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Memphis-based Baptist hospital
signs contract with Miss. casino

Baptist Press
12/19/96

By William H. Perkins Jr.

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Baptist Memorial Health Care System, Inc. (BMHCS) in Memphis has contracted through a DeSoto (Miss.) County branch hospital to provide health care services for employees of Grand Casino in Tunica County, and the agreement is raising eyebrows among Mississippi Baptists.

That's because BMHCS is one-third owned by the Mississippi Baptist Convention, which has condemned the legalization and rapid spread of casinos in the state.

John N. Robbins, BMHCS executive vice president, confirmed the contract Dec. 3 and issued the following statement:

"Baptist Memorial Health Care provides industrial health nurse services such as wellness and preventative medicine for many corporations in the Mid-South. It is the mission of Baptist Memorial Health Care to serve the health needs of all people within our geographic area and literally around the world. We provide compassionate care in the name of Christ to all people regardless of race, religion, vocation or lifestyle. At the same time, we are most sensitive to the moral concerns of those of the Baptist faith and seek to uphold basic Christian principles in representing this institution to others."

Robbins stressed that BMHCS is opposed to gambling but at the same time feels a ministry commitment to care for individuals in situations where a Christian witness is needed.

Robbins said BMHCS will remain sensitive to the concerns of the three state Baptist conventions affiliated with the health care system -- Mississippi, Arkansas and Tennessee -- by taking such measures as turning down invitations to provide exhibits at health fairs and convention meetings at casinos.

Mississippi is currently the only state of the three that allows casino gambling.

Arkansas voters recently turned down a proposal to open that state to casino gambling, and Tennesseans also have been successful in keeping casino gambling out of their state.

Robbins also pointed out the Grand Casino contract applies only to casino employees at an on-site clinic, with emphases on prevention and wellness, and does not involve services to casino patrons.

Paul G. Jones II, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention's Christian Action Commission (CAC), commended BMHCS for its years of Baptist service to the residents of the three-state area, but he questioned the propriety of the casino contract.

"The churches of the MBC have long appreciated the ministry and health services provided by BMHCS.

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"The recent decision by BMHCS to enter into a contract (with) Grand Casino is both regrettable and offensive to those who have long fought to keep gambling out of our state.

"We strongly disagree with a policy that places employees of BMHCS inside a facility whose product or service is in direct contradiction to historic Baptist positions on moral and ethical issues.

"We find it hard to understand how a contract with Grand Casino is being sensitive to the moral concerns of Baptists, or (how the contract) upholds Christian principles.

"We are deeply disappointed by this action and trust the churches of Mississippi will communicate their displeasure and disappointment," Jones said.

Baptists in DeSoto County, where the MBHCS branch hospital with the casino contract is located just north of Tunica County, were instrumental in defeating a November gambling referendum in their county for the third time since gambling was legalized by the Mississippi legislature.

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Once repulsed by nursing homes,
they're now her mission field

By Colleen Backus

Baptist Press
12/19/96

HOPE, Ark. (BP)--Utter revulsion. That was Rosalie Alderman's first reaction to visiting a nursing home. "I was horrified," she said. "Nobody in his right mind would voluntarily go near such a place!" But that was nearly three decades ago and a lot has changed.

For the past 27 years, Alderman has been actively involved in nursing home ministry, discovering residents "were ill and lonely folks who could and would work creatively for God if someone would teach them to do so."

Alderman didn't initially volunteer for service; she was pressed into it. It was 1966, and both kids were "out of the nest." One daughter was married and the other daughter was in college. Rosalie was enjoying gardening around her home in Hope, Ark., an active social life and weekends spent in the Ozark Mountains with her husband, Edwin.

Then one night in May, Edwin asked her, "Why are you breathing so hard?" The next thing she knew, Rosalie was in a hospital being diagnosed with coronary thrombosis.

The doctor ordered a change in lifestyle, curtailing her activities.

"From then until May 1969 my life was a continuous nightmare," Alderman recalled. "Time passed, but my life pattern became no easier to live with." Frustrated and depressed, she couldn't understand why things that had interested her before -- like teaching Bible class at First Baptist Church, Hope -- no longer appealed to her.

Then something changed. At a meeting of a mission action group in her church, Alderman recounted, "I was my usual bored self." Then it was announced that a Bible teacher was needed for Heritage Manor Nursing Home. "I'll do that!" she said. "The ladies thought that I'd flipped!

"It was an awesome experience," Alderman recalled. "God filled me with the sweetest, most peaceful feeling in my restless spirit."

Alderman began Bible studies that Wednesday and today conducts Bible studies at three nursing homes in Hope and a Sunday morning service at one of them.

Her strategy for nursing home ministry is simple, aimed at directly meeting the needs of nursing home residents. She believes they have a need to hear the Bible read regularly and a need for personal worth. She always greets the residents with a handshake or a hug, and she remembers to look directly into their eyes. She tells even comatose patients, "I love you."

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Alderman recruits help from church, nursing home staff and from residents, both for an extensive prayer ministry and nursing home worship. Knowing her health limits her, she works to make sure teachers, music leaders and pianists are scheduled. "Nursing homes are a fact of life today," she noted. "One of the most compassionate fields of service open to humanity is that of helping those who live in them."

Her crusade is outlined in her book, "Take Heart: A Touching Story of Ministry to 'Forgotten' People," first published in 1978 and reissued this year with an updated chapter. "It's a story of men and women refusing to become a vast and barren wasteland of humanity, waiting only to die."

Indeed, her book is a painfully honest account of victories, large and small, as well as failures and misunderstandings. It also serves as an extended "thank you" to all those who have helped her over the years, including her husband, Edwin. He now assists with the Sunday morning worship in addition to the financial and emotional support he has provided for Rosalie over the years.

The book also details her efforts to teach the residents to manifest Christ's love by doing good for one another. The teaching has resulted in informal support groups, gathering when a resident receives bad news from home or a disturbing diagnosis. Racial boundaries have crumbled, even for Alderman, who was raised in small-town Mississippi.

The book serves as a reminder that even a smile can be a small victory. One such account notes a gentleman who would speak to her in the hall but was embittered and would not come to Bible study meetings. He asked her, "Has God ever answered one of your prayers?" Her reply was, "Yes, this visit is an answer to prayer."

A short time after their conversation, the gentleman came and acknowledged Jesus as his Savior and participated in the communion Alderman's pastor, Stan Parris, and the church's deacons, administer at the nursing home. Four days later, the resident died.

Parris has known the Aldermans for many years, having grown up in the church he now serves as pastor. "They are genuine servants of the Lord," he remarked. "With Rosalie, what you see is what you get -- this is a true calling to a mission field. Those people love her. She can minister on that field like no one I've ever seen."

Now 80 years old, Alderman has five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren but is more determined than ever to get others involved in nursing homes ministries.

"There are two kinds of people in this world -- those who contribute time and talents toward the solving of problems and those who are the problems," she explained. "I know that, in my own life, there was a time when I was the problem.

"I know now, three decades later, that God ... was forcing me to wait, which was something I was not good at," she added.

"My restlessness and misery were his method of directing my focus toward a ministry to hundreds of people. ... It had been his purpose for me all along."

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**Author helps parents teach
social graces to children**

By Russell N. Dilday

**Baptist Press
12/19/96**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--"Etiquette is a set of rules that we have in our head and manners are in our heart, and together they are a shield against embarrassment," said June Hines Moore, noting the need for social graces in society.

"If you know the rules, you won't embarrass yourself, and if you have manners in your heart, you won't embarrass someone else."

Moore, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark., is the author of the recently released book, "You Can Raise a Well-Mannered Child," published by Broadman & Holman of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

The book serves as a map for almost any social situation, from table manners to correspondence, from party situations to church congregations and, as Moore notes in her chapter 14 heading, "From Basketball to Ballet."

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She has had plenty of opportunities to research her subject. The former schoolteacher has owned and operated Moore Than Manners Consulting, a social and business etiquette training service, since 1987. "I teach all ages, I teach classes, I hold workshops for corporations and teach in the continuing education department at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock," Moore recounted. She also wrote the "Moore on Manners" column for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette for several years.

Her etiquette classes have drawn more than 500 children and teens over the years, but Moore said she wrote the book to answer the needs of their parents. "I had fifth- and sixth-graders in my classes, but the drawback was that I didn't have these children all day like their parents do. The parents began telling me that they needed a guide to reinforce what I was teaching and to give them more information.

"That's the reason for the book," she explained. "I decided that parents needed to know how to teach children ... because they are the teachers all the time. I wanted to address the questions and the needs that I have seen in all my business seminars and classes. I have been asked every question imaginable."

Moore, who also has written "A Business Etiquette Manual for the Professional" and curriculum material for camps and schools, now is working on a still-untitled second work "for the adult professional. It will be a guide to confidence in business etiquette."

Moore said there is a current movement back to etiquette sparked by the business community. "Society evolves," she noted. "The pendulum went so far in the direction of too much propriety before the '60s that the hippies ... started the pendulum the other way.

"In the late '60s and '70s, the business community discovered that the '60s generation was highly trained and educated, but lacking in social skills," she commented, "and when they found that it was affecting their bottom line, they got in gear and did something. Corporations all over the country began calling in people to conduct seminars and training. The return to proper manners didn't start at some little old ladies' tea party, but in the business world."

When she began teaching etiquette, the Ouachita Baptist University graduate recalled she was alarmed when she "found out not everybody knows the rules. I did a class one time where we had a large number of Ph.Ds. They were so much more educated, but they did not know the elementary rules of table etiquette or how to greet someone. They lacked confidence because they lacked social skills."

Although Moore makes a living teaching adults and older children social skills, she said etiquette training must begin at home early. "For it to really start, it must begin with young children. For parents, as soon as the child is born, you can start saying 'please' and 'thank you' and make positive comments to the child. They see modeling by the parent."

Moore said she has noticed a downturn in social etiquette among teens, blaming the trend on the breakup of the family -- "the fact that parents and children don't eat together, we live such a fast-paced life and they don't have much opportunity until their senior prom."

She explained etiquette "is a family value to pass on to children -- the mores and folkways and the proper way to do things." She cautioned, however, that "you never do the proper thing just for the sake of doing it. You do it for a reason. There is a reason for every rule of etiquette."

Many of those reasons, such as shaking hands, came from common practices. "We shake hands in America because this country was settled by men carrying guns. They extended their open hand without a gun in it to show that they were friend and not foe."

Other common social practices grew out of religious practices. "I researched in 27 libraries on reasons for etiquette and so many of them are related to religion. When someone sneezes, we say, 'Bless you.' That goes back a long way to the time when a person's life was considered to be in their breath. When a person sneezed, to keep them from dying, someone else would say, 'Bless you.'"

While many of her classes have dealt with common social practices, she admits having to improvise when it comes to dealing with regional needs common to Arkansas, for example. Once, while teaching male students the correct way to seat a date in a car, one of her students became concerned about how to seat his date in his tall four-wheel-drive truck.

"To tell you the truth, I'd never read anything about that," Moore said. "So we went out to his truck and I was standing there contemplating how, with a straight skirt on, I could get into that truck. He was a big football player and he finally picked me up and put me in it."

Her courteous response to his solution? "I think that will do just fine."

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**Outreach via school sports
underscored in new book**

By Julie McGowan

**Baptist Press
12/19/96**

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)--It's a familiar Norman Rockwell-type scene: A one-high-school town on game day with the school colors displayed proudly on flags, sweatshirts, bumper stickers and pep rally posters. The team gets pumped, school-age fans flock to the game, parents and other townsfolk gather for the heart of the community's social life: Sports.

But who washes the team's towels after the game? Who provides Gatorade for the two-a-day practices before the season ever begins? Who greets the visiting team? Who videotapes the events? Who gives attention to the nearly fanatical, non-athletic fan? Who hosts the officials for a snack supper?

"The bottom line is: Churches today need new avenues to reach people," said Sharon Baach, coauthor of a new book, "Reaching Out Through School Sports." Baach, a member of First Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo., is associate professor of recreation at Southwest Missouri State University. She has served as recreation director on two church staffs and on the recreation and leisure faculty at Southwest Baptist University, Bolivar.

"Because there is such an interest in sports in our country, that is a natural avenue to reach people. That's what Jesus taught us -- to meet people where they are."

Baach and Bobby Shows, a member of the Missouri Baptist Convention missions education and ministry development team, compiled and wrote Reaching Out Through School Sports to help churches build relationships with people in sports programs. The objective: to break down barriers and change perceptions of the church.

Shows is the MBC consultant for sports evangelism. He has been a minister of recreation in churches in Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas and Missouri for 30 years. He also is beginning his 21st year of refereeing basketball, an outlet ministry where he relates to coaches.

Shows noted recent Gallup poll findings that 90 percent of all Americans watch, read about or participate in sports at least once a month -- 70 percent more than once a month.

"If Jesus were walking on the earth today, I believe he would be involved where people are involved," Shows said. "Yes, I believe he would be at a Cardinals baseball game or a Chiefs football game. He would attend the athletic functions of your school. He was a people person."

Believing the church needs to minister as Jesus did, the authors have offered ideas to provide simple, practical ways to build relationships with coaches and athletes in a school system, thereby opening doors for ministry with those individuals.

The suggestions in the book are in three categories: ministering to the coach; ministering to the athlete; and general ministry options (spectators, parents, libraries and the general student population).

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The general ministry options are important, Baach noted, because of the relationships that can be built. "The number of people directly involved in a sport -- actually on the roster -- how many is that? Ten, 12? But when you add the parents, the kids in the school who aren't on the team but still are interested and support it, you broaden the avenue. You go where the people are. It's another way to build contacts."

The ideas in the book are built around sports because that is the authors' world, Shows said. But the suggestions easily could be applied to other groups -- choir, drama, band and others.

"My involvement came just as having a natural love for sports," Baach stated. "But for anyone in ministry, you can't do ministry today like you used to. The message doesn't change, but the medium needs to change. If one church can use one idea to save one person, the book is worth it -- bottom line. That's why it was written."

The scriptural basis cited for the book is 1 Corinthians 9:22 (LNT): "Yes, whatever a person is like, I try to find a common ground with him so that he will let me tell him about Jesus Christ, and let Christ save him."

The concepts in *Reaching Out Through School Sports* were written specifically for communities that have a single school system, the authors pointed out. While many of the recommendations might be adapted for churches in larger communities with multiple school systems represented, scheduling conflicts and potential rivalries could make their use more difficult.

The book was sparked by a group of people involved in athletics who had ideas or success stories to share.

Hal Rhea, a member of First Baptist Church, St. James, Mo., became involved in sports as a tennis player at Southwest Baptist University. His three children have excelled in different sports, so as parents he and his wife have attended many sporting activities. Through involvement in church, he wondered what his church could do to minister to athletes, coaches or both.

The church started experimenting with ideas such as a coaches' appreciation day and a banquet for the local high school girls' basketball team. This year, during national athletic week, the church placed an advertisement in the local newspaper naming each coach and thanking them for working with the children in the school. The church also invited the coaches to the teachers' lounge for coffee, donuts and rolls to express appreciation.

The St. James church still is in the beginning stages of its sports evangelism, but Rhea reported the events have been successful to open the door to ministry. The church is planning a Super Bowl party for young men and their fathers to watch the game together, complete with snacks and an inspirational devotion at halftime.

Ideas in *Reaching Out Through School Sports* include the name of the activity, the purpose and the practical implementation. Ways suggested to minister to coaches include a subscription to a Christian sports magazine, to provide a witness and the opportunity to read about Christians in the world of athletics.

Another suggestion is gift certificates to local restaurants, to meet a physical need for a coach, perhaps during a busy time of the year such as his or her competitive season.

"To my knowledge, I've not seen anything like this book available," Shows said. "It's just been word of mouth or ideas shared at a conference. So this is something in black and white, ideas a church could be capable of doing."

Reaching Out Through School Sports is available for \$5 per copy, which covers printing charges only. The authors also would be glad to go to a church to talk about how to implement ideas for sports evangelism. For more information or to order a booklet, call (573) 635-7931, ext. 422.

**\$1 million grant endows NOBTS
psychology/counseling chair**

By Debbie Moore

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has been named as the first recipient of a \$1 million grant from Baptist Community Ministries (BCM), a private foundation in New Orleans.

Given in recognition of the service of Landrum P. Leavell II, NOBTS president 1975-95 and long-time member of the BCM board of trustees, the grant will endow a chair of pastoral care and counseling in the seminary's division of pastoral ministries. The gift is historic, providing the first chair in the school's history to be fully endowed with \$1 million.

"We are delighted to receive this grant and are proud of Baptist Community Ministries' determination to take their founding vision and continue to keep the faith," said Chuck Kelley, NOBTS president. "Their investment in our seminary is about as tangible a sign of their faith in this seminary as can be made, as well as to Baptist work in this city."

Gordon Reische, chairman of BCM's board of trustees, made the official announcement of the grant on Dec. 10 to the seminary's executive committee of the board of trustees. BCM President Byron Harrell and Chaplaincy Director Gene Huffstutler also were present.

The history of BCM dates back to the early 1920s when Southern Baptists had a vision to start a hospital in New Orleans, Reische told NOBTS trustees. BCM, a private foundation now endowed with proceeds from the sale of New Orleans' Mercy+Baptist Medical Center to Tenet Health Care in August 1995, makes grants to qualifying charitable organizations in the five-parish (county) river region surrounding New Orleans.

BCM's funding interests are primarily in the fields of education, health, public safety and governmental oversight. Grantees and programs are evaluated considering the religious history and mission of BCM, which is governed by a local independent board of trustees.

BCM is a Christian-oriented institution with a Baptist tradition, although there is no official association with the Southern Baptist Convention or any other religious denomination.

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**She 'had to' visit church
for a college class report**

By Jim Edlin

Baptist Press
12/19/96

LAUREL, Mont. (BP)--Bobby Shaw, pastor of Laurel (Mont.) Baptist Church, greeted a first-time visitor and thanked her for coming.

He asked if she was new in town and why she had chosen to visit the church. She replied that she "had to." She said she lived in Laurel and was taking a college philosophy class.

Her current assignment was to attend a meeting of a religious group that was unfamiliar to her and to evaluate the experience. She said she chose Laurel Baptist Church because it was the closest.

The following is her report, with her name withheld:

"On Oct. 13, I attended the 11 a.m. Sunday worship service at the Laurel Baptist Church. On entering the building, I was greeted at the door and given a bulletin of the morning's events. I was also given permission to take notes during the service.

"The building itself was very plain, with white walls, a simple wooden cross in the center of the front wall. Off to the left was the podium (which was raised two to three steps), to the right was a piano.

"The congregation was casually dressed and sat on folding chairs. Everyone was smiling and happy, or at least it seemed so. Children were running back and forth, laughing. This particular congregation was the first group of people in a church that I've felt truly comfortable with in more years than I care to remember.

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"The service was scheduled to begin at 11 a.m. At 10:55, the music began and people started to seat themselves. When everyone finally settled down at 11:05, the pastor, Bobby Shaw, greeted the congregation. We stood for the opening hymn (which had the words on a overhead screen behind the pastor). We sang three songs, then the opening prayer (invocation) was said. This prayer was simple to the extreme and lasted for just a couple of minutes. After we sat down the visitors and newcomers were again welcomed. Then everyone in the congregation who had not had a chance to talk to their friends were asked to do so (this particular action caused a great deal of confusion, especially when 90 people start milling around).

"After order was restored, we again sang songs from the overhead and the children were called forward. The pastor conversed with the children on their level while seated on the floor. He explained the distances that Kenneth Loucks, a guest speaker from Brazil, had traveled (I'm not sure if this is the standard routine or not. I do know that this ritual impressed me because, in my experience, children were taught to be seen and not heard). One of the children was sent to the nursery with a message. When he had returned, Mr. Shaw explained that a missionary was the same as that child -- all he did was carry a message to other countries. The children returned to their seats.

"We again stood and sang while the offering was taken (one thing that was unusual is that the guests were told that they were not expected to give). After we were seated, the pastor introduced Kenneth Loucks and the Sunday message began. We were all asked to stand in reverence to God's Word while 1 Corinthians 3:7,9 was read. ("So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building.") After we again sat down, he started his talk about Brazil and the work the church was doing. The main point of the message is that, as Baptists, when they are "united they stand and divided they fail (fall)." When the message was complete, an offer was made to the congregation for anyone who had not yet accepted Christ to come forward. None responded, so the service was ended with a prayer.

"After services, on the way out of the building, both Bobby Shaw and Mr. Loucks spoke to everyone at the door. Visitors were invited to come again.

"It is extremely hard to form a valid judgement on a church by attending just one service. I do know that in this short period of time, I was able to form several impressions. The congregation presented a happy and outgoing attitude. Visitors were welcomed by all, and there was no evidence of reserve that a newcomer often experiences. In my past, I've gone to several different churches. I was raised a member of the Mormon Church. (I had been baptized in both the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.) I also went to a Catholic school, so my religious upbringing is somewhat confused. I have had my name removed from all their roles/books.

"In conclusion, this church seemed welcoming to the 'regular person' off the street. They seem to teach a simple doctrine based on the teachings of Christ (from what information I could gather). The bottom line is that if I was contemplating returning to an organized church or religion I would seriously consider attending here because of the warm welcome I received."

What would be the report on your church from someone like this?

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Edlin is technical director for the Montana Southern Baptist Fellowship.

CORRECTIONS:

In (BP) story, "Pastor: Bakker has much to say, but sadly, few to share it with," dated 12/18/96, please correct the first sentence of the ninth paragraph to read:

Bakker compares 3 John 2 to a similar greeting in Romans 1:10, concluding in the latter that the apostle Paul was simply saying, "I sure hope God grants me an opportunity to visit you soon."

In (BP) story, "Baptist-coordinated clinic entails multi-agency effort," dated 12/18/96, please correct the spelling of Dailey to Daly beginning in the 14th paragraph and following.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

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