

What's Not Shaking in
Guatemala A Year Later?

By Teresa Shields

RICHMOND (BP)--It took less than a minute for the Guatemala earthquake to kill 23,000 people, injure 80,00 and leave 1.6 million homeless. Among Baptists, 45 were killed, sixteen Baptist churches and 400 Baptist homes were destroyed in the killer quake last year.

"The only thing that didn't shake in the Feb. 4, 1976, earthquake was the Guatemalan Christians' faith in Jesus Christ." said Southern Baptist missionary William W. Stennett. "A year later, that faith is still not shaken," he noted.

The people could have easily turned bitter, but instead they remained "open to the gospel," explained Jacquelyn Madon, Southern Baptist missionary journeyman in Coban, Guatemala. As Southern Baptist missionary Jean (Mrs. Harry E.) Byrd explained, "When the ground you live on moves, you look for security in something."

Baptists from the United States who went to Guatemala said they saw the same openness and responsiveness to the gospel.

"Almost all of these people lost their homes and families, but the trauma of the disaster was not able to shake their faith in God. They were able to rejoice in him, praise him and give thanks for life and the love they have," said Bill Berry, a Virginia Commonwealth University student, who went with a crew of Virginia Baptists to do reconstruction work.

Statistics on how many people accepted the Lord during the past year in Guatemala, were generally difficult to find. However Southern Baptist missionary Ted. E. Yarbrough reported 1,500 professions of faith and more than 300 baptisms in his church during five months following the disaster.

"Because we could not handle the situation alone," Yarbrough commented, "We asked for help." Thirty-five Spanish-speaking evangelists from the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas were brought in to aid in personal evangelism and nightly evangelistic services.

But not all the witnessing for Christ was done by outsiders, A. Clark Scanlon, Southern Baptist field representative for Middle America recalled, for example, "In the town of Parramos, which was 90 percent destroyed, one family had part of its possessions stacked under a lean-to made of the tin from a roof. On an altar made of adobe bricks, they had positioned an open Bible and the banner of their church. In the midst of disaster they witnessed of Christ."

To aid the Guatemalan Baptists in reconstructing churches, pastors' homes and other homes destroyed in the quake, Southern Baptists sent money and reconstruction personnel. Nineteen teams from various Baptist state conventions and several churches aided mainly in the rebuilding of Baptists churches. So far, 10 Baptist churches have been rebuilt. The six others are in the process of being reconstructed, according to Mrs. Byrd.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has appropriated more than \$670,000 for relief in Guatemala. This has included funds for food, medication, tents, a jeep, tools and reconstruction efforts.

"In the town of San Raymond others were saying to the Baptists, 'How great what you do... You came with men and money to reconstruct,'" said Southern Baptist missionary Herbert D. Billings.

Scanlon added, "Guatemalans were impressed by the volunteer workers that came. In more than one town the first building to go back up was the Baptist church. When people drew near to find out what was going on, they found a welcome and often received medical attention.

"In the town of San Martin a member of another denomination asked, 'How is it that Baptists who are so few have rebuilt their building and we who are so many have done nothing?'"

Richard R. Greenwood, Southern Baptist missionary in Coban, talked of the witness of the Baptist churches and congregations. "In addition to the normal help of medicines, shelters and food," he said, "We provided a lantern and some sheet iron to each Baptist congregation. They made a shelter and had services nightly. The lantern attracted people when there was no light anywhere else.

"They were surprised to find people singing when sorrow was rampant everywhere," Greenwood said. Missionaries and nationals alike agreed that Baptists have helped the cause of Christ in Guatemala by attending to physical and spiritual needs.

"The earthquake brought the concept of brotherhood to the Guatemalan Baptists," Yarbrough concluded. "They realized that they were part of a great brotherhood, not only of Southern Baptists in the U.S., but throughout the world because there was response to their need."

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(BP) Photos to be mailed to Baptist state papers

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Deceased Woman's Ministry
Continues in Trust Fund

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RICHMOND (BP)--This past year over \$147,000 from a single trust fund was appropriated for publication and distribution of Bibles around the world by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The money came from the "Ann Oldham Fund," named after a Texas Baptist woman who died in 1966.

Miss Oldham was born in Silver City, N.M., the daughter of Texas rancher-stockman Richard Henry and Minnie Mae Oldham. She grew up in Abilene, Tex., where she resided most of her life. She attended Baylor University, a Baptist school in Waco, Tex., and most of her adult life she managed the affairs of a large estate, following her mother's death.

Before her own death, Miss Oldham had set up a fund --"The Minnie Mae Oldham Bible Fund"--and contributed to it annually. From 1954 until Miss Oldham's death, she gave over \$39,000 to the fund.

She specified that the money be used to publish Bibles and that money from sale of the Bibles be used to publish more. Her expressed motive for the fund was "to give people the word of God--the Bible--to read for themselves of his great love and saving grace. His words will never pass away," she had said.

Before her death, Miss Oldham deeded properties valued at more than \$2 million to the "Ann Oldham Memorial Trust Fund." The net income of the estate was to be remitted quarterly to the Foreign Mission Board to be used in the continuous publication, purchase and distribution of bibles in memory of her mother.

Announcement of the trust fund was made after Miss Oldham's death in March 1966--about a week before her 63rd birthday.

She specified the fund be used in the "perpetual publication and distribution of the entire Bible in Brazil and all other parts of the world." Through 1976, over \$656,000 had been appropriated for this purpose from the fund.

A large portion of the appropriations each year have gone to provide paper for printing Portuguese Bibles at the Baptist Bible Press in Brazil. In other countries, the money buys Bibles and New Testaments which are distributed through Baptist churches and Southern Baptist missionaries.

Miss Oldham had great confidence in the Bible, a friend said "She once said: she believed the best way to get maximum use of her money was to send Bibles around the world and let them speak for themselves."

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Cooperative Program Breaks
One Month Record in Jan.

NASHVILLE (BP)--Contributions through the national Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget topped the \$5 million mark in January--the first time that figure has been reached in one month in Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) history.

Cooperative Program receipts from 33 state or multi-state Baptist conventions, with churches in all 50 states, totaled \$5,328,221 in January. That's a 9.40 percent above \$4,870,138 given in January of 1976, according to Billy D. Malezovas, director of financial planning and assistant to the treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee.

Total receipts for the month--the fourth month in the SBC's 1976-77 fiscal year--totaled \$12,098,673, including the Cooperative Program unified budget figure and another \$6,770,452 in contributions designated to specific causes.

For the year-to-date, the national level of the Cooperative Program has collected \$17,256,458, an 11.51 percent rise over the same point in the 1975-76 fiscal year, when the total was \$15,474,310. The total national Cooperative Program figure amounts to about one-third of state Cooperative Program funds received by the state conventions from some 35,000 SBC churches. It's between eight and nine percent of the money given in churches.

Total contributions for the year-to-date, including the \$17,256,458 Cooperative Program figure and \$8,044,106 in designated contributions, amounts to \$25,300,655. That's 7.63 percent more than \$23,506,211 received in total contributions at the same point last year.

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Dallas Will Use Biology
Book With Creation Theory

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DALLAS (BP)--Dallas Independent School District trustees, in a 6-3 vote here, have approved the use of a high school biology textbook containing the biblical concept of creation and the origin of man for use as a source book to accompany the primary text used in public schools.

The book, "A Search for Order in Complexity," published by Zondervan Corp. in Grand Rapids, Mich., "recognizes that both evolution and creation are philosophical concepts or theories, and that science needs to present the facts and let the people make their own conclusions," said School Board President Bill Hunter.

The approval came, according to reports, after an emotional debate which split along racial lines, with whites reportedly favoring the book and blacks opposing it.

A black surgeon, Dr. Emmett Conrad, reportedly declared, "There is no place in our textbooks for religious propaganda. The theory of evolution has no religious background at all."

The newly approved source book was written by a 20-member textbook committee of the Creation Research Committee and included a number of academicians from U. S. universities.

Dallas schools will use as their primary biology text one of the five textbooks approved by the committee of the Texas Board of Education. "A Search for Order in Complexity" will be maintained as a research source, with one textbook placed in each biology classroom.

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Hunt said that if the state board included the Zondervan book on its next list of approved text books he would have no objection to using it as the primary textbook in Dallas biology classes.

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To Sin or Not To Sin,
That is the Question

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NASHVILLE (BP)--What a difference a "no" makes--especially when it comes to sin.

Thousands of adult Bible students in Southern Baptist Sunday Schools, who use the "Life and Work" series produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, discovered that on January 30.

Their lesson was titled, "A Woman Caught in Adultery." It was also a case of a Sunday School quarterly caught in sin--with a typographical error.

The way the quarterly quoted it, Jesus approved sin in John 8:11--telling the adulteress: "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin more."

The absence of that little "no" somehow had eluded multiple proof readings.

For the record, folks, that verse should read: ". . . go and sin no more."

Go thou and do likewise.

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Mail Response Shows Concern
But Now a Waste, Wylie Says

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The huge outpouring of mail which the Federal Communications Commission continues to receive at the rate of 6,000 pieces per day, more than a year after it voted down a controversial petition on religious broadcasting, shows that "people care and that the electronic ministry makes a difference in their lives," FCC Chairman Richard Wylie said here.

Wylie, addressing a luncheon in conjunction with the 34th annual convention of the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB), said the FCC has received five million pieces of mail on the petition (which many people mistakenly attributed to famed atheist, Madalyn Murray O'Hair, whom they mistakenly thought was trying to ban religious broadcasting).

Actually, the petition, RM 2493, voted down unanimously by the FCC on August 1, 1975, came from two California men, Jeremy D. Lansman and Lorenzo W. Milam. They unsuccessfully asked the FCC to freeze assignment of additional educational TV or FM radio licenses to individuals or groups planning to air only religious or quasi-religious programs.

The FCC chairman commented that although the heavy mail response shows people care that it now represents a waste of money and effort which church people could expend on other needs since the issue has been decided.

Wylie said the mail response on the Lansman-Milam petition has dwarfed any previous mail response on an issue. The closest thing to it, he said, was 100,000 letters the FCC received on children's programming.

He added America needs a religious renaissance, which, he said, he feels is just beginning to happen in this country. "A 'born again spirit' is reaching and moving millions of our citizens," he said, pointing to a recent Gallup Poll in which over 30 percent of American adults said they had had a "born again" religious experience.

Evangelist Billy Graham, whose address to the NRB meeting was titled, "No Person Is Too Hard for God to Save," commented on his recent meeting with Eldredge Cleaver, former Black Panther who has made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Cleaver and former Watergate figure Charles Colson, also now a Christian, appeared together at a seminar during the NRB activities. The evangelist said he "praised God for the great change" in Cleaver's life.

President Jimmy Carter, invited to appear at the NRB meeting, declined because of the pressures of his first weeks in office, but sent a telegram, read by James Waters, Georgia pastor, NRB board member and trustee chairman of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, Fort Worth. It commended the work of the NRB.

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