



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

---FEATURES

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February 27, 1968

Latvian Lady Finds Freedom As Citizen

By Bob Harrelson

FORT WORTH (BP)--Twenty-eight years ago, Mrs. Stephanie Macs slept in terror that the "Black car" might at any moment come to take her to her execution or to a Siberian labor camp.

Today, however, she sleeps with peace knowing she is a citizen of a free country.

Ten minutes of conversation with Mrs. Macs clearly reveals two impressions---first, she is a lady---dignified but warm, outspoken but gentle. Second, she is an American citizen, and a proud, patriotic American at that.

The story, though of Mrs. Macs---a nine year employee of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here---goes back much further.

Born in Latvia around the turn of the century, her early years were spent in relative comfort. She married a Latvian army captain and continued to enjoy an above-average standard of living.

But the first Russian occupation changed all that, she said. Property and goods belonging to individuals became the property of the state. Houses were seized and unknown families were moved in until each family had only one room for total living space.

Things went from bad to worse during the second Russian occupation beginning in 1940. In one night, 70 or more educated people in the community were dragged from their homes and murdered, she recalled.

The following day, 40,000 other countrymen were forced into the streets and marched off to Siberian labor camps. Two of her brothers were among those taken to Siberia.

They lived in constant fear that the "black car"--the death taxi used to eliminate select villagers and assure obedience from others---might come and claim them.

In 1941, however, during the midst of the Russian rule of terror, the Germans invaded and drove out the Russians. Life continued to be hard for the Macs, but they found it easier to sleep at night.

After a time, Mrs. Macs and her husband moved to Germany hoping for better conditions, but too many people in a small country during wartime provided little relief for the two homeless refugees.

A new promise of relief came in an opportunity to go to America, and the Macs were once more on their way to what they hoped to be happiness and security.

But it wasn't easy. They spoke little English, and this limited the types of work open to them. After a year in Denton, Tex., Mr. and Mrs. Macs moved to Fort Worth where he did janitorial work and she served as a nursery worker.

The years had taken their toll, though, and the ex-Latvian army officer died of heart failure. His wife went to live with a sister, Mrs. Lemanis, a woman of similar experience who had earlier lost her husband.

Nine years ago, Mrs. Macs began to work at Southwestern Seminary. It was cleanup work ---nothing fancy as jobs go---but an honorable work that brought, as she put it, "the finest memories of my life."

Already proficient in her command of the Latvian, German, Polish and Russian languages, Mrs. Macs set about to master English, the tongue of her adopted land. The task was slow, but she was determined, for she now had a deep desire to become sufficiently versed in the language to pass the requirements for citizenship.

Hardship once more seemed to pursue Mrs. Macs, for in May, 1967 she broke her hip and was hospitalized. While recuperating from the break she underwent two major operations and at last was allowed to return to her sister's home. "It was," she noted, "the kindness of my seminary friends during those hard days in the hospital that helped me to keep my spirits up."

At long last Mrs. Macs applied for United States citizenship, and in January of this year she achieved her goal.

"One thing I see in our country that bothers me," she stated. "It seems so many Americans do not appreciate what we have here. We are free people--free from the terrible life of communism. This makes me happy. This makes me rest well at night. This makes me thankful I'm an American."

Coming from the lips of a lady who once slept in terror of the "black car," the words seemed to have more meaning as she spoke of the freedoms "we" enjoy in "our" country.

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February 27, 1968

World Baptist Membership
Total Now 29.8 Million

WASHINGTON (BP)--The membership of Baptist churches around the world shot upward by 2.6 million in the latest tabulation by the Baptist World Alliance.

A statistical table prepared annually shows a 1968 membership total of 29,817,707 as compared with a total compilation of 27,183,622 a year ago.

Josef Nordenhaug, general secretary of B.W.A., said that the statistics include only baptized believers who have "personally professed faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and followed him in believer's baptism."

The largest gains were in Negro conventions in North America. Figures for the National Baptist Convention of America jumped 831,000 to a current 3.5 million. The National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc., showed a gain of 800,000 to a current 6.3 million. The Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., climbed from 505,000 to 521,000.

The largest single group is the Southern Baptist Convention, in the U.S.A., with a new total of 11,142,726 -- up 370,000 over the previously tabulated figures.

Nordenhaug said that the gains were not necessarily achieved in a 12 month period because in some cases the previous comparative figures were more than a year old.

The new totals by continents (with the increase shown in parenthesis) are:

Africa - -	471,856	(29,744)
Asia - -	960,938	(20,732)
Central America - -	214,363	(2,579)
Europe - -	1,157,432	(29,188)
Middle East - -	1,068	(186)
South America - -	297,048	(14,607)
Southwest Pacific - -	111,873	(3,351)
North America - -	26,412,866	(2,343,435)

The statistical tabulation breaks down the totals by continents by listing the totals currently available in each of the 124 countries in the world where Baptists are known to live and witness.

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Baptist Hospital
Administrator Named

2/27/68

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (BP)--The pastor of the First Southern Baptist Church of Tempe, Ariz., has been named administrator of Scottsdale Baptist Hospital here.

A. E. Carpenter of Tempe, pastor of the church there since 1963, had been serving as interim administrator of the hospital since November, dividing his time between the church and the hospital.

Before coming to Arizona, Carpenter was pastor of Central Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala. A native of Louisiana, he is a graduate of Louisiana State University and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

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Arizona Music, BSU
Secretary Resigns

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Paul G. Barnes, music and Baptist Student Union secretary for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention here, has resigned effective Feb. 29 to become minister of music-education at Southside Baptist Church, Tempe, Ariz.

Barnes is a graduate of Grand Canyon College, Phoenix, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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Preachers Punish Par
In Play and Pray Tourney

PINE MOUNTAIN, Ga. (BP)--A Baptist pastor has won the fourth annual Georgia Preachers' Golf Association tournament, driving in a score of 198 for the 45-hole tournament, 18 strokes over par.

Al Brackett, pastor of Engleside Baptist Church in Macon, Ga., was presented the tournament trophy on the 18th green at Mountain View Golf course at Callaway Gardens near here. The trophy was presented by Lesley Williams, new missions worker with the Georgia Baptist Convention.

The Baptist pastor, a three-time runner up in this tournament, won over both a Methodist minister, Resse Turrentine, pastor of Sherwood Methodist Church, Columbus, Ga., and another Baptist pastor, Stanley Hahn of First Baptist Church, Dublin, Ga., who tied for second place with scores of 204 each.

In a death play-off, however, Hahn took the second place honor over the Methodist pastor. Hahn is the brother of golf trick-shot artist, Paul Hahn.

Defending champion Jack Ballard, pastor of the Mount Carmel Christian Church in Decatur, Ga., finished with a 207.

A total of 113 Georgia ministers entered the tournament here, representing Methodist, Presbyterian, Church of God, Church of Christ, Nazarene, Primitive Baptist, and Southern Baptist denominations.

Alvin S. Davis, president of Callaway Gardens and a layman at First Baptist Church in Pine Mountain, extended an invitation to the Georgia Preachers' Golf Association to hold its fifth annual tournament here again next year.

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Meredith College Gets
\$400,000 Gift For Building

RALEIGH, N. C. (BP)--Meredith College, a Baptist school for women here, has been given \$400,000 to apply on the college's first physical education-recreation facility.

The gift was presented by W. Herbert Weatherspoon and the family of his brother, the late James R. Weatherspoon. The former Weatherspoon is a retired Raleigh attorney and the only honorary life trustee of Meredith College. The late James Weatherspoon was one of the founders of Durham Life Insurance Co. Both have been deacons at First Baptist Church here.

Meredith trustees meeting here voted to name the new physical education facility the Weatherspoon Building.

It will house Meredith's first indoor swimming pool, regulation athletic courts, classrooms, offices, game rooms, and other areas for leisure activity.

In other actions, the trustees heard plans for other building programs at the college, approved a record \$2.2 million budget, gave salary increases to faculty and staff members, and allocated more funds for student aid.

The trustees meeting was held in conjunction with the 77th anniversary of chartering the college of Feb. 27, 1891.

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BAPTIST PRESS PHOTO 159A

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NOW U.S. CITIZEN, SHE SLEEPS IN PEACE: Mrs. Stephanie Macs, a cleaning woman at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary who once feared she and her husband would be taken from their Latvian home to labor camps in Siberia, now sleeps in peace as a United States citizen. She is shown sharing her experiences with a seminary student. (BP) Photo.

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