

MAR 2 2 1985

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

(BP)

-- FEATURES  
produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee  
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Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
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March 21, 1985

85-32

(Editor's Note: This is the second of two stories which show the impact of one missionary's work to insulate African families from drought, famine and drudgery. The first story was released 3/19/85.)

'Grain Talk' And 'Water Talk'  
Being Turned To 'God Talk'

By Robert O'Brien

YATTA DISTRICT, Kenya (BP)--Missionary Dan Schellenberg finds it easy for "grain talk," "water talk" and even "cow dung talk" to become "God talk" among rural Kamba people in Kenya's dry Yatta District.

The Kamba have an almost Hebraic sense of the spiritual implications of wind, rain, soil, crops, trees, animals and other things of nature. That's a positive influence, Schellenberg said, but it can also be a problem. The Kamba often interpret spiritual implications in the shadowy context of traditional African culture dominated by things of Satan rather than in the light of the God of the Bible.

That's affected the way Schellenberg, a Southern Baptist missionary reared among the Kamba by missionary parents, works to introduce his "self-reliant homestead" system. If they accept its simple technology, the system can insulate Kamba families from famine and drought.

As his system begins to catch on, Schellenberg has introduced technology new to the Kamba, such as water catchment pits, brick-and-cement storage silos, biogas digesters and other non-traditional things.

It's a slow process among a people who cling to the old ways.

Louisa Nyanzwii stood by her house. In the background an innocent-looking striped gourd hung from a nail. Schellenberg recognized it as a witchcraft charm to protect the grain in her new silo.

"Is that a charm, Louisa?" he asked. "No," the Christian woman replied with a nervous laugh. "It's just a decoration from the field."

"May I cut it down?"

"No!"

"May Jesus cut it down?"

"Not now he can't."

Louisa, like many of her people, isn't interested in quick changes. Subsurface influences of her culture color even her Christianity--perhaps especially her Christianity, because spiritual things are woven into her whole pattern of life. Africans tie the social, physical and spiritual together and each affects the other, Schellenberg explained.

"Have others lost food in their silos?" he continued. "No," Louisa admitted sheepishly.

"Don't be afraid," Schellenberg counseled. "God will protect your food supply. He gave it to you. You don't need protection from anyone else." She wavered, then refused. But the next time Schellenberg came the witchcraft talisman was gone.

It's not always that easy, but a growing number of the Kamba--who know Schellenberg was born among them, speaks their language and sits freely in their village parliaments--will ask him to place their new grain-storage wealth in God's care.

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Before he prays for God's blessing, Schellenberg asks that symbols of witchcraft be removed so God will get the credit.

"The proof will be if God does protect their food," he explained. "When he does, it's a significant step of faith for these people. It doesn't matter to them if we've properly dried the grain and sealed the silo, which we have. They see the conflict as spiritual."

"Rain, earth, healthy children and food are gifts of God," he prayed at the home of the non-Christian Mukanda family. "Charms and talismans don't bring a blessing from God. God gave his Son, Jesus Christ, to do that. God sent his son to shed his blood because he loves us, even when we don't deserve it."

He prayed the Mukandas would let Jesus come into their lives, save them from their sins and protect them. "I banish the power of Satan from this place and put this family under the blood of Jesus Christ in his name," he continued. "When famine comes, we will praise you, Lord, that this family has so much food in storage and that it's under your protection."

Thus the transfer of allegiance from one spiritual force to a greater one begins in the lives of the people with whom Schellenberg works.

Even their cook fire is spiritual. When Kamba women cook, they must see the fire burn for deep, underlying cultural reasons. Emily Ngozi, a pastor's wife, became truly liberated when she allowed an efficient mud cookstove—with the fire hidden inside—to replace her open fire.

"How Jesus can change them is radically dependent on how they view spiritual things," Schellenberg said. "How you can change their children's health, as we did with the Ngozi family, is radically dependent on their spiritual view of children."

Thus talk of wind, rain, grain—and even the readily available cow dung to fuel their new biogas digesters—naturally leads into "God talk" based on their own experiences and teachings from the Bible.

For example, would the Kamba submit to using cow dung as a fuel for lights and cooking? It, too, is a gift of God, Schellenberg told them, quoting the Old Testament verse Ezekiel 4:15. The context was a siege of Jerusalem. The Jewish people had disobeyed God and destroyed the land. They had no food, no fuel, nothing. They were desolate.

"See, I will let you have cow's dung instead of human dung on which you may prepare (bake) your bread," declared the Lord.

"It was a blessing they had cows alive to give dung and that God showed them how to use it," Schellenberg told the Kamba, who listened intently. They understand nature, parched earth and desolation.

Schellenberg's self-reliant homesteads are spreading across the semi-arid Yatta District, providing protection from drought and famine. Biogas digesters—among other innovations—have become widely accepted. So has a new quality of life.

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

U.S. Judge Ponders Motion  
To Dismiss Vatican Lawsuit

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press  
3/21/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—A federal judge in Philadelphia has heard arguments on a government motion to dismiss a suit challenging full diplomatic relations with the Vatican and promised to act "with reasonable promptness."

Deputy Assistant Attorney General Carolyn Kuhl told U.S. District Court Judge John P. Fullam Americans United for Separation of Church and State and other plaintiffs in the case do not have legal "standing" to sue President Reagan and Congress over last year's exchange of ambassadors between the United States and the Holy See.

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Kuhl argued further the constitutional doctrine of separation of powers among the three branches of government vests in the president broad foreign policy powers, including appointment of ambassadors. "No court has ever required the breaking of diplomatic ties with another country," she said. "This is a political question, not a judicial question."

Pressed by Fullam, Kuhl expressed the view the president's authority in foreign policy is so broad he "may have the power" to send diplomatic representatives to other church bodies, such as the Church of England or the Baptist World Alliance.

The U.S.-Vatican decision 14 months ago to establish full diplomatic relations came after the late-1973 congressional lifting of an 1867 ban on such ties. No hearings were held on the legislation lifting the ban and the Senate passed the measure without debate on a voice vote.

When Reagan announced his longtime political adviser and personal representative to the Vatican, William A. Wilson, was his choice as U.S. ambassador, opponents of the new arrangement voiced alarm at a one-day confirmation hearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Wilson's nomination breezed through the committee on a 9-1 vote and the California real estate developer was confirmed by the Senate March 7, 1984 by an overwhelming 81-13 margin.

Americans United Attorney Lee Boothby told Fullam the president, like all other federal officials, is bound by the constraints of the Constitution. The First Amendment's prohibition of an establishment of religion, he argued, forbids establishment of diplomatic relations with a church.

In a key argument, Boothby insisted the Vatican is a church, not a nation-state. He cited the views of the apostolic pro-nuncio in Washington, Archbishop Pio Laghi, that the Pope derives his diplomatic role from the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, and that all nations maintaining diplomatic ties do so with the Holy See, not with a nation-state.

Boothby also refuted the government's contention that plaintiffs—which include church bodies ranging from the National Association of Evangelicals to the National Council of Churches—do not have legal standing. Because such bodies are composed of taxpayers whose tax monies have been appropriated by Congress to effectuate the new arrangement, they do have standing, Boothby said.

After the March 15 hearing in Fullam's courtroom, Americans United Executive Director Robert L. Maddox, a Southern Baptist clergyman, declared: "The Reagan administration attorneys have completely failed to show any reasons why the courts should not hear this case. Indeed, their arguments show that the case should be heard. Their assertion that the president has sweeping powers to ignore the Constitution's limitations on church-state entanglement represents a clear threat to our American way of life."

Although the Southern Baptist Convention is not among the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, the denomination's Executive Committee in February endorsed the views expressed in a friend-of-the-court brief filed by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs condemning U.S.-Vatican relations as a violation of separation of church and state.

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Computer Bible Introduced  
By Former Baptist Chaplain

Baptist Press  
3/21/85

ATLANTA (BP)—A computerized Bible described as "the Gutenberg of the computer age" was unveiled by a former Baptist military chaplain who has turned his hobby of collecting old Bibles into a modern-day business.

Lewi H. Miller Jr., president of Computer Bibles International, based in Greenville, S.C., introduced the software during a press conference.

Miller said the entire New Testament is stored on two 5 1/4 inch floppy discs as software being marketed by his firm for \$95.

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Currently, only Good News for Modern Man (Today's English Version) New Testament is available, but Miller said within the next 60 days, he hopes the entire Good News Bible will be stored on five discs.

Later in the year, Miller's firm plans to offer additional software enabling computer users to compare three English translations, plus Hebrew and Greek, on a split screen.

Miller said the computer program designer and developer, Charlie Weisel, is currently in the process of programming the King James Version, and hopes to add the New International Version later this year.

The real advantage of the computerized Bible, according to Miller, is that a particular passage of scripture or a key word can be found so much more quickly than using a printed concordance and Bible. His "Dynamic Concordance" program can display all verses containing a selected word or phrases from any one of the translations stored in memory, Miller said.

In four minutes, the computer can search the entire New Testament for a key word or series of words, flashing the scripture containing those words on the screen. When the floppy disc software is transferred onto a much faster hard disc, the computer can search the entire New Testament in one minute, 18 seconds, according to Weisel.

Using an IBM personal computer, Weisel demonstrated the software by entering the word "love," and commanding the computer to find that word. Within a few seconds, he began printing out on an attached printer all passages in the New Testament using the word "love."

Miller said he envisioned the computerized Bible being a great help to ministers, Bible scholars, Sunday school teachers, serious students of the Bible, and "average Christians."

A retired Air Force chaplain with 30 years of service, Miller became interested in collecting old rare Bibles while stationed in Europe. His collection of old Bibles was displayed at the Baptist pavilion at the 1982 World's Fair in Knoxville on loan to Holman Bibles of the SBC Sunday School Board. His interest in the computerized Bible is a logical extension of his interest in old and rare Bibles, he explained.

Miller said the firm would announce a marketing plan for the software in the next 30 days, with hopes to sell the floppy discs through Baptist Book Stores and Christian book sellers.

At the present, Computer Bibles International is not marketing hardware, only the floppy disc software. But Miller unveiled a hand-held Bible computer mockup which the company hopes to introduce in December.

The hand-held unit, about the size of a printed Bible (6x7x2 inches), will be battery powered with a 30 or 40 character, eight-line screen. It will have a small keyboard enabling users to recall Bible scriptures, or type in notes or instructions.

Miller said the six mega-byte handheld unit will do almost all the functions of the larger desktop personal computers, but could be used by missionaries and Bible translators on the mission field in areas where the larger personal computer units could not be taken. He hopes to market the unit for less than \$1,000.

"Wycliffe Bible Translators are excited about the unit we're developing," Miller said, "because it will enable their translators to recall on the screen various translations of the Bible, including Greek and Hebrew, and then to type in phonetic words of an unwritten language and store the new translation into the computer's memory."

Miller said the handheld Computer Bible could revolutionize Bible translation work around the world.

Although Miller said there is no difference between an electronic Bible and a printed Bible, there are some Christians who feel it is un-Christian and Satanic to develop and use computerized Bible.

He pointed out, however, the text of the Scriptures would be stored in Read-Only Memory (ROM) which cannot be changed or altered by the user.

The Bible has been written on stone, gold, wood, papyrus, sheepskin and paper, so there is no reason it cannot be stored in a computer, he said. "This is simply an improvement on the traditional methods of spreading the word of God," he said.

He acknowledged this is not the only company offering a computerized Bible. The King James Version, Living Bible, and New King James are being marketed by Omega Software, Inc., based in Round Rock, Texas, for prices ranging from \$250 to \$275.

Oldest and largest of the computerized Bible firms is Bible Research Systems in Austin, Texas, which offers the entire Bible in King James Version and New International Version in a software package called "The Word Processors." It is available in most major operating systems compatible with about 60 different brands of computers. Bible Research Systems sells "The Word," which includes computerized concordance features enabling the user to search for up to ten words, for about \$200.

In addition, Bible Research Systems offers a topical index of the Bible in which users can call up Bible passages dealing with 200 topics, and a similar cross-reference index of Bible characters called "People," each for about \$50.

Miller, who tested his computerized Bible at the Christian pavilion at the New Orleans World's Fair last year, said most people over 30 years of age are slow to accept the new technology as a new method to enhance Bible study, whereas youth who have grown up in the computer age were at ease with the computer Bible.

Miller said the computer Bible is the "wave of the future," and that Christians should not fear it, but take advantage of the new technology to encourage and intensify Bible study.

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Foreign Board Predicts Getting  
Almost 99 Percent Of Lottie Goal

Baptist Press  
3/21/85

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Based on a poll of 10 state Baptist conventions, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials project the 1984 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions will total almost 99 percent of the \$66 million goal.

By March 18 the board counted some \$45.7 million in Lottie Moon receipts from state conventions. That's about 69 percent of the 1984 goal, but doesn't include many of the Lottie Moon offerings sent by local churches to state conventions in February.

Board officials contacted 10 state conventions in March and asked about their Lottie Moon receipts for December, January and February. The totals added up to almost a 12.5 percent average increase over receipts for the same three-month period a year ago. That increase is more than three times the current U.S. inflation rate of four percent.

"Assuming that this holds up for all state conventions, the projection is for a total of \$65,267,100, which would be 98.88 percent of this year's goal of \$66 million," said Carl Johnson, board treasurer and vice-president for finance. Last year the forecast based on the state convention poll proved 99.6 percent accurate.

Raising 99 percent of the Lottie Moon goal would be good news for Southern Baptist foreign missions. The annual offering observed by local churches finances almost half of the denomination's foreign mission program in 105 countries, with the churches' year-around Cooperative Program gifts the other major source. But the 1983 Lottie Moon offering fell nearly \$2 million short of that year's goal, and the 1982 total missed by almost \$4 million. The 1981 offering was the last to exceed its goal.

The entire \$66 million goal for 1984 has already been budgeted for use on foreign fields this year. Final Lottie Moon receipts will be totaled May 31.

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