



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #75
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 720-0550
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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Church-starting push
sweeps Mexico City

MEXICO CITY (BP)--Almost 200 Southern Baptist volunteers from at least six states joined forces with Mexican Baptists Aug. 7-14 in a major church-starting effort in Mexico City.

The "Evange-Mex-'88" campaign has produced 13 new churches since January in the metropolitan area, including seven formally organized Aug. 13 while the Americans were there. At least five more will be organized by the end of this year.

Baptists also have launched at least 20 mission congregations and nearly 60 "preaching centers" in formerly untouched neighborhoods. Another 25 preaching points and 100 home Bible studies are projected for 1988.

The Southern Baptist volunteers joined Mexican teams from 46 churches in the Central Baptist and Northwest Baptist associations, along with 48 Mexican volunteers from other parts of the country and a number of Southern Baptist representatives who served as preachers and interpreters. The teams spent five hours each day in door-to-door evangelism in 85 neighborhoods targeted for new congregations. They also helped organize the new churches and missions.

Preliminary reports indicate 5,400 people have made positive decisions about Christ in homes, churches and neighborhoods.

"We had three principal goals," said former missionary Ervin Haste, now a volunteer in Mexico and leader of the church-starting effort. "The first was to proclaim the gospel. The second was to open new work and the third was to organize new churches and missions. I think to a certain extent we have accomplished that."

Haste began planning the metropolitan effort more than a year ago in close cooperation with Mexican pastors and Southern Baptist representatives in the two metro associations. They prepared a detailed Spanish-English manual for citywide evangelism and also produced a comprehensive study of Baptist life in the area with strategies for outreach leading up to the year 2000.

The national Baptist convention has adopted the "Evange-Mex" plan and already is using the evangelism manual in other cities. Convention leaders plan to try out the approach in all major Mexican cities beginning next year.

"It has caught on here," Haste said.

Mike Downey, a church planting specialist for First Baptist Church in Dallas, enlisted 110 of the American volunteers in cooperation with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. They came from Texas, Virginia, Kansas, Missouri and Louisiana. Don Chambers, director of missions for the Panhandle Baptist Association in Oklahoma, brought another 72 volunteers from that state.

"It was wonderful," said volunteer Ann Young, a member of Monument Heights Baptist Church in Richmond, Va. "My husband and I worked in a smaller church in a barrio and it was an experience of renewal for us. The people there were just so receptive."

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Duncan named exec
by Alaska convention

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP)--Bill Duncan, who has been interim executive director of the Alaska Baptist Convention for the past 18 months, was elected executive director-treasurer during the annual meeting of the Alaska Baptist Convention, Aug. 9-10.

During the two-day meeting at Muldoon Denali Baptist Church more than 205 messengers registered, the largest attendance ever in the 43 year history of the convention. Registration was conducted under a new constitution, which redefines the way messengers are qualified for the annual meeting.

The meeting also marked a return to Alaska's August meeting time. Last year, the convention met during the fall, but a snowstorm and the need to drive long distances to attend the meeting caused messengers, as a first item of business, to return to the late summer meeting.

Messengers also adopted a \$1,683,172 budget, of which \$503,805 will be contributed by the 56 churches, 23 church-type missions and 18 preaching points affiliated with the convention. Messengers also approved an increase in the percentage of funds going to support the worldwide missionary, evangelism and educational ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention, upping contributions by a half percent to 31.5.

Duncan, 57, a native of Stuttgart, Ark., has been pastor of churches in Virginia, Oklahoma, Nevada and Arizona. He moved to Alaska in 1967, becoming pastor of Hamilton Acres Baptist Church in Fairbanks. Later, he became pastor of First Baptist Church of North Pole, where he served 10 years.

He left the North Pole church to become director of missions for the Tanana Valley Baptist Association, an area larger than the state of Alabama. In 1985, he joined the staff of the Alaska Baptist Convention as evangelism, Brotherhood and stewardship director, and, in 1987, became interim executive when executive John Allen resigned and left the state.

As executive, Duncan also will continue as director of evangelism.

He and his wife, Betty, have two children and four grandchildren.

In other business, messengers passed a resolution expressing "moral outrage" over the film, The Last Temptation of Christ, and urging all Alaskan Christians to boycott the movie.

Judson Owen, pastor of First Baptist Church of Palmer, was elected to a first full term as president of the convention. Last year, Owen was elected first vice president, but succeeded to the presidency when president Royce Christmas left the state.

Carl Johnson, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Anchorage, was elected first vice president, and Bill Branch, pastor of North Kenai Baptist Church in Nikiski, was elected second vice president.

The 1989 annual meeting will be Aug. 8-9 in Juneau.

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Students challenged to find
God's best for our world

By Bill Bangham

Baptist Press
8/24/88

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Participants at Ridgecrest's 1988 Student Conference were told to beware the trap of technical righteousness and the conflict it has with the righteousness of the Kingdom of God.

"Technical righteousness is more concerned with the code than with the God and Father who gives righteousness," said John Hewlett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Asheville, N.C., and Bible study leader for the week-long conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center. Hewlett's study addressed the theme, "God's Best in Me for Our World."

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Sponsored by the student ministry department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, the conference drew more than 1,500 college and university students from across the nation and several foreign countries.

Hewlett challenged participants to consider the radical nature of Jesus' words: "This gentle teacher got killed because of what he said. He wasn't just another prophet along the Jordan asking people to set goals. You don't kill someone for that."

He also asked them to consider the impact those words may have on their lives: "If you listen to Jesus and follow him you may go back home and find your Christianity has driven a serious wedge between you and your mama," he said.

"The road may be hard, but it leads to the Kingdom of Heaven."

Nearly 120 students responded to the challenge by making professions of faith in Jesus Christ and commitments to service through missions and ministry.

Emmanuel McCall, director of black church relations for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, told participants part of finding God's best was beginning to know God for themselves rather than relying on secondhand impressions from childhood.

"Our earliest impressions of God often follow us the rest of our lives," said McCall. He told them to seek God for themselves intellectually, experientially and intimately. "I was scared of God. You will never know God until you allow yourself to ask questions. I had to discover God for myself."

McCall said even now his search to know God isn't finished. "Oh, I'm more certain, but that quest has not ended as long as there is breath in me." He told them to look toward Christ in their own search and trust the Holy Spirit. "That's our hope. While we are searching for God, he's already seeking us out."

Reid Hardin, director of evangelism support for the Home Mission Board, asked participants to consider that 80 percent of the world's nations will be closed to traditional missionaries in the near future, and to compare that with the way our own nation is closed to professional ministers.

"As I look out at IBM, the court system, the hospitals, I see our world here in closed countries," he said. "Pick up the cross and carry it into IBM, the hospital, the court system. My challenge to you, carry your testimony, your life, back into the marketplace. You can be a light, the missionary for us there."

Echoing Hardin's words, Vic Johnston, Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil, said 95 percent of the world's ordained clergy minister to 5 percent of the world's people here in the United States. "God didn't just choose the most elite people, the most intelligent people, the greatest athletes," he said with tears in his eyes. "I know God has a place for every one of you."

In a closing call to commitment, Gene Bolin, pastor of Metro Baptist Church in New York City, asked what kind of Jesus the participants will offer their world: "A Jesus bulging with stock portfolios, or one bulging with commitment to God?"

Referring to Jesus' example of washing the feet of his disciples he challenged them "to find that little corner of the world and do that thing that needs to be done -- wash feet.

"In this room there are quite enough towels for everyone. And one of them has your name on it."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Brotherhood Commission

(Editor's Note: Following is the first of a two-part series on New Age Religion.)

New Age movements hard
to define but easy to see

By Mark Wingfield

ATLANTA (BP)--Actress Shirley MacLaine's mini-series "Out on a Limb" and last year's "harmonic convergence" popularized a movement with deeper roots than either Dan Rather or Ted Koppel can dig up on prime-time television.

It's called the New Age. Almost no one can give a simple definition, but anyone can see the movement's influence in America.

In 1986, millions of Americans watched MacLaine's mini-series, where she recounted experiences with reincarnation, meditation and the supernatural. Just one year later, nightly newscasts and morning newspapers were filled with pictures of people chanting atop mountain bluffs in New Mexico and California, awaiting a "harmonic convergence" that would bring in a new era.

Since then, New Age has become trendy among housewives, business executives, physicians, educators and musicians looking for answers to life's toughest questions. New Age bookstores have sprung up across the country, peddling everything from the "lost teachings" of Christ to crystals that help people focus the energies of the universe.

The seekers pay hundreds of dollars to attend New Age seminars and lectures. New Age networks keep members informed about upcoming events and new trends. Publishers and national booksellers have capitalized on this interest, churning out hundreds of new titles and reclassifying others.

New Age books, seminars and music emphasize peace, harmony, unity, self-fulfillment and wholeness. Although these sound like Christian ideals, they often have different meanings, reported Maurice Smith, assistant director of the interfaith witness department at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, who has researched New Age extensively.

New Agers are searchers, open to nearly any system of achieving personal peace and global unity. Their quest may or may not include Christianity, Smith said.

One group may favor the teachings of an oriental philosopher; another may listen to the advice of a 50,000-year-old guru whose voice is "channeled" through a modern-day prophet in a trance. Neither devotee will call the other's system invalid.

"The big thing about New Agers is they don't judge others. We're allowing people to search and grow," explained Peter Greene, managing editor of New Age News, a tabloid with a monthly circulation of 13,000.

Greene cites the world's fast-changing, interactive culture as the reason for New Age's growth. "People are saying, 'How can I make my traditional values fit today's changing environment?'" he said.

On the other hand, Smith insisted, New Age movements have gained popularity because people want religion without commitment. "New Age allows you to have some beliefs without believing you are a sinner. It is a non-religious approach to religion."

John Newport agreed. He is vice president for academic affairs at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and author of three books related to New Age.

"New Age appeals to people who want religious experience without some of the strong moral and spiritual accompaniments of authentic religion," he said. "In New Age, there is not much emphasis on judgment or heaven or hell. There is no call for sacrifice or ethical discipline."

Words like judgment and authority don't mix well with New Age. New Agers shun anyone who needs to be right at the expense of making others wrong or who sees deviations from their own dogma as the work of the devil, Greene said.

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The New Age movement blends many traditions into one mosaic. These traditions come from Eastern religions, the 1960s counterculture, mysticism and some occult activity, Smith said.

A recent article in Northwest Magazine described New Age as "a sort of intellectual Velcro dragged across history (which has) picked up odd bits of philosophical lint from unlikely and often contradictory sources."

Two key New Age concepts are that all reality is one and that everything is God, Smith said.

These views contradict the biblical teachings that God is creator and distinct from his creation, he explained, noting, "Human beings are created in the image of God but are not in essence God."

Defining the basic human problem creates another problem between New Age and Christianity, Smith said: "The basic human problem, according to New Age thought, is that you are unaware of your true identity as divine, as one with ultimate reality, which is God," he explained. "From the Bible's perspective, the basic human problem is the reality of our sin."

The solution to humanity's basic problem as Christianity defines it is to trust Jesus Christ as personal savior, Smith said. However, a common solution to the New Age version of humanity's basic problem is reincarnation. According to this teaching, individuals must live multiple lives until they realize the true self and experience enlightenment.

Despite the contradictions between New Age and Christianity, Christians are encountering New Age teachings almost daily, Smith said.

New Age does not confront Christians on the street in the same way Mormon missionaries do, he explained. Rather, New Age teachings are gradually working their way into ordinary places, merging with Christian ideals.

A recent news article illustrates how New Age and Christianity are being pushed together. The article reports on a new book called "Zen Driving," which encourages drivers to meditate while driving and to focus on the feel of the car and road.

The authors insisted that people of all faiths can practice Zen driving. "To be a Buddha behind the wheel doesn't mean you have to take the plastic Jesus off your dashboard," they said.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

Texas Baptists share Christ
with 'The Land Down Under'

By Ken Camp & Terry Barone

Baptist Press
8/24/88

DALLAS (BP)--Two hundred years after Capt. Arthur Phillip and the "First Fleet" sailed into Sydney Harbor to establish Australia as a penal colony, more than 630 Texas Baptists traveled half-way around the world to help Australian Baptists share the liberating power of Jesus Christ with "the land down under."

About 500 Texas Baptist volunteers -- joined by workers from at least eight other states -- teamed up with churches in New South Wales, and an additional 133 Texans served in Western Australia during the 1988 Texas-Australia Partnership Missions Bicentennial Crusades, July 24-31.

Although the exact number of commitments to Christ has not been tabulated, a number of decisions were reported as people stood to testify at partnership missions victory rallies in Sydney and Perth Aug. 1.

"What a joy to realize that in these last eight days, there have been hundreds of people who have been translated by the resurrection power of the Lord Jesus Christ from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of our Lord," said Norm Nix, director of evangelism and church growth for the Baptist Union of New South Wales. "The angels in heaven rejoice, and there is no verse in the Bible that says we cannot rejoice with them."

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"We are thankful for the preparation that has been made here in New South Wales, for the preparation made back in Texas and for all that God has been able to do through us as a result," said Bill Gray, coordinator of partnership missions for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

John R. Robinson, general superintendent for the Baptist Union of New South Wales, told Texas Baptists at the Sydney rally he had been impressed by their warmth, their sensitivity, their generosity, their spirit of cooperation, and their ministry to Australian churches and pastors, as well as to non-Christians.

Although a record amount of rain greeted Texas Baptists to Western Australia, it didn't dampen the spirits of Texas or Australian Baptists involved in the crusades, Partnership Missions participants testified at the Perth rally.

Bob Clark, general superintendent of the Baptist Union of Western Australia, said the partnership helped churches in Western Australia learn they are part of a "bigger Baptist family" since Perth and Western Australia are among the "most isolated cities and territories in the world."

Charles Todd, a member of South Georgia Baptist Church in Amarillo, Texas, once lived in Perth and returned to Western Australia for the crusades. "This has brought us together closer as brothers and sisters in Christ," Todd said. "It is helpful to know that even though we are 10,000 miles apart, we still are part of the same family."

Ken Wright, a layman and Western Australian coordinator of the partnership missions effort, said he was encouraged because almost one third of the Baptist churches in Western Australia responded to the call to participate in partnership missions.

"This partnership has developed enthusiasm to look at other ways to present the Christian witness that is not normally done in our country," said Wright. "But because the Texas teams were here, we felt a sense of confidence to attempt them. "I believe this is the most significant occasion in evangelism Western Australia has ever seen," he said.

Arthur Payne, pastor of Lesmurdie Baptist Church and president of the Baptist Union of Western Australia, said: "The partnership effort was planned to be the central most important week in the life of Lesmurdie for evangelistic outreach.

"We've had non-Christian contact at every occasion with all age groups, and this week has been a great opportunity for evangelism. And the Texas partnership team has capitalized on this in every way and has done it in an acceptable way. The team has fit into the Australian culture, and they have been able to communicate very clearly."

Activities during the eight-day crusade included home visitation, Scripture distribution, breakfasts for men, morning teas for women, home Bible studies, outreach dinners, crafts classes and "fun nights."

One unique experience of many missions volunteers was sharing testimonies in public schools during "Scripture Class," a weekly part of the school curriculum.

"We feel Jesus has done so much in our lives we want to come share him with others," said Roger Sikes, a mission volunteer from First Baptist Church of Seguin, Texas, to a class at Birrong Girls' High School in the suburbs of Sydney. "He is our friend, or as you would say, our mate."

A popular activity at many churches during the crusade was an outreach dinner in which church members invited their non-Christian neighbors to be their guests for a church supper or a meal in a private home.

An unusual variation on the typical church dinner was the "First Fleet" evening at Mortdale Baptist Church in the southern suburbs of Sydney. About 200 people -- including a large group of non-Christians -- attended the event in which church members dressed as convicts and bush rangers. Later in the week, the Texas team serving at Mortdale led a similar costume celebration called a "Pilgrim Fathers' Night."

Another unusual church-sponsored meeting was the Saturday night "bush bash" thrown by Cast Hill Baptist Church on the western edge of the greater Sydney area. The party, which featured hand-clapping, boot-scooting country music by the Gospel Mountain Band drew about 200 people, about one-fifth of whom were known to be non-Christians.

In another unique approach to outreach, ventriloquist Lee Pitts of Brunswick, Ga., used his wooden friend, "Nicky," to share the gospel as part of a student/recent graduate team from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. The team served at Hornsby Baptist Church, north of Sydney.

Due in great part to a home fellowship meeting sponsored by Haberfield Baptist Church in Sydney, an Orthodox Jewish woman in her fifties accepted Jesus as her savior.

"Tania has two daughters who are Christians, and I know they are jumping for joy," said Bob Morton of Audubon Park Baptist Church in Garland, Texas, who led her to faith in Christ. "I'm sure her daughters had been praying for her, just as the members had been at Haberfield."

Calvin Hogue, a Southern Baptist church planter and pastor of The Lakes Baptist Church in Perth suburb, challenged the new congregation in its service on the last Sunday of the partnership to have 200 people in attendance, reflecting Australia's bicentennial year. The congregation, which meets in a primary school, had 8,000 brochures printed, and church and team members spent the week distributing them to the community in hopes of reaching the goal.

"We had 220 in attendance, and 15 to 20 were first-time families," Hogue reported. "We praise God for it."

Bruce Irving, pastor of First Baptist Church of George West, Texas, whose team served in Karratha, 1,000 miles north of Perth, said, "We had a great time and probably have done some things that Australians have not done ... like eat kangaroo stew."

Irving told of a man for whom the Karratha Church had prayed for two years who came to know Christ as his savior during the week.

D.L. Lowrie, director of the Texas Baptist State Missions Commission challenged Texas and Australian Baptists at the final night victory rally in Sydney to let God take their lives and lead them.

"As we come to the close of this partnership, I hope we'll be able to go back home with a commitment not to feel rest, not to find a place of comfort until all those billions out there who have not heard know what we know," he said. "This is no place to stop."

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Baylor cancels
Nelson concert

Baptist Press
8/24/88

WACO, Texas (BP)--Baylor University has canceled a November concert at the university by country/western singer Willie Nelson.

Baylor officials would not elaborate on the reasons for canceling the concert, but the decision followed recent protests and picketing of Nelson events by police officers protesting a benefit concert staged by Nelson on behalf of a prison inmate involved in the death of two FBI officers. FBI Director William Sessions is a Baylor graduate.

The concert was to have benefited the depositors of the failed Leroy Bank, a private bank northeast of Waco. It has been rescheduled for Nov. 14 in Heart of Texas Coliseum in Waco.

Baylor President Herbert H. Reynolds issued a statement about the canceling of the event: "As a widely known and popular entertainer, Mr. Willie Nelson has had an unusual opportunity to influence the people of this state and nation, and particularly young people, to be responsible, law abiding citizens.

"It is our hope that he will use his influence in the future to strengthen the moral fiber of our nation.

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"Baylor University sympathizes greatly in the Leroy, Texas, community whose bank deposits have been lost, but our concern for the health and well being of the American people is an overriding one."

Eugene Baker, director of public relations for the university, said the cancelation had no connection with Sessions, and that "he has not been involved at all."

Baker added, however, that information about Nelson's benefits had come to light after the original agreement with Nelson for the concert had been made.

Nelson, who grew up in nearby Abbott, was a student at Baylor during the spring of 1954, Baker noted.

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Times changing in U.S.S.R.,
says visiting Baptist pastor

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
8/24/88

DALLAS (BP)--Baptists in the Soviet Union see positive steps toward greater liberty under the current policies of glasnost, or openness, and perestroika, or restructuring, according to an Estonian pastor visiting in Texas.

"Times have changed so," said Ants Rebane, who ministers in a Baptist church in the northwestern Soviet republic of Estonia. "There are very great changes ... day-to-day changes ... positive changes."

Rebane temporarily is in the United States to study at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. He and his wife, Oilme, spoke recently at Richardson Heights Baptist Church in Richardson, Texas. The Rebanes had become friends with the church's pastor, Phil Lineberger, when he stayed in their home during a Baptist World Alliance tour of the Soviet Union in 1982.

Rebane said one clear indication of greater openness is that the Soviet press is reporting "bad news" about the U.S.S.R. for the first time. He also pointed to the June summit in Moscow involving President Ronald Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev as a positive sign.

Rebane experienced the new openness firsthand when he applied for a visa. He recalled that in 1968 when he asked for permission to leave the Soviet Union to study at International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, officials took 10 years to grant his request. A later request to study at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., was similarly delayed.

When he asked permission for his current study leave, Rebane's request was handled promptly. Furthermore, although he had expected to be able to stay in the United States only two months for a summer semester, his travel documents were issued with no expiration date.

"I am not a prophet to say how long I can stay in the United States," he said. "I only know the Lord opened the doors that we had tried to struggle with many times."

Estonia is home to 74 Baptist churches with a total membership of about 6,000, he said. That number has been in steady decline for several years and is a matter of concern to Estonian Baptists.

"We have more old persons in our churches," he said, pointing to the difficulty in reaching young people who are trained in officially atheistic schools. "We hope and pray that our membership will start growing."

Rebane was cautiously optimistic about the ability of the Baptist churches in his country to attract young people: "Many of the youth have lost the ethic of Christianity and lost the morality of Christianity. The schools are teaching them about atheism. But today even though the society is atheistic, it does not always seem as antagonistic toward Christianity. The people have lost their way, and I feel they are looking."

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Estonian young people are "thirsty for contact with the West" and that they are interested in the music and fashions of the United States and Western Europe, he noted. Many youth dream of studying abroad, he said, citing this as an opportunity for them to be exposed to Christianity in a non-atheistic society.

Due to the great interest Estonians have in Western society, church groups from the United States who visit his homeland tend to attract positive attention, Rebane said: "Believers in our country are very glad if groups come to visit us and share about the life of other Christians in other countries. When we have guests from abroad, many people come to church to hear and see the visitors."

One need in Estonia is for trained pastors, he said. To help meet that need, Baptist pastors are hoping and praying they will be able to start a seminary there in the near future.

Bibles and theological books are somewhat more readily available to Christians in Estonia today than in the recent past: "We still have the Bibles that belonged to our mothers and grandparents before the war. Also, a person can bring one Bible into the country and give it as a present to someone."

Christians play an unusual role in Soviet life, Rebane pointed out. While the society is officially atheistic, constitutional guarantees grant individuals the freedom to be religious, non-religious or anti-religious.

"Nobody can take from me my belief as a Christian. I can be a Christian, but the social understanding in my country is atheistic," he said. "At the workplace, a person cannot hold a higher position if he is a Christian. He cannot get a leadership position. And our teachers cannot be Christian. They must be atheistic."

In his Sunday evening sermon at Richardson Heights Church Aug. 7, Rebane took as his text the words of the Apostle Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians: "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair."

Soviet Christians do not see themselves as sufferers, but simply as followers of Jesus Christ, he said.

"We are not in despair because we are Christians," he explained. "I am happy because I am never alone. I am in my Lord."

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NC missions thrust
extends to year 2000

Baptist Press
8/24/88

DOWNERS GROVE, Ill. (BP)--North Central Missions Thrust, a plan to double the number of Southern Baptist churches and members in seven north central states between 1975 and 1990, has been extended for an additional ten years.

Executive directors and state missions directors of the states -- Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota-Wisconsin, and Iowa -- met in Downers Grove, Ill., and targeted the year 2000 for conclusion of the program to coincide with the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust emphasis.

One out of five Americans live in these seven states, according to Home Mission Board estimates, and 58% of the population there is unchurched.

When North Central Missions Thrust began in 1975, there were 1,784 SBC churches in the seven states. Currently there are 2,127 churches and 264 church-type missions with 538,582 members.

The January 1991 rally, originally planned to celebrate the completion of North Central Missions Thrust, becomes the next in a series of mass rallies to mobilize churches and leaders in evangelism and church extension. State leaders set a goal of 1,000 churches by the 1991 rally in Merrillville, Ind.

Otha Winningham, executive director of the Minnesota-Wisconsin convention and current president of the North Central Missions Thrust, has said, "With 28 million people without Christ in these strategic states, we must renew our efforts to share the gospel and plant new churches."

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Texas Baptists OK
allocation to BJCPA

DALLAS (BP)--The Texas Baptist Administrative Committee has authorized allocation of \$10,591 for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs to replace funds cut from the BJCPA by the Southern Baptist Convention in San Antonio in June.

The action of the administrative committee, which handles budget matters between meetings of the Texas Baptist executive board, was a followup to state convention action last fall.

Meeting in Fort Worth, messengers to the 1987 state convention approved a motion by John Leland Berg, pastor of West Oaks Baptist Church in Houston, "to continue Texas Baptists' historical and traditional support for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs" if the SBC chose to allocate funds away from the BJCPA.

In June in San Antonio, the SBC reduced the BJCPA's share of the SBC budget by 10.79 percent or \$48,400. The BJCPA also was denied a 4.25 percent increase in its budget given to other SBC entities, amounting to a total reduction of \$67,457.

Texas' share of the \$67,457 (15.7 percent of Cooperative Program funds) would be \$10,591, the amount approved.

The funds will be taken from earnings from the Wasson Trust and will be forwarded after October 1 to the BJCPA through the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, which functions as the Texas Baptist public affairs committee.

The subcommittee, which studied the situation and recommended the action, also recommended that if further reductions are made in the BJCPA budget that appropriate action be considered.

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