

July 7, 1960

**Congress Has Largest
Rio Religious Crowd**

By W. C. Fields

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil--(BP)--The 10th Congress of the Baptist World Alliance closed here Sunday, July 3, with a gigantic evangelistic service in Maracana Stadium attended by 150,000 people, the largest Baptist meeting in history.

Principal speaker for the occasion was Billy Graham. He reported that this was the biggest crowd he had ever addressed.

In opening the afternoon meeting, Theodore F. Adams, outgoing president of the Alliance, said to the vast throng, "You are a part of perhaps the largest gathering of Protestants and evangelicals in all of time." William J. Reynolds of Nashville led the delegates and visitors from 10 nations in an unprecedented volume of music as they sang "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" and "How Great Thou Art."

Every continent was represented on the program. The flags of the nations were paraded into the oval of the soccer field and the crowd, mostly from the host country, stood to sing the Brazilian national anthem.

Government officials said that the attendance was the largest the stadium had ever had for a religious assembly. A Roman Catholic Eucharistic Congress held here a short time ago drew only two-thirds as many.

At the close of the service hundreds stood to indicate their acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour. Because of the enormous size of the stadium, the largest in the world, and because of the congestion in aisles and walkways, it was impossible for those making "decisions for Christ" to walk to the speakers' platform in the customary manner of most Baptist evangelistic services.

A choir of 2,000 women dressed in white and 1,000 men dressed in blue sang the "Hallelujah Chorus" from Handel's "Messiah." They were directed by a Rio shoe store operator. The towering statue of Christ the Redeemer atop Mt. Corcovado was visible in the bright winter sunlight over the high rim of the stadium. Planes of the Brazilian Air Force trailing long plumes of white smoke roared over the stadium in a dramatic salute.

Streams of Brazilians from all over the country including Catholics, Protestants, and Jews as well as Baptists poured into the city for the occasion in what was considered by local religious leaders to be an unheard-of development.

A big soccer game opening the sports season was postponed to allow Baptists to conduct the meeting. Roman Catholics protested the meeting to government officials to no avail. The Rio daily newspapers stated that Catholic officials had sharply criticized the governor of the state of Guanabara for his appearance before the Congress and for his remarks earlier in the week.

"A leaflet entitled "Who Are the Baptists?" was distributed by Catholics at the gates as the people entered the stadium.

John Soren, pastor of Rio's 2,800-member First Baptist Church, spoke briefly to the crowd as the newly-elected president of the Baptist World Alliance. He said, "Return to your homes, your churches, and your many fatherlands to lead men to Jesus Christ. I challenge you to lift up bravely and courageously to all the world the word of God."

Before nightfall many delegates began their homeward journeys across the seven seas. As the crowd began to move out of the stadium the Brazilian brass band, black suited and Baptist, played "God Be With You till We Meet Again."

The next Congress of the Baptist World Alliance will meet at Miami Beach, Fla., in the summer of 1965.

Soren President
Of World Alliance

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil--(BP)--John Soren, for 26 years pastor of the First Baptist Church of Rio, and five times president of the Brazilian Baptist Convention, was elected president of the Baptist World Alliance.

The president of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon-Zurich, Switzerland, Josef Nordenhaug, was chosen to succeed Arnold T. Ohrn as general secretary of the Alliance. Ohrn retired after this Congress session here.

Soren is a native of Rio. His mother was born in Roanoke, Va. He is a graduate of Rio Baptist College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and the University of Louisville.

In addition to his pastoral duties, the new Alliance president teaches systematic and contemporary theology at the South Brazil Baptist Theological Seminary in Rio. He is a former vice-president of the Baptist World Alliance and has been serving for the past five years on the Alliance executive committee.

Soren preached the official sermon for last Congress held in London in 1955. During World War II he served as a military chaplain with the Brazilian expeditionary forces in Italy. He is a charter member and was the first secretary of the Brazilian Bible Society. Mrs. Soren is a native of Rio. They have three children.

Nordenhaug comes to his new duties as chief executive officer of the Alliance from 10 years of experience as president of the Zurich seminary. He was born Aug. 2, 1903, in Oslo, Norway. After receiving a degree in science at the University of Oslo, he earned master's and doctor's degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He was pastor of Baptist churches in Kentucky and Virginia and later became editor of The Commission, monthly journal of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. He has traveled widely and speaks several languages.

Mrs. Nordenhaug is a native of Kentucky. They have two children, both university students in the United States.

Nordenhaug becomes the fourth general secretary in the 55-year history of the Baptist World Alliance. He was preceded by J. H. Rushbrooke of London, W. O. Lewis of Missouri, and Dr. Ohrn, who is also from Norway.

Soren is the tenth president of the Alliance, the first outside of the United States, Canada, and England. He succeeds Theodore F. Adams of Richmond, Va.

The vice-presidents of the Alliance elected by the delegates are continental representatives. V. Carney Hargroves of Philadelphia; Joseph H. Jackson of Chicago; Lam Chi Fung of Hong Kong; Alfonso Olmedo of Argentina; Alan C. Prior of Australia; William R. Tolbert of Liberia; Henri Vincent of France, and Yakov I. Zhidkov of the Soviet Union.

Eight Southern Baptists were among the 50 members elected to the Alliance executive committee. Walter Pope Binns of Missouri; Baker J. Cauthern of Virginia; J. D. Grey of Louisiana; Mrs. R. L. Mathis of Texas; Duke K. McCall of Kentucky; Edward H. Pruden of the District of Columbia; Porter Routh and James L. Sullivan of Tennessee.

All of the 150 Congress delegates who had been detained in Caracas as a result of the attempted assassination of Venezuelan President Romulo Betancourt had arrived safely in Rio by Thursday night. They reported that they were treated in a considerate fashion by Venezuelan authorities during their forced layover of five days.

Undeterred by political unrest, hundreds of delegates were planning to return home via Venezuela and Cuba.

The Congress accepted a recommendation from its commission on the doctrine of the church that as soon as possible an additional staff member be secured to coordinate research on doctrine and other matters of mutual interest among Baptists.

Uncle Sam To Help
New Baptist Hospital

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, Ark.--(BP)--The city of North Little Rock has awarded a contract for construction of a \$2 million new hospital to be financed by a government grant and funds raised in a bond issue. The hospital will be leased to Arkansas Baptist Hospital in neighboring Little Rock for operation and is expected to be ready for use by January, 1962.

This will be the first hospital for North Little Rock, the state's second largest city, with a 1960 official census of 57,200. The city is located just across the Arkansas River from Little Rock. With a net gain of more than 13,000 in population during the past 10 years, it is the state's fastest-growing city.

Little Rock Air Force Base is located a few miles north. The recent announcement that an \$80 million missile-launching defense base is to be built here is expected to accelerate North Little Rock's already rapid growth.

Norman L. Roberts, Jr., a member of the administrative staff of Arkansas Baptist Hospital, will serve as the new hospital's administrator. The hospital is an agency of Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

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Carver Benefits \$4100
From Georgia Estate

(7-7-60)

LOUISVILLE--(BP)--Carver School of Missions and Social Work here will receive \$4100 from the estate of the late Dr. Martin A. Wood of College Park, Ga.

The money has been turned over to Georgia Baptist Foundation. Income from it will be used for scholarships at Carver, according to school officials.

The scholarships, to be handled at the discretion of school administration, will be called the Virginia Y. Wood scholarships in memory of the donor's wife.

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