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March 5, 1985

85-24

Chile Earthquake Strikes During Sunday Worship

SANTIAGO, Chile (BP)--Chilean churchgoers were attending Sunday evening worship services when the March 3 earthquake struck the South American country.

Collapsing church walls killed about 12 Catholics in one building and four Methodists in another, according to Bryan Brasington, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director for western South America.

No deaths or injuries have been reported among Chilean Baptists or Southern Baptist missionaries, said Walt Chambless, chairman of the Southern Baptist mission organization in Chile.

About 40 of 208 Chilean Baptist churches and 45 of 70 Southern Baptist missionaries are in central Chile, where the earthquake did the most damage. The region stretches from Santiago, the nation's capital, to the Pacific coast cities of Vina del Mar and Valparaiso.

Three Baptist churches reported extensive damage, said Brasington. Reconstruction efforts will be organized for the damaged churches, he said.

Early counts totaled more than 150 people killed and 2,000 injured in the earthquake, which registered 7.4 on the Richter scale.

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American Indians
Propose Strategy

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
3/5/85

DENVER (BP)--Baptist American Indian leaders from seven tribes have proposed a mission strategy for Southern Baptists to reach the nation's 1.4 million native Americans during a national language missions conference.

Meeting at the annual language missions leadership conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Indian leaders called on Baptists to begin 175 new Indian churches, train 670 Indian pastors and 4,280 lay leaders.

They also urged Southern Baptists to establish 129 Ethnic Leadership Development Centers for training Indian leaders by 1990.

Southern Baptists currently work among 97 of the 495 American Indian tribes and bands in the United States and Canada, noted B. Frank Belvin, former national consultant among American Indians for the SBC Home Mission Board. He added 70 percent of all baptized Christian Indians are in six "civilized" Indian tribes.

The 360 Southern Baptist American Indian congregations includes 12 language families and 22 dialects, Belvin said.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

An ad-hoc group of Baptist Indian leaders, led by Russel Begaye, Home Mission Board national consultant for American Indians, recommended goals tied to the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust, Southern Baptists' plan to share the gospel with every person on earth by the year 2000.

Indian leaders called on Southern Baptists to present the gospel to all native Americans while also leading American Indian churches to achieve 13,500 baptisms among American Indians during the next five years.

In addition to starting 175 new Indian congregations by 1990, the ad-hoc group called for Southern Baptists to establish 838 new Indian congregations by the end of the decade. They also set a goal of leading 65 Southern Baptist American Indian congregations to start a new mission-type church each year.

The group also encouraged American Indians to be involved in ministry projects and to increase the number of church missions committees in American Indian churches by five percent each year during the next five years.

Indian leaders divided the nation into four regions and made recommendations for each region ranging from church starting to developing Indian leaders.

The Southwest region, which includes California, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Utah, ranked highest in need for new churches. Indian leaders set a goal to establish 61 new churches by 1990 and 384 new churches by the end of the century.

California, with an Indian population of 201,311—the largest of any state—currently has only four Southern Baptist Indian churches, noted Begaye. The West also boasted the greatest Indian population—670,655 Indians, according to the 1980 Census.

Projections indicate the West, particularly California, will continue to increase in Indian populations by the end of the century, the group reported. Already three California cities—Los Angeles, San Francisco and Riverside/San Bernadino/Ontario—ranked among the top 10 standard metropolitan statistical areas (SMSAs) with the largest number of American Indians.

Oscar I. Romo, director of the Home Mission Board's language missions division, noted most Baptist Indian work is on reservations. But the strategy proposed by Indian leaders calls for increased Southern Baptist work among urban Indians, he said.

"If the denomination intends to be serious about evangelizing the United States and the world, we must take into consideration these recommendations," said Romo.

He added Baptist Indian leaders had given state language workers "the benefit of their thinking" by pinpointing key areas for future outreach to native Americans. "At the same time," said Romo, "they have offered themselves to help."

Reaching the American Indian with the gospel also will require Southern Baptists to support Indian causes, such as tribal sovereignty, land, water and fishing/hunting rights, and civil rights, said Indian leaders.

Currently court cases throughout the nation are deciding tribal governmental, natural resources and civil and religious rights for Indians. The outcome could determine the future of the American Indian, said John Echohawk, a lawyer and executive director of Native American Rights Fund in Boulder, Colo.

Peter MacDonald, former tribal chairman for the Navajo Tribe, Tempe, Ariz., said American Indians today have "entered an age of unrest and uncertainty."

Indians have not been exempt from federal cutbacks in social needs, said MacDonald. As courts decide key issues for American Indians, he added, Indians now have "a great deal of apprehension and anxiety for what the future may bring."

Social change also brings changes in values, said MacDonald. Southern Baptists must stay abreast of changes "or we will not be able to communicate with the new generation."

But change may also leave American Indians receptive to the gospel, said MacDonald. "American Indians of all ages are looking for some instant solution to satisfy their soul's hunger," he said.

"It is a good time for home missions to lay out its strategy if you are to have your share of the harvest," he concluded.

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Mission Service Corps
Consultants Trained

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

Baptist Press
3/5/85

FOREST HILL, La. (BP)—Twenty-five Baptist Mission Service Corps regional consultants from four states learned techniques of assisting volunteers in mission and ministry in the first regional orientation meeting in the Southern Baptist Convention.

David Bunch, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's Mission Service Corps, said consultants have responsibility to assist volunteers with achieving their goals of mission and evangelism projects. "The consultants also have an opportunity to create an awareness of the role and opportunities of volunteers in our churches and associations," he said.

The group, meeting at the Louisiana Baptist Tall Timbers Conference Center near Forest Hill Feb. 25-28, included MSC consultants from Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana.

Consultants also are resource persons to help volunteers who desire to be involved but do not know how, Bunch said. "The consultant system is new and enlarging. We developed the system in Texas over the past four years. Now we are beginning to organize regional orientation sessions for the consultants. Other sessions will follow this one," he said.

Mission Service Corps was approved at the 1977 Southern Baptist Convention to enlist mission volunteers for Bold Mission Thrust. Bunch said a recent survey shows 94 percent of individual MSC sponsors provide funds over and above their regular church offerings.

During the orientation sessions MSC consultants studied prayer support, funding and recruiting.

Bunch told the consultants volunteers need prayer support from friends and churches "when they go on their mission, sustaining prayer while they are there and re-entry prayer as they return home."

Bunch noted contributions from sponsors are used 100 percent for the volunteer's ministry but "checks should be processed through a tax-exempt organization such as the church, association, state convention or Home Mission Board."

Johnny Armstrong, a MSC worker assisting Don Mabry, Louisiana Baptist missions division director, is responsible for coordinating volunteers and consultants in the Louisiana Baptist Convention.

Consultants attending the sessions were:

Louisiana—Arnold and Donnie Nelson of Mansfield; Jan Stewart of New Orleans; Daniel and Yvonne McFatter and Woodrow and Marguerite Young of Lake Charles; Earl Swain of Alexandria, and Armstrong.

Mississippi—Oster and Marguerite Daniels of Vicksburg; Marvin and Pauline Bibb of Water Valley; Estus and Gertrude Mason of Crystal Springs; John and Catherine Sproles of Kosciusko; Gerald and Joyce Masterson of Biloxi.

Arkansas—Paul and Pat Dennis of Springdale; Maurice Hurley of Sherwood and John Ragsdale of El Dorado.

Tennessee—Eugene and Juanita Fleming of Knoxville.

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First Deaf Men's
Group Formed

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)—A Deaf Men's Fellowship started at First Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., is believed to be the first such organization in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The group has been meeting for several months to learn about Brotherhood and Baptist Men. The fellowship was formally organized Jan. 23.

The organization has decided to follow the study/fellowship approach as outlined in the Purpose and Plan of Baptist Brotherhood. This approach includes mission action, prayer groups, witnessing groups and other emphases as determined by the group.

Claude Burgess is minister to the deaf at the Memphis church and Earl Davis is pastor.

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Humor Journal Brings Light
To Theological Studies

Baptist Press
3/5/85

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Robert Larremore takes humor seriously.

The alumnus of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, recently published the first issue of LIGHT, a journal of religion and humor. LIGHT is an acronym for Laughter in God, History and Theology.

Other editorial staff members are listed as Tal D. Bonham, executive secretary-treasurer of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio; Conrad Hyers, professor of religion at Gustavus-Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn.; John Newport, Southwestern's vice-president for academic affairs and provost, and Ralph L. Smith, distinguished professor of Old Testament at Southwestern.

Larremore said the journal is sponsored by SALT, a Southwestern organization promoting "Salvation And Laughter Together."

"Most people think they have a sense of humor," Larremore said. "But when they get into religion, they think it's not appropriate. We have so many negative emotions. We need more positive emotions, like humor."

Newport said, "We need humor because sometimes we forget that we have been redeemed. An appropriate study of humor, pointing out right and wrong uses, is helpful. In a time of tenseness, a good sense of humor is very helpful."

Smith agrees. In times of tension, he said, "people look for relief in humor. Humor can be related to rejoicing."

It is a "solid area of academia" that "does not have to be irreverent," Smith said.

The first issue of the biannual publication contains three articles and a section of book reviews.

The main articles are an interview by Bonham with comedian Jerry Clower, a Baptist layman from Mississippi; "The Day Jonah Swallowed the Whale" by Hyers; and a scholarly article on theology and humor by Fred D. Layman, professor of biblical studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Ky.

Book reviews were written by Southwestern faculty members, students and others.

Larremore plans to publish a bibliography on the subject this year.

Subscriptions to LIGHT are available by writing to Larremore at P.O. Box 6928, Fort Worth, Texas 76115.

CORRECTION--In (BP) story "Overseas Volunteers Top 6,000 in 1984," mailed 3/1/85, in seventh paragraph please change the name of the church and its location from First Baptist Church, Gallup, N.M. to Crestview Baptist Church, Farmington, N.M.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

CORRECTION--In (BP) story, "Mrs. B.B. McKinney Dead At Age 95," mailed 3/1/85, in fifth paragraph, please change the date of Mr. McKinney's fatal car accident from 1985 to 1952. Baptist Press regrets the error.

Thanks,
Baptist Press



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