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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 19, 1985

85-30

### Missionaries Stay In Lebanon Despite Additional Tensions

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—Seventeen Southern Baptist missionaries are continuing to work in Beirut, Lebanon, despite the March 16 kidnapping of a sixth American by Islamic fundamentalists.

Fourteen missionaries are related to the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in east Beirut and three work at the Beirut Baptist School in west Beirut. Only Mack and Linda Sacco, now living in a Beirut suburb, have children still in Lebanon.

"We are going to stay as long as we can and do as much as we can," emeritus missionary Mabel Summers said in a March 18 telephone conversation with Elise Bridges, Foreign Mission Board associate director for Europe and the Middle East.

Summers said Lebanon mission leaders have decided to keep the nine-student seminary and 800-student school open because the 17 missionaries intend to stay.

However, mission leaders reaffirmed the missionaries may make individual choices to leave for safety reasons. The missionaries are staying close to their homes and their work, Summers said.

Tension in Beirut escalated March 11 when the United States vetoed a United Nations Security Council resolution which would have condemned Israeli security practices in the portion of southern Lebanon still occupied by Israeli troops.

Subsequently kidnapped were a British metallurgist March 14, a British businessman March 15 and Terry Anderson, Associated Press bureau chief, March 16.

Kidnapped Americans still missing in Lebanon are Presbyterian minister Benjamin Weir, Roman Catholic priest Lawrence Jenco, U.S. Embassy political officer William Buckley and university librarian Peter Kilburn. A sixth American, Jeremy Levin, then bureau chief for Cable News Network, escaped from his captors in February.

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(NOTE TO EDITORS: This is the first of two stories which show the impact of one missionary's work to insulate African families from drought, famine and drudgery.)

Famine Holds No Fear  
For Kenyan Family

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press  
3/19/85

YATTA DISTRICT, Kenya (BP)—Famine and drought, killers which stalk victims across Africa, no longer frighten William and Emily Ngozi.

Like a donkey, Mrs. Ngozi once spent five hours a day hauling water on her back from a distant river to her family in the semi-arid Yatta District, remote bush country in Kenya.

She was haggard, bitter and defeated. Now she's content and optimistic. Her seven children once were pot-bellied from malnutrition. Now healthy, they play happily around their thriving homestead.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
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Ngozi--once an absentee father and husband and the ineffective pastor of tiny Mbembani Baptist church--struggled to find income and food. Now he has regained self-respect and shed his local image as a man unworthy of the role of father and husband and the title of pastor.

The Ngozi family began their physical and spiritual turnabout when they agreed to work with Southern Baptist missionary Dan Schellenberg to test a "self-reliant homestead" system. The missionary said it would enable them to control their lives and care for their needs.

The system worked. Water, food, adequate income and security--once distant dreams--have become realities on the Ngozis' small homestead. That's freed them from the struggle just to survive and allowed Ngozi time and energy for spiritual development under Schellenberg's guidance. Mbembani Church had six members when Ngozi became pastor and remained static as he struggled for survival. Now it counts more than 80 members. During a recent period he baptized 40. In the preceding two years he'd baptized only 12.

Schellenberg, 39, who grew up in Kenya the son of missionaries, doesn't claim to have the entire solution to Third World poverty and hunger. He hasn't invented a new idea. But the way he puts together the "self-reliant homestead" concept has caused the United Nations and many international development agencies to study his methods. They're amazed that bush-dwelling Africans can operate the homestead without big grants or high-powered First World technology.

Schellenberg used Southern Baptist hunger funds to help the Ngozis and other rural Kamba tribesmen on 19 test sites to launch the system. But he taught them how to develop it so they can generate funds and resources to carry it on, expand it and teach their neighbors to duplicate it with no outside aid.

"If any project out here can't be done by Africans without spending a fortune, it's not worth it in the long run," Schellenberg said. "William and the others now have an approach they can use whether I'm here or not."

Water conservation--in a land where water is life--lies at the heart of the system. The secret's simple, Schellenberg said: "Don't let the rain get away when it does come."

"Water is everything," Ngozi added as he proudly showed a visitor his oasis in the Yatta District. "The Lord has poured water on us all this time, and we didn't know what a blessing it was." When it does rain in Yatta, it pours. But the rain rapidly runs off the sunbaked turf, taking valuable topsoil with it. For the rest of the year the people struggle to get water to drink. They don't have enough left over for meager attempts at agriculture on the denuded land.

Schellenberg began by teaching the Ngozi family and some other Kamba tribe members how to cheaply finance and dig cement-lined, 12,000-gallon pits to catch rain water.

"If you have 10 inches of rain you can fill it up three times, and William has built a second one," Schellenberg explained. Once in place the water catchment pits can insulate a family from drought for about 18 months whether more rain comes or not.

The system converts water from the elusive elixir of life into an available, versatile resource. The family can sell it to eager neighbors or use it to raise grain and other crops. They can sell the grain, store it in brick-and-cement silos Schellenberg teaches them to build or use it to raise such animals as chickens, rabbits and cows for food and cash.

"If there's a drought, you eat the excess, or you put it into better production, such as chickens or cows," Schellenberg said. "If you store your grain for even six months, it gets you into the prime market value."

Then the self-reliant system can expand. Schellenberg teaches them how to build such things as biogas digesters, which use cow dung to produce gas for light; highly efficient mud cookstoves to conserve scarce wood; wind-mills to pump water, and charcoal-and-sand filters to clean drinking water.

Schellenberg also teaches agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, terracing and reforestation with fruit-bearing trees to protect the soil and increase crop potential.

Then a family like the Ngozis—with water and food stored—become insulated from famine and protected from family breakup, a common problem in Africa. As fathers move about to eke out a living, they often go to cities seeking work or education while their families degenerate at home.

The self-reliant homestead keeps a family living and growing together and produces another by-product: a form of liberation Western women's rights advocates haven't dreamed about. If a woman lives 50 years in the African bush, Schellenberg explained, she'll spend 30 of them in the backbreaking, dehumanizing "donkey work" of carrying water, wood and babies on her back for great distances.

The self-reliant homestead, which can make a family almost completely self-contained in three years, frees wives and mothers of much of the drudgery which shortens lives and deadens relationships.

Men who've joined William Ngozi in the experiment like that change, though they've been used to the second-class role women play in the Third World.

"We're men married to 'donkeys' who are becoming women," one said with new appreciation.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Heart Disease, Cancer  
Claim Most SBC Lives

Baptist Press  
3/19/85

DALLAS (BP)—For the fifth consecutive year, heart disease and cancer have been the leading causes of death among Southern Baptist ministers and denominational personnel.

According to statistics of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, 221 of 330 persons who died in 1984 were victims of heart problems or cancer. Deaths caused by heart disease were down in 1984 to 143 compared with 181 in 1983. Cancer caused 22 more deaths last year with a total of 78.

Respiratory failure claimed 29 lives, 15 people died as a result of a stroke, 14 people died from natural causes, 13 from pneumonia and 12 were victims of accidents.

The remainder causes of death and totals include: kidney failure, eight; tumors, six, suicide and hemorrhage, four each; liver failure, three, and one death resulted from Parkinson's Disease.

The totals reflect deaths of ministers and denominational employees who participated in the board's retirement programs. One hundred eighteen died in active service, while 212 died in retirement.

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Church Damage Count Rises  
After Chilean Earthquake

Baptist Press  
3/19/85

SANTIAGO, Chile (BP)—A post-earthquake survey has raised the number of seriously damaged Baptist churches in Santiago, Chile, from three to 10.

The March 3 earthquake, which measured 7.4 on the Richter scale, struck on a Sunday evening as church services were being held.

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It was "a blessing of God" no worshippers were killed or seriously injured, said Betty Law, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board associate director for western South America.

Mission officials in Chile conducting the post-earthquake survey have received \$1,000 in FMB relief funds to supplement a March 17 offering in Chilean Baptist churches. The money primarily will purchase nonperishable food for homeless families.

Further studies will help determine additional relief needs, Law said.

The earthquake killed about 150 people, caused about 2,000 injuries and left about 200,000 homeless. The hardest hit locations were Santiago, the nation's capital, and the cities of Vina del Mar and Valparaiso to the north. Immediate relief needs were handled primarily by the Chilean government, Law said.

Of the 10 damaged churches, four have been temporarily condemned. The most severely damaged is First Baptist Church, Valparaiso. The extent to which the building may need to be razed has not been determined, Law said. The education wing is still usable.

At least one church, Puda Huel Baptist in Santiago, has had to use homes for Sunday school and a record attendance was reported March 10.

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CORRECTION: In Baptist Press story mailed 3/15/85 titled: "College Students Spend Break Building Housing," in the fourth paragraph, please delete the second sentence.

Thank you,  
Baptist Press

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Mabel Summers Retires From  
Lebanon Without Evacuating

By Irma Duke

Baptist Press  
3/19/85

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—Mabel Summers, 70, has worked in Beirut for 35 years without evacuating, but there were times when she had a notion to.

Once a shell hit the playground outside her apartment. The Southern Baptist missionary ran to the furnace room and said to herself, "I'm getting out of here. I don't know what this country's coming to." More than eight years of shelling has gone on since then, but she's in no hurry to leave now even though she officially retired March 1.

"I've gotten scared a few times from rockets," the white-haired single woman explains. "That's the only thing I'm scared of." In 1976 a rocket tore into the left side of her bedroom, causing minor damage.

"Ever since we've been out here, there's been war, assassinations. There have been rashes of those car bombs," says the spirited little missionary. More than 100,000 people have been killed in the strife among Muslim factions and between them and Christians.

Much of the fighting erupts at night, but the Bardstown, Ky., native says she hasn't had much trouble sleeping. "My cousin gave me some earplugs."

Once when she was working as treasurer for fellow missionaries she went through battle lines to make sure some employees got their checks. When this particular fighting broke out, everyone in the area scattered. Summers was in the middle of the shooting before she realized she was driving the only car on the airport road—the firing line.

"When I heard what she'd done, I almost passed out," says Jim Ragland, a missionary co-worker who sort of looks out for Miss Summers.

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She satisfied her nervous energy with needlepoint during the war when she couldn't get out to do other things. A group of women got together every Tuesday afternoon in someone's yard to work on it. "Sometimes we had to move for the rockets," she adds matter-of-factly.

Summers definitely downplays any suggestion of sacrifice on her part but points to the Lebanese people. "We haven't borne anything compared to what a lot of nationals have." She's lived in Lebanon during all these years of fighting but says she would be scared to go to a country like Russia; she's afraid she might be put in jail there.

She believes prayer has sustained her. "It's been woven in everything I do--the big things and the little things. You need a parking place downtown--you pray ahead and you find one.

"The Lord's kept these buildings and us and our school," Summers explains. She lives on the Beirut Baptist School compound and has been treasurer for the school for years, helped out with chapel programs and done other things as needed. She also worked for the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary just outside Beirut and for Christian literature ministries.

She has championed Baptist women's and children's work. She used to pack a station wagon with a projector, an organ, some handicrafts and some young people and go throughout Lebanon holding Bible schools for children. Many of those same young people went to college because of her financial help.

"We used to go north, south and east but now what can we do?" Summers asks. Still, she does more traveling than most of the other Southern Baptist missionaries.

"She's our carrier pigeon," says colleague Ragland, principal of Beirut Baptist School. "She's old, she's a woman and she drives a little car; so she goes anywhere she wants to." Kidnappings have been a problem in Beirut, particularly for males traveling alone.

Once Summers was confronted by a guard from one of the factions who immediately recognized her. "I know you," he said. "You used to come up to Ain Dara and show films."

"She's dear to all Baptist women's hearts," says Ghassan Khalaf, Lebanese Baptist Convention president. He said she tries to help and contacts others to do so when she can't.

"She's been a regular pitcher on the team as well as pinch hitter and because of that, we've won a lot of games," says Ragland, who has worked with Summers for the last 30 years.

Summers is so thoroughly Lebanese now that her retirement is a bittersweet experience. "As long as you have good health, you can't just sit, muzboot (right)?" she asks, not realizing she has mixed Arabic into the conversation.

Even though she hasn't made up her mind what she'll do when she comes back to the United States, it definitely won't be just sitting.

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