



BAPTIST PRESS
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September 1, 1972

**James Irwin To Travel Widely
On Round of Baptist Meetings**

RICHMOND (BP)--Apollo 15 Astronaut James Irwin has accepted a far-ranging itinerary of overseas appearances sponsored by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board here.

Col. Irwin has retired from both the Air Force and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and begun a full-time program of Christian witnessing in which his personal testimony is a central element.

As an emissary of the Foreign Mission Board, he will travel with Joseph B. Underwood, the Board's consultant in evangelism and church development, in several Asian and Pacific countries this fall.

Underwood, who announced Irwin's acceptance of the Board-sponsored appearances, will be meeting with Baptists overseas in connection with the World Mission of Reconciliation Through Jesus Christ (WMRJC).

Underwood is General Chairman of the coordinating committee for the WMRJC, a five-year project of the Baptist World Alliance.

From Oct. 13 to Nov. 14 he and Irwin will be meeting with WMRJC planning groups, and Irwin will be speaking in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand.

Irwin will participate in press conferences, interviews with heads of state, conferences with university teachers and students, television interviews, and dinners sponsored by Christian businessmen who will be hosting non-Christian associates.

In Korea, Irwin is to speak to thousands of military personnel. In every country we will give dignitaries souvenir American flags taken to the moon and signed by himself and the two other Apollo Astronauts. He may also give Bibles and New Testaments.

Irwin is scheduled to speak in Lebanon, Jordan and Israel Dec. 10-31, and he hopes to broadcast an appeal for world peace on Christmas Day from the Hall of Nations in Tel Aviv.

He will give his testimony during evangelistic rallies in Recife, Brazil. Two rallies, at which Underwood will be preaching, are slated for the city coliseum and stadium Jan. 27 and 28.

Public appearances and meetings with Baptist leaders are scheduled Feb. 26 through March 10 in Senegal, Liberia, the Ivory Coast and Nigeria.

Tentative plans call for Irwin to speak in other parts of South America and Africa next fall.

High Flight, Inc., Irwin's independent organization for Christian ministries, will pay the expenses of his wife and daughter and of High Flight's executive director, William H. Rittenhouse, and his wife when they accompany Irwin on Foreign Mission Board-sponsored trips.

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World Mission Project Leader
Starts New Planning Sessions

9/1/72

RICHMOND (BP)--Joseph B. Underwood, general chairman of the coordinating committee for the Baptist-sponsored World Mission of Reconciliation Through Jesus Christ (WMRJC), has begun a new series of meetings with participants in Europe.

Underwood said he would be speaking to Baptist groups in Portugal, Spain, France, Yugoslavia, England, and possibly Scotland to inform and motivate them as participants in the five-year project of the Baptist World Alliance.

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Named to head promotion of WMRJC in August, 1971, Underwood travels extensively in this role and in his regular job as consultant in evangelism and church development for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, headquartered here.

As of July 25, 1972, 94 Baptist bodies in 83 countries had voted to participate in the special evangelistic mission. The project was proposed in 1970 during the 12th Baptist World Congress in Tokyo.

The two-fold objective of the mission is to lead people to be reconciled with God and with each other.

In the meetings in Europe, Underwood will exchange information about the mission and discuss ways churches can become practically involved in it.

He said the suggested WMRJC emphasis for 1973 is spiritual preparation and training for reconciliation, while other emphases, to begin in 1973 and continue through 1975, call for various cooperative endeavors and the training of laity for witnessing.

The latter period will also stress ministries of reconciliation between individuals and various groups, classes, nationalities and races.

Following his visits with Baptists in Europe, Underwood has scheduled similar meetings in nine Asian and Pacific countries, to be accompanied by former Astronaut James Irwin.

These meetings and public appearances are slated for Oct. 13 to Nov. 14 in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Vietnam, Philippines, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand.

Then Underwood will continue alone to other conferences in Malaysia, Thailand and Burma, where he will meet with more than 300 Baptist leaders for planning sessions. He expects to go on to Cairo for a brief meeting with Egyptian Baptists.

Underwood said Baptists in Nigeria are planning evangelistic campaigns in 18 cities in 1973 and 1974 in connection with WMRJC.

Nigerian Baptist churches are to have a week of special training in witnessing to be led by laymen from the United States. Later, there will be a series of week-long, city-wide evangelistic campaigns in each of the 18 cities.

Then there will be a week of simultaneous campaigns in all participating Baptist churches in Nigeria. Preachers, musicians and laymen from Africa, Brazil and the U. S. will lead these campaigns, Underwood said.



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