

June 16, 1964

Nurse Finds Theology
Her Kind Of Tonic

By Mary Lane Powell
For Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS--She is just as much at home on campus reciting a lesson in New Testament Greek class or across town assisting with delivery of a baby at Southern Baptist Hospital.

After all, pert Miss Peggy Argo of Atlanta, Ga., has been steadily mixing the two activities for more than four years, and her record proves she's an expert at both.

This year at spring graduation, Miss Argo became the first woman to receive the bachelor of divinity degree and the second woman to receive an advanced degree in theology from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

This spring Miss Argo also established another record. She is the first woman to be admitted into the program of study leading to the doctor of theology degree.

"Sincerely, I've enjoyed my studies at the seminary more than anything I've ever done," said the raven-haired scholar. "Probably because I didn't have to do it."

Miss Argo's studies for the bachelor of divinity degree began as something she had to do to fulfill requirements for a position with the Southern Baptist Convention Home Mission Board as resident nurse at its Sellers Home for Unwed Mothers and Adoption Center in New Orleans.

Having taken the required number of hours, "Brother" Peggy, as she is kiddingly called, found herself completely fascinated by her studies. "I just kept coming back for more," she explained. "The work was enjoyable, and besides, it gave me some contact outside of my immediate job, which was a bit confining."

Miss Argo was on call 12 hours a day at Sellers Home and often found her night's sleep interrupted by a quick dash to the hospital. Yet even long, odd hours failed to affect her grade average which totaled over 96 at the end of her work this year.

"Miss Argo has been one of our finest B. D. students," commented New Testament professor R. E. Glaze. "In my classes she has shown a reverence for truth and dedication to the search for that truth. Her gracious personality and ability as a scholar have won the respect of her fellow students as well as appreciation from her professors," he added.

Not until last week did the vivacious student relinquish her Home Mission job of four years so she might concentrate on her doctoral work in the coming three to five years.

"We are certainly happy that Miss Argo came into the New Testament department to do her graduate work. The quality of her work and grades speak for themselves concerning her outstanding ability," said one of Miss Argo's major professors, Ray Frank Robbins.

"Giving up my Home Mission position was a hard decision to make, but I hope to teach religion in a college or seminary, and I must be as well prepared as possible," she explained.

Teaching will not be a new experience for the female doctoral candidate. After receiving a bachelor of science degree from Tift College (Baptist), Forsyth, Ga., and a registered nurse's title from Mather School of Nursing at Southern Baptist Hospital, New Orleans, Miss Argo served as an instructor at Georgia Baptist Hospital, Atlanta; Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, and her alma mater, Southern Baptist Hospital.

-more-

Would she advise other women to get a divinity degree? "It all depends on what they want to do," replied Miss Argo. "If they want to teach, then a B. D. is right. If they plan to go into directly related church work, a religious education or music degree is probably best. Of course, some subjects, such as theology and ethics, would make wonderful electives, even for a woman in another field."

Miss Argo's departure from the undergraduate school of theology does not mean the end of feminine influence upon the Greek and Hebrew classes. Beginning her second year of bachelor of divinity work is Sue Haire of Marianna, Ark. Both agree it's not too hard being the only woman in a class, if you can stand the unbelieving stares when you make the best grade in the room.

-30-

(picture accompanies feature)

Miss Argo
Sue Haire
Theological Seminary
Marianna, Ark.

BAPTIST PRESS

460 JAMES ROBERTSON PARKWAY
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

**Davis C. Woolley
Historical Commission
127 Ninth Ave., No.
Nashville, Tennessee**

519

**NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION
WATCH FOR THE (BP) CREDIT LINE**