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Killing Didn't End With Amin  
In Uganda; Baptists Endure

By Art Toalston

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
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KAMPALA, Uganda (BP)--Missionary Jim Rice is too mild-mannered to boast about persevering in a land where more than 1 million people have died at the hands of their own rulers.

"I've often wondered, 'Why am I here? What talent or talents have I got?'" Rice admits. He concedes he does "an adequate job" as chairman of Southern Baptist missionaries in Uganda, but "It may boil down to availability. I may not be so talented, but at least I'm here."

Missionary Rick Goodgame, a physician, recalls everyone hoped "the worst was over" when dictator Idi Amin fell from power in 1979. Religious freedom was restored, but otherwise, "It got worse."

Six times since, the reins of power have been grabbed through military coups, a suspicious election or a war replete with artillery and machine gun barrages. The forces of Milton Obote, in power from 1980 to 1985, may have equaled Amin's in the number of people they killed--an estimated half million. The mayhem reflected longstanding tribal animosities in Uganda. Many soldiers had no qualms about murder, rape, breaking into homes or demanding payments at roadblocks throughout the country. "Sin had free rein," Rice recounts.

However, Ugandans believe they have cause for some celebration this year. Yoweri Museveni, whose National Resistance Army came to power in January after several years of warfare, has pledged there will be no "thieves," "murderers" or any "remnant of the bad governments of the past" in his regime. He says Uganda must move toward self-reliance. Museveni's troops are under control. No longer are roadblocks dreaded points of harassment.

In Baptist work, some strides forward occurred during Uganda's post-Amin turmoil, but there also has been decline or stagnation. One association of 18 churches no longer exists; guerrilla warfare made refugees of churchgoers and their neighbors. About 20 churches closed in a region where Karamajong warriors often murdered cattle owners and stole their herds.

The Baptist Union of Uganda reports 185 churches. Most are small and weak. The nation's strife made it impossible for Baptist leaders to travel to assist churches, says union General Secretary John Ekudu, a botany teacher at Makerere University in Kampala. Correspondence wasn't even an option, because the mails were sporadic and unreliable.

Southern Baptist missionaries have faced times of peril. Five years ago, a drunken soldier shot and killed a milkman in front of Larry and Sharon Pumpelly's home. A vehicle Linda Rice was driving was stolen by four men with machine guns in broad daylight. The Rices, of Christiansburg, Va., again weathered a vehicle robbery in 1982, as did the Pumpellys. The Pumpellys are from Newark and Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio, respectively.

Two missionary homes in rural Uganda were destroyed and two were ransacked during the past year's political-tribal upheaval. The missionary families were elsewhere each time.

Nevertheless, "I'd like for people to understand that we believe we're in the Lord's will here," Linda Rice says. Southern Baptists in the United States should "keep praying for us, not tell us that we're crazy." About 20 Southern Baptist missionaries are assigned to Uganda.

When Museveni's forces invaded Kampala in January, the part of town where the Rices and Goodgames live became a battleground. The Rices spent two days huddling in the hallway of their house, with 2-year-old daughter Kristen and 11 other missionaries and children. Rick and Susan Goodgame and their five children spent much of the time barricaded in their kitchen.

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A recording from the Rices' hallway at the time sounds like a war movie. "The gunfire and artillery were deafening at times," Goodgame says, but residential homes were not targeted.

Rumors of war abounded last summer, so Goodgame, senior lecturer in Makerere University's School of Medicine at Mulago Hospital, called his family together to say, "We don't know if it's going to be next week, next month, next year, two years. If we leave (Uganda), we'd just be sitting around waiting. But we're going to do our work.

"I'm going to go to the hospital," he continued. "Mom is going to take care of the things she always does. You're going to go to school. We're going to work with the church. When the war comes, we're going to get to our house, lock the gate, block the doors, get on the floor and read books and play games for a few days. Then the war will be over and we'll get back to work."

Goodgame is from Clearwater, Fla., and his wife is from Houston, Texas. In going to Uganda six years ago, they had to decide, "What are we willing to risk for the sake of the gospel? God in his sovereignty can handle any circumstance--our own deaths, our children's deaths, loss of property, illness. You have to leave yourself open to all those possibilities."

In recent years nearly 20 Southern Baptist missionaries have left Uganda for various reasons, but an equal number have replaced them. Rice, who also works with the Baptist bookstore, and his wife, director of the Bible Way Correspondence School, are the only Southern Baptist missionaries in Uganda who were there during the Amin years.

On several fronts, Baptist work has progressed. Kampala Baptist Church, the union's largest congregation, opened its new building in May. Southern Baptists contributed \$125,000 to the construction costs, and Conservative Baptists added \$75,000 plus the efforts of volunteers.

New work is beginning in Uganda's most prominent indigenous language, Luganda. There's a Luganda service at Kampala Baptist and two new Luganda congregations, one in northern Kampala and another on the eastern outskirts. Lugandan Bible Way materials also are being prepared.

"A number of churches, given a little bit more encouragement, will be self-supporting," Baptist leader Ekudu predicts. As a first step, 20 Baptist leaders were invited to a July 7-9 conference to foster churches that model a vision for missions and stewardship in various regions of the country.

In student work, the Pumpellys launched a fellowship for college graduates last November, and average attendance has reached 50.

Six hundred oxen are being purchased in northern Uganda with Southern Baptist hunger relief funds. Groups of four families, Christian and non-Christian, are sharing pairs of oxen and paying into a fund for other community projects.

Goodgame has joined several other doctors at the forefront of research into Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in Uganda. He describes the problem in Uganda as "enormous...a plague." A study of 1,000 pregnant women in Kampala revealed more than 10 percent had been exposed to AIDS. Uganda's strife, Goodgame believes, has eroded morality, creating a "profound promiscuity." AIDS is "a virus that takes advantage of it." He is pleased Museveni's government is addressing the problem.

Beyond such concerns, Baptists are working to soften hardened hearts. During recent years, "It seemed like evil was rewarded and godly characteristics were punished," Linda Rice notes. "It's spoiled a whole generation in Uganda." Sharon Pumpelly adds, "It was the view of a lot of unsaved people and even some saved people that to survive in Uganda you had to do something illegal. People were beginning to rationalize their corruption. Very few had any interest, it seems, in doing what was best for the country."

But for faithful Christians, "this tribulation" can be a blessing, says Methusela Sebagala, a Baptist associate pastor and high school teacher in Kampala. "Many people have cried to God for help." Peace may be at hand. "It is quite a ripe time," he says, "to preach the gospel vigorously."

Association Leadership Training  
Multiplies Consultants' Efforts

By Frank Wm. White

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—As Baptist Sunday school enrollment increases, associational leadership training is becoming increasingly important, said Harry Piland, Sunday school department director for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

That theory was the basis for a Sunday school leadership conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center for ASSIST (associational Sunday school improvement support team) members.

The conference was attended by 1,848 people representing 169 district associations in 29 states and Canada. A similar conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center in August has an advance registration of more than 2,200.

Many more churches will receive benefits from the ASSIST conferences than the regular Sunday school leadership conferences, Piland pointed out.

"The potential is to reach more churches more effectively. We will never have enough consultants to reach every church in the convention. We will need more multipliers. ASSIST teams are our multipliers," he said.

The ASSIST team members are learning to be conference leaders in their associations—not just workers in their individual churches, Piland explained. "We are investing in multipliers who will spread our training across the convention," he said.

The Sunday School Board paid much of the costs for the people attending the conferences, which provide training information for Sunday school program emphases through 1990.

The board also will fund additional state training sessions for ASSIST team members during the next three years as part of a commitment to associational training, said James Chatham, Sunday school associational unit consultant.

ASSIST teams have been established in 1,183 of the 1,230 associations in the convention. Those teams include more than 8,800 members. The associations represented at the Glorieta conference include 6,282 churches, said Cliff Burchyett, also an associational unit consultant.

Several teams at Glorieta were ethnic teams which will provide specialized training for black, Hispanic or Korean churches in their associations.

ASSIST teams were developed in 1979 as a way for associations to provide Sunday school leadership training at the local level. A basic team includes five members and can be expanded with additional specialists.

Until the teams were established in most of the associations in the convention, the Sunday School Board could not rely on them for convention-wide training, Chatham said, adding, "Now we are equipped to start using these teams for extensive training. We can rely on them to help train churches."

Chatham said the training has created a new excitement among the team members for setting goals for Sunday school growth.

Tim Clark, ASSIST team director for the four-county Powder River Baptist Association in northeastern Wyoming, said the team training means everyone on the team has received the same ideas: "I'm part of a group, not just by myself. I don't have to go back and sell the ideas now."

Ed Wiggins, a director of missions for the North Central Baptist Area in Texas, said the training has "given us a real foundation for planning new ministries between the associations and churches."

ASSISTeams Provide Contact  
For Canadian Churches

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)—Associational Sunday School Improvement Support Teams (ASSIST) are a new idea for Canadian Baptists, but those teams are becoming a significant link between Southern Baptists in sparsely settled areas of Canada.

Thirty ASSIST members from Canada attended a Sunday school leadership conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, along with more 1,800 other associational trainers.

"Because of the distance between churches, our ASSISTeams become a vital point of contact. There may be no other contact within a year than the ASSISTeam," explained David Wyman, church services director for the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists.

Even directors of missions in the five Canadian district associations cannot reach their churches on a regular basis. In one association, the distance is more than 1,000 miles between churches, Wyman said. Circuits of 2,500 miles between the churches in an association are not uncommon.

The expansive Canadian territory for Southern Baptists is more than 3,000 miles from the westernmost church to the easternmost.

"Our area is bigger than the area of the entire Southern Baptist Convention," Wyman said. And in that area, Southern Baptists have more than 6,000 church members in 78 churches. "The ASSISTeams will be my contacts in those churches."

The training for ASSISTeam members at a Sunday school leadership conference at Glorieta is valuable for developing links between the Canadian Baptists, Wyman said, noting "There is no way I could train them otherwise."

The oldest ASSISTeam in Canada is in the Northern Lights and Wheatland Baptist Association. That team was established when the ASSISTeam concept was developed in 1979, said Jack Conner, director of missions.

Teams in the other associations have been developed within the past two years, and many are less than a year old, Wyman said.

Because of the distance between churches, some teams will work with single churches, with only one team member leading sessions rather than the traditional association-wide training conferences.

The ASSISTeam members have an opportunity to have a major impact on growth of Southern Baptists in Canada, Wyman said, "This is the beginning of great things for Canadian Baptists."

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Roxburgh's Safari To The Savior  
Leads To Seminary, Missions

By Craig Bird

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Few sinners are pursued by clawing lions and charging water buffalo.

John Roxburgh lived to fight off such animals, but he knew he was dying inside.

Now Roxburgh, 43, is preparing at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to spread the gospel among the rural tribes of Zambia, where he once led big-game safaris.

Roxburgh's long trail to Southwestern began in South Africa, where he was born the illegitimate son of a prostitute. When police found the 2-year-old child wandering the streets looking for food, he was adopted.

That took care of his physical hunger, but the emotional hunger raged on.

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His natural mother was murdered when he was eight, and by 15 he had quit school and was estranged from his adoptive family. At 18 he moved to Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia) to work. At 21 he "went off where I didn't think anyone would find me, took every pill I could find, then cut both wrists."

Hovering on the edge of death he had a vision of three figures dressed in mauve, apparently waiting for him to cross into their valley. "I couldn't see their faces or hands and to this day I can't interpret what it all meant," he says.

But since becoming a Christian, "I've read in Revelation that God and the saints wear white robes—so that valley I almost went to sure wasn't heaven," he says.

Roxburgh decided life was worth living and became a determined optimist, even though not yet Christian.

He led rich Europeans, Americans and Asians on almost 200 safaris in Zambia. But he found even the most important people in the world weren't happy.

While in the United States recruiting hunters, Roxburgh met his wife, Carol. She moved to Zambia with him to live in the grass hut of his base camp.

Later they moved to Kerrville, Texas, to establish and manage an exotic game ranch. New friends urged him to accept Christ. "I rationalized and told myself if there really was a God and Jesus and Holy Spirit it could be proved," he says. "If Christianity didn't solve my problems, I would throw it all out.

"All I wanted to talk about was God, but most Christians were intimidated by my questions," Roxburgh notes. "So I started watching religious television 15-18 hours a day when I was off work and reading everything I could get my hands on."

His self-study led him to identify his beliefs as Southern Baptist. "It is important for faith to be based on Scripture instead of emotion," he explains.

At 11 p.m. New Year's Eve 1982, he stood with his wife and 7-year-old son in the darkened sanctuary of Southern Oaks Baptist Church in Kerrville and committed his life to a God he had long denied.

Now the man who once took the King of Nepal on safari spends his nights parking cars and his days studying the Bible at Southwestern. Instead of organizing big-game hunts in Zambia, he dreams of evangelizing the rural villages of that East African country.

He is working on getting the movie "Jesus" dubbed into N'ja so he can use it and soccer games between neighboring villages to attract crowds.

"The villages are usually about nine miles apart," he says. "I want to start with one and work to the next, leaving a Christian church in each one. I think in five years the whole area can be evangelized."

Roxburgh is determined to reach his goal because of his unshakable belief that faith in God through Jesus Christ is the answer to any question. "There are no political answers to the freedom of man," he says. "There is only a Christian answer. Unless you change people's hearts, you aren't really changing anything."

Roxburgh remembers the times he almost died before encountering Jesus Christ. He vividly recalls the lion that veered in mid-leap and brushed his leg and the charging water buffalo that fell less than six feet from him.

More vivid than these visions is his knowledge that Zambians are dying each day without hearing of the God who can fill the emptiness in their lives. "The world is falling apart," he says. "We must tell everyone about Jesus."

