



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

---FEATURES

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Latin Americans Respond
To Baptist Broadcasting

by June Carter

CARACAS, Venezuela (BP)--From the tiny Dutch island of Bonaire, off the coast of Venezuela, the powerful voice of Trans World Radio broadcasts in Spanish the good news of God's love for man.

In response, from all over the Americas come 200 to 300 letters each month to the offices of Southern Baptist missionary George S. Lozuk here.

Lozuk's mail includes responses from Cuba, bearing the postmark of Guantanamo, the town across the fence from the U.S. Naval Base. "The envelopes are often home-made," he said, "and the letters written on thin, crude paper or on the back of scraps of used graph paper."

For months the sermons, Bibles and correspondence courses offered on the programs were mailed to the Cuban listeners who wrote for them. "Then, checking through our files one day," Lozuk says, "we realized we had received no letter of thanks for material received, and not one Cuban had returned the first lesson of the Bible course included in each of our packages. The truth dawned: Our literature was not getting through."

A correspondent from Havana wrote: "I have written several letters, but the material does not reach me. If you could get it into my hands, I wish you would include some tracts. I am anxious to receive your material because I want to learn more about religion before I become too old."

Mrs. Lozuk, who personally answers many of the letters, said, "we are still amazed at the events that led to this opportunity to share the gospel with persons all over the Americas."

George and Veda Lozuk had spent two terms in Venezuela when the Venezuelan Baptist mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries) asked him to open this type of ministry.

While Baptist work had not even made an imprint in many sections of Venezuela, nearly everyone had a radio, and even the shacks which clung to the mountainside often had TV antennas.

Lozuk spent a furlough year studying radio and television in the United States. Once back in Venezuela, before his wife had unpacked the suitcases, he began nailing bedspreads, curtains and throw rugs on the walls of the room that was to serve as his recording studio for two years. Later he improved the acoustics by gluing cardboard egg dividers to the walls and ceiling.

Because the work was experimental, Lozuk's equipment was minimal. Most of the recording took place on Wednesday nights. Following prayer meeting at Central Baptist Church here, the pastor, singers and announcers would troop to the studio. The Luzuks' piano was pushed in for the recording session, and often the young singers would bring flutes and cuatros, instruments similar to ukeleles.

Although these sessions often continued past midnight, they were ideal because the Lozuk children would be asleep and the neighborhood quiet. Daytime sessions proved frustrating. A child slamming a door, a dog barking or the approach of an ice cream vendor meant re-recording.

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Eventually, the Venezuelan Baptist radio and TV committee purchased an old house that was easily accessible from all parts of the city by public transportation. The second floor was remodeled to include a recording studio, control room and office. This time Lozuk was able to nail up cork soundproofing instead of egg dividers.

A piano loaned by a furloughing missionary couple completed the Venezuelan Baptist Recording Studio. Narrators and musicians declared that they suddenly felt like professionals in the new quarters.

Lozuk had been producing a weekly program, "Christ the Only Hope," for the evangelism committee of the Crusade of the Americas.

With the crusade in its final phases, it appeared that the program would have to go off the air. But since it had bought considerable response by mail, the crusade committee made funds available for another four months of broadcasting.

Just as these funds were running out the program was saved again, this time by an organization of laymen which had grown out of the crusade. The Pan American Union of Baptist Men provided funds to keep the program on the air another year and to change the broadcasting schedule from a predawn hour once a week to a prime time slot on Tuesday and Thursday nights.

About this time, the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission asked the Lozuks to handle the correspondence for a Spanish-language program it was producing, also to be broadcast by Trans World Radio in Bonaire. At Lozuk's suggestion their program was rescheduled to Wednesday evening, giving Baptists a three-night block at the same hour.

A month later Lozuk found himself with 250 letters from all over Latin America; he had no secretary and no money in the budget to hire one, so Mrs. Lozuk took the job.

Incoming mail makes their office what one friend called "A stamp collector's paradise." At the same time, they buy a lot of stamps to mail the materials their listeners ask for. Sermons, Bibles, tracts and study courses are airmailed to all parts of the Americas, with the Pan American Union of Baptist Men paying for literature and mailing.

When the mail piles up, the Lozuk teen-agers pitch in. Paul addresses envelopes while Mark and Ann stamp them with the return address, "Printed Matter," and "Air Mail." Sometimes seven-year-old Larry sticks on the postage stamps.

Now and then several large boxes full of mail have gone out at one time, and Paul and Mark, in charge of mailing, have returned home grumbling, "They hate us at the Post Office."

More than 2,000 incoming letters were handled within the first seven months that the programs were on prime time, says Mrs. Lozuk. "Many letters describe the unequalled joy of a person who has, for the first time, understood that he can be a child of God through Jesus Christ. Some ask doctrinal questions. Others have complicated personal problems and are looking for someone to counsel with them."

Two members of Central Baptist Church answer those that require counseling.

Some persons write from remote areas telling the Lozuks, "your program is my church," or telling of gathering neighbors to listen to the program or use the literature.

Mrs. Lozuk asked: "If the Lord can use the efforts of newcomers...in this task of making the gospel known by radio, might he not do revolutionary things in Southern Baptist mission work in Baptists were to take a deep look at the possibilities and really plan and organize to take advantage of them?...There is a vast audience of people... waiting."

Georgia Baptists To Build Assembly on College Property

TOCCOA, Ga. (BP)--The Georgia Baptist Convention Executive Committee meeting here voted to develop a Baptist assembly on the present campus of Norman College, a Baptist junior college that is closing June 6, and to buy 25 acres of land on the Atlanta Baptist College site as the future location of the convention's administrative center.

Only a week before the action was taken, the Norman College trustees had voted to close the 70-year-old junior college and to request the convention to assume its assets and liabilities and convert the campus into an assembly ground.

The proposed new assembly would primarily serve Baptists in south Georgia. The convention's Executive Committee met for sessions at the Toccoa Baptist Assembly in the northeast corner of Georgia.

In a related action, the Executive Committee elected Garnie A. Brand, vice president and public relations director at Norman College, to be the director of the proposed new assembly. Brand is a former church training secretary for the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Enrollment at Norman College currently is about 170 students, and President Thomas Renfroe said they could foresee only 120 students for September, not enough to insure financial stability.

Total assets of the school are about \$1.5 million, compared to liabilities of \$1.2 million, most of which is debt on two new dormitories.

In separate and unrelated action, the convention's Executive Committee voted to buy 25 acres of land from Atlanta Baptist College, and authorized its administrative committee to draft preliminary plans for a Baptist Administration Center on the property.

Searcy S. Garrison, executive secretary-treasurer of the convention, told the committee that several projects are possibilities for the Atlanta site, such as a home for the aged, a continuing education center and a headquarters building for the state convention.

Purchase of the 25 acres, however, has been temporarily delayed because of a law suit filed by Atlanta Baptist College students charging the president and trustees with neglect of duty and malfeasance. The suit requests a court order freezing all assets.

The suit was scheduled to be heard in Dekalb County Superior Court on March 23, but was delayed indefinitely after attorneys for the students and college officials conferred.

Last November, the Georgia Baptist Convention authorized its Executive Committee to accept title to all Atlanta Baptist College property after college officials approached the convention with the possibility of taking over the school and property. Title is presently held by the Atlanta Baptist Association.

In February, however, the Executive Committee of the Atlanta Association refused to call a special session of the association to consider giving the college to the state convention, and instructed the school to continue operation.

A fund campaign is now underway seeking to under write operations of the three-year-old Atlanta school beyond June 1. President Monroe Swilley had earlier said it would be impossible to continue operations beyond June without selling more of the high-value property, or raising more funds.

In another action, the Executive Committee approved a campaign to set a goal of increasing all denominational enterprises by 15 per cent by November of 1972 when the convention celebrates its 150th anniversary. Included would be 15 per cent increases in baptisms, church memberships, church giving, church organization enrollment, etc.



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Cutlines

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NEW ALASKA BAPTIST BUILDING: Construction on this new two-story office building for the Alaska Baptist Convention will begin May 1 following the Alaska "break-up" or ice thaw. The proposed new building combines features of an Alaskan Indian meeting house with those of an Alpine lodge. Architect Roland H. Lane, a 21 year-old resident of Alaska, designed the building. The Alaska Baptist Building will be located six miles south of downtown Anchorage just off the new Seward Fr away. Estimated cost will be \$150,000. (BP) Photo