

(BP)**-- BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICESBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor**BUREAUS****ATLANTA** Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041**DALLAS** Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996**MEMPHIS** Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300**RICHMOND** Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151**WASHINGTON** Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

July 10, 1980

80-112

**Rival Group Gets No
Criticism From BWA**

TORONTO (BP)--Officials of the Baptist World Alliance refused to criticize dissident Soviet Baptists who have charged that the worldwide BWA's Soviet delegation is infiltrated by agents of the KGB, the Soviet secret police.

The dissident Baptists, headed by Georgi Vins, were holding a meeting of the "Voice of the Persecuted Church," July 9-12, at Toronto's Harbor Castle Hilton Convention Center in competition with the BWA's 14th Baptist World Congress, July 8-13, at Maple Leaf Gardens.

"We are not here to disagree with anyone," said BWA General Secretary Robert Denny. "Our commission is to preach the gospel, not meddle in politics."

Denny and other BWA leaders say they have no evidence to indicate KGB infiltration of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, the officially recognized Baptist group in the USSR, which is a BWA member.

Charges by the Russian dissidents that the delegation of officially recognized Baptists in Toronto for the Baptist World Congress are "without foundation," according to the official leader and spokesman of the recognized Russian Baptist group.

Alexei M. Bichkov, general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, said the charge, made by exiled dissident Baptist pastor Georgi Vins, is "insulting" and "stupid."

The two major Baptist organizations in the Soviet Union are the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists and the dissident Council of Evangelical Baptist Churches. The latter is not a member of the BWA, although it has been invited to join. It reportedly does not intend to apply for membership as long as the All-Union Council is a BWA member.

Earlier this year, Vins formed the International Representation for the Council of Evangelical Baptist Churches in the Soviet Union, with offices in Elkhart, Ind. This organization is sponsoring the meeting of the "Voice of the Persecuted Church."

Gerhard Claas of West Germany, who has been nominated to succeed the retiring Denny, said, "All my heart is with the dissident Baptists because they have suffered so much. I also love my friends in the All-Union Council. I am praying for the uniting of these two groups of Christians again."

The All-Union Council is composed of churches which are registered with the Soviet government. In the main, the congregations of the Council of Evangelical Baptist Churches are not registered with the government and are frequently in conflict with Soviet law.

-more-

Denny told a July 4 press conference that Vins had been invited to the Baptist World Congress, and that the BWA had offered to pay his registration fee. However, the invitation was not accepted.

Meanwhile, two groups of anti-Soviet demonstrators vied for the attention of delegates outside the congress headquarters hotel, the Sheraton Centre.

Carrying orange and black placards with slogans such as "KGB in BWA" and "Zhidkof Supports Soviet Government," representatives of the International Council of Christian Churches sometimes engaged in heated debate with the small crowds that gathered.

The ICC's president, Carl McIntyre, led a protest meeting at Toronto's Jarvis Collegiate Institute on "Baptist World Alliance: Christian or Communist?"

Quietly passing out tracts and books a few feet away from the pickets was Mitko Matheef, a Bulgarian pastor now living in Canada, whose booth bore such signs as "A New Deception of Satan is Friendship With Athelism and Communism—A Plague for Christianity."

Matheef, head of the Evangelical Christians-Baptists in St. Catharines, Ontario, said he was not cooperating with Georgi Vins, a dissident Russian Baptist, in his "Voice of the Persecuted Church" meeting at Toronto's Harbor Castle Hilton Convention Centre, but that he admires him greatly.

-30-

Thinking Their Gun a Toy,
Missionary Evades Robbers

Baptist Press
7/10/80

KYELA, Tanzania (BP)--Confronted by two robbers, Southern Baptist missionary Evelyn Knapp mistook their gun for a toy and resisted, foiling their plans.

Holding a gun on her through a partially open car window, one of the men ordered her out of her locked car just after she turned into the driveway of the Baptist guest house in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, July 5.

Thinking their gun was a toy, she blew the horn repeatedly and raised the window while evading the man's grasp.

Guest house workers came running and the two robbers fled, pursued by several community youth and a Boy Scout troop meeting nearby.

One man was apprehended carrying the gun, which was real and loaded. He was taken into custody and is awaiting trial.

-30-

BWA Congress Opens
With Historical Drama

By Catherine Allen

Baptist Press
7/10/80

TORONTO (BP)--The Baptist World Congress opened in Toronto with the pomp of Canadian welcomes and pageantry of Baptist history.

In opening ceremonies, Pauline M. McGibbon, lieutenant governor of Ontario, welcomed more than 19,000 Baptists in Maple Leaf Gardens on behalf of the queen of England.

-more-

Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau sent greetings via John Roberts, minister of environment, science, and technology. Roberts spoke both in English and in French to commend the 600,000 Baptists of Canada who worship in 20 languages.

The president of the Baptist Federation of Canada, Jarold K. Zeman of Wolfville, Nova Scotia, called the evening "the high point of our life and ministry in the second half of this century." Zeman, professor of church history at Acadia Divinity College, said the 5,000 Canadians registered for this congress outnumber the total registration from all lands in the 1928 Baptist World Congress, the last held in Toronto.

Registration at the 1980 congress in Toronto exceeded 19,000, filling to capacity the Maple Leaf Gardens.

"Never have we seen as many Canadian Baptists gathered in one place as tonight," Zeman said of the crowd in the opening service.

David Y. K. Wong of Hong Kong, president of the Baptist World Alliance, acknowledged Canadian contributions through 75 years of BWA history—including the first major speaker, the first vice president and the first woman vice president.

"Baptists are a minority here and in many other countries," Wong noted. "But amid the throng of delegates and swell of music, Baptists have never felt so much in the majority."

The drama that followed, "The Tie That Binds," hopped across three stages, three centuries of Baptist history, and 10 nations.

But the drama was punctured when Richard Dilday of Toronto burst onto the stage, screaming that white Christians are slave masters.

Dilday had previously shouted a protest from the balcony and had been escorted quietly from the Maple Leaf Gardens arena by two officials of the congress.

Dilday, who wore no credentials as a delegate, passed security, re-entered the building, and ran onto the stage during the final scene of the dramatic presentation.

One of the drama authors and four ushers ran onto the stage and wrestled the tall black man off the stage.

Then local committee members released him again, and said no charges would be pressed.

Dilday told reporters that he is not a Baptist, but that he is deeply religious. "The Christian religion brought the black man here. It's not right. I want to show that the white man is a slave master," he said.

Two members of the Toronto press corps said that Dilday has a history of eccentric appearances, including a protest against Santa Claus.

Dilday admitted to reporters that he had been drinking, and said that "drink is the white man's trick" used against blacks and against American Indians. He was carrying a sign saying, "Jesus is not coming back."

Following the disruption, the drama continued without a bobble. Identical triplet actors sang during the evening's dramatic production to a standing ovation.

Darrell, Gerald and Harold Ware, Baptist ministers of music from Oklahoma, all played the same man—John Rippon, the first person to chronicle Baptist statistics who dreamed of a worldwide Baptist fellowship. Other actors were students from William Jewell College, a Baptist school in Liberty, Mo.

It was a nostalgic recreation of people and events which pegged down Baptist distinctives in religious, theological and political liberty, missions and ministry.

The fast-moving action showed contributions to worldwide Baptists made from Switzerland, the United States, England, India, Jamaica, Germany, and Canada. Then it focused on the development of the Baptist World Alliance in 1905 and the current BWA focus on ministry in developing countries.

The drama was written by Ed Seabough of Houston, Texas, and Raymond L. Sikes of Washington, D.C.

-30-

BWA Adds Four
Member Bodies

Baptist Press
7/10/80

TORONTO (BP)--Four Baptist bodies were accepted for membership in the Baptist World Alliance by vote of the General Council prior to the opening of the 14th Baptist World Congress.

The new BWA members are the Evangelical Baptist Church of Angola; the Karnathka Baptist Convention, India; the Kerapatan Baptist Convention, Indonesia; and the Thailand Baptist Convention. The new members bring Alliance membership to 119 bodies in 85 nations and dependencies.

After lengthy debate council members overwhelmingly defeated an attempt to change one of the 12 vice presidential nominees that the council had approved at a meeting one year ago.

The board of directors of the National Baptist Convention, USA Inc., and its president, Joseph H. Jackson of Chicago, had asked that the name of Leroy Bowman be substituted in the list of vice presidential nominees for E.A. Freeman. Both Bowman and Freeman are members of the General Council.

Robert Campbell, chief executive of the American Baptist Churches, explained that it is the practice for member denominations to be consulted when members are elected to the General Council, but the alliance elects its own officers.

Jackson responded that the BWA is "concerned with fellowship, and it is not expected that the Alliance will determine policies within conventions." He added, "We cannot sacrifice freedom for fellowship."

Less than 10 of the 185 General Council members voted for the change, so Freeman's name remained on the list of nominees for vice president.

In other action the council unanimously elected a staff of eight associates to serve in the BWA office in Washington, D.C.

-more-

Denton Lotz was elected as associate secretary with responsibilities for the division of evangelism and education and for the division of relief and development. He presently is a member of the faculty at Baptist Theological Seminary, Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

Reinhold J. Kerstan, director of communications for the North American Baptist Conference in Chicago, was elected associate secretary for the division of communications and the division of study and research.

Two regional secretaries were elected: Edwin Lopez, for Asia, and Knud Wumpelmann for Europe. Lopez is general secretary of the Convention of Philippine Baptist Churches, and Wumpelmann is general secretary of the Baptist Union of Denmark.

Betty L. Smith, a Southern Baptist and assistant secretary with the responsibility for conferences, was reelected to continue in that position.

Erna Redlich, who has served on the BWA staff since 1968, was elected assistant secretary with responsibility in the division of relief and development.

Cyril E. Bryant, current director of communications, was elected administrative assistant to the general secretary until his retirement in September 1982.

Charles F. Wills, present associate secretary with responsibility in finances, will continue in the post until the end of the year when he retires.

The General Council elected these persons after they were nominated by its personnel committee, subject to a bylaw change which will clarify whether BWA employees are to be elected by the General Council or the Baptist World Congress.

The General Council will nominate Gerhard Claas as the new BWA general secretary to succeed Robert Denny, who will retire later this year. Claas is currently associate secretary of BWA and secretary-treasurer of the European Baptist Federation.

The General Council members approved a recommendation from the relief and development division that the mass immunization program in several developing nations be terminated at the end of 1980 as originally planned. Present projects will continue to completion. The recommendation expressed appreciation to Dr. Robert Hingson for his leadership in this project.

Denny noted that critics, including Georgi Vins, a Baptist refugee from the Soviet Union, would be in Toronto attacking the Alliance for its relationship with the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in the Soviet Union.

Denny said that Baptists in the Soviet Union and the BWA worked for Vins' release from prison. "The BWA contributed money toward his welfare," Denny said. "We invited him and a companion to come to this meeting and offered to pay their registration. We have welcomed them, not rejected them."

Claas added that he personally has deep concern for all people who have witnessed and suffered for Christ's sake. "All my heart is with the (USSR) dissident Baptists because they have suffered so much, but I also have deep trust, love and concern for all my friends in the All-Union Council. I have never heard one word from their leaders condemning members outside their group," he added. Leaders of the dissident Baptists, however, have been critical of the All-Union Council.

Claas urged Baptists to "help us not to build up frontiers, but to bring people together to reconcile our brothers in the spirit of the Lord."

He observed that some progress is being made in the release of imprisoned Baptist dissidents. "Ten years ago there were 260; now there are about 32—which is still too many," Claas stated.

In an earlier meeting Claas said that he had asked Vins to help reconcile Russian Baptists from both groups who have come to Germany, but Vins refused, saying the gap is too deep.

-30-

'Undeveloped Resource'
Could Change World

Baptist Press
7/10/80

TORONTO (BP)--Although described by one speaker as an "undeveloped resource," more than 700 women attending the Baptist World Alliance Women's Department leadership conference expressed little doubt about their power to change the world.

More than 300 of the 700 women attending the four-day meeting prior to the 14th Baptist World Congress were official representatives of nationwide Baptist women's activities in 83 countries. Their attendance and participation was financed by Alliance Women's Department funds raised in its annual Baptist Women's Day of Prayer.

The theme of the meeting was "Go and Tell," the first words spoken by Jesus following his resurrection to three women at the tomb. But the women attending the meeting at the Royal York Hotel were first challenged to "come and see" the world's need for Christian action, and to "come and hear" the compelling and comforting message of Jesus.

Mrs. Kerstin Ruden of Stockholm, Sweden, former president of the European Baptist Women's Union, urged women to make whatever sacrifices necessary to proclaim liberty, dignity, human rights and non-violent co-existence for all people in the world.

Another keynoter, Mrs. Jean Howitt of Calgary, Alberta, Canada, outlined other key issues which grip women today—the fight for personal justice in employment, compensation, and legal rights; freedom of choice in lifestyles; self-fulfillment; friendship and understanding and recognition. She said these issues bind women of all nations and cultures together, despite surface differences.

The first Burmese woman allowed to attend a worldwide Baptist meeting in 17 years dramatically closed the meeting. Miss Esther Byu, associate general secretary of the Burma Baptist Convention, told the audience, "I am not afraid of life—or of death. Life is a gift from God, to share with others."

Although Burma was the first Baptist mission field of Americans, missionaries were forced out of the country in the early 1960s, she said. The government took over church institutions such as schools and hospitals.

-more-

However, Miss Byu said, "We have religious freedom. We can go and tell. Jesus has set before us an open door which no one is able to shut." She said that a shortage of Bibles and hymn books has not hampered growth of Baptist adherents, but has pushed zeal upward.

"I am like a butterfly out of a cocoon. I am ready to fly," she said, expressing her joy at being able to "break bread together and for the warmth of God's love in the worldwide Baptist family."

Mrs. Hilde Blazek of Yugoslavia and Mrs. Milado Pohlova of Czechoslovakia were the only women recently granted permission from their countries to attend the BWA activities.

"Going and telling costs love, time, money, will, and energy," said Mrs. Blazek, secretary of Yugoslavian Baptist women, who spent part of her childhood in concentration camps.

Dangers of war did not stop Baptists in Lebanon from worshipping and studying the Bible together, according to Mrs. Mona Khauli, president of Baptist women there. She told of Baptists huddling in stairwells and private homes for worship.

Sister Eva Hertzler, overseer of the religious order of Baptist deaconesses in Germany, stood in her starched white cap and dark habit to describe the hospital ministries of 270 deaconesses under her supervision.

Miss C. Ananda Bharathi, supervisor of a corps of Bible women in India, told how women can become evangelists and preachers in the closed homes of her country. Their witness to Hindu women and children is more productive than men's. "It is common for more women than men to become Christian nowadays," she said.

Two dozen other speakers told about their involvement in Baptist colleges, outreach and social action projects, organized Baptist women's work, and—the bedrock of Baptist women's work—missionary support and action.

In 13 workshops, women received practical ideas for working with the aging, for doing missionary work, for personal witnessing and spiritual development, and for communication.