



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
Telephone (615) 244-2355  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

## REGIONAL OFFICES

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Editor, 161 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30303, Telephone (404) 523-2593  
DALLAS R. T. McCartney, Editor, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) RI 1-1996

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Editor, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

## BUREAU

BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD Lynn M. Davis Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203,  
Telephone (615) 254-1631

March 27, 1967

Surgeon Visits Cuba;  
Operates on Caudill

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ATLANTA (BP)--An Atlanta eye surgeon, recently returned from a secret trip to Cuba, may have saved the eyesight of 63-year-old Southern Baptist Missionary Herbert Caudill.

Dr. William S. Hagler, associate professor of ophthalmology at Emory University Clinic here, said he performed "retinal detachment" surgery on Caudill in a Havana eye hospital (March 15). It apparently was successful, he said.

Dr. Hagler, who was in Cuba for eight days, said he volunteered to make the trip when it was learned that Caudill's condition required specialized treatment not available in Cuba. With approval of the U. S. Department of State, he was granted a visa through the Czechoslovakian Embassy.

Another surgeon also made the trip--Dr. Harry Taylor of Norfolk, Va., who just completed a six-month fellowship at Emory Clinic to learn Dr. Hagler's highly specialized retinal surgery techniques.

Caudill, a native of Clinchport, Va., who once was pastor of several churches in Georgia, is the missionary who was arrested on April 8, 1965, along with his missionary son-in-law David Fite and 40 Cuban Baptist pastors.

He and Fite were convicted of illegal currency exchange. Caudill was sentenced to 10 years in prison, Fite to six.

Four months ago, Caudill was released "conditionally" to seek treatment in Havana. Apparently he will convalesce from the surgery in his home.

Dr. Hagler said he also saw the Clifton J. Fites of Waynesboro, Ga., the parents of 34-year-old David Fite, who had been a professor at the Baptist Seminary in Havana before his arrest. David's twin brother, Donald, also is an associate professor of ophthalmology at Emory University Clinic.

The Clifton Fites left the U. S. on Feb. 25 to try to see their son and plead with Cuban officials for his release.

Dr. Hagler said Margaret Fite, David's wife, and the Clifton Fites were allowed to see David each week at La Cabana Fortress, where he was moved from the Isle of Pines Prison "apparently at the request of the Fites."

David Fite is a native of Fort Worth, and attended Mercer University, Macon, Ga.

Dr. Hagler said Fite is working in a rock quarry now and is "delighted, according to Margaret, because he is outside working. She said he looks good, and is sunburned."

He said the Fites reported they were treated politely and had experienced no trouble in getting to see government officials.

"Everything went smoothly on the operation," Dr. Hagler said. "But it was a harrowing experience just as it is in any strange hospital."

He said he and Dr. Taylor left about \$2,000 worth of drugs and instruments with the head of the Ramon Pando Ferrer Eye Hospital "as a gesture of thanks for their help, cooperation, and friendship."

Dr. Hagler said he and Dr. Taylor were treated cordially and were free to sightsee in Havana and the countryside. They entered Cuba through Spain and spent two days in Madrid on the return trip.

Dr. Hagler operated on Caudill in Atlanta in 1964 in an attempt to save the sight in his other eye. Caudill is blind in that eye now, however.

Caudill was director of Baptist work in Cuba before his arrest. He has been a missionary there for 37 years. His wife and daughter, Mrs. David Fite, and the Fite's three young sons, remain in Cuba.

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Car Crash Kills Baptist  
Missionaries, Families

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SAN ANTONIO, TEX. (BP)--Two Baptist missionaries and seven members of their families were killed in a grinding auto crash that claimed a total of 10 lives and injured six others.

It reportedly was the worst traffic accident in the city's history.

Killed were two students at the Mexican Baptist Bible Institute, both Spanish missionaries with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

The victims were identified by H. B. Ramsour, president of the Bible Institute here.

They were Juan Pedro de la Cruz, 37, a student at the Institute and Spanish missionary with the Home Mission Board; his wife Bertha, about 30, and their two sons, Peter, 15, and Sammy, 9.

Also killed were Pablo Jiminez, 33, another Institute student and Spanish missionary; his wife, Mrs. Jiminez, 33, and their children Paul, Jr., 13, Ernest, 11, and Naomi, 12.

Listed in critical and serious condition were: Amelia de la Cruz, 16; Yolanda Jiminez, 9; Ernestina de la Cruz, 12; Alex de la Cruz, 10.

Undergoing treatment for minor injuries were Richard de la Cruz, 11; and Becky de la Cruz, 7.

Also killed was Genovio A. Villarreal, about 28, of San Antonio. The two families, 15 persons in all, collided with an auto driven by Villarreal, who was alone.

Police said Villarreal's car was traveling along the 8200 block of US Highway 81 South about 12:14 A.M., a stretch of highway which has no median strip. Police said the car collided with the station wagon carrying the 15 members of the two families.

Witnesses said the dead and injured in the wreckage of the vehicles were strewn for yards along the busy highway, and in the following confusion police were not notified of the crash until almost 20 minutes after it occurred.

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Tolbert Says World Thinks  
Christians are "Faking It"

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"The world has no respect for Christians today because it knows we are simply faking it," said New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Professor Malcolm O. Tolbert here.

Speaking at the 13th annual Student Missions Conference at New Orleans Seminary, Tolbert told the students that "drawing a smoke screen of talk over our lives cannot hide the truth."

"Jesus identified himself fully with those he came to reach, in their anguish, agony, dirt and disease. We say that we believe in him, and yet we raise barriers that keep the world from coming in contact with us," said Tolbert, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Brazil.

"The purpose of identification is that men may see God," he said, "and they can only see him in someone else. Christ came because God's love had to become concrete in a human being, and it is the same today. We must point people to God by our willingness to relate to them."

Tolbert said he is a troubled preacher, because his ministry is in church buildings and the church today is not for bad people but for good people.

"I am spending my life separated from the people Jesus spent his life surrounded by-- those who are outside the pale of human respectability," he said. "God does accept the sinner, and as long as we Christians do not, the world will know we're faking."

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Johnson Tells Baptists:  
Renew or Face Extinction

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Describing life in the 1970's and 1980's, a Baptist college chaplain told the Inter-Agency Council of the Southern Baptist Convention here that Baptists must have church renewal if the denomination is to survive in the future.

"It is no longer possible for us to survive as a major religious force in this country without serious re-evaluation and re-direction," said L. D. Johnson, chaplain to Furman University in Greenville, S. C.

Speaking to the denomination's Inter-Agency Council, Johnson read a 30-page manuscript outlining what life would be like in the 1970's and 80's, and offering seven main suggested solutions which he felt Southern Baptists should consider.

He said his position was neither that "all is well," or "all is lost." Somewhere in between these two "lies my deep concern for the relevance and health of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Saying that much of the present Southern Baptist Convention denominational organization is obsolete, Johnson urged Southern Baptists to face squarely the crucial issues of the future.

Earlier, he had listed what he considered to be some of the issues of the future, and their effect on Christianity.

The next two decades will be characterized by more emphasis on the ecumenical movement within Christian groups, he said.

"Baptists can ill-afford to remain aloof from the lively movement that is bringing the Church of Christ together," he said. "It is highly unlikely that a position of denominational isolationism can be regarded as viable by the 1970's...The days of isolationism are about done."

"Another significant change in the 70's will have to do with understanding of Scripture," said the former pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, S. C.

"Insistence upon the literal meaning of all of the Bible is no longer a tenable position among people who are educated, and the education of the American people will be the mark of the 70's."

He said that the 70's and 80's will be characterized by more scientific advances, and that the totally secular society is making scientific knowledge the supreme good. No church will be able to minister to people of the nuclear age if it refuses to come to grips with this, he added.

On education, Johnson predicted increased costs, more financial crises for Baptist schools, and expansion of federal aid to higher education.

He said Baptists have two alternatives for their schools--either to get out of the business of higher education except for the seminaries, or "find some way of using tax dollars in our schools without compromising or feeling that we are compromising, our religious freedom."

The trend is toward more federal government, not less. In world politics, the future is so complex it will require a mature church to deal with world problems realistically, he added.

Describing population changes, Johnson predicted that the majority of the population of the nation will be under 25 years of age by the 1970's; and that the population will shift to huge metropolitan areas, where problems of crime, slums, the inner city, will increase tremendously.

Secularism will increase, and the influence of the church in society will decrease during the 1970's and 1980's, he predicted.

To meet the challenge of the future, he offered seven suggestions, one of which included ten different points.

He recommended greater openness among Baptists, an emphasis on "converted church membership," a revival of church discipline, a re-examination of success symbols, emphasis on church renewal, a re-discovery of worship, and ten suggestions on church education efforts.

On the need for a greater openness, Johnson said Baptists often operate "with the blinds down and doors locked" against influence from the outside, and cited as an example a trend

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toward not inviting any speakers to the annual convention who are not Baptists.

"A clean breath of fresh air needs to blow through our convention and through our local congregations," he said. "Without openness we are going to be more and more isolated from the real world where Christ must be preached if redemption is to take place."

Second, he urged Baptist churches to quit crowding their church rolls with "baptized unbelievers," and to do a better job of winning people to the Lord Jesus Christ, not just getting them baptized or on church rolls.

It is a scandal that so many churches have some disciplinary provisions in their church manuals or covenants, and rarely ever invoke these provisions, he said. "As someone has said, the church is the easiest club in town to join and the hardest to get out of."

He urged Baptist churches to quit using secular materialistic standards to judge their success, saying big memberships, big budgets, and big contributions do not necessarily mean success.

On church renewal, Johnson suggested the formation of small lay-led groups to meet for intensive Bible study. He urged pilot projects that encourage experimentation and innovation.

On worship, he said the worshipper in the pew is being deprived of the full meaning of the experience unless he is given encouragement to participate in praise and adoration, confession and contrition, absolution and thanksgiving, petition and commitment.

On education programs at Baptist churches, he suggested: (1) elimination of assembly programs in Sunday School, (2) abandoning "cubby-hole" classrooms, (3) Bible teaching in small groups, mixing the sexes, using dialogue instead of lectures, (4) more time for teaching by ministers, (5) special training for parents, (6) a complete overhaul of the concept of Training Union, (7) re-scheduling of church meetings throughout the week, and (8) re-emphasis of the mission of the church.

"Mission is the church responding to its opportunities to give witness to Christ in the world," he said. "It is self-evident that the traditional ways of mission require re-appraisal."

"The traditional revival meeting is almost universally ineffective. So is the Sunday morning preaching service as a method of reaching the lost. Worship services on Sunday may be the means of collecting and inducting those who have been won, but such services rarely are the occasion for winning them."

Finally, he urged the church to face difficult problems, and social issues. "To long we have avoided the crucial issues which might cause disagreement. Our emphasis has been a blandness and inoffensiveness.

"We cannot go along much further without having come to grips with our responsibilities in the racial crisis. We cannot ignore the moral revolution in our day. We need...a compassionate and intelligent ministry to those with special problems such as alcoholism, delinquency, job displacement, divorce or other family stress."

Commenting on the decline of young people responding to the ministry, Johnson said that unless something is done quickly to reverse the downward trend, the church of the 70's and 80's will be in desperate plight and in greater peril of leaderless churches than most realize.

"It is likely that the appearance of irrelevance, triviality, commitment to the past and lack of excitement about the future keep young people away from the church," he said. "Show them that we care and that we are willing to risk something dangerous and perhaps unpopular, and they will once more respond with their lives."