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92-60

**Billy Graham meets president,
Christians in North Korea**

HONG KONG (BP)--Billy Graham has stormed one of the last bastions of communism -- and had a friendly lunch with its general.

The famed evangelist visited still-isolated North Korea March 31-April 4, discussed religion with President Kim Il Sung -- the nation's absolute ruler for nearly half a century -- and spoke about Christianity to leading scholars as well as the nation's tiny Christian community. The visit got front-page coverage in the North Korean press, Graham's organization reported.

Graham, 73, was invited to the officially atheist nation by the Korean Christians Federation, the government-sanctioned organization for Christian believers.

"I don't know why I was invited but I'm often invited to countries where I don't why I was invited," he told reporters in Hong Kong April 6.

Graham personally delivered messages to Kim from President George Bush and Pope John Paul II. He would not detail what the messages said but indicated Bush's message was a greeting.

"I am non-political. I do not take sides in politics," he said.

The White House also denied Bush sent any "official" communication to Kim through Graham. The United States and North Korea do not have diplomatic relations.

Graham and Kim discussed religion and philosophy during a private meeting and later over lunch. The evangelist called the elderly Kim "a vigorous and magnetic leader."

North Korea's policy on religion has "undergone some developments in recent years," Graham said. "It is well-known that North Korea is one of the few remaining communist-oriented nations in the world and therefore is a society which is based on a philosophy which includes atheism as part of its foundation. The door has been slightly opened as others may follow in the months and years ahead."

Actually, Graham himself followed several foreign Christian delegations that have made less-publicized visits to North Korea in the last few years. But he claimed he was the first foreign evangelist allowed to preach the gospel there since World War II.

What is now North Korea was once the heart of Korean Christianity and one of the most vibrant Christian centers in Asia. Pyongyang, now the North Korean capital, was called "the Jerusalem of the East." Graham's wife, Ruth, spent three years in school there in the 1930s when her parents were missionaries in China.

But Christianity was suppressed in the north after Korea was divided and communists led by Kim Il Sung took over. Many believers fled south, died under persecution or were killed during the Korean War.

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Graham preached in Pyongyang at the two officially sanctioned churches -- one Protestant and one Catholic -- and addressed pastors, seminarians and other church leaders who gathered from other parts of the country. Preaching from John 3:16, he stressed the reality of God's love for every human being and urged his audience to follow Christ in their daily lives.

The two churches were built with government assistance. "They are the first buildings to be set aside and used for Christian worship in several decades. Bibles and hymn books for the use of believers also had been published with governmental assistance," Graham said.

Other church buildings are under construction or planned, he said. But he acknowledged Christian believers still make up only a tiny -- and strictly regulated -- minority of the country's 22 million people.

"They live in a society which does not encourage religion and where it is not advantageous to be a Christian," he said. "They have much to teach those of us from other parts of the world about dedication and what it means to follow Jesus Christ regardless of the cost."

Graham also lectured to students at Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung University on Christianity in the United States and what it means to be a Christian. One evening the Korean Christians Federation gave a reception in his honor that was attended by some of the nation's prominent actors and scholars.

The evangelist said he saw young people in the churches -- not just older believers who may have been Christians prior to communism's rise. Both the Christians and the university students seemed eager to listen, Graham said, but the students were not allowed to ask questions after his lecture.

"My main purpose in going to North Korea was to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ -- just as I have done in over 80 countries across the world," he said. "I come away from North Korea with a new commitment to pray for my fellow Christians there and for reconciliation on the Korean peninsula."

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S.C. pastors group wants
ties with Furman severed

Baptist Press
4/7/92

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--Thirty-four South Carolina Baptist pastors, "representing the diversity of theological beliefs found among South Carolina Baptists," have called for a special state convention meeting to sever legal and financial ties with Furman University.

The pastors held a news conference April 6 in West Columbia to announce their recommendation. It comes following the failed attempt between a special South Carolina Baptist Convention committee and Furman University officials to reach a settlement over the dispute regarding who has the right to elect Furman trustees.

The dispute began in October 1990 when Furman trustees amended the school's charter to give trustees the sole power to elect their successors. Messengers to the annual state convention meetings have elected trustees for the college since 1826.

Led by four pastors, each with differing theological perspectives, the 34 ministers said their call for severing ties with Furman was the best possible solution short of an expected lawsuit. The lawsuit would be long and costly, could drag on for years, and may lead to additional legal entanglements, said the pastors.

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"We are especially concerned that any litigation effort would detract from the new direction emphasizing church growth which we have committed ourselves to for the next ten years," said a statement released by the pastors. "As a group of leaders among South Carolina Baptists, we have come together to state that if the South Carolina Baptist Convention pursues legal action against Furman University, we all lose.

"It is not our intention that the severing of legal and financial ties prohibit the South Carolina Baptist Convention and Furman University from finding ways to work together for the benefit of both parties in the future," the statement said.

"We call upon the executive committee of the general board of the South Carolina Baptist Convention to call a special meeting of the board to ask our president to call a special convention of the South Carolina Baptist Convention at the earliest possible date for the purpose of severing the legal and financial ties between South Carolina Baptist Convention and Furman University."

The severing of ties would please Furman's president, John E. Johns, he said.

"Under the circumstances, I think the proposal ... is a good one. I am especially pleased that this action will eliminate the possibility of a long and costly lawsuit," Johns said.

"Since Furman and the convention have both suffered during this dispute, I can understand how it would be best if the institutions can agree to a friendly separation," Johns said. "The sooner this matter is settled, the sooner we at Furman can turn our full attention to our real business of educating students."

In addition, the pastors' recommendation calls for convention president Eddie Greene, pastor of New Prospect Baptist Church in Anderson, to "appoint a representative committee of South Carolina Baptists to work with our executive secretary-treasurer and our general board staff to study relationships between the South Carolina Baptist Convention and all of its various agencies, boards, and organizations; and to make recommendations to the convention concerning any recommended changes in those relationships in light of the actions of Furman and the commitment of South Carolina Baptists to kingdom growth."

The pastors were led by: Michael S. Hamlet, pastor of North Spartanburg Baptist Church, Spartanburg; John R. Lincoln, pastor of Shandon Baptist Church, Columbia; Edward M. Carney, pastor of Riverland Hills Baptist Church, Columbia; and Jim King, pastor of First Baptist Church, Aiken.

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Volunteers used more in
ministry, coordinators say

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
4/7/92

TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP)--The use of volunteers for Baptist ministry and staff work has grown during recent tight economic times, changing the way they will be used in the future, coordinators of a national volunteer leadership conference in Talladega, Ala., said.

"All of us are having to ask first, 'Can we do this with a volunteer?' rather than, 'How are we going to get the money to pay a person to do this?'" said Don Hammonds, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's volunteer division.

The role of volunteers in ministry work is likely changing forever, Hammonds said.

"This is a learning time when we are finding out that volunteers can do what we thought only paid people could do," he said. "Even if we got more money now, there would be some states that would continue to do it on a basis of volunteers."

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More than 360 volunteer coordinators and consultants met April 3-6 at the Shocco Springs Conference Center for the HMB's first national volunteer leadership conference.

Bo Simms, volunteer director for South Carolina Baptists, said he also is seeing volunteers used more frequently.

One Baptist association in his state recently decided to find a volunteer to coordinate resort, migrant and festival ministries after a five-year wait for the money to hire someone, he said.

"We really cannot wait on money to do that ministry," Simms said. "Why not go ahead and put together a Mission Service Corp volunteer package and get accomplished what we have been putting off?"

Mission Service Corps workers are adult volunteers willing to serve at least one year in such jobs as Baptist Student Union directors, resort ministers or Baptist community center staff.

About one-half of the office staff at Union Baptist Association in Houston are volunteers, said volunteer consultant Ellen Armstrong.

Those volunteers do everything from program computers to file information, freeing up money and time, Armstrong said.

HMB Mission Service Corps director Bob Mills said the greatest challenge is convincing people God needs them. "Somehow, some way, we've got to communicate to them that their skills can be used in the kingdom's work."

Many needs for volunteers still go unmet, officials said.

About 1,800 requests for Mission Service Corps volunteers currently are unfilled, said Mike Riggins, associate director of that program.

"Literally, any area where we have ministries we have requests for Mission Service Corps personnel," Riggins said.

About 30 percent of missionaries' requests for summer youth groups are unfilled, said Mike Robertson, director of the HMB's short-term volunteer department.

HMB President Larry Lewis told the volunteer coordinators they are crucial to the board's goal of establishing 15,000 churches this decade.

"If we are going to get anywhere near the goal of starting 1,500 churches a year, the major portion of that task is going to have to be done by volunteers," he said.

Volunteer coordinators continue to match any skill with a need, said Elmer Goble, HMB associate director for short-term volunteers.

He recalled one man from Mississippi who wanted to volunteer but said he had no skill other than tuning pianos. That man now travels to cities each year tuning pianos for churches that otherwise couldn't afford that service.

"The truth is we will never do what we as Southern Baptists have committed ourselves to do without volunteers," Goble said.

Anyone interested in volunteer opportunities can call the Home Mission Board's volunteer division at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

Ministers see evil in
San Francisco society

By David Winfrey

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)--From homosexual counseling in schools to nails driven through New Testaments, "institutionalized evil" is a constant threat to evangelical ministry in San Francisco, two Southern Baptist leaders here said in an interview.

"It has nothing to do with head spinning and pea soup spitting, but it has a lot to do with intimidation," said Karl Ortis, director of missions for the San Francisco Peninsula Southern Baptist Association.

As examples of "institutionalized evil", Ortis offered the following:

-- Last year the school board voted to hire a counselor for students who want to explore the possibility they may be homosexual.

-- The area's strong acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle permeates the society. "You can't get elected here if you're not pro-homosexual," Ortis said.

-- Some participants in an ecumenical prayer service returned to their cars to find "Here's Hope" New Testaments with nails driven through them placed under their tires, Ortis said.

-- The association's Christian flag was recently torn down from a second-story flagpole.

-- A project trying to enlist local churches to work with at-risk children turned out to be financed by the Unification Church.

"Evil is in every city, I'm sure," Ortis said. "But I've come to think there must be a difference between a place where there is a lot of sin and a place where sin is enshrined."

Jim Pittman, pastor of Valley Baptist Church, said he finds it difficult to minister in this environment.

"People hear and feel all week stuff that is in a totally different direction from what they hear on Sunday," he said. "Sometimes I honestly feel like I'm pecking at a boulder with a toothpick."

Pittman said it is ironic Christianity is often shut out by a community that prides itself on openness.

Ortis said he often counsels area pastors who are "spiritually beat up."

"There's a huge turnover in the bay area in pastors," said Ortis. "There are just more war stories than you want to hear."

Pittman said such conditions forced him to look for signs of success other than just "noses, nickels, budgets and baptisms."

"You can't stay in this city long without having to redefine success," he said, adding he now places more emphasis on his personal relationship with God and his church's ability to respond quickly to opportunities for ministry.

Ortis said he fears his association's 50 churches and missions have set up a "defense mentality" that seeks to maintain the status quo.

"That kind of spiritual outlook is not one of growth," he said.

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"Until the churches see that they have that (defense mentality) and are willing to break free from that we can't move anywhere," he said.

Ortis said he plans to meet with pastors soon to establish a new strategy for growth in the area.

"This is not a matter of are we going to win or are we going to lose. We're going to win. Jesus has promised us that," he said. "I think if we act like winners we'll start winning a lot more battles.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Tumultuous South Africa, on the edge of civil war over racial and tribal divisions, found a measure of new hope when whites recently voted overwhelmingly to continue the dismantling of legal apartheid. Africa correspondent Craig Bird and photographer Warren Johnson visited South Africa, and Bird filed the following three stories.

South African Christians on
front lines of social change

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
4/7/92

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (BP)--On commuter trains infamous for death, Baptist layman Lawrence Mabaso shares eternal life.

Elsewhere, missionary Carroll Shaw goes into the Valley of Death to distribute food and hope.

And survivors of the Swanieville massacre find shelter in Kagiso Baptist Church.

In South Africa, Christianity doesn't dodge the tough places.

"It is amazing how much people are willing to forgive," explained Zachariah Motaung, pastor of Kagiso Baptist Church. "They want to start a new life and move beyond the destructive evil of apartheid. The 'New South Africa' (a popular term designating a non-racist nation) means a lot to them."

For many victims of South African violence -- whether on the crowded train cars, in squatter camps like Swanieville or in the Valley of Death -- the willingness to forgive is tied to the basic moral teachings of Jesus Christ.

Another teaching of Jesus -- that he is the only way to God -- leads Mabaso, an insurance executive and lay preacher, to evangelize and sing on trains where death squads and thugs regularly toss victims to their deaths off the speeding passenger cars. It leads Shaw, a Southern Baptist missionary from Vernon, Texas, to coordinate a feeding program in one of the most violent sections of a violent country. It leads Motaung and his church to minister to those caught in the crossfire of social change.

Motaung and Kagiso Baptist Church (Mabaso and Shaw are members) are caught in a more subtle crossfire, as South Africa tries to undo almost half a century of apartheid without spawning a civil war.

The same outrage at senseless violence and inhuman social conditions that drive other blacks to terrorism surges through the congregation. But the same Jesus who commands them to defend the helpless tells them to love their enemies. The same Bible that says there is a time for war also insists on forgiveness.

Evangelical Christians often are viewed as wild-eyed radicals by one end of the political spectrum and as gutless sellouts by the other. That's why African National Congress partisans threatened to burn the church when Motaung refused to let the ANC hold rallies there. That's why South African military and police glared at the pastor when he led a massive funeral for some of the Swanieville victims.

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The attempt to remain consistent to all the teachings of the Bible -- not just the convenient ones -- is nothing new to South African Christians. But it is still difficult.

"Our neighbors think we are crazy for going into the townships to work and to church but we've never been hurt," pointed out Shaw. "And the neighbor who is the most vocal about how foolish we are was robbed at gunpoint not long ago."

Guns and violent death are common passengers aboard the commuter trains. The trains are a natural byproduct of a system that decreed non-whites had to sleep miles from white cities -- yet required non-white labor to run the economy.

Each work morning, long before daylight, the trains begin their runs from the black townships. Each evening they retrace the routes. The jammed cars attract people with a message to sell to a captive audience in a closed space. In the 1960s political activists and union organizers began working the trains, with excellent results. Thieves also recognized a good setup, and killings -- during robberies or to make a political point -- have been common for years.

But evangelicals also appreciate the arrangement; recent years have seen the emergence of "Christian cars."

"People learned where the gospel was being preached and where Christians were praying and singing," Mabaso said. "One result was muggings and attacks dropped to almost nothing on those cars."

The key word is "almost." Two years ago the victims of an apparently random attack on a train from Soweto to Johannesburg included a pastor friend of Mabaso's. He was fatally shot as he knelt in prayer.

Mabaso, a Zulu raised in Soweto, became a Christian in high school. He was training to be a pastor when economic pressures on his parents forced him to seek secular employment. He went to work for a major bus company and began preaching on the buses. In 1982 a job change turned him into a train commuter -- and a train evangelist.

"We get to touch people who are hurting and need to hear the Good News," he said. "And the train has a great advantage over street witnessing. A person who is saved on the train can get back on that same car the next day and the next and be encouraged and disciplined by the people who witnessed to him. We don't just present a 'dry' gospel that asks people to be saved and ignore the social problems. Instead we show how Jesus can give strength and guidance to face tough times and encourage people to live up to Christian standards no matter where they find themselves."

No trains travel in the Valley of Death, a section of 2,500-foot-tall hills outside Pietermaritzburg. But there is still violence -- and the presentation of the gospel.

Shaw, using Southern Baptist hunger relief funds, identified 10 locations for feeding sites. The project helps up to 900 people who have been burned out or driven from their homes in ethnic fighting between ANC and Inkatha Party loyalists.

The deadly battles even forced Kwashange Baptist Church to move.

"The church building is sitting empty and unused right now because it is in an Inkatha area," Shaw said. "The church members who are ANC are afraid they will be attacked if they even go to worship in that area. So the Inkatha church members agreed they would come into an ANC area so the church could worship together in a private home."

In a sermon at the church, Shaw noted just as Jesus recognized the needs of Nathaniel before he met him, Jesus is aware of the needs of people in the Valley of Death. "Along with the need for food there is a greater need for spiritual food," he preached.

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During the invitation a woman in a wheelchair -- unable to stand to indicate a desire to accept Christ -- asked a friend to stand for her.

Meshack Hlatshwayo, the 70-year-old pastor of the church, was "asked" to join the ANC, but declined. "I've already joined the Christian family so I can't -- I can't serve two masters," he told the recruiters.

His ANC visitors reviled all Christians as liars. "You tell people God is good and God forgives, but he doesn't! He doesn't forgive Satan, does he?" they shouted.

Replied Hlatshwayo, "He would if Satan would ask for forgiveness. And look here, if you ask he'll forgive you too." The ANC recruiters retreated, muttering about wasting their time.

"We preach against politics," Hlatshwayo said, "but there has been almost constant fighting around here since 1986. Some church members join parties because of intimidation."

In urban centers, the "some church members" changes to "many or most church members" affiliated with ANC, Inkatha or other mutually hostile political groups. Even if you don't join, you are known by the company you keep.

Swanieville, outside Johannesburg, is known as an ANC stronghold. Several families living in the tin huts there were members of Kagiso Baptist Church.

In the pre-dawn hours of May 12, 1991, the squatter camp was attacked. Eighty houses were burned and almost 100 people died. Eyewitnesses said about 1,000 Inkatha men walked three miles from their hostel to the camp, escorted by police, then burned and looted. Police had to use tear gas to keep enraged mobs from attacking the Inkatha group as it returned to the hostel.

The Kagiso Baptist Church crisis committee, set up in 1990 after a similar incident, swung into action. Baptists housed and fed displaced people, negotiated with companies and government for land so the victims could build new homes and took care of funerals.

For months about 20 men slept at Kagiso church. Their wives and children lived a few miles away at a Catholic church.

"They had nothing so we gave them what we had," Motaung said. "We didn't require that they come to church, but it was clear why we were doing what we were doing and that they were welcome. Besides, we have a prayer meeting at the church every weekday at 5 a.m., so if they weren't early risers they wound up in the middle of those!"

Motaung also led in organizing funerals for the massacre victims. One at Kagiso stadium attracted 20,000 people.

"The crowd damaged Nelson Mandela's Mercedes-Benz trying to get close to him," Motaung remembered. "But what impressed me was when Chris Hani (a leader of both the ANC and the South African Communist Party) talked about the role the church was playing in the fight to end apartheid. He said we were often neglected but we were vital."

It was a striking moment. A devout communist and an advocate of armed rebellion had noticed some people really could care for the oppressed -- like their Bible said -- and still work for the salvation of the oppressor -- like their Bible said. Maybe he noticed the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi on the program cover: "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love, Where there is injury, pardon, Where there is doubt, faith, Where there is despair, hope, Where there is darkness, light, Where there is sadness, joy."

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Lawrence Mabaso, Carroll Shaw and Zachariah Motaung, and thousands of other South African Christians like them, not only know that prayer -- they live it. In the tough places.

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

High calling includes lowly tasks
for South African church planters

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
4/7/92

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (BP)--The glamour of the job dims as Zachariah Motaung cleans toilets, Johannes Mashiani makes bricks at 5 a.m. and Shadrach Morakabi compares his shrinking paycheck with his growing family.

But the glow of the call shines on.

Motaung, Mashiani and Morakabi claim God has called them to grow Baptist churches in South Africa. Southern Baptist missionary Carroll Shaw has no reason to doubt that, especially after years of working alongside them.

"Johannes and Shadrach have a vision that is still too rare in Baptist Convention of Southern Africa work -- church planting," Shaw explained. "That's why I put most of my time and materials into them. They have the vision and work to bring that vision to life."

As for Motaung, Shaw's pastor at Kagiso Baptist Church, the missionary noted: "He used to be my Timothy and now I'm his. He is teaching me and helping me grow as a Christian the way I used to teach him. His only problem is his heart is so big it gets him into trouble."

Mashiani and Morakabi work in and around Mabato, the "capital" of the South African homeland of Bophuthatswana. Motaung leads a key church in the black township of Kagiso near Johannesburg. Their methods vary as do the working situations, but all see the need to present a clear evangelical message while meeting people's human needs.

That's why it isn't unusual to see Motaung cleaning toilets at the church before the nursery school opens or washing dishes after the children have eaten breakfast. After all, he had to be at the church anyway for the 5 a.m. prayer meeting.

Mashiani believes in teaching converts construction skills so they can help build a church as well as improve their on economic situation. And he leads by example.

"Back in 1965 I made almost all the bricks for the first church I was pastor of," he said. "I'd make bricks from 5 to 7 a.m., visit from 7 to 9, then do my Bible studies. I made bricks before I had my quiet time for exercise."

More than two decades later, he still likes to start a church near a water supply. If there isn't one, he drills a well. "Then you can use the water to make bricks and teach people to grow vegetables by hand watering," he explained. "And when people come to the church for that we tell them about Jesus too."

Mashiani has started seven churches in the past 27 years. At first glance that doesn't seem to be a staggering number. But church-starting is hard work in South Africa, where Christianity is viewed as a "white man's religion" by most black South Africans, who argue it has been used to justify apartheid and other types of oppression. And how many Baptist pastors in America help start a new congregation every 3.8 years?

A current project, Mmakaunyane Baptist Church, typifies Mashiani's and Morakabi's approach. The town of 7,000 people had one Christian church (Dutch Reform) and one public water well. A drum of water sells for more than \$2.

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Door-to-door surveying by members of Mopane Baptist Church (where Mashiani is pastor) found a handful of people interested in a church. An elderly man led to Christ during the visitation offered to let the new church meet under a tree in his yard. A year later there were 50 members, a pastor's home was almost completed and a drilling rig was 80 feet down looking for water.

When the well is completed Shaw will have to drop a favorite joke from his routine: "Water is so expensive around here we're considering becoming sprinkling Baptists."

"The caretaker we hired has been saved and we've asked the government to reserve the plot next door so we can build the community a day care center," Mashiani said. "The public well is on the other side of town from ours so we'll be popular with everyone around here. We'll make bricks and grow vegetables. There are so many people here who are not saved. But they say they want to come to our church and we say, 'Come on, you're welcome.'"

About 10 miles away, in a community with the quaint and folksy name of "Block LL," Morakabi's main interest is coming to life. Spirit Lake Baptist Church -- named for the home church of Southern Baptist volunteer Loyd Garrison from Idaho, who helped start the church -- got a plot "with a double water tap right in front."

A squatter family on the land could have been a problem, but Morakabi, a church planter for the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa, tied the news that the land had been allocated for a church with an invitation to be part of it.

"We told them they were automatically part of us and asked if they'd be caretakers of the property since they were already living there," he said. "That worked out for everyone." Six months after it was organized, and before it had its own building, the church had 34 members and more than 50 regular attenders.

"This is what I think it's all about," Shaw said. "We (Southern Baptists through their missionaries and gifts) help them get started then we don't put another penny into it. It's theirs."

Back in Kagiso, Motaung isn't even interested in taking the first penny.

"He is so determined to show the people they can stand on their own and, by practicing stewardship and being faithful, pay their own way he won't even think about taking money from the Foreign Mission Board," Shaw explained.

Motaung also knows the value of leading by example. He went without salary for six months so the money could be redirected to the building fund.

Several hundred people jam Kagiso Baptist Church each Sunday. The ethnic mix is revealed in the song service as the crowd easily switches among four or five dialects. A youth program attracts hundreds more.

When tribal battles left nearby families homeless in 1990, the church formed a crisis committee to help meet the survival needs of the living and make funeral arrangements for the dead. Later clashes led the church to open its own doors so men would have a safe, dry place to sleep.

A shortage of child care in a community where most mothers not only work but commute long distances to reach their jobs led to the opening of a day care center for 1- to-5-year-olds. "Because many operations like this are little more than baby-sitting services," Motaung convinced the church to send a team to Swaziland to study how Baptist churches there operated day care centers.

"Black education in South Africa is dismal enough," Motaung said. "If we have the opportunity, we need to improve that situation." So the children who spend the day at Kagiso Baptist Church get a warm breakfast, Bible study, math, arts and physical development along with toilet training and snacks.

Pleased parents are open to what Motaung has to say about the God behind all that the church does. And if they happen to drop their children off while he is cleaning the toilet it won't bother Motaung. Like Mashiani and Morakabi he signed on full time when he answered that call from God.

The glamour comes and goes. But the fire keeps burning.

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

South Africa changes
seen in open schools

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
4/7/92

DURBAN, South Africa (BP)--Maybe the world should not have been so shocked last month when white voters overwhelmingly backed President F.W. de Klerk's push to create a non-racist South Africa.

For the past three years many of those same whites have been voting by landslide margins to fling open the doors of all-white schools and let children of all races share classrooms, according to South African school administrators. Surely an electorate willing to mix its children was ready to endorse multiracial politics.

Of course, the integration of South African public schools is not universal, and even those schools that have torn down the color barrier retain academic qualifications. But the foundation stone of apartheid that held different races would be educated separately -- and at different levels reflecting their "abilities" -- is shattered.

The first quiet cracks came in 1989, when the South African government offered three alternative models for education. The first allowed schools to continue with the status quo of the last 50 years -- racially defined schools. Model "B" allowed each school to set individual admission policies through an elected parents council. This model carried continued government financial aid.

Schools adopting Model "C" would decide their own admission standards, but would require parents to carry much of the cost of operating the schools since government funds would be cut.

Changes could not be made lightly. The government mandated 80 percent of the parents of students currently attending a school had to vote and 72 percent of those voting had to approve any new model selected. Otherwise the school stayed with the status quo.

By the end of 1991 Model "B" had become the overwhelming choice.

"We found that most of the 'white only' schools had incredibly huge polls," said Don Stewart, principal of Lyndhurst Primary School in a suburb of Durban. "Parent turnout was usually 95 percent or higher -- and the approval for Model B at least 90 percent."

Southern Baptist missionary Mark Baber, whose three sons attend Stewart's school, put the change in sharp perspective when he compared the vote to the likely fate of any similar election in the southern United States in the 1950s.

"How many of our schools would have voluntarily integrated then, even with control over admissions?" Baber asked. "I think it is very impressive and speaks well of the average white South African. It also speaks well of Christian administrators like Don Stewart who provided leadership in moving toward the change."

In schools attended by other Southern Baptist "missionary kids," the story was the same.

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"We live in a district that is an Afrikaaner stronghold every election," said Louisiana missionary Glenn Simmons, who has four children in Johannesburg-area public schools. "And our neighborhood school voted more than 95 percent in favor of Model B."

Texans Dave and Brenda Clark's older child attends another Johannesburg-area school with an Afrikaaner principal. The principal led the school to adopt Model B just as overwhelmingly. "And he was very openly in favor of the change," Mrs. Clark said.

All other children of Southern Baptist missionaries in South Africa either live in the "homelands," where schools already were integrated, or attend parent-funded, integrated private schools formed in protest of apartheid.

"None of us as missionaries were pleased our children were in segregated schools," Baber pointed out. "But it was either pay the private school fees out of our own pocket or home school and make our wives give up most of their ministries. We thank God for the changes."

Many people seem to share Baber's sentiments.

"People simply realized it was the right thing to do," Stewart said. "The real concern was always over standards. This school does a good job of educating our children and parents were afraid a flood of poorly educated children of any race would lower the education their children would receive.

"Our parents council decided, on the advice of the teachers, to require any student coming here to be able to speak English. After all, a young Zulu child unable to understand what was being taught would have tremendous problems. But a Zulu child who moves into the neighborhood (also a possibility now since the abolition of the Group Area Act, which segregated residential neighborhoods), even if he can't speak English, will be allowed to enroll. He would be no different from a child who moved to Durban from Germany -- he'd have to pick it up as best as he can -- and those cases usually do well."

The school has a capacity of 600 students and an enrollment of 591 -- not much leeway to bring in new students anyway, Stewart admitted. But Lyndhurst's first year under Model B included 30 black and Indian students. One black parent was elected to the 12-member Parents' Management Council and the school administration brought in two black student teachers (out of nine).

"We opened up all our classes (the school goes through 7th grade) but most of the non-white students are in the lower grades," he explained. "Our remedial teacher spends a morning with each applicant and there were a few who couldn't cope and were not accepted."

All students, regardless of race, pay an annual school fee of about \$115. Some of the new students come from as far as five miles away.

"Black parents will make any sacrifice within their power to get a better education for their children," Stewart said. "That is why they will travel past several other schools to get here. But as the quality of the other schools rises then the pressure to get into the 'top' schools will decrease."

The new students "have enriched education for the white children too. After all, they are living in a multiracial society but attending an all-white school, so they weren't getting a true picture of society," Stewart explained. "With the falling away of the Group Areas Act, I expect this area to be completely multiracial within the next five years and the neighborhood children deserve to get to attend school here.

"We have had no comments from parents -- and I assure you if any of them were upset they would call the principal -- and no complaints from teachers. I get the same story from other schools at area principals' meetings. If people were watching this process looking for conflicts and problems, it was a non-event."

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And how is it going with the kids?

"Watch them on the playground," Stewart replied. "It's been quite incredible how well the children here accepted the changes. They are not naturally conscious of race anyway. It's basically a parents problem."

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