

LESSON 11

THE WITNESS IN EUROPE: A LIGHT REKINDLED

PART II

Poland

The political history of Poland has created for the historian many difficulties. For one, the ethnic composition of the nation is so changed after each invasion that it is unwise to define church-grouping in terms of ethnicity or authority. And further, the relationships of the early Baptist groups in Poland were so ill-defined that at times Polish Baptists were more German Baptists than Polish.

As far as can be ascertained, Baptist Witness began among German-speaking Poles. The Western districts of Poland (Posen-Pommerellen) were under German domination in the nineteenth century. And since the preachers were mostly German, the message appealed more to the German overlords than to the people. The Polish majority paid little attention and so when liberation came the German-speaking churches suffered most.

The evangelist who did most work among the German-speaking Poles was Gottlieb Alf (1831–1898). He was a young tailor who had been converted on November 28, 1858 in Adamow. Alf was born on April 11, 1831. After his conversion, for ten years he worked vigorously to evangelize his brethren. He was imprisoned as were the converts on many occasions, but they used the opportunity to win other converts. By 1868, there were at least 1,000 Baptists in and around Adamow.

Alf went to Germany between 1858 and 1859 and during his absence dissensions arose, but with his return, normalcy was restored. On his return, he was ordained on September 26, 1859.

From Adamow, the Witness spread to Kicin which Alf visited in July, 1860. Here he was received by Peter Ewert, a Mennonite whose house had become the place of meeting. But the house proved too small and a barn was acquired. Ewert was in the process convinced on baptism and was elected as the pastor. On August 25 of that year, however, the community began to experience legal and social restrictions. Nevertheless, Kicin appeared to be a better site for the headquarters and so in the same year, Alf moved the Mission headquarters to Kicin. From this central point the work grew, but hard times created severe hardships. Many members either migrated to Russia or to America and the work had to be maintained by a grant from an Edinburgh church.

The Polish-speaking Witness of the Baptists did not begin until 1908, when Pastor Ostar Truderung of Warsaw

*Baptist Witness began among _____
Poles.*

(German-speaking)

*The evangelist who did most work among the
German-speaking Poles was _____*

(Gottlieb Alf)

The Polish-speaking Witness began in _____

began to preach in Polish. He died in 1910 but his successors carried on the work.

In Eastern Poland, Baptist activities began earlier (1872) when a church was constituted in Zelow by K. Jersak. From this church has radiated all the churches in the region; and because of the language, it has maintained some links with the work in Czechoslovakia. By 1921, there existed Polish-speaking churches not only in Warsaw but also in Lodz, and in the succeeding years, many more came into existence. However, the multi-ethnic and language base of the church presented problems of organization. Three Unions existed in 1922: a Polish-speaking, a Slavic-speaking and a German-speaking Union. Despite this, the Baptists have been able to publish a national paper, to sustain a public hospital and to own a publishing house.

Hungary

There appears to have been some Baptists in Hungary in the sixteenth century, but to date very little is known of that movement.

The Hungarian Baptist Union, formed in 1921, dates its beginnings to the 1840s when six young Hungarians went to Hamburg in search of work. There they came into contact with Oncken and the Baptist church and became Baptists themselves. Four of them then returned to Hungary and started a Baptist Witness.

The young men had been drawn to Hamburg in the first instance by the prospect of work since the city had been devastated by a fire. After their conversion, the Young Men's and Young Women's Union of the church decided to send four of them back home to begin a Mission. In April, 1846, Scharschmidt, Rottermayer, Voyka and Loders returned to Hungary.

The group split into two: Scharschmidt and Rottermayer went to Budapest, and Voyka and Loders to Funfkirchen. At first, they began to act with utmost care in those matters as the law forbade them and the Roman Catholic authorities regarded these activities with hostility.

Despite this, by 1848, a church with nine members was formed in Johann Rottermayer's house. Nothing more was heard of Baptist work until after the national struggles against the Austrians between 1848 and 1867. It appears that Joseph Lehmann of the Berlin Church visited Budapest in 1865 and baptized several persons, one of whom was Rottermayer's son.

In 1871, however, Johann Novak was sent from Vienna to work as a colporteur in Nagyszalonta and found a few persons meeting regularly in the house of Johann Lajos to study the Bible. They were all members of the Reformed Church but were dissatisfied with their Church's spirituality. Novak, a Baptist, established contact and in time they came to recognize (a) that faith preceded baptism and (b) the primacy of Holy Scriptures. They immediately abandoned their stance on infant baptism and desired to be immersed, but there was no one in Budapest to do it.

(1908)

Are the following statements true or false?
Six young Hungarians went to Hamburg seeking work where they met Oncken. They became Baptists and four of them returned to their homeland to begin a Baptist Witness.

(true)

In Johann Rottermayer's house, a church was formed with _____ members.

(nine)

Lajos asked Novak if by selling his house he could obtain enough money to go to Vienna to be baptized by Millard, who was pastor there.

While these discussions were going on, German Baptists were moved to send Heinrich Meyer to undertake Baptist work in Hungary. When Novak learned of this, he entered into correspondence with Meyer. In due course, Meyer met with the group in Bekes Gyula on August 21, 1875. After five days of discussions, Meyer baptized eight of them: Johann Lajos and his wife, Michael Kornya and his wife, T. Lajos, Susanne Lajos, Sara Kiss and Frau G. Bordas.

Heinrich Meyer and his wife had been settled in Budapest since 1873 as an agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society. As such, he seized every opportunity to explain the Scriptures. He gathered a few people in his home and had the first baptism in 1874. The work of the church grew so much that he had to resign his connection with the Bible Society in order to organize the work on a national level. This he did by appointing colporteurs and developing local leadership with financial aid from abroad.

His efforts were strongly resisted by both Catholic and Protestant clergy. Nevertheless, in ten years, Meyer had baptized 629 men and women, and by 1893 the Baptists of Hungary numbered 3,805.

The Baptist Witness was effectively spread by Michael Kornya, who Meyer had baptized in 1875. He was a man of great eloquence and much enthusiasm. He was ordained in 1877 as an Elder and was responsible for taking the Witness to much of what is now Romania. He is said to have baptized some 8,000 persons during his ministry. Michael Baranyay reported to the B.W.A. in Toronto in 1928 that the Baptists had 1,000 places of worship and 25,000 members in 1918, but he lamented that territorial changes had cut the figure in half and that since 1918, in those ten years, due to migration and other hardships, the numbers were 12,000. Nevertheless, they maintained a seminary, two orphanages and a home for the aged.

The first twenty years of the Witness in Hungary were seen as another development of the German Baptists. In 1893, two young men, L. Balogh and A. Udvarnoki, returned from their theological studies in Hamburg. With their return, some of the congregation desired that the first language of the Witness be Hungarian. Serious differences developed between Meyer and the young men because of this. It was quite clearly not an ecclesiastical issue but an issue which had nationalistic undertones. It eventually caused a split between the German-Romanian fellowships and the Magyar communities. The issue was made worse in 1907 when the State recognized the Magyar speaking churches as the official Baptist representatives and gave to them certain privileges which they denied to the others. The situation was still not remedied when the 1914-18 war broke out. And despite the intervention of the Baptist World Alliance, two Unions still exist which together have 12,000 members in some 200 churches.

The German Baptists were moved to send Heinrich Meyer to undertake Baptist work in _____

(Hungary)

The Baptist Witness was effectively _____ by _____

(spread, Michael Kornya)

The first _____ years of the Witness in _____ were seen as another development of the _____ Baptists.

(twenty, Hungary, German)

Romania

Karl Johann Scharschmidt was the first Romanian Baptist. He was baptized by Oncken in 1845 and went to Bucharest to preach in April, 1856. He was primarily concerned with the German settlers and as a result of his work, in 1863, August Liebig was sent to conduct the first baptism and to constitute a church. Liebig did not remain for any length of time, preferring to go to the Danube delta to begin other churches, so the young church was left pastorless.

In the meantime, the little church had been joined by an English Baptist, Elizabeth Peacock Clarke from Canterbury. She introduced the church to Spurgeon, whose sermons were read as a substitute. In 1886, the church contacted Edward Millard, the Bible Society representative in Vienna, who sent Daniel Schweigler to help. His task was to open a Bible depot and he was also to serve as pastor. He remained in Bucharest until 1906. When he moved, he left behind Johann Hammerscheid, who had been the assistant pastor since 1891 as pastor of the church. He served until 1910.

When 1911 arrived with the need for a new pastor, the Hungarian work had not yet been indigenized. This came with Constantin Adorian who on his return home, despite language and cultural differences, stimulated the formation of a local association around basic interests.

With the conclusion of the 1914–18 war, boundaries were changed and Romania acquired some more Baptists. One result was that Romanian authorities knowing little about Baptists treated them as deviants from society. Baptist were imprisoned, beaten, and their property seized.

Despite British and American protests, there was little relief. In 1923, a faint hope existed that the Constitution might be amended in the direction of religious liberty, but this was frustrated. At the Baptist World Alliance in Stockholm that year, the Secretary tabled a report to say that despite the Union of all Romanian Baptists, the opening and equipping of a seminary by the S.B.C., the comprehensive building programme, and the publication of works in Hungarian and Romanian, nevertheless, "the attitude of the Romanian Government towards religious minorities is grossly unsatisfactory and the persecution it has fostered or tolerated will form a subject of consideration at the Congress."

The subject was on the agenda in 1928 and again in 1939. At the Alliance meeting in Atlanta, J. H. Rushbrooke reported that the situation had grown worse. The Alliance therefore protested the Ordinance 26208, promulgated in June, 1938, which in effect attempted to outlaw Baptist groups and to close Baptist church buildings. It was pointed out that there lay behind it the hands of the Orthodox Church which had been a party to the Oxford Conference of 1937, which spoke about religious freedom for all.

Since that time the King has been deposed, and

August Liebig went to Bucharest to conduct the first
_____ and to constitute a _____

(baptism, church)

Spurgeon's sermons were read as a _____

(substitute)

Romanian _____ knowing little about
Baptists treated them as _____ from society.

(authorities, deviants)

The Ordinance 26208 attempted to _____
Baptist groups and to _____ Baptist church

(outlaw, close, buildings)

Romania is now a Socialist Republic, and since then Baptists have had some freedom. In recent times repression of the church has been renewed, but the church is withstanding it and a revival has occurred in the nation.

Norway

Baptist Witness sprang spontaneously from the Pietistic Movement which swept Norway towards the end of the eighteenth century. Moravians had gone to live in Norway and had taken with them the new-found liberty which they had discovered in evangelical preaching. So great was its impact that in 1741 the Conventicle Decrees were promulgated forbidding the gathering together for religious purposes except under the supervision of a priest of the State Church.

This did not prevent groups meeting privately in several parts of the country. In 1742, Sören Bølle, a Dane who lived in Drammen, left the State Church, and having been immersed himself, began to baptize others. He also maintained that the Bible was the sole authority for faith and practice. As a result, he together with others were arrested, their property confiscated and some of them were banished.

Elsewhere, in Skein, a revival broke out and the pastor there, G. A. Lammers, was converted. He broke with the State Church in 1855 and together with twenty-four others, organized a group called The Free Apostolic Christian Church. While he opposed infant baptism, he refused to baptize anyone who had already been baptized as an infant. He was so adamant on the issue that one of his group went to Germany to be baptized by Oncken. His inconsistency caused great uncertainty in the group. As a result, nineteen of them were baptized in a small lake called Børsesjø, including Lammer's daughter. They were therefore excluded from the church and so they formed the Christian Dissenter Church in 1860 with Sören Tufte as their pastor.

In September, 1857, another Dane, Frederick Ludwik Rymker, was sent to Norway as a colporteur and worker among Norwegian sailors under the Seaman's Friends Society of New York.

Rymker had led an interesting life. In 1845, while staying at a seaman's lodging in New York, Isaac Smith, the secretary of Mariner's Temple, had invited him to church. Rymker was converted. A year later he was baptized and joined the church. He was licensed to preach in 1848 and two years later returned to Denmark as a missionary of the Baptist Women's Society.

In 1855, Anders Wiberg, an outstanding leader of Swedish Baptists, wrote to invite Rymker to go to Norway as a colporteur on behalf of the American Baptist Publication Society and a worker under the auspices of the Seaman's Friends Society of New York.

Rymker landed in Norway in September, 1857 and contacted the group at Skein. He was received kindly but not with enthusiasm. Nevertheless, he baptized Carl

Baptist Witness sprang _____ from the _____ Movement which swept Norway towards the end of the eighteenth century.

(spontaneously, Pietistic)

A revival broke out in _____.

(Skein)

Frederick Rymker was sent to Norway as a _____ and worker among _____ sailors.

(colporteur, Norwegian)

Gunderson Kongeröd on December 25, 1858, and on April 22, 1860, the first Baptist church in Norway was constituted at Tolnaes, on a farm near Skein. Later some of the "Free Church" group joined the church and it became known as Skein Baptist Church. By the time he left Norway in 1862, two other churches had been formed.

Together with Rymker must be named Godtfred Hübert, the first Norwegian Baptist minister, and O. B. Hanson (Swedish) as the founders of the Witness. Hübert became a Baptist in New York having been baptized in Boston at the Seaman's Bethel. He served in the American Navy and in 1862 began preaching in Norway. In 1864 the B.M.S. agreed to underwrite his salary as a help to Norwegian Baptists. He was a man of far-reaching ideas and an organizer. He persuaded Swedish Baptists to pay the salaries of some of the workers for a time. He himself, in the meantime, founded two religious periodicals and launched a publishing house. The B.M.S. (London) continued their support until 1892.

Hanson was a blacksmith who joined the Swedish church in 1862. He took up evangelistic work in 1863 in Norway and for twenty-five years worked with fishermen and people based in the Arctic.

By the 1880s, Baptist work had spread from Skagerack to the East of the North Cape near the Russian border. There were in all 22 churches and about 1,680 members.

But the spread was not easily done. Up to 1841, Baptists had to contend with the Conventicle Decree which forbade anyone leaving the State Church. And it was only in 1845 when the Dissenter Law was passed making it lawful for persons to leave the State Church at the age of nineteen that the Free churches overcame some difficulties. Even then certain restraints remained until 1891, when dissent was allowed at the age of fifteen. In 1898, the King's Resolutions made it possible for anyone to dissent with the approval of the local priest.

The work would have had even more problems had not the American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society taken over some of the responsibilities hitherto assumed by British Baptists. In 1879, the churches organized themselves into a National Conference. Two things provided the foundation for the strong Union which now exists in Norway: (a) the financial help to the central administration and pastoral fund and (b) the strengthening of the publishing and young people's work.

The Union is now divided into four associations. It owns a publishing house which issues a weekly and a Sunday newspaper. Norwegian Baptists support missions in the Congo and co-operate with Danes and Swedes in the Scandinavian Seaman's Mission. There is a seminary in Oslo founded in 1910, which serves the region. Today Norway has 63 churches and 6,538 members.

On April 22, 1860, the first Baptist church in Norway was constituted at _____.

(Tolnaes)

List accomplishments of Godtfred Hübert.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The spread was not easily _____.

(done)

What two things helped strengthen the Norwegian Baptist Union?

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Finland

The nineteenth century revival, which came in the wake of the rationalism of the eighteenth century, had its counterpart in Finland. Here for at least a century the Lutheran Church had by devious means attempted to smother the enthusiasm of the pietists, but the movement had persisted. It was this movement which provided the background for Baptist Witness in Finland.

Swedish-speaking Baptists

The first Baptist preacher to Finland came from Sweden. Karl Justus Mattias Möllersvärd had lived in the United States and had become a member of the First Baptist Mariners' Church in New York. On his return to Sweden, he began to preach and had become known as an evangelist.

In 1854, a Lutheran pastor in Aland wrote to friends in the Evangelical Alliance of Sweden asking them to send an evangelist. Möllersvärd undertook to go and landed at Föglö in the autumn of that year. Here he preached and a revival broke out much to the annoyance of some of the priests. Because of this, Möllersvärd had to leave, barely escaping arrest by the Russian authorities.

In 1855, one of the converts returned to Föglö with copies of a book on baptism written by Anders Wiberg, a Lutheran minister who had become a Baptist. Many people began to discuss the matter and in the Spring, when the ice broke, Johan Erik Östling, a farmer from Föglö, and two of his friends went to Stockholm and were baptized there on May 25. Late in Autumn 1856, a baptismal service was held in Föglö itself and a church was constituted called the Föglö Baptist Church.

Persecution followed and the leadership was brought before the Chapter at Abo (Turku). The clergy, who tried the case, referred the matter to the Senate in Russia. While they awaited the answer the Chapter ordered prayers to be said in Church each Sunday for them, and this had the effect of making people examine Baptist opinions closer. An answer came back in December, 1858, and while not upholding imprisonment, placed the Baptists under house arrest. It was then discovered that there were far more Baptists than the authorities had supposed and so the Chapter of Abo was again summoned on June 1, 1859.

After the hearings, a senior member of the Chapter, Henrik Heikel, the Rector of St. Mary's Church invited the Baptists to go home with him to discuss their views a little more deeply. The Baptists went home with him and after discussion they sang a hymn and there was prayer. Some years later both children of Henrik Heikel (the host) were to be baptized and become leaders of the Finnish Baptist Church.

In 1860, Henrik Heikel moved from Abo to Pedersöre as vicar, and lived in Österböthen near Jackobstad, and his home became a centre of Pietism. When he died in 1867,

The first Baptist preacher in Finland came from

(Sweden)

A church was constituted at _____

(Föglö)

Is the following statement true or false?

After discussing their views with Baptists in his home, the Rector of St. Mary's Church became a Baptist.

his son Vikter was baptized in Stockholm, and in 1868, Anna, his sister, was baptized.

Anna Heikel was to become the centre of Baptist Witness for she brought home and distributed tracts on the Lord's Supper, Holy Baptism and Church Membership. Each Saturday, there was open house in which the central features were the reading of a sermon of Spurgeon's, Bible studies and prayers. One regular was Petter Stormons, who began to examine the question of baptism and came to the conclusion that the Baptists were right.

In 1869, the Heikels were visited by Adolf Valen, one of the original group of four from Föglö, and he preached to the assembled company. On the evening of July 14, 1869, the first baptismal service on the Finnish mainland was held when Petter Stormons and Maria Edquist were baptized. This led to the constituting of a church in Österböthen, from which by 1874 seven other churches had sprung.

After the establishment of Baptist Witness on the mainland, it spread to Vasa and the district around due in the main to the work of Anna Hellman, a friend of the Heikels. She was instrumental in using her bookshop as the focal point of Witness. By 1881, on January 25, a church was constituted there.

In the Petalax area, the church was formed around the witness of Erik Jansson. He had lived in the U.S.A. for sometime and had been a member of Moody's church in Chicago, though not a Baptist. He returned to Finland in 1878 and began to preach in his house. His sermons were sharply criticized by the State Church but despite this and his own doubts about the Church, he did not counsel converts to leave it.

About this time, however, Staffan Johnsson, who had been a member of the Tunadal Church but who had been excluded from it, came to Petalax and he shared the preaching with Jansson. A group gathered as a result and they desired to form an established fellowship. So Johnsson communicated with the Baptist church in Vasa and on September 12, 1880, a group sailed from Petalax to Vasa where thirty-three members were baptized and celebrated the Lord's Supper together.

Jansson had opened a shop in Petalax but his preaching so "annoyed" the community that his establishment was boycotted and he suffered severe financial loss. Despite this, he still remained a loyal member of the Lutheran Church. He did not break with it until 1881 when he began a close study of the New Testament evidence on baptism. As a result, he went to Sweden where he was immersed on October 27. On his return, he began to gather the baptized into a fellowship and a church was constituted on September 26, 1882.

With the work established in Petalax, it was not long before it spread further south to Helsingfors, and in 1885, a Baptist church was constituted with the help of the Swedish Baptists. Soon other churches were constituted in Sibbo, Karis and in Abo itself.

The leadership of the Baptists was conscious of the

(false)

The first baptismal service on the _____ mainland was held in _____

(Finnish, 1869)

The church in the _____ area was formed around the witness of _____

(Petalax, Erik Jansson)

Is the following statement true or false?
Jansson never became a Baptist. _____

(false)

need to have larger units of fellowship than the local church and so they formed "District Unions." These were first suggested in 1883 when all Baptist churches were invited to send delegates to Amossa. The results were not encouraging at first, but by 1892-93, not only was there a District Union, but a new feeling began to emerge in that the Minutes of that Union meeting spoke of the Baptist Denomination in Conference, the publication of a Baptist newspaper and the need for theological training.

Finnish-speaking Baptists

The advent of Baptist Witness into Finland had very close relation to the common language and ethnic background of the inhabitants of Aland, but it was not long before Baptist ideas also influenced the Finnish-speaking peoples. The first person (apart from those who had been converted in Österbötten) was a Lutheran pastor, John Hymander, in Parikkala, Karelen. He became a Baptist by studying the Bible and also it seems through the influence of the Heikels. In 1871, he resigned his pastorate and was baptized in Sweden. On his return he baptized his wife and several others and constituted a Baptist church in the town. In Luvia, another work also sprang up, led by a converted sailor, Henriksson, who had been to England. Apart from these there was work in some of the larger cities, but unfortunately the beginning of Baptist Witness had to compete with the advance of Communism, the War of Independence and Pentecostalism. From these onslaughts, the Baptist Witness has not fully recovered despite much help given to the Finnish-speaking Baptists by British Baptists.

Despite their language differences, both groups kept in close touch with each other but joint action and united meetings proved a heavy organizational burden. So in 1905, two Unions were formed. Despite the separations of 1903, both groups meet annually in a General Conference to discuss common problems and develop strategy. In 1924, a theological school was established as a preparation for students who would complete their studies at "Bethel" in Stockholm. There is also a publishing house, which serves the whole denomination, a denominational newspaper and a missionary programme to Asia and Africa.

Since 1924, the language grouping has been solidified in law. And with the passing of the Liberty of Religion Act, the Finnish-speaking churches elected to be legalized under the Dissenter group and be known as The Finnish Baptist Union. The Swedish-speaking Baptists on the other hand preferred to be registered as a civil organization and be known as the Swedish Baptist Conference in Finland.

As things now stand, each group is a member of the Baptist World Alliance and internally attempt to do as much together as they can. The Swedish-speaking Union has 24 churches and over 2,000 members and the Finnish Baptist Union has over 700 members in 10 churches.

These Baptists formed "_____ Unions."

(District)

List three things Baptists in Finland had to compete against.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The language grouping has been solidified in

(law)

Italy

The origins of Baptist Witness in Italy lay in work initiated in Rome by James Wall, an Englishman of Calne, Wiltshire, in 1863. The Italian Revolutions had made a marked impression on him and had increased his desire to preach the gospel in Rome.

About the same time, Edward Clark, another Baptist minister, had similar thoughts and so both men decided to go on a fact-finding tour. Through the generosity of a friend, both men were able to visit Italy and as a result Wall decided to settle at Bologna and Clark at Spezia.

Wall returned to Britain and sold his household articles and with his wife and children sailed for Italy in 1863. It was five years before the B.M.S. in the Bristol Assembly of 1868 decided to adopt the Mission and in 1870, a grant of £100 was sent to Wall in Bologna. Later that year, however, he moved to Rome where he eventually laboured until 1901.

Associated with Wall was W. Kemme Landels, a Scotsman, who had business interests in Sicily. So touched was he by Wall's work that he devoted his life to work with the Mission. And in 1875, he started work in Naples and Turin. His brother John Landels joined him and started a Baptist Witness in Genoa.

In 1878, N. H. Shaw of Dewsbury was sent to Rome to head the Via Urbana Mission which was a gift from Thomas Cook, a Baptist philanthropist. Here he remained until 1891, when the B.M.S. took over all the Baptist work in Italy except that in Spezia and he was transferred to Florence.

The Spezia Witness under Clark was unique. It paid special attention to education. The work consisted mainly of a school of 500 children and an orphanage of fifty, which was established in 1884. From this work a number of churches were started to which Clark gave oversight. There was also a mission to sailors and soldiers and of course a special ministry to the British sailors who visited the port at Spezia.

Between 1872 and 1873, the Southern Baptist Convention began another work in Rome. Dr. George Boardman Taylor together with John Howard Eager were responsible for its establishment. A theological college was formed in 1901 and several publications were put on the market of which two, *Bilychris* and *Il Testimonio*, were under a papal ban.

The 1914-18, war together with bad State Church relationships in Italy had its effect on the Baptists. And it was clear that the mood of the country dictated that Italian Baptists manage their own affairs.

In 1923, it was decided to create an Italian convention with its own autonomy. Earlier, the S.B.C. had decided to appoint an Executive Committee comprised of Italian delegates to be responsible for the Witness. The B.M.S. now followed and in that year (1923) the B.M.S. transferred property and personnel to the S.B.C. and the Executive Committee. And in 1967, the La Spezia Mission joined the Italian Baptist Union. The S.B.C. no longer administers the

Name the two Englishmen who began Baptist work in Italy _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The Spezia Witness was _____

(unique)

The Southern Baptist Convention began work between _____ and _____

(1872, 1873)

In 1923, an Italian convention was organized with its own _____

Italian Union as a Mission but co-operates in its programme.

In 1951, Baptist Mid-Missions began work in Italy, first in Naples, where a church was constituted, but due to differences between the missionaries and the church, the church withdrew from Baptist Mid-Missions. In 1955, another work was started, one in Verona and another in Vereto.

The Baptist Mid-Missions witness included also a radio ministry as well as Bible studies and up to 1970 prospects appeared quite good. Since 1970, Baptist Mid-Missions has withdrawn from Italy and given over the work to others. It appears that both the Naples and Salerno work are still standing on their own feet.

As a whole, the Baptist Witness has developed remarkably since World War II. In 1972, the Italian Baptist Union was constituted a legal entity culminating the process began in 1922. There has been outreach by radio and social ministries, including a home for senior citizens, recreation reception centres for sailors in ports and a camp site for retreats. Theological education has been enhanced by the Theological Education by Extension methodology. And a translation of the New Testament published in 1976 in which Baptist scholars have taken a leading role has been released by the United Bible Society. In this time also Italian pastors have gone to serve in Canada, U.S.A, Brazil, Germany, Switzerland, Australia and the Cameroons.

Spain

The origins of Baptist Witness in Spain are to be found in the possibilities for religious freedom which came into being after the 1868 revolution. This revolution created the climate in which Protestant minorities were released from the repression of an absolutist Catholic regime.

Immediately upon the declaration of religious liberty, Dr. William Knapp, an American Baptist, settled in Madrid and in 1869, supported by the American Baptist Convention, established a Mission. His method was to give elaborate receptions which rivalled those of the ambassadors to the more educated and to the elite of Spanish society and in that context present the faith. In two years he had baptized thirty-three candidates in Manzanares, and on August 10, 1870, constituted a Baptist church.

Knapp did not confine himself to Madrid but organized churches in Alicante. For seven years he laboured in Spain enlisting the support of the gentry and working through his Spanish workers.

With the re-establishment of the monarchy in 1874 however, things became difficult. The Catholic Church gradually reasserted its hold on the communities and in 1876, Knapp seeing the decline accepted a professorship in Yale University and went home. With his departure, the work declined even more.

A year later at the appeal of the American Board, a Swede, Erik Lund went to Catalonia. He established a

(autonomy)

The Baptist Witness has developed remarkably since World War _____.

(II)

The origins of Baptist Witness in Spain can be found in the possibilities for _____ that came out of the 1868 _____.

(religious, liberty, revolution)

His method was to give _____ receptions which rivalled those of the _____ to the more _____ and to the _____ of Spanish society. The faith was presented in this _____.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

church in Figueras near Barcelona and in time planted churches in Barcelona and Gerona. He was essentially an evangelist who went from village to village and when he left Spain in 1898 he left behind a team of trained evangelists to care for the churches.

Meanwhile, in the 1880s some former Baptists who had joined up with the Plymouth Brethren went to Linares in Jaén and established a church. Since they had been associated with the Metropolitan Tabernacle and were graduates of Spurgeon's College, the Tabernacle supported them for awhile. In the same region and about the same time, Mr. Armstrong, a former Anglican now turned Baptist, established causes in Asturias, Valladolid, Burgos and in Jaén itself.

With the collapse of the Mission in Madrid and the departure of Erik Lund all seemed loss. But by this time the Swedish Mission Board had decided to and had begun work in Valencia in 1885. This work had been spearheaded by Charles Haglund who had begun by holding services of seamen in the town. By 1888, the first converts were baptized and when he died in 1895, Lund gave oversight to this work as well.

Haglund was succeeded by Juan Uhr at Valencia in 1897, and until the turn of the century, the Witness was sustained by other Swedish volunteers and local preachers. Despite several set-backs these workers were able not only to establish churches but also to begin a school and to publish a number of Christian journals.

The neutrality of Spain between 1914–18 enabled some independent missions to be started. In 1914, a Swede, G. T. Vickman re-established a Witness in Madrid. Vickman was supported by the Swedish Missionary Society of America and in that year on April 15, baptized 26 candidates. By 1920, the Madrid church had a membership of 245 when Vickman for health reasons had to return to Sweden. About this time, through discussions at the Baptist World Alliance level, the S.B.C. was invited to take over the Mission, which they did. And by 1922 a theological institute was opened.

Other Missions were also at work. There was that of Peter Buffard who in 1918 established himself in Valdepenas and that of R. P. Simpson who began in Murcia. At this time there were at least five large missionary agencies ranging from groups in America, Sweden and Britain to independent congregation-supported workers.

With the coming of the Depression of the 1920s and the Spanish Civil War (1936–39), repression was once more introduced and on many occasions the B.W.A. has had to address itself to the restriction of civil liberties in Spain.

Despite this, the Witness has grown. This has been marked since the 1966 Constitution which guarantees religious liberty and the Spanish Baptist Union has used its "right" to put signs on churches, register legally with the government, hold conventions and televise religious programmes. The contrast is seen when it is remembered

The Swedish Mission Board had decided to begin work in

(Valencia)

Through discussions at the Baptist World Alliance level, the S.B.C. was invited to take over the

(Mission)

that between 1950 and 1960 twelve Baptist churches were ordered closed.

The Baptist Union now has over 4,800 members in 61 churches who support a seminary in Madrid, a publications centre in Barcelona, a radio programme, a camp ministry and work in the off-shore islands, in both Spanish and English.

Perhaps the two most encouraging signs for the future was the televising of a service from a Madrid Baptist church in 1974 (There are now seven churches in Madrid.) and the attendance of King Carlos in December, 1975 at a lecture on Baptist belief and practice.

Yugoslavia

Baptists in Yugoslavia form a small part of the Christian community. They existed in small groups and were not brought together until 1925, when the Yugoslavian Baptist Union was formed. It was composed of four associations formed on racial and linguistic lines.

The earliest Baptist activity was in 1875, when Adolf Hempt was converted at Novi Sad and became a colporteur for the B.F.B.S. He travelled widely in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Serbia and much of the work overlaps with that of Heinrich Meyer of Hungary.

Meyer had baptized Nicolu Zrincak of Zagreb; and in 1883, he took the Baptist Witness to Croatia and was pastor there for forty years. He was succeeded by Vincent Vacek, who having returned from America at the invitation of the Southern Baptists met with seven pastors and invited them to join in the reorganizing of the work.

In 1930, Vaclar Zbaril, a Czech, joined him and became eventually pastor of the Serbean church in Belgrade. The real development, however, began with John Moore, an American missionary to the region, who together with Dr. Everett Gill, the European Superintendent from the B.W.A., developed the infrastructure of the church.

In 1939, Vacek died and during World War II, the Baptists suffered greatly. Some churches, those in Slovencia, came under German occupation and some members were put in concentration camp. Another section came under Italian administration and these fared no better.

In 1945, with the end of the war and despite the return of nearly 800 members who were Germans, two new trends developed. Firstly, there was an emphasis upon ministerial training. Pastors were trained in Hamburg, Budapest and in St. Andra, Austria. Secondly, there was an emphasis laid upon the production of literature. A monthly periodical was published. Devotional books were translated from English, as well as some theological books. In Kassel, Germany, a hymn-book in Serbo-Croatian was produced and printed for the Baptists, while "hand-outs" of short pamphlets and tracts were printed.

The earliest Baptist activity was in _____

(1875)

*The real development began with _____
and Dr. _____*

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Give two trends that occurred after 1945. _____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Czechoslovakia

Between 1390 and 1460, an interesting man named Peter Chelcicky, from whom the Baptists of Czechoslovakia derive their name, lived. *The Brotherly Union of Chelcicky* (Czechoslovakian Baptists) took his name as part of their title because he, the father of Unitas Fratrum, was in fact a Baptist. He maintained that "only adult believers should be baptized" and in fact the earliest Bohemian Brethren appear to have practised believer's baptism. He also advocated the separation of Church and State and as a pacifist was a forerunner of Comenius.

So closely has the link been between the Brethren and the Baptists that in the sixteenth century when Balthasar Hübmaier sought refuge, it was Moravia which gave it.

Evangelical faith flowered again in the nineteenth century, when Augustus Meereis, a colporteur with the British Foreign Bible Society began to work in Eastern Czechoslovakia. He preached in Brandys and on April 14, 1877 baptized five persons. Shortly after, the authorities forbade him to preach and he had to leave the area.

Contemporaneous with this Magnus Knappe came to visit a German Baptist group in Broumer and on August 3, 1867 baptized a group there.

After Meereis was driven out, his place was eventually taken by Henry Novotny (1846–1912), his friend. Henry was originally a Congregationalist who had come to accept believer's baptism and had been baptized at Lodz (Poland) in February, 1885. He went in March of that year to Czechoslovakia, and on March 25, a church was constituted at Hledsebe, near Prague, with sixteen members. As pastor, it was he who lay the foundation of Baptist Witness in the country despite persecution, imprisonment, and harassment. Within ten years, a congregation of 180 persons had gathered about him. Despite his heavy work, he founded a monthly paper called *Messenger of Peace* which had a good circulation.

Meereis was also responsible for the spreading of Baptist Witness in the then related territories of Hungary, Silesia and Austria. It was due to him also that in 1888, a Baptist-Slovak-German-church was established with the intent to make the Witness more indigenous. Chapels were built at Vavrisova (1890) and Chvojnice (1894). And he also gathered a group of evangelists and trained them.

During the next decade the church passed through unsettled times. But new work was nevertheless attempted. In Moravia, Norbert Capek began a Witness in Brunn (1895) and despite hinderances, the Witness grew. In 1911, at the B.W.A. in Philadelphia, Capek reported that there were 2,500 Baptists but that the Baptists were suffering severe financial hardship. Capek remained in America after the Alliance and was succeeded in his post in quick succession by V. Kralicek and later O. Fric, who incidentally had been in the Cameroons.

Novotny died in 1912 and was succeeded by his son, Joseph, who had studied at the Midland College in

What is the name of the Czechoslovakian Baptist Union?

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Henry Novotny lay the _____ of Baptist
Witness in the _____

(foundation, country)

But new work was nevertheless _____

(attempted)

Nottingham and at the Universities of Geneva and Vienna. He was helped by stalwart volunteers, among them Dr. Prochazka, who became head of the seminary. He succeeded in building the Baptist church in Prague in 1914.

The war years 1914-18 dispersed many Baptists. Preachers had to serve in the armed forces and it was not until 1919 that some semblance of organization emerged. In that year the Czechoslovakian Baptist Union was formed.

With the formation of this new body, Baptists from the Northern Convention, U.S.A. and the British Baptists were able to relate to Czechoslovakian Baptists. Between 1920-21, emergency training courses for preachers were arranged with their help and upwards of 30 men were trained. By 1924, the membership in Czechoslovakia was over 3,000. This was due partly to the unpopularity of the Roman and Orthodox Churches and the new winds of post-war revolution. By 1927, when the enthusiasm had settled down, the Baptists could look on a building fund launched in 1921, a seminary (October 25, 1921), an orphanage (1922). These Baptists had built an almost self-supporting Witness, composed of three associations.

Since then the seminary has co-operated with the Protestant Theological Faculty in the University of Prague. The Witness has played its full role in every part of the nation.

Bulgaria

The influences of Islam in Turkish ruled Bulgaria proved to be the means for the introduction and spread of the Baptist Witness in this nation. There was much tension and fighting in the Balkans during the nineteenth century. Turkey, an Islamic nation, and Russia, the largest centre of Orthodox Christianity, contested the supremacy in the region.

Meanwhile, in Russia, the Baptist were being persecuted and some had escaped into Bulgaria for refuge. Among these refugees were the leaders of the Baptist Witness in Russia: Vasili Pavloff and Colonel Pashkoff, who had been exiled for their faith in 1881 and found refuge there. They had, however, been preceded by many who had worked as colporteurs for the B.F.B.S. of London in Uskub and in the village of Macedonia. Indeed, others had travelled as far south as Salonika (Greece) which was then an integral part of Bulgaria.

The influx of Russian Baptists was most supportive of the work of another Russian Baptist, Kargel, who had preceded them. He was a Pashkovite who was a native of St. Petersburg. Kargel went to Bulgaria in 1880 and there discovered four Baptists and a larger group of Bulgarians who had rejected infant baptism but who did not know the next step. They had advertised in a newspaper asking whether any Baptist might come to Kazanlik to explain. Kargel responded to the invitation. He baptized eight converts and constituted a church before he returned to St. Petersburg.

List the accomplishments of Czechoslovakian Baptists since 1919.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Baptists in Russia were being persecuted and some had escaped into _____ for _____

(Bulgaria, refuge)

*Is the following statement true or false?
A Russian Baptist named Kargel baptized eight converts and constituted a church in Kazanlik.*

(true)

He was succeeded by Vasil Martcheff, then Spas Raitscheff, a Bulgarian, and subsequently Gerasimenko, a Russian. These pastors extended the Witness into the surrounding villages.

Elsewhere in Lom-Palanka, August Klundt established a church from which churches sprang up in the villages. The church in Golonzi was almost entirely comprised of gypsies who came to the faith through Peter Puntscheff who was converted by reading the New Testament.

By 1903 the Baptist Witness had spread into the mountains of Bulgaria and a solid work was established by 1922.

Southern Bulgaria was influenced towards the Baptist Witness by Peter Doycheff. He worked in the area near Adiranople and to the east of Philippolis. For thirteen years he laboured, much of it during the interminable Balkan Wars from his centre at Tchirpan.

Associated with Doycheff was Spas Raitscheff, who in 1915 baptized twenty converts in Mertwitza in Northern Bulgaria. These converts were nearly all Romanians. From this baptism grew three churches in the region. With help from the German Baptists in America, Spas Raitscheff was able to open a mission to the Moslems, with Pedersen, a Danish Baptist in charge, as well as erecting church buildings in the area.

Sofia the capital had no Baptist Witness until 1894. It was in that year that Vasil Martscheff baptized the first converts. He remained until 1895 but the work almost disintegrated and did not take root until in 1905 when Spas Raitscheff took it in hand. He worked single-handed until 1914, when C. E. Patrick, who had been a missionary in India with the A.B.F.M.S. settled in Sophia. With the backing of the German Baptists in the United States they were able to organize the work and erect chapels.

Portugal

Baptist Witness in Portugal was the direct consequence of the establishment of Baptist work in Brazil. In 1907, at the first meeting of the Brazilian Foreign Mission Board, it was decided to establish a Witness in Portugal. Z. C. Taylor, a pioneer of the Brazilian field was chosen to begin a Witness, and he arrived in Portugal in November, 1908.

Long before Taylor arrived, sometime in 1888, an evangelist named Reginald Young had been active. Through Bible study and private meetings, Young had gathered together a group. On December 27, 1908, a Baptist church of twenty members was constituted.

Taylor remained with the group for a short time and then left. In the meantime, John Oliviera, a Baylor University graduate, decided to return to Brazil via Portugal; and on his return to Brazil, spoke enthusiastically about Baptist possibilities in Portugal. The Brazilian Convention voted to send him back to Portugal and so he left in August, 1911, and he settled at Oporto.

In 1912, the Oporto Church received a group of

Peter Doycheff influenced _____ Bulgaria towards the Baptist Witness.

(Southern)

Baptist Witness in _____ was the direct consequence of the establishment of Baptist work in _____.

(Portugal, Brazil)

Identify John Oliviera.

Baptists led by Joseph Jones, who had been meeting privately. With this larger number, Oliviera decided to build a chapel on a plot Jones himself had given to the new church and in February, 1916, a large chapel was opened and dedicated.

From Oporto, the Witness spread to Vizeu, Tondelo and Morelena. By January, 1920, the work could sustain two missionaries and the Brazilian Convention sent Antonio Mauricio, a Portuguese, who had come to Brazil to study. Together, the two men formed the Portuguese Baptist Convention in December, 1920.

In 1922, A. W. Luper, a representative of the Texas Baptist Missionary Association decided to go to Portugal and persuaded Oliviera to work for the Texas Board. This caused some disquiet which lasted for sometime and it caused a split in the work. But fortunately, this did not obscure the Witness, for in the same year, on August 20, 1922, a Congregationalist minister, Paul Torres, and his entire congregation were baptized and became the First Baptist Church of Lisbon.

In 1925, in answer to urgent appeals, Archilles Barbosa arrived in Portugal but he could not get on with Mauricio, so after a brief period of service he returned to Brazil. About this time also both Luper and Oliviera went to the United States and did not return. So the churches under their care reverted to the Brazilian Baptist Mission within the Portuguese Convention.

In 1935, William Hatcher and his wife visited Portugal and decided to stay and work there without cost to the Convention. They built up the seminary which had been closed with the departure of Barbosa. By 1939, when the Second World War broke out, Baptists were firmly established having constituted more than twelve churches in good buildings and having eight pastors. A newspaper, the *Baptist Christian*, was also started.

In 1959, the Portuguese Baptist Convention requested the S.B.C. to assume some relationship with the work and so from that date a fraternal link has been forged. Broadcasts have developed on a national level and a seminary was reopened in 1970. The seminary has since been relocated on new premises acquired in 1976.

Since 1959, there has been a marked increase in membership and pastoral care. In 1978, the combined membership was approximately 3,000 in 50 churches, almost a 100 per cent increase over the 1959 figures. And in the meantime, the Convention has set aside a portion of its budget for witnessing in African lands and by this means has supported missions in Angola and Mozambique. Recently, the Convention has supported missions in France and elsewhere.

Belgium

Belgium is a nation set at the crossroads of Europe and because of this has been the battlefield for many wars. These cataclysmic events have left behind a divided

(Compare your answer with the text.)

In 1925, Archilles Barbosa arrived in Portugal in answer to _____

(urgent, appeals)

The William Hatchers worked in Portugal _____ to the _____

(without, cost, Convention)

Southern Baptists engaged in a _____ link with Portuguese Baptists in _____

(fraternal, 1959)

people and it is within this context that the Baptist Witness developed.

The issue of language is a burning one. The Flemish-speaking peoples live in tension with their French-speaking brothers and both with the Germans. Thus Baptist work among the Flemish-speaking peoples is not related either to the Belgian Baptist Unions or the Baptist World Alliance. Because of the seeming French bias, these Baptist bodies are looked upon with some disfavour.

Baptist work in Belgium has three sources. The first Witness came from France. Sometime in the 1830s, a Belgium *émigré* returned home a Baptist and began the first churches. So that by 1914 three churches had been established.

These years saw also the rise of Leopold I and his remarkable manipulation of European power politics in respect of Africa. In his schemes he was ably abetted by the B.M.S. and Baptists became known. However, with the increased disenchantment of the Baptists with Leopold's Congo policy, Baptists fell into disfavour and in Belgium up to 1930 only two more Baptist churches were established and *one* was due to Polish immigrants, who developed their own Baptist church.

Baptist Witness began to show growth in the 1960s. Prior to this, the French-speaking-Evangelical-Association of Churches had attempted to incorporate certain churches in France, Belgium and Switzerland into a fellowship which betrayed certain theological assumptions. The Association grouped the churches around a particular interpretation of the Scriptures and in this kept them together. At the same time, there developed the European Baptist Federation which undergirded the Baptist Unions of the Continent and sponsored joint actions in outreach and missions.

Given this background, when NATO moved to Brussels in 1967, Belgian and European Baptists were able to respond. Not only was there already an input from Britain since the B.M.S. had used Belgium to train its B.M.S. personnel for the Congo but with the coming of the Americans, the American Conventions became more directly involved.

The S.B.C. moved Rudolph and Helen Wood from Luxembourg to Brussels and increased their financial aid to the European churches. By 1968, a second English-language church was started in association with the Belgium Baptist Union.

Since 1968, the work has grown drawing upon the English-speaking personnel in the international city of Brussels. There are nine churches in the Belgian Union apart from a number of Flemish-speaking Baptist churches outside the Union. There still exists *one* congregation which is Polish-speaking. But by and large, the work is in French. And even where there is English-speaking work, outreach is in French.

The Baptist community is not large, but it still remains a national influence. This time not so much because of its

The issue of _____ is a _____ one.

(language, burning)

The first Witness came from _____

(France)

Is the following statement true or false?

The Polish Baptists integrated their work with that of the Belgium Baptist Union. _____

(false)

Baptist Witness began to show growth in the _____

(1960s)

The American Conventions became more directly _____

(involved)

proximity to power but because it has promoted an international Gospel Festival.

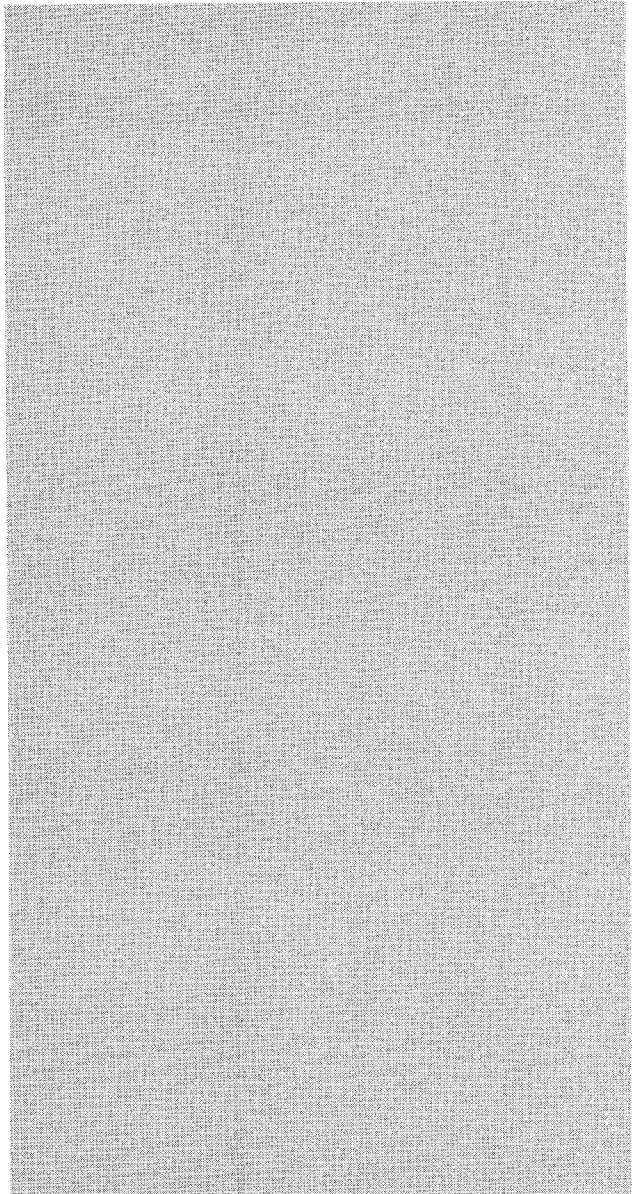
It is hoped that through the medium of music, Baptists will come together in a national association and in this speak true peace to a divided nation.

Conclusion

Baptists have always been a people of the Covenant and its confessional importance lies in its reaffirmation. This dynamism engrained in the texture of Baptist Witness has kept it alive. Baptist churches may grow cold and may even appear to die but whenever the "Winds of Pentecost" blow over these smouldering embers of faith, they are rekindled. The Baptist Witness of Europe during the nineteenth century was such an experience.

Not much has been written of England and Wales, because in a sense, despite their own tensions, development and changes, they are a little apart from the continental happenings. Their role was to be the catalyst and receptacle for Baptist Witness. From these offshore islands and the Americans came the support which made the newer work possible.

As yet the Baptist Witness is still comparatively small and in some places weak and divided. Despite the work of the European Baptist Federation, the development of Ruschlikon as an international theological centre in Europe and the support in personnel and money given by the American Conventions, there is still much to be done in each nation and across boundaries. There is increasing need to recapture the urgency of Oncken, the zeal of Rushbrooke, the daring of Pavloff and the rugged spirituality of a John Clifford. But these with Spurgeon belong to a by gone era. New challenges demand new endeavours and it is towards this new day that Baptist Witness needs to grope with a confidence born of the assurance that the light has not gone out. It has been rekindled.



Home Study Exercise

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

1. How did the Baptist Witness enter Poland? _____

2. What evangelist did the most work among German-speaking Poles? _____

3. How did the Polish-speaking Witness begin? _____

4. What is the connection between Oncken and the Baptists in Hungary? _____

5. Outline briefly the development of Baptist work in Hungary. _____

6. What did the results of the 1914–18 war bring on Romanian Baptists? _____

7. Identify Frederick Ludwik Rymker and Godtfred Hübent. _____

8. Name two things that have served to strengthen the Baptist Union that now exists in Norway. _____

9. Outline the spread of the Baptist Witness among Swedish-speaking Fins. _____

10. What three things did Baptists in Finland have to compete against? _____

11. In what way have the two language Baptist groups in Finland been solidified? _____

12. How did Baptist work get started in Italy? _____

13. Give the development of Baptist work in Italy since World War II. _____

14. Where can the origins of Baptist Witness in Spain be sought? _____

15. What method did William Knapp use in establishing Baptist Witness? _____

16. How did the Southern Baptist Convention become involved in Spain? _____

17. When did the real development of the Baptist work in Yugoslavia begin? _____

18. Who laid the foundation for Baptist Witness in Czechoslovakia? _____

19. What was the source of the Baptist Witness in Bulgaria? _____

20. How did Baptist work come to Portugal? _____

21. Name three sources for the Baptist Witness in Belgium. _____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3).

1. Trace the movements and contributions of Johann Oncken to the Baptist Witness in Europe. (The student will need to review Lesson 10 to complete this activity.)

2. Describe the Pietistic Movement and show its influence upon the spread of the Baptist Witness.

Advanced activity (Level 3).

1. Write a paper on the Baptist Witness in Europe entitled: "The Light Rekindled."
2. What value must be placed on co-operative endeavours as a means of establishing Baptist Witness in Europe?

Seminar Discussion

1. Discuss the movements and contributions of Johann Oncken to the Baptist Witness in Europe.
2. Discuss the Pietistic Movement and show its influence upon the spread of Baptist Witness.
3. Compare the development of the Baptist work in the Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden and Finland.
4. Discuss the Baptist Witness in Europe since 1945.
5. What value must be placed on co-operative endeavours as a means of establishing Baptist Witness in Europe?