



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Billy Keith, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-1631
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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**Baptist Astronaut Tells Church
He Felt Close To God On Moon**

HOUSTON (BP)--The first Baptist astronaut to walk on the moon returned to worship at Nassau Bay Baptist Church here, saying that he felt the presence of God more closely while on the moon than at any other time in his life.

Astronaut James B. Irwin told members of the church about his experiences on the moon and expressed thanks for their prayers during the perilous mission.

Irwin presented to the church an enlarged prayer covenant, framed along with a copy of a banner reading, "Things Happen at Nassau Bay Baptist Church," which was a duplicate of the banner he had left on the surface of the moon.

To Irwin, however, the prayer covenant was more than just a souvenir to be stuffed in a corner of his flight bag and brought back as a church trophy. It symbolized a sacred promise entered into by the congregation to sustain Irwin and his flight companions--James Scott and Al Worden--with prayer.

Irwin also took to the moon a small Christian flag from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, signed by its executive secretary, Baker James Cauthan. Irwin in effect became the first Baptist foreign missionary to the moon.

In presenting a copy of the covenant to the church, Irwin both expressed thanks for their prayers and "most of all" he said, "we take time to thank God, who enabled us to leave the earth and explore a part of his marvelous heavens."

"We think our mission was a tremendous success," he told the two morning congregations, "and the success of that mission is directly related to your prayers for our safety and success."

Irwin, a quiet, thoughtful man, believes deeply in God's will for his life and in what he is doing.

In what most human beings would consider an alien and ominous environment, Irwin felt only that he was where he should be, where God wanted him to be.

And as a Christian, he saw the beauty of the moon as further evidence of God's creation.

"You are almost struck dumb sometime by the beauty you see, not only on the moon, but around the moon, the view back to earth and the various lighting conditions," he said.

It was this beauty of God's creation, and his trust in God during the trip to the moon, which prompted Irwin to quote his favorite Psalm to an international television audience as he gazed at the beauty of the mountains 250,000 miles from his home planet on earth.

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.

"The Lord is thy keeper; the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand."

And on Irwin's cue, television news commentator Walter Cronkite picked up a copy of the Bible and read the entire Psalm 121.

On his return to the church where he is a member, Irwin told the congregation that he felt God's guidance while on the moon.

Several days later, when Atlanta dentist Roy Wicker arrived in Candelaria, Dr. Wicker removed three bullets after two friends had shot each other in a drunken gunfight. One of the wounded men later announced his intention to commit his life to Christ.

Minor surgery was performed frequently by the doctors in the Lempira villages and by Hurst who is licensed by the Honduran government to do some medical work. They removed numerous cysts and Dr. Tate removed a cancerous growth on one man's head.

With only primitive facilities and the hopeless condition of many Hondurans' teeth, the dentists were limited to doing extractions. Dr. Wicker recorded a total of 1,634 teeth pulled in the 16 days he served in Gualcince and Candelaria.

The most common maladies treated by the "Operation Touch" teams were worms, dysentery and prenatal ailments. As the doctors would prescribe medicines, the youths would measure and package the dosages.

The youths also registered each patient and spent a major portion of their time administering inoculations for typhoid, tetanus and smallpox. In one day, the youths at El Porvenir gave a total of 832 typhoid and tetanus vaccinations.

The medicines, medical equipment and vaccine for "Operation Touch" were donated by a number of Georgia pharmaceutical firms. With the contribution of a cargo plane to transport the medical supplies to Honduras, total donations for the project exceeded \$60,000.

Another \$5,000 was budgeted by Northside Drive church to pay for other supplies and part of the transportation costs of team members. The participants themselves contributed \$150 each for their plane fare.

Beside the basic medical and dental services, team members sought to express the love of Christ to the villagers through educational, recreational and evangelistic means.

In the village schools, the youth taught classes in English, agriculture, sewing and hygiene. They gave out yards of material and hundreds of toothbrushes and Bible portions.

Most of the groups brought along Frisbees, and would attract scores of participants whenever they began a game of catch. Several girls brought guitars and taught English songs and learned Spanish ones.

In each of the five villages in the state of Lempira, evangelistic services were conducted each night by the missionaries.

In Gualcince, high in the mountains, 10 persons came forward for baptism in the first week of nightly services. After baptism, they formed a nucleus for a church in an area where evangelical missionaries had been stoned as recently as three years ago.

Except for El Porvenir where a Baptist church and clinic have been established, the teams stayed in homes and ate meals provided by the villagers.

In the village of San Antonio, most primitive of the Honduran pueblos where the team set up clinics, the group was provided with two cots, two hammocks, and one bed--representing virtually every piece of bedding in the entire village.

Three of the villages had no electricity at all, and the others have electricity only for three hours nightly. Plumbing was available in only three of the pueblos and there was no hot water.

Just getting there was sometimes a problem. There were no roads into the five Lempira villages and those groups had to be flown as close as possible, traveling the rest of the way on mules.

The 90-mile trip to the five Lempira villages would take three days overland from Tegucigalpa, the Honduras capital. A road does exist from Tegucigalpa to El Porvenir, but it requires six hours of rough riding to make the 72-mile bus trip.

"Operation Touch" concluded with a dinner in Tegucigalpa given for the team members by the Honduran Mission of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Team members were unanimous in their desire to return for more medical mission work if the opportunity were to arise again.

"We called this project 'Operation Touch,'" one youth commented, "but I don't think any of us realized how much we'd be touched ourselves."

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EDITOR'S NOTE: George Sheridan, associate editor of the Christian Index in Georgia, participated in "Operation Touch" as both reporter and team member.

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BP PHOTO mailed to Baptist State Papers

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Theological Schools Association
Organized for Hispanic America

8/25/71

CALI, Colombia (BP)--Thirty missionaries and national representatives of Baptist Bible schools and theological seminaries in 12 Latin American countries, meeting here organized an Association of Baptist Theological Institutions in Hispanic America.

The association will seek, among other things, to coordinate efforts of such institutions to avoid duplication of textbooks and teaching materials. It also will develop bases for transference of credits and for accreditation of the institutions.

The conference, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, "the most significant meeting of the theological educators in the history of mission work in Latin America," according to Missionary James E. Giles of Cali.

Giles, professor at the International Baptist Theological Seminary here, coordinated the conference and was elected executive secretary of the new association. He is from Clovis, N.M.

Missionary Pat H. Carter of Morrow, La., Baptist representative to Mexico, was elected president and Dr. Daniel Tinajo, psychiatrist, pastor and professor in Buenos Aires, Argentina, was elected vice president.

During the five-day conference, the group explored the institutions' relationships with Baptists as a denomination and with other denominations. It also recognized the need for emphasizing local resources in support, administration and teaching.

Other subjects discussed included curricula, levels of study and transference of credits, extension programs, qualifications of and support of theological students, development of national professors and the purposes of theological education.

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BP PHOTO to be mailed to Baptist State Paper Editors.

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Crane Named Southwestern
Guest Missions Professor

8/25/71

FORT WORTH (BP)--James D. Crane, Southern Baptist missionary to Guadalajara, Mexico, has been named 1971-72 guest professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

A graduate of the University of Texas, Austin and Southwestern Seminary, Crane has also been president of Mexican Baptist Theological Seminary and an evangelistic worker in southern and western Mexico.

He was appointed a missionary to Mexico in 1945, previously working among Mexican-Americans for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He was pastor of First Mexican Baptist Church, Fort Worth.

Earlier this year, the seminary had announced the appointment of Marion Fray, missionary to Gwelo, Rhodesia, as guest professor of missions, but an extended illness prevented Fray from accepting the appointment, seminary officials said.

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San Blas Christian Repeats Cycle Started 35 Years Ago

MIAMI (BP)--When he was 11-years-old, Claudio Iglesias was brought to the United States from the San Blas Islands near Panama by Christian missionaries. He knew no one and did not speak English or Spanish.

This summer, Iglesias, now a Baptist minister and missionary working in New Mexico, returned to Miami with the hopes of repeating a cycle started 35 years ago.

Iglesias, whose name in Spanish literally means "church," came to Miami to meet another 11-year-old Cuna boy being flown in from San Blas Islands. Like Iglesias 35 years ago, the boy knows no one in the United States and speaks no English or Spanish.

Iglesias and his wife have agreed to take the boy into their family for a year, and they hope the boy will follow the pattern of his host family.

Iglesias' brother, Adonirum Judson Iglesias (name for the first Baptist missionary to India), was the first Cuna Indian converted to protestant christianity by an American woman who was the first evangelical missionary to reach the San Blas Islands in 1909.

After becoming a Christian, Adonirum Judson Iglesias came to the United States to get an education at Nyack College in New York. He later returned to the San Blas Islands and established Christian schools there.

He and his wife adopted an illegitimate boy who had somehow escaped the usual death for illegitimacy by being buried alive; but the boy suffered the taunts of members of the Cuna trib .

When a missionary friend offered to arrange for the five-year-old to be taken to the United States, Adonirum jumped at the chance, but asked that young Claudio go along as a companion.

That is how Claudio Iglesias wound up at the Murrow Orphan Home in Muskogee, Okla., operated by American Baptists. A Southern Baptist church nearby sent a bus to bring the children to church each Sunday and at the age of 14, Claudio accepted Christ under the preaching of W. A. Criswell, who was then pastor of First Baptist Church of Muskogee.

Iglesias, like his brother, went to Nyack College. Then he went back to Oklahoma University to regain his own Cuna language as well as Spanish. He met and married a teacher who had served with the Wycliffe Translators in Mexico.

They went back to the San Blas Islands and worked with his people until 1964 when he returned to the United States, first as a chaplain at an Indian school in Oklahoma, and later as pastor of an Indian congregation in Gallup, N.M.

When Iglesias returned this summer to Miami to pick up the 11-year-old Cuna boy to live in his home, he was joined by Dr. Daniel Gruver, a Southern Baptist medical missionary to the San Blas Islands. Both spoke at the First Baptist Church of Miami about baptist missions work in the San Blas Islands.

Iglesias' 19-year-old daughter, Marina, had gone this summer to the islands to work with Dr. Gruver.

All of the family hopes that the 11-year-old boy will follow in the steps of the two Iglesias brothers, as well as Iglesias' daughter.