

1. RUSSIA'S FIRST RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CONGRESS: One hundred fifty representatives of all major religious communities in Russia assembled May 16-18 at the Youth Institute in Moscow for Russia's first Religious Liberty Congress. Sponsored by the Russian Religious Liberty Association, the Congress raised the issue of equality of religions, non-discrimination based on religion or belief, relations between churches and religions and the state, as well as the matter of evangelism and proselytism in Russia. The Congress enabled representatives of the Committee on Freedom of Belief and Conscience of the Supreme Council of Russia to exchange views on the fundamental right of citizens to religious freedom and the necessity to provide guarantees to such freedom in modern society. [ANR]

2. ALBANIA GUARANTEES FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE: On March 31 the Albanian parliament approved a bill of rights for all Albanians, including a guarantee of freedom of conscience and religion. Article 18 states: *"The freedom of thought, conscience and religion may not be violated. Everyone may freely change his religion or beliefs and may manifest them either alone or in the community with others and in public or in private life, in worship, teaching, practice and observance. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health and morals, or the rights and freedoms of others."*

Parliament has postponed discussion on a bill which would guarantee religious liberty to religious communities in Albania which enjoy freedom of religion, though the current situation hinders the normal process of building places of worship. The state is lax in returning confiscated places of worship and Muslim politicians frequently insult the feelings of Christians in the press and public meetings. [ANR]

3. CENTRAL AMERICA REPORTS that under Global Mission, during 1992, they baptized 22,600 and

established 30 congregations. During 1993 they have already established congregations in 10 new areas and have immediate plans to penetrate 10 more!

4. CHALLENGE OF NORTHERN INDIA: Northern India is one of the greatest Global Mission challenges in the world. However, God has blessed beyond our expectations. In this union alone more than 50 new congregations have been established since 1991.

Rajasthan and Madhya states are among the most difficult areas. At the conclusion of evangelistic meetings where four people were baptized, a political leader filed a complaint with the government that mass conversions were taking place. The constable was ordered to jail Mr Masih the evangelist.

Mr Masih and the four new members were called before the council and asked if the charges were true. When he testified that he was commissioned by Jesus Christ to preach, teach and baptize, he was slapped on the face.

During interrogation the new members were asked if they had been bribed to be baptized, a charge which they vigorously denied. In fact, they testified, they had pledged to pay one-tenth of their income to support the Church. The local press wrote blazing articles against Christianity and the situation was dangerous.

On his release Mr Masih was again called to the police station, expecting the worst. Instead, the magistrate was kind and simply requested that he fill out an application to proceed with the meetings.

Worldwide prayer and support for Global Mission are placing the gospel in many unentered areas. Taskforce teams are scattered in many distant places, and even as I write some are in danger. The gospel to the world is going forward. I appeal that every church member pray and work. Jesus is coming!

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