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**Catholics, Communists  
Out to Win Followers**

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By C.B. Hastings

ROME (BP)--Who is evangelizing whom? Here in Rome 225 bishops of the Roman Catholic Church, representing 104 countries around the world, are holed up in the ultra-modern Papal Audience Hall debating for a month "evangelization in the nations."

A bare mile across the Tiber the Italian Communist Party is throwing a three-day festival of youth in the Piazza Navona, one of Rome's most popular places for happenings of every sort.

At the Synod of Bishops no observers are allowed into the debates. Reporters are given condensed summaries of each of the dozen or so "interventions" of the two-a-day sessions. At the Communist festival, every modern medium is used to bring the Communist gospel to the many-tongued crowds.

The Communists are providing the most attractive singing groups, ping-pong tournaments, art exhibits, book stalls, judo demonstrations, free movies, and everywhere posters are pushing their platforms of political reform.

Mixed into the festival scene is an occasional short speech, or panel discussion of contemporary issues, and especially, a time for small groups, where "citizens ask" and attractive, smiling "Communists reply."

The latest Italian government has just resigned amid impending bankruptcy. The Communists see a fertile field of opportunity.

These contrasts in this "eternal city" are almost overwhelming. A horse and buggy bounce smug tourists over cobbled streets as they imagine themselves in old Rome. Flats like water-bugs whirl through the streets, horns screaming. Three men in a craft shop yell at each other while their wise old hound sleeps knowingly a few feet away.

You may walk into the church of Santa Maria della Vittoria, featuring Bernini's masterpiece, "St. Theresa in Ecstasy," and lose yourself amid the admirers.

Or you may stroll out of the bustling shops along the Via Veneto into one of the most bizarre experiences of Rome--the crypts under the Church of the Immaculate Conception.

The Capuchin monks had to dig up the cemetery of their predecessors to make room for the enlarged church. Not wanting to waste their good brothers' bones and skulls, they used them to decorate a series of seven crypts under the church. Their fine baroque skill seems to laugh at the feverish commercialism on the street above.

With 400 churches and only 160 parishes Rome might warn us not to overbuild. The dedication: Ad maiorem gloriam Dei, "To the greater pride of man."

Bibles in modern Italian are stacked five feet high in the bookstore closest to St. Peter's Basilica. In St. James of the Spaniards Church, just off the Piazza Navona, while 18 older women chant their evening prayers, an open Bible on a prayer stool goes unattended.

Meanwhile in the Piazza outside, the Communists continue to attract more children and youth.

Meanwhile, also, the Synod is listening in its first week to an even 100 Catholic bishops reflecting on the contrasts of hope and despair of their diverse peoples. In 10-minute speeches they are developing most of the same themes sounded at the opening sessions by the "Panorama" address and the "relators" of the five continents.

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Like all reporters, I respond to certain wave-lengths and am blind to others. But an evangelical cannot but be impressed with the frequent mention of the rise and spread of small religious groups, sometimes within, sometimes alongside existing church structures. This is especially true in the Third World.

In El Salvador, Bishop Damas said these widespread groups "are truly beneficial and serve as a standard of vitality for Christians." Usually these groups spring up spontaneously and are not afraid to include non-Catholics.

Even Patriarch Hayck, of the Syrians in Antioch, spoke of groups that meet for prayer, meditation and reading of the Bible. He called it "a sign of the acting of the Holy Spirit." Some of these go on to develop small communities within the parish where people can build a genuine fellowship and learn to be supportive of each other.

Bishop Buitrago, of Colombia, reported that these "represented an experience of signal value for their intense testimony of faith, hope, charity and prayer."

However, his Venezuelan neighbor complained that such groups manifested "prophetic opposition to authority...which renders them inoperative for evangelization."

The honesty of some of the bishops is noteworthy. Many questioned whether the modern bishop, overburdened with administration and plagued with priest shortages, could really know his people personally and be a pastor to them.

Others boldly questioned whether the Curia in Rome could ever break out of their mind-set. "We often ask," said Cardinal Darmujjuwano of Indonesia, "if the 'Roman Centre' is capable of understanding, evaluating and making the final decisions on our concrete problems correctly."

He further questioned whether it is necessary for priests in the Orient "to apply all the norms followed in the West."

It must come as a surprise to Pope Paul and the Curia that the 1971 Synod seems not to have said the last word on the issue of ordaining married men. The majority of African bishops, even some from South America, have reopened the matter in the light of the desperate shortage of priests.

Some bishops have begun to appoint an outstanding lay leader, married or single, to serve as a kind of unordained "president of the assembly" in the absence of any available priest.

Bishop Rojas, of the Dominican Republic, prepares these through a 280-hour course of training. He commented that "the institution of 'president of the assembly' has had results which are far higher than those of the diaconate of married persons." He is a bare step away from ordaining married men and giving them "full faculties" whether or not Rome approves. No observer, however, expects any change by Pope Paul.

Bishop Quinn, of Oklahoma City, urged the bishops to make their liturgies occasions of joy and spiritual warmth. Only then will young people be attracted back to the Mass, he said.

He spoke of youths' desire to be known and respected as individuals of inherent worth and not as figures to be manipulated. "They yearn for contact with the true ministers of Christ, who clearly reflect the mind and heart of Christ." Another bishop analyzed the youth problem as a crisis, not of faith, but of trust in the Church.

Some of us have learned to be a bit skeptical when religious leaders show humility publicly before their peers away from home. But at least they are going on record, and some people back home may eventually read what they say. Surely no one could argue with the words of Bishop Villalobos of Costa Rica, who held up a high standard: "A bishop should be docile to the Holy Spirit, who understands the needs of his people, who cultivates a deep interior personal life, who believes in collegiality, someone strongly against every form of injustice."

Meanwhile the church bells in Rome ring desperately to call the sleepy to early Mass, while Communists wait until evening when the city comes alive.

Areas of Home Mission  
Concern, Interest Aired

By Toby Druin

ATLANTA (BP)--Everything from a "home console plug-in church" to the problems of support of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering in a "no-cash society" were tossed into the idea hopper here in a brainstorming session at the close of the fall meeting of the directors of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

More than a dozen areas of concern and interest were cited in the idea session that followed a preview of trends predicted for the next 25 years by Orrin Morris, the board's regional coordinator.

Morris said today's high school senior will be about 42 years old in 25 years, working as a middle-manager, about six hours a day and four days a week, in a setting in which over twice as many people will be retiring than will be entering the labor force.

"General population migration will continue toward coastal areas, the major urbanized regions and . . . areas offering a combination of moderate climate, abundant resources, jobs and a variety of leisure time activities," he said. "The need to start new churches will continue to be a challenge."

Cities under 250,000 will be prime targets for growth, he said, and 95 per cent of new housing in big cities will be apartments.

"Tensions in every day existence in the future in race relations, institutional survival, missions support, relief appeals related to famine and overpopulation will be equal or greater than the tensions currently being experienced," he said. "The ministry of reconciliation is the only hope."

Following Morris's presentation, the directors were asked to suggest "bold new steps" for home missions efforts during the final 25 years of the century.

In about 10 minutes the directors suggested more than a dozen areas for consideration, including:

- Cable television and the possibility of linking church members and churches;
- Ministry in apartments and condominiums;
- Home console, plug-in churches to enable members to participate at home;
- Regional centers of the Home Mission Board, instead of one central location;
- The use of small, maximum use, modular buildings;
- A liaison system with labor, black, scientific and radical groups;
- Need for financial planning to look to the day when church properties will be taxed;
- How the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and other offerings will figure into a predicted "no-cash" society;
- The church as a place for refuge;
- Tapping the resources of the aging;

-- A talent pool to make available and keep track of the talents of persons in a mobile society.

--Stewardship of human resources;

--Ways to tap the missionary potential of volunteers such as in the board's Christian Service Corps;

--Research in how Baptists can engage in preventive type ministries to keep things from happening instead of ministries after they have happened.

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Excess Offering Funds Set  
For Evangelism, Missions

10/11/74

ATLANTA (BP)--Responding to convention expressions for increased emphasis on evangelism, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board here ticketed some \$630,000 of the 1975 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for evangelism projects. The board also voted to use all funds received over the offering's \$8.5 million goal for evangelism and missions needs.

Evangelism-oriented matters, including a call to win America for Christ now by Southern Baptist Convention president Jaroy Weber, dominated the agenda of the fall meeting of the board.

But in other actions the directors voted to increase the interest rate on church loans, approved new salary guidelines for staff members and missionaries, appointed 26 missionaries and missionary associates and honored executive director-treasurer Arthur B. Rutledge for 10 years at the board's helm.

They also honored three retiring staff members and accepted the resignation of another, heard plans for Home Mission Board projects in observing the nation's bicentennial and approved themes for a bold mission thrust, 1976-79.

The directors voted to distribute the 1975 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering as follows, if the \$8.5 million goal is met:

--\$5.9 million for missionaries and field ministries;

--\$1.3 million for special projects;

--\$1.3 million for advance in critical areas.

Evangelism projects would receive four per cent (\$240,000) from the \$5.9 million designated for missionaries and field ministries and 30 per cent (\$390,000) of the \$1.3 million for advance in critical areas.

All over the \$8.5 million goal would be used "for urgent unmet field ministries needs in missions and evangelism."

Robert M. Saul of Waco, Tex., was elected to head the department of lay witness ministries. President of Religious Communications Corporation of Waco, Saul is a native of Quitaque, Tex., and is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco.

He has been pastor of churches in Otto and Bruceville, Tex., and formerly served as a consultant in lay evangelism for the Home Mission Board. He has directed some 65 evangelistic crusades and was one of the original 40 men who did initial work on the board's Witness Involvement Now (WIN) lay witness materials. He has conducted more than 50 lay evangelism schools in 10 states.

Themes approved for the bold missions thrust emphases were: "Let every person in our land have an opportunity to hear and accept the gospel of Jesus Christ" and "Let every person in our land have an opportunity to share in the witness and ministry of a New Testament fellowship of believers."

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Directors authorized another new position in the division of evangelism, creating the position of director of evangelism planning and consultative services. The person named to the position will assist state conventions in planning evangelism programs and emphases.

A three-man committee evaluating the place of evangelism in the board's structure has held a preliminary meeting and will meet again in November. Members are directors Carl Bates of Charlotte, N.C.; Alfred B. Coyle of Memphis, Tenn., and Landrum P. Leavell of Wichita Falls, Tex.

Weber, pastor of First Baptist Church, Lubbock, Tex., continued the same "Win America for Christ" theme he has made in recent addresses to other SBC agencies.

Speaking at a luncheon for the directors and board personnel, Weber said he had two objectives as SBC president--to honor Christ and help the denomination.

"We ought to believe our denomination can reach America for Christ in our lifetime," he said, "and now is the time to do it. If we are going to win America for Christ it needs to be done now. America is dying."

Honored on their upcoming retirement at the end of this year were Willis Brown, deputy director of the division of chaplaincy since 1962; Victor Glass, director of the department of cooperative ministries with National Baptists since 1965; and L.D. Wood, assistant director of the department of language missions since 1966.

The directors accepted the resignation of Roy Owen, associate director of the division of associational services. Owen has been named assistant executive secretary for the Colorado Baptist General Convention.

A multi-media presentation at the luncheon honoring Rutledge highlighted his concerns and the accomplishments of the board during his decade of service. It was climaxed by a presentation of a bat and ball, autographed by Atlanta Braves' homerun champion, Henry Aaron. The presentation to Rutledge, an avowed Braves' fan, was made by Alfredia Aaron Scott, Hank's sister and librarian at the board offices.

The church loans interest rate was hiked from 8.5 per cent to a "break even rate" of 9 per cent. The directors authorized the borrowing of \$2 million from the Georgia teachers retirement system at 11.5 per cent to provide funds for loans.

The 11.5 per cent rate prompted the hike. The 9 per cent rate to churches will be subsidized from other interest income.

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Georgia Baptist Leaders  
Ask "Blue Law" Approval

10/11/74

ATLANTA (BP)--Two Georgia Baptist leaders have urged Georgians to vote "no" in order to express approval of a new Sunday "blue law" proposal which will be on the state's ballot in the Nov. 5 general election.

Dudley Pomeroy, chairman of the Georgia Baptist Convention's public affairs committee, and Searcy S. Garrison, the convention's executive secretary-treasurer, made the appeal from Atlanta.

The "Common Day of Rest" Act of 1974 provides Georgians with county options on acceptance of a new blue law. Counties which reject the new law will not be bound to the present blue laws, according to an opinion given by Georgia Attorney General Arthur Bolton. Thus, rejection of the new law means counties will have no blue law at all.

The Nov. 5 ballot includes the following question:

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"( ) Yes Shall the County of (insert county) be exempt  
 ( ) No from the provisions of 'the Common Day of Rest'  
 Act of 1974?"

Commenting upon the act, Pomeroy, pastor of the First Baptist Church, College Park, said: "Georgians are urged to vote 'No' to the Sunday closing question on Nov. 5. If they don't, their counties will have no 'blue laws' at all and will be wide open for business of all types on the Lord's Day."

The "Common Day of Rest" Act defines the types of businesses not specifically exempt from operating on consecutive Saturdays and Sundays. Violators of provisions will be considered guilty of a misdemeanor under terms of the act.

"The new bill is not a perfect bill," Garrison declared, "but it does have some good features. The main point is, that if Georgians vote against their counties being covered by the new bill, those counties will have no Sunday laws of any kind."

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John Freeman, Prominent  
 Southern Baptist Leader, Dies

10/11/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--John D. Freeman Jr., 90, a prominent Southern Baptist pastor, editor and denominational leader, died in Baptist Hospital here, Oct. 11, after a brief illness.

He had been serving in retirement as senior minister at Belmont Heights Baptist Church, Nashville, at which he preached, during a Sunday observance by the church of his 90th birthday last February. He preached his last sermon at a Chattanooga, Tenn., church, Sept. 8.

A native of Allene, Ark., Freeman was former editor of the Baptist and Reflector, Tennessee's state Baptist newspaper, 1925-33, and of the Western Recorder, Kentucky's state Baptist newspaper, 1942-46.

During a long ministry, spanning 76 years since his 1914 ordination, he also served as executive secretary of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, 1933-42, and field secretary for the rural department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission, Atlanta, from 1946 until his retirement in 1951.

Before joining the Baptist and Reflector, he had served as a missionary in southwest Arkansas, 1916-18; pastor in Springfield, Ky., 1918-23; and pastor of Belmont Heights Baptist Church, 1923-25, where he returned in 1960 as senior minister, concentrating on counseling and visitation.

He held numerous positions on boards of SBC agencies, was president of the Southern Baptist Press Association and chairman of Tennessee's first Interracial Committee.

Freeman, who earned degrees from the University of Arkansas, Duke University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, worked his way through college and seminary teaching science and history and serving as a high school principal.

He remained active after retirement, preaching many revivals, holding interim pastorates, continuing to author books and serving as a visiting Bible institute and seminary professor.

Funeral services were held at Belmont Heights Church, with the pastor, Robert J. Norman, officiating. Burial was in Nashville at Mt. Olivet Cemetery. Survivors include two daughters, Mrs. C.F. Fielden Jr. and Mrs. Perry M. White Jr., both of Atlanta, four brothers, one sister and six grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, contributions are requested for the Dr. and Mrs. John D. Freeman Scholarship Fund of Belmont College, a Baptist school in Nashville.

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