Father, the time has come for you to bring glory to your Son....
You have given me some followers from this world, and I have shown
them what you are like. They were yours, but you gave them to me,
...and they accepted it. They know that I came from you, and they
believe that you are the one who sent me. I am praying for them...

John 17:1b-9a CEV
Introduction

Central and South America include many different nations. Brazil covers the eastern half of the continent with over a million Baptists in 6,000 plus churches. Barbados, a small island in the Caribbean Sea, has about 500 Baptists in eight churches. Most of the countries’ larger populations migrated from Africa and Europe. They also have minority indigenous people dominated by the immigrants. Baptists began in similar ways in most of the countries.

South America

Argentina

European immigrants coming to Argentina included Baptists. Lasting and growing Baptist influence began with Paul Besson’s (1848-1932) ministry. His French-speaking family lived in Switzerland. While serving as a Reformed Church missionary in France, he began studying Baptist beliefs. Convinced their beliefs were true, he joined a Baptist church.

Swiss immigrants in Argentina called Besson as pastor. He arrived in 1881. And before the end of 1882, he became pastor of a French congregation in Buenos Aires. He began preaching in French, and then added Spanish. He had left Switzerland when the government took control over the Reformed Church. This prepared him to stand strongly for religious freedom in Argentina. He followed Baptist belief and practice in his effort. Baptist historian Leonard has called him, “herald of Christian liberty.”

Underline a phrase that supports Besson being named, “herald of Christian liberty.”

In the first paragraph, check the phrase that relates why he became a Baptist.

Besson personally paid to build a church building in Buenos Aires. A church still meets on the same property. His ministry resulted in two other churches. He also translated a Spanish edition of the New Testament. When American Southern Baptists entered Argentina in 1903, Besson cooperated with their mission.

Another source for Baptist life entered the country with German-speaking immigrants from Russia’s Volga region. As their churches grew, they formed an association which still functions. It joined the National Baptist Convention, and its churches began using Spanish. Slavic Baptists left Communist-controlled Russia in 1917. They came to Buenos Aires and also settled in the north. They, too, have joined with the Convention.
In addition to these beginnings, American Southern Baptists have helped ongoing growth. Sidney M. Sowell arrived as their first missionary in 1903. But, as always, ongoing growth requires national leadership and development. Argentinian Juan C. Varetto’s preaching and writing supported and influenced Baptist life throughout South America.

Varetto’s leadership represents fulfilling the need for __________ leadership. Such leadership is necessary if Baptists will continue to live and grow.

Argentine Baptists developed an effective publishing ministry, including their El Expositor Bautista. It completed a book on 100 years of ministry in 2008. Argentine Baptist missions planted Baptist life in Paraguay and Uruguay. They also began missions in Peru and Spain.

Buenos Aires Central Baptist Church, begun by Besson, became Argentina’s largest Baptist church. It has an average attendance of 1,500. Central Church led Baptist churches in ordaining women to ministry. Five of its nine ministers are women. The church ministers through a medical clinic, dental office, food store, clothing room, and a daily lunch program.3

Underline one practice that Central Baptist Church follows that differs from most Baptists.

Spanish language use in worship has largely replaced other European languages. Some churches have begun a Pentecostal style of worship. It includes high emotionalism and, in some churches, falling in the Spirit.

Baptists have done much for religious freedom in Argentina. “Since Besson, and through Varetto and Varetto’s son-in-law, Santiago Canclini, Baptists have been leaders in matters of freedom of conscience. It is a fact recognized by all other evangelical or Protestant churches.”4

Check Baptists’ outstanding contribution in Argentine life noted above.

Conservative Baptist missionaries entered Argentina in 1947. They began their Mobile Bible Institute in 1961. They have an effective ministry among the indigenous Guarani people. Cooperative Baptists relate to the National Convention but have their own separate association. Independent Baptist missionaries that came later do not cooperate with the Convention.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Argentine Baptist Convention had 481 churches with 70,000 members.5
Brazil

American Baptists’ beginnings in Brazil resulted from the United States Civil War. A group of Southerners, unhappy with their lost cause, migrated to Sao Paulo. Baptists within the group founded a church in 1871. A. T. Hawthorne, a former Confederate general, was one of the migrants, but not a Christian. On a trip back to the States, he was led to trust Christ. He then urged Southern Baptists to send missionaries to Brazil.

___True ___False Baptist church life in Brazil began as a planned mission strategy.

Southern Baptists heard Hawthorne’s appeal. As a result, the Foreign Mission Board appointed William B. and Anne Luther Bagby to Brazil on Christmas week in 1880. This began, “...the incredible (unbelievable) saga of the ‘Bagbys of Brazil.’ Anne served sixty-one years, until her death during Christmas week of 1942.” She began teaching girls in Sao Paulo, and Anna Bagby College grew out of that effort. Its yearly enrollment grew to about 500 students. Hers has been the longest service of any SBC missionary. Nearly all the Bagby children became missionaries.

Many missionaries, including Zachary C. and Kate Taylor, soon followed the Bagbys. “Bagby and Taylor set policies of starting work in the larger cities, training Brazilian pastors as quickly as possible and turning the work over to national leaders.” They found Brazilians open to the gospel. Good growth occurred in spite of early Roman Catholic persecution. Those coming to faith began doubling in number nearly every decade. By the beginning of the 20th century, Brazil had become Southern Baptists’ most responsive mission field.

Under the Holy Spirit’s enabling, Bagby and Taylor’s missions policies helped good Baptist growth in Brazil. They stressed beginning work in the larger _____________. They knew the need to train ______________ from the beginning. They also knew that Baptists’ future in Brazil required _______________ leaders.

Baptists found outstanding assistance from missionaries that joined them from other backgrounds.

Solomon L. Ginsburg

One would not expect a great Baptist missionary from a Polish Jewish rabbi’s son. Solomon Ginsburg was born into a Jewish family near Suwalki, Poland on August 6, 1867. At fifteen years old, he rebelled against his father’s wishes. He did not want to study to become a rabbi. Nor did he
want an arranged marriage with a twelve-year-old girl. She was part of his father’s study plan for him. Just before his wedding feast, Ginsburg managed to run away.

He worked his way across Europe until he reached London. There he found work with an uncle as an assistant bookkeeper. His uncle was a devout orthodox Jew. However, a converted Jew soon raised a challenge to Ginsburg’s new enjoyable home life. He invited Ginsburg to hear his Sabbath afternoon message on Isaiah 53. Ginsburg remembered reading that chapter at home back in Poland. Afterward, he went to his father and asked, “To whom does the prophet refer?” Following a long silence, Ginsburg asked his question again. Then his father grabbed the book from him and slapped his face.

The converted Jew’s message revealed Jesus as the prophesied messiah. This gained Ginsburg’s growing interest. He began reading the New Testament and found more evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. He learned also that the Jews had rejected Him. But he felt no connection to his own life.

Ginsberg continued reading the New Testament. The account of Jesus’ crucifixion moved him deeply. He began to feel that he was one of those responsible for Jesus’ death. He realized he needed to trust Christ and claim his forgiveness. But he knew also if he followed Christ it would cost him greatly. He would lose his job and be thrown out of a happy home life. He struggled for three months before he revealed his faith in Christ. Then when he returned home, broomsticks, buckets of water, and a locked door met him at his uncle’s house. Late at night, he stood on the street with only a few coins in his pocket.

What led Ginsburg to personal faith in Christ? A ________________
Jew’s message on Isaiah chapter ____.

Later, a second uncle offered him a rich inheritance. But his uncle demanded that he first deny Christ. Instead, Ginsburg left a group of Jewish leaders after testifying for Christ. He left with the sound of their excommunication curses ringing in his ears. However, his commitment to Christ as Lord was fixed for life.

What happened that both cost Ginsburg a happy home life and gave him direction for a lifetime?

His first teacher taught him the importance of witnessing. Bold witnessing led Ginsburg through all of his Christian life. Often, his witness efforts resulted in his being badly beaten. He rejoiced in the beatings. He felt like he had joined with Christ in His sufferings.
Praying for God’s will, he felt led to Brazil as a missionary. To prepare, he went to Portugal to learn Portuguese. There he wrote tracts that challenged the Roman Catholic Church. They also aroused Jesuit threats against his life. He fled to Brazil, arriving in Rio de Janeiro on June 10, 1890. From the first, he continued his bold witness and faced persecution. Sometime after his arrival, he met Southern Baptist missionaries Z. C. Taylor and W. B. Bagby. He accepted baptism in November 1891. For the rest of his life, he worked with the Southern Baptist Mission.

Ginsburg’s life experiences taught him a missionary principle. “A courageous, positive attack is the best approach...where people were indifferent, the work progressed very slowly, but where the people were hostile and persecuted, the gospel messenger’s work progressed rapidly.”

He entered San Fidelis City and began an open air service playing on his portable organ and singing. In the midst of a threatening crowd, the police arrested him. The next morning, the chief of police offered to release him. But he had to promise to leave and never preach there again. Ginsburg replied, “If you release me, I will certainly continue my preaching.”

**Ginsburg’s witnessing was □ Fearful □ Courageous □ Hesitant**

The police sent him under heavy guard to the state capital, Nictheroy. The capital was under rebel attack at the time. Mrs. Ginsburg went with him. In the midst of the warfare, she gained the governor’s release for her husband. They returned to San Fidelis and founded a growing church. There are many records of threats to Ginsburg’s life and the Lord’s protection. The threats often aroused great fear within him. But he always prayed to give a good testimony in the face of death. He wanted his testimony at death to match his life’s testimony.

Ginsburg died on April 1, 1927. Ginsburg’s first wife had died of yellow fever just five months after they married. Later, he married Miss Emma Morton, a single missionary in 1893. They served together for over thirty years. Ginsburg titled his autobiography, *A Wandering Jew in Brazil*. Early rapid Baptist growth in Brazil can be credited in part to Solomon Ginsburg. He was a Jewish rabbi’s son who truly trusted Christ as his Lord and Savior.

**Erik A. and Ida Nelson**

Ginsburg aided Baptist growth when he learned about the Erik A. Nelson family. They were living on the Amazon River. He visited them and together they carried out evangelistic efforts. Nelson, a former cowboy from Kansas, played the violin and sang and Ginsburg preached. He and missionary William Entzminger enlisted the Nelsons for the Southern Baptist Mission.
Erik grew up in Kansas as the son of a Baptist preacher. As a young man, he drifted away from his early commitment to Christ. He worked for several years as a cowboy in the American west. But in his twenties, he returned home and began to study the Bible. A letter written by W. B. Bagby led him to Brazil in 1891. Erik and Ida Lundberg married in 1893, joining with Bagby in missions ministry.

A letter written by missionary Bagby was one influence for Nelson’s mission commitment. What other factor helped prepare him for the Bagby letter’s influence? His ________________ of the ________________.

The Nelsons served six years as independent missionaries. Then they received Southern Baptist appointment in 1897. They served until 1937, ministering to people who lived along the Amazon River. For many years, they lived on and ministered from a houseboat they called “Buffalo.” Eric Nelson served for 48 years and is buried in Manaus, Brazil.

**Brazilian Leadership Develops**

Brazilian Baptists organized the Brazilian National Baptist Convention on June 23, 1907. The organization included their Home and Foreign Mission Boards. From that beginning, their home missions efforts spread across the vast interior of Brazil (the largest country in South America). Their early foreign missions included Chile and Bolivia. Being a former colony of Portugal, and speaking Portuguese, they sent missionaries there also.

The convention organized itself like the American Southern Baptists. In addition to their mission boards, they began seminaries, and publication ministries. The Brazilian Baptist Publication Society formed in 1901 began publishing *O Jornal Batista*. The women organized themselves as the Woman’s Missionary Union of Brazil in 1908. The Union related to the Convention as an auxiliary. The churches usually follow strict discipline and most observe close communion.

The WMU organized as an ________________ of the Convention. It worked in cooperation with the Convention and aided it.

Baptists in Brazil look like the country’s ethnic mix. German Baptists, many from Russia, settled in the most southern state, Rio Grande do Sul. There they have their own state convention within the Brazilian Convention. Latvians are another major Baptist ethnic group. Many European, African, and Asian people make up the larger population. Inter-marriage has resulted in a mixed racial melting pot population.
Baptists reaching the many ethnic groups in Brazil is: □ alright □ very important □ necessary to fulfill the Great Commission.
(Check all correct responses)

The Baptist Missionary Society (BMS of London) sent Arthur and Kathleen Elder as missionaries in 1953. They cooperated with SBC missions efforts, focusing on areas where Southern Baptists had little work. They emphasized evangelism using the slogan, “Every Baptist Home a Preaching Station.”

Baptists grew rapidly in the 1950s and 1960s. In Parana state, they grew from about 5,000 members in 1955 to nearly 11,000 in 1965. However, during the same period, Brazilian Assemblies of God grew from 9,200 to 38,450. BMS author Brian Stanley “…observed that the ‘secret of Pentecostal success in Brazil…lies in the offer of active leadership participation to ordinary, uneducated people.’” But also strong spiritism and demon possession cultural concepts influence many Brazilians. Pentecostal emphasis on the Holy Spirit and healing meet their felt needs and expectations.

Pentecostal influence moved into Baptist life by the 1960s. It grew as a movement among Baptists, called Renovation. Its practices included charismatic worship, speaking in tongues, healing, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. These practices divided Baptists and led to the formation of the National Baptist Convention. It separated from the Brazilian National Baptist Convention. It has grown rapidly to over 200,000 members in 900 churches.

Baptists are free to follow Pentecostal practices (and remain baptistic) as long as they follow truth and _____________ Christ as Lord first of all.

Many Baptist missions have entered Brazil, including Conservative, Swedish, Independent, and Free Will. Baptist Mid-Missions began work in 1935. Brazil has become its largest field. Brazil is also ABWE’s largest mission field.

At the close of the 20th century, Baptists in Brazil had 1,176,098 members in 6,416 churches. The emphasis given here on a few individuals must not deny the value of all the faithful believers. In their early beginnings, Baptists remained faithful through persecution. Today, their commitment to Christ’s Lordship continues to give vital life to Brazilian Baptists.
Central America

Chile

Baptists came with German immigrants to Chile. Philip Maier’s preaching gave them renewed life. They began the first German Baptist Church in 1892. Baptists’ renewed life spread to the Spanish-speaking Chileans. Later, H. L Weis extended the Baptists’ revival even further. He was a Mennonite missionary working with the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA).

William D. and Janet MacDonald, Scottish Baptists, also served with the C&MA. Trouble developed in their C&MA relationship. MacDonald began trying to raise help from Baptists. And C&MA leadership felt he was being disloyal. Then MacDonald learned that a C&MA missionary had sprinkled an infant. Bad feelings developed from the debate that followed.

___True ___False  MacDonald should not have been concerned about the infant baptism. (Prepare to discuss in class the basic problem with infant baptism)

MacDonald broke with the C&MA and formed the Evangelical Baptist Union (later renamed Convention) in April 1908. The Union began with under 500 members. Baptist statistician and historian Wardin notes that the people in the Union had little education. He connects that to the union’s electing MacDonald as their superintendent. He follows, noting that “…he [MacDonald] dominated, ruling like a bishop and moving pastors at will.”

Wardin seems to indicate that MacDonald gained his leading role because of the people’s limited education.

___True ___False  The way MacDonald began leading the Union was not baptistic. (Prepare to explain your answer for the class meeting)

At MacDonald’s request, American Southern Baptists’ FMB sent missionaries William and Mary Davidson in 1917. The Board also appointed MacDonald as one of its missionaries in 1920. The mission found it hard to move away from MacDonald’s ruling control. Ismael Neven, MacDonald’s son-in-law, felt that the transfer of a missionary was wrong in the 1930s. That seems to indicate that MacDonald continued his controlling leadership. Neven left the Convention and, over several years, seven churches followed. They founded the Chilean Mission/National Baptist Church. It has grown to 37 churches, with 5,600 members, and begun a partnership with the American Baptist Churches/USA (ABC/USA).

The Evangelical Baptist Convention and Mission formed a joint administrative board in 1926. It became the Cooperative Board in 1936. These organizational
moves reveal the growth of Chilean national leadership. They began college and seminary institutions, along with other ministries. Honorio Espinoza became president of the seminary in the 1940s. He edited La Voz Bautista, which MacDonald had begun years before.

Chilean Baptist churches became self-supporting sooner than their Convention. The SBC FMB continued to aid the Convention financially until recent times. Missionaries held some Convention offices jointly with Chilean leaders, but that is no longer true. The Convention has gradually accepted its responsibility for full financial support.

Brazilian Baptists have sent some missionaries to work with the Chilean Convention. ABWE’s first missionaries came to Chile in 1935. They centered their work in Santiago and founded the Baptist Bible Institute there. Chile has proven to be one of the most difficult countries for ABWE mission efforts.¹⁵

Baptists are one of the smaller denominations in Chile. They numbered 32,323 members in 272 churches at the close of the 20th century.¹⁶

Cuba

Cuba’s Ten Years War (1868-1878) against Spain’s harsh rule affected Alberto Jose Diaz in many ways. The most important effect brought him to faith in Christ and Baptist belief. These influences led to his becoming the Baptists’ Apostle to Cuba.

Diaz graduated from the University of Havana and gained approval to practice medicine. Cuba’s Ten Years War soon followed. He joined the rebels and soon became a cavalry captain.

One day, Diaz and his companion found themselves trapped behind Spanish lines. They escaped by holding onto a log in the sea. They thought the current would carry them along the shore back to safety. But instead, it pulled them out to sea. Diaz’s companion slipped away and drowned. A fishing boat picked up an unconscious Diaz. Its crew put him on a boat going to New York City. He walked off the boat a stranger and penniless. But he knew where to find fellow Cubans—in Cuban cigar shops. There he found work.

God’s ongoing care saved his life from deadly pneumonia. At the same time, it opened the door for new life in Christ. Miss Alice Tucker, a young Christian woman, learned Diaz was critically ill. She felt she must do something for his salvation. At his bedside, she would read a few verses from her red-covered New Testament. Then she would put her hand over her eyes and pray silently for Diaz. While she prayed, she moved her lips. Diaz could not understand what she was doing. At first, he thought she was crazy. He could write a little in English and wrote, “What is that book
which you are reading?” and “What makes you talk to yourself?” She replied, the book was the Bible and that she was praying for him.

His Catholic background and experiences with the priests made it hard for him to understand. Even her answers did not seem to mean much. He found a Spanish New Testament which he could understand. In his medical training, he had taken special interest in treating the eye. This interest drew his attention to Jesus’ healing the blind. When he read of Bartimaeus being healed Diaz thought, “I too am a blind man; and what is distressing about it is that I cannot see him who is able to heal.” As he struggled to know the truth, his Spanish-speaking friends could not help. Also he knew too little English to learn from the Christians around him.

Led by the Holy Spirit, Diaz found his way to faith through reading Scripture. Without a church, sermon, or preacher, he knew he had to share his faith. In this manner, the first Baptist witness to Cuba was born (re-born).

In the paragraphs above, what three factors helped Diaz come to faith?
1. The ______________ of a young lady;
2. His study of the _________ ________________; and
3. Of course, the leading of the __________ ____________.

The Spanish government granted pardons to the rebels. This let Diaz return to Cuba and his medical practice. He brought a new quality to his practice—his witness of Christ. But Catholic priests learned of his witnessing. They told his patients that they sinned by going to a heretic. The priests’ opposition destroyed his practice.

Diaz returned to New York and his father followed with the rest of the family. They found a house near the Gethsemane Baptist Church. Soon Diaz’s sisters, Minnie and Clotilde, began attending and enjoying the Sabbath-school. Diaz’s mother’s health required his father to take her back to Cuba. His father told him, “Alberto, we will leave the girls with you here, on one condition: you must not try to make a Protestant of Minnie.” Alberto agreed because he knew his sister was already committed to the church.

One Sunday night, Alberto and his sisters saw their first baptism. Minnie was the first one to point out that it fit New Testament teaching. She was accepted for baptism at the Gethsemane Baptist Church in October 1882. Minnie Diaz became the first Baptist of all Cubans. A month later in November, Alberto followed in baptism. Her brother is called “Apostle to Cuba.” But it is important to note that Minnie served with him from the very first.
Alberto Diaz has been called “Apostle to Cuba.” But ____________
his ____________ was the first Cuban baptized as a Baptist.

Diaz knew he had to follow God’s call to minister to his people. He learned that the Philadelphia Female Bible Society wished to send a colporteur to Cuba. The Society appointed him and he went back to Cuba in 1883 with Minnie and Clotilde. Though not baptized, Clotilde returned committed to Christ. She resisted her mother’s efforts to lead her back into Catholic practices. In time, the entire Diaz family came to Baptist convictions. Alberto’s mother surprised her son and asked to be the first baptized in their church’s new baptistry.  

Diaz found himself in Havana with nothing except his box of Bibles and faith in God. He felt himself as one lone colporteur against a million and a half of Romanists. His feeling of God’s presence gave him the strength for the task. He shared his faith as he sold the Bibles. On a train trip out of Havana, police arrested him. They knew he was a former rebel. They thought his boxes contained propaganda against the government.

In jail, as an American citizen, he wrote the American consul. On Sunday, he asked permission to talk to the other prisoners. The jailer refused his request. Desiring to witness, he sang, prayed aloud, and preached so that all could hear him. When released the following Tuesday, many friends met him. He also sold all his Bibles, including one to the mayor. The next week, the mayor came asking where the book taught infant baptism and purgatory. Diaz said they were not there and shared his faith in Christ. His witness resulted in the mayor, his jailer, and 75 others being baptized.

Even while in jail and following, what one thing did Diaz continue to do? ___________________________________________________________

In Havana, as more young men became interested in his witness, they asked for regular meetings. They began meeting in the Pasaje Hotel on Sabbath afternoons. Diaz continued to share his testimony and some came to faith, but others doubted. As more began to attend, they needed to rent a larger place.

The number coming to faith grew and they organized as “The Reformed Church of Cuba” (reformed as against Catholicism). Episcopalians learned about the group and sent an Episcopalian priest to Havana. He said they should let him confirm them and make them Episcopal Church members. Diaz could not oppose the priest. He had agreed with the Bible Society that supported him to be neutral about churches. At the bishop’s suggestion they all kneeled and he “confirmed” the whole assembly. But when the
priest left, the group was not satisfied. He had done things much like the church the men had left. The priest retired a short time later.

The group began asking questions. Finally Diaz offered to tell them about the different churches (denominations). He explained about the Episcopal, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches. Then, one by one he asked that they vote for which fit them best. Beginning with the Episcopal Church, Diaz called for those who chose it to raise their hands. Not one raised his hand as Diaz named the other churches until Baptist. They all voted for it. For the first time, Diaz told them that he was Baptist. Agreeing together, the group freely committed themselves to stand together as Baptists.\textsuperscript{21}

What Baptist practice did Diaz begin with for the group he led? Baptists believe each one must come to his/her faith \underline{______________}, not by force of any kind.

Gradually, Baptists came to aid in Diaz’s missionary effort. The first connection came from the influence of Cuban converts in Florida. At their urging, W. F. Wood, a Southern Baptist home missionary, went to Havana. He found Diaz’s work was even more than he had been told. He led toward Diaz’s ordination in 1885. Diaz left the Bible Society and gave himself entirely to evangelism and leading the Havana church. The church took the name Gethsemane Baptist Church in 1886. That same year, the Home Mission Board (HMB) of the SBC began missions work in Cuba. It appointed Alberto Diaz as its first general missionary to that country.

Southern Baptists invited Diaz to speak at its Convention in 1886. He said that they (in Havana) had to be careful or they would soon have a thousand members. He reported that Havana Baptists had sent one missionary to Spain and one to the United States. The Convention made plans to provide additional aid for the work in Cuba. Two years later, the Convention instructed the HMB to provide $50,000 for a lot and building in Havana. They purchased a lovely theater building which became the center of Baptist work at that time.

Just over two years after Gethsemane Baptist Church organized, they had baptized 1,100. They were accepted out of 8,000 that had come forward. This reveals how careful Diaz was to assure that each one had truly trusted Christ. At the end of 1889, Diaz gave the following report. There were 27 churches and stations that had baptized 300. Their membership numbered 1,493. They had twenty missionaries. Also 2,228 teachers and pupils participated in the 26 Sunday schools.\textsuperscript{22}

\underline{True} \underline{False} In my opinion: Today, most Baptist pastors would find it hard not to accept all 8,000.
Prepare to discuss: What best promise could a church find in the 7,000 not accepted? What could a church do that could assure a larger number coming to true faith?

The Spanish-American War of 1898 ended Spanish rule over Cuba. Southern Baptists sent C. D. Daniel as superintendent for its work and Diaz resigned from the HMB. In November 1898, the HMB of the SBC left the eastern half of Cuba to the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS). The SBC HMB continued its missions efforts in the four western provinces. Daniel helped organize the Western Baptist Convention of Cuba in 1905. La Voz Bautista became the Convention’s periodical.

Harwell Robert Moseley came to Cuba as ABHMS’s first superintendent. He, with others, led in forming the Eastern Baptist Convention of Cuba in 1905—the same year the Western Convention began. The Eastern Convention named its periodical El Mensajero. ABHMS missionary A.B. Howell emphasized that Cuban work should depend on their pastors and laity. ABHMS gave financial assistance for local leaders to direct their own work. It led to “...the most extensive effort at indigenous funding and control of any Latin American Baptist community.”23 In the 1920s, Cubans appointed their own Home Mission Society. By 1956, all Eastern Convention pastors were Cuban and one was a superintendent.

Underline the phrase that reveals the firm foundation of ABHMS’s Cuban mission strategy.

The Cuban Revolution in the 1950s caused many serious problems for Cuba. Baptists served in both the General Fulgencio Batista government and Fidel Castro’s revolution forces. Frank Pais, a Baptist, became the second most important leader of the Castro revolutionary movement. He was killed in the struggle. And Cuba considers him a national hero. Baptist pastors served as chaplains with the forces of the Revolution. “In his study of the church and the Revolution, Marcos Ramos observed, ‘The number of Baptist clergy who helped and preached to the rebels was very high, owing largely to the painstaking attention the Eastern Convention had given the rural areas of the province.’”24

Had Frank Pais lived, he would have faced a difficult decision in 1961. The revolutionary government declared itself Marxist-Leninist. Many Baptists, including pastors and missionaries, left the country. The government nationalized the schools, but most churches and two seminaries continued their ministry.
Baptists who cooperated with the Revolution faced problems when the government became Marxist-Leninist. Marxist-Leninist governments took the position of atheism. That radically opposed Baptists’ foundational commitment to ________________ as Lord.

In 1965, the government arrested 48 Western Convention Baptist leaders. They included the Southern Baptist HMB superintendent, Herbert Caudill, and his son-in-law, missionary David Fite. They were charged with counter-revolutionary activities. The actual charge was illegally exchanging dollars for Cuban currency and cooperating with the CIA. Caudill and Fite were in prison or house arrest for four years before their release in 1969.

Thomas and Mabel Willey in 1941 began work that led to the Free Will Baptist Convention. The Convention operates a small theological school and publishes its paper *El Mensajero Fiel*.

What would be a basic belief of the Free Baptist Convention?

Christ died for: □ the elect □ for everyone

The Western Convention removed three churches from its organization. It could not approve of their involvement in politics. Also, they practiced open communion and a more open policy on baptism. One of its leaders was Raul Suarez, pastor of Havana’s Emmanuel Baptist Church. He was also a member of Parliament. The churches organized themselves into La Fraternidad de Iglesias Bautistas de Cuba. They have developed relationships with ABC/USA and Alliance of Baptists.

Since 1990, the government has relaxed its opposition to religion. The 1992 Cuban constitution makes it illegal to discriminate against Christians. Most Baptist churches are conservative in their theology. Church growth began to increase toward the end of the 20th century.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Baptist Convention of Eastern Cuba had 357 churches with 20,000 members. The Baptist Convention of Western Cuba had 160 churches with 16,000 members. Free Will Baptists’ twelve churches had 2,100 members. Altogether, Cuban Baptists had 529 churches with 38,100 members.

**Haiti**

Most of Haiti’s population descended from former slaves. The slaves fought their French masters and won their independence in 1804. Its small land area holding 9,699,191 people makes it the most densely populated country in the Americas. Also, it is the poorest nation in the Western hemisphere.
The majority of the population are Roman Catholic. But voodoo practices brought from Africa continue to hold a strong influence. In recent years, the Protestant minority has grown more rapidly. Historian Wardin suggests the sense of becoming full members of society comes with their new Baptist faith. This may be seen as the Spirit’s leading them to be open to the gospel. Baptists hold a concern that Haitians come to true faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.

**Underline Wardin’s suggestion about what may have helped Protestants’ growth. Prepare to discuss in class both the helpfulness and possible problem seen in Wardin’s thought.**

Baptist efforts began slowly and lacked ongoing support for many years. Small beginnings without follow-up came from various sources. The American Baptist Free Mission Society, an anti-slavery group (abolitionist), provided the earlier ongoing effort. It sent William M. Jones to Port-au-Prince in 1845. Mr. and Mrs. William L. Judd joined the work in 1847 and served for twenty years. One of the Judd’s converts, Lucius Hippolite, studied abroad and became pastor of the Judd church in 1890. He pastored the church until his death in 1928. England’s Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) and Jamaican Baptists added briefly to the efforts. Other small and somewhat isolated events developed. Their value should not to be overlooked.

The American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) began the first ongoing missions ministry in 1923. Their first missionary, A. Groves Wood, found about 1,200 Baptists scattered over the country with eight pastors. His ministry included evangelism, training pastors, and helping organize many primary schools. Those missions beginnings were followed by opening a seminary (1947), the Good Samaritan Hospital (1953), and an Eye Center (1989). The missions efforts included two agricultural centers and eighty-five schools with 27,000 students.

Historian Wardin notes additional mission bodies that have carried out effective ministries. Haitians had worked in Cuban sugarcane fields. And Cuban Baptists had led some of them to faith. The World Team’s (WT) Cuba Bible Institute followed them up. It opened the Evangelical Baptist Mission of South Haiti. Out of its various ministries, 284 churches have developed with over 60,000 members. In addition, 183 schools related to the mission have 23,000 students.

The Evangelical Crusade Mission began working in Haiti in 1943, accepting another missionary’s work begun in 1928. It formed the Evangelical Baptist Union of Haiti. In five provinces, the Union has 308 churches and missions with 120,000 that attend. Its 185 Christian day schools have 44,500 students.
And its ministries include medical care, economic self-help programs, and relief efforts.\textsuperscript{29} 

Baptists in Haiti have grown out of various missions efforts to include 641 churches with 235,463 members.\textsuperscript{30} They are the largest Protestant body in Haiti.

**Jamaica**

An escape from slavery brought George Liele (or Lisle) (1750-1828), the first Baptist to Jamaica. He sailed with British military forces after their defeat in the American revolution. He carried a letter of recommendation to the governor which permitted him to work in the capital. He was a freed slave. But he and his children had been threatened with a return to slavery in the new nation.

However, Liele brought more than his desire for freedom to Jamaica. He came as a Baptist preacher committed to Christ as Lord. He had helped found the Silver Bluff Baptist Church near Augusta, Georgia. In Jamaica, he became a missionary before Carey sailed to India. In 1783, he led in founding a church in Kingston. He did that while he worked to pay for his fare to Jamaica.

George Liele came to Jamaica following God’s call to be a missionary. ___True ___False

Leile became the first Baptist missionary to Jamaica. ___True ___False

This first missionary to Jamaica was bi-vocational. In my opinion: that was [___wrong ___right] (Prepare to explain your answer relating to being a bi-vocational pastor today).

Moses Baker was one of many whom Liele led to Christ. He, too, was a freed slave and became a Baptist preacher. He worked with Liele organizing Baptist churches. They ministered among Jamaican slaves who followed African religions. Moses wrote to the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) in London for help. The BMS began relating to Jamaican Baptists in 1814 and continued into the 21st century. The Society sent John Rowe (1788-1816) as their first contact.

The BMS sent many missionary couples. They faced the opposition of both the powerful rich plantation owners and the threat of disease. Yellow fever took the lives of many. John Rowe died of the fever in just over two years. Missionary Thomas Knibb died of yellow fever in 1823 in Jamaica. He had arrived only three months earlier. His brother William, with his bride of one month, Mary Watkins Knibb, reached the country in 1824. He became strongly opposed to slavery. He wrote in his journal, “I
pray God that I may never view with indifference a system of so infernal (hellish) a nature.”

Baptists’ efforts proved effective even when government laws opposed their efforts. The laws opposed giving religious instruction to the slaves. But the Jamaica Baptist Association reported twelve churches with 7,001 members in 1829.

___True ___False  In my opinion: One should be willing to break the law to teach the slaves about Christ.

Kingston, Jamaica’s capital, was a center of the slave trade in the Caribbean. Slavery affected all of its society. The slaves revolted in 1831. Because some Baptists joined in the revolt, it was called “the Baptist war.” Government authorities arrested Knibb with other missionaries. However, investigations proved Baptists and other missionaries innocent. But angry whites still destroyed Baptist and Methodist chapels. Their destructive actions worked against the whites when reports reached England. The reports helped end slavery in Jamaica.

___True ___False  In my opinion: The Baptist missionaries should not have taken a stand against slavery. Their emphasis should have focused entirely on evangelism. Standing against slavery might have slowed their evangelistic success.

William Knibb, Thomas Burchell, and James Phillippo, missionaries, sailed from Jamaica to England. Knibb wrote his opposition against slavery in London,

I look upon the question of slavery only as one of religion and morality. All I ask is that my African brother may stand in the family of man; that my African sister shall, while she clasps her tender infant to her breast, be allowed to call it her own; that they both shall be allowed to bow their knees in prayer to God who has made of one blood all nations.

The men’s reports attacking slavery had a strong effect on the English Parliament committees. England ended slavery in 1833, and Jamaican slaves received their full freedom in 1838. Baptists began efforts to assist the newly freed men and women. They founded the Jamaica Education Society to promote education without government help. Knibb, Phillippo, and John Clark led in organizing free villages. Each slave could own enough land to feed his family. Also he would be approved to vote for the National Assembly.
Check the different efforts made to aid the slaves beyond helping them gain their freedom. Baptists began their educational programs without government assistance. Why? They wanted to keep _______________ and state separate.

Western and Eastern Baptist Unions founded the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society (JABMS) in 1842. The Society organized itself separate from the BMS. It revealed its strength when it began the Calabar Theological College and began missions efforts. It sent missionaries to Africa in 1843, began missions in Haiti (1879), Panama (1894), and Nicaragua (1904). In 1847, the Jamaica Baptist Reporter was begun to bring the Western and Eastern Unions together. They became the Jamaica Baptist Union in 1849.35

Underline the first purpose for publishing the Jamaica Baptist Reporter.

Different kinds of great problems led to hardship in the 1850s. More than 20,000 died in a cholera epidemic. The price of sugar dropped. The national economic financial losses made it difficult for Baptists to support their work. An appeal for financial aid to England Baptists failed to bring help.

An 1860 revival began whose effects lasted many years. As Baptist members grew in number, they began to have national influence. In 1865, disagreements occurred over government excessive fiscal (tax) policies and land control. The Morant Bay Rebellion broke out. The government executed William Gordon, a legislator with Baptist sympathies, and Paul Bogle, a Baptist deacon. It also arrested and jailed several Baptist pastors. Today, Jamaica honors Gordon and Bogle as national heroes.36

___True ___False  Baptists believe in the separation of church and state. Therefore, Baptists should not become involved in political issues. (Prepare to discuss your answer in class)

Many differences troubled Jamaican Baptists into the 20th century. They divided over violence, racial questions, following British worship traditions, and divine healing. Later, critical Bible studies begun at Calabar College caused some Baptists to join other churches. Financial needs remained an ongoing problem. Baptist membership grew in the 1950s, but dropped again in the latter half of the 1980s. Growth has begun since then.37

Baptists in Jamaica build their work on the local church. To help meet a shortage of pastors, they formed circuits. The church freely joins a circuit, shares a pastor, and cooperates in ministry with other churches. The circuits join councils, while the churches relate in associations. Neither circuits,
councils, nor associations hold controls over local churches. The Jamaica Baptist Union membership includes all pastors in the Union, elected executive members, and church delegates.

**Note their circuits, councils, and associational organizations. Underline the practice related to the local church that follows a basic Baptist principle.**

Many American Baptist denominations have begun ministries in Jamaica. They include Seventh Day Baptists, Independent Baptists, Reformed Baptists, General Baptists, National Baptists, and Progressive National Baptists.

At first, Baptists had refused assistance from the Negro Education Grant (1844) provided by the British Parliament. But in 1870, Calabar College moved to Kingston and began to accept grants. The grants supported a large number of elementary schools operated by the churches. Churches had formed two kinds of Sunday schools. One kind followed the very first historical English Sunday schools and provided a general education. The second, like most Sunday schools today, teaches the Bible and gives moral training.

**What conflict arose against Baptist practices when Calabar College accepted government financial help?**

___________________________________________________________________

At the close of the 20th century, all Baptists in Jamaica had 452 churches with 51,055 members. Of these, 293 churches with 43,000 members relate to the Jamaica Baptist Union.\(^{38}\)

**Mexico**

Baptists’ first missions efforts in Mexico faced strong Roman Catholic opposition. James Thompson, a Scottish Baptist, served in Central and South America (1827-1830) with the BMS. The Roman Church cut his work short in Mexico.

James Hickey (1800-1866) served as a colporteur for the American Bible Society. He and his wife, with three others, began the first Baptist church in Monterrey on January 30, 1864.\(^{19}\) The church did not use the name Baptist until 1870. However, it followed Baptist practices from its beginning. It continues as the oldest non-Catholic Mexican church in Mexico.

Before the organization of Monterrey’s First Baptist Church, Hickey baptized brothers Jose and Arcadio Uranga and Thomas Westrup. By 1869, Westrup, with the Uranga brothers, had begun six other churches.
In addition to missionaries, ____________ leadership helped Baptists’ development from their beginnings in Mexico.

Little response and the Mexican civil war slowed Baptists’ development. Also, opposition took a violent form. A. Sepulveda was assassinated as he distributed Bibles. John Westrup, American Southern Baptists’ first missionary to Mexico, was also killed. He had just reported that there were a total of thirteen Baptist churches in Mexico. His last entry in his diary read: “Four baptisms today. Go back and teach them next week.” Texas Baptists sent William Powell to investigate. Powell read Westrup’s note and saw the church needs. He felt led to take Westrup’s place.⁴⁰

Southern Baptists began sending other missionaries to Mexico. By 1884, missionary Powell’s ministry resulted in the Coahuila Baptist Association. Other churches in the Monterrey area organized the Nuevo Leon Baptist Association. It invited the ABHMS to begin work in 1881.

Powell’s efforts spread Southern Baptist work into other areas of Mexico. He had good success raising money for missions. SBC’s FMB appointed other missionaries who began service. But they became unhappy with Powell’s controlling efforts to direct all the work. The conflict resulted in Powell’s resigning along with several other missionaries. Also, questions were raised about how missionaries and Mexican pastors could cooperate. These problems hindered Southern Baptist mission efforts for a period of time.

☐ Personality differences ☐ Cultural problems provoked problems between SBC missionaries. (Check the correct answer)

However, Baptist work grew well, generally, until the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917. The violence of the war destroyed churches, seminaries, and scattered members. Some members were martyred. They had to close mission schools and discontinue their convention meetings. The promise of separation of church and state at the close of the war gave Baptists hope. The Roman Catholic Church no longer held a controlling political position. The government followed socialist principles. It took control of the Catholic Church, including its property. And it limited all worship to within church property. The government permitted only native-born Mexicans to lead services. It may have taken those steps to control the Catholic Church. But all missions groups felt the effects. Baptist missionaries could serve only as doctors or teachers.

☐ Yes ☐ No In your opinion: Baptist church life would be badly hurt if only Mexican nationals were permitted to pastor.
The National Baptist Convention began its yearly meetings again in 1919. Messengers from 54 churches attended. It returned to its missions efforts among ethnic Indian peoples. Women organized their Women’s Baptist Missionary Union in 1919 also. But the Great Depression began to affect American Baptists. It slowed their appointment of new missionaries until 1938.

The National Baptist Convention had organized its ministries into five boards by the mid-1940s. They served the purposes of Missions, Evangelism, Publications, Christian Education, and Stewardship. It cooperated in evangelistic efforts with Texas Baptists along the Rio Grande River. The river forms the boundary between Texas and Mexico.

In the 1970s, the National Convention began needed organizational changes. Too often, the same work was being done by two organizations. At that same time, the Southern Baptist Mission turned its institutions’ property deeds over to the Convention. By 1993, the Convention considered itself “self-sustaining.”

National Convention Baptists set their Program for Baptist Urban Evangelism to close out the 20th century. It focused on evangelizing major Mexican cities, including the 20 million people in Mexico City. The Program extended its efforts beyond the cities.

The Convention works with ten ethnic groups and has missionaries in Honduras. It supports two seminaries, student work, and medical ministries. Its paper, La Luz Bautista, informs the churches and builds Convention support. The Women’s Baptist Missionary Union publishes La Voz Misionera Bautista.

The Convention’s La Luz Bautista serves two purposes. It builds Convention _______________ and it informs the _______________ about the Convention’s ministries.

Many additional Baptist groups began sending missionaries to Mexico following WWII. A few, including the Baptist General Conference (BGC) and the North American Baptist Conference (NABC) cooperate with the National Convention. But most do not.

The Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) has been one of the more effective missions. It began its work in 1950. Harold and Connie Vilbiss became the first BBFI missionaries. Many independent Baptist churches had already begun and many of them joined with the BBFI. They formed the Baptist Bible Fellowship of Mexico. At the close of the 20th century, the Fellowship had 350 churches and missions and six Bible colleges.

The Baptist Missionary Association of America (BMA) began its first missions efforts in Mexico. The Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society began work in Mexico as one of its first fields. By the end of the 20th
century, it had 19 churches, and had begun the Nogales Baptist Seminary. It is located on the Mexican side of the United States and Mexican border. It trains pastors for service both in Mexico and Spanish-speaking churches in the USA. A group of Sabbath-keeping churches (the Church of Christ of the Seventh Day) was accepted by Seventh Day Baptists in 1963.

At the close of the 20th century, Baptists had 1,224 churches with 120,877 members. The Convention National Bautista de Mexico with 66,398 members, and the BBFI with 52,500 members, were the larger bodies.

**General Summary**

Baptists in most of Central and South America use Spanish as their common language. Spanish colonization brought the language and forced it on the people. Brazil was the exception under the Portuguese. These two languages should not hide the indigenous (“Indian”) languages. Baptists must share the gospel to these ethnic peoples also.

There are 35 countries in the areas noted. Neither the purpose of the text nor its limitations permit noting the work in each country. Baptist beginnings were very much alike in most countries. However, all are important and include missionaries and nationals whose lives have assisted Baptist growth. At the close of the 20th century, Baptists in Latin, Central, and South America numbered at just under 2 million in 12,726 churches.

**Further Steps Toward Learning**

**Section 1**

1. In South America, __________ is the first major language and __________ is the second.
2. __________ from France and Germany brought the first Baptist influence into Argentina.
3. The first missionary called to Argentina was __________. He has been called the “herald of Christian __________.”
4. Argentinian Juan C. Varetto represents the value and need for __________ leadership if Baptists were to become indigenous in Argentine life.
5. What important Baptist gift to Argentine life has been noted by other Christian bodies? __________ of conscience or religion.
6. Argentine Baptists have organized themselves into a __________. But not all Baptists have joined it.
7. Baptists came first to Brazil not as missionaries but as unhappy losers in the United States’ __________ War.
8. Solomon Ginsburg, son of a Polish Jewish rabbi, came to Brazil as __________ its first Baptist missionary.
9. Ginsburg’s personal faith grew from his reading the _____________.
   (This does not deny the value of a converted Jew’s testimony who first
   got his interest.)
10. Ginsburg was bold in his ____________ which often led to his suffering
    _____________.
11. Brazilian Baptist women organized themselves as the Woman’s Missionary
    Union. It was an ____________ to the Brazilian National Baptist Convention.
    __True __False This assured the women that they would direct their
    own ministries. But they continued supporting the Convention.
12. Baptists in Brazil grew rapidly in the 1950s and ‘60s, but the ____________ of
    ____________ Churches grew much faster.
13. ABWE’s missions efforts in Brazil are □ small □ large compared to
    their other fields.
14. Baptists began in Chile through
    □ Baptist missionaries □ Immigrant Baptists
15. The first Baptist work in Cuba was begun by
    □ an American missionary □ a Cuban
    □ German immigrants
16. Cuba’s first missionary was ____________ ____________ called the
    Apostle to Cuba.
17. ABHMS’s missions planning stressed depending on ____________
    pastors and laity. It resulted in truly indigenous development of Baptist
    life there.
18. George Leile, a freed slave, began missionary service in ____________
    before William Carey left for India. However, he did not go there to be
    a missionary. He fled from the American colonies to escape a return
    to ____________ for himself and his children.
19. __True __False Baptists in Jamaica worked against slavery, but never
    used violent means.
20. __True __False Baptist work in Mexico began under violent opposition.

Section 2 (Use a separate piece of paper to answer the following.)
1. State the two reasons given to explain why the Assemblies of God in
   Brazil grew more rapidly than the Baptists.
2. Explain what more important event broke the early relationship of
   Baptist and C&MA missionaries in Chile.
3. Describe how Alberto Diaz became an Evangelical Christian.
4. Explain the Castro Cuban government decision that prevented Baptist
   cooperation.
5. Count the number of Baptist publications noted in Central and South
   America. ___
Section 3 (Use a separate piece of paper to answer the following. Choose any 3 of the following.)

1. Explain how MacDonald organized the Evangelical Baptist Union. Describe how the way he organized went against Baptist practice.

2. Alberto Diaz reported baptizing 1,100 out of 8,000 that came forward. How would you relate to the larger group? Perhaps you could gain assurance that a larger number would come to true faith?

3. Discuss how Haitians’ feelings of “becoming full members of society” (Wardin’s note) may help Baptists’ growth in Haiti. And how may it undercut Baptists’ foundational belief?

4. Explain how Mexico’s law permitting only native-born Mexicans to pastor could have helped Baptists grow and develop.

5. State what could be important about the number of publications that Baptists have used in Central and South America. What might it mean for your Baptist life?

Notes

1Leonard, Baptist Ways, 258.
2Wardin, Baptists Around the World, 333.
3Ibid., 334.
4Ibid.
5Johnstone, Operation World (2001), 77
6McBeth, The Baptist Heritage, 422.
7Torbet, A History of the Baptists, 402.
8McBeth, The Baptist Heritage, 423.
9Eugene Myers Harrison, Blazing the Missionary Trail (Chicago, IL: Scripture Press Book Division, 1949).
11Ibid., 480.
12Wardin, Baptists Around the World, 338.
13Ibid., 337.
14Ibid., 341.
15Ibid., 342.
16Ibid., 340.
18Ibid., 18.
19Ibid., 19.
20Ibid., 38.
21Ibid., 31.
22Ibid., 53.


25 It is possible that government controls gave an artificially high value to the peso. Many may have exchanged dollars on the “black market.” But Caudill and Fite would have had no connection with the CIA. Southern Baptist FMB policies would not permit it. Also, no missionary would want their ministry for Christ threatened by such an involvement.


27 McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 385. The American Baptist Free Mission Society took a strong anti-slavery position. Its purpose was to “separate ourselves now and forever from all connection with religious societies that are supported in common with slaveholders,” citing Baker, *Source Book*, 94.


29 Ibid., 301.

30 Ibid., 299.


35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 303.

38 Ibid., 301.


42 Ibid., 287, 315, 331.
AFRICA: LIBERIA, NIGERIA, & DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
(Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, & Tanzania)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son. Jesus said: "Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world.

GENESIS 1:1, JOHN 3:16, MATTHEW 28:19-20 CEV

Expected Learning Outcomes. You will be able to:

1. share accounts of how Baptist life began in two or three African nations;
2. name some of the outstanding missionaries and early national leaders;
3. identify practices of some Baptists that moved away from Baptist distinctives;
4. explain some of the historical settings that have made life difficult for Baptists and their people;
5. reveal how cultural strengths can and did oppose Baptist practices;
6. give illustrations of how missionary practices blocked Baptist practices;
7. state the benefits that Baptist belief and practices have brought to life in African countries;
8. appreciate the values of Baptist belief and practice alongside appreciation of all other Christians; and
9. gain further understanding of the need to maintain the history of your Baptist people—the local church, association, or convention.
Introduction

African nations have similar histories. Often, mixed tribal groups make up their populations. European colonial powers set their national boundaries. Sometimes the boundaries included feuding tribal groups. At other times, the boundaries divided one tribe between different colonies. Some European colonial actions promoted education and prepared the people for independence. Others used their controls to steal the wealth from their colony. The Africans, at times, lived in near slave-like conditions. Missionaries came controlled by their home cultures. That often included serious faults. But missionaries, more than any others, worked to aid African peoples.

Liberia

Many white Americans believed that freed black slaves could never fit in their society. Some thought it best to send them to Africa. The American Colonization Society planned to send as many as possible to Liberia. Southern slave owners believed the plan would prevent a slave rebellion. The effort began in 1822 and ended in 1866. But they sent less than 12,000 of the freed slaves out of a black population of 1.75 million.¹

___True ___False  American Southerners sent freed slaves to Africa just for the freed slaves’ benefit.

The Foreign Mission Board (FMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention appointed Lott Cary and Collin Teague as its first missionaries to Liberia. Lott Cary had been a vicious young slave in Richmond, Virginia working in a tobacco warehouse. But faith in Christ changed his life in 1807. He became a member of the First Baptist Church (white). There were no Black churches in the South at that time. Sitting in his church’s slave balcony, he felt a call to preach to his people.

At work, Cary had permission to pick up tobacco left on the warehouse floor. He also received tips doing errands for merchants. He raised $850 and bought freedom for himself and his children in 1813 (his wife had died). As a freed man, he earned a good living. But he could not escape God’s call to help his people. With others, he helped found the African Baptist Missionary Society of Richmond.² It was an auxiliary of the Triennial Convention.

Cary and his second wife, Teague and his wife and son, plus one other couple prepared to go to Liberia. Before sailing, they formed themselves into the first church in Liberia (later Providence Baptist Church in Monrovia). They founded the church more than 4,000 miles from its place of ministry. The group arrived in Liberia in 1821. Cary pastored the Providence Church
and served as schoolmaster and physician. His election as lieutenant governor in 1826 revealed the people’s trust in him. When a tribe attacked the colony, he joined in its defense. An accidental munitions explosion killed him in 1826. Local Blacks attacking the immigrant Blacks promised future troubles.

The Black colonists had African ancestry, but they were born in an American setting. They thought in many ways like the American society. And they treated the tribal people much like the whites had treated them. As a result, Baptist and Methodist efforts have reached only 35 percent of the population. More than 40 percent continue their tribal traditions. Twenty-one percent are Muslim.

**The American immigrants to Liberia were Black like the tribal peoples. But what hindered the Christian immigrants’ witness to the native tribes?**

American Southern Baptists began missions in 1846. They continued their ministry even during the Civil War. But in 1875, they closed their work in favor of missions in Nigeria. They hoped Black Baptists would continue the Liberian missions.

Joseph James Cheeseman, a Black, had served with Southern Baptists. He continued to lead when the missionaries left. He led in the organization of the Liberia Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention (LBMEC) in 1880. He served as its president. He also founded the Ricks Institute near Monrovia in 1887. In 1892, the Liberian nation elected him president. He served until his death in 1896.³

White missionaries reentered Liberia in the 20th century. Baptist Mid-Missions (BM-M) began ministry in 1938. The Mission developed effective theological education and relates to six language groups. Churches that developed have formed the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.

William R. Tolbert, as president of the LBMEC, encouraged Southern Baptists to return in the late 1950s. He was elected vice president of Liberia in 1960. When President Tubman died in 1971, he became president. From 1965-1970, he served as the first Black president of the Baptist World Alliance.

The ruling elite (from immigrant American Blacks—5 percent of the population) dominated the Grebo and Kru tribes. Bad economic times and growing resentment against the ruling elite sparked a rebellion. A 1980 military coup led to assassinations of Tolbert and other government leaders. Those leading the coup were overcome in 1990. Civil war and unrest continued into the 21st century. Thousands died and fled as refugees. Providence Baptist Church had to close for six months in 1990. But still it grew from 1,200 members in 1989 to 2,700 in 1994.
At the close of the 20th century, Liberian Baptists numbered 59,222 members in 250 churches.¹

What do you think likely prevented the greater number of Liberians being won to faith in Christ?

Nigeria

Nigeria’s 138,698,398 population stands as the largest of all African nations. They are a mixture of over 490 ethnic people groups. Hausa/Fulani, Igbo, and Yoruba are the leading ethnic peoples. It gained its independence from Great Britain in 1960. Muslims control the northern area and have long held political control over the country. Christians are the larger population and live more in the south. At the beginning of the 21st century, a Baptist, General Olusegun Obasanjo, was elected president.

American Southern Baptists sent the first Baptist missionary to Africa in 1850. Thomas Jefferson Bowen left with two companions. They stopped for a short stay in Liberia. While there, both of Bowen’s companions died. Their deaths revealed the cost in missionary life for Africa that was to come. Bowen spent his first months exploring, learning about the country, and studying the Yoruba language. He settled in Abeokuta.

Events soon called Bowen to service very different for missionaries. The king of Dahomey’s (present-day Benin) army attacked Abeokuta. Bowen had fought on the American frontier and in Texas’ struggle for independence. His experience prepared him to serve as a successful military leader for the Egba Yoruba people. The Egbas won, “and Bowen had proved to be a good soldier of the Lord in more ways than one.”⁵

Bowen returned from a trip to the United States in 1853 with his bride, the former Laurenna Davis. Two missionary couples, the J.S. Dennards and Lacys came with them. But “cultural shock” (or eye problems?) caused the Lacys to leave within three months. The Dennard couple died in their first year. Left alone, the Bowens settled in Ijaiye where many Nigerian Baptist “firsts” took place. They included education efforts, baptism, the Lord’s Supper observance, and a marriage ceremony. Also, the first missionary child was born and buried. She had died within three months. Her mother’s diary reveals the depth of feelings many missionaries lived through.

This morning about 9 o’clock the spirit of our only earthly treasure took its flight to its heavenly world. Our dear child is dead! We buried her body this evening at 5 o’clock. Stillness and loneliness fill the house, we are very, very, sad, but hope in the Lord “for he is good his mercy endureth forever.”⁶
W. H. Clarke arrived in 1854 to strengthen the missions efforts. His arrival permitted the Bowens to begin work in Ogbomosho. They accepted the invitation of the Shohun (king) of Ogbomosho to live and work there. It became and continues to be a major center of Baptist work in Nigeria. The Bowens began a Day school and Sunday school, but baptized no one there. Poor health required that they return to the United States in April 1856.

**Underline the phrase that reveals the importance of Ogbomosho to the Baptists of Nigeria.**

When the Bowens left, Clarke transferred to Ogbomosho. He baptized a small group of believers and had the Oke Oshupa Baptist chapel built. To become a Christian at that time often resulted in persecution. A new believer might be whipped and his property destroyed. The committed Ogbomosho believers proved important to the spread of Christianity in Nigeria. As traders, their travels helped carry the gospel across Nigeria and beyond.

**Underline a phrase or sentence that reveals that Christian faith had become real to Ogbomosho believers.**

Missionary travel in Nigeria was difficult at the time. Where possible, missionaries preferred a canoe on the rivers. There are accounts of Mrs. Bowen floating across a stream hanging on to a large calabash (gourd). On another occasion, Mrs. Pinnock floated across a stream sitting in a bath pan. Trekking at times required the missionary to follow the accepted pattern of the day. Four hired men would carry the missionary in a hammock. The hammock hung on two poles placed on their shoulders. Sometimes, it was the only way the missionary could travel.

By the mid-1860s, six of eight missionaries sent to Nigeria had died soon after arrival. Earlier anti-Christian violence forced the missionaries out of the interior. They moved to the large port city of Lagos. The last Southern Baptist missionary there, R. H. Stone, was ill and he retired in 1869.

*There were no...Baptist churches in Nigeria at that time. Stone recorded that when he left there were thirty-five baptized believers in the Lagos congregation* and attendance was probably between fifty and one hundred. *There were only small groups of Baptists in Ogbomosho, Abeokuta and Oyo.*

**Read the paragraph and Stone’s report again. In your opinion, had the mission to Nigeria been worth the cost? ___Yes ___No.**
Nineteen years of missionary work seemed lost. The Civil War in the United States had left Southern Baptists in poverty. They sent no other missionaries to Nigeria until 1875.

In spite of how things looked, new life continued among people called Baptist. Two individuals stand out who aided and encouraged that life. Sarah Marsh had married the Southern Baptist missionary Joseph M. Harden in 1857. She was from Sierra Leone and he was the son of an American slave. Moses Ladejo Stone was an orphan from Liberian inter-tribal warfare. Missionaries Stone and Phillips had taken him in along with other orphans. He took the Stone’s name because of the care they gave him. He served as an important member of Lagos Baptists.

Mrs. Harden (widowed) was committed to keeping Baptists alive in Lagos. Her ministry included evangelism and aiding Christians fleeing persecution. She continued the care for tribal-war orphans begun by the missionaries. She and the Lagos group prayed for new missionaries. In answer to their prayers, W. J. David, and W. W. Colley arrived in September 1875. Colley came supported by the Black Baptist State Convention of Virginia. David, his companion, was a Southern Baptist missionary.

Traveling over Yorubaland, they found some Baptists still in Abeokuta. S. Cosby, another missionary sent by the Black Baptist Board, began work there again. David found a small group in Ogbomosho still worshiping under a tree on the mission property.

In your opinion, rate the importance of national leadership in Nigeria for Baptist life. [Low 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8 - 9 - 10 High] (Circle your choice.)

David ministered mostly in Lagos. The congregation grew in members and organization. His ministry included one revival that lasted forty-eight days. Nearly one hundred made professions of faith. But illness forced him to return home. He returned to Nigeria in 1878 with his bride, Nannie Bland David. He wrote to the executive secretary of the FMB.

Mrs. David and I turned our faces toward the ‘dark continent,’ believing that he who hath lived and cared for us in the past, will order our future in that way, that will bring most honor to his name. Our desire is to glorify Christ whether in life or death. Mrs. David says I must put ‘Amen’ to the above for her.

Glorifying Christ in death proved true for Mrs. David (it included two of her children) and many others. West Africa earned the name, “white man’s graveyard.” Multiple graves of missionaries and their children proved
its truth. The deaths made it hard to find volunteers to replace them. The results may not seem worth their cost. By 1887 there were only five churches with 149 members and seven pastors (none ordained).\(^\text{10}\)

One benefit grew from the lack of missionaries. Nigerians began to take leadership for their Christian lives and ministries. However, a clash of American and Nigerian cultural patterns led to a division among Baptists. The details are confusing. The end result was the formation of “Independent Baptists” outside of the “Mission Baptists.” The division caused David unhappily to resign and return home.

Underline the phase stating what Nigerian Baptists gained when they had no missionaries.

The Independent Baptists founded the Native Baptist Church—later renamed Ebenezer Baptist Church. Moses Stone left First Baptist Church Lagos and became its pastor. Mrs. Sarah Harden also joined the new church along with D. B. Vincent. Vincent changed his name to Mojola Agbehi and promoted indigenous Nigerian Christianity. He believed they should use an African language in worship and wear traditional African dress. He promoted self-support, self-government, and self-growth among Nigerian churches. He wrote,

> To render Christianity indigenous to Africa, it must be watered by native hands, pruned with native hatchet, and tended with native earth... It is a curse if we intend forever to hold at the apron strings of foreign teachers, doing the baby for aye (Ayandele 1996: 200).\(^\text{11}\)

In my opinion: Vincent’s positions were correct. ___True ___False

Later, Moses Stone apologized for the grief he had caused the missionaries. He ministered in both Ogbomosho and Abeokuta for two years. Then he returned to become pastor of First Baptist Church, Lagos in 1894. The church grew rapidly under his leadership. Nigerian Baptists have called him, “the Spurgeon of Yorubaland.”

Larger issues outside Baptist life formed a part of the differences of the 1870s and 1880s. Nigerian nationalism and the issue of polygamy affected local churches’ governance (polity), ethics, and worship style. Most Mission churches refused to receive polygamous men for baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Therefore, Christian men with more than one wife desired African churches free of missionary control.\(^\text{12}\)

Many years passed before efforts brought Mission and Independent Baptist churches back into fellowship. Missionary S. G. Pinnock had good
close relationships with Nigerians. He was asked to invite both groups—
Independent and Mission Baptists—to a meeting in Ibadan in March 1914.
They formed a new association. It elected Mojola Agbehi, the Independent
Baptist leader, as its first president. The association had 2,888 members
in 31 churches.

The following year, the association took the name Yoruba Baptist
Association, and Baptists were working together again. “All parties emerged
from this lamentable (sad) conflict with the awareness that missionaries
and nationals can function without each other, but that God’s work can be
carried on in a far more enjoyable and effective way when the two groups
work together.”13

Medical care, from the beginning, proved most helpful. It aided the
Nigerians and opened a way for the missionaries to develop close relationships.

*Each station had its dispensary, where the people were encouraged to
come for medical treatment. This was found to be a great asset in winning
their affections, for, as they came for bodily healing they were brought
into contact with the Christian life of those about the Mission.*14 (Louis

The first missionaries came with only basic healing skills. But in 1907
Dr. George Green came as a trained doctor. The medical work he began in
Ogbomosho has grown into a major Baptist Medical Centre. Green came with
a basic concern for healing souls. He believed that his skill in medicine and
surgery “would enhance the value of his missionary service and multiply
his usefulness as a soul winner in Africa.”15 His cataract surgery gave sight
to one blind man. Later the man returned to the clinic leading ten blind
men (Green could not meet all their needs). Dr. B. L. Lockett arrived later
and added to the medical care. His effectiveness included outstanding
church leadership.

*Coming as a missionary doctor, Green believed he could lead to
healing of both ______________________ and ______________________.*

The missionaries believed education (schools) were next in importance
to churches. In the early years they often used their personal money to
maintain schools. Church leadership training that grew into the Nigerian
Baptist Theological Seminary began in May 1898. Located in Ogbomosho
it continues to serve Nigerian Baptists.

In recent years, the SBC FMB has stated its goal as “evangelism which
results in churches.” Missionary historian Collins noted that that had
been the Nigerian missionary strategy 70 years earlier. “Establishing churches—this is the object in all our evangelistic work” (Pinnock 1917: 137). Nigerian “field evangelists” ministered alongside the missionaries in their evangelistic efforts.

Missionary Scott Patterson noted in 1915 that Southern Baptists had sent 60 missionaries to Nigeria in the previous 65 years. He wrote,

> Of the sixty missionaries some twenty-four have died on the field or after leaving the field from the effects of the climate, twenty-two have had to leave the field on account of ill health due to the climate, and today we have the same number of missionaries on the field as in 1855 (quoted in Pinnock 1917:1249).

The cost in Baptist missionary life in Nigeria was □ low □ high.

S. G. Pinnock came to Nigeria from England in 1889 as a Methodist Wesleyan missionary. His New Testament studies led him to accept Baptist beliefs and practices. Baptist missionary P. A. Eubank baptized him January 1, 1891. He so impressed the Baptist missionaries that they recommended his appointment to the SBC FMB.

Check the correct answer/s.
- □ Pinnock decided to become a Baptist missionary to gain better support.
- □ Pinnock became a Baptist based on what he found were biblical truths in the New Testament.
- □ Baptist missionaries persuaded Pinnock to become a Baptist to help them in their missions efforts.

Pinnock had excellent relationships with the Nigerians. He spoke Yoruba very well and understood their culture. He won their love and respect. A father’s response to Pinnock’s leading his son’s funeral service reveals Pinnock’s relationship. The father, who followed a traditional religion, said after the funeral,

> White man, until you held that service over my boy’s grave I never knew that you understood our sorrow, but that day we saw tears on your wife’s face, and knew by that sign that you understood us and sympathized with us in our griefs (Pinnock 1917:154).

Pinnock stood up for justice, speaking against the Oyo king’s oppression of his people. It resulted in the king forcing him and his wife out of Oyo
in 1909. Neither his fellow missionaries nor the FMB supported his stand against the Oyo king. But he became a folk hero in the eyes of many Yoruba. His ongoing close relationship with the Nigerians continued to disturb fellow missionaries. He seemed always to favor the Nigerians in conflicts with the missionaries. He was charged with failing to take a “stand against polygamy in churches under his control” (Executive Committee Minutes, January 14, 1921: 6).^{19}

According to Baptist practice, [☐ I find a problem ☐ I do not find a problem] with the phrase, “...a stand against polygamy in churches under his control.”

Pinnock’s independent actions grew as he bypassed Mission policies more and more. He ignored policies on leasing buildings and land. Greater concern grew when he added money from the Abeokuta Industrial Institute to his own salary. With these mixed causes, Pinnock’s effective but somewhat troubling missions career ended. The Mission asked the FMB not to permit Pinnock’s return in 1924. He had served for 35 years.

The Yoruba Baptist Association took the new name, Nigerian Baptist Convention, in 1919. The new name revealed that Nigerians were reaching beyond Yorubaland across all of Nigeria. Rapid growth resulted in 211 churches and preaching stations with 21,214 members in 1937. By 1970, 455 churches and 934 mission points had nearly 76,000 members.^{20} While the Nigerians experienced growth, the number of missionaries became fewer.

Missionary Josephine Scaggs began her ministry in a group of four small villages in 1942. They were on the Orashi river in an area called Joinkrama in southeastern Nigeria. In 1956, this missionary called “river rat” by her friends, received the title Officer of the Order of the British Empire. Queen Elizabeth personally presented her with the honorary title. A British historian in 1951 described this uncommon ambassador of Jesus Christ. He wrote,

\[\text{Miss Jo Scaggs, the evangelist, presses tirelessly into the remotest villages, by cycle and canoe, to spread the word of God. She has under her care no less than forty-two churches, each in charge of an African pastor, and every Sunday she is off along the creeks to hold prayer meetings in as many of them as she can reach assisted by a small band of devoted women (quoted in Hall, 1935:35).}\]

A year later, Queen Elizabeth, at the British Embassy in Washington D.C., pinned a medal on May Perry. She also had been named an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for her ministry in Nigeria. She had
pioneered and served for thirty-nine years in the education of Nigerian women. Other missionary women and men served just as well without public recognition. They ministered alongside Nigerian men and women whose dedication matched theirs.

Even the Queen of England had reason to recognize the ministry of two Baptist missionary women, _______________ ________________ and _______________ _________________.

A strong Woman’s Missionary Union has aided the Convention. In addition, it has helped overcome Nigerians’ cultural low value of women. Completely under women’s leadership, the WMU has carried out a wide range of ministry. In addition to evangelistic and missionary efforts, it has emphasized Bible teaching and mission study. The women have also provided clinics, camps, classes in child and home care, and literacy. The WMU publishes sixteen different pieces of literature.

Underline the phrase that notes a cultural effect of Nigerian Baptists’ WMU.

Somehow, in Nigerian Baptist development, they have failed to accept an important Baptist practice. The Convention directs a Baptist church hierarchy. It decides questions about church membership, pastors’ salaries, and their ordination. Three influences stand out as possible causes for this non-baptistic practice. Some find it caused by Nigerian cultural patterns. Nigerians may value their cultural practices more than Baptists’ concern for local church government.

Nigerian Baptist Convention controls noted above threaten (undercut) _______________ church authority. This is important, NOT because it fails to follow a Baptist practice but because Christ is Lord—the _______________ of the church.

Others see the Convention as similar to the Anglican Church organization. They point to the influence of Mrs. S. M. Harden. She led in Lagos during a period when there were no missionaries. She came from an Anglican background and may have shared Anglican practices. Also, the second Nigerian pastor of Lagos’s First Baptist Church had received an Anglican education. He brought Anglican forms of worship into the Lagos church.

Missionary Collins suggests that the Mission itself may hold some responsibility for the matter. For the decade 1937-1947, the Nigerian Baptist Convention had an overseeing officer. He was called the General Superintendent—always a missionary. Much earlier, the Mission had taken
control over the ordination and placement of most pastors in the churches. The January 14, 1921 Executive Committee Minutes read, “We should be very careful in ordaining only those who (have) the confidence of the Mission.” Other Mission minutes indicate controls over local church practices.

The author would question why the Mission, 71 years after their beginnings, could not trust national leadership. Whatever the reason, the Mission seems to bear some responsibility for non-baptistic practices. Their controls undercut Baptist practices that emphasize the Lordship of Christ over the local church.

In Baptist belief and practice, who holds the authority for a pastor’s ordination? The ____________________  ___________________.
(Prepare to discuss in class the importance of who should ordain a pastor)

Some of the results have hindered Baptist ministry. The Convention has set education and years of service requirements for ordination. Also, the one being ordained became responsible to pay for a costly celebration. These requirements, at least in part, have caused serious results. In 1999, only about one-fourth of all pastors had been ordained. Also, 46% of the churches lacked pastoral leadership. The problems become more serious when only ordained pastors are permitted to baptize and lead in the Lord’s Supper. A lack of ordained pastors limits baptism and Lord’s Supper observances in many places.

___True ___False I can cite biblical references that support requiring ordination for the one who baptizes or leads in the Lord’s Supper.

Nigerian Baptist growth has included its large number of ethnic groups. Charismatic practices have come into some worship services. In some cases, they have caused conflict. The question of polygamy continues to cause division. As a result, in 1960, E. A. Atilde founded the Gospel Baptist Church leading to the Gospel Baptist Convention.

The Mambilla Baptist Convention (MBC) came from North American Baptist Conference missions in British Cameroon. The northern section of British Cameroon voted to join Nigeria. And the Baptists from what was formerly Cameroon continued as its own body. They formed their own convention in 1973. In 1953, a Nigerian Seventh Day Baptist church made a connection with Seventh Day Baptists in the USA. They formed the Nigerian Seventh Day Baptist conference in 1975.

Statistician Wardin records a total of 629,586 Baptists in 4,837 congregations in the early 1990s. Over 600,000 are in the Nigerian Baptist Convention.
Johnstone presents remarkable growth in its updated February 2004 report. Its report lists only the Baptist Convention and gives a membership of 1,040,000 in 6,664 churches.\textsuperscript{24}

**Zaire/Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

Two states share the area of the Congo in Africa. The Republic of Congo had been a French colony and received independence in 1960. On its eastern border lies the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It had become a colony of Belgium in 1908. Known as the Belgian Congo, Belgium granted it independence in 1960, and in 1970, it became the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The new independent nation had been given almost no preparation to be a free state. It has faced civil war, dictatorship, and warfare on its borders (often spilling inside). Estimates run as high as 3 million that have died of war, violence, starvation, and the collapse of its health system.\textsuperscript{25} Thousands live as refugees fleeing the ongoing war conditions.

Zaire/DRC has the fourth largest population of Baptists in the world. They form the third largest Christian body in the DRC after the Roman Catholic Church and the independent Kimbangu Church. Baptists themselves consist of 13 different organizations.

Baptists entered DRC as the first Protestant mission. They came with a holistic concern, including social services and evangelistic witness. An Englishman, Robert Arthington, promised the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS) £1,000 (pounds) to begin a Congo mission. BMS missionaries Thomas Comber and George Grenfell, at that time, were serving in Cameroon. They were asked to begin Congo explorations in 1878. Grenfell established the first station, Underhill in Matadi, near the end of 1880.

David Livingstone’s writings had inspired George Grenfell to enter missionary service in Africa. He served several years as a lay minister before enrolling in the Baptist College at Bristol. After completing his preparation in 1874, the BMS accepted him to serve in the Cameroons. Two years later, he returned home to claim Miss Hawkes as his bride. She returned with him and died in less than a year. Greatly saddened, Grenfeld wrote, “I have done a great wrong in taking my dear wife into this deadly climate of West Africa.”\textsuperscript{26} Following his three years in the Cameroons and marriage to a West Indies widow, he entered the Congo.

The first Baptist missionary who served in the Congo-DRC was ___________________  ___________________.

\textup{Africa}  \textup{39}
Shallow rapids blocked boat passage on the Congo River 160 kilometers from the coast. It made the 350 kilometers travel by land very difficult to reach the capital, Leopoldville (Kinshasa today). Arthington made a second gift to the BMS. It was a river steamer to be assembled on Stanley Lake above the rapids. The steamer was built in Liverpool, England and shipped up the Congo River to the rapids. From there, men carried the steamer’s 800 sections 350 kilometers to Stanley Lake. Three engineers were sent one after the other to assemble the boat. Each one died, and Grenfell finished directing its assembly. They named the river steamer *Peace*. Grenfell’s wife and children traveled with him on the *Peace* during his exploring trips.

The *Peace* was launched in 1884, and within two years Grenfell chartered 4,760 kilometers of the Congo River system. “Between 1886 and 1890 the BMS founded four stations on the upper river... went even beyond Stanley Falls (at one point)... the BMS established a remarkable string of stations more than 1,680 kilometers—a geographical feat unequaled by most other missions.”

Technology in the form of a river __________ greatly aided the beginning missions outreach in the DRC.

As was true in much of Africa, early converts were few and missionary deaths many. Within 30 years, over fifty missionaries died, as did many of their children. Grenfell and his wife buried four of their children in the Congo.

Tribesmen caused some other problems—some were cannibals. Grenfell recorded many times that he had to run from them. He wrote that they would act friendly and then suddenly attack with poisoned arrows. Sam Lapsley, a missionary of another group, (on a visit) did not see things like Grenfell. He judged Grenfell a mess—“very anxious.” He wrote that Grenfell hated the natives and they hated him. He wrote also of meeting “refugees” from the *Peace*. He describes them as disoriented and starving. He judged Grenfell very harshly. Lapsley’s views may have been accurate, but a short visit can miss the larger picture. Did Lapsley ever experience tribesmen shooting poisoned arrows at him?

A second mark against Grenfell stands without question. He saw the growing harsh treatment of Belgian King Leopold’s rule. Belgian authorities took his personal maps, notes, and even the *Peace*. At that time, mistreatment against the Africans was growing. As an eyewitness, he saw Leopold’s state employees buying slaves in chains. He wrote home in a letter that he was hesitant to “publicly question the action of the State.” Did he fear more for personal safety or the possible loss of his mission service?
From the paragraphs above, list some of the problems early Baptist missionaries faced in the Congo.

Grenfell’s twenty years of missionary service gained better results in the later years. He wrote of being received in a village, hearing the sounds of “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name.” Twenty years before, he had been driven away with spears. He continued his ministry until an African fever took his life in 1906.

The Belgian Congo, as it was called then, had no government schools. The BMS began a large system of elementary and secondary schools. The missionaries knew the importance of church leadership education. It began a seminary at Yakusu, plus two Bible schools, and added Theological Education by Extension years later. It opened a hospital at Bolobo in 1912. Cooperating with American missions and others, they opened a second in Kimpese. BMS published the Kikongo language New Testament in 1893. By 1918, they were publishing literature in eleven languages. Outstanding church growth began, following World War I. The growth continued even when church discipline removed many members from their churches.

Check the different ministries begun by BMS in the Congo.

Alfred Tilly was a member of the BMS Committee. But he believed the BMS would limit its missions to the DRC coastal areas only. Therefore, he formed the Livingstone Inland Mission (LIM) as an inter-denominational mission. Later, its mission ministry was given to the American Baptist Missionary Union (ABMU). The ABMU worked closely with the BMS.

A revival movement broke out in Banza Manteke in 1886. It began with the ministry of Henry Richard, and has been called the “Pentecost of the Congo.” “Within a short time more than a thousand Africans professed faith in Christ, placing their fetishes at the feet of the missionary.” The revival spread to other stations. Like the BMS, the ABMU missionaries practiced strict discipline. Members were put out of the churches for polygamy, witchcraft, drunkenness, improper dances, and other pagan practices.

The BMS and ABMU together began the Kimpese Evangelical Training Institution. It has became the Evangelical Center of Cooperation and operates a number of schools. Additional development continued with church leadership training and increased medical work.

Baptists began organizing as the Convention of Baptist Churches in 1946. Following their national independence in 1960, the Congolese churches organized separately from the Mission. They became the Communaute (Association) Baptiste du Zaire Ouest (CBZO).
__True  ____False It was best for the Congolese Baptist churches to form their own association.

Other mission groups entered the Congo from Sweden (1892) and Norway (1922). In 1946, the new Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society (CBFMS, now CBI) entered the DRC. It took over the work of Paul and Mrs. Hurlburt, Sr. in the Kiva province. He and his wife had carried out their ministry since 1928 (16 years) without a furlough. Their mission had grown to 2,600 members, about 750 bush schools, a station school, and a leprosy clinic. CBFMS extended the missions ministry.

The DRC passed a law that all Protestant churches had to become communities of the Church of Christ (formed in 1970). The government wanted unity and a national identity. Three Baptist bodies (of the Lower River, the Middle River, and the Upper River) plus a fourth from the Lower Region, joined as the Baptist Community of the Zaire River (CBFZ). The Baptist Mid-Mission (BM-M) missionaries refused to join and left. It gave its ministries to the churches it had helped develop. They organized as the Communaute des Eglises Baptiste Independantes Evangeliques.

What Baptist belief (concern) gave the BM-M missionaries a problem about their churches joining the Church of Christ? They were committed to the ______________ of church and _____________.

Between 1971-1978, the government limited and controlled Christian activities. However, since 1980, religious freedom has been restored. The churches regained control over most of their education and health services. Each community (denomination) within the Church of Christ controls its own faith and practice. Each is permitted to work with its supporting mission.

Later, Canadian Baptist missionaries came and joined with the ABMU mission ministries. American Southern Baptists came in 1987 and worked with churches in Kikwit and Kinshasa.

Tensions between national leaders and missionaries have resulted in divisions among most of the groups. The greatest division occurred related to Simon Kimbangu. He had been baptized by a BMS missionary in 1915. He asked to be appointed as an evangelist under the Nkamba (Baptist) church. But the church rejected him. Following his rejection, he claimed he had a vision through which he received divine authority. The vision indicated he was to be a prophet with miraculous powers. “After exercising certain prophetic gifts, he was recognized as a prophet by the Ngombe Lutete (Baptist) Church.”

Missionaries refused to accept his claims. The Belgian government used force to try and stop his movement. It sentenced Kimbangu to death,
but changed the sentence to life in prison. However, the government’s threat to kill Kimbangu, followed by his imprisonment, gave life to the Kimbangu movement. It served nationalist feelings, and the movement grew by the thousands. It has become Africa’s largest independent church named L’Eglise du Jesus Christ sur la Terre par le Prophete Simon Kimbangu (The Church of Jesus Christ on the Earth of the Prophet Simon Kimbangu). And it has caused divisions among churches and their members.

Underline the phrase stating non-Christian factors that aided the Kimbangu movement’s growth.

___Yes ___No  There is a danger when a Christian denomination attaches the name of a person to itself. (Come to class prepared to explain why you chose your answer)

Baptists in DRC live with terrible conflicts and serious economic problems. At times, the missionaries have had to be evacuated. Historian Wardin notes,

But through it all, Baptists have made significant contributions to the nation...The ABMU and BMS protested the inhuman labor practices of King Leopold. Besides their widespread evangelistic endeavors, the contributions in education, medicine, literacy and other social services have been incalculable (cannot be measured). 33

At the close of the 20th century, Baptists in Zaire/DRC numbered 765,585 members in 2,051 churches. They are divided among 13 different organizations. Ongoing warfare in the DRC has caused a great refugee problem. The problem would make it difficult to find all the scattered Baptist members and their churches.

Other Baptists Across Africa

The continent of Africa contains many different nations. As noted in the preface, this text does not attempt to present a full history of all Baptists. The African countries presented serve to illustrate Baptists in their development. But there are many other Baptists in other countries. The following do not include all other African countries. They simply represent the many other communities of African Baptists.

Cameroon

Baptists in Cameroon had grown to 182,486 members in 1,001 churches at the close of the 20th century. 34 The first and second World Wars changed Cameroon’s colonial rulers. Germany, England, and France, at times, controlled
Cameroon. And each ruling power determined whose missionaries could serve there. Baptist churches include about forty tribal languages. Large city churches may use English or French.

Three major Baptist bodies have developed: The Eglise Baptiste Camerounaise (Native Baptist Church) (1945), the Union des Eglises Baptistes du Cameroun (1952), and the Cameroon Baptist Convention (1954). The Johnstone report does not speak well of Cameroon Christian life generally.

Nominal (appears to be, but not true) Christianity is a bigger problem in this land than in any other in Africa. The early pioneer work of Catholics, Presbyterians, Lutherans and Baptists was damaged by compromise and the arrival of liberation theology. These large churches lost spiritual life and opened their door to millions who had no personal faith in Christ... low moral standards are endemic (affecting most).  

Underline in the Johnstone report the factor that works against (undercuts) Baptists’ basic belief.

Kenya

Baptist missionaries entered Kenya first under the African Inland Mission. The Mission formed the African Inland Church (AIC) whose beliefs and practices are similar to Baptists. The AIC brings great Baptist (without the name) influence to Kenya. It has grown to 5,435 churches with 1,250,000 members.

American Southern Baptists came as the first official Baptist mission to Kenya in 1956. Kenyan Baptists formed the Baptist Convention of Kenya in 1971. Together, the Convention and Mission have begun schools and used the Bible Way correspondence program. They began the Kenya Baptist Media. Their evangelistic outreach includes the nomadic Massai who have been receptive. “As a result of the 1990 Kenya Coastal Crusade...there were 50,000 professions of faith.” Eighty-four churches were organized.

The Nairobi Association withdrew from the Convention because it practiced open membership. The Nairobi Baptist Church accepts only immersed believers as members. Its membership numbers just 500, but its Sunday attendance reaches 3,000 in four services. Leading government personnel and foreigners attend.

Forced out of Uganda, Conservative Baptist missionaries entered Kenya in the early 1970s. They chose a difficult coastal area peopled by Muslim, Hindu, and syncretistic (mixing Christian and pagan beliefs) Christians. Their Daystar school in Nairobi has become a leading evangelical educational institution. The Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE) began work in Nairobi (1991).
Johnstone’s revised January 2004 report notes 2,610 Baptist churches with 244,400 members. The over 5,000 AIC churches with 1,250,000 members join Baptists with their common influence.

**Malawi**

The beginnings of Baptists in Malawi relate to the work of Joseph Booth (1851-1932). He was an English Baptist and held strong commitment to African rights. But his commitment to clear biblically based belief seems mixed. He brought in National Baptists, Seventh Day Baptists, the South African Churches of Christ, Seventh Day Adventists, and Jehovah’s Witnesses! Historian N. Olney Moore knew him personally. He judged Booth to be a sincere and earnest Christian worker. But also called him “a sort of religious hitchhiker.” Booth was always seeking and accepting assistance from any organization that was going his way. Then he would abandon it when he felt that he could not work satisfactorily with it any longer.

Baptists outgrew these unusual beginnings. Malawi has become the most successful field for American National Baptists. Seventh Day Baptists there have developed one of their strongest bodies in the world. It is the Central African Conference of Seventh Day Baptists (1969). American Southern Baptist missionaries entered in 1959 and developed their wide range of ministries. Their work has grown well developing churches among eight major people groups.

The Evangelical Baptist Church (ECB) had only four churches with 400 members in 1979. Matthias Munyewe became chairman and brought a vision for reaching his people, the Yao. The Yao hold a mix of Islamic and folk beliefs. The ECB grew very well among the Yao and others. “It is one of the fastest growing groups in South Africa and possibly the most successful in gaining adherents from a previously unreached Moslem population.”

At the close of the 20th century Malawi had 190,105 Baptist members in 1,774 churches.

**Mozambique**

Mozambique suffered 470 years as a Portuguese colony. It became independent in 1974 under a Marxist-Leninist state after a long revolutionary struggle. Civil war followed the revolution. The Marxist government worked against the churches from 1975 to 1982. It took over mission property, closed churches, and took Bibles away. It also jailed church leaders, prohibited Sunday schools, and the distribution of Christian literature. At last, religious freedom was granted in 1988. National changes followed the Marxist government’s failure. The changes have helped the nation.
A 1992 peace accord began to operate fully in 1995. The nation continues to be one of the world’s poorest.

The Baptist Union of Portugal began Mozambique missions efforts in 1949. The Union sent Luis Rodrigues de Almenda and his wife as their first missionaries. They organized the Baptist Convention of Mozambique in 1957 with two churches. But Portuguese Baptists left their work when the country gained independence. They had elected Bento Matusse in 1975 as president of the Convention. They also chose him to pastor the First Baptist Church in the nation’s capital. The church was nearly empty when its Portuguese members left. Pastor Matusse, the church, and the Convention suffered under the Marxist government oppression.

However, in the 1990s, the Convention revealed “...healthy growth with over 10,000 members, fifteen churches, over one hundred preaching places... and three Bible schools.”

Brazilian Baptists provided some help. American Southern Baptists arrived in 1986 providing Bible Way correspondence materials, TEE, etc.

Before the Portuguese Baptists’ arrival, the Free Baptist Union of Sweden (FBU) had come in 1921. Their missionaries took up the mission work begun by a South African lawyer, Mr. Baker. Later, the FBU accepted responsibility for the mission work of the South Africa General Mission in the north also. Historian Wardin calls growth in that area, “explosive.” When the government forced the missionaries to leave, the ministry became even stronger. Also, persecution and civil war forced the believers to flee into other areas of the nation. Muslims who became Christians began forming new churches in the north in the early 1990s. The Igreja Uniao Baptista, formed in 1968, is the much larger of the two Mozambique Baptist bodies.

Underline the phrase that reveals true commitment among Mozambique Baptists.

As a result of Portuguese early control, the Roman Catholic Church remains the largest Christian body. Baptists are the largest Protestant denomination. At the close of the 20th century, they have 210,200 members in over 1,015 churches.

Tanzania

Tanzania gained its independence from Great Britain in 1961. Its beginning state-controlled economy seriously damaged the new nation. Changes begun in the 1990s have led to improvement. The nation enjoys freedom of religion, including both Muslims and Christians.

An American Southern Baptist survey in 1954 led to their beginnings. Their first missionaries arrived in 1956. Tanzania’s location permitted their
missionaries to serve in surrounding countries to add their specialties. Southern Baptists’ broad missions scope soon included evangelism, medicine (hospital 1959), education (seminary 1962), and agriculture. A media program began in 1967, and Bible Way correspondence came in 1973.

The rapid growing number of churches called for church leadership training. The seminary provided needed training on only one level.

*In 1988 the seminary with the Convention of Tanzania established a Department of Decentralized Theological Education (DTE)—their Seminary Education by Extension. There are 180 DTE centers with 1,600 enrolled, twenty Bible schools equipping 340 church leaders, and four seminary branches with 130 pastors in both certificate and advanced studies.*

The Baptists’ broad scope of missions efforts reached villages and towns by different means. They were called “the people of the Book.” Their rapid growth provoked opposition. In the western Muslim area of Ujiji, Muslims demonstrated against them. The result—the Ujiji Baptist Church is one of the strongest in the country.

When Baptists began reaching the Maasai converts, the Muslims did not protest. They were glad to see the changed Maasai lives when they became Christians. But the Roman Catholics and Anglicans protested. Betty Ann Whitson’s missionary account notes that they had the Baptist leader arrested. While the leader was under arrest, he led three men on prison duty to faith in Christ.

*As Solomon Ginsburg learned in Brazil, opposition: (Check the correct answer)*

- [ ] Always prevents Baptist growth
- [ ] May actually lead to better growth

In the Bukoba area, Baptists began (1970s) among Greek Orthodox churches. Many of the churches chose to become Baptist. Those coming to faith in the 1980s reached an average of more than 15,000 baptisms each year. The number of churches being started grew to more than 150 each year. In 1989, the Baptists’ Department of Religious Education began developing the “Bible Storying” method for teaching and outreach. They continue to develop ministries such as the Community Health Evangelism. In Bukoba, an extensive AIDS ministry assists thousands of orphans. They also provide veterinarian help for the Maasai. The Maasai have a cattle-centered culture and economy.

The rapidly growing Baptists of Tanzania have formed thirty-four associations. At the close of the 20th century, the Baptist Convention of Tanzania has 1,381 churches with 120,000 members.
Note two important and different kinds of effective evangelistic results that Baptists have known in Tanzania. In one area, they have reached ______________ for faith in Christ. In another, ______________ Churches have turned to Baptist faith and practice.

Summary

Again, you have only brief presentations of Baptist life in Africa. Much of the history has not been covered. There are many other important events and people who have not been included. But the faithful commitment to Christ as Lord lived out by individual believers is most important. God moved through faith to birth new life within them and to continue it through their lives. Being Baptist is never most important—affirming Christ as Lord always is. Your people need accounts of your history to appreciate the cost and importance of continuing Baptists’ Scripture-based and Christ-focused beliefs.

Further Steps Toward Learning

Section 1
1. __True __False Americans’ plan to send freed Africans to Liberia was more cultural than spiritual.
2. __True __False Even freed American Blacks went to Liberia controlled partly by American culture.
3. Freed blacks from America did not relate well with Liberian Grebo and Kru tribes. That poor relationship resulted in the assassination of Liberian President William ______________. He also had served as president of the BWA.
4. The FMB of the SBC sent Lott ______________ and Collin Teague as their first missionaries to Liberia.
5. Joseph James Cheeseman, a Black, served as a ______________ Baptist leader. He led in the founding of the ______________ Baptist Missionary and Educational Convention. He also was elected president of the country.
6. Thomas Bowen, the first Baptist missionary to Nigeria, filled an unusual role. He helped protect the city of Abeokuta as a ______________ strategist.
7. In the early days, missionaries found travel in Nigeria □easy and enjoyable □difficult
8. Mrs. Sarah ______________, from Sierra Leone, a widow, and Moses Ladejo ______________ led in keeping Baptist work growing in Lagos when the missionaries left.
9. Missionary W. J. David brought his bride to Nigeria, both knowing possible death. Her death and that of their two children illustrate the phrase, “West Africa the white man’s __________________.”

10. Cultural conflict between the missionary and Nigerian church leaders resulted in the ______________ Baptist movement.

11. The Nigerian leader of the movement took the name Mojola Agbehi. He promoted indigenous Nigerian Christianity. He believed their churches should be _____-governed, _____-supporting, and _____-growing.

12. __True __False In my opinion: The Nigerian independent Baptist movement benefited Nigerian Baptist life.

13. The Nigerian cultural practice of ______________ caused one of the most difficult problems for Baptists (a problem found in many African countries).

14. Both ______________ care and schools aided Baptist mission efforts. Their goal, however, was “_____________that results in churches.”

15. Missionary S. G. Pinnock, a Wesleyan Methodist, became a Baptist from his study of the ________________________. He and his wife had very good __________ with Nigerians. (Later in life, Pinnock became careless in his responsibilities, including finances.)

16. Missionaries Josephine Scaggs and May Perry received the title, “Officer of the Order of the British Empire.” It was presented to them by the __________ of ___________ in recognition for their Nigerian service.

17. Nigerian Baptists developed a denominational government that takes away Baptist local church rights. The Convention controls pastors’ ________________.

18. Check the correct statements that follow:
   □ Baptists in the Republic of the Congo (DRC) are small in number.
   □ George Grenfell had a long difficult ministry in the DRC.
   □ Grenfell openly opposed the harsh treatment of the Congolese by the Belgium authorities.
   □ The DRC has the fourth largest population of Baptists in the world.
   □ A revival movement in Banza Mantke in 1886 has been called the “Pentecost of the Congo.” Thousands professed faith in Christ and laid down their fetishes.
   □ Africa’s largest independent church resulted with a break from Baptists in the DRC.

19. Because the DRC government wanted unity, it forced all _____________ _____________ to become “communities” of the Church of Christ.

20. Many Baptists, along with other Christians in Cameroon, can be called _____________ (not true) Christians. This seems to be more true of Christians in Cameroon than in any other African country.
21. __True __False In Kenya, the large African Inland Church (AIC) has a Baptist-like influence (similar to Baptist beliefs and practices).

22. __True __False Malawi has become the most successful missions effort for American National Baptists.

23. Portuguese Baptists began their missions in Mozambique in 1949. But they left in 1974 when Mozambique gained its ______________. Pastor Bento Matusse was left with nearly an empty church in the capital.

24. __True __False Baptists in Mozambique have had strong growth, including among Muslims.

25. __True __False In the Tanzanian Muslim area of Ujiji, Muslims demonstrated against the Baptists.

__True __False But Muslims approved their work among the Maasai tribal people. However, the ______________ and the ______________ churches protested against Baptist work among the Maasai.

26. Baptists in Tanzania found ______________-Orthodox churches open to Baptist beliefs.

Section 2
Choose one of the following missionaries: Alberto Diaz, Solomon Ginsburg, or S. G. Pinnock. Using the text materials, prepare a brief presentation of his Baptist missions service. It need not be more than a half-page single-spaced. At the heading of your presentation, describe the group for whom you are preparing it. Note what kind of meeting (mission study, illustration when teaching, age group, and purpose) you wish to accomplish.

Section 3
Prepare a paper describing Nigerian Baptist Convention pastor ordination practices. Describe how they go against Baptist distinctives. Discuss the sources that may have caused it. Include also important problems that you may find.
Notes

1Leonard, Baptist Ways, 342.
3Wardin, Baptists Around the World, 77.
4Ibid., 76.
6Ibid., 9, citing L. Bowen’s unpublished diary.
7Stone noted that there were no Baptist churches in Nigeria. But he then refers to a “congregation” of 35 baptized believers in Lagos. Perhaps his first phrase meant interior Nigeria. Or maybe the Lagos congregation had not organized as a church.
11Ibid., 24.
12The practice of polygamy presented the missionary with a complicated problem. First, in the culture of their early days in Nigeria, the only acceptable woman’s role was as a wife. The missionaries decided that the men had to limit themselves to one wife in order to join the church. This usually prevented the leading men who trusted in Christ from becoming church members. Multiple wives gave men status in that time. What happened to the “discarded” wives? Often, they had to become prostitutes in order to eat and live.
16Ibid., 34.
17Ibid., 35.
18Ibid., 52.
19Ibid., 53. From a Baptist practice view, there is a problem with the phrase, “churches under his control.” Foundational to Baptist belief has been the local church’s commitment to Christ for its authority.
20Wardin, Baptists Around the World, 81.
22Mission Strategy Conference Report (Ibadan, Nigeria: Baptist Mission of Nigeria and Nigerian Baptist Convention, 1999), 35. The author participated in research that led to the report. In personal conversation, he learned of additional problems. A pastor desiring ordination was expected to give gifts to those who would approve his selection. It appeared that the local church had little authority in the matter.
23Wardin, Baptists Around the World, 80.
25Ibid., 199.
Polygamy presented missionaries and believers in the Congo with a difficult problem like it had in Nigeria. One Baptist wrote, “We lived apart. Many in our town have never been to the river towns. Women married as you might buy a pig; she knew nothing. Then white men brought us the light; great blessing, great cause for thanks. In the dark we did terrible things. Now the change has come thanks to God.” But others judged the results as a threat to African customs—replacing them with “Western values.”