



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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June 16, 1975

75-91

## Tragedies, Triumphs Told By Baptist Missionaries

By Dan Martin

MIAMI BEACH, (BP)--The tragedies and triumphs of missionary service around the world were told during the closing session of the annual Southern Baptist Convention here.

Missionaries from three trouble spots--Vietnam, Bangladesh and West Africa--told of the suffering and opportunity in the lands they serve.

The recounting occurred during Foreign Mission Night at the convention here.

James Harris, from Fort Worth, Tex., president of the Foreign Mission Board (FMB), told messengers the "Southern Baptist Convention is primarily a mission convention, although we have many other endeavors . . . "

Robert C. Davis Jr., who served in Vietnam 21 years, used a series of words to describe his feeling at the fall of "his land".

They are "lost, tragedy, hope and thanksgiving."

The lostness is because he cannot go home again; the tragedy is because of the human suffering.

"But there is a hope, a blessed hope because God is not dead," he said.

The thanksgiving is because of the "wonderful years" he served in Vietnam.

"Is there hope for the Christian work in Vietnam today?" he asked. As he answered his own question, he replied: "Yes, if it is real, there is. If we were just building buildings, it could not have lasted, but if what has happened in their lives is real, they will persevere."

Missionary James E. Young, who serves in Bangladesh, told the messengers: "Hunger has become a way of life for the majority of 75 million people living in Bangladesh."

He told of the work of feeding people--both spiritually and physically--which is going on and assured messengers: "The help Southern Baptists have poured into Bangladesh has not been given in vain."

John E. Mills, field representative for West Africa, said the "responsiveness (to the gospel) we see in Southwest Africa today is in direct response to the problems."

He encouraged Southern Baptists to "reach out and make plain the love of Christ" by prayer, direct service or other help.

Baker James Cauthen, FMB executive secretary, told messengers there is "a vast open door for evangelism around the world."

"What a tragedy it would be if in this generation we as Southern Baptists sit mute as dumb dogs . . ."

During the session, 18 missionaries were introduced and prayed for as they begin service abroad.

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The concluding ceremonies ended on the same note which began the convention -----the ringing of the 2,048-pound Liberty Bell replica.

"God bless you," said President Jaroy Weber as the messengers filed from the 14,000 seat North Hall of the Convention Center.

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Middle East Baptists Few  
But Growing, Says BWA

Baptist Press  
6/16/75

WASHINGTON (BP)--Baptists in the Middle East number 1,542 baptized believers compared with 1,390 a year ago, according to statistics released by the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) here.

Included in the BWA data are 13 nations in West Asia, plus the Gaza Strip. Baptists have work in seven of the 13 countries and in Gaza. The BWA counts Pakistan in its Asian reports, and it counts the Arab portion of North Africa in its African statistics, a BWA release notes.

Most of the Baptist congregations, reported in the Middle East figures, are made up largely of Arab Christians, but there are a few English-speaking expatriate churches, the report notes.

Yemen Arab Republic, where Southern Baptists have a hospital in which more than 28,000 patients were treated last year, apparently does not have an organized Baptist church and was dropped from the BWA statistics this year, the BWA release cited.

By state or area, the data are:

	Churches	Church Members	
	1975	1975	1974
Iran	2	137	30
Israel	9	345	281
Jordan	10	321	334
Lebanon	14	594	594
Syria	1	50	50
Turkey	1	62	53
Yemen Arab Republic	---	---	17
Gaza Strip	<u>1</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>31</u>
TOTAL	38	1,542	1,390

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European Baptists Reverse  
Trend--Gain Over 10,000

Baptist Press  
6/16/75

WASHINGTON (BP)--Membership in European Baptist churches reversed a downward trend of recent years as they increased 9,875 for a new total of 1,168, 847 over last year, the Baptist World Alliance reported here.

Leading with an estimated 10,000 member increase were Romanian Baptists, according to BWA estimates.

The Alliance estimated the Romanian membership at 160,000 baptized believers, compared with a 1974 estimate of 150,000.

No formal statistical report has come from Bucharest, but it is known, the BWA report cited, that the Baptist churches of Romania experienced a "considerable ingathering of converted persons recently."

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The Soviet Union, which continues to have the largest Baptist membership of European countries, increased 4,000 the past year, for a new total of 539,000, the BWA said.

An increase in membership was posted also for West Germany, due in part to immigration of Baptists from the Soviet Union. Switzerland also reported an increase, due largely to a recognition of French-speaking Baptists who were omitted from earlier data, the BWA noted.

Continuing a generally declining posture were the United Kingdom and several Scandinavian countries. Italian Baptists dropped in number in Southern Europe, but Spanish and Portuguese Baptists increased.

Baptist churches in Europe, according to the BWA, total 11,157. Data on the number of churches was not collected last year, the report noted.

The figures by country are:

	Churches	Church Members	
	1975	1975	1974
Austria	9	800	808
Belgium	11	513	410
Bulgaria	20	1,000	800
Czechoslovakia	27	4,045	4,050
Denmark	42	6,611	6,638
Eire	8	250	250
Finland	33	2,759	2,748
France	68	3,639	3,677
German Democratic Republic	223	22,842	22,900
German Federal Republic	4	71,926	69,966
Greece	2	161	140
Hungary	212	12,070	12,125
Iceland	1	50	50
Italy	100	5,336	5,688
Luxembourg	1	20	20
Netherlands	82	10,479	10,174
Norway	64	6,588	6,588
Poland	52	2,401	2,650
Portugal	62	3,786	3,736
Romania	1,037	160,000	150,000
Spain	87	8,796	8,512
Sweden	837	44,826	45,184
Switzerland	24	3,822	2,625
U.S.S.R.	5,025	539,000	535,000
United Kingdom	3,065	253,546	260,854
Yugoslavia	54	3,254	3,052
Channel Islands	6	300	300
Isle of Man	<u>1</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>27</u>
TOTAL	11,157	1,168,847	1,158,972

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#### CORRECTION

In the BP story of 6/12/75, headlined "Jerry Clower: Color Him Funny," by Charles Warren, 2nd graf, third line should read "spoke--no small" (instead of "spoke--small").

Thanks