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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Major Study Announced for
Southern Baptist Schools**

By Dan Martin

NORFOLK (BP)--A major study of the 43 Southern Baptist-affiliated colleges and universities will be conducted by the program in liberal arts studies at the University of Arizona, which is funded by the Lilly Endowment of Indianapolis, Ind.

The study was proposed by Earl J. McGrath, executive director of the program of liberal arts studies and senior advisor for education of the Lilly Endowment. It is expected to take about 15 months to complete and will be coordinated through the office of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville.

"I have for many years been concerned with the role of the church-related liberal arts colleges, McGrath said in his proposal. "I firmly believe that these institutions provide an essential element of strength and diversity in American education and deserve greater attention and support than they now receive."

He recommended that the study be aimed at "establishing priorities for the future and guidelines for their development."

McGrath discussed his proposal with leadership of the SBC Education Commission during its National Colloquium on Christian Education at Williamsburg, which studied the purposes, processes and potential of Christian higher education. Ben C. Fisher, executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission, announced the study during the 119th annual session of the SBC the following week in Norfolk.

McGrath said the study will focus on a number of areas in institutional life: goals, leadership and management, financial health, curriculum, campus environment, admissions and recruiting and the attitudes of the laity toward Southern Baptist higher education."

When he addressed the colloquium, McGrath said the private schools which maintain a strong Christian distinctive will survive financially in the modern world.

"It is my conviction that to the extent that the church-related college stands firm on its dedication to its religious commitment, it will remain financially sound," declared the former secretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

"More importantly, it will restore order to our society laboring under a confusion of purpose and regain for this generation of youth an appreciation of those transcendent eternal values which give enduring meaning to the human enterprise."

Fisher said additional details on the mechanics of the study will be worked out in mid-July during a meeting of the college representatives.

"I view this (the study) as a strong vote of confidence in Southern Baptist higher education and believe that it can be of inestimable value in the three-year follow-up to the National Colloquium on Christian Education," Fisher added. The colloquium and its follow up are designed to be an intensive study of priorities, opportunities and purposes of Baptist schools.

E. Bruce Heilman, president of the University of Richmond and president of the Association of Southern Baptist College and Schools, commented: "I feel this (the study) is a very positive affirmation of the significance of our Baptist colleges to the totality of our system of higher education."

George Bagley of Montgomery, executive secretary of Alabama Baptists and chairman of the Education Commission, said the study will enable Southern Baptist colleges to evaluate their function and Christian purpose and help them set realistic goals for the future."

Missionaries Plan
Return to Lebanon

By Jane Robison

RICHMOND (BP)--Dr. and Mrs. Finlay M. Graham, Southern Baptist missionaries to Lebanon since 1948, hated to leave their war-battered adopted country in May when the time of their four-month furlough arrived. In spite of trouble and dangers there, they plan to return in September.

"If it hadn't been for wanting to see our children, we wouldn't have left," says Mrs. Graham.

But they did leave, just two weeks before the leftist-controlled Beirut airport closed, and only four weeks before President Ford ordered the evacuation of Americans from a country divided by a "religious" war. Southern Baptist missionaries stationed in Lebanon elected to remain.

"This is the first time in our lives that we have lived in a country (Lebanon) where there has been no government, no security, just complete chaos," Mrs. Graham said in an interview here. "You think it's impossible to live in a situation like that, but it isn't. It's amazing. You just go along in your day-to-day jobs."

However, because the city is cordoned off and guarded by the different factions, the missionaries' "day-to-day jobs" take longer than they did in peace time. For example, a trip to the airport that used to take only 20 minutes before the war, now takes more than three hours because travelers must wind their way up through the mountains, back down into the foothills, and on into the city in order to stay within certain "political" boundaries, according to the Grahams.

Despite the worry the Grahams say they are still anxious to return to the political hot-spot and the work they left at the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut.

While the seminary is located in an area controlled by rightist Christians, and the Beirut Baptist School is under control by a leftist group, both have been able to carry on their work. However, the Beirut Baptist School, unlike the seminary, has had to dismiss classes several times due to heavier fighting in its area.

What will be in store for the Grahams and for Lebanon is uncertain, but the missionaries say they are optimistic.

"The Lebanese people are resilient," Graham said. "If they are given just two years of peace, they could clean up the mess and get back in business again."

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Congress Hears Report of
Reform Russian Baptists

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By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--Russian Reform Baptists are the best organized dissenting group among the various protest movements in the Soviet Union, according to testimony at a hearing by the House of Representatives' subcommittees on International Organizations and Political and Military Affairs here.

Professor Bohdan Bochiurkiw of the department of political science of Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, pointed out that the Russian government makes no distinction between religious and other types of dissenters. The Baptist group to which he referred is the dissenting body headed by imprisoned George Vins, executive secretary of the Initsiativniki (Reform Baptists), which was formed in 1961 as a protest group opposed to the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB).

The hearing was under the direction of Rep. Donald M. Fraser (D., Minn.), chairman of the Subcommittee on International Organizations. Also participating in the hearing was Rep. John H. Buchanan (R. Ala.), who is a member of the Subcommittee on International Political and Military Affairs. This was the first of two hearing on religious persecution in the Soviet Union.

Other witnesses were Pastor Janis Smit, chairman of the Russian Reform Baptist group, and David A. Klassen, a dissenting Russian Baptist who has been a prisoner of conscience in the Soviet Union.

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In addition, written testimony was submitted by George Dobczansky, research director of Human Rights Research, Inc.

The testimony by all of these persons indicated there is a rising tide of dissent of all forms in Russia which is being accompanied by increased religious persecution, political imprisonment and other forms of resistance by the government.

After the testimonies which described many instances of oppression in the Soviet Union, Fraser asked, "What can the United States government do most effectively to assist in opening up religious freedom in the USSR and to aid those who are now in prison?"

Professor Bochiurkiw replied that human rights everywhere in the world are a proper concern to be voiced by U.S. officials. He claimed that oppression and a violation of human rights is not an exclusive internal concern of the Russian government.

Specifically, the professor encouraged the development of a strong public opinion in America against denial of human rights in Russia, asked for continued publicity to be given to the many cases of persecution, deplored "detente" between the Soviet Union and the USA, and urged a Soviet policy that would make it possible for people in the USSR to migrate to places where they can practice their beliefs in freedom.

Smit replied to Fraser's question that Congress should adopt the resolution now before both the House and Senate calling for the release of George Vins from prison. He emphasized that the western powers should stop their blind attempts to appease the Soviet Union.

The former Latvian pastor said that the Voice of America is heard by the Russian people and that through this source they learn of developments within their own country. However, he cautioned that the Voice is beginning to lose its effectiveness because of the American policy of detente.

Klassen pointed out that during World War II the U.S. government and President Franklin D. Roosevelt found ways to relieve many forms of oppression in the Soviet Union. He said the U.S. government can again find ways to do the same thing.

"If Russians can receive wheat to keep from starving, we should be able to receive Bibles," Klassen asserted.

Smit, who left the USSR, Soviet-occupied Latvia on May 25 of this year, told the hearing that he had been deprived of his pastoral activities for the following reasons:"

1. "Preaching the New Testament in several Soviet republics and other cities other than my parish;
2. "Asking the believers to pray for those in prisons and persecuted; and
3. "Admitting minors below the age of 18 to church activities, in particular, singing in the choir."

Klassen outlined at the hearing seven methods of persecution implemented against the churches in Russian. They are:

1. Physical annihilation. He cited instances in which Christians were torn to pieces by dogs, tongues torn out and branding by hot irons, suffocation and drowning.
2. Psychological tactics. He cited instances of deprivation of parental rights and taking children away from their parents.
3. Trojan war tactics. He said that the ministry of cults "penetrates church communities by smuggling in false preachers who destroy the churches from within."
4. Religious badgering. He cited his experiences of over three years in an experimental camp where members of over 40 religious denominations were harassed.
5. National harassment. He cited an instance where the government forced a member of his church to give testimony against him, threatening to deprive him of his job when he refused to do so.

6. Offering of bribes. Klassen said, "Depending on whether the believers remain faithful to the church or prefer to compromise for the sake of material welfare, the believers had to pay a fine of two million rubles for illegal gathering in their own homes for religious purposes."

7. Provocational tactics. He said that "various types of slander and lies are directed at the ignorant masses to provoke anti-Christian feelings."

All three of the witnesses who appeared in person at the hearing attacked churchmen in Russia who cooperate with the government in the officially permissible religious programs.

Professor Bochiurkiw pointed out that the atheistic Soviet government had made some concessions to certain official church leaders. "This leads them to say that there is no religious persecution in Russia," he said. "This is true," he continued, "if people keep their religious views private, but when they speak out openly the government's attitude changes."

Smit claimed that the Reformed Baptist movement in Russia under the leadership of Georgi Vins was made necessary because the "state-controlled All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists" had refused to call an extraordinary All-Union Congress since 1944. "The then-leadership of AUCECB blindly carried out the instructions of the atheistic communist government," and that "AUCECB was trying to incite local churches to anti-Christian deeds," Smit alleged.

When the Reformed Baptist movement got under way in 1961, Smit said that "a spark of truth and resistance lit the hearts of thousands of believers throughout the whole Soviet Union."

He continued, "What followed is a long story but the outcome in practical terms was a flat refusal of the state-controlled All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists to agree to a restoration of Christian and biblical normalcy in the life of the church. On the contrary, the 'organizational committee' transformed itself into a so-called 'Council of Churches of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists'."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: The Baptist Press wrapup on Southern Baptist editorial reaction of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Norfolk will be mailed Monday, June 28, to give time to collect an adequate number of editorials on which to base it.

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