



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 10, 1989

89-76

Soviets give written OK
to Baptist seminary plans

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

MOSCOW (BP)--Soviet authorities have given Baptists written permission to open a seminary.

"We now (face) a period of bargaining with the government," said Alexei Bichkov, general secretary of the All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists, in a telephone interview from Moscow about the new seminary.

Baptists in the Soviet republics of Latvia and Estonia have received permission from authorities to reopen seminaries that were ordered closed in 1957, Bichkov said. Baptists also operated Bible schools in Leningrad for five years and in Moscow for two years until they were closed by the government in 1929.

The first matter to be resolved is the location of the new seminary, Bichkov said. Several possible sites have been discussed with state officials, but "some places are over two hours by car (from Moscow). We (will) seek a more reasonable distance."

Bichkov said the Baptist council envisions opening a full-time, four-year course of study for 20 theological students in "I hope not more than three years," if negotiations with the government proceed smoothly. A couple of years later, he said, the enrollment will be expanded to 40.

A theological seminary is important to Baptist ministers, Bichkov said, because it will better equip them for addressing the ways of thinking of today's Soviet citizens. "(Many adults) graduated from the technical colleges (and) universities," the Baptist leader said. "The level of education of the last two generations is very high."

The written permission from the Soviet Office of Religious Affairs was dated Feb. 20, Bichkov said. The Baptist council has been lobbying for such permission more than 10 years.

Bichkov said the new seminary will not eliminate the need for a Bible correspondence course begun by the Baptist council in the late 1960s. More than 600 church leaders have completed the three-year theology program or two-year music curriculum. The council now is working to add a fourth year of ministerial training. Enrollment stands at about 100 per year.

Five acres just outside a freeway circling Moscow is the Baptist council's preferred site for the new seminary, Bichkov said. It is less than 20 miles from the center of the city.

Negotiations over the site will not place the Baptist council and Soviet government at an impasse, Bichkov predicted. "We (will) try from our side to find as much as possible a reasonable proposal," he said.

A proposal for a theological training center in Kiev is being prepared, he added. The second school would serve Baptists primarily in the Ukraine, where more than half of the Baptist council's 5,000 churches are located.

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Keith Parker, director of Southern Baptist work in Europe, said the government's written permission constitutes "a notable historical decision" that will allow Baptists not just enhanced ministerial training, but also new opportunities in missions education. The Soviet Union encompasses one-sixth of the world's land mass and more than 100 language groups. Baptists currently are found in about 30 language groups.

"This phenomenal potential," Parker said, "needs to be taken quite seriously" by Southern Baptists and other Baptist bodies worldwide committed to helping Baptists in the Soviet Union expand their outreach.

The Soviet Union's 548,000 Baptists comprise the fourth-largest constituency of the Baptist World Alliance, after the United States, India and Brazil.

Funding for the new seminary will come from a variety of Baptist sources, Bichkov said. But, he noted: "We hope that our main contributors will be from our own churches. Our people have been waiting for so long and have prayed so much for this announcement. They are very generous people and we believe (they) will give very much money for (the) seminary."

When the new seminary opens and seminaries in Latvia and Estonia reopen, they will join five other theological institutions operated by Baptists in Eastern Europe -- in Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Romania and Yugoslavia. Their total enrollment is about 90 students.

The Baptist seminary in Romania, one of the oldest, was founded in 1922 and has been open most of the time since.

New facilities are being built for the seminaries in Hungary and Poland, with the assistance of numerous Southern Baptist volunteer construction teams. A new home for the seminary in East Germany also has been built, with the help of Southern Baptist funds.

The Hungarian seminary also will be the home of the International Baptist Lay Academy, scheduled to begin providing short-term theological training to ministers and lay leaders throughout Eastern Europe beginning next year.

Another avenue of theological education for ministers and lay leaders from Eastern Europe has been the Summer Institute of Theological Education at Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland. The institute, now in its 11th year, is scheduled to have its largest Eastern European enrollment this summer, with more than 40 participants, including 14 from the Soviet Union.

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Annie offering increases;
trustees concerned with CP

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

Baptist Press
5/10/89

ATLANTA (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board expressed enthusiasm about potential increases in the 1989 Annie Armstrong offering for home missions and concern about projected decreases in Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget funding.

During the May meeting of the agency's executive committee, Home Mission Board Executive Vice President Bob Banks reported \$9.41 million had been received for the 1989 Annie Armstrong Offering as of May 9.

That is an increase of \$1.9 million, or 27 percent, over the amount received by the same date last year, he said. It also is the largest amount received by that date since 1982.

However, Banks cautioned that the final outcome of the annual offering is impossible to project from these early returns, since the offering is still being collected and processed through local churches and state conventions. The goal for this year's offering is \$39 million.

HMB President Larry Lewis joined board members in applauding the positive signs of giving, noting that the offering is "very critical and important to us."

But Lewis said he remains concerned about proposals from the Southern Baptist Executive Committee to establish a new Religious Liberty Commission. He also voiced concern about the budget that would reduce the amount of money flowing to missions through the Cooperative Program, the denomination's unified giving plan.

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Lewis said he is encouraged by Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines' request that the SBC Executive Committee not bring the Religious Liberty Commission proposal before the denomination's annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev., June 13-15.

The Cooperative Program budget proposed by the SBC Executive Committee for 1989-90 would channel almost \$1 million less to the Home Mission Board than the current budget, Lewis explained. That shortfall is due, in part, to an effort to eliminate debt on the four-year-old SBC Building in Nashville. The budget, however, does not yet include funds for the Religious Liberty Commission.

"This reduction is almost intolerable in a time when we need to expand our missions efforts," he said. "I would hope something might occur that would cause the Executive Committee or the convention to rescind that action.

"We're facing a tough budget crunch over the next decade if something isn't done."

Lewis reported that the current Home Mission Board budget already has been reduced by \$6.6 million, in accordance with a previously announced plan to reduce the budget by 9.6 percent. The reductions are necessary to prepare for the projected decrease in funds available, he said.

Board members discussed several options concerning the SBC Executive Committee's proposed Cooperative Program budget, which must be approved by messengers to the SBC annual meeting in Las Vegas.

Gene Bowman of Griffin, Ga., suggested that the HMB request the SBC Executive Committee to reconsider its proposed budget. After discussion, a substitute motion was approved asking a special committee to study the issue and bring a recommendation to the HMB executive committee's June 6 meeting.

A pivotal point of the discussion was the SBC Executive Committee's proposal to divert half of any excess CP funds over the basic budget to capital needs projects. HMB trustees particularly noted the "priority item" of \$2.5 million to pay off in one year the remaining debt on the SBC Building.

Board members expressed concern that funds would be diverted to pay off mortgages while missions expenditures were cut. The group noted that the Home Mission Board has been in its current building more than 20 years and still has an outstanding mortgage.

In other matters, the HMB executive committee approved 10 new missionaries.

Lewis also reported that HMB employees, families and retirees soon will begin a 12-hour-per-day, five-day-per-week intercessory prayer ministry. Prayer rooms will be set aside in each of the board's main buildings in Atlanta, he said.

"We feel strongly that with that kind of prayer support, we won't face any obstacle that we can't overcome," Lewis said.

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Priesthood, preaching
to be themes of Forum

N-CO

Baptist Press
5/10/89

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--"Priesthood of the Believer" and "Preaching of the Gospel" will be themes of the Southern Baptist Forum during its sixth annual session this summer in Las Vegas, Nev.

The Forum will be held June 12, beginning at 8:45 a.m., at the Cashman Field Complex Theater. It is one of more than a dozen conferences held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, set for June 13-15 in Las Vegas.

"We're trying to be positive and offer a 'meaningful Monday' -- something beneficial and worthwhile for people in Las Vegas that day," said Peter Rhea Jones, chairperson of the Forum's steering committee and pastor of First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga.

"Priesthood of the Believer" is to be the theme for the Forum's morning segment.

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Morning speakers are Molly Marshall-Green, associate professor of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and Brian Harbour, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark. Al Staggs, pastor of First Baptist Church of Portales, N.M., will present a dramatization based on the life of Dietrich Bonhoffer, a German theologian and martyr.

"We plan to defend and extol the Baptist conviction -- the priesthood of the believer," Jones said. Marshall-Green and Harbour will address the doctrine directly, and Staggs' performance will illustrate the doctrine by depicting the way Bonhoffer stood up to Nazi extremism, he added.

"Preaching of the Gospel" is to be the theme for the afternoon segment.

Afternoon speakers are Fred Craddock, professor of New Testament and preaching at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta; Clyde Fant, chaplain at Stetson University in DeLand, Fla.; and Robert Schuller, television minister and pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, Calif.

"Doctors of preaching" Fant and Craddock particularly will speak to the theme, Jones said. Fant has written numerous textbooks and co-edited a definitive multi-volume compilation of great sermons, and Craddock has delivered the Lyman Beecher Lectures on preaching at Yale University and is one of the most noted preachers in the country, he reported, adding that Schuller is one of the nation's most well-known preachers.

Special music will be performed by Cynthia Clawson, a Grammy Award-winning gospel artist from Louisville; the Southern Seminary Vocal Ensemble; and Bob Bailey, a singer/songwriter from Nashville.

The Forum also will present its Church-of-the-Year and Denominational Statesperson awards during the meeting.

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Baptist Press
5/10/89

SOUTHERN BAPTIST FORUM

June 12, 1989

Cashman Field Complex Theater, Las Vegas, Nevada

Monday Morning

Theme: "Priesthood of the Believer"

8:45 Prelude

9:00 Special Music: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Vocal Ensemble, Phillip Landgrave, director

Opening of the Sixth Annual Session

Welcome and Invocation

Scripture Reading

Speaker: Molly Marshall-Green, associate professor of theology, Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Special Music: Bob Bailey, singer/songwriter, Nashville

Dramatization of Dietrich Bonhoffer, by Al Staggs, pastor, First Baptist Church, Portales, N.M.

Business Session and Offering

Church-of-the-Year Award

Congregational Singing

11:00 Speaker: Brian Harbour, pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark.

11:30 Benediction

Monday Afternoon

Theme: "Preaching of the Gospel"

1:30 Prelude

1:45 Congregational Singing

Invocation

Scripture Reading

Speaker: Fred Craddock, professor of New Testament and preaching, Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta-more--

Special Music: Bob Bailey
 Denominational Statesperson Award
 Speaker: Clyde Fant, chaplain, Stetson University, DeLand, Fla.
 Announcements and Offering
 Mini-concert: Cynthia Clawson, entertainer, Louisville
 Speaker: Robert Schuller, pastor, Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove, Calif.
 Benediction

Excellence, joy to be theme
 for SBC religious educators

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Baptist Press
 5/10/89

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--"Bold Excellence -- Joy in Service" will be the theme for the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association annual meeting June 11-12 in Las Vegas, Nev.

The 34th SBREA conference, to be held at the Aladdin Hotel, is among more than a dozen special-interest sessions scheduled in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, also in Las Vegas, June 13-15.

"What we envision is to emphasize excellence," said SBREA President Jerry M. Stubblefield, professor of religious education at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. "We're trying to get this group to push a little harder in terms of skill development -- enhance their skills in teaching -- and in terms of personal and professional growth."

The conference will emphasize practical information in these areas, Stubblefield said.

Two keynote speakers will highlight the excellence theme, he said. "Toward Excellence in Teaching" will be the topic presented by Bradley Courtenay, department head and associate professor of adult education at the University of Georgia in Athens. Bill Taylor, associate pastor/minister of education at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas, will discuss "Excellence: Personal and Professional Growth."

"'Joy in Service' focuses on how you can deal with problems and issues" in ministry, Stubblefield noted. Larry McSwain, dean of the School of Theology and professor of church and community at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., will speak on "Coping Effectively in Ministry." He will be followed by four ministers who will describe experiences of coping with forced termination, broken marriage, adjusting to different pastors and dealing with a new marriage while involved in ministry.

Another keynote address will set the stage for excellence in ministry in the 1990s, Stubblefield said. Arnold Brown, chairman of the Weiner, Edrich, Brown Inc. management consulting firm in New York, will address "Looking at the Decade Ahead." Brown's firm works with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in examining issues with which it must deal.

Of the four plenary speakers, two -- McSwain and Taylor -- work for Southern Baptists, and a third -- Courtenay -- is a Southern Baptist, Stubblefield said.

The conference also will feature worship lead by Pastor Paul Duke and staff members Robert Fulbright, Mark Lawson and Gail Scott of Kirkwood Baptist Church in suburban St. Louis.

The conference will include meetings of professional-interest groups, business sessions, fellowship times, a luncheon and presentation of the 1989 distinguished leader award.

The SBREA also will sponsor two professional-growth seminars prior to the Las Vegas meeting, Stubblefield said.

The seminars will be "Identifying Adult Learning Styles -- Determining Leadership/Teaching Styles," led by Mancil Ezell, director of the Sunday School Board's church media library department, and "Identifying Issues and Managing Change," led by Brown.

The seminars will be held at the Aladdin Hotel Saturday, June 10, from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Offered on a cost-recovery basis to SBREA members, the seminars will cost \$30 for members and \$50 for non-members.

For more information on the seminars, contact SBREA Executive Director Merle T. Basden at P.O. Box 330369, Fort Worth, Texas 76163 or (817) 292-7371.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
 June 11-12, 1989
 Aladdin Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada

Theme: "Bold Excellence -- Joy in Service"

Saturday Afternoon, June 10, 1989

Pre-Session Seminars

- 1:00 "Identifying Issues and Managing Change," Arnold Brown, chairman, Weiner, Edrich, Brown Inc. management consultants, New York
 "Adult Learning Styles," Mancil Ezell, director, church media library department, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville
 College/Seminary Professors

Sunday Afternoon, June 11, 1989

Theme: "Future Trends in the Decade Ahead"

- 2:30 Sing
 Welcome, Program Overview, SBREA President Jerry M. Stubblefield, professor of religious education, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valey, Calif.
 2:45 "Looking at the Decade Ahead," Arnold Brown
 4:15 Worship
 4:30 Adjourn
 4:35 New-Member Orientation, Jerry M. Stubblefield

Sunday Evening, June 11, 1989

Theme: "Joy and Circumstance"

- 7:00 Sing
 7:05 Greetings and News from RE Groups
 7:15 "Coping Effectively in Ministry," Larry McSwain, dean, School of Theology, and professor of church and community, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.
 "Those Who Have Coped Effectively"
 8:45 Worship
 9:00 Fellowship, Hosts: Western Baptist Religious Education Association, Nevada Baptist Convention, Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, California Southern Baptist Convention

Monday Morning, June 12, 1989

Theme: "Excellence in Teaching"

- 8:30 Sing
 8:35 "Toward Excellence in Teaching," Bradley Courtenay, department head and associate professor of adult education, University of Georgia, Athens
 9:30 Break, Host: Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission
 9:45 Professional Interest Groups
 Adult Education
 Youth Education
 Childhood Education
 Ministers of Education
 Curriculum and Program Planners
 State, Associational, Denominational
 Professors
 10:30 Sharing of Implications
 Summary and Closing Statements, Bradley Courtenay
 11:00 Business
 Nominating Committee
 Findings/Resolution Committee
 Membership Committee
 Secretary-Treasurer's Report
 Sabbatical Program
 Professors
 11:45 Luncheon/Entertainment/Recognitions
 Lunch
 Present 1989 Officers
 Introduce 1990 Officers
 Distinguished Leader Award
 Entertainment
 1:30 Adjourn

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Monday Afternoon, June 12, 1989

Theme: "Excellence in Personal and Professional Growth,"
 1:45 Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Vocal Ensemble
 2:00 President's Address, "The ME as a Professional," Jerry M. Stubblefield
 2:30 Business
 Board of Directors' Report
 Report from Executive Director, Merle T. Basden, Fort Worth, Texas
 Constitutional Revision Committee
 2:50 Break
 3:05 "Excellence: Personal and Professional Growth," Bill Taylor, associate pastor/minister of
 education, Prestonwood Baptist Church, Dallas
 4:35 Worship
 Adjournment

Italian Baptists protest
 bid for Belgian school

By Art Toalston

N-FMB

Baptist Press
 5/10/89

ROME, Italy (BP)--Italian Baptist leaders have urged Paige Patterson to stop negotiating for the purchase of a Bible school in Belgium.

Patterson, in response, underscored "the right and privilege of any Baptist body" to voice its opinion, but he reiterated reasons why he is continuing to explore the possibility of Criswell College in Dallas buying the financially troubled Belgian Center for Biblical Education near Brussels.

Patterson is president of Criswell College and a trustee of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. The transaction would involve Criswell College, not the Foreign Mission Board.

The executive committee of the Baptist Evangelical Union of Italy urged "that the enormous resources which he (Patterson) is about to pour into (the Belgian school) ... be donated instead to the one institution which European Baptists do recognize, appreciate, love and sustain, and that is the Baptist (Theological) Seminary in Ruschlikon."

The Ruschlikon seminary, located near Zurich, Switzerland, has been a cooperative venture between European Baptists and Southern Baptists since its founding in 1949.

The Italian union's executive committee took its stance during its April 6-9 meeting in Rocca di Papa, but did not release it from Rome until early May, said Paolo Spano, president of the union, in a May 8 telephone interview. He has led the union since 1984 and previously was director of its theological commission.

The nine-member committee further appealed "to all the Baptist unions of Europe to unite themselves quickly in a common action in order to persuade Dr. Patterson to withdraw from his initiative."

The committee also registered a protest that both Italian Baptists and other European Baptist unions "have never been consulted at all" by Patterson.

Spano said he does not know whether other unions have taken a stance opposing Patterson's negotiations.

Spano added, "We feel that, in a way, (the Ruschlikon seminary) is threatened; the unity of European Baptists also is threatened." Many Europeans will be troubled by "two European trends, one perhaps more open and tolerant, as the one in Ruschlikon, and another one very fundamentalistic," he said. "It is very important that we as Europeans keep united to foster the cause of the Lord."

Patterson, in a May 9 telephone interview, commented that no one should be threatened "by a strong belief in the inerrancy of the Bible and in the doctrinal truths which Baptists have held to be true across the years." In previous interviews, he also has underscored his hope to work cooperatively with European Baptists.

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On the question of consultation with European Baptists, Patterson said, "It has always been the very essence of Baptist conviction that men ought to do what their consciences compel them to do under God." No one should be forced to abide solely by even the sincere dictates of "a given body, Baptist or otherwise." In previous interviews, he also has said consultation would be premature until Criswell College and the Belgian school have agreed on a sale.

"Not a thing" has been agreed upon to this point, Patterson said.

The opportunity to purchase the Belgian school "came to us," Patterson noted. "We never pursued it ourselves." Through subsequent prayer, he said, he and others helping to explore the purchase believe God's will is "to give it an opportunity to see if it would work."

The Italian executive committee consists of eight Italian Baptists and one Southern Baptist missionary.

Spano emphasized that the committee's stance "was my initiative and was supported unanimously by the Italians. (The missionary) had no influence whatsoever on this. We Italians are quite independent. We take all the responsibilities for what we decide."

Had he sought the opinions of Southern Baptist missionaries stationed in Italy, Spano said, "there might have been a hesitation on their part, because they, as you may guess, are careful not to create problems. They are here in Italy to help, not to create questions and problems."

Criswell College, also known as the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, is an arm of First Baptist Church of Dallas, where W.A. Criswell has been pastor 44 years.

The Belgian Center for Biblical Education has an enrollment of 160 resident students, a small minority of them Baptist, in a 500-room former Roman Catholic Jesuit seminary on 10 acres of land.

The facility was up for sale last fall for \$3 million. It was purchased in the early 1970s with funds supplied by the Greater Europe Mission in Wheaton, Ill., and European evangelicals. It has operated in the red for a number of years, according to Robert Johnson, European director for Greater Europe Mission.

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SBC missions day camp
gears up for children

By James Warren

N-CO
(B'hood)

Baptist Press
5/10/89

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)--Plans are "full steam ahead" for the activities at SBC Missions Day Camp, June 13-15 in Las Vegas, Nev, organizers said.

Missions Day Camp, sponsored by the children and youth division of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, is for boys and girls who have completed grades 1-6 whose parents attend the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Missions Day Camp provides a missions education program for children of messengers during all daytime sessions of the convention: Tuesday, June 13, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Wednesday, June 14, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.; and Thursday, June 15, 8:30 a.m.-3:20 p.m.

Activities planned include Bible study, crafts, and games, organizers said. Two missionaries will share experiences about their work.

The cost is \$7 per day per child, or \$20.00 for three days, and includes lunch Tuesday and Thursday and refreshments all days.

Registration will be conducted at the Missions Day Camp Booth near the messenger registration area in the Las Vegas Convention Center Monday, June 12, from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and during daytime sessions Tuesday and Wednesday. No limit has been placed on the number of qualified children that can attend. Parents will need to be able to provide a brief medical history of the children as well as local contact information in the event of an emergency.

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Day Camp will be at First Baptist Church of Las Vegas, 300 South Ninth Street. Transportation will be provided to and from the convention center. Additional information will be available at the Missions Day Camp Booth.

The day campers should dress comfortably, planners said. All activities will be inside because of the intense heat expected during June in Las Vegas.

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Southern chooses
Alumni of Year

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(SBTS)

Baptist Press
5/10/89

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)-- Five graduates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary have been selected as Alumni of the Year at the Louisville, Ky., school.

Four Southern Baptist alumni--Moriyoshi Hiratani, R. Gene Puckett, Carl F. Whirley and Joe Priest Williams--will be honored at the seminary's annual alumni and friends reunion June 14 during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev. An American Baptist alumnus, the late Jitsuo Morikawa, will be recognized posthumously at the seminary's alumni luncheon June 21 during the biennial meeting of the American Baptist Churches, USA, in Milwaukee, Wisc.

Hiratani has served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Pearl City, Hawaii, for 31 years. He was president of the Hawaii Baptist Convention in 1958-59 and 1968-69. He received a master of divinity degree from Southern in 1954.

Puckett has been editor of the Biblical Recorder, news journal for North Carolina Baptists, since 1982. He also has been editor of the Maryland Baptist news journal, executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and pastor of Baptist churches in Kentucky, Ohio and Florida. He earned a bachelor of divinity degree from Southern in 1957.

Whirley retired from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in 1980 after 33 years of service in Nigeria. After leaving the mission field, he taught at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., from 1980 to 1987. He received a master of theology degree from Southern in 1946 and a doctor of theology degree in 1957.

Williams retired last year after 27 years as pastor of Baptist Tabernacle in Louisville. He has been pastor of three other Kentucky churches and director of the Baptist Student Union at Murray (Ky.) State University. He earned a bachelor of divinity degree from Southern in 1948 and a master of theology degree in 1952.

Morikawa served with National Ministries for the American Baptist Churches for 20 years, first as director of evangelism and later as secretary of the office of planning and organizational development. Morikawa, who retired from National Ministries in 1976, was vice president of the American Baptist Churches in 1984-85. He received the a master of theology degree from Southern in 1940.

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Interfaith leader offers tips
on spotting bogus petition

By Mark Wingfield

N- HMB

Baptist Press
5/10/89

ATLANTA (BP)--A petition that has caused government officials to see red for years could be eliminated if concerned Christians would learn to see "little black spots," a Southern Baptist interfaith witness leader said.

Bill Gordon, assistant director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department, warned that "Petition 2493" about Madalyn Murray O'Hair's alleged attempt to end Christian broadcasting is making a comeback.

Well-meaning Christians across the United States periodically have deluged the Federal Communications Commission in Washington with signed copies of the phony petition for at least 11 years, he explained.

Although government and church leaders repeatedly have said the petition is false, photocopies of the original continue to appear on church bulletin boards and in church newsletters, Gordon said.

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"There is absolutely no truth to this rumor about Madalyn Murray O'Hair attempting to end Christian broadcasting," he said. "The petition is bogus."

For skeptics, Gordon offered two ways to confirm that petitions currently circulating are the same as previous petitions.

First, look for little black spots all over the paper which result from photocopying poor-quality original documents, he said. "Those spots are a sure sign that the petition you have is a copy of a copy of a copy."

Occasionally someone will retype the petition, eliminating the black spots, he said. "Fortunately, those who retype the petition often don't go to the trouble of updating it. They copy verbatim the exact words which were first written on the petition."

There are two typographical errors and one wrong date that usually get retyped unchanged, he said. O'Hair's name is misspelled "O'Haire" and atheist is misspelled "athiest."

Beyond that, the petition states that O'Hair "successfully eliminated the use of Bible reading and prayer from all public schools 15 years ago."

That court case was settled June 17, 1963 -- which is now 26 years ago. The 11-year difference is exactly the amount of time the current inaccurate petition has been circulating, Gordon said.

Christians who receive copies of this petition should destroy them and should inform anyone else with copies of the scam, he said.

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Brotherhood leadership names
official Royal Ambassador song

By James Warren

N- (O
(B'hood)

Baptist Press
5/10/89

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--State and national Brotherhood leaders have designated an official Royal Ambassador song for the Southern Baptist boys' missions education organization.

Titled "Royal Ambassadors," it was written in 1967 by Gene Bartlett for the 1968 National Royal Ambassador Congress in Oklahoma City.

Bartlett's song has been used through the years by RA groups in states and churches, although it never was recognized as the undisputed, official RA song, Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission leaders said. "The King's Business" was the RA hymn when the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union sponsored the program beginning in 1908. Some chapters still that hymn.

Bartlett was director of the Oklahoma Baptist church music department from 1954 to 1980 and wrote several hymns that appear in the 1975 "Baptist Hymnal." He directed the music for the national congress in 1968.

Brotherhood Commission President James H. Smith said he is proud the official song was penned by Bartlett, who died in 1988.

"Gene Bartlett was a man of missions," said Smith. "He understood our purpose in Brotherhood. The adopted song shows the true purpose of Brotherhood, to involve men and boys in missions."

The official song will be released to participants in Royal Ambassador University, the national training event for RA leadership, May 25-28 in Memphis, Tenn. Sheet music will be available in Baptist Book Stores after June 1.

RAs is the missions education organization for boys, grades 1-9, in Southern Baptist churches. It is a part of a total church Brotherhood program in Southern Baptist churches.

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