

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICESBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor**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, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2000
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

June 6, 1977

77-100

Midwestern Seminary Grads
Giving to Beirut Seminary

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--As its class gift, the 1977 graduating class of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here is collecting money for the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut, Lebanon.

The students' goal is \$1,000, according to Don Taylor, senior class president. Even though Midwestern's graduation exercises were May 28, the books were to remain open for giving through the annual Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Kansas City, June 14-16. More than \$500 has been collected thus far, according to Southern Baptist missionary Emmett A. Barnes, visiting professor at Midwestern Seminary while on missionary furlough.

Barnes has been a professor at the Beirut Seminary and will assume its presidency when he returns to Lebanon in October.

The Arab International Seminary, begun in 1960, trains pastors and church leaders who serve in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Palestine.

The seven-acre campus is 10 miles from the center of Beirut. The seminary was damaged in 1976 during the Beirut Civil War. All the windows were broken and shells tore two holes in the roof.

-30-

Story of Man TV Program
To Be Re-aired on NBCBaptist Press
6/6/77

FORT WORTH (BP)--People of the past whose influences still shape the present will be presented again July 10 when the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission air "Ecce Homo, Behold This Is Man" from 5-6 p.m. Eastern time. (Check local station logs for local time.)

The documentary, a tour through the British Museum in London, presents the story of humanity's past and the riddle of its future. It was previously shown on the network in January, 1969, and again in 1970.

"It's a little unusual that such a religious documentary is re-run more than once," said Truett Myers, senior vice president, television production services for the Radio and Television Commission. "However, in this case the network seemed to feel the film was timeless enough to be well-received again."

Highlights of "Ecce Homo" include a look at the Rosetta Stone, the Magna Carta, the first Bible ever bound in book form, and the Elgin Marbles which once stood on top of the Parthenon.

Other scenes include the museum's Egyptian gallery, a catalogue of early weapons, cooking utensils, ancient games and clocks.

"Ecce Homo" was produced by Doris Ann, manager of the network's religious programs. Joseph Vadala was director of photography. Narration is by Robert Burr.

Paul M. Stevens, commission president, and Truett Myers were consultants.

-30-

4 Agencies Launch Joint Mission Volunteer Program ✓

ATLANTA (BP)--A "cooperative plan of people" program designed to use volunteers in "a more creative and effective way" has been launched by four Southern Baptist agencies, it was announced here.

The program, a cooperative venture of Southern Baptists' Foreign Mission Board (FMB), Home Mission Board (HMB), Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) and Brotherhood Commission, is called Volunteer Involvement in Missions. The system was planned by representatives of the four agencies, which will use it jointly.

Generally, the project is for laypersons who wish to contribute their time, gifts and funds to short or long term missions projects at home or abroad. It is not intended for persons who feel called to full-time service, according to Roy Edgemon, coordinator, and HMB director of volunteer project correlation. Key planners for the project included Evelyn Blount of WMU, Norman Godfrey of the Brotherhood Commission and James Cecil, FMB.

Volunteer Involvement in Missions features an automated data system at the HMB offices in Atlanta. Persons desiring to participate will be listed on the system, along with information about skills, gifts, interests, concerns, availability and duration of service, Edgemon said.

The information will be drawn on by the four agencies for special projects, he noted.

Prior to creation of the new system, Edgemon continued, each agency tended to recruit, promote and assign its own volunteers. As a result, he said, there was very little coordinated use of one of the greatest resources of Southern Baptists--its laypersons.

"This started out as a Bold Mission Thrust effort to use volunteers in a more effective and creative way," Edgemon said. "But we realized if we correlated our efforts among the agencies, we could do so much more (in the use of volunteers). (Bold Mission Thrust is Southern Baptists' effort to evangelize and congregationalize the United States by 1980.)

"When we realized what we could accomplish together, we started working to pull together the four agencies," he added.

"We also realized that if we put our collective talents together, we could involve more people, give them more places to go and create more opportunities for laypersons to serve in missions."

Edgemon said he expects the system to be "on stream" by the first of the year. Those who have been planning the system also expect it to contain some 100,000 volunteers.

The system, he said "actually is an effort to identify the resources we have" and to put them into a workable system, where volunteers can be made available immediately.

"This is a cooperative plan of people," he said, adding that when the system is operational "we will be able to have on hand volunteers so that we can take advantage of the opportunities placed before us.

"We want to be able to respond immediately . . . when the Holy Spirit opens a door for us. If we know who we have available, we will be able to respond immediately," Edgemon said.

An instance is disaster relief. If Southern Baptists have a resource bank, people can be notified and sent to places of need with little delay, he cited.

Edgemon said, however, many mission opportunities will be offered to those who volunteer, including construction, teaching, agriculture, medicine, music, recreation, social work, evangelistic projects, renewal, disaster relief, hygiene, homemaking, and other mission and evangelistic opportunities.

"Volunteer Involvement in Missions is God's people working together, to be more effective and creative in our cooperative witness and ministry to the world. Each person who participates--helper and helped--is important," Edgemon said.

He said persons who want to be part of Volunteer Involvement in Missions could write to "Volunteer Involvement in Missions", 1350 Spring Street, NW, Atlanta, Ga. 30309.

A detailed form--listing interests, skills, gifts, concerns and availability--will be sent to potential volunteers, he said. When the volunteer completes the form, planners ask that it be returned with a \$2 contribution--to make the system as self-supporting as possible, Edgemon said.

"This is really a cooperative plan of people, just like the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program(unified budget) is a system of finance. It's a method of using volunteers to spread the kingdom of God," Edgemon added.

- 30 -

(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

#

North America Baptists Increase
To Over 29 Million, BWA Cites

Baptist Press
6/6/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--Baptists in North America increased by more than a quarter-million this past year, reaching a total of 29,016,036, according to statistics released here by the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

Baptists of Central America and the Caribbean Islands declined slightly during the same period of time, and now are 193,039, the BWA said.

The North American figures on churches and church membership are:

	<u>Churches</u>	<u>Members</u>
1. United States	99,053	28,773,731
2. Canada	1,704	195,085
3. Mexico	468	43,547
4. Bermuda	20	3,673

No Baptist witness is reported for St. Pierre and Miquelon or for Greenland, which fall geographically in the North American sector of the World.

Southern Baptists, in accord with tradition, led the way in the numerical increase:

	<u>Membership Increase</u>
Southern Baptists	186,942
All Others	96,405
	<u>283,347</u>

Baptists in North America lead the world in Baptist church membership figures, but they lag behind many other regions in their outreach ratios. The Alliance figures there are only 9,172 Baptist "preaching places" in North America outside the 101,245 local churches, according to Carl W. Tiller, BWA associate secretary in charge of studies and research.

Even more a matter of concern, according to Tiller, is that the "Baptist community" in North America, consisting of church members and others under pastoral care, is only about 28 percent above the church membership figures.

The Baptist community figure is set by the BWA at 37,242,955. In some other continents the corresponding figure has been as much as double the church membership, Tiller said.

-more-

In Middle America, the principal Baptist populations are:

	<u>Churches</u>	<u>Members</u>
1. Haiti	169	63,507
2. Jamaica	366	32,562
3. Bahamas	275	27,010
4. Puerto Rico	94	14,533
5. Cuba	193	14,030

There is a Baptist witness in every one of the 27 political jurisdictions of Middle America, Tiller said. This is the only region of the world with complete coverage, he added.

Baptist preaching places in Central America and the Caribbean are more than double the number of churches--4,020 compared to 1,605 churches. The Baptist community there is well more than double the church membership--529,819 compared to membership rolls of 193,039, Tiller noted.

He then cited six "significant additional observations."

--The Baptist count in the United States would be much higher if all local churches reported, or if the denominations made estimates in place of mission reports. Among Southern Baptists, there are 421 churches which had not reported for at least 3 years. Among American Baptist Churches, data on church membership is missing this time for 1,283 churches, Tiller said.

--Data include bodies affiliated with the Baptist World Alliance and not so affiliated. North American membership data divided this way: BEA affiliates 25,201,666; non-BWA affiliates, 3,814,370.

--Of the three large Baptist bodies in North America which have the phrase "National Baptist" in their names, only the Progressive convention supplied statistics this year. The BWA has continued to use older data for the others.

--Nicaragua leads the Baptists of Middle America in growth. Mainly through efforts of a Commission on Evangelism and Mission, the Convencion Bautista de Nicaragua experienced last year a 16 percent increase in baptized membership, a 20 percent increase in places of regular preaching. Baptist membership in the country of Nicaragua jumped from 4,558 last year to 7,376.

--El Salvador shows the greatest percentage of Baptist-preference people in addition to the church membership. Their Baptist community count is 15,000, while church membership is placed at 3,621 in the Asociacion Bautista de El Salvador.

--A slight drop in church membership took place in the 101 Baptist churches in the western part of the communist country of Cuba; last year's number was 6,936, this year's is 6,796. No report was received this year for the 92 Baptist churches in the eastern part of that island nation.

-30-

CORRECTION

In the BP story of 6/3/77, headlined, "'SBC Must Double Giving by 1982,' Says Task Force," third graph from bottom, line 1, should read "two and one half cents of each"; change third line, same graph, to read "of a penny from each dollar..."

Thanks

Baptist Press