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1,120 Won To Christ
In Paraguay Crusade

By Eric Miller

N-FMB

ASUNCION, Paraguay (BP)--Baptists put a Billy Graham-type evangelist in a stadium and on television for a week in Paraguay, and 1,120 people made decisions to accept Christ as their savior, a Southern Baptist missionary reported.

Nilson Fanini, described as the "Billy Graham of Brazil," drew 5,000 to 6,000 people each night to an Asuncion stadium during a week-long crusade in mid-October, said Tom Law, a Southern Baptist missionary in Asuncion. About 7,000 people attended the final Sunday night meeting.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and the Paraguay Baptist Convention split the \$30,000 bill to have the crusade broadcast at prime time each night, said Bill Damon, the board's associate area director for Eastern South America.

Even on one rainy night, more than 80 people walked down the steps to talk with counselors and make commitments to Christ. Before the crusade, about 400 Baptists were trained as counselors.

People who met counselors received a package containing tracts, the Gospel of John and the first of a six-part Bible study called "Six People Who Met Jesus." They also received a card with the basic plan of salvation and another card they filled out, giving their name, address, church attendance history and the decision they had made.

Church members living nearest the new converts have been visiting them at home, giving them New Testaments and continuing the Bible study, said Law, who is promoter of evangelism and new work for the Paraguay Baptist Convention for the greater Asuncion area.

A surprise of the crusade, Law said, is that the Baptist convention office is receiving letters from people in towns where there is no Baptist work. The live half-hour and hour-long broadcasts each night reached most of the nation, including remote areas.

The convention office has received 200 requests from people who saw the broadcasts and want more information, along with a New Testament offered on television free of charge, Law said.

The broadcasts spilled over into Argentina, which drew Argentines to the stadium, Law said. The Argentines said they planned to have Fanini speak in their country next year.

About 110 pastors, seminary students and lay people from Brazil rode 1,500 miles in buses to do house-to-house visitation as part of the crusade. They helped during counseling and worked with churches to help create an atmosphere of enthusiasm. One of the bus drivers made a profession of faith during the crusade.

The convention rented 49 city buses that were rerouted to churches and mission points 35 miles away and then to the stadium. To board a bus, a church member had to have an accompanying non-member.

In several instances, people made professions of faith in Christ in the stadium and returned the following night with family members who also made professions.

So far, more than 1,000 Bibles have been given out as part of the crusade. A 13-week Bible study is planned for 75 homes, starting in March 1987, Law said.

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About 6,000 Baptists live in Paraguay, which has a population of 3.5 million. About 98 percent of the population has ties with the Roman Catholic church, with only 20 percent saying they are faithful Catholics, Law said.

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Hamblin Says Missionaries Are Strangers In Secular Society

By Joe Westbury

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DOUGLASVILLE, Ga. (BP)—Newly appointed home missionaries were reminded that although they are strangers in a secular society, they can take courage that they are on a divine mission from God.

Robert Hamblin, vice president for evangelism with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, compared the 80 new home missionaries to first century Christians who found themselves exiles from a secular society—but chosen by God for a higher calling.

"It's all right to be strangers in our society because God has chosen to save us, to set us apart, so we can go back into that society equipped with the power of Christ," he said. "No enemy can defeat us in our mission to bring the gospel to a hurting and dying world."

During the Home Mission Board's fall commissioning service, 80 missionaries were encouraged to serve on their respective mission fields in 24 states and Puerto Rico.

"Perhaps the most romanticized role in Southern Baptist life is that of a missionary," said Hamblin. "Though their places of service are romantic to many of us, their work is extremely difficult because they are sent to places where the gospel is unknown and where others do not want to go."

During the service two of the missionaries, Diane Allen of Winston-Salem, N.C., and Randy McCollum of Gadsden, Ala., told of their personal calls to missions.

Allen, who works in a Christian social ministries center in Chelsea, Mass., said the inner-city church in the Boston area recently has grown from 12 to 55 in attendance.

"We do not live in the best part of town, but we live with the people to whom we minister," she said. "There is widespread drug and alcohol abuse in our neighborhood, and our home was recently broken into, but we are convinced our living testimony is needed in the inner city."

"There is no greater witness to a broken community than my love for my husband, his love for me and our love for Jesus Christ," she said. "We want the people of our community to see the power of his love in our lives."

McCollum, who works in the North Central and Miami Baptist associations in Indiana, attributed the role of his home church as God's greatest influence on his life. "I stand before you today because those church members took the time to nurture me and to set the examples I needed for my life," he insisted.

McCollum encouraged people attending the commissioning service to "look at the children around you today—listen to them, be sensitive to them, encourage them, so they in years to come may be able to reach out and love others in the name of Christ."

The service was held at First Baptist Church of Douglasville, Ga., in the western suburbs of Atlanta.

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Wheelchair, Partnership Change Lives In Senegal

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
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DALLAS (BP)—A wheelchair and Partnership Missions volunteers from Texas have had a role in sharing the gospel with Moslems in Bignona, Senegal, in West Africa.

The incident sprang out of the ministry of Texas volunteers who built a new Baptist ministry center this year in Dakar, the capitol of Senegal.

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Missionaries have found the Moslems who make up more than 90 percent of Senegal's population will not attend churches, but they flock to ministry centers to take courses in English, nutrition and job skills. Subsequently, many will join in Bible study.

While 100 Texas Baptist volunteers were building the new Baptist center in Dakar, some of them also touched the lives of people about 200 miles to the south in Bignona.

Southern Baptist missionaries in Bignona had long experienced difficulty in breaking through the wall of Moslem tradition with the gospel.

Then 16-year-old Pap Sow showed up at the Baptist center, reports missionary Martha Jones, whose husband, Robert, is a nutritionist. His work and that of Ken Sanderfer of Lufkin, Texas, a specialist in agricultural evangelism, led to a desire by villagers of nearby Bougoutoub for Bible study.

"Pap made an impression on us from our first days here because of his wide, warm smile and his daily presence at our Baptist center," says Martha Jones. "His smile and presence were extraordinary to us because they existed despite his personal circumstances." Pap is crippled. Because of two withered, toothpick-like legs, he spent the first 16 years of his life dragging himself on the ground wherever he wanted to go.

"His life changed drastically on June 29, and being a part of that change has been one of the highlights since our arrival in Senegal," she says.

The Joneses looked for a wheelchair for Pap but found only one in the country, and the cost was outrageous. In April they were visited by some of the Texas Baptist volunteers helping to build the Baptist center in Dakar. The Joneses told the Texans about Pap.

Back in Texas, the volunteers began looking for a wheelchair and encountered a neighbor selling one. When he heard it was for a crippled boy in Africa, he insisted on giving it.

Another group of Texas Baptist volunteer builders transported the chair to Senegal.

"Many may think the arrival of this chair in Bignona was good fortune or just a series of favorable coincidences," Martha Jones says, "However, Robert and I, having prayed for a wheelchair for Pap, believe it was an answer to that prayer and evidence of God working his will through many concerned people."

But the greatest miracle was yet to come. The Joneses and the Sanderfers decided to present the chair to Pap after Sunday worship June 29. Having sought the permission of his Moslem family and inviting them to come, the missionaries waited with great anticipation.

To the missionaries' knowledge, none of the nationals who attended services were Christians, although some had been hearing the gospel for years. Although usually in French, services that Sunday were in Wolof, the language of the largest tribal group in Senegal. Pap's mother, sister and uncle were there and heard the gospel for the first time.

"Though to this day we really don't know much that was said since we don't speak Wolof," Martha Jones says, "we do know that God's Spirit was there, and he touched lives."

"That was one miracle. The other was that Pap's life has changed forever. How exciting that following week to see him all over town in the wheelchair whereas before he had been confined to a half-mile stretch from his house."

Oklahoma Students Donate
Books To Yellowstone Campus

By Leanne Lewis

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(OBU)

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)—Oklahoma Baptist University students recently combined efforts to get rid of their books—books they gave to a fledgling sister university to compile a library school officials hope will help gain institutional accreditation.

Yellowstone Baptist College in Billings, Mont., founded in 1982, has a goal of being an accredited institution in three to five years, and building a strong library is a major factor in achieving that goal.

Oklahoma Baptist students, led by Assistant Professor of Education Gary Doby, began a book drive and brought more than 2,200 books to donate to the college's library. Those 2,200 books represent a 10 percent increase in the library's total holdings, said David James, director of OBU's Baptist Student Union.

Doby was a member of a mission team that went to Billings last summer to help with construction work on the school's dorms. While he was there, he learned from YBC President Bill Robbins the school needed books as part of the criteria for accreditation.

"I thought OBU could help with that," Doby said. "We're the nearest Southern Baptist college to them, and they have nine or 10 states plus Canada that they could serve. The problem is that there are few Southern Baptist churches there and the association does not support them. So they get all their support from mission efforts, donations and drives like this one."

OBU faculty and students responded to the drive, which had a challenge goal of 1,000 books and donated any kind of books from textbooks to book-of-the-month selections, he said.

In addition, James; Dale Griffith, a former Baptist Student Union intern; and two students, Odus Compton, a junior from Ardmore, Okla., and Bart Trentham, a junior from Clinton, Okla., led a Thursday-through-Sunday revival at Rimrock Baptist Church in Billings during OBU's fall break, Oct. 16-19. Although the mission team worked in the church, they placed emphasis on working with students from YBC, Eastern Montana College and Rocky Mountain College, the three colleges in Billings, James said.

Originally Montana Bible Institute, founded in 1974, YBC became a Southern Baptist institution in 1982 and started with five students. It currently has 30 students enrolled, with 15 full-time students. The campus has a men's and a women's dormitory, a gym/cafeteria and an educational building, and the president lives in a mobile home.

Although the college's student housing can accommodate about about 60 people, only 10 students currently live in the dorms. Teachers from other campuses, pastors and community people are used as faculty because the school has no full-time faculty, James said.

"They literally are living month by month," he added. "Their bills for heating in the winter months are atrocious."

However, despite the hardships of the young institution, three students graduated last year.

The library, under the leadership of Ida Owens, a Mission Service Corps volunteer, grew from no books to more than 17,000 books in four years. Because of Owens, the library was organized, and books were placed from boxes onto shelves. She found a magazine rack and a receiving desk at an auction and bought them herself for the library.

YBC is functioning in a sparsely populated state with little Christian influence where the largest cities—Billings and Great Falls—have populations of about 90,000 people each.

James said OBU graduates might serve for one-year terms during the next three years to help John Brubaker, the Baptist Student Union director of all three campuses, with student work. By the end of three years, he said, he hopes YBC can cultivate leadership among its graduates to carry on the work.

Children's Sunday School Literature
 Called Biblically Based, Evangelistic By Frank Wm. White

N-BS-B

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—From the publication of the first "Kind Words for the Sunday School Children" more than 100 years ago to the current materials, the stated goal of Sunday school for children has been to help them know God and understand their relationship with him.

Writers for the two lines of children's Sunday school curriculum published by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board were encouraged to strengthen the focus on Bible study and evangelism during the annual writer training conferences in Nashville, Tenn.

Preliminary results of a curriculum evaluation process indicate needs in those areas, children's curriculum editors at the board said. The board's children's curriculum sections have participated with the entire Sunday school department for the past six months in an evaluation of Sunday school literature.

Recommendations for possible changes will be complete next year for introduction in October 1991. However, some things learned from the evaluation can be implemented immediately, editors told the 44 writers who will prepare materials for 1988-89.

More than 1,000 responses to informal surveys, an additional 1,000 responses to a telephone survey, more than 600 responses to a mailed research survey and information from listening sessions in 12 locations have provided definite opinions about Sunday school literature strengths and weaknesses, Ginny Davis, children's foundation curriculum section supervisor, told writers.

Users exhibit high degree of acceptance of materials, but some of the editors' concerns are with effectiveness of the project teaching approach, the particular needs of sixth graders and first graders, applications of Bible material and the need for help in conveying an evangelistic message, Davis said.

Two immediate goals for writers of the Bible Searchers, Bible Discoverers and Bible Learners materials will be to strengthen the evangelistic message of each session and to offer help in use of Bible learning projects, she told the writers.

"We feel what we have is good, but we believe we can improve it," added Beth Cole, Children's Bible Study editor, who spoke to writers for that curriculum series. She emphasized the changes writers will incorporate for the 1988-89 curriculum will be to strengthen what they already are doing, not to make major changes.

She told writers to focus on communicating the Bible content of the sessions to the children and to give the teachers additional help for explaining the plan of salvation.

Another goal to be implemented immediately is to make the literature as simple as possible to use. "Are there ways we can make it still easier to use?" she asked the writers. "We need to make it easy to use without making it simplistic."

Cole urged writers to provide the warmth of human experience in the literature. "Share what the Bible passage means to you. Focus on the Bible study and make that the most important thing," she said.

Opportunities in each unit to feature God's redemptive plan should be emphasized, she said.