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April 17, 1967

National Council Names
Southern Baptist To Staff

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NEW YORK (BP)--The National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. has named a Southern Baptist from Oklahoma to its professional staff.

Harold Martin, former minister of education for the First Baptist Church of Blytheville, Ark., is believed to be the first Southern Baptist ever named to the professional staff on the National Council of Churches on a full-time basis.

Martin has already assumed the position here as promotion assistant for the National Council's Radio, Visual, Education, and Mass Communications Committee (RAVEMCCO).

Martin will be in charge of production of promotional materials for RAVEMCCO, which coordinates use of media in its name for the Overseas Ministries Division of the National Council.

The Oklahoma native told Baptist Press he wants to continue his Southern Baptist identity, and expressed hope that no Southern Baptist will conceive of his joining the National Council staff as a rejection of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Southern Baptist Convention is not a member denomination of the National Council of Churches.

Martin, 28, said he hopes to establish dialogue with the other National Council members, and perhaps make a small contribution towards breaking down some stereotyped images of Southern Baptists.

He also expressed hope that Southern Baptists, in turn, can break through some of the stereotyped images and prejudices they have towards the National Council of Churches.

He indicated he did not expect overnight miracles, but felt he should attempt, in what he called a minor job, to make a small contribution towards improved relationships and understandings between Southern Baptists and the National Council.

"I will continue to be a Southern Baptist," he said, "but in a different way will I minister. I hope to bring about some dialogue, more cooperation, improved understanding and more love, all for the sake of the gospel," Martin said.

He added that he felt sure he would receive criticism from some Baptists for his decision, but added that he believed each person must decide for himself what his own role should be in the Christian ministry in the light of God's leadership and understanding of self.

The personnel office of the Council of Churches told Martin he was the only Southern Baptist professional staff member in its employ, and probably the first in its history on a permanent basis.

He added that he did not feel he was a pioneer, although he might be the first on the staff. There are many other Southern Baptists, he said, "who are doing positive things in an effort to improve cooperation and understanding between Christian groups through some involvement in the National Council of Churches, such as serving on interdenominational committees, etc."

Martin is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Okla. He received the bachelor of divinity and master of religious education degrees from the seminary and was minister of education for the Arkansas church for one year before joining the National Council staff.

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Southwestern Seminary
Wins Top RPRC Awards

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PHILADELPHIA (BP)--Public relations specialists from three Southern Baptist organizations won six of the top 13 awards presented by the Religious Public Relations Council during its annual national convention here.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, won the top award of the year, and three of the 13 awards presented.

John Earl Seelig, executive assistant to the president at the Baptist seminary, accepted the awards, two which went to him and another to Billy Keith, news director at the seminary.

Seelig's work on a general information brochure won the Paul M. Hinkhouse Grand Merit Award, a \$250 cash citation, as the best of the 157 entries in the organization's Creative Communications Contest.

The annual report of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board, produced by John Bloskas of Dallas, won two awards, including one of two Merit Award scrolls, one of the three top awards in the competition. The report also won the top honors in the annual report category.

In the public relations project category, Agnes Ford of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, won top honors for her work on the board's Book Fair.

W. C. Fields, public relations secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, presided over the convention as president.

In his presidential address, Fields warned the public relations workers against the "frightfully easy" tendency to view people as statistics.

"As communicators, we are involved in the question of how, among the swelling millions, can the individual be himself," Fields said. "More and more, we are beginning to look like we all came out of the same cookie-cutter."

Fields said that the religious public relations worker must come to deal more with qualities than with quantities.

He also warned against manipulation of people, saying "we cannot stoop to unethical practices and naively hope that everything will be hunky-dory."

"The bonafide pro in this game," he said, "is a little wheel that runs by faith inside a big wheel that runs by the grace of God."

Fields had been elected one week earlier as president of the Associated Church Press (ACP). The ACP and the RPRC are the two major Protestant editorial and public relations organizations of the nation.

Elected as the new president of Religious Public Relations Council was Winston H. Taylor, director of the Washington office of the Commission on Public Relations and Methodist Information for The Methodist Church.

During the convention, two major speakers chided the religious public relations workers for over-publicizing what they called denominational and institutional trivia through multitudes of handout releases on church appointments, conventions, resolutions, and even social action endeavors.

Louis Cassels, religion editor for United Press International, and James McGraw, editor of Renewal Magazine, urged the public relations people to be more concerned with communicating divine truth to meet the anguished needs of modern man and to answer the gnawing questions man is asking.

McGraw called for a moratorium on the publication of institutional trivia, so that the funds used to promote institutionalism could be used on genuine Christian communication of prophetic insights. If this is not done, religious groups may find in the future that they do not have a public to which they can relate, he said.

About 110 public relations specialists from major religious bodies in the nation attended the convention.

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Alien Immersion Storm
Brews in North Carolina

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By Toby Druin
Associate Editor, Biblical Recorder

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--A storm of controversy is brewing over the baptismal waters of North Carolina's largest Baptist association here, but it may be October before full force of the storm hits.

Mecklenburg Baptist Association here likely will consider a resolution in October that would restrict its membership to churches which require members to be baptized by immersion.

A constitutional amendment has already been drafted to that effect, and will be considered by Baptist pastors in the association in a special meeting in early May. If approved by the pastors, it will be presented to churches in the association for their action.

The constitutional amendment stipulates: "The churches affiliated with this association shall be churches who use the New Testament as a statement of their faith and church policy and require that members be immersed in water on the basis of belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord to qualify for church membership."

The baptismal fracas was precipitated by a recent decision by St. John's Baptist Church in Charlotte to accept members from other denominations which practice sprinkling or effusion (pouring) as their mode of baptism.

The St. John's decision was the result of an 18-month study by a church committee, according to the pastor, Claude Broach.

A "Statement of Position on Baptism" was adopted by the church which states: "We consider baptism to be an act of obedience following conversion which symbolizes the believer's identification with the Christian faith and whole Church as the Body of Christ. Such baptism is 'believer's baptism.'"

The statement also sets forth that "In keeping with earliest Baptist tradition we, upon majority recommendation of the pastor, associate pastor and officers of the deacons, will accept a candidate's baptism as valid, without regard to mode, if it was for him an act of obedience which followed conversion and symbolized his identification with the Christian faith and the whole Church as the Body of Christ."

Broach has emphasized the "believer's baptism" aspect of the statement. The church will continue to baptize new converts by immersion and will not accept members without immersion who were baptized as infants.

Another Charlotte congregation, Myers Park Baptist Church, accepts members who have been baptized by sprinkling either as infants or believers.

Mecklenburg Baptist Association, which has 75 churches and missions with more than 40,000 members, will meet in its annual session at Southside and Durham Memorial Baptist churches in Charlotte on October 19 and 20.

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Tucker Named Associate
Editor, Christian Index

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ATLANTA (BP)--Bert O. Tucker, press representative for the public relations department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, has been elected associate editor of The Christian Index, effective May 10.

The Christian Index is the weekly newsmagazine of the Georgia Baptist Convention, published in Atlanta.

Tucker will succeed Jack U. Harwell, who was associate editor for nine years before being elected editor last November. Harwell succeeded John J. Hurt, now editor of The Baptist Standard, the Texas Baptist newsmagazine published in Dallas.

Tucker was elected by the board of directors of The Christian Index, meeting in quarterly session in Atlanta.

He is a native of Wilson, Okla., a graduate of Louisiana (Baptist) College and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He also holds a certificate from the Professional Photography School at Winona Lake, Ind.

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While in college, he was music and education director at the Wardville Church in Pineville, La. During seminary days, he worked as a copy editor for the New Orleans Times-Picayune and started a campus newspaper for the seminary.

He has worked with the Texas Baptist convention's public relations department since graduating from the seminary in January of 1966.

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Methodist Gives Baptist
Church \$230,000 For Gym

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ATLANTA (BP)--A Methodist layman has given the Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta \$230,000 to erect a gymnasium-activities building, plus \$40,000 to establish college scholarships for young men considering the ministry of Christian recreation as a career.

The donor, who refused to let his identity be known, said a major factor behind the gift was the recreation program at Atlanta's Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, in which his two sons have been involved.

He said Robert Ward, director of Christian recreation at Second-Ponce de Leon, had so influenced his boys that he wants the Wieuca Road building named for Mr. Ward.

He also suggested that as soon as Wieuca Road is financially able, that it erect a similar building for some other church in the Atlanta area.

William L. Self, pastor at Wieuca Road, said architectural planning will begin immediately. Joe Stone is chairman of the building committee.

Wieuca Road has recently purchased five additional pieces of property for parking space and is now making plans to erect another educational building plus a sanctuary to seat almost 2,000 people. The entire project will cost about \$2 million.

Wieuca Road was started in 1954 as a mission of Second-Ponce de Leon.

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Board Appoints Four
Home Missionaries

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ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board appointed four new missionaries in April, including a missionary couple who will participate in a pioneer mission emphasis in Southeast Alaska.

New missionaries are Donald E. and Kathryn May Wright of Anchorage, Alaska; A. L. McDaniel Jr. of Fremont, Calif.; and Rufus S. Corbin of Chickasha, Okla.

The Wrights were appointed by the department of pioneer missions in Ketchikan, Alaska. The couple will be involved in a five-year cooperative pioneer project (with First Baptist Church of Ketchikan, the Alaska Baptist Convention, and the Tongass Baptist Association) of development in reaching the southern part of Southeast Alaska.

Wright was pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Anchorage when appointed. He is a graduate of Arkansas State Teachers College in Conway, and attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Tex. A native of Deview, Ark., he also has been pastor of First Baptist churches in Beebe, Gould, and Wabbaseka, Ark.

Mrs. Wright, a native of Ellisville, Ark., also attended Arkansas State Teachers College in Conway.

McDaniel was appointed by the department of rural-urban missions as a mountain missionary in Bijou, Calif. He is a graduate of California Baptist College in Riverside and Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. When appointed he was pastor of the Warm Springs Baptist Mission in Fremont, Calif.

Corbin, pastor of First Baptist Church (National Baptist) in Chickasha, Okla., has been appointed executive secretary-treasurer of the Oklahoma Baptist State Convention of National Baptists.

He has a bachelor of theology degree from Oklahoma School of Religion of Langston University and has attended Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee.

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