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### Southern Baptist Convention Media Missions in Africa: Cross-Cultural Communications in a Pluralistic Environment

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION  
MEDIA MISSIONS IN AFRICA: CROSS-CULTURAL  
COMMUNICATIONS IN A PLURALISTIC ENVIRONMENT.

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Honors Program, approved by the Honors Council  
and Senior Independent Study Committee.

by

IAN ROBERT COSH

May 1987

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INTRODUCTION.

The purpose for research was to analyze and synthesize the accomplishments of the Southern Baptist Convention's media missions work in Africa and to document the essence, magnitude and complexity of the task facing media missionaries in Africa. Research conducted by the writer at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in June 1986 revealed that the formal study of media missions is comparatively new, and therefore not well documented. Much of the up-to-date information available is in the form of audio cassette tapes and video recordings. Research papers written by students at the seminary, within the past two years, frequently cite sources at least ten years old. Considering the pace that media technology has developed in the past decade, those involved in the media discipline have neglected to document developments adequately. Because insufficient work has been produced in the field of media missions, this writer hopes to make a contribution by collating significant data in this area and providing a comprehensive bibliography that will be of use to other researchers. A field trip to Africa during the summer of 1986 provided the opportunity to gather primary research data in the form of minutes and memoranda. Discussions with media missions and attendance at media planning meetings provided insight into the practical workings of the Southern Baptist Convention that have proved invaluable to an understanding of this subject.

## I. THE ANTECEDENTS OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST MEDIA MISSIONS IN AFRICA.

The African continent first received the attention of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1846. The opening of a new work in Lesotho in March 1987 provides fresh evidence of the ongoing investment of human and financial resources that continues to be made in Africa. In the early days of mission work in Africa the missionary was the only resource and therefore had to be a person of well rounded ability, a jack-of-all-trades and a master of many of them as well. Media missions developed out of the embryonic efforts of those early missionaries as they attempted to communicate their message in the best way possible with limited assistance. Strategic guidance, in broad terms, was provided by the Foreign Mission Board's statements of philosophy that has proved to be flexible enough to remain healthy and viable in the varied cultural, political, social, spiritual and economic environment of Africa since 1846. The most important antecedent of media missions in Africa is therefore the early missionary. However, an examination of Foreign Mission Board philosophy and the environmental realities of Africa both provide an important base for understanding media missions in Africa.

### A. MEDIA MISSIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF FOREIGN MISSION BOARD POLICY.

There is a tendency to view media in missions as a revolutionary byproduct of this technologically advanced contemporary world. This perception is based upon the radical changes in religious broadcasting that have taken place within the continental United States during the past twenty years. The introduction of cable T.V. and domestic satellite communion has provided the highways upon which the "Electronic Church" has been built. Unfortunately, many in their desire to harness

some of the benefits of these new media tools neglected to calculate just how financially burdensome these new ventures would be. The tragic outcome is a proliferation of seemingly money-hungry evangelists or silver-tongued manipulators who leave even the most tolerant of people skeptical about the lasting benefits of such media endeavors.

Negative stereotypical impressions of media work need to be dispelled when dealing with media missions within the Southern Baptist Convention. First, the use of media, in this broader, more familiar context provides ample evidence that media has enjoyed an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary history with the Southern Baptist Convention. The need to publish materials for missionary work has been pursued from the time the Southern Baptist Convention was organized in 1845 with the specific aim of promoting foreign and domestic missions to the present time.<sup>1</sup> Electronic media, the other major subdivision of media missions, has a much later history due, in part, to its dependence upon recent technological advancements. As early as 1938, the Southern Baptist Convention, sensitive to the need to incorporate new media tools to advance the progress of its work, commissioned a committee to investigate the field of radio broadcasting as a possible means of projecting the gospel.<sup>2</sup> Some of the urgency to investigate radio broadcasting was to insure that the Southern Baptist Convention did not fall behind the efforts of other groups who might monopolize this powerful form of communication. These early efforts to grow with progress have not diminished, as is born out by the signing in 1981 of a \$2.1 million-per-year lease of a satellite transponder for the American Christian Television Service.<sup>3</sup> While this deep commitment to utilize electronic media domestically has reached heights of involvement undreamed of even ten years ago, an equally strong effort has been

made in foreign missions to use media effectively.

A discussion of Southern Baptist media missions would be incomplete without understanding the overall program of which it forms a part. The story of missions is dynamic and comments, such as are to be found in this paper, form small, "still life" portraits of a vibrantly changing scene. There are many quality publications distributed by the Foreign Mission Board that specifically seek to "tell the story" of Southern Baptist missions. Each year, furloughing missionaries meet and speak to Baptists throughout the nation in an attempt to bring a fresh word and comment upon the latest developments.

The best starting point from which to trace the beginnings of media missions can be found in the statement of Foreign Missions Board Philosophy.<sup>4</sup> The philosophy is primarily Biblically based to the extent that the Bible speaks to the issues of world missions. However, the experience of Christian history, the history of Southern Baptists-which includes over a century of missions experience-and the historical context of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, all aggregate to provide the environment in which the mission philosophy is produced. The task of missions to make disciples, to baptize them, and to teach them to observe all that Christ commanded is a task that involves ministry to every area of need that presents itself. In this age of clamoring voices, the demonstration of genuine love manifested by compassion to those who are sick, hungry, distressed and helpless still presents a means of authenticating genuine love. From the Foreign Mission Board's statements, it is clear that their commitment to missions is, in no sense, one that is superficial; the inherent intent is to propagate a gospel that is backed by personal involvement. Moreover, the following statement illustrates the fact that there



will be instances where electronic communication alone will be the best ministry to offer because the great over-arching objective of Bold Mission Thrust is to provide every person on earth with the opportunity to hear the gospel by the turn of the century:

The Board is committed to a strategy of entering new countries, as well as ministry to neglected areas in countries already entered, as God may lead. It believes attempts should be made to communicate the gospel via mass media to countries where missionaries either cannot go or are prevented from preaching.<sup>5</sup>

The enormity of the task that faces Christians demands that increased and improved use of mass media techniques be effected to make the task of outreach realizable. The printed page, radio, television and other audiovisual techniques are constantly being improved; the cost of using them continues to decrease, and the effective use of these tools is limited only by the ability to apply them in a skilled manner to the task at hand. The Board has committed itself to some fundamental principles of operation, which include indigenous church strength and the recognition that the local people are to be helped to help themselves. This places the emphasis on tailor-making media products that have been culturally attuned to the sensitivities of the local needs. The marriage of skills between the various missions and missionary specialists as they attempt to strengthen the local church where it is most lacking is vitally important. Decentralized planning is another fundamental principle whereby long-range strategy is designed to encourage local initiative and accountability for the work. To this end, nationals are being encouraged to develop their media skills, and, in most countries where the Foreign Mission Board works, the nationals are involved in the work of media-missions.

Media missions has a recognized and supported role to play in the



life of foreign missions. It is a role that is integrated with the overall program, and therein lies its strength and safety. The integrated leadership approach to media missions will prevent the development of programs that are disconnected from the day-to-day needs of each mission. This commitment is best summed up by the following extract from the Foreign Mission Board statement of Philosophy:

The Board conducts a unified program, not a collection of separate programs. It believes that proportion and balance are both desirable and necessary. Methodology should be kept comprehensive and flexible. Every method which God will honor should be employed where feasible and possible.<sup>6</sup>

The unified program mentioned is a strategy adopted by the Foreign Mission Board to keep the total mission effort concentrated. Attempts at specialization must be directed toward supporting the core thrust of the Board as a sending agency. For media missions this means that media development is always carried out under the guidance and approval of the area leadership and never as an independent program with different goals.

## B. MEDIA MISSIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF AFRICAN MISSIONS.

The continent of Africa has a mystique all of its own, and is a continent of great dimensions physically, culturally, socially and linguistically. Communications on the continent are as complex as one will find anywhere in the world, and herein lies a problem of huge dimensions that can be addressed by media missionaries who have made effective communication their primary task.

Africa has an approximate population of 545 million people, the majority of whom live south of the Sahara.<sup>7</sup> The population is unevenly distributed with 70% living in rural areas. However, the global phenomenon of urbanization is making its own impact, and in many cities in Africa the infrastructure of the cities is groaning under the stress of the urban influx. Many who are experiencing starvation and hardships in the rural areas see the city as offering some form of salvation from their plight. Compounding the problem of urbanization is the rapid population growth, due, in part, to the improved medical care being provided and the high birth rate. The death rate is still tragically high with countless numbers still the victims of starvation, corruption, power struggles and disease. The average life expectancy is 48 years of age compared to 73 years of age in the United States. Some of the poorer nations, such as Burkino Faso, have a life expectancy of 32 years of age.

There are upwards of 800 languages spoken throughout the continent, making communications a complex task. Because of this proliferation of languages, many people are multilingual. Each year the Foreign Mission Board spends substantial amounts of resources in developing the language skills of career missionaries, seeing in this commitment a proven way to identify, communicate, and work with the nationals. There is no way

to overstate the goodwill generated and the effectiveness achieved by those who invest their energies in seeking proficiency in the local language.

Religious life is as colorful and varied as the rest of the personality of Africa. As many as 200 million people practice their local traditional religion. This local religion is usually animism, defined by John Semands as follows:

The term animism is derived from the Latin word "anima" meaning "breath" or "soul". It is the belief in the existence of spiritual beings, including the spirit of the living and the dead as well as those that have no human origin. It is the doctrine that places the source of mental and even physical life in an energy independent of, or at least distinct from, the body. Most commonly, animism has been defined simply as "spirit worship", distinguishable from the worship of God or gods.<sup>8</sup>

One of the encouraging aspects about animism, according to Semands, is that the Christian movement has enjoyed some of its greatest successes with animistic peoples. His explanation for this fact is that they have a very strong group identity that offers strong resistance to early approaches, but tends to develop into a "people movement" once progress is made. This is supported by his statement:

Millions of animists in Africa today are followers of Christ and constitute the largest block of Christendom outside the western world. The impact of scientific knowledge, education, and the disruption of village life by industrialization and urbanization have all contributed to the rapid disintertation of animism in many parts of the world.<sup>9</sup>

For media missions, effective understanding of the general religious background of the target audience is crucial to understanding the people. The only realistic starting point with people begins by determining what their needs are and by developing a realistic and effective plan to meet those needs. James Engel and H. Wilbert Norton, in their book, What's Gone Wrong with the Harvest, have a basic proposition that crisply states

the approach being used by the media ministries personnel in Africa:

The responsibility of the Christian communicator is to approach people where they are in terms of their spiritual position and, through an appropriate combination of message and media, to cause them to progress in their decision process toward initial commitment and subsequent growth.<sup>10</sup>

Those involved in media missions as specialists are in the fortunate position of having their "general evangelist" colleagues working closely with the people and in a position to discern the spiritual status of the people. Together they are able to agree upon the appropriate combination of message and media that will seek to meet the growth needs of the people to whom they seek to minister. A message made relevant by careful analysis and sensitivity to the uniqueness of the peoples addressed will differentiate those who communicate superficially and those who communicate to the very depth of people's spiritual needs. Against the background of this sort of specific targeting media products developed in the United States are likely to have little lasting impact in an area of the world such as Africa that is unique.

The second major religious group in Africa is formed by 150 million Muslims. Islam has enjoyed wide success in Africa although friction and distrust have marred the relationship of Christian and Islam through the ages. North Africa, in particular, has been a Muslim stronghold for many years. There can be no doubt that the Muslim is one of the more difficult persons to reach with the gospel, and those who seek to do so must be the embodiment of incarnational love, skilled in the communication of a gospel that seeks to minister with a true sense of realism.

Roman Catholics are estimated to be approximately 130 million strong and form the third of the three major religious groups in Africa. However, the situation in Africa has, in recent decades, begun to change. Earlier

years saw the north of Africa dominated by Islam and the center and south of the continent dominated by animism. David Barrett, a well known missionary sociologist, has in recent years completed an extensive statistical analysis of population and church growth of Christianity in Africa, and he has made some startling predictions about the growth of Christianity on the continent by the end of the century. He estimates that there will be 350 million Christians in Africa by the turn of the century, which will mean, in percentage terms, that 50% of all the peoples of Africa will be Christian.<sup>11</sup> Many would disagree with Barrett about his definitions as to when someone ought to be counted as a Christian. His critics believe he is not conservative enough in his definitions, but in spite of these differences, no one would dispute the fact that Africa presents opportunities to "make disciples" unparalleled anywhere in the world, at least in the quantitative sense. From this brief discussion of the religious heritage of Africa, it is clear that Africa presents complexities for missionary endeavor that can be helpfully addressed by media missionaries. The adoption of effective strategies will call for the most energetic, creative, corporate effort which Southern Baptists are capable of producing.

Communication services in Africa tend to be better in the urban, as opposed to the rural, areas. Most of the capital cities of Africa can provide better communication to Europe than to the remote rural areas of their country. This is a residual effect of colonialism that placed a high value upon having good communications with the mother countries in Europe. Radio has, for many years, been the chief means of mass communication in Africa. Every African country has its own broadcasting capability. It is estimated that only 8% of the people of Africa own radios, but the declining cost of radios has made the possibility of own-

ership widespread. The remotest villages throughout the continent will often have access to a radio. The voice of the radio commands a great deal of respect and fascination by the majority of Africans. This respect comes from their fascination with sophisticated electronic hardware and the fact that radio appears "magical" to many of the rural people. Radio is often associated with the government because there are a small number of private stations and the large number of government controlled stations. Radio frequency allocations are usually jealously guarded and issued in accordance with Comité Consultatif International Télégraphique et Téléphonique (C.C.I.T.T.) recommendations. Television is in its early stages of development in many African countries, although twenty countries provide T.V. service. For example, developed countries like the Republic of South Africa are capable of producing and broadcasting programs of a quality equal to the best offered anywhere in the developed world, therefore making it necessary for media missionaries to produce top quality material acceptable to these advanced networks.

Of the 4.5 million telephones on the continent, half are in service in the Republic of South Africa and Egypt. Sophisticated terrestrial communication systems have been installed for many years in the colonized countries of Africa to provide the basic national communication capabilities necessary for any nation to grow and prosper. All of these established idiosyncrasies of development in Africa provide channels of communication that, although controlled by national governments, are potential communication tools needed to reach out to the urban and rural populations of Africa.

The Foreign Mission Board's relationship with Africa has been a long and fruitful one and goes back to June, 1846, when the following statement



was made:

Another important position which the board considers themselves as specially invited to occupy is Africa. They are only waiting to secure men of suitable qualifications to enter the field. Africa is doubtless to be evangelized.<sup>12</sup>

In the light of subsequent years, progress has been made, and many have dedicated their lives to see the bold vision for Africa realized. The statement was bold and visionary then, and it is just as fresh, bold and relevant today as men and women with qualifications peculiar to this age of technology seek to apply their special talents to insure that Africa continues to be evangelized.



C. THE MEDIA SPECIALIST: A NEW PHENOMENON.

The central axiom in Southern Baptist methodology is that the Foreign Mission Board is committed to plurality in mission methods and not to a single methodology. This methodology is best summed up in the Bold Mission Thrust document adopted in January, 1976:

The methodology is comprehensive and flexible. Our commitment is not to one method to the exclusion of others. Every method which God will honor should be employed where feasible and possible. Comprehensive methodology is inclusive of all such methods.

Some mission organizations exist to promote one method exclusively. Our commitment to a comprehensive methodology may expose our work to certain problems which such organizations do not face. The polarizations which can result from the magnification of one method over another have unfortunate consequences. Methods, procedures, and organizational forms are being called into question by changing times. New ways will be found to do old and new things. Care will be taken to preserve necessary functions—even though forms may have to change radically.<sup>13</sup>

The emphasis in this whole statement is on flexibility and comprehensiveness of ideas which have been transplanted into the philosophy of the Foreign Mission Board discussed earlier. One of the ways that comprehensiveness is being built into Southern Baptist Mission strategy is through the sending of media specialists to the mission field as permanent members of the mission team. These specialists are being trained at Southern Baptist seminaries. Southwestern Seminary, which has in recent years been heavily involved in providing staff for, and supporting the American Christian Television Network, offers the Master of Arts in Communications degree. This degree is described in their Bulletin as follows: "The purpose of the Master's degree is to prepare men and women to minister effectively in an age dominated by changing lifestyles and abbreviated value systems which affect our basic religious, cultural, social and technological perspectives."<sup>14</sup> A new generation of professionals who are

electronically literate need to be given a specialized training that will allow them to be resource members of the mission team. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has stated that its Master of Arts in Christian Education degree with vocational major is aimed at "producing producers." These they describe as people who are competently able to produce program materials within the tight constraints of time and budget that face those involved in a church related media discipline. The skills they intend to impart include the following:

- A. A basic understanding of general communication.
- B. A basic understanding of the mass media.
- C. Experience in writing scripts.
- D. Knowledge of the fundamentals of dramatic production.
- E. Experience in program design.
- F. Experience in production.
- G. A basic understanding of media strategy and how to go about planning such for a local area.
- H. Other related specializations depending on the context of the media minister's work (i.e. studies in cross-cultural communication for the media missionary.)<sup>15</sup>

Most of these programs are in their infancy at this time, but they are being designed to allow the new media specialist enough breadth of knowledge to adapt to the demands of the special situations in which they will find themselves. In evaluating this new communications degree the major weakness lies in the fact that it is radically different from the traditional theology and Christian degrees offered to date. The question of course content and emphasis must be judged by results that will take years to determine and evaluate. Time will disclose how well the communication specialists are able to complement those in traditional ministries and justify their claim to be a vital link in modern day ministry.

The measure of growth in foreign missions is therefore most clearly to be seen qualitatively as well as quantitatively, as Winston Crawley has indicated:

While reaching out to many additional countries with a much larger mission force, Southern Baptists have also greatly expanded the variety of other missions ministries. Prior to 1950, missionary forces consisted almost entirely of preachers and women evangelists, teachers, doctors and nurses. Since then, many specialized ministries have been added, such as agriculture relief and development, social work, student ministry, music, religious education, broadcasting—in fact, a total about 80 categories of missionary ministry.<sup>16</sup>

Missionary societies have been formed over the years to address specialized missionary needs. For example, the Missionary Aviation Fellowship was formed to meet the special travel needs of missionaries in areas where travel is difficult. Trans World Radio is an example of an organization that has specialized in a broadcast ministry and the provision of air time—via its transmitters—for other Christian organizations who have production facilities exclusively. In this perspective, the media specialists of the Foreign Mission Board are unique in that they are appointed as part of a larger team. Their task is performed within the context of their fellow missionaries' needs and perception of how the work should be done. Cooperating in missions has been a unifying factor on the foreign fields as the missionary force becomes more heterogeneous in the future. The overall effectiveness of Southern Baptist Missions will, in the future, be dependent upon how well the Foreign Mission Board is able to make its multi-faceted missionary team more effective than the effectiveness that those acting alone could ever achieve.

Media consultants have been appointed to help in the overall coordination of media. Their task is to evaluate and analyse, then monitor all media efforts to insure their compliance to the Board's philosophy that media tools support the work of each mission. They are available to missions and missionary specialists alike to assist them to do their tasks better by the use of media. The rapidly changing media environment has



## II. INTERNATIONAL MEDIA CLUSTERS.

The study of media clusters in Africa offers the best existing organizational structure by which to analyze the work of media missionaries in Africa. The clusters are grouped in accordance with geographical, resource and ministry requirements rather than by the existing political national boundaries that are often ethnically fragmented, and place limitations on media development work. National boundaries cannot be ignored, and the majority of missionary work is organized on a national basis without hinderance to that work. Media resources are scarce and often cannot be justified in the national context but can be justified and implemented within the multinational context. Media clusters therefore represent logically related areas that often correlate closely with general administration boundaries. An analysis of these clusters follows.

### A. THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIA CLUSTERS IN AFRICA.

Planning for Christian missions never ends because it demands of those involved in it an ability to see the detail of the present in view of the trends that are continually developing in every society. Whether "megatrends" or "microtrends," all are potential indicators that help to prepare for the future in a thinking rather than a haphazard fashion. Winston Crawley offers the warning, "In missions, there can be the same danger that has been observed in national defense: the danger of preparing for the previous war."<sup>17</sup> Media clusters provide tangible evidence that those responsible for the planning of the media ministries in Africa are seeking to provide a strong interdependent means of coordinating the scarce resources available.

At a recent All Africa Media Director's Conference held at Brakenhurst,

Limuru, Kenya, on September 22-27, 1986, the following philosophy statement was made that reflects the self-perception of media directors working in Africa:

Whereas our over-arching objective in missions is evangelism that results in churches, we believe appropriate media use supports strategies for evangelism, church growth and leadership training. We will produce media materials adaptable to the cultures of our area in consideration of the cost and availability of hardware and will support the utilization of indigenous forms of communication.<sup>18</sup>

The philosophy statement states why involvement in media missions is taking place in Africa. The support role is a complex one that demands close linkage between the missionaries working in the areas of evangelism and those seeking to help their efforts succeed. But the work of winning a person to Christ is only the beginning and not an end in itself. The new convert must be channelled into a local church and ultimately trained to assume leadership responsibilities in accordance with talents and gifts that the individual has been given.

The concept of media clusters is best explained in the context of how the media ministry personnel plan to carry out their work. The statement of purpose stated at this conference illustrates in clear terms just how the media specialists plan to achieve their objectives:

It is the purpose of the Baptist media directors in Africa to support local missions/national entities and each other in: (1) sharing resources, (2) creating awareness of Baptist participation in sharing the gospel in Africa, (3) and training media producers and users in order to communicate effectively the gospel of Jesus Christ in such a way that all peoples of Africa can be confronted with the opportunity: to accept Christ as Saviour, to become involved with a local Baptist church, to mature spiritually and to share their faith.<sup>19</sup>

Sharing resources is not an easy matter in a continent three times the size of the continental U.S., but it is vitally important to be able to share resources in an efficient manner. In order to provide the opportunities of access to electronic and print media resources, it has



been necessary to establish in a formal manner, Multinational and International Institutions. The institutions provide an umbrella under which services can be offered by certain countries with no disruption to the work being carried out within the service-providing country. Wise stewardship alone necessitates the sharing of personnel and resources with those nations that would find it prohibitively expensive to attempt the provision of their own media services. Of paramount importance is the fact that the collective efforts of a number of countries are able to provide a level of service not possible on an individual basis.

A study of media clusters is therefore beneficial in that it provides a structured way by which the products and services available within Africa can be documented. Secondly, the functioning of the clusters provides a clear understanding of the role that the media ministers play in Africa. Finally, the media clusters will be fashioned and commissioned in years to come,<sup>20</sup>

The term "multinational" is usually applied to joint venture situations where the geographic proximity of adjacent missions has been exploited, such as in the establishing of Setswana Publishing House, which serves the Botswana mission and the Bophuthatswana mission. From an organizational point of view, these Multinational Institutions are under the control of a board, whose members are drawn from the mission personnel of the countries they seek to serve. The International Institutions have been initiated to meet the needs of a particular group of countries on an international basis. These clusters have not spontaneously developed because of geographic proximity, but have been formally created by the media consultant for Africa, in cooperation with area directors, associates to the area directors and media specialists. These leaders have been in the best position to propose the



establishment of International Institutions because of the "big picture" perspective that their duties involve. Cooperation on this level is enabling the achievement of goals that would not otherwise be possible.

[The following text is extremely faint and illegible, appearing to be a list or a series of points.]

## B. THE DEVELOPMENT OF BaPSWA: A CASE STUDY.

In 1980, Ted Ward, a Michigan State University professor, in addressing the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, made the following observation, "God isn't necessarily always going to do things the way he has been doing . . . Your mission board faces a time when there are to be in the plans of God, new modes of missions, new kinds of activity."<sup>21</sup> The recent development of Baptist Publications West Africa is a fresh example of the new kinds of activity to be seen in Africa. This historical outline of the birth of BaPSWA serves as an insightful illustration of how past and future media clusters have been and will continue to be formed. Much of the material used in recounting the development and creation of BaPSWA comes from internal memoranda and letters sent from the office of the Media Consultant, Africa.

In 1981, Dr. W.R.O. Ojo of Nigeria, while attending an International Editors' Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, called together an ad hoc committee of representatives from West Africa to discuss the possibility of establishing an International Publications Service for West Africa. This committee summarily recommended that such a feasibility study be undertaken.<sup>22</sup> The need for such an organization had been evident for a number of years prior to this because of the need to share what was being done on the West and East of Africa. West Africa, primarily Nigeria, had over the years developed Sunday School, Church Training, W.M.U., and R.A. literature, which was unknown and unused in the Eastern and Southern areas of Africa. In contrast, East Africa had spent much time and effort in developing Sunday School curriculum, stewardship and church growth materials.<sup>23</sup> Of particular significance at this time were the existing needs in many of the smaller and more recently established countries in

West Africa whose chances of replicating such materials were slim, quite apart from the obvious waste of personnel, time and finance that would be needed for them to do this. Thus, it was envisioned that cross-continent upgrading of materials would ensue, creating the possibility of enhancing the quality of the publication with each transfer. One of the great burdens placed upon missions responsible for print media is the burden of contextualizing material available in the United States into a form suitable for use in Africa. While the plurality of language and culture has already been stressed, there are common elements of culture that make materials that have been generally adapted for a particular region easily altered to meet the special needs of neighboring regions.

On December 18, 1984, Dr. Zeb Moss informed mission chairmen and participants that approval had been granted by the Area Director for West Africa, John Mills, to call together a task force on literature coordination for the English-speaking countries of West Africa. The needs of English-speaking West Africa had become too great to be handled by Francophone West Africa and the problem had to be addressed. This task force met on March 18, 1985, in Monrovia, Liberia. Participants from The Gambia, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria and Francophone publications met together with the following resource persons-Dr. Zeb Moss, Rev. David Mayhall, Dr. Bert Dyson, Dr. Bill Bullington and Rev. and Mrs. Ralph Harrell.<sup>24</sup>

Dr. Zeb Moss presented a paper opening the West Africa literature task force and reminded those present of the fact that their call was to a ministry involving the printed word. "The ministry of writing, publishing, distributing and using Christian literature in Africa, is a highly complicated and involved process . . . We are here because the needs are

greater than we can meet without each other's help."<sup>25</sup>

Dr. Moss discussed at this meeting some of the basic needs at every level of missionary activity. He pointed out that tracts have had, and will continue to have, a part to play in the literature needs of Africa. He recalled the fact that the Associate Pastor at Parklands Church in Nairobi could trace his salvation experience to receiving and reading an evangelistic tract. Experience had shown that some of the best tracts available were those written for Africa by Africans.<sup>26</sup>

In the area of leadership training, it was apparent that the needs are often highly specialized, calling for the production of literature needed to train pastors and other church leaders. Dr. Moss cited as an example such material as the theological education by extension materials developed by Baptist nationals and missionaries which are currently being printed in Nairobi.

The area of discipleship training was discussed as one particularly significant because upon it rested the capability and responsibility of being able to train people to an adequate level of Christian maturity. To this end, "Follow the Master" and "MasterLife" material in basic English format needed an organization capable of providing distribution and coordination.

The second major reason given by Dr. Moss for the establishing of a Baptist Publication Service in West Africa was ". . . because the frustrations of getting it done requires (sic) us to work together to overcome as many of these difficulties as possible."<sup>27</sup> The difficulties included such things as the financial squeeze that was being felt throughout the Foreign Mission Board that could be helped by reducing the high development costs associated with the production of original materials. To

replicate the writing of materials on a country-by-country basis would be inexcusable and illogical. A further difficult area to be addressed was the development of curriculum material to meet the needs of West Africa in such a way that the extensive experience and current materials of the International Publications Services of East and Southern Africa be usefully drawn upon. Materials for pre-schoolers, beginners, primaries, juniors, intermediates, young people and adults had already been developed with a three year grid of units and lessons and could provide a solid base upon which West African needs could be built.<sup>28</sup>

The major difficulty to be overcome was in the provision of trained and committed writers. Dr. Moss emphasized the fact that there were no short cuts in the development of writers. Long, hard work would be needed to develop the necessary skills. A noted frustration of talented writers was that they were not able to devote quality time to writing due to the pressure of other leadership responsibilities. The general shortage of trained writers demanded that the results produced by writers be disseminated beyond their country of origination. In this way, the efforts of writers could be multiplied many times.

A third reason given for the establishment of a West African Publishing Service was, "the opportunities for effective use of Christian literature are greater than ever before in Anglophone West Africa."<sup>29</sup> Dr. Moss drew attention to the deep hunger for good reading material that existed throughout the area. Christian literature, to the secular world, was a need that had not even been fully addressed. Quality Christian literature needed to be placed in Baptist and other bookshops. There was a need for African writers to write literature that went beyond the demands and scope of the most urgent and pressing needs.<sup>30</sup> Captivating

and inspiring literature has vast potential in a continent hungry for the written word.

The fourth major reason given at the meeting for the formation of an Anglophone Publication Service was the need, "to establish some sort of organizational entity that would help to accomplish the purpose of providing Christian literature and services that present and/or aid in presenting the gospel to the people of Anglophone West Africa."<sup>31</sup> By creating a dedicated organization, it was hoped to provide materials in a style and format adapted to the region in question. The new organization would begin with one couple and local secretarial help. This small team was envisioned by Dr. Moss to be responsible for the assignment of writing, the receiving of manuscripts and the coordination of information and materials among the Anglophone countries.

The primary recommendation that came out of the task force meeting on literature coordination in West Africa was that which called for the formation of an organization to be called Baptist Publications Services West Africa.<sup>32</sup> The purpose of the organization was defined as follows:

The purpose of this organization is to serve as a resource for (1) the sharing of information concerning available printed materials and manuscripts, (2) the coordination of the adaption of existing materials and the development of new materials, (3) the training of writers, (4) a consultory service of research and analysis for participating countries, and (5) other related services that present and/or aid in presenting the Gospel to the people of West Africa in style and format that is adapted to the area to (1) persuade them to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, (2) develop mature Christians in Jesus Christ, and (3) strengthen churches and lead them to carry out Christ's command to make disciples and develop additional churches.<sup>33</sup>

The members present also discussed the scope of the new organization's operations, which was to include all of the curriculum and non-curriculum materials that would be needed in Anglophone West Africa. The new organi-



zation would look at all of the currently available African materials with the view to making recommendations regarding their suitability based on a careful evaluation of those materials. The new organization would have to coordinate the efforts of training and selecting local writers. All manuscripts would be controlled and distributed by the BaPSWA office to insure an effective means of administration of materials. In those instances where existing materials proved to be inadequate or unsuitable, BaPSWA would be responsible for the research and development of new materials. In the area of leadership training materials, BaPSWA would have the responsibility to provide for the needs of the area. Discipleship training materials, such as "MasterLife" and "Follow the Master" would also be dependent upon BaPSWA for regional adaption as necessary.

The task force made recommendations concerning the structure of the committee that would be responsible for the government of the new organization. Five members would be allowed from each of the participating countries that had organized conventions operating with those countries. The remaining participating countries would be permitted to have one representative on the committee. The mutual agreement of the convention and mission in each country would be sought and a request made to appoint representatives. By virtue of their offices, the Media Consultant for Africa, the Associate to the Area Director for English-speaking West Africa, and the Director of Francophone Baptist Publications would occupy a position on the governing committee.

The selection of Monrovia, Liberia, as the geographical location for BaPSWA was determined on the basis of its centrality to the participating countries, services available and airport facilities. The task force meeting ended with the establishment of objectives and goals to be con-



sidered at the first planning meeting of BaPSWA to be scheduled on December 11-12, 1985.<sup>34</sup> This planning meeting was held and provided the opportunity for participants to determine, in a workshop environment, the specific objectives and goals of the BaPSWA organization.

The first organizational meeting of BaPSWA was held on March 12-13, 1986, in Monrovia, Liberia. This was the first time that the appointed representatives from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Ghana, The Gambia, Liberia and Kenya had met together. Dr. Bert Dyson was elected as Chairman, and Rev. J. Gbana Hall was elected as Secretary. At the meeting, Mrs. Pat Bellinger was introduced as the person nominated by the Southern Baptist Mission in Liberia to serve as Coordinator, and she was duly affirmed to this position by those present at the meeting. The Rev. David Mayhall, Associate to the Area Director, West Africa, explained to those gathered that BaPSWA was not a "command post" but a "resource center."<sup>35</sup> The importance of seeing the new organization as a coordinating committee was important because it was in this role that it would be able to serve the needs of countries whose closeness to the reality of existing needs could not, in any way, be substituted by an organization whose only purpose was to provide resources. Working groups were set up during the meeting to plan, in specific terms, needs in the areas of coordinated curriculum materials, MasterLife and other discipleship materials and non-curriculum materials. Jay Stewart, Evelyn Moss and Zeb Moss called attention to the fact that the Office of Overseas Operations of the Foreign Missions Board had circulated its priority concerns for the period 1986-1989. Ten such concerns were circulated, but he felt that three specifically related to the work of BaPSWA. "Priority concern 4: Emphasize church development in Christian discipleship, stewardship, family life

and missions outreach responsibility."<sup>37</sup> To comply with this concern, it would be necessary for each mission to work out its specific literature needs because literature would be a fundamental element in any outreach plan. Priority concern Number 6 was stated as follows:

"Undergird publications and distribution of Bibles and materials that contribute to reaching Bold Mission Thrust intentions."<sup>38</sup> This concern called attention to one of the "thorniest" problems experienced by those involved in literature ministries.<sup>39</sup> The challenge of getting the right person at the right time was a process that would require the special attention of those involved in BaPSWA planning. Distribution problem solving would enable strides to be made in the spirit of Bold Mission Thrust.

Dr. Moss concluded his discussion of priority concerns by focusing attention on priority concern Number 10, and explained that BaPSWA itself had become a manifested solution to the problem. Priority concern Number 10 called upon missions to "develop plans to interchange technologies, materials and curricula among Baptist publications and media centers."<sup>40</sup> He predicted that the work of BaPSWA would have an impact on Eastern and Southern Africa because it enlarged the cooperative effort in insuring that the considerable bulk of valuable materials being produced in country after country was shared in an effective manner.<sup>41</sup>

Since the first organizational meeting in March of 1986, BaPSWA has commenced its task of better addressing the printed word needs of Anglophone West Africa. With this organizational "hub" in place, it will be possible to meet the literature needs of conventions and missions. Attention is drawn to the fact that convention participation draws the nationals directly into the planning, leading, organizing and controlling

functions involved in literature ministries. In this way, local indigenous talent becomes the golden link in helping to communicate in the environment of Africa.

C. FRANCOPHONE MEDIA AND ITS ROLE IN FRENCH-SPEAKING WEST AFRICA.MISSIONS.

The pluralistic linguistic environment of Africa is as distinctly evident in Francophone West Africa as one may find anywhere on the African continent. The Francophone countries of Africa include fifteen republics of Benin, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Galon, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Burkino Faso and Zaire. All of these countries were formally under the control of France or Belguim, and, as a result, French is regarded as the official language of the area. Institutes of higher education use the French language as the medium of instruction, which results in the strengthening and perpetuation of the language. Many of these nations gained their independence during the 1950's and 1960's, and thus solutions to the political aspirations of the indigenous peoples were realized. However, the harsh economic realities of life did not disappear with the acquisition of independence, with the result that many of the nations in this area have a very weak economic base. Unemployment, poverty and drought have taken their toll on the peoples of these regions and have often resulted in political instability and tension between nations. The Ivory Coast is a notable economic exception because of the way that country has been able to develop and grow since obtaining independence. None of the countries of this area are more than 20% Christian, with countries like Senegal being more than 95% Muslim. Of all the Christian groups working in the area, the most persuasive one has been Roman Catholic, who has made an impact in the areas of medicare and education. The Catholics enjoyed particularly good relationships with the former colonial powers, to a degree that placed Protestant groups at a disadvantage. But in recent times, this former distinction has blurred, and Protestant groups

are no longer regarded with the suspicion of former times.<sup>42</sup> The following groups—all Protestant—are currently exercising their ministries in this area. The Boemen Mission (Togo 1853), Assemblies of God, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Conservative Baptists, Sudan Interior Mission, World Evangelistic Crusade, United World Missions, New Tribes, Apostolic Mission groups, Methodists, Presbyterians and some independent groups.<sup>43</sup> As with all areas, an understanding of the influences and idiosyncracies of the region served by the Francophone media cluster help in understanding how media needs ought to be adapted to make them relevant to the communications environment.

The program base design for Francophone media is a foundational document that outlines the purpose, function and character of the media cluster in French-speaking Africa, and it lists ten prominent influences and factors that it sees as affecting the work in the French region of Africa. Those are:

1. Lack of raw materials and energy resources.
2. Low economic development.
3. Militant nationalism.
4. Unstable political systems.
5. Multiplicity of tribal groups and languages.
6. Low literacy rates.
7. Urbanization and attendant problems.
8. Disturbance and deterioration of the traditional family.
9. Rising religious tensions.
10. Inroads of materialism.<sup>44</sup>

The list above highlights the dynamic social, political and economic realities of this area and helps to reinforce the fact that a region so distinctively characterised demands missionary efforts that are appropriately contextualized.

The first Southern Baptist missionaries to enter Francophone West Africa did so in 1964 in the person of the Clayton Bonds, who were trans-

ferred from Ghana (Anglophone West Africa) to Togo. In 1966, the Ivory Coast received its first missionaries when John Mills, (the present Area Director, West Africa), and his family, together with Estelle Freeland, arrived on transfer from Nigeria. Senegal was entered in 1969, Benin in 1970, Burkino Faso in 1971 and Niger in 1973.<sup>45</sup> From these early beginnings, the building of the media center to serve this area was completed in 1980 after years of visionary planning that had begun as early as 1968.<sup>46</sup>

In fact, the Francophone conference of 1969 "moved that publication work for all Francophone-speaking Africa can be done best and most economically from one center, and that we emphasize to the Foreign Mission Board the importance and urgency of establishing such a center as soon as possible."<sup>47</sup> It was at this conference that the missionaries collectively agreed to request a missionary literature specialist who was skilled at producing literature in French. At this time an important decision was made that publications in the local languages would be the responsibilities of each individual mission. This principle applies today and represents, in a sense, the "tip of the iceberg" in terms of the volume of work that exists to be addressed for years to come. Most of the work to do with publications is a process that calls for specific skills and experience, not available from third parties. However, the area of printing is one area of operations that has been, and continues to be, subcontracted out to private and Southern Baptist printing facilities. Over the years, Francophone media have used presses in West Africa, France, Hong Kong and America, but have always had three major printing problems: "1) Price of printing, 2) Quality of printing, and 3) Time involved in printing."<sup>48</sup> In an attempt to overcome these problems, it was decided at the fourth conference in 1971, that it would be necessary to involve itself in small



scale printing.<sup>49</sup> This principle is still exercised at the present time in that restraints are placed upon the printing capability while the publishing capability is emphasized. Many private printing companies with economies of a scale that could never be matched by in-house operations have a vital resource that can be utilized. However, the publishing expertise cannot usually be performed by outside parties. The emphasis on publishing is therefore one that will, in the long run, be strategically fruitful and will reflect a correct allocation of scarce resources. The decision to locate the Francophone publications and audiovisuals center in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, was taken at the seventh Francophone conference, which met in 1975 in Dakar, Senegal.<sup>50</sup> At this conference a further important decision affecting the future was taken when it was decided to ask the Ivory Coast mission to request the appointment of a mass communication specialist. Perhaps the most significant recommendation to come out of the conference was the acknowledgement that the guiding of the activities of a media center would require more detailed attention than could be given during an area mission conference. With this in view, it was decided to form a standing committee, "The Publications Committee," that would be responsible for this necessary attention to detail. When the eighth Francophone conference met in Lomé, Togo, in 1976, a further expansion of the duties of the publications committee was determined, together with a name change to that of "Publication and Mass Communications Committee."<sup>51</sup> By virtue of their offices, the following persons were added to the committee: the Chairman of the Francophone conference, the Associate to the Area Director for West Africa and the Radio and T.V. Representative for Africa. New job descriptions of the new committee were defined as being:



That the committee coordinate and direct the work of mass communications in Francophone West Africa, making policy decisions, recommending budgets, assigning responsibility for work, and ensuring that publications and communications ministries are supported and integrated into the total work. Materials to be published will be decided upon by the Publications and Communications Committee."<sup>52</sup>

The present name of the committee "The Francophone Media Committee" was adopted at the 1978 conference, at which time full authority was given to the committee to direct the work of Media Baptistes.<sup>53</sup> Since its inception, the following full-time publications coordinators have served Francophone media: Buddy Norville, Larry Cox and Mitchell Land.<sup>54</sup> Audiovisual coordinators have been James Lassiter and Barbara Whittington, who currently serve as the Audio-Visual Director.

In 1986 the Francophone media committee celebrated its tenth year of operations, an accomplishment that stands as a testimony to the continued cooperative efforts among the French-speaking countries of West Africa.<sup>55</sup> Some of the current accomplishments provide illustrations to the continued growth and vibrancy of the media effort in this area. MasterLife has become a major discipleship tool in Africa. However, an examination of the adaption process in transforming this from an American discipleship tool into an African discipleship tool provides a clear example of the long lead time that is commonplace in the development of new material. The original material had to be rewritten to cater to the African culture and had to be produced in a form that would make it an economically viable item of literature. Only after this rework had been accomplished, was it possible to have MasterLife translated into French of a quality acceptable to the West African peoples. In the future, it is hoped that local language versions of the materials will be produced by the individual missions with the assistance of the Francophone Media center.

In the area of electronic media, Francophone media have produced their first two evangelistic films. One of the interesting aspects of these films centers on the successful use of nationals as actors. The two films produced, "Le Combat" and "Le Indifferent," deal with African problems within the context of Africa and seek to give Biblical answers to perplexing problems common to most people's life experience.<sup>56</sup> Most importantly, these films have produced overwhelming responses and ought to provide years of useful service because of the care taken to avoid hints of dating in the film production. "Le Indifferent" recently received first place as the best foreign film (at the Baptist Publications Relations Conference in 1986).

In the area of audio production, the Abidjan studio produced twelve tapes in areas such as evangelism, music and Bible drama during the past year. Missionaries have found that the audio cassette tapes provide a way for illiterate people to enjoy many of the benefits of studying usually available to those who can read and write. The demand for audio materials is so intense that a decision was made at the 1986 Francophone media committee to build a new audio-visual center in Abidjan. This new expansion of facilities is an indication of the fact that Francophone Media is living up to its stated purpose:

To provide print, audio, visual and audio-visual materials and services that present and/or aid in presenting the Gospel to the people of West Africa in style and format for Africans with the view (1) to persuade them to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; (2) to develop mature Christians in Christ Jesus; and (3) to strengthen churches and lead them to carry out Christ's command to make disciples and develop additional churches.<sup>57</sup>

Much remains to be done by those involved in the work of media missions in West Africa, and much that they have accomplished is serving

as a model that will help mission fields in other areas of the world to improve their media missions ministries.

D. INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS SERVICES AND ITS ROLE IN THE WORK OF  
EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA.

International Publications Services serves the eighteen countries of Eastern and Southern Africa as follow: Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Republic of South Africa, South West Africa, Angola, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, Bophuthatswana and Transkei. However, on the basis of the priority concern that relates to the interchange of "technologies, materials and curricula," I.P.S. seeks to work with Francophone media and BaPSWA.

As far back in the history of Southern Baptist Missions as 1970, two meetings were held to discuss how curriculum and other materials might be shared among the regions of Eastern and Southern Africa. The outcome of these early discussions led to the establishment, in 1974, of an organization entitled "Co-Lit." The true international nature of the cooperation led to the change of name, in 1978, to International Publications Services.<sup>58</sup> The task of coordinating curriculum materials for such ministries as Sunday School and W.M.U. work among eighteen countries is one of considerable dimensions. This great effort to maintain a system of cataloging manuscripts and providing an organization to make such interchange possible is dwarfed by considering the conservation of publication effort that results. Not only are existing materials available on call by the countries served, but the status of present and future materials is communicated to the interested countries.

International Publications Services also trains curriculum writers in the special skills necessary to be effective in this special area. Training is also provided in the areas of news and general writing where skills in adaptive writing can be developed in those with latent talent in this area.

The Bible Way International Correspondence Schools provide a powerful education tool to help Christians in their spiritual development. Many models have been developed whereby this program of materials can be used in church planting and church growth. Bible Way's success throughout the region has resulted in a need for I.P.S. to coordinate materials and produce new materials under the direction of an international editor. Tract writing and tract distribution are all channeled through an international editor. These examples illustrate the nature of tasks undertaken by International Publications Services. In terms of control, I.P.S. is governed in a similar manner to other media clusters, by a board composed of Baptist Publishing House directors in Eastern and Southern Africa, associates to the area director of Eastern and Southern Africa, the Media Consultant for Africa and two nationals on a rotational basis from countries not served by a Baptist publishing house. This board meets once a year to plan and discuss the work of I.P.S. Between meetings of the board, the I.P.S. Director, the staff of I.P.S. and the Media Consultant for Africa form a local management committee to deal with issues not within the operational jurisdiction of the I.P.S. Director.

E. BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS SERVICES AND ITS ROLE IN THE WORK OF EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA.

Baptist International Missions Services (BIMS) grew out of the need to provide missionaries in Africa with medical problems a guest house facility in Johannesburg, South Africa. Such a property was purchased in 1976 in Edenvale, South Africa, making available to the F.M.B., at a reasonable cost, medical facilities equal to those available in the United States. Later, an M.K. Hostel for missionary children was added for those children attending school in South Africa. In 1984, a new facility for BIMS was opened in Harmelia, providing facilities for the numerous services offered by the center. According to the program base design document, BIMS offered the following services:

- Auditing of mission treasurers' books.
- Facilities of a guest house and car rentals in Johannesburg.
- Coordination of literature for the Southern Africa region.
- Media consultation, library and recording studio.
- Living quarters and missionaries supervision for missionary children attending school in Johannesburg.
- Purchasing of all types of mission and personal missionary goods and equipment.<sup>59</sup>

By way of completeness, attention is drawn to the broad responsibility of BIMS in seeking to provide a wide variety of special services in the region. However, the work of the media consultant and the coordinator of literature is pertinent to this paper. The coordination of literature services is the key link in the coordinating process with I.P.S. In fact, the main task of the coordination is to promote, market and distribute I.P.S. materials in Southern Africa.

As a matter of importance, the BIMS literature coordinator is responsible to monitor the process of translating, editing, publishing and distributing materials in the mission, the Baptist Union of South Africa



and publishing houses in the area. The need to keep up with scheduling deadlines among these cooperating groups is important and necessary. The coordination also helps in the development of literature programs, including the training of writers. Because of the fact that this position is new, it is envisioned that considerable growth in this area is anticipated. Jewel Franks assumed responsibility for this position on a temporary basis in October of 1984 and was replaced in October 1985 when Nema Westmoreland began serving full-time as the coordinator of Literature Services for Central and Southern Africa.<sup>60</sup>

The position of media coordinator for Southern Africa has been held by Frank Baker for a number of years. In this post he is responsible for planning, directing, promoting and evaluating media ministries in the Southern African region. The media coordinator, as a resource person, is available to help missions with the purchasing and servicing of equipment. He is available for consultations for those involved with media productions and provides a critical liason between BIMS media and the other missions involved with radio and television ministries. A variety of audio and visual tapes is available, together with a choice of 16mm films offered on a circulation basis. At the present time, BIMS media is producing five radio programs a week. Two Portuguese programs are beamed by Trans-World Radio in Swaziland into Angola and Mozambique. A program in Tswana is beamed into Botswana, and a fourth program transmitted by Radio Pulpit in Pretoria will be beamed into Bophuthatswana.<sup>61</sup> In recent months, an exciting opportunity in Swaziland has been explored by missionary Roy Davidson, where Radio Swaziland has accepted a series of epilogues and morning worship services in English to be aired. The follow-up responsibilities of gospel programing are considerable, and many respondents are

aided in their spiritual development by being enlisted in the Bible Way Correspondence course. According to the "BIMS Broadcaster," mail responses to the Portuguese programs result in 35-50 responses per month. Literature in the form of Bibles, tracts and personal letters are often sent to help with a particular request.<sup>62</sup> These efforts to respond effectively will require considerable effort and place a greater strain upon the resources of BIMS as time progresses. The media studio, located at BIMS, will continue to be used to produce video and audio programs for evangelism and church leadership training aids needed by the region.

Part of the responsibility of the BIMS Media Coordinator is to study and be informed about trends and developments in the mass media industry because the coordinator is in the best position to determine what new techniques and technologies can be effectively introduced into the work of the media missions in his area. Media can only be useful to those who take the trouble to be developed through user skills, and to this end the media coordinator has the challenge to plan, promote and conduct workshops for missionaries and nationals on the use and importance of media.<sup>63</sup>

### III. BROADCASTING IN AFRICA: AN OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS.

Broadcasting deserves special attention because radio is the most pervasive and influential mass media tool available to media missionaries in Africa. Governments in Africa rely heavily upon radio as the means to communicate with their urban and rural peoples. The respect that Africans have for radio is a function of many factors including: the authoritative aura surrounding this medium of communication, the entertainment role that radio plays in African society, the availability of relatively inexpensive radio receivers and the lack of competing forms of communication. Television, video cassette recordings and movie film are not widely enough available to offer any real challenge to the radio. The development of broadcasting competence provides a sound basis upon which other advanced types of electronic media skills may be built. Personnel skilled in the field of radio broadcasting may be readily retrained to master video production techniques. Media clusters develop their audio capabilities in advance of video capabilities because historical technological development has determined this, and developing countries often follow the broad traditional developmental patterns of growth in introducing technology. Technological developments are reducing the costs of video hardware to the point where audio will ultimately become the dominant medium of transmission, as in the United States. Furthermore, media missions are already successfully developing their video capabilities to take advantage of the television time that is becoming available in many of the advanced African countries.

#### A. CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY BROADCASTING IN THE EARLY DAYS.

Broadcasting is one of the most used and misused electronic media

tools to be introduced this century primarily because it is a medium that has often been misunderstood in terms of what is or is not possible. Southern Baptists have been pioneers in the use of radio in religious broadcasting, starting in 1928 when the Argentine Baptist convention formed a committee to oversee radio evangelism in that country.<sup>64</sup> In 1933, missionary C.J. Lowe was broadcasting five programs a day in Shanghai, China, and was one of the early visionaries who sought to use the new medium to spread the gospel rapidly throughout China. In those early days, all broadcasts were made in English—something that was done in Asia and Africa. Alan Compton indicates the only explanation for the use of English as the broadcasting language was the fact that large expatriate groups were seen as potential audiences. One of the important aspects of C.J. Lowe's work is that it embodied a principle later embraced by the Foreign Mission Board, namely, that radio could be used "to soften up the communication barriers of an area into which human resources were to move at a later date."<sup>65</sup> The second major strategy that Lowe incorporated is expressed in an article published in Home and Foreign Fields in September, 1937, "so the messages would flow forth upon the wings of the air to the far interior sections to which no missionaries have ever yet been sent."<sup>66</sup> Excitement was naturally high about the potential offered by radio in those early days because missionaries knew the audience was limited in its listening choice, therefore, making a large, captive listening audience a definite probability. Although this "guaranteed" listening audience perception was true in earlier years, the changing patterns of the broadcasting industry were not readily acknowledged in later years, which often impeded the need to change with change. One can appreciate the excitement of those who saw the possibilities of reaching

the literate and illiterate and expanding their ministry as something to pursue with great energy. Radio introduced an element that represented the opposite extreme to the usual missionary strategy, that sought to deal with the individual and then the larger group. Radio offered an opportunity to reach the masses and work toward meeting the individual. This balance between the two philosophical extremes is one that has continued to require attention.

Most of the efforts experienced during the 1930's came from individual missionaries eager to utilize a tool they believed had special possibilities. The financing for radio work was a problem at a time when the Foreign Mission Board was investing little in this area.<sup>67</sup> Missionaries like Paul C. Porter attempted to draw attention to the fact that shortwave radio was being used by secular interests to reach Brazilians and ought to be used for missionary endeavors. Such requests all played their part in bringing about the creation of a committee in 1946 by the Foreign Mission Board to investigate such possibilities. George W. Sadler, then Secretary of the F.M.B., in an administration committee stated:

It was recommended that the Foreign Mission Board and the Executive Committee be advised of a joint meeting and that Foreign Mission Board request the Radio Committee, (which was a forerunner of the Radio and T.V. Commission), continue its explanation of the possibility of bringing into being facilities by which the good news may be sent over the air to all peoples of the earth.<sup>68</sup>

While much development in the use of radio was taking place in South America, things were beginning to develop in Africa. The first daily radio program was broadcast from Port Harcourt in Nigeria under the initiative taken by the missionaries there.<sup>69</sup> During the 50's, regular broadcasts—either weekly or daily—were typical and reflected the contentment of many that such consistency was true broadcasting. The lack of prerecording

facilities in those days placed a high demand on missionaries who had to broadcast live from the radio station premises. Technological developments in the late 1950's ushered in the possibility of building recording studios which not only made program production much more convenient, but also provided a training facility for local talent to be developed. Many overseas seminary campuses became prime sites for the construction of recording studios. The wider availability of production facilities made it possible to use radio as a tool for creating awareness for special evangelistic efforts.

The missionaries were, naturally and appropriately, the "radio personalities" in those early days. In particular it was easy for missionaries in the English-speaking countries of Africa to broadcast in English and achieve a very acceptable standard of proficiency. Nationals, at the time, were not used as broadcaster because they had not developed their skills to the degree called for in the broadcasting industry. An increased sense of independence and confidence on the part of the nationals in later years insured their growing involvement in media throughout the continent.

Audience response became important to broadcasters in the 1950's, as those involved in radio ministry attempted to understand how effective their efforts were. Listeners were asked to write in an attempt to establish contact with the listening audience. Later, Bibles and home correspondence courses in Bible study were offered. In Zambia, the Bible Way Correspondence School was successfully developed and implemented to meet the needs of the listening audience. Today, Bible Way Correspondence Schools are operated in twenty countries, and over the years, it is estimated that 289,000 people have enrolled in these courses. As recently as September 1985, a task force workshop was held at Brakenhurst Baptist



Conference Center in Limuru, Kenya, convened to study using the Bible Way Correspondence School in church planting and church development.<sup>70</sup> Such a workshop provides evidence of one way in which the needs of radio audiences were met in an effective fashion.

The growing demands made on radio necessitated institutionalization. Numerous developments all contributed to the need to centralize efforts. Nationals were becoming involved; production studios were proliferating; follow-up of audience response was becoming burdensome on already overworked personnel. Distribution of programs required the attention of persons dedicated to media. Local churches became less involved and specialists more involved, a condition that, in the opinion of Alan Compton, exists today and is in need of rectification. Local churches are again being asked to be involved because they are the ones that are in the best position to help respondents on a one-to-one basis. This trend is highly evidenced in America in that the central thrust of the ACTS network is to get local churches on the air in their own communities. It is an attempt to guide the listening audience to a local church.

During the 1960's, the Radio and Television Commission, under the direction of Dr. Paul Stephens, attempted to meet the needs of foreign missions. Programs were made available in English, Spanish and several languages to missions who had air time but no capability of utilizing it by themselves. One problem with this arrangement was that all audience responses were directed to the Radio and Television Commission on the basis that audience responses were confidential. In this way, referrals were seldom passed on to mission or national organizations. For a time, the commission and the foreign media missions seemed to be opposed, or rather, moved in different directions. At the heart of the problem were

two different philosophies. The commission followed a philosophy in which the broadcaster's responsibility was to the listener and therefore balked at the idea of giving a listener's name to anyone, unless that person requested or agreed to it.<sup>71</sup> Missionaries on the field, who often had to work hard to make contacts, were disappointed and frustrated not to be given respondents' names. This dilemma illustrates the fact that special interest groups within the same denominations will often take different approaches in their ministries that can be counterproductive. Part of the solution to the problem can be seen in the common focus of Bold Mission Thrust that has become the prime objective of the Radio and Television Commission and the Foreign Mission Board.

The development in indigenous radio and television ministries received much attention in the late 1960's and 1970's. For example, a training workshop was held in 1969 in Kenya, dedicated to equipping nationals for mainstream media production as well as the strengthening of missionary skills in the area.<sup>72</sup> Added pressure has also come from African governments who have insisted that nationals appear on the air, as opposed to foreigners. This shifted the missionaries' energies from presentation to production, which in the long run, has resulted in more time to train nationals for the task.

Training of nationals has not been without its problems. Some, once trained, take positions in commercial radio networks. Pastors, committed to pastoring, become frustrated in a full-time media role.<sup>73</sup>

Some notable successes are appropriate to mention at this time. Radio has been proved to be particularly successful in the opening of new work. In such situations, radio has been used to rouse the awareness level of target audiences. In Swaziland, exposure, via national radio, has been

forthcoming and has been taken advantage of by missionary Roy Davidson.<sup>74</sup> Radio and television are run by the government of Swaziland and provide certain advantages discussed in the next section under "Models of missionary broadcasting." Davidson is an excellent example of a missionary creating and maximizing openings for media, integrating them with his local church development plans and using the expertise of media personnel to assist him in his endeavors. The approach taken by Davidson is one that has received wide support and stands as an ideal not always achieved. Alan Compton, in the following statement, expressed something of the errors that media specialists perceive in their own efforts at radio evangelism:

Although the need was, and still is a real one for media specialists, there was a negative element created by those of us who are specialists. It was basically because of our orientation toward the product, rather than people.<sup>75</sup>

The result is that when the missionaries' knowledge of the local audience is developed with the media specialists' production ability, programs are developed that do not just entertain, but really have a chance of success in the realistic sense of the word. As was discussed earlier, not only has the denomination had to change its method of working, but it has had to monitor the broadcasting industry as a whole. Missionary broadcasting does not operate in a vacuum, but is part of a dynamic industry that forces its mood upon the listening audience. One trend that developed in the 1960's was the realization that audiences varied in their listening preferences and habits, causing commercial and government program managers to become sensitive to the type and quality of programs offered. Baptists responded to these changes by producing, "children's programs, programs for women, dramatic programming, musical programs, magazine formats, and public service-type broadcasts, reaching out to the needs of the community, but at the same time, providing input in a special

way of the gospel message.<sup>76</sup> The soft-sell approach to the gospel thus became one of the ways to get programs aired outside of "religious program" slots. Those who resisted this new state of affairs and insisted on a direct preaching approach had little chance of getting their programs broadcast at the most advantageous time.

## B. MODELS OF MISSIONARY BROADCASTING.

Robert Don Hughes, Assistant Professor of Mass Media at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has proposed five models of Christian Missionary Broadcasting, based upon his knowledge of media and upon experience gained working in Africa on Media projects. Hughes draws attention to the importance of understanding how broadcasting can effectively contribute to the gospel effort. His analysis involves the posing of three questions as applied to five approaches being currently used by media missionaries and their organizations. The three questions he asks of each model are as follows: "Will it 'target' the nationals? Who will be the 'gatekeeper' of the message? Is it cost effective?"<sup>77</sup>

In order to dispel some incorrect but flattering views of the media, Hughes draws attention to the "Bullet Theory," popularized during World War II when it was assumed by some that mass communication was a magic means of injecting thoughts or feelings automatically to the listener. Experience soon dispelled this myth when it became apparent that "the results did not support the theory."<sup>78</sup> What then has mass media got to offer that differentiates it? In the first instance, the listener is an active participant in the communication process and, as such, brings his or her critical faculties into play when a message is heard. These judgments and filterings may be "crude" by some standards, but they cannot be ignored. Secondly, Hughes calls to one's attention that channels of mass communication are better at presenting information than in swaying opinion. Persuasion depends upon person-to-person communication between individuals.<sup>79</sup>

Naturally, such a view of mass media's function has serious consequences for missions in media, for it has placed the responsibility of "winning" people squarely in the hands of the individual Christian. Those who view

media as a substitute for personal witnessing are likely to be guilty of a serious misjudgement. "Personal evangelism will never be replaced,"<sup>80</sup> but it can be made easier and more fruitful by the use of broadcasts that give out information helpful to those who may later be approached by a witnessing Christian. Efforts to inform people about the faith must be carefully scrutinized to insure that they are forming them about the faith and not a culture. For this to happen, the gospel must be "contextualized". That is, carefully communicated so as to teach truth and not cultural norms that are themselves subject to change. Perhaps the best "contextualizers" are the indigenous Christians themselves, and they must be trained and encouraged to accept leadership roles in media. Although this approach appears to make sense, nationals have not always been brought "on line" as quickly as expected. Those culpable, in terms of ignoring local cultures, are those groups who have no long term commitment to ministry in Africa, but have their programs aired directly without indigenous participation. The tragedy of this tendency to broadcast in Africa for the sake of appearance is the fact that nobody benefits and precious funds are needlessly dissipated. Dr. Hughes expresses his disconcertions by asking the following question:

If the task is to use media to inform a foreign audience about Christianity, why waste precious offerings of concerned Christian stewards by distributing programs targeted to meet no-one's need?<sup>81</sup>

In analysing the ways that broadcasting has been accomplished in Africa, Hughes suggests that there are five models representative of five approaches taken.

#### The Ecumenical Committee Model.<sup>82</sup>

The origin of this model can be traced back to the philosophy of the



British Broadcasting Corporation to allow mainline churches the right to broadcast. Control is exercised via mainline church representatives who, together, determine air time allocation and program content in a broad sense. Many of the countries of Africa that were former British colonies have followed the model, even after gaining independence, and have allowed the government-controlled broadcasting networks to function in much the same manner as pre-independence times. Usually, a Religious Broadcasting Department is responsible for the coordination of this area of broadcasting. The advantages to operating under this model are numerous and are listed below:

- 1) Transmission costs are covered by the government. Only production costs are paid by the originator of the program.
- 2) Programs are locally produced and applicable.
- 3) The national network has an established listening audience.
- 4) Efficient contributors may be able to get extra time from those who forfeit time due to production difficulties.

The disadvantages are enumerated below:

- 1) No "trailers" are allowed at the end of broadcasts and therefore no direct audience contact is possible after the broadcast.
- 2) Dilution of goals because of the compromise that must be made when numerous denominations work together.

In conclusion, the ecumenical committee model, when analysed by the three questions posed at the beginning of the section, give the following result:

- Does it 'target' the nationals? Yes, because the program is aired over their national network.
- Who are the 'gatekeepers'? The nationals are, because in post-independent

Africa, the religious departments are increasingly being run by nationals who insure the appropriateness of the message.

- Is it cost effective? Yes, because the government is bearing a substantial portion of the cost involved in transmission.

Frank Baker, media specialist based in the Republic of South, has had experience with the ecumenical committee model and points out some of its advantages and disadvantages, such as the fact that air time is not for sale, making it critical for media personnel to work within the parameters set up by the religious programming departments. Personnel must learn to give and take as they work with government departments and other denominations. He further points out that in Zambia and Kenya, the Council of Churches make sure prospective programmers are screened before getting on the air. Contributors are limited to what they can say and not say, and they must be careful to be non-political and avoid moral and ethical issues, such as E.R.A. and abortion.<sup>83</sup> Negative remarks about another faith or denomination is not tolerated, therefore insuring the message must be positive and Biblically based if the contributor values the air time provided. Baker also believes that reliability and dependability enable one to take "spots by default", and therefore enable the build-up of air time.<sup>84</sup>

The Baptist Communications Centre in Harare has worked successfully with the ecumenical committee model for many years and consistently produced programs in Ndebele and Shona for broadcasting over the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation's national network. As a multimedia production organization under the auspices of the Baptist Convention in Zimbabwe, the Baptist Communications Centre has developed the capability to deal with production demands via departments of radio programming, audio-visual ser-

vices, postal counseling, music production and special projects.<sup>85</sup>

These departments are mentioned to illustrate the channeling of energies into production needs rather than transmission needs, as provided by the broadcasting models mentioned above.

#### The International Transmitter Model.<sup>86</sup>

This model supports the use of missionary-operated shortwave international transmitters. The idea is to gain complete control over program transmission, not possible with the government controlled "ecumenical committee model." This approach is commercial and independent, and parallels the American approach to broadcasting, which has placed the broadcasting industry squarely in the commercial or private sector. What, therefore, happened in the United States to broadcasting was emulated by organizations such as Trans World Radio, Far East Broadcasting Association, the Sudan Interior Mission and others. Government regulations must still be complied with, but they are a lot less restrictive than those imposed by the previous model discussed.

The appeal and major strength of the "international transmitter model" for religious broadcasting lie in the fact that the program may be as direct as desired. Additional programs may be beamed into "forbidden" areas where it would not otherwise be possible for missionaries to travel. The Trans World transmitter in Swaziland beams programs all over South, Central and Eastern Africa. Unfortunately, there are drawbacks to the model, the major one being finance. It is an extremely expensive capital investment to build a radio station, especially when revolutionary forces could easily decide to use the facility for their own ends. This actually happened in Ethiopia, when the Radio Voice of the Gospel in Ethiopia (ROVG)

was transformed into the "Radio Voice of Revolution in Ethiopia."<sup>87</sup>

Finally, the listening audience must be cultivated because people do not receive the balanced appeal and variety of programs available via a national network and, therefore, may not ever be interested in tuning into a "religious station." It is likely that Christians will constitute the majority of faithful listeners rather than the non-Christians targeted. The importance of contextualization has been emphasized repeatedly in paper, and this is one area where missionary transmitters often fail; the target is large, and canned Western programs are directed to those who may be disinterested by programs to which they cannot relate.

The three questions posed earlier again highlight the weaknesses of the model:

- Does it 'target' the nationals? Generally large multiethnic groups are targeted, although specific audience are catered for. An example being the BIMS media weekly Portuguese programs that are being beamed by Trans World Radio into Angola and Mozambique.<sup>88</sup>
- Who are the 'gatekeepers'? No clear answer can be given under this model because of the varied sources from which programs are drawn. Usually, there will be a mix of programs in that locally produced and foreign produced programs will be integrated at the discretion of the transmitting station personnel.
- Is it cost effective? Specialization by the various contributors does provide a cost advantage. For example, media directors in Africa make frequent use of Trans World Radio's transmission capabilities.

Some experts, as Dr. Robert Hughes, are pessimistic about such programing, and believe that the "average indigenous listener will not search the dial to find the infrequent native-language programing."<sup>89</sup>

Africa's multi-lingual environment complicates this situation and makes the narrowly defined targeting strategy desirable but difficult to achieve.

Steve Evans, Director of the Baptist Communications Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe, relates one clear example of how a church was started using the "international transmitter model."<sup>90</sup> In 1982, Shadrek Ndlovu began to listen to a Shona-speaking program sponsored by Baptists in Zimbabwe and broadcast by Trans World Radio via its international transmitter, situated in Manzini, Swaziland. Under conviction by the Holy Spirit, Shadrek prayed and experienced new life in Christ. Without the help of a local church to teach or encourage him, Shadrek nevertheless began to share his new found faith with his fellow students at Mavedzenge I Primary School. The fact that Shadrek is only in Grade seven at age twenty one is not unusual in Africa and is no reflection of his capabilities. Often rural people begin their education in their teens because they lack the finances or opportunity to begin school at an earlier age. Shadrek's initiatives that follow indicate that he is a particularly capable and able leader. Shadrek continued to listen to programs on Trans World Radio and wrote to Stanley Kandulo, a producer of young people's programs, requesting a Bible and study material. During this time, Shadrek was leading people to the Lord and had organized weekly meetings at the school. After Shadrek sent in a list of 154 names, requesting literature for new Christians, Steve Evans realized that Shadrek was in need of more help than they were able to provide. Evans contacted the nearest Baptist missionary to Shadrek, Jerry Schleiff, and asked him to assist Shadrek. Schleiff and missionary associate Wayne Paul traveled the 75 miles to the small rural town of Chachacha to meet with Shadrek and arranged for a Baptist seminary

student to lead them in regular Sunday Bible studies. Subsequently, local adults have started to attend the church services held on Sunday afternoons, and an average of fifty people now meet regularly to worship and study together. Such a story is unusual, but it does reveal the possibilities that do exist, and one can only marvel at the way a radio program and a dedicated new-born babe in Christ became God's instruments to start a new Church in the heartland of Zimbabwe. The "international transmitter model" has a role to play, and responses from listeners, such as Shadrek, show that needs are being met by this approach. The story of Shadrek also emphasises the importance of follow-up and the possibility that one unanswered letter could represent a lost opportunity of substantial importance.

#### The Western Evangelist Model.<sup>91</sup>

Of the three discussed, this is the most ineffective because it totally ignores social, cultural, economic and language differences that exist in Africa. Typically, a Western evangelist purchases air time in an African country and has his home-addressed messages delivered without any adaptation taking place. Often the messages run for a series of weeks and then stop; follow-up is either non-existent or weak, leaving interested persons suspicious of the real intent of these evangelists. When the three questions are applied to this model, negative answers must be given to all three. The nationals are definitely not 'targeted', although there are probably expatriates who might appreciate the programs. The 'gatekeeper' of the message is definitely the originator, who totally ignores the indigenous people's approval contribution. Cost effectiveness cannot be justified by local observers of these programs, but one has to realize that the efforts made in a foreign field make good reporting back home and may be



justified in these "positive" benefits alone.

#### The Geosynchronous Satellite Model.<sup>92</sup>

This model elevated the "international transmitter" and "Western evangelist model" to new realms of possibility made available by technological advances. Dr. Hughes makes the point that although this model has not as yet been employed, it is technologically possible at this time. What it would primarily do is to offer to Western evangelists the possibility of beaming programs from the United States directly to the foreign nations. In this way, commercial transmitters, national transmitters and missionary transmitters could all be bypassed. This model is a little too elaborate to be taken seriously at this time. The cost of down-links in each nation, together with the required terrestrial transmitters, would be astronomical, and permission by African governments would not likely be entertained because of the enormous threat to national security that this model would pose.

#### The Independent Producer Model.<sup>93</sup>

The final model represents one of the most viable and potentially effective models so far discussed. Implementation of the model involves the establishment of small production studios around the world. The Foreign Mission Board has applied this model extensively in Africa. For example, although the Baptist Communications Centre in Harare produces programs for the "international transmitter model" and the "ecumenical committee model," it is, when viewed overall, one of the best examples of the "independent producer model" in Africa. When this model is analysed using the three questions applied to the previous models, its

flexibility becomes apparent. First, it does target the nationals. Programs are produced in close geographic proximity to the people targeted. The producer has total control over his program and can produce it to be relevant to the latest issues needing to be addressed in a particular area. Programs developed can be aired over the national radio or via an international transmitter. If the program is unsuitable for one, it may be acceptable for the other. A local studio can also discover and develop talent, such as the development of musical, teaching, preaching and counseling talent. Local congregations can be informed about upcoming programs and therefore word-of-mouth advertising becomes possible. Second, "gatekeeping" the message is attainable because the possibility of having nationals producing and participating in programs is enhanced when a local studio is well placed close to the people it hopes to reach. For this to be completely successful, the missionary directing the studio must have the confidence in his local staff to trust them with message content. The "independent producer model" does not solve all the problems pertaining to "gatekeeping," but it has the potential to give nationals the choice to become true partners in media missions. In Harare, Zimbabwe, the B.C.C. has nationals in charge of radio programming and production.<sup>94</sup> Third, this is one of the most cost effective approaches because of the comparatively low cost involved in setting up a recording studio. Some of the most basic studios are being used to produce quality work. More importantly, this model offers opportunities of diversion into other areas to be discussed in the next section. Indigenous music, leadership training tapes and numerous other special audio products can be produced for distribution to the field.

In conclusion, the five models provide a means of analysing the basic

approaches possible in broadcasting. Further experience will enable media specialists to understand even more clearly the role they must allow broadcasting to assume in the overall strategy in missions. The fact that the person-to-person element of the communication process is not substitutable ought to guide them in their efforts to use media correctly.

### C. INDIGENOUS MUSIC FOR BROADCAST PURPOSES.

Mention has already been made of the fact that recording facilities provide the means to move far beyond the production of traditional programs. Electronic media covers a wide range of ministry possibilities that offer the creative media specialist opportunities to research and develop new products. By way of illustrating this fact, the area of indigenous African music is described as a case in point. Although efforts in the area of radio drama, leadership training and film production are all being developed in Africa in innovative ways, the results being achieved and the approaches being taken to develop indigenous music offer a representative picture of new developments.

The need for music in broadcasting became apparent when music for radio programs was sought. In early days, when English-language broadcasts dominated the broadcast scene, Western style music was readily available and appropriate in relation to the program format and style. However, as African countries gained their independence and broadcasters sought to target their programs to specific national groups, it became apparent that there was a weak link in the program production chain—very little indigenous music was available.

Nathan Corbitt, Media Director from Nairobi, Kenya, has invested time in trying to understand indigenous music and the benefits available to those who record it in a systematic manner. Corbitt says, "... indigenous music is an effective tool for communicating a message to people who do not read or write. Indigenous music, as related to the vernacular language and used in areas of high illiteracy, can be very effective."<sup>95</sup> This is extremely significant on a continent where 70% of the people are functionally illiterate and is just one example of how special needs can

be addressed in special ways. Developing a comprehensive library of indigenous music is not a simple matter. Media directors must travel widely and be prepared to record all types of singing in every conceivable structure. Whether it be in a mud and tin hut, concrete buildings or under a tree in a remote rural area, the media missionary needs to be able to deal with acoustic problems, unencountered in the United States. Extreme effort in the recording of music has encouraged music missionaries of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa to organize a resource center for the collection of audio materials, so that they are preserved and available to other interested parties.<sup>96</sup> Corbitt sees the broadcast needs as justification for the recording of good music because it helps people to identify with the message and attracts them to the program.

While research in the area of indigenous music will continue to be pursued by music and media missionaries, many areas have developed their music production capabilities to very high degrees. One of the departments within the Baptist Communications Centre in Zimbabwe—Revelation Records—has taken giant steps to place indigenous music into the hands of Christians and the public at large. B.C.C. took over a company called Revelation Recording in 1984 with the view to using it as a means of addressing the desperate lack of availability of Christian music in Zimbabwe. Initial benefits included the prospect of revenues that could support the other ministries of the B.C.C. and the connection this new venture would provide for the B.C.C. staff to minister to the musicians of Zimbabwe.<sup>97</sup> The acquiring of Revelation Recordings provided access to good quality cassette masters for duplication purposes via an affiliated company in South Africa. Thus, international music was immediately available. The B.C.C. also began producing 45 rpm singles that were recorded in the Harare studio

but pressed locally. The initial results of these efforts has been excellent. Christian music is distributed via the Baptist Book Centre in Gweru, the Evangelical Alliance Mission operated store in Harare, and via twenty other retail stores. This commitment to music has had a profound effect on local musical talent in that personnel at the B.C.C. have developed relationships with the local musicians and had the joy of seeing some of them make a commitment to Jesus Christ.<sup>98</sup>

Evans also reports that they now have people coming every day asking to be recorded. The results produced in developing local talent have evoked accolades from the Zimbabwean Broadcasting Corporation and Zimbabwe Television. The national radio is happy to play whatever can be provided and have frequently asked for video productions of B.C.C. artists.

The results being achieved in Zimbabwe more than justify the effort being put into indigenous music development. Coming years are bound to open up opportunities scarcely conceived of at this time. Innovative media specialists and missionaries hungry to develop their effectiveness will continue to be presented with communications challenges that media specialists will have to solve.

John Wheatly, General Director of Far Eastern Broadcasting Association, estimates that 80% of the third world households have access to radio.<sup>99</sup> We have, therefore, potential access to a huge audience, but as has been emphasized many times before, there are no quick fixes in mission work. Long term commitments by motivated, thinking, innovative media specialists can prepare the way for that all-important one-on-one encounter by individual Christians, be they missionaries or nationals. Communications in a pluralistic environment demand the very best loving outreach that we are capable of offering.



#### IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

The purpose of this paper has been to document and evaluate, in general terms, the work of the Southern Baptist Convention's media ministry in Africa. At the time of writing this paper, March 1987, religious media practices have come under the scrutiny of the American public because of the excesses that many of the electronic churches appear to be guilty. The current crisis is indicative of the potential for harm that media ministries present. W.G.Tanner, the President of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, has stated that, "Media is at its strongest and most effective when it is related to the local church."<sup>100</sup> This principal is followed in the media strategies of both the Foreign Mission Board and the Home Mission Board in that media is used to support and build local churches. Media missionaries in Africa, as specialists, must be self disciplined enough to remember that they are part of an organization that is primarily in the mission's business. As the number of media specialists increase, the potential for them to become too heavily oriented toward the telecommunications aspects of mission work could cause them to drift away from the fundamental objectives of the Foreign Mission Board more easily than their "generalist" predecessors. The commitment to appoint specialists will bring with it new challenges in the form of requiring better coordination; something that their 'generalist' predecessors did not need.

Media clusters are an excellent example of the type of complex management structures that become necessary when a change is made from a decentralized to a centralized form of organization. The benefits of coordination have been favorably alluded to in this paper, but cognizance must be taken of the fact that centralization places constraints

upon the degree of independence that national missions are allowed to exercise within the centralized structure. When a new cluster is commissioned, the participating missions lose some of their flexibility in the interests of the cooperative effort. No evidence of this type of hinderance is evident at this time because the advantages of cooperation outweigh the disadvantages--this could change.

The progress of developing nationals to do the work of media missions is difficult to measure. All of the media personnel under appointment by the Foreign Mission Board hold, at the very minimum, a bachelor's degree in communications and may have advanced degrees. Considering the cost of a media specialist's education, in terms of time and money, it is unrealistic to expect a national to advance to the competence level of an appointed media specialist through attendance of in-house training courses. The commitment to train nationals to professional status is not being adequately addressed and is a definite weakness in the present strategy. The speed with which nationals are trained and placed in authority is an age old problem in Africa and is a sensitive issue with African governments. Political pressure in Zimbabwe in this regard is evidenced by the fact that the media director has been issued his final work permit because the government believes that white missionary tutelage is no longer desirable or necessary. The national staff at the Baptist Communications Centre are experienced, dedicated and competent, but they do not have the professional training to handle the developmental aspects of the work.

Ecumenicism among Protestant groups in Africa is noticeable and has mixed benefits that must be addressed by missionaries. By contrast, Southern Baptists in the United States are totally self-sufficient in

education; in finance, and in human resources. In Africa, there are few self-sufficient Protestant groups; therefore, the benefits of cooperation are attractive, and it is normal for fraternization to take place interdenominationally. Southern Baptist missionaries have to work in this ecumenical environment maintaining their identity, while cooperating with other groups. Missionaries in Africa have the opportunity to fellowship with fellow Christians of diverse backgrounds, and this provides a broad perspective on approaches to mission work and life in general. Fellowship, for those in remote areas, is often only available with people of different denominational affiliations. Difficulties can arise, however, when approaches to ministry clash or a cooperative offer has to be turned down in the interests of maintaining independence. Generally, Southern Baptists seek to operate independently of other denominations, as they do in the United States, and this can cause problems in an area of the world where denominational boundaries are not always clearly defined.

The Foreign Mission Board has never balked at using the services of specialized missionary organizations in their field work. Missionary Aviation Fellowship is used to provide transport to remote and otherwise inaccessible areas. The services of the Far East Broadcasting agency and Trans World Radio are employed to carry Baptist broadcasts across Africa. Many of these special organizations are adept at working in an interdenominational situation and present no special problems of cooperation.

As the capabilities of the nationals develop the potential for disharmony can also increase. For example, the Roodeport Mission Press in the Republic of South Africa is the publications arm of the

Baptist Union of South Africa and independently produces Christian literature for Southern Africa. Although a member of the Southern Baptist International Publications Services Board, there are naturally conflicts of interest at times between Roodeport Mission Press and the operating of International Publications Services. Further attention is therefore drawn to the fact that large scale cooperative efforts, such as media clusters, may appear monopolistic and threatening to the growing number of national Baptist conventions and the independent media producers who are emerging in Africa.

The constraint placed upon religious broadcasting in Africa by government agencies has placed a sense of discipline and order into Christian programing. The desire for African governments to have the nationals present the programs has forced missionaries to divert their energies from presentation to production. The training of nationals to become producers is underway, but the training and experience required to develop competent producers are large tasks that will need to receive further attention. A few nationals have graduated from Southern Baptist Colleges and seminaries with degrees in communications, but this number is not adequate to meet future needs and the problem of integrating national media specialists into the international media clusters will require careful handling.

The people of Africa have a great interest in the spoken word both socially and from a media perspective. Most Africans have an insatiable desire to read, listen and learn that has not been squelched by the incessant media bombardment to which the peoples of developed nations are subjected. Media specialists must therefore work at interpreting the media challenges of Africa with fresh insight.

The mission force in general will continue to change from being a

homogeneous group, in terms of training and assignments, to being a heterogeneous group. These changes are healthy in that they show the Foreign Mission Board is sensitive to changing needs. The longer the Foreign Mission Board has operated in Africa, the more sensitized those representing it have become to the fact that communication is an increasingly complex problem. The constant changes in social, spiritual and personal needs of the African peoples must be constantly monitored and evaluated and changes in course called for by those in leadership positions. Many missions have seen the significant changes take place as long strived-for integration with national conventions in planning, and work has taken place. As a sending agency, the Foreign Mission Board has specialized in making available resources to these nationals in the form of suitably qualified personnel. The need for special skills in recent years has been successfully provided by volunteers in the field exposing them to the work they support, and at the same time providing the human resources needed for special projects. Recently, an American sound engineer went to Harare to install a new recording consol in the main studio. This type of special assistance needs to be developed even further as funds from the United States become more strictly budgeted and accountability for those funds more intense. Alan Compton, Senior Media Consultant for the Foreign Mission Board, forsees, "the greatest human resource need in media development for the future is that of large numbers of media users among nationals and missionaries."<sup>101</sup> This means that sophisticated media products that are not used effectively, short-circuit the labors of the many people who carefully develop them. Production and usage cannot be dichotomized. They must be carefully synchronized, not only at the developmental stage, but throughout the life of the media product.

Closely associated with the management of the developed products is the need to insure that media facilities are not built for the sake of convenience, but because of legitimate long-term media commitments.<sup>102</sup>

The Foreign Mission Board has made a philosophical commitment to avoid the support of mass media broadcasts that seek to cover large geographic areas and people in a haphazard fashion. To this end, they have committed themselves to encourage greater expertise in programing development. The audience in Africa is becoming more selective in its listening habits because of the many voices competing to be heard. Only the most well researched approaches in production and marketing will produce the quality results that do justice to the vision of Bold Mission Thrust.

With effect from February 11, 1987, the Foreign Mission Board will operate under the name of, "International Board of the Southern Baptist Convention."<sup>103</sup> The name change is part of a major reorganization that is taking place in an effort to concentrate even more heavily on global evangelism. Davis Saunders, former Area Director for Southern and Eastern Africa, now assumes the position of Vice President, Africa. A new area director, still to be appointed, will live on the field and thereby be closer to the action. These latest developments will make the coordination of media work in Africa even more cohensive than it is today, and should enable the new Vice President for Africa the opportunity to synchronize, more closely than ever before, the human, financial and material resources of that great continent to the glory of God.



## NOTES

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