

GOD'S PEOPLE IN BLACK AFRICA

Once again Mr. Harold Jackson and Mr. Robert Morton have returned from a baptizing tour of Black Africa. Here is the complete report of one of the most successful baptizing tours in the history of this era of God's Church!

by Robert G. Morton

HOW WOULD you like to wait twelve years for your first visit by a representative of God's Church? Would you be willing to wait patiently for a decade or more before you could be baptized? This is what many of your brethren in Black Africa had to do until we were able to reach them last fall.

Meager Growth

Until the fall of 1972, God's Church had grown very slowly in Black Africa. When Mr. Roderick Meredith and Mr. Raymond McNair visited South Africa and Rhodesia (which then included what is now Zambia) in 1960, only one African was baptized.

During the ten years from 1960 to 1970, as a result of internal strife, civil wars and political independence movements, much of Black Africa remained inaccessible to God's ministers. In that decade only three additional Africans became members of the Church. They visited the United Kingdom and later returned to their homes in West Africa.

Then, as a result of two tours — in 1970 and 1971 — an additional fifteen individuals were added to God's Church for a total of nineteen members in all of Black Africa.

Last year's tour, however, exceeded our wildest expectations! We left London on August 8th, and in two months we were able to visit West, Central and East Africa (see map showing itinerary of tour on page 19).

Nigeria At Last!

Until last year it had been impossible for a baptizing team to enter Ni-

geria because of the bloody civil war which devastated the country for seven years. For the first time, Nigeria opened its doors and we were able to visit many who had been waiting *twelve long years* for a minister to come and baptize them.

One of the first to be baptized was an elderly gentleman, now 74, who had faithfully monitored *The World Tomorrow* broadcasts during the seven years we were on WNBS in Nigeria. Each week he filled in and mailed to Bricket Wood a report giving such details as whether the station was starting the broadcast on time or was playing the tapes too fast or too slow. He also listed the literature advertised so our mail readers at the college could properly serve the people of Nigeria.

Mr. Morton stands beside the first person baptized in the Philadelphia Era of God's Church in Nigeria.

Jackson — Ambassador College



When he first heard the truth, this man had six wives. But when he learned that polygamy was wrong, he put away all but his one true wife. He had never met a representative of the Work before, having waited patiently on God for more than a decade to send a minister to baptize him.

Traveling many miles throughout Nigeria, we were able to meet and counsel with 102 individuals, many from remote villages in the interior. Some traveled hundreds of miles, spending almost their entire life's savings in a single journey to meet God's ministers. A total of *thirty-two* were baptized in Nigeria!

From Nigeria we traveled to the United Republic of the Cameroons where two more were baptized, and then westward to Ghana and Liberia. From Monrovia in Liberia we journeyed through Zaire (the old Belgian Congo) to keep the Feast of Tabernacles with God's people in South Africa and Rhodesia.

After the Feast we visited Zambia, Tanzania and Kenya. Unfortunately, even though we made a brief stopover in Uganda, the political tensions and extreme danger to travelers there made it necessary for us to cancel appointments with the six people (two of them baptized members) who were hoping to meet us in Kampala.

The threat of war between Uganda and Tanzania also prevented all of those in Tanzania from seeing us. Those who live in the border regions that were bombed a few days before by the Ugandan Air Force would have had to travel some 800 miles through

AFRICAN TRAGEDY!

by Harold L. Jackson

OUR EAST African Airlines return flight 762 from Nairobi to London had been re-routed and was now to stop at Entebbe, Uganda, for forty-five minutes, then proceed to London non-stop. After takeoff we were informed by a stewardess that East African Airlines was one of the lines chosen to assist in the airlift of Asians expelled from Uganda.

The landing strip at Entebbe is on the far side of a three-hundred-foot hill which hides the airport proper. So we were totally unprepared for the sight which came into view as we taxied around the hillside.

General Idi Amin, President of Uganda, was hosting the President of Liberia, Mr. Tolbert, and a large ceremony was in progress. A full-dress parade with inspection proceedings, cabinet ministers, local and state dignitaries, plus high-ranking military officials was in full swing as we turned to park behind a cargo plane in the process of being loaded (one of four which were waiting). We could also see at the end of the inner runways two fighter bombers, and on the far side were several MIG-17s and what appeared to be MIG-21s not too far away. Artillery and mechanized units were visible as we came to a stop and the engines were cut.

An announcement by intercom stated that we would be here for one hour and that passengers in transit would remain on board. We were happy to hear that because it afforded us an opportunity to assess our sur-

roundings without arousing suspicion.

When the cargo plane in front of us pulled away for takeoff, we saw what we had not noticed before — two orange-colored tractors pulling trailers loaded with Indian families waiting to board our aircraft.

It was a pitiful sight. The children, some playing with toys, milled about their parents asking questions and impatiently demanding answers. The puzzled expressions on their faces bespoke their troubled thoughts as they watched their belongings being loaded on board our jet.

After a two-hour wait for the preempting official ceremonies to be concluded, the 142 passengers were transferred from the trailers to our plane. Finally, after another hour passed, during which baggage was loaded and fuel needs supplied, we took off for London.

During the seven-and-one-half-hour non-stop flight I carefully watched the expressions and attitudes of these

people who had been *thrust out* of their country. Meanwhile my tour companion, Mr. Bob Morton, had a very interesting conversation with a young student, one of the 50,000 persons of Asian ancestry being evicted from Uganda by its military ruler and despot.

One of a family of five, the young man's parents were merchants in the city of Kampala. The father, a dealer in fabrics, had saved a sum of £2400, but was permitted to take only £50 of it out of the country. The young man told of others who were forced to leave their stock in the hands of agents who, it was told them, would forward the money received from future buyers.

However, the full extent of their injury was not apparent until we arrived at Heathrow Airport in London, and went to claim our baggage. There coming off the plane was the baggage of these unfortunate deported Asian business people, ripped and torn apart beyond repair. It was not loaded that way, of this I am certain, for we

watched it being loaded on the plane. Hinges had been ripped or pried off, locks broken open, ropes and straps cut or hacked apart. It was a sickening mess!

An old adage says: "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." I thought of a time coming when another group of people may be rejected by the nations they live in, perhaps be thrown out of their lands without any belongings.

How willing are *you* to be a part of that group if such occurs?



Keystone Press Photo

potentially dangerous guerrilla-infested territory to meet us in Dar-es-Salaam.

Severe Trials

The problems facing some of the people we met are unbelievable. To obey God in some areas runs against the grain of deep-seated tribal customs and laws — many of which stem directly from the religions of ancient Canaan.

Forsaking the tribal religion with its superstitions, libations, sacrifices and in some areas even ritual fornication, can mean excommunication from the tribe or the family, and economic deprivation. Also, in many areas a girl's parents have the right under tribal law to take her away from her husband and give her to another man — even after years of marriage! This means a man obeying God could lose not only *his job*, but also *his home, his wife and his family*.

Another serious trial facing many of our members in Africa stems from the economic situation. The average African family can afford to send only the oldest son to school. Consequently the education of girls is usually neglected. Therefore the majority of the readers of *The PLAIN TRUTH* in Black Africa are men, and most of the baptized members are young bachelors. This means they face a *real* trial. They understand they cannot marry an unbaptized girl, yet God has not called many women into His Church who are eligible for marriage. These young men know they must wait in faith for God to provide them wives.

We baptized a number who are married whose wives are illiterate — they neither speak English, nor read or write their own language. Some of these illiterate wives want to be baptized — what a challenge for their husbands!

One Man's Faith

We came across many examples of faith in those whom God is calling.

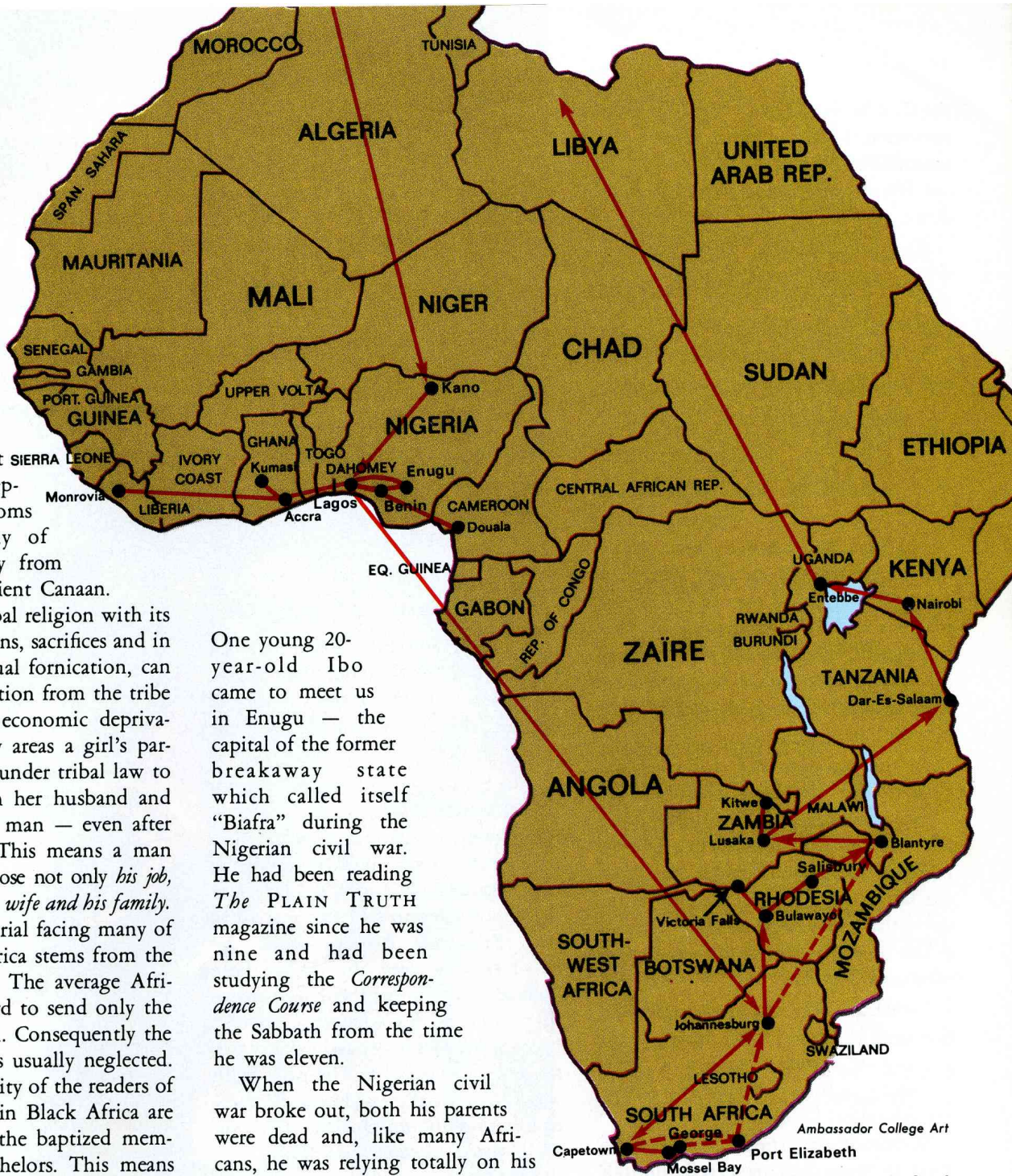
One young 20-year-old Ibo came to meet us in Enugu — the capital of the former breakaway state which called itself "Biafra" during the Nigerian civil war. He had been reading *The PLAIN TRUTH* magazine since he was nine and had been studying the *Correspondence Course* and keeping the Sabbath from the time he was eleven.

When the Nigerian civil war broke out, both his parents were dead and, like many Africans, he was relying totally on his older brother for support. But when his brother was taken captive by federal troops early in the war, he was left without any means of support.

In the meantime a serious drought combined with the war to produce one of the most disastrous famines of recent history. Official statistics top the million mark for the number of Ibos who died, but unofficial estimates of local people we talked to run as high as *two and one-half* million! Only those with jobs and money were able to buy what little food there was left. Many thousands were dying every single day and our young man knew he would soon starve to death unless he could

get food. In this plight, work was arranged for him in Enugu by an uncle. But after arriving in the city he was dismayed to find he could not have the job unless he was willing to work on the Sabbath. It was either break God's Sabbath which he had now been keeping for five years, or walk out of that office to almost certain slow and *agonizing* death.

Most people at this stage would begin to lose faith or reason that God must intend them to work Sabbaths after all, or that "He would understand." Instead, our young man decided that



Ambassador College Art

the God he served could save him from starvation if He wanted to. He was determined to obey his God, *even if it did cost him his life!* So he turned the job down.

To make matters worse, hearing what happened, his uncle took the action as a personal insult and determined to make him pay for it. He contacted each of his surviving relatives and forbade them to help him in any way. Since remaining in the city was impossible, the 16-year-old wandered out into the countryside again, waiting for starvation to take its ultimate toll.

His very obedience to God, however, is what *saved his life!* Within a few days Enugu was overrun by federal troops and tens of thousands of Ibos were killed, *including all those working in the department where he would have been employed!* He had left the city just in time.

In the privation that followed the close of the war, God somehow preserved his life. As we heard the story, Mr. Jackson and I recalled the promise in Psalm 33:18-19, "Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy; *to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.*"

Needless to say, the young man was baptized. He now has a job and is beginning to prosper, saving a little money to go back to school and obtain the education he missed.

We heard *many* similar stories in Nigeria of how God preserved through that time of extreme horror the lives of those who feared and obeyed Him.

Overcoming the Language Barrier

A young school teacher from Ouagadougou, capital of Upper Volta, traveled for *four days* to meet us in Accra, Ghana. Unfortunately, we spoke only English, and he spoke only French. His questions were all written in French, but he had also written down the scriptures, and by recognizing a word here and there we were able to answer most of his queries.

The real difficulty came, however,

when he asked if we would baptize him. How do you counsel an individual for baptism when you can't speak his language and he can't speak yours? There was no interpreter available, but he had his Bible in French and we had the same Bible in English. By turning to a question or phrase in our English Bible and finding the same phrase in his French translation, we were able to converse. Back and forth we went for nearly three and one-half hours until we were *sure* he was ready — it is, after all, the heart and attitude which God looks on. He left for home, which was nearly six hundred miles away, rejoicing in the fact he was now a begotten son of God!

God Intervenes for Us

On many different occasions we had to rely totally on God ourselves to give us favor in the eyes of individuals and officials in order to carry on with the tour.

One Sunday we were due to fly from Lagos, capital of Nigeria, to Douala in the Cameroons. After a mad half-hour taxi ride at insane speeds through the crowded streets of Lagos, we arrived at the airport only to find that our 10:30 p.m. Ethiopian Airways flight *just didn't exist* — even after it had been booked and confirmed with that airline from London! We discovered that *only* Nigeria Airways is allowed to carry passengers on that route. The next flight was not until the following Wednesday. It would mean missing all our visits in the Cameroons.

Questioning an airport official, we learned of an Alitalia flight coming from Rome which was due to land at 3:00 p.m. the following day (Monday) to drop off mail and then continue on to Douala. Like Ethiopian Airways, Alitalia has no terminal rights in Lagos and can't take on passengers for that route. Nevertheless, we *determined* to find some official who could get us on that plane the next day.

A few phone calls early the following morning elicited the information that only the Ministry of Transport and Aviation had the authority to fulfill our request. So we arrived there about 8:30 a.m. and began working our way

up through the echelons of bureaucratic authority.

Finally we reached the office of the Permanent Secretary (the individual directly responsible to the elected cabinet minister). His assistant listened patiently while we explained our problem, then said they couldn't help us. We smiled and persisted. He smiled and persisted also. For more than half an hour we haggled and hassled back and forth. Still the official remained adamant.

Then, *suddenly*, he changed his mind! "Okay," he said, "give me the tickets. I'll see what I can do."

Then we hesitated! Even though our flights had been booked from London, they had all been paid from South Africa. Across the top of our tickets, in big bold capitals, was a note saying they were *refundable only in South Africa*.

Nigeria is very *hostile* toward that country, so we knew that now we were *really* going to find out whether God wanted us on that flight. To get us permission to board that plane, God would have to cause this official not to notice or be influenced by what was written across each of the tickets he held in his hand. He looked at both tickets, read every word on them, then walked out of the room with the tickets in his hand. We were left there staring at one another.

Half an hour later another official returned with our tickets and took us into another office. He, too, carefully examined each ticket, then ordered his secretary to write letters to the Airport Commandant, the Airport Duty Officer and to Alitalia, asking them to get us on the flight to Douala that afternoon. Neither he nor the official before him had paid any attention to what was written in bold letters across each ticket! It was God who brought us to Douala that day to take care of the people He was calling into His Family.

We arrived in Douala just in time to meet two brothers who had traveled many hours to see us. They met us last year and this time they both believed

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earth. "These pictures were scanned and broken into 64 different shades of gray. Each shade became a number, and the numbers in sequence were transmitted to the tracking stations of NASA and the Jet Propulsion Lab.

"The signals were faint when they reached earth — only one quintillionth of one watt strength. They were amplified, taped, and fed into computers. Each sequence of 6 'zeros' and 'ones' became a piece of visual information, which was then reconverted into one of 64 shades of gray to make a picture, much like the tiny dots make up the picture on your TV screen at home" (*Reader's Digest*, October 1965).

Can your mind comprehend how little power "one quintillionth of one watt" is? Most ordinary light bulbs in your home are probably rated at 100 watts. If written in decimal form, "one quintillionth" would be .000000000000001. Yet man was able to receive, amplify and decipher the message carried by one quintillionth of a watt of power.

Is it conceivable God could receive your thoughts in His heavenly communications center, amplify them, record them, read out and understand them by and through His Spirit?

Notice in Malachi 3:16-17 that God definitely does record certain of man's words and thoughts: "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

God read Job's thoughts. Job was self-righteous. God was so interested in Job He let him go through much grief to learn to recognize and overcome that self-righteousness. Finally, Job said, "I know that thou canst do everything, and that *no thought can be withholden from thee*" (Job 42:2).

God Also Broadcasts Commands

When King Ahab and the whole nation of Israel sinned grievously, God allowed a three and one-half year drought to overtake the nation as pun-

ishment — to wake up the nation and its king. During this period, to keep His prophet Elijah alive, God "commanded" ravens to bring food to Elijah. God told His prophet:

"And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have *commanded* the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook" (I Kings 17:4-6).

How did God "command" the ravens to feed Elijah? He may have done it by altering their *instinct* which regulated their behavior patterns. Regardless of how He did it, the Scriptures show us that God has the ability to give long-distance commands and cause them to be obeyed by His creation!

From the "miracles" of modern science and God's Word, YOU CAN KNOW that a Living Being in the heavens can clearly see and hear the activities of any and all human beings on this earth!

God Uses His Power to HELP US!

As a member of God's Church, you are one of Christ's disciples. You have been chosen by God. And *you* as an individual are being scrutinized by God. Much more than the sparrows, God, through His spiritual assistants and master spiritual communications center, watches, hears and keeps track of you, for your good.

Said Jesus Christ, "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" — why? — "that ye should go and bring forth fruit" (John 15:16).

And what goal does He have in mind through that? Christ told His disciples: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will *raise him up at the last day*" (John 6:44).

That is your destiny. That is the reason God watches and hears you — to *help* you and *guide* you so you can qualify to one day be instantaneously changed, or resurrected, to join Jesus Christ and the Father in their all-powerful Family for eternity! □

FATAL FAMILIARITY

(Continued from page 3)

Modern Israel is not going to turn to God. "For the people turneth not unto Him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of Hosts. Therefore the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, IN ONE DAY"! (Isa. 9:13-14.) If you are overly familiar with God's truth and His Church, then *you* could suffer with Israel and the rest of the world. Or you could die disapproved of God before that time!

This is why every Co-Worker letter urges us NEVER TO LOSE OUR SENSE OF URGENCY!

Analyze yourself. Have you grown lethargic? Lukewarm? Dulled? Apathetic? All these are symptoms of the FATAL spiritual sickness of FAMILIARITY. Change NOW, before *your* time runs out! □

AFRICA

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they were ready to be baptized. Discouraged over not finding us at our hotel earlier in the day, they were about to leave for home when they decided to try to contact us just once more. They checked the hotel barely half an hour after we arrived. They were both baptized that night.

What You Can Do

The entire trip took us 30,000 miles. We met and counseled 218 people — a tremendous increase over the 82 we were able to meet the year before. Forty-eight individuals were baptized and added to the growing number of Christ's called-out ones on earth's most spiritually darkened continent.

Only Jesus Christ knows what type of work He intends to do in Black Africa, and whether He will one day give these people local ministers they can go to for help and encouragement.

But one thing *is* certain. Your brethren in Black Africa are scattered throughout a darkened land, with a pagan society hostile to everything they believe in and stand for. They desperately need your prayers.

So please remember them — lovingly! □