

**BAPTIST PRESS**

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February 10, 1969

**Imprisoned Missionaries
Arrive in U. S. Safely**

MATAMOROS, Mex. (BP)--Cheerful and composed, the Herbert Caudills and David Fites Friday stepped off a Mexican government airliner here and onto freedom ground.

The party of six, smiling and teary-eyed, groped in silence for words as they encountered a welcoming party, then Mrs. Caudill blurted out:

"This is a surprise."

David Fite, lean and tan from prison farm labor, said simply:

"We are grateful to be here and grateful to everyone who worked and prayed to make this possible."

But if the Matamoros arrival was silent emotional understatement, the Atlanta arrival some 30 hours later was an emotional explosion.

Relatives--including David Fite's parents--and a group of Cuban refugee friends pressed against television cameraman and newsmen and sang in Spanish what sounded like "Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow," a doxology for tearful reunions.

In the middle of the melee, 12-year-old James Fite, the Fites' eldest son who was sent out of Cuba earlier, stood with his arms around his brothers, John, 10 and Mark, 3, getting reacquainted in their native tongue--Spanish.

Saddest of all, teenager Benjamin Valdez, a Cuban refugee living in Atlanta, stood sobbing as he tried to talk to David Fite, who had last seen Benjamin's father in prison eight weeks ago.

Caudill and his son-in-law Fite had been prisoners of the Cuban government since April 8, 1965, when they were arrested for and later convicted of illegal currency exchange.

Now Caudill, 65, and his wife Marjorie were arriving home to stay in the U.S. after nearly 40 years as missionaries in western Cuba.

"It's like leaving home," Caudill said.

Fite, 35, and his wife and two young sons were following the trail of their eldest son James, who left Cuba via Matamoros last November, a month before he knew his father was to be freed from an Havana prison.

At a news conference at the Atlanta airport on Saturday, Caudill was asked what he expected to do now. He smiled and demonstrated the surprisingly good humor under strain that marked each of them:

"I believe we'll start a second honeymoon," he replied. "And I hope the next 38 years will be as happy as the first."

Both men, in response to questions about how they were treated in prison, said: "We were not discriminated against."

Fite told reporters his release from prison on Dec. 16 was an "unexpected surprise" and a "humanitarian act of mercy." Margaret had visited him on Saturday, Dec. 14, and told him that she had received word his liberty papers had been signed and that he would be allowed to come home before Christmas.

He was released two mornings later and surprised his family by arriving home on a public bus.

The youngest boy, three-year-old Mark, responded by running and shouting to neighbors: "My Daddy's home, my Daddy's home."

Caudill, who had been out of prison on conditional liberty two years due to eye ailments, apparently could have applied two years ago to leave the country.

"We did not want to leave Margaret and the children alone with David in prison," he said.

Late in the fall of 1968, when it became evident that Mrs. Caudill also was developing serious eye trouble that threatened her sight, it became increasingly important for the Caudills to leave.

Mrs. Caudill, however, told her daughter: "I would rather go blind than leave you alone now."

When Fite was released, the entire family--the Caudills and the Fites--made application to leave the country as a family unit and gained approval to fly out on the monthly Mexican government refugee flights to Matamoros, across the Rio Grande River from Brownsville, Tex.

"The way these things all came together, we believe God's hand was in it," Fite said. "This was the answer to thousands of prayers. Daily we felt new strength and saw insurmountable problems overcome.

Both the Caudills and the Fites said there had been a steady flow of friends visiting them in Havana since it became known they were leaving.

Caudill said the Baptist work has continued all along. "It hasn't grown outward much," he said, "but it has deepened."

He said there still are about 90 churches and 7-8,000 Baptists in western Cuba, where Southern Baptist work began some 80 years ago. More than half of the Cuban pastors who had been arrested also are free now, Caudill said, and many are preaching.

Caudill, at the time of his arrest nearly four years ago, was superintendent of Baptist work in western Cuba and president of the Baptist seminary in Havana.

Fite, who had been in Cuba six years, was pastor of the Buena Vista Baptist Church in Havana, a congregation of English-speaking West Indians, and was teaching New Testament and Greek in the seminary.

Mrs. Caudill had continued teaching in the seminary until they left Cuba. Asked what she had done to keep busy, Mrs. Fite replied:

"I've been keeping house and toting jabs (cloth sacks for hauling groceries, etc.)."

The women had been allowed to visit their husbands on varying schedules, depending on where they were, usually working out to be once a month.

Caudill spent most of his confinement in the La Cabana Fortress, across the bay from Havana. Fite, however, was moved several times and for nearly two years has been a working prisoner on prison farms.

Caudill and Fite, both under appointment of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, will be given time to reorient themselves and decide what they want to do next. Caudill, at 65, is of retirement age, but the Home Mission Board will continue his salary through the end of 1969.

Arthur B. Rutledge, executive secretary-treasurer of the Home Mission Board, and L. D. Wood of the language missions department were on hand to greet the missionaries in Matamoros, and then to escort them to Atlanta after spending the night in Brownsville, Tex.

"Both couples will be given time for rest and reorientation," Wood said.

Rutledge commented: "The reports we have heard indicate that these missionaries have conducted themselves courageously and faithfully and we are pleased with what they have done. They are leaving many devoted Christians behind among the Baptists of Cuba and it is our hope and prayer that they will continue to bear their witness."

Caudill, a native of Clinchport, Va., is a graduate of Mercer University (Baptist) in Macon, Ga., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth. Fite, a native of Fort Worth, is also a graduate of Mercer and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

The Caudills tentatively plan to live in Atlanta. The Fites, who are moving into a home provided by the Avondale Baptist Church in the Atlanta area, will remain in Atlanta until deciding on their next assignment.

Clark Pinnock Resigns
At New Orleans Seminary

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Clark H. Pinnock, associate professor of theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here for the past four years, has resigned to become professor of systematic theology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Ill.

"The decision to leave New Orleans has been made entirely of my own volition, and not due to pressure from any quarter," said Pinnock in a written statement submitted for publication to the Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.

"My four years at New Orleans have been rich and fruitful beyond all expectation, and I want no one to suspect any undercurrent of disappointment or bitterness at my departure," Pinnock said.

Seminary President H. Leo Eddleman of New Orleans could not be reached to confirm that the resignation had been accepted, but he earlier had confirmed that Pinnock had resigned.

He asked, however, Baptist Press to delay release of the story because "it may not go through--he is in the process of reconsideration."

Eddleman said it was the third time Pinnock had tried to resign, but in each case he later reconsidered and felt it would not be the thing to do.

Pinnock, however, said in a telephone interview that he was not reconsidering this time, and that "as far as I am concerned the decision is final."

"They are trying to get me to reconsider, but I am not reconsidering, nor do I intend to," he said.

Announcement of Pinnock's resignation came only two weeks after announcement of the resignation of another theology professor at New Orleans, Robert Soileau, who resigned "under protest" over a conflict with the administration, over the academic climate at the school, and the theological direction of the school towards more conservatism, he said.

Soileau (pronounced swallow), also cited as factors in his resignation the failure to be promoted for seven years and a conflict with another faculty member "who has been promoted, pushed and rewarded for his attacks on professors, individuals, institutions and agencies of the entire (Southern Baptist) Convention."

Although he did not identify the professor in his written statement, he said in a telephone interview he was speaking of Pinnock.

In his statement of resignation, Pinnock did not mention the conflict with Soileau or other seminary professors. When asked if he wanted to answer the charges Soileau had made, he declined.

He said he tried to make his statement of resignation positive, and did not go into any of the negative aspects of his resignation.

When asked if there was any connection between his resignation and that of Soileau's, Pinnock said there was none at all.

Eddleman commended Pinnock, saying he had resigned like a gentleman. When asked if there was any tension between Pinnock and the administration, Eddleman said he was "pleased with Pinnock all the way down the line....I've had no falling out with him."

Pinnock made national headlines last June when he gave three addresses to the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, in Houston, calling for a new reformation within the church and urging Southern Baptists to forsake unbelieving modernism.

He said that Southern Baptists are drifting away from a Biblical, Christ-centered theology. The greatest crisis the church has ever had to face is the current attack on the existence of divine truth, he said in his address last June.

Pinnock has also been a frequent speaker at state-wide Baptist evangelistic conferences, and it was in some of these speeches that he made sweeping charges of liberalism at specific Southern Baptist agencies and institutions.

Editorials in several Baptist state papers urged Pinnock to be specific in his charges that the denomination is shot through with liberalism, or to take his charges to the boards of trustees elected by the convention to deal with such matters.

In his statement of resignation, Pinnock said that in his estimation, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School is one of the "finest evangelical seminaries in the world, and I have long desired to participate in its ministry."

"Nor does the decision reflect any loss of confidence in the (Southern Baptist) Convention, and its great future under God...."

"I shall continue to pray fervently that God would guide in the affairs of New Orleans Seminary, so that a clear witness may be made to scriptural truth," he concluded.

Pinnock is a graduate of the University of Toronto, Canada, with a bachelor of arts degree, and the University of Manchester, England, with the doctor of philosophy degree.

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Mercer University
Seeks Federal Grants

2/10/69

MACON, Ga. (BP)--The Mercer University board of trustees in a February 7 meeting unanimously approved applying for federal grants to assist in constructing three buildings.

Applications for the grants include approximately \$182,000 (or one-half of the projected construction costs of a performing arts auditorium), approximately \$163,000 for an infirmary and \$225,000 to provide one-half the cost of building a physical educational facilities building.

President Rufus C. Harris, in seeking permission to apply for the grants, told the trustees that the requests "in no sense was meant to be flauntive" of the Georgia Baptist Convention which three times in recent years has voted against acceptance of federal grants for colleges under its sponsorship.

"In fact," Dr. Harris said, "this decision is made in the full realization that the Convention has done its duty in that it has expressed its views on the matter, and realized now that the trustees must do their duty and make their decision in the light of their legal and moral responsibility, and in the light of accreditation requirements."

The president pointed out to the trustees that the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the body which accredits the university, revised in November, 1967, its Standard II, which provided that policy decisions must be left to the trustees.

"While trustees may and should listen widely to advice and consider it fully, they must make the policy decisions of the college," Dr. Harris said. "This means precisely that the denomination can offer advice or express its wishes or preferences on all matters involving the colleges. But it also means that such sponsoring bodies must realize that the ultimate and operating decisions must be left to the trustees."

Pointing out that Mercer faces a critical financial need, as do many private colleges, Dr. Harris said that the university has lost more than one-million dollars by refusing federal funds in the past five or six years.

"Added to such a total were possible grants unavailable to use by national educational foundations because we declined to use federal funds, plus other private gifts withheld by citizens who expressed their disturbance over our denial of government money," Dr. Harris said.

A Mercer spokesman said the deadline for applying for federal grants is Feb. 15 and indicated applications would be processed immediately.

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Home Life Assisand
To Edit New WMU "Start"

2/10/69

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Mrs. Helen M. Allan, former assistant editor of Home Life magazine in Nashville, has been named editor of pre-school materials for the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) here.

Mrs. Allan will edit "Start", a new magazine which will be published in October of 1970 for leaders of pre-school WMU groups. She will lead in development of pre-school WMU materials and edit all materials related to that area.

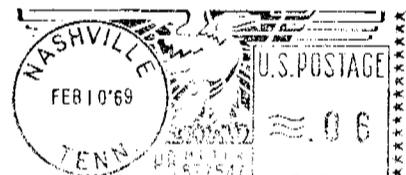
A native of Missouri, Mrs. Allan attended Washington University, St. Louis; the University of Tennessee, Knoxville; and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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