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127 Ninth Avenue, North Nashville, Tennessee

EUROPEAN BAPTIST UNION LAUNCHED; BWA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PLANS REHABILITATION AND NAMES CLEVELAND FOR 1950 CONGRESS

LONDON--(BP via cable)--European Baptists, rehabilitating and reorganizing in the wake of the world's greatest war, have formed a European Baptist Union.

The new Union, representing Baptists in 23 nations, has a total membership of 657,337, excluding Russia from which no accurate figures are available. Estimates place the number of Russian Baptists at between 2,000,000 and 4,000,000.

Organized after the pattern of the Southern Baptist Convention, the various national Baptist Unions compare with the SEC's state conventions.

The Union was launched at a meeting of the Baptist World Alliance Executive Committee here, at which 19 countries were represented. The European Union will be independent of the Alliance, excepting as Baptist bodies cooperate with the world group.

Also organized was a European Baptist Women's Union, stimulated by a recreated women's committee of the Alliance.

Relief and Rehabilitation

Reports reaching the Alliance indicated that relief will be needed by Europeans desperately this coming winter, but that the needs are expected to diminish thereafter.

The Alliance group, in compliance with the recommendation of Dr. R. Paul Caudill of Memphis, chairman of its relief committee, made plans for relief this winter to countries behind the Iron Curtain, including Poland, Hungary, and the Balkans, with Germany and Austria slated as main recipients. Relief materials will be distributed through Baptist channels.

Emphasis was given to reconstruction of seminaries on the Continent, with Southern Baptists asked to build a Seminary at Geneva or Zurich to be used as a graduate school for all European Baptists.

Considering displaced persons, American Baptists were asked to receive and relocate an estimated 3,000 Baptists coming to the United States under the recently adopted displaced persons legislation.

Way Cleared for Missions

The way was cleared for more widespread and helpful mission work throughout the European continent, when mission executives voted abandonment of the old mandated system.

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Whereas the old system provided the assignment of certain nations as the exclusive responsibility of certain mission boards, the new plan favors cooperation between the European national conventions and mission boards. This opens the way for Southern Baptists to work in Germany, which had not been mandated, if German Baptists desire assistance.

Adopting a report of the evangelism committee, the group declared that "evangelism is the primary business of the Baptist World Alliance."

Next Meeting in U. S.

Next meeting of the Baptist World Congress will be held at Cleveland in 1950, but the exact dates have not yet been determined.

A delegation consisting of Dr. C. Oscar Johnson of St. Louis, president, and Dr. Arnold T. Ohrn of Washington, secretary of the Alliance, was sent to Spain to make a plea for religious liberty in that country.

Plans were made for a world Baptist youth congress at Stockholm in 1949. Arrangements are directed by Dr. Frank H. Leavell of Nashville and Dr. T. G. Dunning of London, co-chairmen of the Alliance youth committee.