



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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February 17, 1970

SBC Executive Committee
Proposes Hospital Divestiture

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention voted unanimously here to request a joint committee to come up with a specific proposal that would allow the Southern Baptist Convention to get out of the hospital business.

If the final recommendation is approved by the full convention, the SBC would sever ties with two hospitals operated by Southern Baptist Hospitals, Inc.,--one in New Orleans and the other in Jacksonville, Fla.

No specific plan or procedure to accomplish this, however, was either proposed or approved by the Executive Committee.

Rather, the Executive Committee requested a subcommittee named to study the matter last September to meet jointly with a committee from the hospitals, and to work out a specific plan for recommendation to the Executive Committee in its pre-convention session in Denver, and to the full convention, June 1-4, in Denver.

The joint committee was requested "to develop recommendations...whereby the Southern Baptist Convention would divest itself of its hospitals, and they would be passed on to one or more corporations based on mutually agreed upon contract or charter, or charters, which will assure the continuation of the hospitals as Baptist-oriented Christian institutions of mercy."

Owen Cooper, industrialist from Yazoo City, Miss., and chairman of the Executive Committee's subcommittee named to study the matter, told the 58-member body there were numerous reasons his committee felt this would be a wise move.

The main reason was financial, he indicated. Because the SBC Executive Committee must approve all long-term loan requests and meets only twice annually in regular session, the hospitals work under these restrictions, Cooper said.

He also pointed out that of the \$29 million indebtedness projected for 1970 in the Southern Baptist Convention, \$20.5 million of that amount was indebtedness of the hospitals.

Cooper said, however, that only about \$1½ million of the hospital's million assets in 1970 has been provided by the SBC for the hospital's capital funds through the years, and the bulk of financial support for the institutions must come from local or area sources and fund campaigns.

The committee did not recommend selling the hospitals since most of the money they have received has come from local sources, not the SBC, Cooper said.

The proposal to turn over the hospitals to a local board of trustees would allow the institutions to better serve the local areas, Cooper said.

He also observed that Southern Baptists would not be "going out of the hospital business" completely, since the SBC Foreign Mission Board operates 21 hospitals and 92 clinics and dispensaries abroad. In addition, there are 13 state conventions that operate a total of 41 Baptist hospitals.

Cooper pointed out that many Baptists today feel that the state conventions, not the SBC, should be responsible for hospital ministries; just as they are for operation of colleges and universities.

Cooper also pointed out that since the SBC meeting in New Orleans last June, both hospitals are now approved by government authorities for Medicare and Medicaid participation. The convention had asked the Executive Committee to study this matter.

Porter R. Routh, executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee, said that the committee had already met with the board of directors for Southern Baptist Hospitals, Inc., and their recommendation came with the hospital directors' approval.

On Jan. 29, the hospital directors voted to "cooperate with the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention in its desire to divest itself of the hospitals...."

At the same time, the hospital board also voted to amend its charter and bylaws to enable the change in relationship, contingent upon approval by the Southern Baptist Convention.

Under the charter and bylaw changes the board approved, trustees would be elected on a rotating basis, and would be selected by the board of trustees on a self-perpetuating basis. The charter and bylaw would provide for 12 local trustees each in Jacksonville and in New Orleans.

Seventy-five per cent of the local board members must be Southern Baptists, and all of the trustees from outside the local area must be Baptists, according to the charter and bylaws. The board would be limited to 30 to 50 members.

Though copies of the bylaws and charter changes approved by the hospital board were distributed, there was no discussion by the Executive Committee members on the changes approved by the hospital board.

One Executive Committee member from Jacksonville, Fla., E. C. McDaniel of Main Street Baptist Church, told the committee he was first against the proposal, but favored it after hearing the facts presented.

The executive secretary for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Robert Lee, questioned whether the word "Baptist" would continue to be in the name of the hospitals, since there is a possibility the institutions might accept federal aid as a private corporation.

Two hospitals currently owned by Louisiana Baptists do not accept federal aid; but the Louisiana convention voted only last November to sever ties with Baton Rouge General Hospital which may accept federal funds.

The question of government funds for the hospitals was not discussed by the Executive Committee members, and was not mentioned as a reason for severing ties with the two Southern Baptist hospitals. As private corporations, however, the boards would be free to decide to accept government grants and loans if they so chose.

James Monroe, chairman of the Executive Committee and pastor in Fort Walton Beach, Fla., said that details of the proposal to sever ties with the hospitals would be released after the joint committee formulated recommendations to the Executive Committee and Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Denver, June 1-4.

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Home Mission Board Elects New Staff Members

ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board has appointed two staff members to its chaplaincy division and department of special mission ministries.

Carl Hart of Collierville, Tenn., was named director of institutional chaplaincy, in the Chaplains Commission, effective March 1.

Emery E. Smith of Middletown, Ky., was elected assistant secretary of the department of special mission ministries, a new position, also effective March 1.

Hart comes to the board from Nashville where he was director of religious services in the Tennessee Department of Correction. He will work primarily with institutional chaplaincy, including correctional institutions.

Hart will serve on the Advisory Council of the Federal Bureau of Prison Chaplaincy, along with representatives of every major denomination.

A native of Collierville, Tenn., Hart attended Union University, Jackson, Tenn; Bethel College and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

He was pastor for 10 years and has been working with Tennessee correctional institutions since 1962.

Smith is now an associate in the student department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. He will be specifically responsible for student summer missions, recruiting and promoting the program as well as administering the processing and assigning of summer missionaries.

Don Hammons, associate secretary of the board's department of special mission ministries, said that the growing number of summer missions programs (nearly 900 summer missionaries appointed annually), and the increasing complexity of student ministries necessitated the addition of a new staff member.

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The 32-year-old native of Bogalusa, La., is a graduate of Louisiana College, Pineville, and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He was director of religious activities at Louisiana College from 1962-64 and Baptist Campus minister at Morehead State University, Morehead, Ky., before he came to the Kentucky Convention.

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SBC Radio-TV Commission
Grants 12 Broadcast Awards

2/17/70

FORT WORTH (BP)--A dozen awards were presented to stations and individual broadcasters of the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area at the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission's first annual Abe Lincoln Broadcasters' Awards Banquet.

On hand to make the presentations, held on Lincoln's birthday, was Vincent T. Wasilewski, president of the National Association of Broadcasters.

Paul M. Stevens, executive director of the SBC Radio-TV Commission, said the awards were instituted as means of giving special recognition each year to stations and broadcasters who distinguish themselves in religious broadcasting and civic responsibility.

The top award, the Abe Lincoln Broadcaster's Award, went to Norvell Slater, public relations director for WFAA-TV in Dallas, and a Southern Baptist laymen.

The award was designated for "a man whose personal life, as well as his longtime activity in religious programming, have endeared him to the people of his community."

Abe Lincoln Merit Awards were presented to Mike Shapiro, general manager of WFAA-TV/AM/FM for "promoting better understanding between the broadcast industry and the community."

Similar Abe Lincoln Merit Awards were granted to three stations in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, honoring KRLD, WBAP, and KBUY for "outstanding programming and services rendered to the community."

Six other stations in the area received awards of excellence.

Stevens gave two reasons for choosing Abe Lincoln's name for the award. First, he explained, "Abe" happens to be the acronym of "across boundaries electronically," which expresses the manner in which radio and television communicate with people of different races, religions and cultures.

Second, he said, the awards are symbolic of the "triumph over adversity" that made it possible for the man Lincoln to cross social barriers and make his great contribution to mankind.

Stevens said he hoped the awards would become "the Peabody awards of the religious broadcasting industry." The Peabody Awards are among the highest honors in the broadcasting field.

In addition to the president of the National Association of Broadcasters, other special guests included Robert E. Lee, a member of the Federal Communications Commission; Steve Cowan, president of the Texas Association of Broadcasters; and Fort Worth Mayor R. M. Stovall.

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