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91-166

**Missionaries leave Haiti
as sanctions take hold**

By Mary E. Speidel

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (BP)--As fuel supplies dwindled because of international sanctions, Southern Baptist workers left Haiti Nov. 2 for the neighboring Dominican Republic.

Missionaries Mark and Peggy Rutledge and volunteer Bobby Edwards flew from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, to Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic on a Missionary Aviation Fellowship charter flight.

The three are among about 3,000 Americans who have left Haiti since the Sept. 30 coup that ousted Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haiti's first freely-elected president. The U.S. State Department urged American citizens Oct. 10 to leave Haiti and authorized voluntary departure of non-essential embassy workers and their families.

The Rutledges, from Murfreesboro, Tenn., and Glendale, Calif., respectively, were scheduled to fly Nov. 4 to Richmond, Va., where they will begin a short furlough. Edwards, a mechanic from Greenville, S.C., will stay temporarily in the Dominican Republic to repair cars for missionaries there.

Their decision to leave Haiti was primarily a stewardship matter, according to Mrs. Rutledge. "We weren't going to be able to accomplish much by staying," she said in a phone interview from Port-au-Prince Nov. 1.

The Rutledges operate an agricultural project in a rural area about five hours from Port-au-Prince. Much of their work involves travel, which would have stopped because of the lack of fuel, she said.

Haiti's fuel shortage has resulted from the cutoff of foreign oil supplies since the Sept. 30 coup. The Organization of American States called for economic sanctions against Haiti to protest the takeover by the military junta. The United States barred all trade with Haiti Oct. 29, except for medicines and basic food supplies.

An OAS delegation was expected to arrive in Port-au-Prince Nov. 4 to try to resume negotiations for the return of Aristide.

Meanwhile, Southern Baptist projects in Haiti will shut down temporarily. As soon as the fuel situation returns to normal, a volunteer couple is expected to go into the country to continue operating a Baptist well-drilling project there.

In light of the uncertainty in Haiti, the Rutledges decided to move up a furlough they had planned to begin in January, Mrs. Rutledge said. They have not taken a furlough or traveled to the United States since they were appointed missionaries to Haiti in 1986.

"It just seemed like a good breaking point," she said. "That's something that's always been difficult for us because there never seemed to be a good time to take furlough ... This seems like a better time than most because we can't really accomplish anything by being here."

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The Rutledges first had decided to stay in Haiti following the State Department advisory urging Americans to leave. As the fuel situation got worse, they changed their minds. Still, they were hesitant to leave "because you feel like you're abandoning people when they're at a low point," she said.

But after consulting with Foreign Mission Board officials and Haitian Baptists, the Rutledges felt they would not be able to get much done during the embargo anyway. Because of moving their furlough to an earlier date, they also hope to return to Haiti in March in time to help Haitians with their first planting season of the new year, Mrs. Rutledge said.

Mrs. Rutledge called on Southern Baptists to pray "for a spiritual undergirding" of the Haitian Baptists they are leaving behind. "It's hard on people when they don't know what is going to be happening," she noted.

As Southern Baptist workers prepared to leave Haiti, a kind of "cautious hesitancy" was apparent among Haitians, Mrs. Rutledge said. "Everybody right now is kind of sitting back and waiting to see what's going to happen. Nobody really knows but it is all very calm at the moment."

Besides Southern Baptist personnel, a number of other evangelical missionary groups have left Haiti, according to Mrs. Rutledge.

All American Baptist personnel have returned to the United States, according to news reports. Twenty-six American Baptist workers left the Cap-Haitian area Oct. 6 because of Haiti's political unrest and violence related to a local dispute over control of a Baptist secondary school. The unrest resulted in the burning of the headquarters of the Baptist Convention of Haiti in Cap-Haitien Sept. 30. In addition, eight American Baptist missionaries and volunteers recently left the Limbe area.

Assembly of God officials announced Nov. 1 their missionary personnel were expected to leave the country. Nazarene missionary personnel left the country Oct. 26, according to news reports. In addition, classes at the Nazarene Bible College in Port-au-Prince were suspended because of conditions in Haiti. Several Mennonite workers also have left Haiti.

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New Mexicans register 523
despite snow and cold

By J.B. Fowler

Baptist Press
11/4/91

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Despite blizzard conditions and temperatures falling to 12 degrees, the Baptist Convention of New Mexico's 523 messengers and guests met at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center Oct. 29-31.

All convention officers were re-elected: Dean Mathis, pastor of Taylor Memorial Baptist Church in Hobbs, president; Charles Wilson, deacon at First Baptist Church of Carlsbad, first vice president; Hilcias Barrios, pastor of Sante Fe Spanish Baptist Church, second vice president.

Messengers adopted a 1992 budget of \$2,540,803 to be raised by the state convention's churches. Of this amount, 30.5 percent will be forwarded to the national unified budget. This is the same as last year's division.

Additional funds from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Sunday School Board, state camps, Baptist New Mexican subscriptions and special missions offerings swell the total budget to \$5,252,440. The 1992 budget is about 1 percent lower than the 1991 budget.

Among resolutions passed, two addressed SBC entities. One resolution urged the Sunday School Board to reconsider the decision to close the Albuquerque Baptist Book Store effective March 31, 1992. According to the Sunday School Board, the store does not generate enough revenue to pay its way.

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Another resolution brought to the convention floor and approved by messengers with only a handful of negative votes, urges the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board to "reconsider their decision to defund the seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland." The resolution says the FMB should "operate with integrity" and fulfill the obligations Southern Baptists have made to the seminary -- a reference to the FMB's commitment to continue its contribution to the European seminary through 1992.

The 1992 convention will be at First Baptist Church of Alamogordo, Nov. 10-12.

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Minnesota-Wisconsin convention
increases budget by 6 percent

By Louise Winningham

Baptist Press
11/4/91

MILWAUKEE (BP)--Minnesota-Wisconsin Southern Baptists, meeting at Northwest Baptist Church in Milwaukee Oct. 31-Nov. 2, adopted a 1992 budget of \$1,653,849, elected new officers and ten executive board members, approved several resolutions, and recognized tenure of MWSBC staff/office personnel/directors of missions.

The new budget represents a 6 percent increase over the current. Of that amount, 26 percent is again earmarked for national SBC causes, \$314,513 of the 1992 budget will come from the 90 churches and 32 missions affiliated with the eight year old convention.

Larry Creamer, pastor of Community Baptist Church in Milton, Wisc., and Friendship Baptist Church in Ft. Atkinson, Wisc., was re-elected president. Bob Phillips, a layman from Highland Crest Baptist Church in Green Bay, Wisc., was re-elected first vice president. Bob Barrett, a layman from First Baptist Church in Wausau, Wisc., was chosen second vice-president.

Clyde McClain, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester, Minn., was re-elected recording secretary. Becky Dodson, a member of First Baptist Church of Wausau, Wisc., was elected assistant recording secretary.

Resolutions adopted by the messengers included one calling on individuals, churches, and other Baptist groups "to make an environmentally responsible ethic a part of our lifestyle and evangelistic witness."

Another "reaffirmed the spirit" of the 1891 SBC publications committee report proclaiming the autonomy of local churches and encouraging churches "to give first consideration to the literature produced by our Sunday School Board."

One resolution echoed a Foreign Mission Board request churches pray in New Year's Eve services for personnel and resources to meet "unprecedented windows of opportunity" for missions in Eastern Europe.

Through another resolution MWSBC churches were encouraged to respond to SBC president Morris Chapman's request for one hour per week in concerted prayer for spiritual awakening.

Staff members and directors of missions were recognized during the meeting for their tenure of service within the convention. Executive Director Otha Winningham, who has served 16 years, remarked the tenure of staff service is unusual in that nine have served ten years or more in MWSBC.

There were 125 messengers and 51 visitors from 46 churches/chapels attending.

The 1992 meeting will be Oct. 29-31 at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Rochester.

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Great Commission Breakthrough
prepares for training phase

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE (BP)--As many as 2,000 Great Commission Breakthrough consultants will be trained in the next year during phase three of the Great Commission Breakthrough project conducted by the Sunday school division of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The training will prepare for the final phase of the project to begin in September 1992. In that phase, planners hope as many as 7,000 consultants over the next five years will lead each of the 42,000 churches and missions in the Southern Baptist Convention in a year-long customized growth training process.

The consultant plan is designed to lead churches to develop Sunday schools that focus on evangelism and Christian development as outlined in the Matthew 28:18-20 verses commonly known as the Great Commission.

Following pretest and pilot phases during the past two years, materials are being restructured to make a "consultant manual as strong as it can be," said Garry Insko, project manager.

The first 2,000 consultants will be trained in 38 state training sessions beginning in Arkansas in February and ending in Mississippi in September 1992.

Those consultants each will lead a church in the Great Commission project during 1992-93, and additional consultants will be trained to reach the goal of 7,000 consultants, Insko said.

In the pilot phase from October 1990 to September 1991, 540 consultants were trained and led 348 churches to complete the process, Insko said.

Many churches experienced growth and indicated positive results on reports of the pilot project, Insko said.

"Because of Great Commission Breakthrough, our church has a new spirit to reach people," Ondra Black, pastor of Hope Baptist Church in Flanders, N.J., reported after the pilot project. "Our church has elected a building committee. Plans are to provide space needed to meet the needs of our church."

Bob Fuston, consultant in the Sunday school division of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, said the Texas convention plans to train more than 300 consultants next year with a goal of 700 consultants to make consultation available to every Southern Baptist church in Texas.

In an evening service during Great Commission planning at Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, Ky., "between 50 and 75 Sunday school workers made public commitments during the invitation to help bring about a Great Commission Breakthrough," Tim Clark, minister of education, said.

The pilot phase is the basis of the revisions for the consultant manual, Insko said. The manual is not being rewritten but restructured. The restructured manual will include as many as 50 how-to sheets on such topics as conducting weekly workers meetings, prayer ministries, outreach visitation and other areas where pilot churches indicated a need for assistance.

The manual also will include a strengthened prayer base by emphasizing the four focus areas of the project: growing in the authority and power of Christ, making disciples, teaching them to observe and rejoicing in the fellowship of the ever-present Lord, Insko said.

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In addition to the churches and consultants who participated in the pilot project, as many as 115 churches and 150 consultants were enlisted when the plan was presented at conference centers last summer, Insko said. "Already there is a lot of interest in this plan."

Because of the interest and eagerness to start the project, many consultants will begin working with churches as soon as training is conducted in their state rather than waiting until the October 1992 kick-off, Insko observed.

Funding for the project is provided by the Sunday school Board, state conventions, associations and participating churches.

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Dolifkas ministering
far beyond the pavement

By Chuck Zehnder

Baptist Press
11/4/91

MARALAL, Kenya (BP)--Modern highways lead out of Nairobi to many parts of Kenya.

Missionaries often are found somewhere near these arterial roads, ministering in the bush but still within easy access of the hard-surfaced highways.

But north of the last pavement by more than 75 miles is the town of Maralal, in the northern frontier district of Kenya. That's where Don and Mary Alice Dolifka live and work.

The Dolifkas, of Flagler, Colo., and Gatesville, Texas, respectively, were appointed Southern Baptist missionaries in 1968. They reared two daughters in Tanzania during 19 years there and then moved to Kenya. Their older daughter, Debbie, learned to walk aboard the SS United States en route to Africa. Melanie was born in Nairobi.

After both grown daughters returned to the United States to pursue their lives of their own, the Dolifkas felt God calling them north, far beyond the end of the pavement. They have been in Maralal for just over a year and have seen another missionary couple, Vaughn and Johnene Ross, join them as a team.

Maralal is in the midst of Samburu District, a semi-arid and very remote part of Kenya. The local government had already turned down three workers from other mission organizations, but gave approval to the Dolifkas because they committed to working with local people in developing the area.

The first five months in Maralal they lived in a small camper, then added a small room beside it. After a year they settled into their house.

Dolifka doesn't take credit for being allowed into the district by the local government. He passes most of that to Vaughn Ross, who did a water project at Soshen, just south in Laikipia District, in 1988 and 1989. Ross provided the technology while villagers acquired the equipment necessary to build a large ram pump and a drip irrigation system.

Before that, feeding projects operated throughout Laikipia District. But the water project ended all of them. The local people now no longer have to rely on sketchy rainfall or feeding projects.

When the Samburu district commissioner became aware Dolifka and Ross were from the same mission organization, he welcomed Dolifka to Maralal. He also told him the Laikipia water project was a model for all of Kenya's semi-arid regions.

Two months after their arrival, local government officials and some of the area's business people approached the newcomers and asked them to help organize the first Maralal International Camel Derby.

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The Dolifkas dove into the camel derby every way they could. The effort was a success and the local people credited much of that success to the efforts of the missionaries.

At the final ceremonies, because of the Dolifkas' willingness to help, the district commissioner gave them a letter from the office of the national president granting blanket permission to "preach and teach the Gospel" unhindered throughout the district.

This so impressed the chief of one of the largest locations in the district that he invited Dolifka to come and preach in his area. He also sent runners into other villages in the bush, inviting everyone to come to two villages for the preaching.

Many came and many professed faith in Jesus. The chief wants Dolifka to reach more villages and offered to lead him on foot into the remote villages. "The hardest thing I've ever done is tell him no -- for the time being," Dolifka said. The missionary feels a need to help the first villages establish their churches and leaders and to strengthen them before moving on.

"I want to start churches close to these two villages, do leadership and discipleship training and then move to another remote area and do the same thing," he said, letting the churches evangelize nearby villages.

But those "remote areas" in his plans aren't reachable even in his four-wheel-drive pickup. So the Dolifkas have purchased some mules, saddles and packs to reach the mountainous bush areas. He will soon be heading out with his own mule train.

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Three journeymen become
Kenya camel jockeys

By Chuck Zehnder

Baptist Press
11/4/91

MARALAL, Kenya (BP)--Setting records, being featured on CNN and sharing Jesus in Africa may not be commonplace for many young Americans, but it all happened recently to three Southern Baptist journeymen in Kenya.

When Nancy Delger of Montana, Marlo Huber of Kansas and David Jones of Texas came to Kenya, they never suspected how their ministry might shape up. Certainly none of them dreamed of becoming a camel jockey and racing across the African desert.

But Sept. 28 they grasped the reins (literally) of the task before them and did what they were asked to do. In the amateur division of a Kenyan camel race, Delger finished in second place. Huber came in third -- riding backwards on a camel named Jet. Jones failed to make the starting line, never mind the finish line.

Here's how the unlikely scenario developed:

Southern Baptist missionaries Don and Mary Alice Dolifka of Texas moved to Maralal, a remote town in the northern frontier district of Kenya, about a year ago. Local government officials had just begun working on organizing their first international camel race. They asked the Dolifkas, missionaries in Africa since 1968, to help out.

The Texans jumped in, seeing an opportunity to meet many people quickly and become known throughout the community. It worked well. "When (the first race) was all over, we knew every government official in the area," Dolifka said. "And we also got to know a lot of the local riders and handlers."

When this year's second annual Maralal International Camel Derby was organized, Dolifka was named camel master. His willingness to help out and work hard the first year had earned him the respect of the community.

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In August the Dolifkas asked the Southern Baptist mission organization in Kenya to help them make even greater inroads in the area by sponsoring a Baptist team in the race. The mission agreed and the three journeymen were chosen to ride.

Huber came to Kenya almost two years ago with the two-year journeyman program as a teacher for primary-age children of missionaries. She has been living and teaching in the Lake Victoria town of Kisumu in extreme western Kenya. Delger came to Kenya in 1990 and is secretary to the mission director for eastern and southern Africa in Nairobi. Jones came to Kenya just a month before the camel derby. He teaches mathematics and religious education at Mombasa Baptist High School on the Kenya coast.

The trio arrived in Maralal after a one-day drive (more than 75 miles of it a rough, dirt track) from Nairobi and were ready to meet their camels and handlers.

Both young women got in a seven-mile practice ride the day before the race. But Jones, coming all the way from Mombasa on the Kenyan coast, was late, so he only rode a couple of miles. They agreed they would be sore after the race.

Derby day dawned clear and warmed rapidly. By race time the sun was high and hot and the dirt road was dusty.

The three young Americans were entered in the amateur class along with many other international entries, including some U.S. Marines. Just seconds before the race began another journeyman, Chris Green of Oklahoma, slapped a "Don't Mess With Texas" bumper sticker across the hindquarters of the camel Jones was attempting to ride.

When the barrier was dropped to begin the derby, both girls' camels raced across the starting line and were soon out of sight in a cloud of dust. However, Jones' camel "couched" on the ground and refused to get up.

With Jones seated on his camel and the camel seated on the ground protesting loudly, two television crews (including one representing CNN International) converged on the hapless journeyman. Jones was about to become famous and he couldn't even start the race.

Meanwhile, Delger and Huber were rapidly approaching Maralal -- more than three miles north of the Yare Safaris Camp starting line. Delger was now in second place behind a Samburu tribesman who was a camel handler by profession. Huber was in trouble.

Huber's saddle had slipped until she could no longer reach the stirrups, relegating her to sitting on the rocking, bouncing camel and repeatedly injuring more than her pride.

At the halfway point, her handler told her to turn around and ride backwards so her feet would reach the stirrups. Though incredulous, she did as he suggested -- and the camel promptly raced for the finish line.

Cheers for Delger rose from the crowd as the young American raced across the line in second place. But a roar erupted moments later when Huber came into sight, riding backwards and "spanking" her camel with both hands to even greater speed.

At the presentation ceremonies that evening, Delger was given a special award for doing so well in the derby: a metal highway sign reading, "Caution -- Camel Derby Rider." Huber also received a special award and will be entered in the record books as having ridden backwards on a camel farther than anyone in the past. Jones sat in the crowd.

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The following day was Sunday, and the journeymen spoke at the local high school. When the morning's worship ended, they had led singing, each had given a testimony based on the race the day before, and more than a dozen high school students had prayed to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior.

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Chuck Zehnder is a Southern Baptist missionary doing publications work in Nairobi, Kenya. He is a former newspaperman from Utah.

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

Southern Baptist couple filled
Nepal's call for 'special' people By Michael Chute

Baptist Press
11/4/91

TANSEN, Nepal (BP)--Wayne Thorpe pointed across the valley to the community health post -- a small mud building clinging to the side of a Nepal mountain.

The slender Southern Baptist doctor, in blue jeans and Nikes with a backpack slung over one shoulder, surveyed the valley far below: villages dotted mountains on either side of the raging Gandaki River.

Thorpe couldn't hide his delight. Ever since he was a kid growing up in Richmond, Va., he had wanted to serve God overseas. Since medical school he had wanted to work with poor people in a remote area. He satisfied both of those desires in Nepal's outback.

It was midmorning. He had traveled five hours -- two by land cruiser to the drop point, three on foot to this remote site. Another one-hour hike lay ahead before reaching the health post. His muscles ached, but Thorpe hadn't broken a sweat. The return trip the next day would be worse.

Thorpe pushed on despite severe problems with his retinas. They eventually would cause him to take a leave of absence to care for problems that, if untreated, could possibly lead to blindness.

As Thorpe approached the health post, a young Nepali man emerged from the crowd milling around the clinic. Ahimandu Shresta is a government employee, a medical assistant who completed a one-year course after high school. A non-Christian, Ahimandu lives a full day's walk from this post.

Thorpe, as chief medical officer for the United Mission to Nepal's community health program around Tansen, trained workers like Ahimandu who run the health posts.

Twice a week Thorpe, who is now on leave in the United States, traveled out from Tansen Hospital to work in remote villages, teaching workers at 10 government-run clinics. Combined, they see as many patients -- about 500 a day -- as the hospital run by the United Mission to Nepal.

UMN is an international, interdenominational Christian mission that coordinates work of 382 missionaries sent by 38 evangelical Christian groups from 18 countries in Asia, Europe and North America. Wayne and Pat Thorpe -- Southern Baptist representatives who hope to return overseas -- worked in Nepal only under UMN direction.

As her husband trudged to his remote outposts, Pat Thorpe of Shelby, N.C., coaxed her 4-year-old son, John, along the rocky path leading to the Thorpes' house in Tansen. Practically everybody in Tansen knew Mrs. Thorpe; her warm, energetic personality seemed to attract people.

The five-minute walk from Tansen Hospital to their home often took an hour as people stopped her along the way. She touched a lot of lives as Nepalese came to her constantly with their problems. Of course, John's fair hair and skin always drew an admiring crowd.

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Ducking through the doorway of the house where the Thorpes lived, you couldn't help noticing a sock nailed to the top facing. The doorways are so low by Western standards that the Thorpes put socks over them to cushion the regular blows to their heads.

After lunch, Mrs. Thorpe carried plates of food to the attic, which she converted into a crafts shop. Two women sat on a straw mat, nimble fingers working at handcrafts. She helped them earn money marketing their crafts.

"There's a story behind every one of these women," said Mrs. Thorpe. She explained that Laxmi, crocheting yarn for a purse, was kicked out of her own home when her husband took another wife after 20 years. She came to the Thorpes looking for work.

Showing Laxmi a purse, Mrs. Thorpe asked if she could make it. Laxmi came to the Thorpes' house every day after that. Beside her, Amrita strung beads into a necklace that took a full day to make. She's from the Maggar caste -- a low tribal class in Nepali society.

Mrs. Thorpe worked with three women at a time, saying -- prophetically as it turned out -- that she didn't want a large-scale industry because "we never know how long we'll be here." But then she thought for a moment and confessed: "I was about to turn it into a factory and Wayne had to stop me."

Between the time the Thorpes arrived in Nepal in 1984 and left in 1990, Mrs. Thorpe worked in several social ministries, starting many of them herself. A home economics degree and master's degrees in social work and public health prepared her for the many different things she did.

After John was born, she worked only part-time with her husband in the UMN community health program. But her influence continued to grow as she built relationships with the Nepalis.

Lunch dishes washed and John put down for his afternoon nap, Mrs. Thorpe went outside where 20 or so Nepali girls waited. Inside a strong fence built to confine her curious son, they gathered for one of her after-school girls' clubs. The young girls came to play; older ones wanted to learn crafts.

"Through classes you can know a lot of people," she said. "The girls have a lot of fun, it gives them activities, and it gives me the opportunity to build relationships. It also breaks down castes of people -- Christian and Hindu, rich and poor."

Wayne Thorpe's involvement with Nepal began early on. After medical school, he accepted a one-year, UMN-sponsored internship: He worked another six months in Bangladesh between medical school and residency, and later worked two months in a Thailand refugee camp.

That's where he met Pat, a Southern Baptist journeyman, whom he married in 1982. Two years later they became Southern Baptists' first representatives in Nepal after the Foreign Mission supported their offer to open work there.

While he follows the rules, she often bends them. She seeks relationships while her husband, who needs private time to collect his thoughts, tends to hang back. While she pushes forward, he often sits and listens before making a comment or decision that's right for the situation.

"In some ways we're opposites," she said. "But that's why the Lord put us together -- to round us out. You need all types in the work here."

Maybe they're different, but they're alike in some ways too -- especially in their concern for Nepalis and their commitment to serving God overseas.

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It takes special people to minister in a place like Nepal, especially in an outlying place like Tansen. The Thorpes are just that -- special people.

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Southern Baptist workers
'taking chances in Nepal'

By Michael Chute

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KATMANDU, Nepal (BP)--Robert Watson makes a mad dash across a busy Katmandu street.

He only gets halfway before seeking refuge beside a cow nonchalantly lying in the middle of the road. Vehicles whiz dangerously close. Frantic drivers honk incessantly. Watson just grins.

"I took a chance coming to Nepal; I can at least take a chance crossing the street," Watson says once he's safely on the other side. Besides, he's learned no Nepali would dare strike a "national" animal.

That's just one of many things the Watsons have learned since landing in Nepal 18 months ago. It's "just a bit different" from their native Tyler, Texas, Watson understates, looking north toward snowcapped Himalayan peaks.

Most things Americans take for granted, the Watsons do without. No telephone. No car. No washer and dryer. No microwave. No television.

"Nobody has a TV here," says 7-year-old Holly Watson, while her 8-year-old sister, Hayley, jokingly shows a "microwave": small hands, cupped close to her face, wave fingertips ever so slightly. Both girls laugh.

There's not even a bathtub.

"You wash girls and clothes in that tub," says Watson, nodding toward a galvanized washtub. "We couldn't use a bathtub; don't have enough hot water to fill it. But a lot of people here don't have hot water, so we're lucky."

Walking to a sweater factory run by the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) to help the poor earn income, Mindy Watson explains how her family got to Nepal. Her husband saw an advertisement placed by UMN for a medical technologist. It told interested people to contact their "evangelical sending agent." The Watsons contacted Southern Baptists' Foreign Mission Board.

An international, interdenominational Christian mission, UMN coordinates the work of 382 missionaries sent by 38 evangelical Christian groups from 18 countries in Asia, Europe and North America. The Watsons -- Southern Baptist representatives -- work in Nepal only under UMN direction.

"We feel like this is where we're supposed to be," he says. "Nothing's happened here to change our minds." That quick grin returning, he adds: "After the first few weeks I thought we should have taken more shots."

Back at home, his wife stands at the kitchen sink soaking vegetables in iodine and water. American conveniences, like ready-made cooking mixes, are not found in Nepal. She substitutes chopped tofu for cottage cheese to make lasagna. Yogurt works nicely in place of sour cream.

Everything in her kitchen must be done from "scratch," but she has adjusted well to the new lifestyle. A home economics degree helps her prepare meals, make clothes and do housework.

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Their house -- with its concrete floors, plywood ceilings, and exposed electric wiring running along the walls to the few light fixtures and plugs -- challenges the most ardent homemaker to transform it into a home. The furnishings are spartan at best -- table, chairs, beds, desk, screened pantry and wardrobes in place of closets.

"Well, we've come to Nepal; things are different," Mrs. Watson says, almost in defense. Then, to the girls who want an apple, she adds, "If you wash your hands, it's OK."

Her husband just shakes his head. "That's a home economist talking, not a microbiologist," he whispers, grinning again.

The only medical technologist working with UMN, Watson has made its Patan Hospital the hub for his work. From there he goes out to other Nepali hospitals, teaching laboratory techniques and safety. He also helps upgrade labs in Katmandu valley hospitals.

"I'm a generalist in the laboratory," he says, stepping away from a microscope used to test blood samples. "I made it plain to (UMN) that I didn't want to take a position a Nepali can do."

When the Watsons first arrived, they weren't sure what they would be allowed to do in the way of ministry. They thought work and ministry might be two separate things -- work a full day and then do some sort of ministry, perhaps a Bible study in their home.

"I felt that just putting forth a good Christian example was about the only thing I could do initially," Watson says.

"But things have changed so much" since pro-democracy demonstrations last year caused sweeping changes in Nepal's government, he adds. "Now there's a lot more opportunity to make personal contacts without getting the hospital or mission in trouble."

The Watsons constantly look for ways to minister. He hopes to start a morning devotion in the hospital lab. She uses her "home ec" training to help Nepali women with child development, time management and nutrition. She also does needlework and crafts and looks for ways to teach them to women so they can generate income for their families. She also wants "to be an example, a discipler" and a Christian witness wherever possible.

Recently an attendant at the Himalaya Hotel swimming pool, a favorite Watson family spot, saw Mrs. Watson's cross around her neck and asked if she knew Jesus. When she said she did, he quickly produced a cross tucked under his shirt. He wasn't a Christian yet, but a friend had given him the cross and told him about Christ. She promptly reached in her purse and pulled out some Christian material in the Nepali language.

"I shared the Gospel of John with him," she says of that pool-side encounter. "He was so appreciative; he kept thanking me and thanking me and wanted to pay for (the witness)."

Such an encounter would have been dangerous not long ago. But now, with a new openness sweeping the country, Christians in Nepal may share their faith without fear of imprisonment.

Although the Watsons do present good Christian examples to Nepalis, they're now able to do much more. "We're not here to teach morals. Good morals don't get you into heaven," says Watson of their commitment to Nepal. "We're here to help change lives."

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

**Nepal mission cooperating
with new government**

KATMANDU, Nepal (BP)--The United Mission to Nepal (UMN) is experiencing a positive interest from the newly elected government of Nepal.

Pro-democracy demonstrations in Nepal last year led to sweeping changes and new freedoms. The government has demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with organizations like UMN in trying to solve the country's problems, according to UMN executive director Edgar Metzler.

Southern Baptists representatives work in Nepal under UMN's umbrella. UMN is an international, interdenominational Christian mission that coordinates the work of 382 missionaries sent by 38 evangelical Christian groups from 18 countries in Asia, Europe, and North America.

Metzler met recently with Prime Minister G. P. Koirala. The prime minister expressed appreciation for UMN's long-term service in Nepal. He also said the government will give priority to smaller development projects, particularly in the remote mountain regions. Many people have migrated from such areas due to lack of development and opportunities to earn an income.

"There are many new openings for us," Metzler said. "Over the last few weeks, six different members of (Nepal's) parliament have contacted us with requests for help in their home area.

"More and more people feel free to organize themselves into development organizations, which the government has recognized," Metzler said. "One newly registered non-government organization was founded by Christians. We're encouraged by this, as it gives us a legal way to work with such groups."

The first major action between UMN and the new government was the signing of a general health agreement in June. Under this agreement, UMN will continue to provide health services through hospitals, community development programs and health education on many levels. Total cost for the next five years will be more than \$10 million.

"This agreement also will make it easier to take in short-termers from abroad when urgently needed," said UMN Health Secretary Tjerk Nap, who foresees a simpler and quicker visa procedure for the expatriate personnel.

"I think it's unique for a mission to work as closely with the government as we do," added Mona Bomgaars, UMN assistant health secretary. "Although it will take some time before a new structure is built, I see many good intentions and a potential for a mutual sharing of experiences."

Bomgaars cited response to a recent cholera epidemic as an example of cooperation. Within 24 hours, UMN organized a large shipment of intravenous solution and oral rehydration fluid to the area with the help of four other organizations, including the government.

The mission also has signed an agreement ensuring its support in establishing Katmandu Valley Campus, the first independent college in Nepal. UMN aid will include a science building, scholarships and expatriate specialists.

Other agreements are being worked out for rural development, engineering and industry.