



**-- BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 29, 1981

81-86

Church Vandalism Continues  
Against French Evangelicals

VAULX EN VELIN, France (BP)--A gunman who fired into a church congregation in prayer left no injuries and little damage, but for a small, growing Baptist congregation in Vaulx En Velin, the incident was only one of many acts of violence in more than two years.

Three plate glass windows have been broken at the church, the front door and two small rear windows shattered, and a metal security door in the rear of the church crushed and its concrete supports chipped away, according to Southern Baptist missionary Mark Sutton, pastor of the church.

The gunman fired at the congregation at a night meeting following the showing of a Billy Graham film attended by some Muslim young people.

The vandalism is a problem shared by other evangelical churches, including four which were damaged or destroyed by fire, Sutton says. Several groups, including Baptists, Methodists, Assemblies of God and Pentecostals minister in the Lyons metropolitan area, where 1.25 million people live.

A text from a Jehovah's Witnesses Bible was written in red paint across one wall at a Brethren church damaged by fire, and the group's tracts were found at the site of a fire which destroyed another Brethren church.

Sutton agrees with the police that the Jehovah's Witnesses are not responsible for setting the fires because the group deplors violence and the evidence is "a bit too obvious."

A third fire destroyed an independent Baptist church building and a fourth destroyed an Assembly of God church, the largest church in the city, Sutton reports. One of four men who set the latter fire went to police and admitted that he and the three others had gotten the idea from the first three fires.

They told police they wanted to "show the evangelicals that they were wrong," Sutton says. Police have not been able to apprehend anyone in connection with the other fires, but they know more than one person is involved.

Eighteen percent of the evangelical churches in the Lyons area have been destroyed, says Sutton. "All the pastors and churches in the Lyons area are concerned."

Sutton is not sure how much of the violence can be attributed to religious persecution, but "there is no doubt that some of it is just that."

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He says relations with the Muslim community have been improved because church members refuse to work with Muslim children in Bible clubs until they have obtained parental permission. "This has shown the adults that we are not trying to 'steal' their children."

Also, Bibles have been made available in French and Arabic. Many Muslims in France have only a speaking knowledge of Arabic and are grateful to learn how to read their native language.

Despite the problems Sutton says his church is growing. Up to 40 people may attend a Sunday worship service, and the church is contacting more who are interested in Christian worship.

The church plans to hold a revival in a city park next fall if it can get government permission. "This could be a turning point in our witness to the community," Sutton says.

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Cuban Pastors Hungry  
For Baptist Literature

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5/29/81

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Improved relations between Cuba and Nicaragua have fostered increased contacts between Baptists in these two countries and have allowed Southern Baptist missionaries to provide a literature ministry to Cuban Baptists.

Southern Baptist missionary Stanley Stamps says in the past 18 months he has had contact with about 40 Cuban Baptist leaders and has given them Bibles, commentaries and hymnals, sometimes taking material from his personal library.

Persons going from Nicaragua to Cuba can take books without any problem as part of their luggage, he says.

"My philosophy of missions is to preach and teach wherever we can and not make decisions for national Baptists on how to relate to government," says Don Kammerdiener, Foreign Mission Board director for Middle America and the Caribbean.

He says Cuban pastors have asked Stamps and Ed Steele in Nicaragua if they would be willing to teach short courses in Cuba. Kammerdiener has encouraged them both to go if they are invited.

Stamps reports that at least six churches are using the new Spanish Baptist hymnal and and books also have been sent to the Baptist Seminary in Havana. He heard that the new books stand out on the library shelves in contrast to other books, which are 20 years old.

Early this year, Stamps said, the Cuban Baptist Women's Department received mission books which are now in a lending program. Members of the department also are teaching the books in churches.

A Nicaraguan Baptist has had an interview with the Cuban ambassador to clear the way for future shipments of materials, Stamps says, and another leader plans to purchase equipment for one of the three Baptist conventions in Cuba.

Lack of diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba prevents direct shipment of literature from the Baptist Spanish Publishing House in El Paso, Texas.

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"There is an open door and such an intense hunger for new books to which we can minister legally," Stamps says. "I have been assured by those who have visited (Cuba) that as long as it is a moderate amount coming from a friendly country like Nicaragua there is no problem."

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College Students Devote  
Summer To Missions Work

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BOLIVAR, Mo. (BP)--A phenomenal 209 of Southwest Baptist College's 1,600 students will use their summer for mission work in the United States and other countries.

These students and 65 faculty members and administrators committed themselves to summer missions after their school's missions emphasis week in November.

School volunteers will begin two church planting projects in Loudonville, Ohio, where there is no current Baptist work, and Orland Park, Ill., a suburb of Chicago.

Six teams will work in Mexico, including the cities of Ciudad Victoria and Ciudad Valles which have populations of 200,000, and the villages of Nuevo Padilla and Avila Camacho which have populations of 5,000 and 800 respectively. In Mexico City, a team will continue the work started last summer.

The teams in Mexico are supervised by Van Gladen, missionary to an 80,000-square-mile area, twice the size of Ohio, and a population of six million.

Vacation Bible school, revivals, survey work, door-to-door visitation, personal witnessing, dental service and church planting and building are activities for the Mexico projects.

Cory Braatz, a freshman, will work with 27 people from the college and lay workers from other areas in Avila Camacho for three weeks.

Avila Camacho has no running water or electricity, Braatz said. Members of the team were told to "get a tan to protect the skin before leaving because the temperatures during the day reach 110 degrees and only dip down to 80 degrees at night."

Eric Moore, alumni relations director at Southwest Baptist College and a member of the Avila Camacho team, said the project will involve lay workers who will build a church. "With a small community like Comacho, we have high expectations of reaching the entire population" through mission activities, he explained.

"This will happen only if we can get out there and demonstrate that it can be done," Gladen said. "That's why I am so grateful for Southwest's efforts. With communism becoming such a moving force in the country, it's urgent that we move now to spread the good news of Jesus while they still have basic freedoms."

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Auchmuty, Wallen Agree SBC  
System Needs Some Guidelines

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--E.P. Wallen and James Auchmuty met for the first time May 27.

The two Alabama pastors--both of whom are from the Birmingham area--became newsmakers when controversy erupted over the report of the Southern Baptist Convention committee on boards.

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Wallen, pastor of Vineland Park Baptist Church in Hueytown, one of the two Alabama representatives on the committee, did not recommend Auchmuty's renomination to a second term as a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Auchmuty, pastor of Shades Crest Baptist Church in suburban Birmingham, has said he will challenge the committee's report because he had been "labeled both a heretic and a liar" in the sequence of events before and after the committee action, which will be presented to the 1981 SBC in Los Angeles.

At the heart of the controversy is a questionnaire sent by Wallen to prospective trustees and those eligible for renomination. It inquired about Auchmuty's view of the Bible in what Wallen called an effort to comply with Resolution 16 on doctrinal integrity passed by the 1980 SBC in St. Louis.

Auchmuty responded by affirming the Baptist Faith and Message statement of 1963. Wallen said such affirmation was not adequate.

Hudson Baggett, editor of the Alabama Baptist, arranged the meeting between Auchmuty and Wallen to discuss the possibility of resolving the conflict.

At the end of the "amiable" three-hour meeting, however, the situation was basically the same: the report of the committee will not be changed, and Auchmuty will challenge the recommendation from the floor at the SBC meeting.

The only area of agreement was that both Auchmuty and Wallen believe some guidelines and procedures must be developed to ensure that the committee process is more objective and efficient.

Auchmuty said he has received both telephone calls and letters from some committee members and "a host" of pastors and laymen throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

Wallen, too, says he has received numerous telephone calls and letters from pastors throughout the convention in support of the committee as well as some who are in opposition to the committee's action.

Wallen says, however, he feels the committee process has gone too far to change their nominations and that to do so would only complicate and intensify the problem.

Auchmuty said his name will be placed in nomination and the committee report will be challenged.

Auchmuty also revealed that he is working with a group to bring a recommendation to convention messengers calling for the adoption of procedures that will make the committee process more objective and efficient.

According to Wallen, the committee on boards voted unanimously that there ought to be specific guidelines for those who will be working on this committee in the future. He suggests that a convention committee be appointed, made up of persons who have served on the committee in the past, to bring recommendations to the convention for adoption.

Auchmuty believes there ought to be a bylaw approved by SBC messengers that standardizes and gives continuity to all committee procedures rather than each committee adopting its own rules and guidelines year by year.

Wallen feels the matter should not go to the SBC Executive Committee since many of them have never served on the committee on boards and would not know the problems. Auchmuty feels, however, such would be in order for study and recommendation.

"Whether by amendment or from the Executive Committee," said Auchmuty, "I want the convention to vote on it."

Appreciate History, Move Ahead,  
Historian Says at Board Anniversary

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In services celebrating the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in 1891, Walter B. Shurden challenged employees to know and appreciate the board's history while finding new ways to minister in a changing world and denomination.

"You will find new ways of telling the old, old story or the old story will become stale, your jobs will become dull and Southern Baptists will no longer listen," said Shurden, dean of the school of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and author of a new book on the history of the board.

Shurden said that as he researched the history of the Sunday School Board, "I had a religious experience of gratitude for people I had not heard of and for people I had heard of, but did not know, who had made a contribution to my life."

He cited efforts by Richmond, Va., pastor J.M. Frost which led to the 1891 Southern Baptist Convention approving creation of a Sunday School publishing board. Frost went on to serve two terms as the board's chief executive, 1891-92, 1896-1916.

Shurden also lauded efforts by B.W. Spilman and others in creating all-age Sunday Schools "to reach people for Jesus Christ."

"There are in your past a lot of common people who worked a lot of uncommon hours so you could have a ministry here," said Shurden.

He warned against "under-expecting" what God wants to do through the Sunday School Board and through Southern Baptists.

"God does not come in the ways we expect," said Shurden. "We had better keep our eyes open, keep our ears open and look around for the new, challenging and costly doors God is opening to the future."

During the two-day celebration, which included two worship services and a reception for employees, retirees and trustees, board president Grady Cothen recognized the contributions of former president James L. Sullivan who headed the board 1953-1975.

"He made a contribution in ways that cannot be described," said Cothen. "Most Southern Baptists will never be fully aware of how much they owe him."

Cothen also recognized C.R. Daley of the Kentucky Western Recorder and Al Shackelford of the Tennessee Baptist and Reflector whose papers in 1891 were the only two which editorially endorsed the idea of a Sunday School board.

In recognition of the board's anniversary, Nashville Mayor Richard Fulton proclaimed May 28 as Southern Baptist Sunday School Board Day. Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander proclaimed May 31-June 6 as Baptist Sunday School Board Week.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.

Howard Payne  
Head's Wife Dies

Baptist Press  
5/29/81

BROWNWOOD, Texas (BP)--Helen Phelps, 58, wife of Howard Payne University President Ralph Phelps Jr., died May 25 in a Brownwood hospital after a long illness.

Mrs. Phelps was born in Teague, Texas, and was a graduate of Baylor University.

She is survived by her husband; a daughter, Debbie Phelps; a son, James Phelps; her mother, Mrs. Ruth Kennedy; and a brother, Robert Kennedy.

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