



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 Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-5461
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

July 20, 1973

World Baptists Set Largest
Relief Goal in BWA History

EINSIEDELN, Switzerland (BP)--The Baptist World Alliance's executive committee, meeting here, adopted the largest relief goal in its history and reported the largest attendance ever at its annual gathering.

Chester J. Jump, chairman of the BWA relief committee, said the 1974 goal of \$423,100 the executive committee approved will go for assistance in earthquake-stricken Nicaragua, war-ravaged Southeast Asia and for a series of developmental projects on three continents.

Week-long meetings of BWA executive committee and study commissions were attended by 282 persons from 32 countries.

Several BWA satellite groups, including the steering committee of the World Mission of Reconciliation Through Jesus Christ, also met.

Assistance will be directed also to the drought area of northern Africa, the civil war plagued lands of Rwanda and Burundi and a famine area of India.

All relief funds come from voluntary contributions by individuals, churches and the 92 conventions and unions in 73 countries affiliated with the Alliance. Funds are separate from the BWA operating budget.

Disbursements in 1972 exceeded contributions for the same period, and money from reserve funds had to be used to meet emergency needs.

Jump said \$303,905 was disbursed for relief, rehabilitation and developmental projects in 1972, and that \$112,030 has been expended during the first five months of 1973 out of a relief budget of \$319,600.

Baptist conventions in Bangladesh and Haiti, two of the largest recipients of relief funds in recent years, are among the 1973 contributors, both giving to an appeal for rehabilitation of earthquake victims in Nicaragua.

Developmental projects are prominent in the listing of goals for 1974. Carl W. Tiller, relief coordinator on the BWA staff, said the objective is "to assist in developing human resources and natural resources of needy peoples and to increase their longevity, productivity and economic self sufficiency."

A goal of \$180,000 is listed for rebuilding a Baptist hospital at Managua, Nicaragua.

An unusual project on the lengthy list is for the planting of coconut plantations in India.

In the same drought-plagued villages where Baptists dug wells and built concrete block houses two years ago, the coconut trees are being planted in lots of 10.

One of each 10 trees will be designated "God's tree" and its income used for the church, while fruit from the other nine will feed hungry families. Mature trees are said to bear a monthly harvest over a period of 80 years.

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BWA Group Hears Reports of
Mass Conversions; Lay Renewal

7/20/73

EINSIEDELN, Switzerland (BP)--Baptists meeting here heard a subtle sermon from USSR Baptists and received reports of mass conversions to Christianity and lay renewal around the world.

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Alexei Bichkov of Moscow drew applause from representatives of 20 countries during a meeting of the central committee of the World Mission of Reconciliation Through Jesus Christ, a program of the Baptist World Alliance.

The reconciliation group was one of several BWA satellite groups which met in conjunction with the seven-day annual meeting of the BWA executive committee and study commissions.

Bichkov demonstrated how his Baptist body has adapted the official logo of the world reconciliation program, lettering the slogan in Russian and replacing the dates, 1973-75, with the scripture reference, 2 Corinthians 5:19.

"We left off the dates," said Bichkov, general secretary of the Russian Baptist body, "because the people in my country cannot understand how we can limit our responsibilities of reconciliation to three years.

"It is a continuous obligation that must never end."

The worldwide reconciliation emphasis was adopted by the Baptist World Congress in Tokyo in 1970 and set to run, 1973-75.

Bichkov's report was one of the many telling of the program's adoption and adaptation on all continents of the world.

Each of the 98 cooperating Baptist bodies is encouraged to follow the reconciliation concept in its own way, with a dual emphasis on reconciliation of man with God and of man with man.

A vibrant story of lay activity--the work of unordained persons--ran through the chain of reports.

A telegram from the Telegu churches in South India told of 1,084 baptisms in a single day on July 3, following 13,095 baptisms in June in a lay-sponsored evangelism thrust.

J. T. Ayorinde of Nigeria said 1,600 conversions had been recorded in the first of 15 regional evangelistic crusades planned for his country.

Ayorinde told of a Nigerian tribal king who refused an invitation to come hear a pastor-evangelist.

"I do not want to hear a professional," he said, "but I will come to hear a layman."

A layman was scheduled the following night, and the king came and was converted.

The king asked for the lay preacher's Bible and inscribed on its flyleaf, "I am a new king in Jesus Christ because of you."

Daniel Cheung, a pastor in Hong Kong, who traveled through India on his way to the Switzerland meetings, said he attended classes the Indian Baptists have organized for lay training in evangelism.

Gunter Wieske of Norway told of a "continuous evangelism" program already adopted in seven European countries, in which lay church people are led through a four part training program.

One part, entitled "one step forward," encourages each participant to perform a new Christian deed each day in keeping with admonitions of the Biblical sermon on the mount.

The lay participation is encouraged as part of the world wide programs by the BWA's men's, women's, and youth departments.

Jose Reis Pereira of Brazil said the Brazilian Baptist Convention is beginning a 10 year campaign intended to more than double its churches' current 460,000 membership.

Mrs. Fannie Thompson of Tucson, Ariz., told a story of practical reconciliation.

She organized a mass rally of Baptists from her own black church and many other churches and then guided the friendships made there into visits in the homes.

"Baptists in Tucson who had never associated before are now working together for God," she said.

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International Blend
Flavors BMA Meet

7/20/73

EINSIEDELN, Switzerland (BP)--An international blend of Baptists met here on a Sunday morning for a worship service in an old schoolhouse almost within the shadow of a thousand-year-old Catholic monastery which has made Einsiedeln one of Europe's best known pilgrimage sites.

Several thousand Catholic worshippers crowded the abbey church at the same time the Baptists were meeting.

The Baptists, 282 leaders from 32 countries, were in Einsiedeln for the week-long annual sessions of the Baptist World Alliance executive committee and study commissions.

In the Baptist service that Sunday, a Hungarian pastor prayed. A Nigerian read scripture. A Russian male trio and an American soloist performed. The congregation sang in English, French and German, with their voices blending to favorite hymns of their faith. A Swiss served as presiding officer. An Australian preached the sermon.

Most guests did not know until their arrival here the significance in religious history of Einsiedeln, a town of 8,000 population selected for the meeting because of the availability of economical hotels and its proximity to Zurich, where the European Baptist Federation Congress would meet immediately thereafter.

Benedictines established a monastery here in 948 to honor a German monk who settled in the forest of these mountains in 835 and was martyred in 861.

The abbey they built is best known for its "Black Madonna," a linden wood carving which has been blackened through the years by the smoke of candles and oil lamps.

Ulrich Zwingli was pastor here, 1516-18, before moving to Zurich where he broke with the Catholic Church about 1523 and helped lead the Reformation.

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Burress Heads Baptist
Efforts in Minn. and Wisc.

7/20/73

MADISON, Wisc. (BP)--Frank B. Burress, superintendent of missions for Southern Baptist work in Wisconsin for the past 16 years, has been named coordinator of missions programs for Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Burress was appointed by the State Missions Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, which coordinates Baptist work in the two states with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

He will administrate the department-level post under the Texas Baptist missions division. He had previously served under the Texas Baptist church extension section as missions superintendent in Wisconsin.

The first administrator of Baptist work in the two states to live on the field, Burress will maintain an office in Madison, Wisc.

Burress, who grew up in Texas, was graduated from Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex. He has held one pastorate in Washington, D. C. and six in Texas.

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