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August 2, 1968

Sidelights Throw Big Light
On World Youth Conference

by W. C. Fields

BERNE, Switzerland (BP)--Berne capitulated!

Not since Duke Berchtold von Zahringen founded the place in 1191 and named it after a bear had the city seen anything like the July invasion of 5,600 Baptist young people.

The city council ordered the streets bedecked with all of the festive flags and banners, and then the city fathers kept their fingers crossed.

The "best preserved medieval city in Europe" had heard about student shenanigans at The Sorbonne in Paris, at Berlin, Berkley and Columbia University. They were braced for the worst.

The "7th Baptist Youth World Conference" had little meaning to a town that didn't even have a Baptist church.

But like the man said--"Veni, vidi, vici"--they came, they saw this charming capitol in the bend of the Aare River, and they conquered it, like Joshua at Jericho, with a lot of marching around the walls during seven days and a lot of singing and trumpeting all over the place for seven nights.

Ernest Hegner, director of the Berne Tourist Bureau, told the assembled throng at the end of the week, "You have conquered Berne!"

He said, "Your good behaviour has won the friendship of our people. We hope that one day you will come back!"

Simultaneously, at the city's Zoological Institute, The 6th International Convention of the Union For the Study of Social Insects was going on. But the bug people were lost in the swarms of young social creatures who congregated ever and anon at the Festhalle.

Many of the young people stayed in Swiss homes. One woman called up the housing office and said, "I have two of the young Baptists in my home. They are so nice I would like for you to send me two more."

An American girl boarded a streetcar and discovered that she had lost her red-and-gold Youth Conference badge which enabled all Conference registrants to ride public transportation free. She had no money with her and no other Americans were around. Sensing her difficulty, the Bernese passengers quickly took up a collection to pay her fare.

Another American girl riding a streetcar asked a woman passenger who only understood German how to get to a certain address. The woman conveyed to the girl instructions to get off the streetcar with her. They went to her home, where she got her car and drove the girl to the proper address.

Some students arrived in Berne late at night, received their home assignment and rode a city bus off into the night to find the place. They became lost and knocked on a residence door to get help locating the proper address.

The people said, "It is a long way and it is late. We have room here. Stay with us." They did and the next morning their hosts-for-the-night drove them to their proper address.

Many of the host families, almost none of whom were Baptists, treated their young guests to dinners of fondu, a Swiss specialty, volunteered to drive them to the meeting hall, and took them on tours of the city.

Some guests at the Bellevue Palace Hotel woke up the first morning to hear soft flute music floating up among the balconies. A party of 80 young Baptists had arrived in the night and through some mixup had no place to stay. The hotel let them sleep in the richly carpeted lobby. In a corner a boy was quietly playing his flute unperturbed and happy.

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In a dormitory used for youth visitors, the hot water tank ceased to function. Some of the students got out their trusty Deutsch-English dictionaries and figured out from the German instructions how to repair it.

Like other travelling groups, the Baylor University Band, had their moments of consternation along the way. In London one of the girls broke her leg, and soon had the most autographed cast in England or Switzerland. When the band turned up at Berne's Festhalle for their first rehearsal, they--with feeling--played first, "I Believe in Miracles."

In Athens, prior to the conference, four from one party were in a hotel elevator when a cable broke and the elevator plunged four floors into the basement. Wonder of wonders, no one was hurt.

Jean Ann Cox, a member of the Wordmasters from Georgetown (Baptist) College in Kentucky left her handbag containing her passport beside a Russian memorial in East Berlin. Her bus was about to pass through Checkpoint Charlie when she realized what she had done. She faced the likelihood of two or three days detainment in East Berlin until a substitute passport could be provided by the American authorities in West Berlin.

The bus returned to the site, and after considerable searching and inquiring, the bag with the passport was found. Returning with it, the East German guide was surprised and pleased with a burst of applause from the busload of students. The guide said, "We East Germans are not so bad after all, eh!"

Over 4,000 youngsters and their leaders from the United States attended the Berne meeting. All of them visited other points in Europe. Some went to the Middle East and a few made it around the world. Some hitch-hiked where they could, with faith that they really could "see Europe on \$5 a day." Others took tours costing up to \$2,500.

One anonymous gift of \$1,000 in a Washington, D. C. Baptist Church led eventually to 14 young people from that church attending the conference.

Student groups across the USA gave money for Baptist students in underdeveloped countries to attend the conference.

The conference was publicized widely in the Swiss press. There was considerable interest in the event from both the youth and adult segments of Berne and Switzerland.

A woman stopped Editor Robert Hastings of Illinois and asked him about the possibility of her attending the session when Billy Graham spoke. He told her that she would be welcomed. She said her pastor had urged the members of her church (Swiss Reformed) to learn from the Baptists about Christian education methods, particularly in Sunday School.

Pastor Jack Robinson of the First Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga., was late to dinner one night in his hotel. The hard pressed head waiter scolded him for his tardiness. After the meal Robinson sought him out and apologized for causing him inconvenience. The man thanked him for his thoughtfulness. The next day the waiter said to Robinson, "Do you have a book about the Baptist faith? I want to know about people like you."

Throughout the week the young people tried to put into practice the conference theme, "One World, One Lord, One Witness." The theme was emblazoned in English and German (Eine Welt, Ein Gott, Ein Zeuge) on a large banner stretched over the stage of the conference hall. Flags of the nations, loaned by the United Nations office in Geneva, added color and atmosphere to the international gathering.

At the opening session of the conference the lighting technician, a jolly and rotund Swiss who understood not a word of English, smiled serenely on as the presiding officer frantically asked four times (in English) for the houselights to be turned out for a film presentation.

The youth applauded briskly at the reading of messages of greeting from the President of the United States, the Federal Chancellor of West Germany, the U. S. Ambassador to Switzerland, and others.

The bulletin boards in the lobby of Festhalle, where the conference sessions were held, was soon covered up with notes of all kinds. There were notes in a dozen languages of people trying to locate friends, groups trying to stay grouped, special meetings and events, gathering of campers, nurses, alumni, ham radio operators, etc. Others were like the one which said, "Anyone here from Pomona, California?"

After a few days the Lost and Found Department began listing on the bulletin board items which had not been claimed. Among them were color film, an Instamatic camera, a French-English Dictionary, several umbrellas, "a blue Swissair bag full of dirty laundry and purchases," one French franc, "a red bag including playing cards," a keyring of some tour group's suitcases, one earring from West Germany, scarfs of assorted colors, and on and on.

There was a list placed on the bulletin board by some student for those to sign who did not approve of applause during the sessions. Later a list appeared for those to sign who did not approve of those who did not approve of applause!

The second day of the conference this note appeared on the crowded board: "Important notice to all those who bought or plan to buy one of the souvenir medallians of the conference. Note that Baptist is spelled "Babtist." A local firm had goofed. The note asked the delegates, "What should we do about this revolting problem?"

Answers in differing handwriting were penned and pencilled below the statement in this order: Revolt! Demand a lower price! What is your problem? Don't buy one! Ask Charlie Brown! The last comment on the sheet of paper said, "So what if they misspelled Baptist? YOU misspelled medallion!!!"

One note announced that five young American boys were looking for dates (17-19 years old) to go scooter riding Wednesday afternoon. The note added, "Leave names here and we will pick from the list." Several girls names were pencilled in, all obviously fictitious. One of them was "Pimples Gugan." Still lower on the page and in the first handwriting was a more desperate tone, probably written Wednesday morning: "The original five are still looking! Be here at 1:00." More salesmanship: "All expenses paid and free transportation on scooters."

The young people had their more serious moments. Most of them were alert and articulate. But they discovered that the zip and zaneyness of youth from any land keeps bubbling unbidden to the surface.

Delegates from 65 nations had been expected. Registration showed 58. Some may have been present who did not officially register.

Countries represented were Switzerland, Liberia, Austria, Ghana, Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, Lybia, Yugoslavia, England, Israel, Canada, Scotland, France, Wales, India, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Venezuela, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Poland, Malaysia.

Singapore, West Germany, East Germany, New Zealand, Burundi, Jordan, Australia, Jamaica, Portugal, Italy, Ethiopia, East Africa, Trinidad, Lebanon, Thailand, Korea, Philippines, Denmark, China (Taiwan), Egypt, Hong Kong, South Vietnam, Ceylon, Indonesia, Hungary, Japan, Congo, Finland, and the United States.

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Student, Missionary Couple
Killed In Headon Collission

8/2/68

PADUCAH, Ky. (BP)--A headon two-car collision about eight miles outside Paducah, July 31, took the lives of a missionary couple and a student summer missionary for Southern Baptists in this area.

The victims were Mr. and Mrs. William Joiner of Rosieclare, Ill. and Cherrie Joy Bledsoe, 21-year-old summer missionary from San Antonio, Tex.

Unofficial reports indicated that the collision occurred about 11 p.m. on Illinois Route 145 during a heavy rainstorm. The driver of the other car reportedly suffered a broken leg.

The missionaries were returning from a prayer service at First Baptist Church in Sharpe where Joiner recently had accepted the pastorate, effective Aug. 10. He had been pastor of First Baptist Church in Rosieclare and missionary of the Antioch Baptist Association in southern Illinois.

Miss Bledsoe had been appointed for the summer to assist in the area Baptist work by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta, Ga.

Funeral for the Joiners was held Aug. 3 at Eastside Baptist Church in Paducah with burial in Mount Kenton Cemetery.

Mr. Joiner was a native of Princeton and Mrs. Joiner, the former Alma Christine Pope, was born in Livingston County, Ky.

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They were survived by a son, William Joseph Joiner Jr. of Rosieclare.

A native of San Antonio, Miss Bledsoe was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. B. B. Bledsoe. She also is survived by a sister, Mrs. Donald Week of Kansas City, Mo.

She had attended San Antonio College where she was secretary to the director of the Baptist Student Union and of the BSU Executive Council. She had planned to transfer to North Texas University in Denton to continue her studies in library science.

She was a member of Central Baptist Church in San Antonio where the funeral was held Aug. 3. Burial was in Murray Memorial Cemetery in Carbon, Tex.

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Southwestern, Dallas College
Win American College Awards

8/2/68

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (BP)--Two Texas schools were named winners here in national honors competition sponsored by the American College Public Relations Association.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, won a certificate of special merit for its case study of "Sixty and Ten" celebration and a special citation for its annual "Decade Report."

Dallas Baptist College also received a special citation for its annual catalogue.

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Education, Godliness Are Compatible
Landes Tells Leadership Conference

8/2/68

RIDGECREST (BP)--"Education and godliness are not incompatible," James H. Landes, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Richardson, Tex., told nearly 3,000 Sunday School leaders at Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly.

Speaking at the close of the second Sunday School Leadership Conference, Landes said "All truth comes from God. There is no real truth that will contradict God. We must act in faith; not react in fear if we are to speak to this day and generation."

"It is vastly important that we minister to the underprivileged, but it is equally as important, if not more important, for us to have intellectually competent witnesses on the university campus," the former Hardin-Simmons University president said.

Following the theme, "Christ the Only Hope," Landes emphasized that God is not dead.

"Probably we have been looking for him in the wrong places. The corpses of the many traditional Gods lying around us were not the real God. The real God has risen and gone before us."

"There are some who seem to feel that the scriptures deal with nothing but man's salvation after death," Landes said. "While much of an assuring nature is said about life after death in the Bible, there is also much about feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and helping the downcast and outcast."

"As Christian leaders, we must proclaim to individuals and to groups all of the spiritual principles which we gain by prayerful, careful and responsible Bible study," he said.

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Seminary Student, Haslam,
Joins Sunday School Board

8/2/68

NASHVILLE (BP)--Larry Haslam, a native of Piedmont, Ala., has joined the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention as a consultant in the church recreation department.

Haslam, holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in religious education from Samford University, Birmingham. He will receive a Master of Divinity degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Jan., 1969.

As recreation consultant, Haslam will specialize in camping. His work will involve writing for publication, directing clinics, and consulting on campsite selection and development.

Haslam was previously employed by the Kentucky Baptist Convention as assistant manager of the Cedarmore Baptist Assembly. He has served as interim pastor for five Kentucky churches.

Mrs. Haslam is the former Malissa Morgan. They have two daughters, Miranda Joy, age 3, and Malissa Hope, age 1.

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