

EBM/MASA and its Member Unions in Europe

From the beginning our mission has seen itself as a comprehensive European mission agency. Following the decisions made by the Council of the European Baptist Federation (EBF) held 26 – 28 September 1953 and 15-16 September 1954, the European Baptist Mission was founded in Zurich 17-28 September during a meeting convened for this purpose. Besides the EBF, the Baptist Unions of France, Switzerland as well as Germany (BEFG) were its founding members.

Right at the inaugural meeting it was decided to invite Baptist Unions from other countries to become members and to participate in the work. Today, 17 unions from all over Europe, from East and West, North and South, belong to EBM/MASA. This has led to great richness and a wonderful variety, which shall be brought to greater attention by this article. Below, the various member unions are listed in chronological order (year of their joining EBM/MASA), with their respective priorities and particular involvement in world missions being highlighted:

- **1954 – France:** Sending of the first EBM missionary couple, Maurice and Madeleine Farelly, to Cameroon; sending of numerous other missionaries, substantial involvement in Cameroon (from 1918) and in the Central African Republic, plus many contacts with Baptist Unions in the French-speaking world;
- **1954 – Germany:** Sending of numerous missionaries, substantial involvement in Cameroon (from the 19th century) and in South Africa, strong support for MASA; in addition development of the autonomous “Hans-Herter-Indienhilfe” (“Help for India” founded by Hans Herter) and of “Help for Eastern Europe”, which is taken care of directly by the German Union;
- **1954 – Switzerland:** “Mother country” of EBM, which is, as we know, an association according to Swiss law; commissioning of numerous missionaries, considerable involvement in Cameroon, Sierra Leone and in the Central African Republic, strong support for MASA (children’s homes);

- **1955 – Austria:** Sending of missionaries to Mozambique, considerable involvement in Mozambique (reconstruction assignments) and in South Africa (programme of “reverse missionaries”); strong support for MASA;
- **1955 – Belgium:** Sending of a missionary to Sierra Leone (‘80s), considerable involvement in Africa in cooperation with the French Baptist Union;
- **1955 – Italy:** Sending of missionaries to Cameroon (‘60s till ‘90s), considerable commitment to Africa, strong support for MASA (children’s homes);
- **1955 - Yugoslavia:** Membership expired around 1990;

- **1956 – Finland:** Sending of numerous missionaries, considerable involvement in Sierra Leone, strong support for MASA (children’s homes);
- **1956 – Spain:** Commissioning of numerous missionaries, considerable involvement in Cameroon (medical work) and Equatorial Guinea;

- **1965 – The Netherlands:** Commissioning of numerous missionaries, considerable involvement in Africa (from the beginning of the 20th century), today above all in Cameroon (Garoua) and in Sierra Leone;

- **1979 – Portugal:** Sending of missionaries to Mozambique, considerable involvement in Mozambique, in addition numerous contacts with the Baptist Union of Angola;

- **1987 – Hungary:** Sending of a missionary to Sierra Leone ('90s); general support of the work;
- **1988 – GDR:** Sending of a missionary to Cameroon ('80s); considerable involvement in Mozambique; membership expired in 1991;
- **1994 – Romania;**
- **1995 – European Baptist Convention (EBC):** General support of the work; preparations in view of sending out a missionary of their own; in 2003 renamed « International Baptist Convention» (IBC);
- **1997 – Poland;**
- **1999 – Czech Republic:** general support of the work, considerable commitment to MASA work; preparations in view of sending out a volunteer;
- **1999 – Hungarian Baptists in Romania:** general support of the mission;
- **2001 – Norway:** Sending of a missionary couple to Cameroon, preparations in view of sending missionaries to Sierra Leone, considerable involvement in Africa (from the beginning of the 20th century), in addition many contacts with the Baptist Unions of Congo and Vietnam.

In addition, there has been cooperation with other European Baptist unions or mission agencies, respectively. In the '80s, several co-workers from **Great Britain**, missionaries of the "Baptist Missionary Society" (BMS), worked on behalf of EBM in Cameroon and in Sierra Leone. In the '90s, we supported the mission work of Baptists from **Denmark** in Rwanda by forwarding donations. In 2003 we received a big donation for MASA's work in the children's homes from the churches of the Baptist Union in **Slovakia**. Moreover, together with the Mission Board of the "American Baptist Convention" in the **U.S.**, we financed Regina Claas' missionary ministry in South Africa over many years.

No single European Baptist Union on its own would be able to make such an enormous contribution to world missions, as is possible today within the framework of EBM/MASA. Of course, the financial resources vary considerably according to the size and the economic capacity of any one country. But opportunities to get involved exist for all the unions, for the small and the big ones, for those involved already as well as for future members, supporters and sponsors of our common mission.

Hans Guderian