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GLOBE-TROTTING With GINNY

By Virginia Harris Hendricks

French Baptists Yearn For Pastors, Schools

RUSCHLIKON, Switzerland (BP)--Our three sons had been promised we would attend church services at the Baptist Seminary Chapel (Ruschlikon Baptist Church) where they expected to use earphones in order to hear the sermon in English.

They were quite disappointed upon arrival to hear the bi-lingual Pastor Arndt preaching in English with the translation coming in German over the earphones.

During the impressive service in the beautiful chapel, I was reminded of recent news releases concerning seminaries in America: the frightened cry from religious leaders warning that fewer young people were attending seminaries, and the facts on the other hand of the expansion and increase in seminaries in our denomination.

Most of all, I was thinking of Serge Scuba, a French ministerial student at Ruschlikon seminary. Serge is the only student French Baptists have in any seminary this year.

European Baptist Theological Seminary here is the only Baptist seminary on the continent where French pastors can go, and then only if they speak English and have college qualifications.

French Baptists know what a preacher shortage is. Some pastors must serve from three to six preaching stations. In France where living expenses perhaps double the American living expense, all pastors receive the same salary of \$75 a month.

If they are married, they receive \$100. The approximately 2000 members of the French Baptist Federation (in a land of 46 million population) know what minority Christianity is, too. Yet they are expanding, building new churches, entering new cities.

Who will help lone Serge Scuba fill the pulpits of those new churches? I was wondering.

French Baptists need the prayers of Southern Baptists that in spite of their minority in numbers and their smallness of income, somehow more young people will be won to Christ and to the French ministry.

Someday a Baptist seminary will be provided in France to train leaders for the future...because the need is so great.

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Cutline: Although French Baptists have no seminary, this beautiful Baptist student center in Paris (before which Baptist leaders of tomorrow pose) also serves as a church for French and English-speaking congregations. (BP) Photo

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