

want to see complete forgiveness and reciprocal love manifested. This is why I have made this letter an open one.

Anyone who cannot forgive and love his fellow brothers as Christ our Lord loved every man, should not associate himself spiritually with this action. For its purpose is to arrive at the fulfilment of the commandment of our Lord Jesus

Christ: "Love one another, as I have loved you, so love one another. In this way will men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another".

With fullest Christian love in Jesus Christ,

JOSIF TON

Ploiesti,
30 October 1976.

Baptists in Bucharest Protest

Baptists from the Mihai Bravu church, Bucharest, wrote the following letter dated 12 November 1976. In the autumn of 1976 many such open letters were circulated among Baptist congregations.

TO THE COUNCIL OF THE UNION
OF BAPTIST CHRISTIAN
ASSOCIATIONS OF ROMANIA

Deeply concerned at the developments in our denomination today, we address you in the hope that, in spite of your constantly insensitive and stubborn attitude towards the disturbances and disquiet in our churches, you will finally act in accordance with the will of God and of His people in our churches. For the overwhelming majority of our church members the situation is both painfully and unpleasantly clear. You, gentlemen, do not represent anyone. Your mandate expired long ago. The elections of the Associations chose a new leadership which the Congress was to ratify later.

Honesty itself – not to speak of good Christian feeling – obliges you to take steps to respect the will of the people of God as expressed in the elections and to begin handing over the leadership in close collaboration with the members of the new Union Council. You have done nothing of the kind. On the contrary, more than ever before you have acted and still act feverishly in all kinds of ways which only devalue you even more. You are not serving the interests of the people of God, but only your own personal interests by holding on to your position as leaders in the sight of all when you are in fact no longer leaders.

Among the remarkable achievements of your leadership recently one might mention your attempt to introduce regu-

lations against the Statutes of your denomination – an attempt which fortunately did not succeed – and more recently your attempt to abuse without mercy a perfectly justified protest by the second year Seminary students against the declining standard of teaching on their courses. Even more recently, as if to cap it all, you have dismissed two of the students without giving any reason. These two students, in your eyes, were punished as an example to the others, so as to make the rest afraid to voice any dissatisfaction. But this action produced exactly the opposite result. A wave of dissatisfaction and unrest has swept over the thousands of believers in our country. Brother Josif Ton has declared a protest and is fasting for 21 days as a result. Today is the 12th day of his fast, and as each day passes you are being judged since you are responsible for the health and life of this servant of God.

We raise our voices in protest against your inhumane and unchristian attitudes. We ask:

- 1 That you all resign from office and thus facilitate the calling of the Congress.
- 2 That you start collaborating immediately with the new Union Council, which includes brothers Liviu Olah, Pavel Barbatei and Petru Belicov, and work together in preparing for the Congress.
- 3 That you reinstate the two students dismissed illegally from the Seminary.
- 4 That you quickly re-appoint Josif Ton as a teacher at the Seminary.
- 5 That you stop trying to force the entry of brother Ioachim Tunea

into the new Union Council by illegal means.

- 6 That you urgently send a delegation to brother Josif Ton and present to him your promise that you will resolve the problems which

face you and that you try and persuade him to cease his fast.

May we hope that you will all wake up at the twelfth hour?

12 November 1976.

Resolutions before the Congress

After a joint meeting of the Romanian Baptist Union and the new leadership (elected in December 1975), which was held on 17-18 November, 1976, the following resolutions were drawn up.

1 We all join in prayer to God for the unity and good outcome of the Congress.

2 The leaders of the Associations and the pastors will do all they can at this time to stop any action which might hinder the achievement of unity and peace in the denomination.

3 Between 23 November and 12 December at the conferences of orientation and at the general assemblies of the Associations, to be attended by 159 pastors, 990 officials and 1,200 delegates, the problem of how to prevent further actions which could disturb the unity and peace of the denomination will be tackled.

4 The Council of the Union, representatives of the Associations and leading members of the Associations will

draw up a list of proposals about the new leadership of the Union, which will then be discussed openly with the Department of Cults with the intention of presenting it at the Congress.

5 The Council of the Union, representatives of the Associations and leaders of the Associations ask the Department of Cults to recognize the office of brothers Pavel Barbatei and Liviu Olah to which they were elected both by their Associations and by representatives of the Union Council. If such recognition is not forthcoming the Department is requested to communicate the decision to the general assemblies of the Associations giving the reasons for this refusal.

6 A meeting of the Union Council, the representatives of the Associations and the Association leaders will establish what forms of action should be taken to prepare for the Congress.

7 The decision of the Congress will be valid for all and no future interventions and protests should be made.

CORRECTION

A news item in RCL Vol. 4, No. 4 (p. 57) stated that "the Pope received President Dazara of Hungary". The President of Hungary is in fact called Gyorgy Lazar. *Ed.*