

# South Africa's John Newton Believes In Training Indigenous Missionaries

By GARY STEWART  
Managing Editor

Indigenous missions--the training of native Africans to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to their own people--is the answer to evangelizing the nation, says A. John Newton, native South African missionary who spoke at revival services last week at Midview Baptist Church in Kings Mountain.

Rev. Newton said 90 foreign missionaries have had to leave the country in the past 10 years because of political problems and stress, but he has trained hundreds of natives to go into their own tribal communities to spread the Word and build churches.

Newton, whose father was Catholic and mother a Methodist, became a Christian at the age of 17 and began his ministry at age 19. He spent over 30 years in preaching and training ministers in Africa before coming to the United States in 1984. Since coming here, he has pastored some churches, spoken in revivals and missions conferences and led seminars, and at present is a field representative for Christian Aid Mission in Charlottesville, Va., which finances indigenous mission programs. Beginning later this year, Newton will serve six months raising money in the U.S. and six

months ministering and training pastors in Africa.

Newton has preached in army tents, churches and in the shade of trees in Africa and once baptized over 3,000 people at one revival.

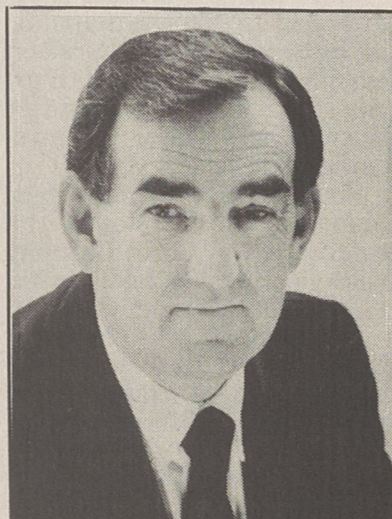
"Our revival meetings usually last from six weeks to four months," he noted. "We go in with a team of 15 men and myself, put up a tent, preach, baptize, and build churches."

He said preachers in Africa often get the feeling that people are not responding, but it's usually a case of language barriers. "That's why it takes so long to run a revival," he said. "For weeks it seems the people are just staring at you and not responding. Then, as they begin to understand the Message, you'll see a tear rolling down their cheek and you know the Holy Spirit is working on them."

Newton is an independent Baptist but he says the churches he organizes in Africa are non-denominational. "We never put a name above the door," he says.

Christian Aid Mission, he said, serves over 3,000 missionaries and ministers in foreign lands and has contact with over 25,000 independent indigenous ministries.

"We only finance indigenous works," he said. "We buy tractors for farmers, put on roofs for



REV. JOHN NEWTON

churches, complete buildings for orphanages and hospitals, assist with medical supplies, purchase vehicles, Bibles, tracts and medical supplies."

Newton doesn't agree with recent U.S. sanctions against South Africa, and says most Africans don't agree with them either. He said the sanctions and disinvestments by U.S. companies will eventually backfire on the U.S. because, while the U.S. is banning trade with South Africa, Russia is buying up South African minerals, taking the best for themselves and selling the leftovers to the U.S. "Eventual-

ly, it will put Americans out of work," he said.

"The political situation in South Africa is not as much a black-white conflict as it is a Red conflict," said Newton. "We hear a lot on the news about the black-white conflicts of South Africa, but it is distorted news. The American people are not getting the real truth about what's happening there. People have been kidnapped and taken to Russia, Cuba and the PLO nations and trained to be terrorists, then brought back into South Africa to go into the tribal communities and plant land mines, etc."

Newton said there are 27 million black people in Africa who are members of 10 different tribes. "These people are wanting to develop their homelands and to identify with the world that they can develop their own future," he said. "The South African government has spent an enormous amount of money to help them so they can become self-governing nations and set up a stable future."

Newton said South Africa, which represents about eight percent of the total population of Africa, and a few states in the extreme northern tip of Africa, are the only Democratic governments in the nation. Others are communist-controlled or controlled by one-party dictatorships and military rule. South Africans enjoy freedoms which are probably unsurpassed only by the U.S.

Other African nations do not enjoy such freedoms, have very poor highway, railway and utility systems, and most people cannot afford the high-priced food and other necessities.

"Those nations started off 'one-man, one-vote' nations, and today it's a one-party system...socialistic with no rights, no freedom," he said.

The African states have the highest percentage of persons with AIDS (40 percent) of anywhere in the world. It's such a problem, Newton said, that South Africa requires all persons

coming in from other parts of the country to have AIDS tests administered by a surgeon before entering South Africa and as soon as they get there.

"It's known as the AIDS belt of the world," Newton said. "The disease has reached epidemic proportions. It's a known fact that the African hospitals use the same needles for blood transfusions, and have no refrigeration and cooling systems for blood banks, and this is what's creating it."

He said South Africa sends corn meal, milk, medical supplies and petroleum products into the northern countries to try to keep people from coming into South Africa and creating

medical problems.

South Africa also contracts persons who do not have the AIDS virus to work in mines for two to four years and learn a trade to take back to their homelands.

"Half the money is banked, one quarter given to the employees and one quarter sent to their families," Newton said. "After the contract period is up, they take the money that has accumulated and go back home. Very seldom do they return for a second term to work in the mines. The money they have accumulated and the trade they have learned enables them to be affluent businessmen in their countries."

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## Assemblies Of God Should Be Saluted

There is no doubt that Jimmy Swaggart's fall from grace has hurt many people and shamed the cause of Christ. Swaggart's downfall has been more damaging to the church than last year's controversies involving Oral Roberts and Jim and Tammy Bakker. More people listened to Swaggart and believed him to be a true man of God.

The Assemblies of God is to be commended for treating Swaggart's sin like that of any other fallen preacher. There is instant and total

Clyde Dupin



forgiveness for any repentant sinner who calls on the Lord. However, there are some life-styles, habits, and sins that make it wise to go through a period of Christian discipleship and rehabilitation. Due

to the nature of Swaggart's sex problems, his denomination felt he needed this help. The National Religious Broadcasters apparently agrees and have removed Swaggart from its membership.

Many prominent TV preachers have not been able to escape the taint of mixing business with religion. This problem has overtaken too many television ministries; and others are now on shaky ground and ready to collapse. The sins that have brought so many TV preachers down are pride, money and sex. Swaggart's sin was a form of sexual immorality that we cannot pornography.

Jimmy Swaggart will soon hit the "come-back" trail. Hopefully, he will remember some of the toughest talk from Jesus in the Gospel is aimed at the hypocrites and the self-righteous. It is important that a man lives what he preaches.

### Revival Set

Cherokee Street Baptist Church will hold revival services May 11-13 at 7 p.m. each evening.

Visiting evangelist will be Rev. Junior Clark, of Piney Mountain.

Special singing will be featured each evening. Rev. Gene Leigh, pastor invites the public to attend.

### Mom's Morning Out

Central United Methodist Church will sponsor Mother's Morning Out again this fall on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to noon and registration forms are available until May 25.

Contact Lisa Hall at 739-9054 for more information and to register.

Ms. Hall said the program features free play, crafts and a snack and cost is \$16 per month for one child and \$24 per month for two children.

The program follows the school calendar and is not held in the summer months.

### Banquet Monday

The annual United Methodist Women Mother-Daughter banquet will be held Monday at 7 p.m. at the church.

"The Clowns Around", a group of senior citizens from Gaston County, will provide entertainment.

Admission is \$5 for adults and \$2.50 for children under 12.

### Church Women Dinner Thursday

Third annual dinner of the Kings Mountain Council of Churchwomen will be held Thursday, at 6:30 p.m. at Boyce Memorial ARP Church.

Tickets are Available through local church offices.

### GOSPEL SING

There will be a gospel singing Saturday at 7:30 p.m. at Midview Baptist Church. Featured groups include the Ambassadors of Rock Hill, S.C., and the Eddie Houston Family of Maiden.

## We Are Easter People

By PHILLIP M. SQUIRE, Pastor Resurrection Lutheran

For many people and churches, the Easter celebration is long past. It is a one day celebration and when Easter Sunday is passed, Easter is over. We forget that Easter shapes the way we look at the world and the way we live daily.

All too often we forget where life comes from. We see our life beginning in a physical union between a man and a woman and that is it. But life is much more than just being born. We are nothing until we are gripped by what God has done for us on the cross of calvary. Our life only takes on meaning, purpose and direction when we are confronted with the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

When we understand the victory over death that Christ bought with the giving of his life, then the way we live takes on a whole new meaning. If we believe our three score and ten years ends in a six foot hole in the ground, then the old saying, "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die", takes on great significance for us.

The Easter story tells us of a different ending for our lives. Easter tells us that death is not the end but only a door through which we will all pass on our way to eternal living; some to the eternal torment of hell and others to the eternal banquet in the presence of our heavenly Father. Where we go, as hard as this statement seems for many, is NOT our decision. We don't pile up enough good works or brownie points or decisions for Christ, or righteous acts, or worship services attended to tip the scales in our favor. We don't earn, much less merit, God's forgiveness and love. If we can do ONE thing to earn our salvation, then Christ had no reason to die and rise from the dead. As St. Paul tells us in Romans, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God". (R. 3:23)

Christ's victory over the cold, damp earth of the grave, opens the way to the eternal presence of God for all people. On the cross, the word of our Lord was "Father forgive 'them' for they know not what they do". The "them" was an inclusive "them". It was another word for sinner, which is the title all of us wear. For as St. Paul says, we ALL fall short of perfection and nothing can bridge the gap that exists between God and mankind, except the death and resurrection of Christ.

One of the proclamations of the church is that we are Easter people. That is, because of the resurrection of Christ from the dead, we in a sense are permitted to do more than eat, drink and be merry. We are so overwhelmed by what God has done for us, that what we do is love and serve others in response to God's saving act in Jesus Christ.

As Easter people we worship on the day of resurrection. Each Sunday is a worship celebration of the Easter event. But so many of us loose sight of the death and resurrection as nothing more than just an historical event. The content of our lives, which are lived out sermons, should be the victory that Christ has won for us by his rising from the dead with the defeat of the powers of the law and the evil one.

All too often we celebrate Easter as a one day event and then it is back to life as usual. The incredible news that Christ is risen from the dead should shake us to the ground of our being each and every time we hear that news. Easter should color every day of our living. We should view the world through glasses that are tinted with resurrection color.

No matter how hopeless a situation seems; no matter how bad the news we read in the newspapers or see on television; no matter how desparate and despairing our life seems to become; the resurrection always speaks a word of hope to us. The resurrection tells us that life and salvation are NEVER found within ourselves or in the world around us or by what we do. Life and salvation are the gift of the totally other: the one who died and rose from the dead so that we might have life and live that life to its fullest in love and service for God to one another.

May we live as Easter people, for tomorrow we may die. So let us eat, drink and be merry in celebration of the victory God has won for us over death. For to each of us the gift of eternal life awaits.

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