

# The Church around the World<sup>®</sup>

Pray to the one in charge of the harvesting, and ask him to recruit more workers for his harvest fields.

Matthew 9:38

## South Africans Flock to Prayer

The recent nationwide Day of Prayer in South Africa brought together thousands of believers from every racial group in the country. Soweto, a center of confrontation and one of the nation's hot spots, was like a ghost town. One observer reported that trains, buses, and taxis were empty as an estimated 60 percent of the populace participated in the prayer day.

## Mainline Churches Decline

A recent study shows that mainline denominations (Presbyterian, Methodist, Episcopal, etc.) are becoming a minority in American Protestantism. In 1902 mainline churches made up 76 percent of America's Protestant population, but by 1984 that figure had dropped to 53 percent, while evangelical, charismatic, and fundamentalist churches have increased. Sociologists and church leaders believe the reason for this shift is aging membership in mainline churches, with relatively few young adults attending, and "the lack of a stirring message."

## Comic Books for Chinese Evangelism

A 140-page comic book published by Hong Kong-based Christian Communications, Ltd. is being well received by Chinese children in mainland China. *The Greatest Story in the World* depicts the life of Christ and is illustrated by a Chinese artist. The books are taken in legally, with government permission. At present, no Christian literature for children is published inside China.

## Moody Film Receives High Honor

Top honors in the Religion and Ethics category at the Columbus Film Festival went to *The Moody Institute of Science*, a division of Moody Bible Institute, for its production *Journey of Life*. The film received the Chris Statuette Award and the special President's Award. Three hundred fifty films were entered in this, the oldest film festival in the United States.

## Evangelical Church Opens in Yugoslavia

What is believed to be the world's only Albanian-speaking evangelical church recently opened in Yugoslavia. It was dedicated last summer in Pristina, which is in the Federal State of Kosovo, an area which is 98% Muslim and has an Albanian population of 1.6 million.

## Evangelical Church in Ecuador Increases

The evangelical church in Ecuador now has 90,566 believers who are members of 1,316 local churches. The figure represents 1 percent of Ecuador's 9.5 million population. Recently the interim mayor of Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city, said he is a born-again Christian.

## Gandhi Asked to Stamp Out Missionaries

Charan Singh, president of the major political opposition party in India, has asked Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to "stamp out" Christian missionaries in India. Singh claims that the aim of missionaries is "to rob Indians of their faith by taking advantage of their poverty and illiteracy." Christianity has existed in North India from the 5th century.

## Aid Denied

India's supreme court has ruled that members of "scheduled castes" (formerly called "untouchables") lose their claim to special government aid when they convert to Christianity, but that they may receive aid if they reconvert to Hinduism. An estimated 144 million of India's 684 million people belong to scheduled castes.

## National Missionaries in Africa

National missionaries in Africa are reaching out to preach the gospel. Over the past ten years indigenous mission agencies in developing countries have increased their ranks five times faster than Western missions. There are 100 indigenous mission organizations in Africa alone. Nigeria tops the list with 3,000 missionaries. In Kenya, eighteen agencies are working to reach 1.5 million Pokots, Giriama, Turkanas and other unreached tribes.

## School Board Takes a Stand

The school board of Perry County School in Hazard, Kentucky, has taken a stand on the Ten Commandments. Alone among all the 180 school districts in the state, it has refused to remove the Ten Commandments from the classroom walls. Charles D. Campbell, member of the school board, said, "It's time for Christian people to stand up for more morals in the school system."

## Israeli Census

Israel's population is now 4,225,000, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics. Of that population, 82.5 percent are Jews, 13.5 percent Muslim, 2.3 percent Christian, and 1.7 percent Druse and others. In the past year the Jewish population growth was 1.6 percent and the Muslim growth was 3.2 percent.

## Members of Sikh Sect Baptized

1200 Sikhs have recently come to the Lord and have been baptized in strife-torn Punjab and neighboring states in northern India. Although Westerners can no longer enter India as resident missionaries, native missionaries are effectively reaching their own countrymen for Christ.

## Witness Lee Successful in Lawsuit

A California court has ruled that Witness Lee and The Local Church were libeled by a book from Spiritual Counterfeits Project entitled *The God-Men*. Following that decision and based upon correspondence with The Local Church, Tyndale House Publishers announced that it has withdrawn the chapter concerning The Local Church from its publication, *Larson's Book of Cults*, with regrets for any damages that may have been caused.

## Growth of World Religions

The past fifty years has witnessed a 500 percent growth of the Muslim population, from 200 million to the present one billion. During the same period, Christianity increased by 47 percent, Hinduism by 117 percent, and Buddhism by 63 percent. The rapid spread of Islam is viewed as one of the greatest socioreligious changes of our time.

## Pornography Endangers Public Health

Dr. C. Everett Koop, the Surgeon General of the United States, keynote speaker at a recent gathering sponsored by the National Coalition Against Pornography, said that pornography is a clear and present danger to American public health. Three hundred fifty anti-pornography workers attended the meeting, including leaders of local decency organizations, heads of several denominations, a retired FBI agent, a clinical psychologist, and a former Playboy bunny.

## Happy Ending in Missionary Kidnapping

The three New Tribes missionaries who were taken hostage by the Revolutionary Armed Force of Colombia late last year were released unharmed. Tim and Bonnie Cain and pilot Steve Estelle spent more than a month in captivity. The abductors gave as a reason for the kidnapping their belief that the missionaries were spies.

## Scriptures for Eastern Europe

The United Bible Societies have sent significant shipments of Scriptures to nations of Eastern Europe. 122,000 Bibles and New Testaments went to Czechoslovakia and 10,000 Bibles to Russia. The Societies also provided paper for printing 100,000 Romanian Bibles.