



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Merv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hasteley, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

August 4, 1987

87-117

House Report Says Civil
Strife Cause Of Famine

By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP)--Civil strife, not drought, is the major cause of the severe famine plaguing the southern African country of Mozambique, stated a report released by the House Select Committee on Hunger.

Mozambique faces a famine of historic proportions, according to the report, with about one-third of the nation's population in danger of acute malnutrition or starvation. The primary cause of the crisis, the report continued, is terrorist activity by RENAMO, the anti-government insurgency force within Mozambique. Previously, most studies blamed drought as the main cause of the famine.

The House committee report specifically pointed to RENAMO attacks on peasant farmers, food production and distribution systems, and social services. Those attacks, according to the report, have resulted in lower levels of primary health care, decreased primary school attendance, declining food production, and increased malnutrition and starvation.

In addition to raiding food production and food relief operations, RENAMO forces have destroyed 42 percent of the country's health posts, caused the destruction or abandonment of 40 percent of the country's primary schools, and attacked and killed local health and relief workers, the report stated. It also charged insurgency forces with cutting main transportation arteries inside Mozambique, thus making distribution of food difficult or impossible in many regions.

Describing conditions within Mozambique as "desperate," the report said 1.8 million people have been internally displaced and 420,000 have become refugees in bordering countries. According to the report, the country has the highest infant mortality rate in the world, with 325 of every 1,000 children dying before age 5. Only 30 percent of the nation's population has access to health services and only 13 percent has access to safe water, the report added.

Because of the nation's crisis, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has selected Mozambique to receive special attention.

The proposed FMB plan will require at least \$1 million in Southern Baptist hunger relief money and is to include training Mozambican Baptists to run feeding programs and operating a seed and farming tool distribution program.

--30--

Retired Missionary Brings Home
Memories Of Life In Middle East

By Trennis Henderson

Baptist Press
8/4/87

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Anna Cowen has lived her adult life in countries most Americans only read about or see on the evening news.

When she retired June 30 as a Southern Baptist foreign missionary, Cowen brought back to the United States memories of her life in Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and even briefly Iran.

A schoolteacher in the small Missouri towns of Urich and Blairstown in the 1940s, Cowen felt God leading her to missionary work in the volatile Middle East.

"I can't remember going through any cultural shock," she reflected. "I wanted to be there, and there were so many things to do."

--more--

Recalling her final furlough and subsequent retirement, however, Cowen added, "I had more of a cultural shock coming home. I've lived longer in the Middle East than in the United States."

Cowen began her missionary work in Nazareth in 1948 -- the same year the modern nation of Israel came into existence. Arriving on the field without the benefit of foreign language school, the new missionary began working in a school attended mostly by refugee children. "I got there on Thursday," she recalled, "and became principal on Monday."

In the early 1950s, Cowen was given the opportunity to help begin mission efforts in neighboring Jordan. After spending nine months in Lebanon studying Arabic, she moved to Jordan, where Baptist work at that time included one hospital and one school.

"We didn't have any congregation in the beginning -- none at all," she noted, adding that the Jordanian government let Baptist missionaries into the country "because of the hospital and because they wanted the schools; they didn't care if they had churches."

Despite such a reception, "I saw the first church organized and the first pastor ordained," she said. Now more than 30 years later, Jordan's Arab Baptist Convention has 500 active members in eight churches and nine missions and preaching points.

"We are the newest evangelical organization to enter Jordan, but today we're the largest," Cowen pointed out. "It's hard work, because 98 percent of the population is Moslem."

Along with the growth of Baptist churches over the years, Cowen also witnessed other changes in Jordan.

When she arrived there in 1954, "they lived like they did in the time of Christ almost." Moving to the city of Ajloun, she recalled, "One plane, one bus, one Jeep and two cars served 18,000 people." Today, however, "Jordan has one of the highest number of college graduates per capita in the world. Jordan has advanced almost as much in the past 34 years as the United States has in the past 200."

Even with the technological advances, Cowen's years in the Middle East were seldom easy. "There were real hard times. In the beginning there were lots of trouble, blackouts and evacuations.

"The Six-Day War in 1967 was hard. Bombs fell in Ajloun. We were down underneath in shelters. Planes would come over, and the bombs would drop, and the buildings would shake."

Cowen recalled being evacuated to Tehran, Iran, as fighting continued between Israel and Jordan. "We had just begun a youth work in one of our churches," she explained. "When we were evacuated, we spent several weeks in Iran and then went to Lebanon before getting back to Jordan.

"That group of young people had missed one or two meetings because of the fighting, but then they went right on. It gave me a real sense of satisfaction that they didn't quit."

Such triumphs helped keep Cowen going day to day and year to year. As she sought to establish Woman's Missionary Union groups and strengthen churches, "sometimes it was hard to keep going to the same place and people wouldn't come. You'd think, 'Is it worth it?' and they you'd find somebody accepting the Lord."

Serving as principal of the Baptist elementary school in Ajloun, which gradually grew into a high school, and later serving as the convention's WMU director and religious education director, Cowen said a key to the work was "individual lives make the difference. The work had to be done mostly one-on-one or in little groups, getting to know people."

When she left Jordan earlier this year, Cowen left the apartment she had lived in for 32 years in Ajloun. More importantly, however, she left "some very strong Baptists, some real fine pastors."

Urging prayer for the national Baptists in Jordan, Cowen acknowledged, "When I think about not going back, it's hard."

But with retirement officially here, she already is making plans to continue her mission work at home. Her calendar is filled with speaking engagements throughout the rest of the year as she plans to tell of her experiences and encourage support of the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget.

"We are very, very fortunate to have the (Southern Baptist) Foreign Mission Board and the way we are supported through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon offering," she emphasized. Noting that some missionaries from other denominations "are so concerned about how they are going to live, they can't work effectively," she added, "Our mission board is wonderful. The plan we have is really good."

As Cowen readjusts to life in the United States and shares her story with fellow Baptists, she will carry with her countless memories of a faraway land that once was home. And those memories will include not only struggles -- "You worked and didn't see much in the beginning" -- but also numerous victories in the name of Jesus -- "When you look back, you can see such advances in our church work and the nationals."

--30--

Southern Seminary Names Institute
For Christian Social Ministries Pioneer

Baptist Press
8/4/87

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has named its National Institute for Research and Training in Church Social Work in honor of Southern Baptist Christian social ministries pioneer Paul Adkins of Atlanta.

The institute, founded in 1984, is administered through the Carver School of Church Social Work at the Louisville, Ky., seminary.

Adkins, the first director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Christian social ministries department, accepted the honor during the board's 75th anniversary of Baptist centers during a celebration held at the seminary. The first Baptist center was founded in Louisville in 1912 by Maud Reynolds McClure, then-principal at the Woman's Missionary Union Training School, forerunner of Carver School.

The three-day celebration was attended by 250 home missionaries from the department.

Adkins, a native of Dundee, Ky., and a 20-year employee of the board, was named director of the missions ministries division in January. Under his leadership the Christian social ministries program has grown into two departments with 340 missionaries while maintaining an emphasis on the local church reaching its community through witness and ministry. Two national programs, disaster relief and domestic hunger, also were developed under Adkins' direction.

The institute undergirds the seminary's social work program by providing research and writing groups, a visiting scholar program and national conferences, as well as course work.

--30--

Peruvians Tune In To
Seminary Singers' Witness

By Elizabeth Watson

Baptist Press
8/4/87

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--A tour of Peru brought Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's Consort Singers standing ovations, awards and a new heart for missions.

The 18-voice ensemble toured Peru, the third-largest country on South America, in July. David Keith, the group's director and associate professor of church music, organized the trip with the help of the Baptist seminary in Peru and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The group performed in Lima, the capital of Peru; Trujillo, the location of the Baptist seminary; Machu Pichu, the fortress city of the Inca civilization; Cuzco, the site of the golden temple of the sun; and Chiclayo, a northern coastal city.

--more--

Baptist missionaries in Peru used Consort Singers to introduce the gospel to the country's upper class, Keith said. The group gave 36 concerts, including performances at the Peruvian Cultural Institute, the American Embassy and the national theater.

"God used our music to open wide doors that had been shut for years in Peru," Keith said. "We built a bridge of music which we and the missionaries used to take the gospel to the people, rich and poor alike.

"Missionaries have had no trouble taking the gospel to the poor people. They welcome news of a better life," he added. "But the higher classes are not as receptive."

Through the Consort Singers' performances, missionaries developed a rapport with Peruvian leaders. One concert even brought front-page coverage in a Trujillo newspaper.

"Tears poured down missionary Sarah Armstrong's face when she picked up the newspaper," Keith said. "For Baptists to get mentioned in the media in Peru is rare. To get front-page coverage in that Catholic-dominated country was incredible."

Karen Chowning, a student member of the group, said the trip opened her eyes to the needs of Third World people for the gospel.

"We sang in modern amphitheatres and dirt-floor churches," Chowning said. "But no matter where we performed, the people would be so grateful. It's a great feeling to know that in some way you gave the people some hope."

Chowning is one of several choir members praying about surrendering to career missions after seminary.

"This was not a sight-seeing tour," Keith said. "Everywhere the group went, people knew why they were there.

"My ultimate goal for the group has become a reality. Consort Singers have witnessed the importance of music in missions and some of them are open to God using their lives on the mission field."

--30--

Children Of Saragosa
Enjoy Six Flags Trip

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
8/4/87

DALLAS (BP)--The children of Saragosa, Texas, who saw their world blown apart by a tornado two months ago, were swept away to the fun-filled fantasy world of Six Flags Over Texas in late July.

About 40 children, ages 8 and up, were brought to the Arlington, Texas, amusement park courtesy of Texas Baptist Men, Project CARE and Greyhound Bus Lines.

The children arrived at Fielder Road Baptist Church in Arlington July 29 and spent the night in the church's family center, enjoyed a full day at Six Flags July 30 and returned to Saragosa the following day.

The idea for the excursion came from Manuel Galindo, liaison between volunteers and government agencies in the Western Texas town that was destroyed by a tornado May 22.

"I noticed during recreation time that the kids seemed to be just going through the motions, so I talked to the representatives of Project CARE who were heading up the recreation activities," said Galindo, who is on leave of absence from Valley Baptist Academy in Harlingen.

"I told them the kids needed to get away from here for a few days. They needed something they could look forward to -- something they could remember and talk about when they came back -- something to take their minds off the terrible tragedy here."

--more--

Galindo said the three-day trip was meant to be recreational therapy for the traumatized children, some of whom lost brothers, sisters and parents in the tornado. The trip also gave counselors an opportunity to talk with the youngsters in a relaxed setting and to help them work through their grief.

"The children of Saragosa have experienced a terrible trauma, and our hope is that this trip will help in the healing process," said Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men.

That sentiment was echoed by Bonnie Gay, one of the six counselors who accompanied the children from Saragosa to Arlington. Gay, a summer missionary assigned to the Rio Grande River Ministry, has led Backyard Bible Clubs in Saragosa for several weeks.

"I think this trip will provide a lot of relief of tension for the kids. It will be good to get them away from here," she said.

The tension and trauma at Saragosa is not limited to children but extends to their parents as well, said William Everett, pastor of Fielder Road Baptist Church.

"I heard about one gentleman who wasn't signed up as a chaperone but who insisted on boarding the bus at Saragosa," Everett said. "Three of his children were on the bus. He said he had lost his wife and two children in the tornado, and he couldn't stand to let the others out of his sight. He was allowed to come along."

Fielder Road became involved with the children of Saragosa through Texas Baptist Royal Ambassador Director John LaNoue whose wife, Kaywin, is children's minister at the church.

"These children were really on John's heart. Many were left orphaned by the tornado," Everett said. "We wanted to do what we could for them."

In addition to providing lodging and meals for the children, the church also purchased marked New Testaments in Spanish and English for the youngsters.