



THE PILOT



Gardner-Webb College

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Inside South Africa With Dr. Partain

by: Charlotte H. Porter

The following interview was conducted with Dr. Jack G. Partain, professor of religion at Gardner-Webb. Dr. Partain was appointed by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention; to Arusha, Tanzania for the period extending from 1965 until 1978. Dr. Partain served as a professor at the Baptist Theological Seminary of East Africa. It is hoped that our discussion will bring you to an understanding of the current turmoil in South Africa; its causes, and perhaps future ramifications.

Q. What is apartheid?

A. The word means "separateness". The basic theory is this; in South Africa (S.A.) there are several different nations . . . the White Afrikaans, African Blacks, Indian, and Colored. Each nation has its own heritage, language, and culture. The government has decided that each nation is to remain separate, so each develops independently of the others. Black Africans have their own educational system, and their own unskilled jobs. This apartness permeates every aspect of life. Each nation has its own "homelands". The Whites decided that all poor land that Whites termed worthless (that they hadn't taken away from the Africans) would be the Black African "homelands". So, 24 million Blacks are left with about 13% of the total land area; 5 million Whites claim the rest.

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Q. This was started back in 1948?

A. The theory was pushed by South African Prime Minister Verwoerd in the late 40's and early 50's.

Q. What was happening before 1948? Were any Blacks in control?

A. No. Blacks have never been in control.

Q. How long has this group of Whites been there?

A. Since the 1600's. They've been there as long as there've been White people in America. They came from Holland, with a few from France. They speak a language like Dutch, and call themselves "Afrikaaners".

Q. Do the Blacks work in White South Africa?

A. Yes, that's where the system is shown to be fiction. The pretense is that Africans do not "really" live where they work. White S.A. is not their "homeland". This is how apartheid becomes oppressive. Let's say you come from Bophuthatswana, but you live in a township near Johannesburg (J-burg) called Soweto. But of course you don't really live in Soweto. You're not allowed to have property there; you just have a permit to be there to work. You must carry a passbook that shows who your employer is. There are thousands of people camped around J-burg, who work there, but are not really allowed to "live" there. So you have to carry out this fiction that you are a foreigner in your own country. You can be evicted at any time. You have no rights. You can't have your family with you. If your wife and children come into the township, they are in danger, because they have no pass. Therefore, all over the country, the women live back in the "homeland" on a poor farm, rearing

the children; while the husbands are at a mine camp or a township. That's a sure-fire formula for social disintegration.

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Q. Do we have a right to try to change their system? Jerry Falwell said recently that we're trying to get South Africans to change something in 37 years; when it took us over 130 years to move toward equality in America. Is there any validity to what Falwell says?

A. I don't know that there's any validity to that stance. I get a little troubled by trying to equate every situation in every country with something in American history. The situation in S.A. is rather different, and difficult to understand on our terms.

Q. I have a feeling many Americans equate our Civil War with what's happening there now.

A. It's not the same. We're dealing with an extensive system which exploits the majority of the people, for the economic and social benefits of the minority.

Q. What makes it different from our experience with civil war?

A. Whites were in the majority for one thing; and there was no tone of nationalism. You're not dealing with slavery here, as such.

Q. Has the rioting been going on for years, and we didn't pay much attention? Is it just recently Blacks have gotten the courage to speak out?

A. There has been a wave of unrest about every 10 years. Starting with the Sharpsville incidents in the 1960's; there have been riots in the 70's and early 80's. It takes 10 years or so for frustration to build up, and for another generation of kids to come along who don't remember the last efforts. White S.A. is very heavily armed, very efficient, and knows few limits to what they will do to put down Black majority dissent.

Q. The major famine that we hear about in Africa hasn't touched S.A. Yet, I have a feeling that a lot of us might confuse the famine in northern Africa, with the problems of apartheid in southern Africa. Many probably think there is a hunger problem associated with the plight of the South Africans.

A. Well, I'm sure there is a continuing problem with undernourishment and a poor food supply, especially in the "homelands"; because of the way agriculture is done.

Q. Would it be safe to say that the Blacks in S.A. are generally well-fed? They're not facing any major droughts or starvation?

A. They're not dealing with massive death or starvation, no.

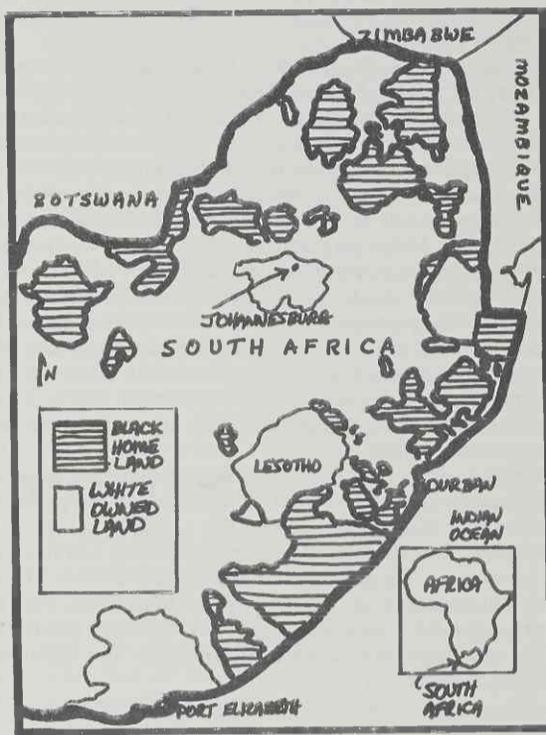
Q. Where in relation to S.A. is the famine?

A. Far to the north, in Ethiopia, Chad, Mali; all along the band just south of the Sahara Desert.

Q. Has America aided in stirring unrest between the White Afrikaaners, and the Black Africans; because of our economic interests?

A. No. Many of our companies there, go along with the White government. If you're a White businessperson; the benefits of the

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Gardner-Webb Searches For A New President

Due to the recent resignation of Dr. Craven Williams, the Gardner-Webb College Board of Trustees is presently in the process of finding a worthy candidate to the position of President. Mr. Hobart Smith, chairman of the board, has formed a Search Committee which he will also supervise. The Search Committee is comprised of George Blanton, Jr., Lloyd Bost, Dr. Paul Craven, Ann Hardy, Bernard Parker and Dr. Timothy Pennell. Already they have compiled a list of criteria which they will use in their search for a new President. This criteria has been developed into a statement which has been published in *The Chronicle*, a well-reputed journal of higher education.

The ad in *The Chronicle* lists specific qualities which include "distinguished academic credentials and proven dynamic, creative leadership skills appropriate for a church-related liberal arts college." In addition "demonstrated abilities in communications, fiscal management, and fund raising are expected."

Dr. Williams relates his resignation to the growth of Gardner-Webb over the past ten years. He feels that in order for Gardner-Webb to continue its growth new leadership is essential. Upon leaving Gardner-Webb Dr. Williams will retain his title of "President" as the head of the Dominion Corporation of Raleigh. We wish the Williams family all of the best and we thank them for ten years of unsurmountable growth, personal commitment, and involvement.

—David Kahler

Enrollment Dips: Causes Sought

This 1985-86 school year, Gardner-Webb has seen a decline in on-campus enrollment. Though the total number of students is only seventy-five less than last year, the loss is noticed most by returning collegians and professors.

On the other hand, Dr. Drayer, the Vice-President of Academics, reports an impressive overall registration of 1,830 students. This figure includes the day and night classes here at the campus, graduate studies, GOAL, as well as the Gardner-Webb satellite colleges in Statesville

and Charlotte. Thus far, there have been 402 freshmen, transfers, and re-admissions welcomed to the college.

There are several possible reasons behind the decrease in students. One explanation as indicated by Religion professor Dr. Robert Lamb, is that the famous post-World War II Baby Boom has passed, resulting in a smaller number of students in the 18-22 year old category.

Another explanation is that state universities have started recruiting students still in high

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