

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522, CompuServe 70420,115
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-6282, CompuServe 70420,115
NASHVILLE Linda Lawson, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300, CompuServe 70420,115
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151, CompuServe 70420,115
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3224, CompuServe 71117,016

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
953 Commerce, Nashville, Tennessee

August 22, 1995

- KENYA--Analysis: Continent full of examples challenges Christians to be logo.
- ANGOLA--Missionaries, Angolan Baptists use disruption to heal hurts.
- ANGOLA--Friendship, trust drive Angolan Baptist med-tech; photo.
- ANGOLA--Angolan deacon packs Bible in one hand, AK-47 in other; photo.
- ANGOLA--Pastor Ricardo is friend every missionary needs.
- ANGOLA--Baptists in Angola work for future of children; photo.
- MOROCCO--Jailed Moroccan Christians released Aug. 17 in Tangier.
- DALLAS--Texas octogenarian wins 108 to Christ in Kenya Crusade.
- TENNESSEE--Correction.

EDITOR'S NOTE: With all its cultural richness, natural beauty and vast human and economic potential, plus its freedom at last from colonial rule, why does Africa suffer so much? In a series, "Cry the Beloved Continent: Chaos, Crisis and Hope in Africa," Foreign Mission Board journalists reflect on that question -- and the challenge Christians and missionaries there face. The series will focus -- in four segments -- on 1) Angola, 2) Liberia, 3) Nigeria and 4) Zaire. The following six stories are the first segment of the series. The first story of the six, by Africa correspondent Craig Bird, gives an overview for the entire package. The stories may be used individually or together. The first segment deals with Angola. Other segments will follow at spaced intervals.

ANALYSIS

Continent full of examples challenges Christians to be one By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
8/22/95

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Africa is an example. What kind of example depends on your perspective.

Mission experts note 20,000 people a day are becoming Christians across the continent.

Muslims declare Africa the indigenous home of Islam and insist its sufferings result from white man's religion being forced on it. Environmentalists defend Africa's flora and fauna. Tourists tout the sunsets and natural splendor. Economists recite countless statistics telling another kind of story: countries rich in natural resources and cheap labor getting progressively poorer.

Critics of U.S. foreign aid see the continent as a bottomless pit where millions of dollars disappear with no visible improvement in the lives of common people.

An incredibly wealthy African upper class lives behind reinforced walls patrolled by private guards (or armies), while slum populations swell and death rates in almost all medical categories soar. AIDS wipes out more and more professionals, those best-equipped to make a mark. Dehydration and malaria, polio and leprosy ravage the poor and the isolated.

Arms merchants think Africa is heaven. Ethnic groups victimized by those who buy the guns call it hell.

Positive examples are scarce, the negative ones uncountable. How can one very important plus -- the massive, long-term response to the Christian gospel in Africa -- brighten such a dismal picture?

That question probably has at least 1,000 answers -- one for each of some 1,000 Southern Baptist missionaries working in almost every country on the continent.

But here are realities the Christian world in Africa faces:

-- Religious conflict. Africa is a bloody battleground between Islam and Christianity as well as between African traditional religions and Christianity. In urban areas, the secularism-versus-Christianity conflict appears. Hindus, Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and Buddhists also actively propound their faiths.

Add the traditional hurling of biblically based barbs by various Christian groups at each other, and you have an ideal environment for spiritual confusion -- the preferred working space of Satan, the father of lies. Christians kill each other in Rwanda and Burundi and steal each other's churches and members elsewhere. Muslims kill Christians in Somalia and Sudan. Fetish priests put pythons in houses where Christian parents have had a new baby.

-- Economics. During the colonial era, African countries generally were expected to provide raw materials to the European countries ruling them and to be dependable markets for products from those same countries. When independence came, many African countries found themselves overly dependent on a handful of cash crops, lacking the strength in diversity.

Burundi, for example, gets 80 percent of its foreign exchange from the sale of coffee. When prices fall, there's nothing to sustain the economy. Formerly popular crops such as hemp no longer have much of a market.

Shortsighted profit-taking has left ecologically valuable forest denuded by the exporting of exotic woods, the making of charcoal and slash-and-burn agriculture.

For example, rain forest used to cover 60 percent of Sierra Leone; now the figure is set at 6 percent. Add over-grazing, and endemic erosion results in the steady expansion of desert southward across the Sahel -- the vast region of central Africa bordering the Sahara periodically ravaged by drought.

-- Corruption. Spiritual bankruptcy and desperate economic conditions cause this malady. Kenyan businessmen claim they can't make a profit if they have to pay 20 percent of their income for bribes. In eastern Zaire, it's common to pay a bribe even before stating your business in an office.

Poorly paid policemen sometimes earn supplemental income by hassling motorists until they are paid off. Poorly paid teachers may require students to take extra tutoring sessions (at extra charges). Public work contracts often are awarded on the basis of kickbacks. Refugees have to bribe guards and secretaries to get into United Nations offices to register. "Tip" customs officers and you can speed through airports; refuse, and you spend hours -- even if your suitcase contains only dirty clothes.

Each year African countries dominate the lists of poorest countries and the rankings on the world "misery index." Yet capital cities swarm with Mercedes-Benzes, and their suburbs boast mansions with satellite dishes and swimming pools.

Major relief agencies debate if they should continue projects -- knowing 60 to 80 percent (or more) of the money is being lost through graft.

Missionaries, as a rule, refuse to pay bribes. But they have to pay unspecified "miscellaneous charges" to companies that handle their freight shipments. Or, to get through the most mundane tasks of daily life, they make such distinctions as this: "A bribe is when you give someone money, but it's just a tip if you give them money to do their job. I need my phone reconnected, so I'm going to tip the man or he'll leave it off."

In Nigeria, one missionary spent three days in an airport because she refused to pay a bribe to clear immigration.

--more--

-- Civil wars and ethnic hatred. In the first half of this decade alone, violence in the form of civil wars, coups or ethnic killings has exploded -- or dragged on -- in Alg ria, Ethiopia, Somalia, Liberia, South Africa, Senegal, Sudan, Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Comoros, Madagascar, Congo, Zaire, Togo, Kenya, Uganda, Mali, Gambia, Rwanda and Burundi, among others.

It may come from ancient tribal animosities, irrational borders drawn by former colonial rulers, hangovers from the Cold War, brutal regimes or simple human evil. The fighting destroys infrastructure, decimates skilled labor, diverts resources from development to buying guns, chases away potential investors, strengthens ethnic hatreds and shatters struggling democratic institutions.

The African challenge to Christians is immense.

How do you love a Somali who spits in your face as you give him food that will keep him alive? How do you love street kids in Lagos or Nairobi who threaten you with needles taken from hospital garbage if you don't give them money? How do you love a swaggering soldier in Liberia who has thoughtlessly killed babies from another tribe because "they are just cockroaches"?

How do you love a government official who won't grant you a permit to dig a life-giving water well in Zaire unless you bribe him? How do you love a young man dying with AIDS in Zambia who remains sexually active even after he knows he has the disease?

By following God's example. He loved the world through the love of Jesus Christ.

--30--

Bird, a missionary based in Nairobi, Kenya, is the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's overseas correspondent for Africa. (BP) graphic and logo mailed to state Baptist newspapers 8/17/95 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Both will be posted on SBCNet News Room 8/21/95. Cutline available on SBCNet News Room. Adapted from the July-August issue of The Commission magazine.

EDITORS' NOTE: Missionary Steve Evans, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's media consultant for eastern and southern Africa, recently traveled to the war-weary country of Angola in southern Africa and wrote the following five stories.

**Missionaries, Angolan Baptists
use disruption to heal hurts**

By Steve Evans

**Baptist Press
8/22/95**

LUANDA, Angola (BP)--Baptist work in Angola could be called a ministry of interruptions.

War has interrupted -- actually, disrupted -- the lives of Angolans and the well-laid plans of Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries to reach them with the gospel.

Areas once open to mission work in Angola's interior are suddenly closed, houses left vacant. Luanda, the capital, is spilling over with Angolans fleeing the war-weary countryside for deceptive security.

Many Angolan Baptists have seen their homes destroyed and mourned the killings of friends and family. Husbands and wives have been separated for years. For many, jobs don't exist anymore.

"We're tired of war," said a Baptist deacon. People dispute how many thousands have been killed in Huambo, his home city, but one is too many when you know the person. Everybody knows somebody who didn't make it. Survivors all share the same nightmares and tell the same horror stories. Their eyes all speak of the same desperation.

Mission work should focus on evangelism, church planting, training, literature development and community ministries, said missionary Mark Hatfield, who directs work in Angola from outside the southern African nation.

But for now it focuses on survival.

--more--

Missionaries Curtis and Betty Dixon once hid on the floor of a back room while bandits shot the locks on their doors before giving up an attempted break-in. Another time the Dixons' vehicle was stolen at gunpoint. And at one point, the Dixons vacated during the heat of battle -- along with Hatfield and his wife, Susan, and missionaries Don and Carol Minshew. The Dixons are from Stroud and Guymon, Okla., respectively, the Hatfields from Ashland, Ky., and the Minshews from Memphis, Tenn.

War began in 1961 with Angolan nationals fighting Portugal for independence. When it was granted in 1974, three factions within the country began to fight among themselves. A negotiated peace in 1991 led to elections in 1993. But election results were disputed, and fighting broke out again. Almost immediately violations marred a cease-fire negotiated in late 1994. It appears opposing factions might be serious now about a negotiated settlement, but only the future will tell for sure.

Still, trouble has given rise to emotions leading to new friendships, which have resulted in Christian service and even sacrifice. Emotions run the gamut from fear to trust, dependency to security, sympathy to empathy.

Among the putrid filth and stench of Luanda neighborhoods, Baptists reach out to children whose bloated bellies and bleached hair show they've never had a nutritionally balanced meal in their young lives. Missionaries and Angolans work to save them in a project that found no place in mission purposes of yesteryear -- an interruption, really. But this, too, is evangelism.

Oscar Paulo, a Baptist doctor, sees interruptions around him as opportunities for ministry. "As Jesus healed and preached, we also have opportunity to help people physically and spiritually," he said.

Paulo lost his only two children, both daughters, to unknown disease; the youngest died in his arms last December. Each Sunday he leads a worship service with 70 participants in the waiting room of a Baptist medical clinic.

Two other Angolan Baptist men -- a pastor in Luanda and a deacon in Huambo -- are overwhelmed by the trust they get from a missionary family. They're so overwhelmed that they sacrificially give themselves in friendship and service. One man daily gives emotional support and open friendship, and the other literally risks his life daily to protect mission property.

In such times as war, when trust becomes a precious commodity, it earns friendships that lead to joint ministries. In Angola trust and faith go hand-in-hand. Likewise, as with trust and faith, missionaries and nationals go hand-in-hand carrying out their ministry of interruptions.

Hatfield and his colleagues need another missionary to head up community development and human needs. Until someone meets this request, they are at their limit in setting up new relief work in Luanda.

Also, they have asked the Foreign Mission Board to raise money for medicines and supplies for a mobile clinic run by Angolans. In 1994 and so far this year, Southern Baptists have given \$5,132 toward "strategic priority" requests totaling \$30,600. (For information, contact David Coleman of the FMB's development office at 1-800-362-1322.)

What about the future? "Since November 1992, it has been a work of survival," Hatfield said, noting now "the direction of our work depends on the war situation."

--30--

Friendship, trust drive
Angolan Baptist med-tech

By Steve Evans

Baptist Press
8/22/95

HUAMBO, Angola (BP)--"Those without Christ are afraid for their lives," said a Baptist medical technician in Huambo, Angola. "They're afraid they will die. Those of us with Christ are ready to die, because we know we'll leave this world for something better."

The med-tech, Cessario Sapalo, lives in a city destroyed by war. Armed soldiers swarm the streets. Gunshots ring out day and night. Stores and businesses are closed tightly. Public utilities don't exist. Food is scarce.

--more--

"Each day we praise God for one more day of life, but now we're tired of war and don't want to relive what we've already been through," said Sapalo.

Angola has been at war since 1961. An entire generation has grown up knowing nothing but war. First it was a war for independence; now opposing Angolans fight for control. A cease-fire began at the end of 1994, but immediate violations raised questions about the future.

Sapalo, a deacon in Huambo's Second Baptist Church, directs Baptist medical ministries in the area. His house was destroyed during a 55-day battle for Huambo in 1993. Suspecting what was coming, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries evacuated, and Sapalo moved into the mission residence to secure it.

Although tired of war and its effects, Sapalo won't give up. A determined man, he's driven by faith. On his dining room wall hangs a Scripture poster: "Casting all your anxieties on him, for he cares for you (1 Peter 5:7)."

The stories about Sapalo's courage are endless, but unfortunately, because of the security situation in Huambo, most of them can't be told. It can be said, however, that during times of military crises, Sapalo has repeatedly risked his life in the interest of the Baptist mission.

Mark Hatfield, the Foreign Mission Board's administrator for work in Angola, has told Sapalo not to endanger his life or the lives of family members just to protect mission property.

Hatfield's pointed remark: "Your lives are more important than things." Sapalo's reply: "I know our lives are worth more than your property. But when we can do something to defend that property, we do it."

Sapalo's home city of Huambo always has been a strategic site during Angola's years of fighting. Portuguese rulers called it Nova Lisboa (New Lisbon) and planned it as a worldwide capital of their colonial holdings. Since independence, two opposing Angolan armies have won the city. Now it's virtually a ghost town.

Huambo's streets and buildings show battle scars. Sapalo recalls a 500-kilogram bomb that exploded a few blocks from the mission residence in August 1994. Displayed in his living room is a two-foot piece of shrapnel that blasted into the garage. Ruins of houses leveled from the blast stand nearby.

Meanwhile, locals fear a third major battle and are leaving by the thousands.

They tell similar stories and share similar nightmares. Fear, desperation, even hopelessness, fill their eyes. When greeted with "Como esta?" ("How are you?" in Portuguese, Angola's main language), local Christians respond, "Praise God, at least we have one more day of life."

"People ask me why I do it, why do I make these trips into (Angola) when I know it can be dangerous?" said Hatfield, who now works out of a base in Harare, Zimbabwe. "Sometimes you have to walk by faith and not by sight -- though, I must admit, you walk by faith with your eyes open. So many times I have seen the hand of God in these trips -- so many doors he has opened."

Huambo is a "city in need," added Hatfield, from Ashland, Ky.

To help meet some of the human need, Southern Baptists are among those flying medical supplies into Huambo. Sapalo runs two clinics in a cooperative project of missionaries and the Angola Baptist Convention. The clinics offer a platform for Bible study, prayer and health teaching.

"Many believe in Christ, especially after we explain the love of God and that he can overcome any sickness," said Sapalo.

He told of an angry officer who entered a Baptist clinic. "He demanded to see all (supply) stocks and accused us of using them to assist the enemy. He wanted to turn the place upside down," Sapalo said.

Sapalo told him the Baptist clinics were part of an integrated ministry, including health, education and worship. "I told him we desired to minister to all areas of a person's life," the Angolan Baptist said.

Then the officer began telling Sapalo how sick he felt. The med-tech examined him but found nothing wrong. But the way Sapalo treated him impressed the officer. "He said that never in his life had anyone given him as much attention as I had just given him," Sapalo recounted.

After the exam, to help the officer with stress, Sapalo gave him a few days' supply of medication to help him sleep at night. Several days later the soldier returned looking "very refreshed and relaxed," Sapalo said. "He told me how happy he was and how satisfied he was with the treatment he received. ... After that, the clinic didn't have any more trouble from his group."

Men like Sapalo, God's call and a love for Angolans are the reasons Hatfield still risks going to this dangerous city.

Sapalo counts the missionary one of his best friends. "I'm not here out of obligation," said Sapalo. "I'm in this house, protecting these things, because of trust and friendship. They trust me, and I return that trust with my friendship."

--30--

(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers 8/17/95 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet News Room.

Angolan deacon packs Bible
in one hand, AK-47 in other

By Steve Evans

Baptist Press
8/22/95

LUANDA, Angola (BP)--Elias Augusto has trouble sleeping at night.

But it's because he can't sleep that Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries in Luanda, Angola's troubled capital city, can do so.

In one way, Augusto, a deacon in Luanda's Good Hope Baptist Church, has learned to apply the biblical principle of "watch and pray." As a security guard for the Baptist Mission in Angola, Augusto packs an AK-47 automatic weapon in one hand, a Bible in the other.

"Bandits know missionaries have cars, food, clothing and other valuables at their homes," Augusto said. "With force, and with weapons, they go after these things."

Augusto has worked for the organization of Foreign Mission Board missionaries in Angola since 1989. In 1993 he became an armed security guard for the mission after a gang entered the mission compound. They looted a missionary home, and attacked another with missionaries Curtis and Betty Dixon from Stroud and Guymon, Okla., inside.

In the attack, the gang tried unsuccessfully to shoot the lock off the front door as the Dixons, both Oklahomans, hid inside. One bullet passed through the door, the living room, the kitchen and the wall on the other side of the house. It stopped at the concrete wall surrounding the compound.

Later the Dixons went to the police to ask about security guards. Police said they would supply the weapons if the mission would provide the personnel.

"Elias wanted to be one of the guards," said Mark Hatfield, who leads mission work in Angola and Mozambique from a base in Harare, Zimbabwe. "He had been in the army and knew guns. It was hard to accept his offer, since we didn't want to put him in danger, but it was a good decision."

Although Augusto spent eight years in the military and knows how to handle difficult security situations, he depends on his faith in Jesus Christ to get him through. "I can't do anything without God's help even in this work of protecting missionaries," he said. "As Christians, we can't have confidence in ourselves, even if we're armed. We must trust God. He's our protector."

One night he was on duty alone. There are usually two guards each night, but his partner was sick. "I saw four armed men enter the compound, and my heart started to beat fast. Each of them had an AK-47. As they began collecting things from the yard, I shot over their heads."

Bullets flew around him as all four returned fire. "Now, I know the value of human life and the sanctity of human blood, and I didn't want to defile the ground of this compound by spilling any blood, so I didn't shoot to kill these men. I began shooting all around them -- to each side, in front of them, and over their heads. I shot until they fled over the compound wall."

--more--

Augusto quickly realized it was a miracle he was alive. "I looked around me and saw bullet holes everywhere -- in the water tank, the storage containers, even in the sides of the house. I just began to pray and praise God, because I then knew for sure that he is my protector," Augusto said.

He learned about Christ, salvation and the Christian life through the testimony of Hatfield, from Ashland, Ky., and other missionaries. "I was disciplined by their testimony and by the teachings of my pastor. Now, the Bible means everything to me, and I try to internalize it, make it real and a part of me -- especially as I face the uncertainties of each night."

Augusto was baptized in 1990 at Good Hope Baptist Church in the Grafanil area of Luanda. Soon he was ordained a deacon. In that role he takes part in most ministries of the church -- helping the pastor, visiting the sick and widows and helping those with deaths in their families.

"He's a leader in whatever he does," Hatfield said.

But it isn't as a church deacon that Augusto believes he performs his greatest ministry. It's through his service as a security guard to the mission.

"We trust him with all we own -- even our lives," said Hatfield. "We know he respects us and our things and takes care of them as if they were his own."

Replies Augusto: "I'm here as a guard, because it's one way I can serve.

"It's one way I can see that the work of God continues. I like to think that maybe, because of my work, Angola's children of tomorrow may know God's Word and God's Son through the ministry of these missionaries I watch over."

--30--

(BP) photo (vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers 8/17/95 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

**Pastor Ricardo is friend
every missionary needs**

By Steve Evans

**Baptist Press
8/22/95**

LUANDA, Angola (BP)--For a missionary in a foreign land, there are new customs and cultures to get used to. There are constant interruptions. Sometimes living conditions are rough. And in Angola, there's the added stress of war.

To the community, the missionary is often a novelty, but always a witness.

For a missionary, to be a friend is expected. But to have a national friend is a precious gift.

Angolan Baptist Ricardo Santos is many things to many people -- dentist, evangelist, church planter and pastor of Good Hope Baptist Church. But that's not how he most helps Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries.

To missionaries in Angola, Santos is a precious gift.

"When we first moved to Angola, we had little to compare it to," said Mark Hatfield, who leads Southern Baptist missionary work in Angola from a base in Harare, Zimbabwe. Hatfield came to Angola in 1989 with his wife, Susan, as an agriculturist. They are from Ashland, Ky.

"We thought it was normal for missionaries in Africa to live in rough conditions in the middle of shantytowns. We helped build our own house after living five months in one room of an old farmhouse that we literally had to shovel out before we could move in. Moving into that prefab house we built was like moving into a castle for us," Hatfield said.

During those first five months, the Hatfields learned about their new home, Grafanil, a community in the capital city of Luanda -- and the people there learned about them. A mutual respect developed and grew.

Life continued to be a hard, daily battle for the Hatfields and their missionary colleagues Curtis and Betty Dixon, from Stroud and Guyton, Okla., respectively. Water, electricity and fuel were constant problems.

--more--

Visitors seemed to be there all day, every day. There were constant requests for transportation. "I can't count the bodies I've taken to the cemetery," Hatfield said. "We used to give nails for the coffins, then drive the bodies to the cemetery."

At Grafanil, the Hatfields became charter members of Good Hope Baptist Church, located just outside the walls of the mission compound. Here, the Hatfields made friends with Santos.

Almost daily, late in the afternoon, Santos would walk to the mission compound. Over a glass of cola or cup of tea, he and the Hatfields would talk about Angola's war, life in Luanda, families, church happenings and news.

"It took Ricardo some time to get used to having a cold drink in the 70-degree 'cold' season," joked Hatfield, who struggles to cope with the heat and humidity of Luanda. "But, I must say that Ricardo is the friend that every missionary needs.

"He made us feel special, but in a common way. We were like his Angolan friends. He and his wife did special things for us but didn't put us on pedestals the way they do most foreigners when they visit once in a blue moon.

"Ricardo knew I was an agricultural missionary and didn't try to force me to be anything else. He saw I was good at doing physical work and allowed me to use that ability. At the same time, he let me teach and preach in church."

Santos uses ministry situations to teach missionaries about customs and culture. "I remember the first funeral I went to in Angola," Hatfield said. "Ricardo helped me feel comfortable in showing my concern for the family. I was the church's 'hearse' driver, and he always rode in front with me, telling me how fast to go, how to treat the family, and what to do and say."

The missionaries won Santos' friendship through trust. "Our friendship really grew after the Hatfields trusted my wife and I enough to have us stay in their home for a month while they were away," Santos said.

Missionaries face the temptation of appearing self-sufficient, Hatfield said. They take with them things that keep them from having to live a dependent life, but what's needed is a dependency that creates friendships.

"We depend on friends for our existence," he said. "National friends are vital for a missionary to be effective and remain on the field. If you don't have them, you're not sharing your life as a Christian or missionary."

Hatfield told of the time two years after arriving in Angola when he felt he had had enough. After much prayer, he came to a different conclusion. "God brought me back to the fact that I could help my friends in Angola -- they needed me. I also realized that I needed them.

"We were forced to depend on our Angolan Christian family," Hatfield said. "Not so much for material things, but emotionally and for security. We could relate when Angolans were afraid a bullet would come into their house, because we feared the same thing."

Now the Hatfields serve Angola from Harare, his base as administrator for mission work in Angola and Mozambique. He makes frequent trips to both countries. In Angola he spends much of his time helping the Dixons, who still live in Luanda. He also assists with human needs projects in the country.

Hatfield has committed to work in both countries until the couple's next furlough. But for now, he's sure that distance hasn't cut the ties that bind him to the people of Angola.

--30--

Baptists in Angola work
for future of children

By Steve Evans

Baptist Press
8/22/95

LUANDA, Angola (BP)--Take a capital city. Add overpopulation, runaway inflation and unemployment. Stir in poor living conditions. Agitate with war. Result: desperation.

--more--

War has driven about 1.5 million people from outlying areas into Luanda, Angola's capital city. They're refugees in their own country. Unemployment is rife, wages low and inflation at 1,400 percent in this city of 3 million.

Desperate times call for desperate measures, and Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board missionaries in Angola have entered a state of emergency.

At one point, the United Nations said 1,000 people per day died from war-related causes in Angola. Then Angola's rate of human suffering was higher than any nation in the world. Angolans continue to suffer and die.

"One large reason for these deaths is malnutrition in children," said missionary Mark Hatfield, who heads Southern Baptist efforts in Angola from Harare, Zimbabwe. He is from Ashland, Ky.

Missionaries and the Angola Baptist Convention's Social Ministries Board and Medical Commission now work together to save Luanda's children. Angolan Baptist physician Oscar Paulo spearheads the effort that began last year and will continue into 1996.

"My real interest is in nutrition, especially for (children from) birth to 5 years," said Paulo. "Many physical, emotional and mental problems a person may have later on in life can be traced back to the first five years of (his) life. Unfortunately, this is also the time when most of our children die.

"In focusing on our children, we're focusing on the future of Angola."

Paulo speaks with the voice of experience, not only as a doctor, but as a father. He lost his only two children, both daughters, at young ages. The second died in his arms last December.

"Many of Africa's chronic sicknesses can be linked to malnutrition," Paulo said. "When people are malnourished or undernourished, they're more susceptible to other diseases. In fighting malnourishment, we're also fighting many other killers of our people."

Considering malnourished children and their families, Baptists selected three areas of Luanda known for severe malnutrition and inadequate health facilities. Their plan calls for three feeding stations for children, two medical clinics and a sewing project.

Children are chosen for the program through surveys and medical exams. They receive a special diet to alleviate the malnutrition, and a professional staff charts their progress. "We aim to move children to a maintenance program for a month after they reach normal averages for weight to age," Hatfield said. "When they enter the maintenance phase, they'll be fed locally available food that mothers will be taught to select and prepare.

"At the same time, we'll teach sewing to unskilled, unemployed men and women who can then provide food for their families." Hatfield anticipates helping 700 children and training 80 adults as tailors and seamstresses.

Baptists have found most malnourished children come from homes where the mother is unskilled. Mothers who learn to sew can earn money and buy food.

Medical clinics near the feeding stations will treat about 12,500 patients during the project. Southern Baptist relief funds will provide medicines. "Because of the economy, the Baptist convention here is helpless to supply their own projects with medicines, food and other necessities," Hatfield said.

Missionaries have asked the Foreign Mission Board to raise \$15,000 for medicines for each of the three years of this project. In 1994 and so far this year, Southern Baptists have given \$5,132 toward "strategic priority" requests totaling \$30,600. (For information, contact David Coleman of the FMB's development office at 1-800-362-1322.)

Those funds will make a difference to Angolans living in places like the Grafanil area of Luanda. There the city's complex problems are easily seen.

Children play in sewage and garbage covering unpaved streets. The estimated population within a five-kilometer radius is 300,000, and no health facilities exist. Many residents are war refugees.

--more--

Baptist pastors, missionaries, medical staff and laymen work together to minister in Grafanil. Factors uniting Baptist efforts there include Good Hope Baptist Church, the Bible Way Correspondence School office, a nutritional feeding station, a medical clinic, storage facilities, missionary offices, and homes of missionaries, pastors and convention leaders.

Cooperation and integration are two keys to the success of Baptist ministries in Luanda. A third is willingness to lay aside important, long-term ministries for more urgent ones. Their efforts have not been in vain.

"The goal of the project in Luanda is to share a testimony of Christ in each community and with each recipient of our ministries," Hatfield said.

People are tied into churches. Where no church exists, Baptists plan to form new congregations.

"Many people don't or won't go to a church," said Paulo, who leads a thriving congregation of 70 Baptists meeting in a clinic waiting room. "But they'll go to a medical clinic. Just as Jesus did, we want to join physical and spiritual ministries. We believe we can minister to the whole person."

--30--

(BP) photo (vertical) mailed to state Baptist newspapers 8/17/95 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet News Room.

**Jailed Moroccan Christians
released Aug. 17 in Tangier**

**Baptist Press
8/22/95**

TANGIER, Morocco (BP)--Four Moroccan Christians arrested in early August for proselytism were released after a trial Aug. 17 in Tangier, Morocco.

The Christians include Mehdi Ksara, 88, who holds dual Moroccan and U.S. citizenship; Fouad Jaafar, 27; Samir Benali, 24; and Mohcen Ibrahim Belhaj, 20. Police in the northern Morocco seaport of Tangier arrested them Aug. 5.

Despite their release, it's not clear if any charges still are pending against them, according to a report from News Network International. One evangelical source indicated they were questioned at a police station in Tangier after the trial that authorities abruptly moved up from Aug. 31.

The case signals a climate of increasing religious intolerance in the Islamic nation of Morocco, according to an evangelical worker who lived there for five years. "We see this as a real crackdown on Christianity," said another evangelical worker currently living in that North African country.

But an evangelical pastor of an English-language church in Morocco disagreed. "I see (the arrests) as an echo of a previous attitude, but I see Morocco moving toward a religious toleration it hasn't had for hundreds of years," said the pastor. "We're going to see it wavering back and forth, but (the country) is moving toward toleration. God is doing something in Morocco. He's bringing about a (religious) climate that's more open."

He added: "The fact that the (Christians) were tried, released and not sentenced to prison is a good sign."

While the four were held in a Tangier jail, the plight of Ksara, who is in poor health, gained world attention. Human rights groups, U.S. churches and a member of British Parliament called for his and the other prisoners' release.

Ksara, "who is frail and can hardly see or hear," was held in "grossly overcrowded conditions," said a report from the London-based International Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity. He was one of 3,000 inmates packed into a jail built for 700, the report said.

"At a preliminary hearing Aug. 8, his lawyer requested conditional liberty since Moroccan law does not permit the detention of persons over 75," the institute reported. This request was denied.

--more--

But one evangelical source said Ksara's health reportedly didn't decline in jail. "I think (Moroccan officials) were making a point to see that his health didn't deteriorate," said the source, a friend of Ksara's. A U.S. embassy representative also reportedly visited him in jail to check on him.

Ksara, a Christian for 60 years, has chosen to live in Morocco to share his faith in his homeland. Friends say he's never been quiet about his beliefs. He travels throughout the country, speaking so openly that other Moroccan Christians often fear associating with him, said one source.

Some people pushing for the Christians' release see this as a landmark case because it could bring more religious tolerance in Morocco, sources said. Morocco's constitution officially guarantees freedom of worship, but it is illegal to try to entice someone to change religions.

"This is an important case, especially since Morocco wants to be a part of Europe," said a spokesman for a London-based group of Ksara's friends who sought his release.

Morocco reportedly wants to join the European Union (EU) because of its proximity to and trade with Europe, according to Exegy database. EU works to increase intergovernmental cooperation on economic, foreign, immigration, crime and drug policies among its member nations.

"If (Morocco) wants to be a part of it, they're going to have to dramatically change in this issue of religious freedom," said the London group's spokesman.

But that change already is in progress, believes the pastor of an English-language congregation in Morocco. "I really do think there's a deeper shift happening throughout the whole country, including (in) the highest levels of government," he said. "But these things don't just change overnight."

He added recent religious arrests in Morocco might be indirectly linked to the government's political concerns about the spread of (Islamic) fundamentalism from Algeria into Morocco. Currently Algeria, Morocco's neighbor, is torn by a civil war as militant rebels battle the government.

Meanwhile, Morocco still carries a reputation of anti-Christian repression. Recent examples include:

-- In May an evangelical couple from the United States and their six children were arrested in Casablanca after parading down the main street carrying a large cross and passing out Christian tracts, NNI reported. They were not charged with any crimes and were released later.

-- In January a prominent Baptist from San Salvador, capital of El Salvador, was abruptly released after he was sentenced to a year in a Moroccan jail for sharing his faith. About a week earlier, in a twice-delayed trial, Gilberto Orellana was convicted of "proselytization" and sentenced.

Orellana, former conductor of the San Salvador Symphony Orchestra and a member of Miramonte Baptist Church in San Salvador, moved to Morocco in 1992 to teach music at a conservatory. He was arrested last December while meeting with five Moroccans, most or all of whom are Christian believers.

-- In late 1993 Moroccan Mustapha Zemamda of Casablana was sentenced to three years for converting from Islam to Christianity. He has signed up for a Christian correspondence program based in France. Eighteen others were freed after agreeing to sever relations with the school, but Zemamda refused.

Later, in court, he also refused to renounce his faith. But after a few months in jail, he reversed his position and was eventually released, said an evangelical source.

Texas octogenarian wins 108
to Christ in Kenya Crusade

By Norman Miller

DALLAS (BP)--Bob Curtis turned 85 in June, and not in the comfort of his easy chair in the confines of a rest home. He celebrated his birthday in Kenya along with the spiritual birthdays of 108 people he led to faith in Christ from June 12-26.

Curtis, a member of First Baptist Church, Dallas, joined 500 Southern Baptist volunteers who assisted Kenyan Baptists and Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board personnel in the six-week Greater Nairobi Evangelistic Crusade.

"There was a lot of walking between the villages -- no streets, just paths -- but there was almost no rejection when I told people about Jesus," said Curtis, who spent eight days trekking the village trails outside Nairobi, the Kenyan capital.

"The Holy Spirit had been working, and to God be the glory, I believe 108 of those people I talked with made confessions of faith in Christ," he said. Curtis explained each person prayed a prayer of confession as proof of their commitment to follow Christ.

Unsure of his financial ability to go to Kenya, Curtis returned to full-time work before the trip. "I have three jobs now," he said. He had worked only on Saturdays for a Dallas funeral home, but he found work as a regional sales representative for a dental company, and he also works three consecutive 10-hour days as a driver for a car auction. "Whatever it takes. If I'm able, I'll do it," he said.

The highlight of Curtis' trip was training a Kenyan layman, Maason Kwuva, how to tell others about Jesus.

Curtis told Kwuva, "I'll be leaving today, and my witness here will be over. I would like you to be my disciple, and you continue as I have been doing." Kwuva listened as Curtis asked people in a Nairobi market whether they would accept Christ. After hearing Curtis three times, "Kwuva led someone to Christ," Curtis said.

"Now I feel as if my mission is complete because I replaced myself," Curtis said. He told Kwuva, "You're the man who will conduct the work that I'll not be here to do." Curtis since has received letters from Kwuva, requesting Christian literature and expressing his desire to attend seminary.

Explaining his involvement in worldwide missions, Curtis said, "Jimmy Hooten (of the Foreign Mission Board's Volunteers in Mission department) challenged me to go to Mombasa in 1990. Since then, I've been on every continent and in 21 countries."

Curtis, who plans to go to Sweden in 1996 and to France in 1997, credits God with his good health and ability to travel widely. He said he never experienced an anxious moment overseas because he believes if God challenges him then God will enable him to do it.

"I want to serve the Lord as I have all my life," he said.

Although reared in a Christian home, Curtis said it wasn't until 1957, when he moved from New York to Dallas and joined First Baptist Church, that he became serious about evangelism.

"After joining First Baptist, I became more fervent about sharing my faith," Curtis said. "I've been involved in visitation programs, but my personal evangelism program includes whoever I meet."

Reluctant to tell how many people he has led to faith in Christ, Curtis said, "There's no way I could know for sure, but I think it's just under a thousand."

--30--

(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers 8/17/95 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet News Room.

CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "SBC mission board executives deplore Texas funding cut," dated 8/21/95, please strike the next-to-last paragraph and revise the last paragraph to read, "We already spend far more on the 'home base' than on global missions," Rankin said. "The current Texas proposal only makes the situation worse."

Thanks,
Baptist Press

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750

Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Southern Baptist Library
and Archives