



**-- FEATURES**  
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Pastor Who Survived Siberia  
Now at Peace in Yugoslavia

By Martha Skelton

NOVI SAD, Yugoslavia (BP)—Few men have spent more time in prison and been less guilty.

Few pastors have been able to deal with family tragedies, the horrors of war and the injustice of forced servitude with more personal understanding.

Adolf Lehotski can talk about it now. For years, he couldn't tell his wartime experiences at all. His children were adults before they heard him relate what had happened.

Lehotski is a retired Baptist pastor living in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia. He was president of the Baptist Union in Yugoslavia 1948-58. He helped reorganize the Baptist Seminary in 1954 and was its director in 1955.

When World War II broke out in Europe in the late 1930s, Lehotski was pastor of the Baptist church in Novi Sad, busily serving German-speaking and Serbo-Croatian groups within the church.

In September 1944, at age 41, he was drafted into the German army.

He "celebrated" his 42nd birthday May 8, 1945, being captured by Russian troops. Taken by foot to Dachau, Lehotski was packed onto a railroad car where he traveled for 10 days among two layers of people with no toilets and no fresh air. He led devotionals as best he could and when the train finally stopped, he was in Siberia.

The prisoners were herded off the train, stripped of everything and issued old clothing. Lehotski hid his New Testament among his belongings and hid his wedding ring by hiding it under his tongue. The New Testament was later stolen, probably for cigarette paper.

The combination of long, arduous work and spartan living conditions quickly undermined the health of Lehotski and his co-workers. After eight months he was taken to the barracks used to house people about to die. He weighed 60 pounds. "I thought to myself, 'This is his (God's) plan and he will make it right.'"

Although he couldn't stand up, Lehotski tried to comfort the dying men and women as much as he could.

At the point of death himself, Lehotski's thoughts went to his family. "I can't die without knowing what's going on with my family," he remembers thinking. He put his wife and children in the hands of God.

"It was like an electric charge went through my body," he says of what happened next. "I had given everything totally to God. I knew I wouldn't die. From that point on, I started getting stronger."

Mrs. Lehotski and the children were indeed in need of prayer. After waiting out most of the war in Austria, their Germanic descent led to imprisonment in a concentration camp when they tried to return to Yugoslavia in 1945. They survived deplorable conditions and escaped in 1947.

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When the Russian authorities finally determined that Lehotski was from Yugoslavia and not from Germany, he was placed on one of the long, slow trains taking former prisoners out of Russia. The trip, in June 1946, seemed interminable and food, again, was scarce.

"We saw (from the train) children in Moscow begging for something to eat from us, and we were starving."

When Lehotski reunited with his family in Yugoslavia, he learned not one family member had been killed.

But Lehotski's trials were not over. Because of his service in the German army, local authorities took him into custody. He spent 1946-47 in jail and had his citizenship suspended for five years.

But "I started preaching in my own church," Lehotski comments. "I didn't have to be a citizen to do that."

During the immediate postwar years when Russian influence dominated Yugoslavia, Lehotski got used to authorities questioning him about his preaching activities. "I learned when they came, to take a blanket; I would probably be there all night."

When Yugoslavia became more independent, all this changed. As pastor in Novi Sad, Lehotski helped restore order and impetus to Baptist work in Yugoslavia—work so disrupted in the war years.

Lehotski led the Baptist Union in Yugoslavia for 10 years before retirement, and has lived to see better days for his family and country.

Now in Yugoslavia, Lehotski says, "You are expected to be a good socialist, but you do not have to be a party member." As an example, he cites the case of a man who headed a government income tax department. He became a Christian—a Baptist—and went to the Communist party headquarters to turn in his membership card.

"I have been convinced of an ideology," he told the party leadership.

"It's not so important; stay in your work," the man was told. Not only did he not lose his job, but greater responsibilities came his way.

Perhaps Lehotski's simplest observation is his most profound. And after his years of suffering, the most welcome: "I live in peace here."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

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Vandals Damage  
Jackson Church

Baptist Press  
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JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Vandals committed \$300,000 to \$500,000 damage to Calvary Baptist Church in Jackson, Miss., March 2 when they broke in after an evening revival service and left fire hoses running on two levels.

The water destroyed all the carpet downstairs, wrecked plaster, curtains and some carpet upstairs and damaged the organ.

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The church had completed a \$2.5 million renovation in June 1976, in time for its 75th anniversary. Joe Tuten, pastor there for 20 years, says a \$2,000 reward is being offered for information leading to the arrest of the vandals.

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Professors Ignore Inerrancy,  
Concentrate On Other Issues

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press  
3/13/81

ATLANTA (BP)—While many Southern Baptist professors of religion have been labeled "liberal" and stand in the middle of the convention's current biblical inerrancy controversy, more than 80 of them ignored that topic and focused on other current religious themes.

The Association of Baptist Professors of Religion (ABPR) spent a day at Mercer University's Atlanta campus hearing papers on the merits of process theology and the spirituality of theologian Morton Kelsey. The association includes more than 300 members from across the southeast.

"Our program does not reflect any answer to the (inerrancy) controversy," admitted Charles Talbert of Wake Forest University and ABPR program chairman.

"But our program does reflect responses to the two issues on the cutting edge of academic theology," Talbert said. "This is not simply a response to the problems of the denomination, but it is a response to the larger issues of the religious life of the nation."

He said process theology and spirituality—"the rediscovery of religious experience"—are important contemporary theological topics which were not emphasized when most of the professors were being educated. Therefore, the purpose of the program was to bring participants up to date and "promote teaching of religion with the best skills possible."

"It's not that we're not concerned with the inerrancy issue, but there are other forums" for discussion and input into the topic, Talbert added. He said many ABPR members express their opinions through their churches, participation in association, state and Southern Baptist conventions and smaller dialogues.

The association's quiet stance of recent years has marked a departure from times when the organization adopted resolutions on the inerrancy controversy, one observer noted.

"I think we're beyond that," said ABPR Secretary-Treasurer Harold McManus of Mercer University in Macon, Ga. "We've got other topics to consider now."

"It isn't an issue with us; it's just an issue with others," added another participant.

And the thought of tackling the controversy "didn't even cross my mind," said John Laughlin of Averett College, chairman of the resolutions committee.

The educators did enter the fray of a related controversy when ABPR President James Kautz spoke out against trends toward dictating what science teachers must present in their classrooms about creationism versus evolution.

"This is not merely a matter of our own freedom, but of academic freedom in general," said Kautz, now with the Louisiana Department of Corrections and formerly a professor at two Southern Baptist schools.

"We cannot remain silent when our academic colleagues are being attacked," he said. "Such a movement will stifle freedom for all of us."

Mexican Congressman Sees  
Inequities In Media Access

By David Daniell

MEXICO CITY (BP)—"It is not right that the current political reform puts communists on radio and television free while it denies evangelical Christians the same media to preach the word of God," a Mexican congressman told 19,000 attending the Billy Graham crusade.

Jonas Flores, member of the Mexican House of Deputies, made the statement while giving his Christian testimony at the Mexico City crusade.

Flores urged the international gathering to turn out in large numbers for the annual March 21st evangelical street demonstration honoring the memory of Benito Juarez, the great Mexican reformer of the 1850s. It was Juarez who forged the concept of religious liberty in Mexico.

"I exhort you to manifest your citizenship," Flores said. "We are a minority, it's true; we are conscious of that, but we must respectfully call this matter to the attention of those in power so that they will once again open the channels of communication for the proclamation of the gospel. Let's pray to that end."

Flores said the scriptures teach that Christians should pray for those in authority so that they may be illumined to do their job and help the country spiritually. The Billy Graham crusade is proof that changes are imminent, he said.

"In this country since President Avila Camacho declared himself a believer, there has never been an important government official, much less a president, speak of God publicly and officially until President Jose Lopez Portillo (in welcoming Pope John Paul II to Mexico in 1979)," Flores stated.

The congressman quoted the president as saying to the media, "I lost faith in philosophy and did not believe in dogma, nor did I practice any rites." This openness by the president to talk in the media about religion has torn down many barriers, Flores claimed.

If atheists can proclaim their doctrines, Christians also have the right to proclaim our doctrines, Flores asserted. "Let's do it in the Lord with humility, with the anointing of the Holy Spirit."

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Daniell is the Southern Baptist press representative in Mexico.

Arson Suspected  
In BSU Blaze

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Arson is suspected in a blaze which damaged the Baptist Student Center on the Texas Christian University campus, causing estimated damage of \$23,000.

Fire inspectors said the student center was entered through a back entrance, and the fire set at three different points: in the kitchen refrigerator, a kitchen closet and a supply room. Firefighters reported the arsonist stacked a pile of books in the refrigerator before setting the fire.

Most of the fire damage was confined to the kitchen and rear storage areas, but there was heat and smoke damage throughout the center.

Just before the student center fire was extinguished, firefighters were notified of the second blaze in the three-story science building nearby.

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Later, a man reportedly attempting to break into the university's administration building was frightened away.

University Baptist Church, adjacent to the TCU campus, has offered office space to BSU director Mike Stiles for the remainder of the semester.

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Gospel Message Overarches  
Musical Taste Says Forbis

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
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LIBERTY, Mo. (BP)—Persons should be attracted to church music ministry because of the call to serve rather than the lure of music, says Wesley L. Forbis, who in May will become director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department.

"We must not unwittingly allow the gospel to be used as the vehicle to promote the art of music rather than using music to promote the gospel," says Forbis, who has led the music department of William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo., since 1962.

Because the denomination is culturally diverse, from extremely large churches to small country churches, Forbis understands why multiple musical tastes exist. He says musical taste results from life experience, and the musical snobbery that occasionally surfaces can be "a lonely, private and costly luxury."

"If we are consistent and if there is any unanimity in the mandate of the gospel, then we can welcome plurality in expression," he says.

Forbis, 49, notes the board's church music department must supply materials and services that appeal to all churches, small through large, and to church musicians with all levels of training. "The department will supply materials and services which fit the needs of our Baptist churches, recognizing that more than 61 percent of our churches have memberships of 300 or less," he says.

Forbis feels persons stuck in their own cultural mold will never be able to see that "while music is a universal language, it has many dialects." He says his one hope "is that persons in all kinds of churches would come to see that musical validity doesn't lie in musical style, but that it lies in the redemption of Jesus Christ."

Forbis, a former athlete and football coach, has experienced first-hand the wide range of musical tastes while serving on the staffs of small rural churches, suburban churches and large downtown churches.

As a high school senior, Forbis and a friend rode on the 4 a.m. milk truck from Chickasha, Okla., to a church near Amber, Okla., each Sunday. They cleaned and swept the church before the congregation arrived. During the worship service, Forbis led the music and his friend preached. For the evening services, they exchanged duties. On Sunday nights, they slept in a barn, and before their return home on Mondays, they would each receive a Bull Durham tobacco sack containing their love offerings.

During his years at William Jewell College, he developed the music department from an insignificant area of the college into what the institution's president, Gordon Kingsley, now describes as "one of our strongest programs."

Forbis' professional reputation is that of diversity in musical taste. "I've watched him lead an internationally-famous concert choir in difficult pieces," observed Kingsley, "and I've seen him lead a revival choir in our local church. He's equally at home in both places."

From his years of varied experience with musical worship styles, Forbis has developed a philosophy which says, "Church music is an acceptable and useful medium of communication about life, if we remember that the gospel—and not music—is the medium of comprehending life."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press.