

News of the Work

BAPTIZING TOUR IN AFRICA

Recent exciting events in the vast African continent have opened up new frontiers in some of the most remote and inaccessible areas on earth. One of God's ministers working out of our Johannesburg office has recently conducted a 3,700-mile journey through Southern Africa. The following is an excerpt of his report to Headquarters:

THE TRIP was very successful — we encountered few difficulties along the way. I did not think that it was possible for a tour to proceed as smoothly as this one did! We met over 100 people during the three weeks. We were encouraged by the trouble some went to in order to meet us. Most of the Africans earn a very low wage, but they were still willing to travel hundreds of miles to see us. Some even sold their livestock in order to have money to pay for their transport.

One African missed the only bus scheduled for that day — but this did not deter him. He showed his determi-

nation to see us by getting on his bicycle and travelling over 40 miles. The journey took him close to six hours — in the hot African sun and along a rather tortuous road.

It was common to meet with others who had travelled 100 or 200 miles to keep their appointments with us. Only a very few we met owned cars, and consequently most had to rely on their feet, bicycles or buses to get from one point to the next. [Note: Arranging for a visit by God's ministers is nowhere near so difficult in most other areas. If you would like to meet a representative of this Work, you may do so by writing to the listed circulation office nearest you. We will do our best to serve you promptly.]

There was one interesting case of an African who travelled 200 miles from the famous Kariba Lake area to meet us. He was a sub-chief and had been nominated as a parliamentary representative, but had refused the position because it would have meant working on the Sabbath. This is a job that would have given him prestige and status as well as a handsome salary — but he was willing to give this up in order to obey God's fourth commandment.

The people who sought to speak with us were extremely hospitable individuals, and we were made to feel very welcome in nearly all the homes we visited. We hope to arrange a follow-up tour some time soon.

— A. Van Belkum

Even more recently, another ministerial team conducted and completed our most comprehensive tour of East, Central and West Africa. This was indeed an historical milestone in God's Work. The following is their report to you, our family of Co-Workers who made it all possible.

THE FIRST leg of the tour, from the 21st of September through the 9th of October, covered Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia, and Malawi. Of the people whom we had arranged to meet, a full two thirds were able to show up and a good number were baptized. We now have members of God's true Church in these heretofore-unreached areas of East Africa. They are small beginnings to be sure, but encouraging for us. Remember the proverbial mustard seeds.

Many who met us had to make sacrifices to raise the money needed for bus or train fares to travel from their remote villages to the main cities. More often than not this was their first trip outside the town limits — public transport in Africa is hazardous and the service very infrequent.

One outstanding example of determination was that of an 18-year-old who travelled from Northern Tanzania to Dar es Salaam — the capital — a distance of some 800 miles. A friend offered him a free ride, but after covering only 30 miles the car was involved in an accident and could not continue. Soon afterward his father, passing by, noticed him on the roadside and gave the young man all the money he had — which was sufficient bus fare for the entire trip! However, since the next bus was not due for nine hours, he had to sleep on the side of the road that night. Was he ever glad to see us!

The influence of Communist China is very obvious in some of these African

nations in the form of a mixture of propaganda and technical assistance. The Chinese are presently engaged in a massive railroad project linking Tanzania and Zambia. On several occasions we were accosted by young Africans trying to sell us the thoughts of Chairman Mao.

Many thousands of high school and college graduates are without jobs — one of the breeding grounds on which Communism thrives. One young man said that when he decided to leave school, his teacher offered to assist him financially. With it came Communist propaganda.

After the first part of the tour our families joined us in South Africa where we were privileged to observe God's festivals. While there we had occasion to address the forty non-European brethren from all over Southern Africa who were attending at Mossel Bay. Needless to say they were thrilled to hear the news of the tour to their brothers up north.

The second half of our tour lasted three and one-half weeks. It commenced on October 29, taking us to Ghana, Sierra Leone, and the Cameroons. We had planned to visit thirty-two persons in Nigeria, but were unable to do so because of visa and entry permit restrictions. We saw about forty people in these countries and baptized another good number of individuals into the Church of God. Thirty-three of these visits were in Ghana. A very high percentage of those not baptized are excellent prospects who just need a little more time.

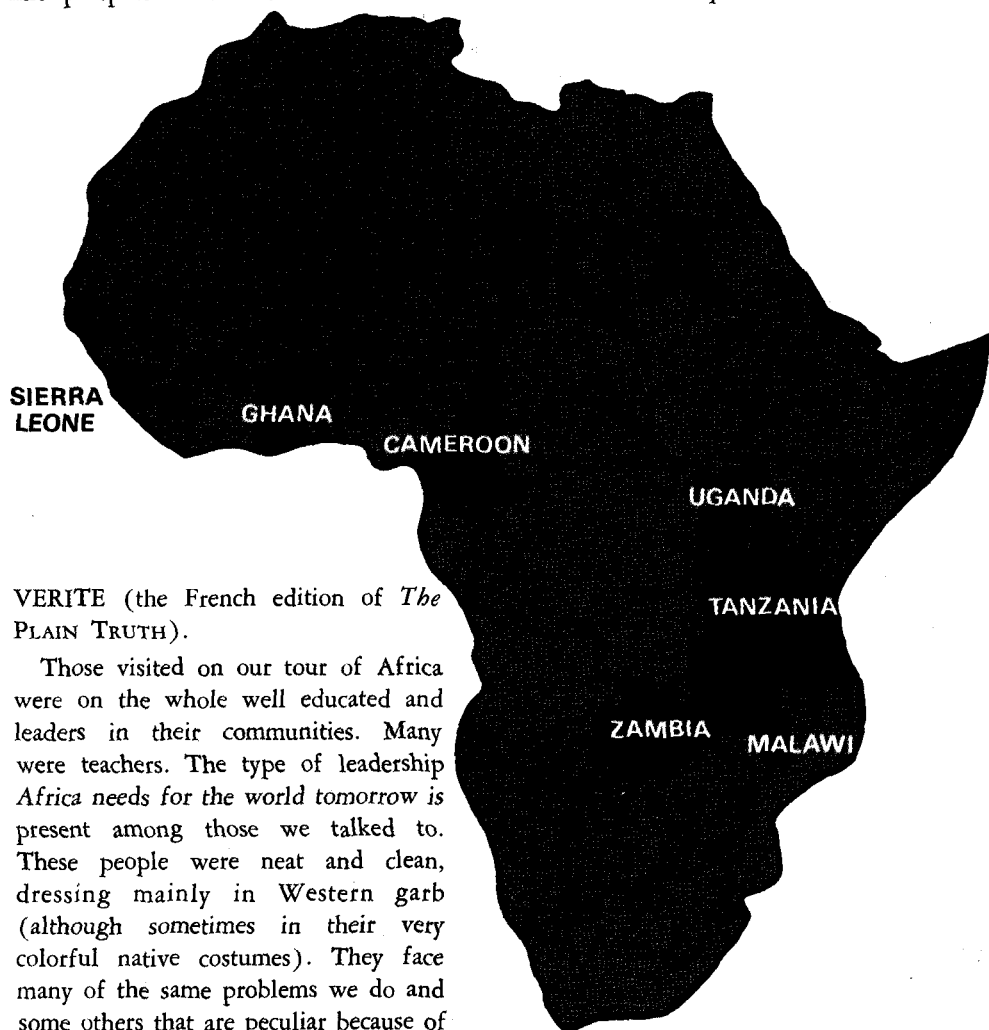
One of the visits in Ghana necessitated working through an interpreter. An old African lady had come into contact with us through her brother, and in spite of the language barrier, had made huge strides. Just before leaving, this little old lady, who has barely enough to eat, dug into the pocket of her dress. Here folded in a piece of cloth were the contributions she had faithfully saved so that she too could have a part in this Work. Immediately both of us thought of the widow's mite. Earlier her two nephews had been baptized. It was an enormously moving experience.

In Sierra Leone we met a person who had travelled all the way from Liberia just to meet a representative of God's Church.

Soon afterwards it was on to Cameroons, where five persons were waiting. One young man here spoke only French, but fortunately his brother knew a bit of pigeon-English. Truly a fine prospect — thanks to *La PURE*

thirties. Most came in touch with Ambassador College through *Reader's Digest* or a friend who had introduced them to *The PLAIN TRUTH*. Besides teachers, those we met were nurses, businessmen, farmers, laborers, clerks, government employees, and even in one case a lawyer occupying a very high governmental position.

On the return trip from Africa we



VERITE (the French edition of *The PLAIN TRUTH*).

Those visited on our tour of Africa were on the whole well educated and leaders in their communities. Many were teachers. The type of leadership *Africa needs for the world tomorrow* is present among those we talked to. These people were neat and clean, dressing mainly in Western garb (although sometimes in their very colorful native costumes). They face many of the same problems we do and some others that are peculiar because of their tribal customs.

Their society, like many others (*ours* in particular), is sick. Fornication, adultery, and prostitution are rife; graft and corruption are a way of life.

These prospects were anxious to hear news about the Work of God — they wanted to get better acquainted with us and asked many deep questions. Quite a number of them will study further, learn to obey more fully and very likely will be baptized next year. The harvest on the next tour will be a much larger one. A good percentage of the visits were people in their twenties and early

were able to stop in Italy and Malta. In Naples one person requested a visit, and in Malta there were four. Tremendous pressures are brought to bear against them from relatives, friends, community and employers. Two of the four should be ready for baptism in early spring '71.

The entire trip has been enlightening not only for those contacted, but for us as well. These people rely solely on the literature and your prayers. There are no organized meetings nor fellowship for them. On their behalf we convey to you their request: "Pray for us."