



-- FEATURES
produced by Baptist Press

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

July 24, 1981

81-114

Wealthy Swiss Businessman
Changes Priorities At 50

By Irma Duke

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — When Gabriel Marinello turned 50, he took stock of his life and removed himself from the routine management of his business in order to do more important things.

Not that the Swiss businessman's companies weren't important. It was his financial success there that put him in a position to make the change.

Because he has been successful in his fine-foods business in Zurich, Switzerland, he feels responsible to do what he can for the cause of Christ.

"With what the Lord gives you, he also gives you responsibility," he said while at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's home office in Richmond, Va., recently.

At the same time he was making this decision in 1978, Baptist Theological Seminary, eight miles away, was in financial straits and needed a businessman's expertise. Marinello, a long-time member of Zurich Baptist Church, was asked to become chairman of the institution's administrative committee. In addition to helping the seminary at Ruschlikon, he has been a consultant to the mayor's council for the city of Zurich, of which Ruschlikon is a suburb, and also is serving on the Baptist World Alliance's commission on lay development.

With Marinello's help and the stabilizing of the American dollar on the overseas money market, the international seminary is now operating in the black. European Baptists also are footing a larger part of the financial obligations and the Foreign Mission Board continues to contribute about \$300,000 annually. Part of the financial problems stem from the inability of many of the students, especially those from eastern and southern Europe, to pay their way.

Although Marinello had lived near the seminary most of his life, he thought it was an American institution. Now he knows it is truly international.

"You see the results of Ruschlikon throughout Europe," he said. "All the leadership of Baptists in Europe have connections there, one way or the other." The seminary was opened under Foreign Mission Board sponsorship in 1949.

Because Baptists in Europe are a minority and because Switzerland is a neutral country, Ruschlikon is strategic to Baptist work there, he added. Students come from throughout eastern and western Europe. Enrollment averages 50 students per semester from 15 to 20 different countries with 80 expected to attend this fall. In addition, special seminars draw pastors and other Baptists from throughout the continent for renewal and fellowship.

Marinello said some people don't understand the change in him in recent years. "When I was a young man, I was ambitious and I was successful and I am still the same man but I have different interests."

"What would it be worth to gain the whole world," he said, alluding to Matthew 16:26 in the Bible.

-more-

"It's very handy being rich but whatever you have is entrusted from God and you have to decide if you own or are being own 'd," he added.

"We businessmen tend to get lost in our work, in our business," Marinello confessed. "We feel important in what we are doing and having, instead of what we are."

But businessmen are ministers, too, he is quick to say. "To be a Christian means to be, not to make."

-30-

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

Catholic Press Publishes
Book on Southern Baptists

Baptist Press
7/24/81

ATLANTA (BP)--A Southern Baptist interfaith witness expert and a Roman Catholic publisher have teamed up to break a long-standing barrier between the largest Christian denominations in the United States.

Paulist Press, a Catholic publishing house, has printed "Introducing Southern Baptists: Their Faith and Their Life" by C. Brownlow Hastings, assistant director of interfaith witness for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"While brief pamphlets have been published by Catholic presses about Protestant denominations, this is one of the first full-length books on Baptist faith and life produced by a Catholic publishing house," Hastings said.

The purpose of the book is to answer questions about Baptist faith and life for non-Baptists, especially members of Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, Hastings said, noting he based the content of the book on questions asked of him during the 11 years he has been involved in interfaith discussions on behalf of the board.

Hastings divided his book into three parts. The first explains the Southern Baptist view of the relationship between the individual and God. Next, he examines the fellowship of believers and their way of life in the local church. The third part traces Southern Baptist history and looks at the challenge of a growing social awareness within the denomination.

The book also includes a glossary of Southern Baptist terms and a series of most-asked questions about the denomination.

Hastings claimed there is an overriding need for such a book because Southern Baptists and Roman Catholics "can no longer ignore each other." He said his hope is that Baptists will give the book to their non-Baptist friends as a means of creating opportunities to share their faith.

Paulist Press's Betty Ralph added the book should "help members of both denominations approach each other with a deeper understanding of what Baptists believe and how they live."

-30-

Former Board Worker
Wins \$400,000 Judgment

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A former employee of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has been awarded \$400,000 by a jury in the Third Circuit Court after an eight-day trial in the \$1.5 million lawsuit he filed against the board.

Don Burnett, 42, a former personnel placement consultant, was awarded \$300,000 in compensatory damages and \$100,000 in punitive damages on the charge of defamation, one of six allegations in the suit.

Judge Joe C. Loser Jr. directed verdicts in favor of the board on five other charges. Loser also dismissed William O. Thomason as a defendant in the case. Thomason was executive vice president of the board in 1976 when events leading up to the suit took place.

Verdicts directed by Loser in favor of the board included allegations of assault and battery, wrongful discharge, gross negligence, outrageous conduct and false arrest and imprisonment.

Loser said he made his decisions because the plaintiff had either failed to show proof or the charges did not meet statutory requirements.

In his instruction to the jury, Loser defined defamation as "the malicious communication of false information tending to expose another living person to public hatred, contempt or ridicule and deprive another of the benefits of public confidence or social acceptance."

To decide in favor of Burnett, Loser said jurors must determine that Cothen, acting as president of the board, made a false and defamatory communication about Burnett, that the communication had been made with specific intent to injure or with the knowledge that it was false. Loser said the jury also must determine that the plaintiff suffered economic loss.

After the announcement of the jury's verdict, reached after two hours of deliberation, board president Grady Cothen said he will request attorneys for the board to file a motion for a new trial.

"We will explore all legal remedies. We do not believe the verdict is supported by the evidence," Cothen said.

Burnett told reporters following the verdict, "I am glad that through this trial, the truth was known."

The suit, filed in the spring of 1977, arose after Burnett went to Cothen in July 1976 to express his concerns that certain board employees might be involved in massive conspiracies to defraud the board of funds and that some officials were engaged in sexual misconduct.

During the trial, Burnett testified he had no concrete facts upon which to base his concerns. However, names of numerous employees surfaced in connection with rumors reported by Burnett.

Burnett recounted two meetings and several telephone conversations with Cothen in July and August 1976. Burnett told Cothen he feared board executives involved in improprieties would hire someone to ambush or kill him for reporting his concerns. He said he was carrying a gun in his car for protection.

-more-

Cothen testified that he investigated some of Burnett's allegations and found no evidence to support them and that he became concerned about Burnett's mental health and for the safety of board employees. On Aug. 2 he asked Burnett to see a psychiatrist, Dan Calhoun, who had been suggested by Thomason.

Burnett voluntarily went to Calhoun on Aug. 3 and Aug. 4 and at the conclusion of his second visit, Calhoun recommended hospitalization for further evaluation. Burnett refused.

Calhoun then called Cothen, told him he believed Burnett **possessed** the likelihood of harm to himself or others, and advised him to have the police pick up Burnett and take him to be examined by another psychiatrist.

Calhoun told Cothen he had filled out emergency commitment papers and a form certifying the need for hospitalization for evaluation, papers which the police were supposed to pick up before taking Burnett to the hospital.

Cothen testified he checked with legal counsel to verify proper procedures for emergency hospitalization before acting.

Testimony showed Burnett was picked up by police on the parking lot of the board and taken to the hospital. He was released that day, however, after conversations between his personal physician and the psychiatrist who was to perform the second examination.

Following the parking lot incident on Aug. 4, Cothen spoke briefly to employees in chapel Aug. 6 about Burnett, without mentioning him by name. His remarks, tape recorded, were introduced as evidence in the trial.

Cothen told employees on Aug. 6, 1976:

"Some of you witnessed, in spite of our best efforts, an unfortunate experience in the parking lot on the day before yesterday, which we did our best to prevent. In spite of our plans it didn't come off in privacy as we had hoped.

"It has come to my attention that there are about the board wild rumors about what went on there, so let me say the only thing that went on there was an attempt on our part, acting upon competent advice, legally and medically, to attempt to get some help for one of our brothers who, in the judgment of competent authority, needed some help. He has not done anything bad. He has not done anything wrong. He is a respected Christian brother who does not deserve our judgment. He does not deserve our censure. He deserves our prayers.

"He will not return to the board until he obtains help, if he needs it."

After Aug. 4, 1976, Burnett was given a three-month leave of absence with pay and benefits and told he could return to the board with certification from a psychiatrist that he was able to resume his duties.

He was terminated Nov. 4, 1976, because he had failed to provide medical evidence concerning his health, and subsequently filed suit.

Lawsuits Challenge Arkansas,
Mississippi Constitutions

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Federal court lawsuits have been filed in Mississippi and Arkansas, challenging portions of the state constitutions which require a belief in a Supreme Being for election to state offices.

According to Jon Murray, Director of the American Atheist's Center in Austin, Texas, and son of Madalyn Murray O'Hair, the suits are part of an effort to get such provisions removed from the constitutions of Mississippi, Arkansas, Texas, North Carolina and South Carolina.

In the Arkansas legal action, O'Hair was joined by her son, Mrs. Frances Flora of Mount Ida, and Erin Leary of Fayetteville. It names Gov. Frank White, state supreme court justices, President Ronald Reagan and the cabinet.

In Mississippi, the suit was filed by Paul G. Tirmenstein, an 82-year-old retired engineer, and names the State of Mississippi, Reagan and the cabinet.

Reagan is asked in both cases to withhold federal funds until the laws are overturned.

The challenged Mississippi constitutional provision says that "no person who denies the existence of a Supreme Being shall hold any office in this state."

In Arkansas, Section One of Article 19 of the state constitution says: "No person who denies the being of a God shall hold any office in the civil departments of this state nor be competent to testify as a witness in any court."

In Mississippi, O'Hair said her group, The Society of Separationists, had attempted to find a lawyer, but none would take the case.

-30-

Too Young, Sister
Works for Brother

Baptist Press
7/24/81

SPARTANBURG, S.C. (BP)--Rebecca Adams, too young to be appointed a summer missionary, is working this summer so her older brother can be.

Her brother Dan, a senior at the University of South Carolina, was named summer missionary in Lakeside, Ore. But a car he bought last year required most of the earnings from his part-time job. If he went to Oregon, he lost the car.

So Rebecca, 15, gets up at 4 a.m. to work in a breakfast biscuit place. She makes the car payments to keep her brother in an Oregon community where the only Protestant pastor is confined to a wheelchair.

"You are truly in this mission project," Dan wrote her recently, "because without you I would not be here."

-30-