

LESSON 7

THE WITNESS IN LATIN AMERICA: A WITNESS OF INTERPRETATION

PART II

Nicaragua

Opening the work

The first Baptist contacts with Nicaragua occurred in the offshore islands of Corn Island, San Andrés and Ruatan. Not all these islands are under the political jurisdiction of Nicaragua, but they are situated nearby. The islands were inhabited by the Mesquito Indians, whose services Jamaican governors had used to put down the maroon revolts of the eighteenth century.

The islands were a sort of refuge and were easily reached from Jamaica and Bermuda. So the inhabitants latterly betrayed the advent of the African and the European survivals through the centuries as adventurers, pirates, settlers and cast-aways.

The first documented evidence of Baptist work began with the arrival of a Belizean named Edward Kelly in 1852. Kelly was a teacher and lay-preacher who had been sent to Corn Island at the request of a small group.

Kelly's brother Joseph had attended the Mission School in Belize during the pastorate of Alexander Henderson. He was the son of African parents and in time was baptized and ordained, and Edward was associated with him. Edward had gone to Corn Island in 1852, but it was not until 1858 that he was ordained on his return to Belize by Alexander Henderson and then settled as a pastor in Corn Island in 1859. Two years later a small Meeting House was built to house the small congregation of the newly constituted church.

A severe hurricane struck the region in 1865 and destroyed the church building. Leaving Peter Lampson and "Auntie Cinda" in charge Edward went to Ruatan, where Pastor John Warner (1849) and Mr. Francis Cunan (1846) had responded to an invitation for help.

Joseph, Edward's brother, was already there on the request of the Belizean Mission, and so Edward remained with Joseph until he left in 1879 when he returned to Corn Island. On his return, he was immediately recalled to the Ebenezer Church. He did not take up his appointment until March, 1880, urgent family matters having made it necessary for him to go directly to Belize. He returned with two of his daughters and when his third daughter died in 1881, Margaret, his wife, joined them in the island.

The first Baptist contacts with Nicaragua occurred in the _____

(offshore, islands)

UNDERLINE the CORRECT ANSWER to the following statement.

*The Baptist Witness spread to Corn Island from
Jamaica
Belize
Costa Rica
Colombia*

(Belize)

In 1865, Edward Kelly went to _____. He remained there until _____.

(Ruatan, 1879)

The Baptists had had no place of worship of their own since 1865, and were reduced to meeting in the members' homes. But in the late 1870s the Moravians closed down their work and the Baptists were able to use their building. The building belonged to Maria Downs who rented it at forty cents per month, but she later willed the land and building to the Baptists on condition that they care for her until she died and look after her burial. This was in 1892. She died in 1897.

After that time the church went through several changes, but always at the centre was Edward Kelly. In 1895 a controversy arose concerning the right to begin another "Sunday School" in the Baptist Chapel. The Principal, Mr. L. E. Aldrich, wished to do so, but Kelly objected on the grounds that although the school was subsidized by government, it was owned by the Baptists whose right it was to decide what happened in it. In 1897, a similar incident occurred. This time Mr. W. B. Morgan, a Jamaican teacher, wanted to begin a private school in the Southside Chapel and the governor had been approached and agreed. Kelly objected again on the same grounds but gave in when a rent of ten dollars per month was paid to him.

J.B.M.S.

It was clear that Kelly was growing old and he sensed it and wrote to the Jamaica Baptist Union for a successor. The Union sent the Rev. John P. S. Williams, who arrived on October 6, 1899.

Williams laid out a plan of action which included a new church building, Mission House and outbuildings. He also tried to separate the North and South congregations and to make them two churches, but he failed. He did not remain long as pastor. An illness and disagreements in the congregation forced him to resign and he went to the United States.

Kelly was asked to act as pastor again until the pulpit was filled. And immediately he faced a crisis. Before Williams had left, he had befriended a Dr. D. H. B. Miller who offered himself as pastor. The congregation, however, would not receive him because he had not been sent by the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society. As a result the church split and some of the South side members broke away and formed a nucleus which later became the Anglican Church in Corn Island.

In 1902, the Rev. F. H. Edwards arrived to succeed to the pastorate, but left in April, 1903. Seeing that the work was in such a state, the J.B.M.S. sanctioned a visit by A. N. McDonald, the J.B.M.S. missionary who was stationed in Costa Rica. He arrived in April, 1903 and stayed until June 21. Rev. Edwards who had not left took part in the discussions and it was agreed that a new system of financing be devised to undergird the Mission.

It appears that the J.B.M.S. had hoped that McDonald would have been able to stay, but the people objected to an unmarried minister and so in the interim he did his best

Edward Kelly was always at the _____

(centre)

*UNDERLINE the correct answer.
Kelly wrote for help to:*

*The National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A.
The American Baptist Missionary Society
The Southern Baptist Convention
The Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society.*

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Kelly was asked to act as pastor _____

(again)

The people objected to an _____ minister.

to help. In August, 1903 McDonald reported by letter to the church that the original missionary was not coming, but that a John McCaulay would come. He arrived on February 22, having graduated in 1895 from Calabar.

McCaulay reorganized the work. He held services on the North and South side every Sunday. He read out each year the subscription of each member, as was done in some Jamaican churches. He read out also the number of times each member attended at the Lord's Table. And if members were ill and could not attend they were taken, "Sick Communion." Discipline was severe. Quarrelling, malice, dancing at weddings, as well as lying, fornication, adultery and stealing earned the same punishment.

In 1904, McCaulay's wife whom he had left in Jamaica died. He set sail for Jamaica on June 22, 1905 to bring back his daughters. On June 27, the schooner *Wander* in which he was travelling from Bluefields to Colon capsized and he was lost.

The Nicaraguan government had passed a law in October, 1904 that no new missionary would be allowed into the territory. Nevertheless, permission was granted to the Corn Island Church to contact Jamaican Baptists. In the meantime, Edward Kelly continued to act. In 1905, Elder Bell of the Canadian Board arrived from Bluefields expecting to be called. But the islanders refused to call him and so he returned to Bluefields. In 1906, the church was admitted as a member of the Jamaica Baptist Union, but later that year another letter came to say that the church should write to England to secure a minister as they could not persuade any minister in Jamaica to come. A hurricane hit the region in October, 1906 and destroyed most everything, but it seemed that it persuaded Mr. Bennett to consider to come. Unfortunately, he changed his mind. In 1907, a letter arrived from Mr. Bennett explaining his reasons.

Later that year, Thomas Livingstone, son of Philip Livingstone, who had started the work in San Andres, wrote and sent a letter of introduction by George Wright whom he had hoped they would call. All went well until he offended Kelly and the Mission was again in the hands of the old man.

Between 1908-1912, Kelly kept the work going. He rebuilt the churches after the 1906 hurricane, started cottage prayer meetings and in 1910, although not an agitator, was consulted on the petition to the government concerning the laws guaranteeing the freedom of religion and education.

National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A.

In 1912, Kelly contacted the National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A. who promised the church a pastor. The pastor did not arrive, but W. R. Richardson arrived in April that year and stayed until August. He was a good preacher and drew the crowds. On his return to the States, Richardson enrolled the church in the National Baptist Convention and in the meantime the church invited

(unmarried)

McCaulay reorganized the _____

(work)

The Corn Island Church was permitted to contact _____ Baptists.

(Jamaican)

Kelly kept the work _____

(going)

The National Baptist Convention of the U.S.A. promised the church a _____

him as their pastor. Dr. Richardson stated his terms, but before the church could reply, Thomas Livingstone visited the island for one day and drew the largest crowd up to that time seen in any one meeting. He urged relations with the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society. Dr. Richardson had wanted a salary and any other job he did to be computed separately. Further, he wanted his medical practice to be carried on without let or hindrances at the Mission House. He was not called.

The church remained vacant until 1917, during which period, Mr. Lampson, the secretary carried on. Kelly had deteriorated just before his death in 1914, due to the death of his daughter and later his wife.

In September 1912, Lampson had gone to Bluefields and had discussed with James Veitch, a Jamaican schoolmaster who had gathered a nucleus of eighteen Baptists about him, the possibilities in Corn Island. But Kelly had vetoed any such move.

In 1917, Edward Bradford James, who had been at the Salkolo Mission in Congo came to help. Mr. James had served as assistant to Rev. George Henderson of Brown's Town, Jamaica and was qualified in dentistry and medicine. He remained until he died in 1921. His wife returned to Jamaica and died in 1932.

Mr. James was succeeded by George Stone, an Englishman, who had served with the J.B.M.S. in Cuba in 1921. He remained until 1925. The church remained without a pastor for four years until David Morgan, a son of Corn Island, accepted the pastorate in 1921 on his graduation from Calabar Theological College in Jamaica.

Morgan developed the work still further. He introduced commercial subjects in the school, started an Infant section and organized a Lay Preachers' Union. Confronted by Seventh Day Adventists, Morgan initiated a teaching programme against their doctrines.

The American Baptist Missionary Society

In 1932, Baptist Missionaries from Managua connected with the American Baptist Missionary Society visited the work and Morgan was invited to meet with Arturo Parajón and C. S. Scott in Bluefields. There the A.B.M.S. requested that he supervise the Baptist stations in Bluefields and Puerto Cabazas to which the church agreed provided his expenses were paid and his salary supplemented. But this did not occur due to the financial crises of 1933. Morgan left for extended leave in September, 1933 with a wife and three children and he did not return.

In 1937, Deacon W. B. Morgan reported that Rev. C. A. Russell would be willing to come if certain requirements were met. He did not come. Finally on December 29, 1938 a member of the Local Preachers' Union, Mr. Fernando G. Dawns was elected to carry on and was ordained a Deacon. Dawns carried on until 1945. Although in 1943, it was hoped that T. H. Duncanson, who was about to retire

(pastor)

Identify the following:
James Veitch _____

Edward Bradford James _____

David Morgan _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Missionaries of the American Baptist Missionary Society visited the Corn Island work in _____

(1932)

Identify Fernando G. Dawns. _____

from the work in Bocas-del-Toro might have considered the pastorate.

In 1945, Robert Dawns wrote saying that Longworth Allen Dawns and his wife Petronila Ruiz were available for the pastorate. The Dawns were graduates of the Baptist Seminary in Managua. He did not remain for long due to financial pressures, but in the short time improved the missionary outreach of the church.

Dawns resigned in 1950 at the request of the church. Later that same year Clarence Whyllie and David Morgan visited the church on behalf of the J.B.M.S. Not much came out of this visit and the church remained under the supervision of Deacon Dawns.

Southern Baptist Convention

In 1953, an approach was made to the Foreign Mission Board of the S.B.C. and the response came in a visit for Charles McCollough who was stationed in San Andres. He suggested that the church might have a "contract" worker, but before these arrangements were made the church called Rodwell Morgan, a Corn Islander, a graduate of a Guatemalan Seminary and Calabar Theological College. Morgan further organized the church laying stress on education, finance and discipline. Unfortunately, in 1961, Morgan had domestic problems which forced him to resign and he was succeeded by Rev. and Mrs. Roland Bryan.

Since then the work has been stable, subsidized by the Southern Baptist Convention and in close contact with other Baptists.

It has already been noted that in 1932, the Northern Baptist Convention "discovered" the older Baptist work of the islands. This new work had been the direct result of the 1916 Congress on Missions held in Panama.

At the Congress the women delegates of the A.B.C. met Miss Eleanor Blackmore, an English nurse who was sustaining a Baptist Mission singlehanded in Managua. On their return the women proposed that they adopt Miss Blackmore and support the work. In anticipation a fact finding tour was made by the Mr. Gilbert Bink and the Mission was adopted.

On Sunday, January 14, 1917, a new cause was started in Managua with forty-two members. Two outstations were also organized, one at Mesaya, and the other at Diriamba; each with thirty-five members. Three local preachers were also adopted: José Mendoza (who was sent to the U.S.A. for training), Refugio Morales and Manuel Ledesma. Attached to each centre was a school which was supervised by locals. Miss Blackmore herself was employed as a supervisor and she travelled to each point. By 1920, the Witness had spread to Granada and Leon. There were now seven churches and one hundred and twenty-five baptized members. This growth necessitated the appointment of Miss Dora DeMoulin to assist in the school work.

Over the years the work has developed due to the work of David Wilson of the Home Mission Board of the American

(Compare your answer with the text.)

The Foreign Mission Board of the S.B.C. was approached in _____

(1953)

A new cause was started in Managua with _____ members.

(forty-two)

Baptist Convention. Today there exist about nineteen churches with more than 2,000 members. There is a hospital in Managua, primary and secondary schools, and a small seminary.

Brazil

North Americans

The Baptists of Brazil sprang from two roots. There was firstly the work of Thompson, the intrepid colporteur, who in 1817 worked as an educator, evangelist and pastor in the country. Unfortunately, Thompson did not establish a well defined work. The second strand which was a more established work began with the arrival of Thomas Jefferson Bowen under the auspices of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1859.

There had been Baptist interest in Brazil as early as 1850. But it was not until 1859 that work began. Unfortunately, the Bowens had to return to America and the venture was abandoned. It was not until another twenty years that a further attempt was made. This time the work began as an extension of the American Church.

Consequent on the Civil War of the 1860s, the Southern States of the U.S.A. suffered tragic destruction. Some Southern families migrated because of this to Brazil and established a "colony" in Santa Barbara, in the province of São Paulo. These "colonists" consisted of Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists, and each denomination invited a pastor of its own. It was because of this that a Baptist church was organized on September 10, 1871, in Santa Barbara; and in October it sent a request to the Foreign Mission Board of the S.B.C. for pastoral help. Nothing was done, but in 1879 Richard Radcliffe, who had been serving the Santa Barbara Church as pastor was present at the convention meetings of the S.B.C. and there he made a stirring appeal for help. The result was that the Convention adopted the church, but at the same time would not accept any financial obligations for it.

New directions

Baptist Witness might have remained ingrown and isolated within a North American enclave had not two events occurred. The first was the interest of General A. T. Hawthorne, who had gained permission from the Brazilian government to set up a colony, but had been forced to return to the U.S.A. because of ill health, but not before he had gained an insight into the religious conditions. Returning from Bahia, he preached extensively in the U.S.A. and the S.B.C. appointed him their agent in Texas for life. It was Hawthorne who met Anne Luther, who together with her husband William Bagby (1855-1939) were to lay the enduring foundations of the Witness.

This second event was of course the marriage and the departure of the Bagbys for Santa Barbara, because their departure for Brazil at the instigation of Hawthorne provided for the North American church persons who were

IDENTIFY Thomas Jefferson Bowen. _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

A Baptist church was organized in Santa Barbara in _____ of 1871 and asked for help from the S.B.C. in _____.

(September, October)

Is the following statement true or false?
General A. T. Hawthorne had a bearing on the Bagby's decision to go to Brazil. _____

(true)

known and respected, but who were not limited by the narrow horizon of the colonists. By the end of 1881, the year of their arrival in Brazil, at least four services had been held in Portuguese in Santa Barbara in an effort to widen the scope of the Witness.

Once the mission had begun in earnest it continued apace. In 1882, Zachary Taylor and his wife Kate, both Texans, arrived in Santa Barbara and not only joined forces with the Bagbys, but also with a new convert Antonio Teixeira de Albuquerque, a former Catholic priest, who upon his conversion had renounced his vows and had been baptized and joined the Baptist church. He had come to the faith through the reading of the Scriptures and discussion with Mello Lins, the minister of the congregation in Pernambuco. Indeed, Antonio might be called the first truly Brazilian Baptist.

The situation now existed where the Baptist Witness had three couples and a large country before them in need of the truths which Baptist announce. It was decided after several exploratory trips to set up headquarters in the city of Bahia. So a house with three floors was rented, the second and third floors being used as living quarters. This left enough room to house a bookroom, a schoolroom and a room large enough to accommodate 200 persons as a sanctuary.

The preaching was shared by Bagby and Teixeira, but the response was poor for the first three months. Despite this, it was decided to constitute a church. And so, on October 15, 1882, the first Brazilian Baptist church was established. The church grew slowly amid harassment by the authorities and the abuse levelled by the Roman Catholic priests. But it continued, and this for two reasons.

The first reason was the importance the church laid upon literature. Teixeira began to write and to publish tracts and books which were disseminated among the intelligentsia. For instance, his *Three Reasons Why I left the Church of Rome*, which is a treatise on the importance of Scripture and the meaning of inspiration and authority, spoke to a real national spiritual need. Unfortunately, it was seen too often as a diatribe against Catholicism, which was not its real purpose. Bagby by December 1882, was pressing for a translation of a Baptist catechism for children and the need for a Baptist history. A few weeks later, he wrote and circulated a translation of *Our Confession of Faith and Bible Doctrines*.

Expansion

By 1883–1884, the work had grown so large and established that Bagby, who was the undisputed leader of the Witness, began to suggest that the Witness ought to be taken to other centres of the country. He suggested an expansion to Rio de Janeiro and got permission to begin a work there in 1884. Bagby arrived in Rio on July 24, 1884 and began the Witness in the home of a Congregationalist until he was able to secure a suitable house. This did not take long and on August 24, of the same year, the First

The Bagbys were not limited by the narrow horizon of the

(colonists)

Zachary Taylor and his wife joined forces with the Bagbys and _____

(Antonio Teixeira)

A headquarters was set up in the city of _____

(Bahia)

On October 15, 1882, the first Brazilian Baptist church was _____

(established)

Give two reasons stated by Russell for the slow response to the Baptist Witness in Rio de Janeiro. _____

Baptist Church of Rio was constituted, with Dr. and Mrs. Bagby, Miss Mary O'Rourke and Mrs. Elizabeth Williams, the English Congregationalist, whose house had been used during the preceding month. The church did not appeal to Brazilians, however, and Bagby felt this keenly. He wrote to the Mission Board in Richmond about this time that he had "an ardent desire" to baptize the first Brazilian in Rio, but that there did not appear to be that interest. There were two reasons for this. Firstly, Bagby was alone and he was overstretched and could not concentrate as he had done in Bahia, and secondly, the church was very much a European affair and this did not fit into the cultural and racial mix in Brazil.

But this did not mean that the Witness was without its effect. There was Mesquita, who had been a Presbyterian and who decided to become a Baptist, and the Rev. E. H. Soper, of the British Sailor's Society, a Baptist, who threw in his lot with the group. Soper was most supportive, an enthusiastic evangelist, a preacher and integrated within the English community. Mesquita was a Brazilian but neither of the two brought to the Witness the impetus that it needed.

The pleas of Bagby were at last heard and in 1885, the Foreign Mission Board of the S.B.C. sent three new missionaries to Brazil. Unfortunately, these did not strengthen the work in Rio, as by this time there were four new churches which had been constituted and requests had been received to begin new Witness points in the interior. And these took priority.

In 1889, a new Republic was proclaimed and the years 1890 to 1907 saw another development of Baptist churches. By that time, a church was constituted in Maceio. It began with fifty persons who had a Bible Study in the town. They wrote to the Baptists in Bahia asking for help. Teixeira who was a member of the group voiced their concern and wrote to Mello Lins who had first helped him inviting him to be a member of this study group telling him of his experiences as a Baptist minister. Teixeira then wrote to Taylor suggesting that he make a visit to Maceio and speak with Mello Lins. Lins, who was in fact a Presbyterian, at first refused to be associated with the local church because he differed with the members on the question of baptism. Taylor accepted the invitation and went to Maceio and met with Lins, after which he invited him to Recife and there baptized him on May 6, 1885.

Taylor, on his return, formally constituted a church in Maceio on August 17, 1885, with Teixeira, his wife and son and Mello Lins. The following year Lins was ordained as a pastor and sent to Recife while Teixeira remained as the pastor at Maceio. Teixeira died in 1887, and with his passing the Witness lost its great advocate.

At Recife the work was put in the care of C. D. Daniel, who was an American, but who had grown up in the North American colony in Bahia. Lins graciously remained as his assistant. The work did not grow rapidly until 1893 when Dr. and Mrs. Entminger settled there. Entminger embarked on

(Compare your answers with the text.)

This did not mean the Witness was without its

(effect)

At last, the Bagby's pleas were

(heard)

*Teixeira wrote to _____
He invited Lins to be a member of their
_____ group.*

(Mello Lins, study)

In 1885, a church was constituted in _____

(Maceio)

Entminger embarked on an aggressive evangelistic

an aggressive evangelistic policy and used the printing press to great advantage in printing tracts and selling Bibles. Between 1893 and 1900, seven new churches were constituted. Entminger was succeeded by Solomon Ginsburg, a Russian Jew who was converted in 1891 and joined the Mission. Ginsburg had studied in Germany and England and had been sent as Congregationalist by the Grattin-Guinness College to Brazil. He was, however, in doubt on the baptismal question and after sometime he sought baptism by Taylor and became associated with the work in Bahia and Alagoas. Ginsburg brought to Baptist Witness several gifts. He had already composed some hymns in Portuguese and was an accomplished type-setter, a job at which he had worked in London. These skills enhanced the work.

Opposition

Baptist Witness in Pernambuco had problems all its own. The church at Nazareth was stoned and the local newspapers attacked the Baptists for using and distributing false Bibles. This caused a lively debate in the press which eventually led to violent confrontation in the street.

Friar Celestino di Pedaroli, the local priest, organized the League against Protestantism which encouraged opposition to all Protestants and organized public ceremonies for Bible burning.

This act aroused public sympathy for the Baptists and served to increase the sale of Bibles, and when the validity of the League was raised in the National Congress, it was condemned as a violation of the Constitution of the Republic. Perhaps, the fact that Recife has become an important theological and educational centre for Baptists is due to the intellectual battles which were won in the newspapers of the State.

Phenomenal growth

The phenomenal spread of Baptist Witness in Brazil was in a large measure due to its early leadership, organization and support from the Southern Baptist Convention. Five things may be isolated: (a) the quality of trained leadership with a cosmopolitan outlook at the very outset; (b) the role of the colporteurs, the Bible and the printing press; (c) the definite nature of the preaching and the fearlessness in using available support; (d) the support of the S.B.C. which was a catalyst for the development of a self-supporting work; and (e) the geographical location of the churches at the crossroads of commerce.

A National Convention was organized on June 22, 1907 in Bahia and by this time Baptist Witness had spread to every state in the Republic. The young Convention immediately undertook to organize its own Home and Foreign Missions. At home, attention was focused on the Indians in Goyez and Maranhao, and other Witness was started in the Mato Grosso and in Parana. Abroad, attention

(policy)

Ginsburg brought several gifts to the Baptist

(Witness)

The Baptist Witness in Pernambuco had

(problems)

This act aroused public sympathy for the

(Baptists)

List five things contributing to the phenomenal spread of the Baptist Witness in Brazil.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The Baptist Witness had spread to every state in the Republic by this

was focused on Chile at the instance of Rev. W.D.T. MacDonald, a British and Foreign Bible Society representative who had formed a Baptist group there and on Portugal where Z. C. Taylor had constituted a church in Porto in November, 1908.

Panama

The Canal

The Baptist Witness in Panama began in the wake of the migrations stimulated by the construction of the Canal and later by the advent of the United Fruit Company and its banana plantations. In 1879, the French Panama Company was formed to unite the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by a canal through the Isthmus of Panama. The Company sent recruiting agents throughout the Caribbean to persuade workers to enlist and it succeeded in enlisting many hundreds of workers. Most of the workers who went were from Jamaica and Barbados. While at work on the Canal the conditions of work deteriorated. The results were disastrous. Large numbers died from malaria and the insanitary conditions in which they had to live. The social conditions were no better when for the first time many encountered their first evidence of racialism. And when the Company failed in 1889 hundreds were left destitute and disappointed.

In 1903, the American Government reactivated the project and again Caribbean labourers were recruited and this time the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society decided to work alongside the migrants.

The Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society

Baptist Witness in Panama did not really begin in 1903. As early as 1868 Mr. E. Hewitt, one of the British missionaries in Jamaica, had suggested the formation of a Panamanian mission. In the 1880s the Rev. Mr. Teall made a visit under the auspices of the J.B.M.S. and as a result, in 1884, Mr. George Turner was sent to Colon.

It was Turner who had to deal with the hundreds of Jamaican workers who had been abandoned and disillusioned by the bankruptcy of the French Panama Company. Unfortunately, Turner's health broke down and he returned to Jamaica in 1885.

It was not until 1894 that another missionary went out, and then the J.B.M.S. sent Mr. Meredith, who had for sometime served in Cuba. Meredith went to Bocas del Toro, with the understanding that the J.B.M.S. would only be responsible for a third of his salary. Meredith remained for four years and then returned to Jamaica. He was succeeded in 1898 by Mr. E. C. Nottman, who in ten years made the church there a self-supporting one.

Nottman was succeeded by Terence Duncanson, a Jamaican. He was a good student, and after concluding his studies at what is now Morehouse College in Atlanta, was sent to help and eventually to replace Nottman. Within twenty years the Witness had spread throughout the Bocas

(time)

Name two important events that stimulated migrations to Panama from West Indian territories.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The results were

(disastrous)

Jamaican Baptists had thoughts of a mission to Panama as early as

(1868)

Another missionary was not sent until

(1894)

del Toro province and to the Canal Zone.

This Witness remained in close association with Jamaican Baptists until in 1908 the Southern Baptist Convention took over the work in Panama, with the exception of the work in Colon and this was taken over in 1950s.

Baptist Associations

With the coming of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, the Witness began to spread and develop much more. Baptist associations developed in seven areas with a membership which was cosmopolitan and united. Indeed, one of the features of the Jamaican Baptist work was that it included not only West Indians, but also Americans and Indians, all worshipping and planning together. With the spread of this Witness this togetherness was sometimes not possible and churches began to manifest certain "ethnic" characteristics. This was particularly marked in the Canal Zone.

Seven Associations eventually developed. There is, firstly, The Bocas Baptist Association which is mainly in the banana and cocoa plantations of the United Fruit Company. The congregations are by and large descendants of West Indians and are English-speaking churches but in addition, there are churches for Spanish-speaking Panamanians and U.S. citizens.

Secondly, there is the Canal Zone Baptist Association which is composed of about four churches, largely English-speaking, and made up of U.S. citizens. In April 1905, Mr. and Mrs. M. L. Wise, who were the first Southern Baptists to enter Panama settled in the Canal Zone. They were welcomed by S. W. Loveridge, of the J.B.M.S., who had been invited to assume the pastorate of four small churches which had grown up spontaneously in the Canal Zone. Loveridge, who had been in the Canal Zone since 1903, was greatly extended and so the arrival of the Wises was welcomed. In the ensuing years, Wise established the Baptist Witness in the Zone on a firm base. It was he who chose a site in Balboa Heights for the First Baptist Church. This church became the focal point of Southern Baptist work and indeed was served by American missionaries until 1928. In that year the church became independent and on its own initiative called an American. The church despite its obvious limitations has established other churches both within the Canal Zone and Republic, engaging in social projects in the Leper Colony, the Gorgas and Corozal Hospitals, and in a daily radio ministry. The outreach programme of the association has included the sending out of thirty-five gospel witnesses between 1955 and 1965, as well as continued assistance to the Panama Baptist Theological Institute.

This association also includes the First Baptist church of Margarita, where there is both an English-speaking and Spanish-speaking work; the Cocoli Church which ministers largely to military personnel; and the Charges River Baptist Church, which was constituted in 1960.

This Witness remained in close association with Jamaica Baptists until _____

(1908)

Baptist associations developed in _____

(seven, areas)

The Bocas Association is mainly in the plantations of the _____

(United, Fruit, Company)

The Canal Zone Baptist Association consists of _____

(four, churches)

Thirdly, there is the Chiriqui Baptist Association, the newest and smallest group of churches. There are only two churches in this area and the work as yet undeveloped.

Fourthly, there is The Panama Baptist Association which consists mainly of Spanish-speaking churches. Within recent years this association has increased its Witness because the government has insisted on Spanish as the first and official language of Panama. Of this group, the First Church of Panama City is perhaps the strongest, but there are churches in Colón and Buena Vista.

Fifthly, there is The Interior Baptist Association which was organized in 1963. The aim was to take the Witness to the largely untouched interior. At present there are about twelve missions and four churches.

Sixthly, there is the Central Panama Baptist Association which is made up of English-speaking congregations. This association includes four churches on the Pacific side and three on the Atlantic side. This association will soon be phased out because of its language bias.

Seventhly, there is the San Blas Association which consists of the work on the San Blas archipelago. There are about 450 islands which make up the group of which between forty and fifty are inhabited. Baptist Witness first began in 1909 when Anna Cooper, an English missionary, adopted and reared Lonnie Iglesias, from the island of Nargana. The Iglesias family was an important one, and Miss Cooper succeeded in arranging for Lonnie's education in Panama and the U.S.A. She did the same for about two others and they returned to form the nucleus of the Christian leadership in the islands. Christian witness was carried out by Ephraim Alphonse, a Methodist, whose writings on his work are illuminating. Baptist work was carried out spasmodically by Duncanson in the early 1920s, but the main Witness has been that of Dr. and Mrs. Lonnie Iglesias who gleaned their support from several sources. Since January 1955, the S.B.C. has taken over the work and the Witness is being sustained.

It is quite clear that Baptist Witness is still in its infancy in Panama. This is so because for a long time the concept of the Panama Mission was that of a chaplaincy. The Americans sought the spiritual welfare of the Americans and the West Indians the welfare of their own. The other work was not conceived in its own right and even divisions on the present work betray the "segregationist concept." Perhaps, the challenges of both Panamanian nationalism and the interior might force the administration to conceptualize the Mission as one and so to make the necessary adjustments which will present the wholeness of Christ and the Church for the unity of all humankind.

Chile

The Baptist Witness in Chile owes its existence to W.D.T. MacDonald, a Scottish Baptist who had been invited by some Scottish settlers to teach their children. MacDonald arrived in 1888, but his school was soon closed

Name four other Baptist associations in Panama.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The San Blas Association consists of the work on the San Blas _____

(archipelago)

The Baptist Witness in Chile owes its existence to W.D.T. _____

due to a violent revolution which disrupted the society in the 1890s. He did not leave Chile, however; instead he took up employment with the Christian and Missionary Alliance as a colporteur.

MacDonald was a convinced Baptist and because of this was involved in many conflicts. So in 1907, he wrote to Bagby, the Southern Baptist missionary in Brazil inviting him to begin work in Chile. Bagby informed the Brazil Baptist Convention which sent him to Chile to meet MacDonald and the Chilean churches. Bagby met with them and on April 26, 1908, three hundred members and twelve churches constituted themselves into a Baptist Union. Since that time this group has become the Evangelical Baptist Convention of Chile.

The Southern Baptist Convention decided over the course of the years to support the work with money and personnel. MacDonald himself had sought and received some support, but it was not until 1917 that personnel were appointed. In that year William and Mary Davidson went to Santiago and organized, by 1920, the First Baptist Church.

In 1920, the S.B.C. took over the Chilean work formally by appointing McDonald and some of the pastors as its missionaries. In that same year a Baptist academy was built at Temuco which provided a Christian general education.

During the ensuing decade a theological seminary (1939) was opened. Another school was built in Antofagasta, an important seaport town. And a clinic which caters for pre-natal and child care operates out of one of the churches.

Today, the Chilean Convention witnesses through education within and outside the church structure. It operates and maintains a theological seminary. It is involved with publication of Christian literature which it distributes through three book stores. An active radio-television ministry is also maintained.

Costa Rica

The Baptist Witness in Costa Rica had its origins in two sources: (a) the Jamaican Baptists through Panama and (b) the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Jamaican Baptists had followed upon the heels of the immigrants in the 1880s to Central America. Many Jamaicans had gone into the vast banana and coffee plantations of Costa Rica when the first Panama Canal project failed and then later on when the second project was completed. The Revds. E. J. Hewitt and J. H. Sobey were therefore sent out by the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society in 1888 to make a survey of the possibilities in Costa Rica. On their return, Sobey resigned his pastorate in Montego Bay and returned to establish a Witness. He chose Port Limon and with that as a centre, visited the several plantation camps around. In 1893, a second person was sent, Mr. James Hayter, a graduate of Harley College, whose knowledge of Spanish enabled him to reach many whom Sobey could not reach. Soon a large

(MacDonald)

Are the following statements true or false?
When Bagby surveyed the work in Chile, he saw no need to organize a convention. Thus, he recommended that Chilean Baptists become a part of the Brazil Convention.

(false)

The S.B.C. formally took over the Witness in Chile in

(1920)

List two sources of the Baptist Witness in Costa Rica.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

chapel was built in Port Limon. Sobey resigned from the J.B.M.S. in 1899 to become chaplain to the Isthmian Canal Commission and was succeeded by Stephen Witt.

The Baptist Witness, however, continued to be linked with the J.B.M.S. under its successors, MacDonald and William Forde, a Barbadian graduate of Spurgeon's College. In the 1950s the work became severed from the Society and related itself to the Mid-Missions and Conservative Baptists of the U.S.A.

In the meantime in San José, there appeared to have been certain "independent" churches which used Baptist literature and were Baptist in belief, if not in name. One of these invited Aurelio Gutiérrez to teach them Baptist doctrine, and from that small beginning with the help of Paul Bell, in 1944, the work of the Baptists began.

Gutiérrez was a remarkable man; he had attended a Baptist school in Nicaragua and had established a work there. In 1943, he returned home and through him the work was established.

With the recognition of the San Jose Church, the Southern Baptists sent Mr. and Mrs. Earl Hughes and Dr. and Mrs. Charles Bryan between 1948 and 1957 to develop the work.

The early years were not smooth. The Hughes' had to battle with suspicion and other problems. Evangelical groups in San Jose were unfriendly to the presence of the Mission, but in time this was overcome. Hughes developed the Witness along five lines. Firstly, he instituted and maintained regular conferences between the pastors and the churches. Secondly, he established a small seminary, beginning with twelve students in order to sustain the Witness. Thirdly, a weekly radio programme was begun and used to co-ordinate the activities of the local churches and to publicize convention activities. Fourthly, a monthly magazine was published to be supportive of the radio programmes and to stimulate interest. And fifthly, Baptist students were enrolled in the prestigious Presbyterian language school.

Today, these Costa Rica Baptists, though still small, have formed themselves into a Convention of four churches. Yet they have not been related integrally to the earlier Baptist Witness. There is therefore still need for Baptists to see themselves as one Witness and practice.

El Salvador

The Central American Mission established itself in Costa Rica as early as 1896 and from there developed and maintained a number of schools in neighbouring El Salvador, which is predominantly Catholic. Due to the indigenous and political climate it was not until 1911, that the American Baptist Home Mission Society decided to begin a work there.

With the more conducive response the A.B.H.M. developed a strong education work. From this work there has been an outgrowth of forty-nine churches associated with the educational input of the two large schools which

Aurelio Gutiérrez was invited to teach _____

(Baptist, doctrine)

What were five things done by Southern Baptist to develop the Baptist Witness in Costa Rica?

(Compare your answers with the text.)

were established. These churches have formed themselves into the Baptist Association of El Salvador administered by an executive secretary.

In the Spring of 1974, the executive secretary with the understanding of American Baptists invited the Southern Baptist Convention to share the work in El Salvador and to exercise special ministries for Christian literature and evangelism. In 1975, through the inspiration of Charles Bryan, the Area Secretary for the S.B.C., the Cadwalladers volunteered to go to El Salvador. They established a book store, and with the arrival of the Stennetts in 1977, they initiated a national evangelistic outreach.

The work is still weak and has been much affected by the recent upheavals in the country. But it still continues to reach out with Christian literature.

Uruguay

Although Uruguay is perhaps the smallest republic in South America, it holds a strategic place in the political life of the continent. With a large Roman Catholic population it was not until the early years of the century that any Protestant witness was established. This was despite the fact that the State had decreed not only the separation of Church and State, but also the removal of traces of religion from the organization of society.

Baptist Witness was introduced by the Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Quales, Baptist missionaries to Argentina who were seconded to this work. In the same year they organized the First Baptist Church of Montevideo. By 1948, the work had grown to the extent that the Evangelical Baptist Convention of Uruguay was organized.

The Convention was partly related to the Argentinian S.B.C. Mission until 1954, when the work was reorganized. A further reorganization took place in 1975 together with the establishment of a Baptist Communication Centre in Montevideo. By 1976, this centre was handling nearly two hundred telephone calls and letters per week. An extensive programme has been designed to prepare laymen for service in the churches. A theological institute has also been established to cater for the conservative pastoral needs.

The latter 1970s have been years of stimulating growth and at present there are thirty-seven churches, of which twenty-two are self-supporting, in the Evangelical Baptist Convention.

Paraguay

Paraguay dates its Baptist Witness from the arrival of Argentinian Baptists in 1920. There had been some evangelical witness prior to this, but there was no formal Baptist organization. The first Baptist congregation was constituted on October 20, 1920 at Asunción with a group of sixteen men and women. The next twenty-five years the Paraguayan Church was nurtured by Argentinian Baptists and the Witness spread to several sections of the interior. In

List the methods used by Southern Baptists in El Salvador.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Outline briefly the reorganizations through which the Baptist Witness in Uruguay went.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Paraguay dates its Baptist Witness from the arrival of _____ Baptists.

1945, however, Argentine Baptists asked the S.B.C. to take over the work and since that time the work has developed rapidly.

Among the new ventures have been a theological institute (1956) in Asunción which works in co-operation with the International Seminary in Buenos Aires. It has been a centre from which the Witness has spread to other areas through the ministry of the students. It has also provided a programme of theological education by extension which has equipped the churches with dedicated laymen.

There is also a Baptist Hospital which provides quality medical care. The hospital has been accredited by the Ministry of Health since 1956. It was opened and dedicated in 1952. Here there is also a programme of Clinical Pastoral Education (1963) linked with the Seminary in Argentina for pastors and Christian workers.

Supplementing these adjuncts to the churches is a strong evangelistic programme centred in the camps and radio and television. Good use is also made of motion pictures in the open air and music is being increasingly brought into use. But there is not a strong national Witness as yet. It is hoped that with the increasing help of Brazilian Baptists this Witness will stand firmly on its feet.

Venezuela

Baptist Witness began in Venezuela in 1924 when Baptist Mid-Missions entered Bolivar State in the Guayanas. Work was begun first in English among migrants from English-speaking regions and a church was constituted in El Callao.

As the work grew, the Witness extended its scope. By 1940, it had begun to spread through the north-eastern section of Bolivar State, establishing churches pastored by Venezuelans in Guasipati, El Palmer, El Pao, San Felex, and Della Costa among others. The Witness was also established in the large manufacturing centre of Ciudad Guayana. In the delta area churches had already been built, and although the area was difficult to traverse several preaching stations had already been begun.

In 1950, work was begun in the Barrancas area and has spread from there to other rural townships. In 1953, several surveys were made to determine what next to do and to discover how best the work might develop. On the basis of the finding, Mid-Missions acquired a launch to service the delta region and a small Piper Cub aircraft to minister to the Indian population which had been neglected. Steps were also taken to translate the Bible into the Warap dialect and this together with a hymn-book and readers was completed in 1970.

Seminary training was begun in 1944 but had to be closed down for lack of personnel. A school was opened at San Felix in 1952 but this also closed for lack of interest. The Mission has now turned its attention to teacher training.

The Mid-Missions does not exist on its own. Since the beginning, independent groups have grown up. The first indigenous witness has been credited to the late Ruperto

(Argentinian)

List methods used in the Baptist Witness in Paraguay.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The Baptist Witness began in Venezuela with the entrance of Baptist _____

(Mid-Missions)

The Witness extended its _____

(scope)

Work began in Barrancas in _____

(1950)

The Mid-Missions did not exist on its _____

Prato. He began a work in Guasualito. He held his own, but subsequently invited G. A. Homberg of the Evangelical Alliance to visit and to develop a witness.

Meantime a group of young people who had been studying in the Bible Institute in Costa Rica came in contact with Puerto Rican and Cuban Baptists and from them got some idea of what it meant to be Baptist. On their return one of them Domingo Bracho entered into correspondence with Dr. J. E. Davis who was then the director of the Baptist Spanish Publishing House in El Paso, Texas. Bracho invited Davis to make a visit to Venezuela, but this did not happen. Nevertheless, the work was certainly aided by the dissemination of literature produced by the Publishing House in Texas. Through this medium, general education matter, magazines, and true Baptist doctrine were spread and distributed by the Bible Institute students, then in Maracaibo. These young men under the leadership of José Corti slowly pushed the church towards Baptist doctrine.

Corti was called to the pastorate of the Evangelical Church *El Salvador* in Maracaibo from which he continued the doctrinal revolution. From here he started a work in Acarigua, in July, 1944, under the auspices of the Association of Independent Baptists for the Evangelization of the World. This Association was represented in Venezuela and Colombia by James and Helen Carder.

Corti remained in Acarigua for a short time, but had to leave because of ill-health. But he left behind him a church which bore the name "Baptist."

The church at Acarigua then started a church in Barquisimeto, and later one at Guanare, installing Antonio Escalona in that place. In the meantime, Antolin Tovar had started a cause in San Nicholas and when Corti, Nuñez Perez and Escalona visited the church, the members asked for and received baptism. This was a Portuguese-speaking church.

From Acarigua Corti went to be the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Barranquilla which was under the Foreign Mission Board of the S.B.C. And it was thus that the Southern Baptists began their work in Venezuela in 1945.

In 1946, the S.B.C. suggested that for administrative purposes an association embracing Colombia and Venezuela might be most advantageous. At the same time, the Board proposed the establishment of two churches, one in Caracas and the other in Maracaibo. By 1947, a working arrangement had come into existence, but this did not appeal to everybody. In 1949, the Neelys were sent to Caracas as the representatives of the Foreign Mission Board. They were to work with the Venezuelan churches in many and varied projects.

In 1951, however, the Portuguese group and the churches met in Acarigua and pointed out the problems of association with Colombia and formed a National Convention. This was not accepted by all, and together with other matters appears to have caused a split in the work. Nevertheless, between 1951 and 1959, a theological institute was built, a Baptist newspaper founded and an

(own)

Is the following statement true or false?

A group of young people learned Baptist beliefs when they came into contact with Baptists from Puerto Rico and Cuba. _____

(true)

Corti continued the doctrinal _____

(revolution)

It was thus that Southern Baptists began their work in _____

(Venezuela)

"Outreach Plan " was developed.

The years 1959–1964 showed an attempt at self-realization. Neely called together the pastors and people of the several churches to conferences in Caracas. And there he stressed the need for a truly national convention. This did not fall on deaf ears and in October, 1963, both Convention and Mission were again united in their work. This decision was ratified by an Assembly.

Since 1964, the Venezuelan Baptist Witness has grown. There is now a Student Centre at Guanare, a theological seminary and plans to develop churches in other parts of the nation. The Convention has plans to create an institute of social work, a book store and an agricultural centre. The work has come a long way since 1924.

Ecuador

The Baptist Witness in Ecuador began in 1950. The work started among the Quichua-speaking peoples in San José de Cocotog north of Quito, the capital. But this church also served the English-speaking families in the area.

The most concentrated Witness to date exists in Guayaquil (1954), the commercial and industrial centre of Ecuador. Here there are thirteen churches. From this city work has radiated to Milagro, Esmeraldas, Manta and Jipijapa. Other Baptist Witness has been established in Ambato, Riobamba and Ibarra. From each of these centres, there has been rapid development in the north-eastern jungles and Baptists have established nuclei in the new homesteads which have developed as a result.

To organize the work better, a national Convention came into being in 1972 which brought together three regional associations. The Witness has been undergirded by two important organizations. Firstly, a theological institute was formed in 1961 to train leadership for the churches. This institute also provides courses for lay preachers and these offerings are given in several locations. Secondly, the distribution of literature through the book stores in Quito and Guayaquil not only serve the whole "evangelical" population but also provides a basis for the development of Christian thought.

Allied to these two enterprises must be added the provision of popular education through camps at Va Merced and Manglaralto and the Baptist Primary School in Quito. The Witness has developed rapidly during these short years, and it is only hoped that with the help of its mass-media presentations depth as well as breadth will be the mark of this Witness.

Conclusion

Baptist Witness in Latin America has been one of interpretation and has therefore possessed a high educational input, as compared with preaching. The use of mass-communication aids the quick establishment of colleges, seminaries and schools. The provision not only of

In October, 1963, the Convention and Mission were again _____ in their _____

(united, work)

The Baptist Witness began in Ecuador in _____

(1950)

The most concentrated Witness to date exists in _____

(Guayaquil)

The two organizations that undergirded the Witness in Ecuador are: (1) _____ and (2) _____

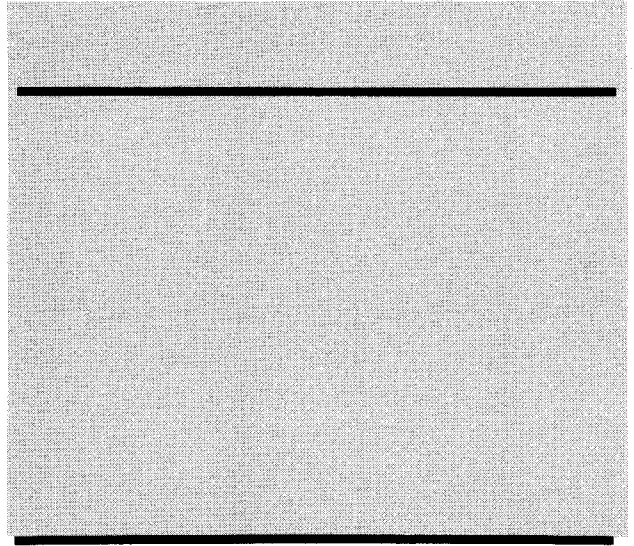
(Compare your answers with the text.)

The Baptist Witness in Latin America has been one of _____

(interpretation)

hospitals, but adjunct nursing schools mean that the supportive agents of the faith were necessary at an earlier stage in Latin America than perhaps in the other continents.

There was also the problem of unity and in this regard Baptist Witness has been more tolerant of others and has assumed a broader face than elsewhere, and as a result Baptist leadership manifested managerial skills. Nevertheless, the competition between Baptist groups have had the effect of hindering more effective work in several areas. Further it must be observed that at times Baptist thrusts have been too closely related to metropolitan foreign policy decision in the realm of politics. And at times, it could almost be said that Baptist Witness sacralizes certain political and ideological positions. Yet, the missions to the fringes of Latin American society still stand as some of the most devoted and unselfish service given in the name of Christ.



Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide, answer the following questions.

1. Where did the first Baptist contacts with Nicaragua occur? _____

2. What part did the Baptist Witness in Belize play in the spread of the Baptist work to Nicaragua? _____

3. Who was Edward Kelly? _____

4. Name four Baptist groups who have worked in Nicaragua. _____

5. How did Baptists begin and establish the Witness in Brazil? _____

6. State two important events that broadened the scope of the Baptist Witness in Brazil. _____

7. Identify the following: General A. T. Hawthorne, William Bagby, Antonio Teixeira, and Zachary Taylor.

8. How was the first Brazilian Baptist church established? _____

9. List five reasons for the phenomenal growth of the Baptist Witness in Brazil. _____

10. Outline briefly the work of the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society in Panama. _____

11. List the seven Baptist associations in Panama. _____

12. Identify W. D. T. MacDonald and the Evangelical Baptist Convention of Chile. _____

13. List five things done by Southern Baptists to develop Baptist work in Costa Rica. _____

14. What methods were used by Southern Baptists in El Salvador? _____

15. Outline the reorganizations employed in the Baptist work in Uruguay. _____

16. What methods were used to sustain and stimulate the Baptist Witness in Paraguay? _____

17. What were the contributions of Baptist Mid-Missions in Venezuela? _____

18. How did Southern Baptists begin work in Venezuela? _____

19. Name two organizations that have helped Baptist work in Ecuador expand. _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3).

1. What was the role of Edward Kelly in the development of Baptist Witness in Nicaragua?
2. Write a biographical sketch of William Bagby.
3. What was the importance of literature in the spread of the Baptist Witness in Brazil?
4. What was the tragedy of the French Panama Company?
5. What were the differences in the approaches taken to open Baptist work in Chile and Costa Rica?
6. What role did the Baptist Spanish Publishing House play in the development of the Baptist Witness in Venezuela?

Advanced activity (Level 3).

1. Who was Antonio Teixeira and what was his importance to the Brazilian Baptist Witness?

2. What is the importance of Bagby and Taylor to the Baptist Witness in Brazil?
3. What is the importance of the association pattern in Panama and its relation to the development of the Baptist Witness?
4. What were the problems faced by the Venezuelan Baptists? How were they solved? What methods were used to solve them?
5. Explain what Russell means when he states that the Baptist Witness in Latin America has been one of interpretation.

Seminar Discussion

1. Discuss Dr. Russell's thesis that the Baptist Witness in Latin America has mainly been one of interpretation. (Students may need to review Lesson 6 to prepare for this discussion.)
2. Discuss the missionary efforts of the Jamaica Baptist Missionary Society in Central America.
3. Discuss what obstacles hindered the development of Baptist work in these Latin American lands.
4. Discuss the life and contribution of William Bagby.
5. Discuss the role literature has played in the growth of Baptists in Latin America.