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March 24, 1970

Controversy Brews Over Sale
Of Arizona Baptist Hospitals

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--In a complex series of maneuvers in and out of court, trustees of three Arizona Baptist hospitals have sought to sever ties with the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention, a suit has been filed to stop the convention's plan to see the hospitals, and the convention's Executive Board has considered dismissing the dissenting hospital trustees.

At loggerheads are the members of the Arizona Baptist Hospital Association, an organization composed of trustees of the three hospitals in Phoenix, Scottsdale and Yuma, Ariz., and the Executive Board of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention.

During the past six months, with a gathering storm intensifying during the month of March, a legal battle over control and sale of the hospitals has developed.

It all started last fall when the convention's Executive Board called a special session of the convention in September to consider selling two of the hospitals. At the special convention, the vote was 422-208 to keep the hospitals rather than sell them.

In November, however, the regular convention session nullified the previous special convention action by voting to sell the three hospitals, plus land on which another hospital was to have been built in Tuscon. The vote passed by a slim eight votes, 133-125.

The convention's Executive Board was empowered to sell the hospitals, the Arizona Baptist Hospital Association was asked to cooperate with the board and the board was directed to provide 40 per cent of the funds derived from the hospital sale to Grand Canyon College, a Baptist school in Phoenix under financial pressure.

In January, the Executive Board voted to sell the Baptist Hospital of Phoenix to the James Allen Guinn Jr. Charitable Foundation, which agreed to assume the hospital's \$2.8 million liabilities and to pay the convention \$2.4 million for its equity.

At the same time, the Executive Board voted to set aside 60 per cent of the income from the hospital sales not going to Grand Canyon College to establish an adequate ready cash reserve for the convention's church loan and church bond funds.

The Arizona Baptist Hospital Association members apparently did not like the board's decision.

A Phoenix attorney, in the name of his wife, Gratia R. Duecy, filed a suit in the U.S. District Court challenging the right and authority of the convention to sell the Phoenix hospital. The convention filed a motion to dismiss the suit. Mrs. Duecy is not a Baptist.

The hospital's attorneys filed an answer to the suit, and also filed a cross claim against the convention and Executive Board. They signed pleading that they "do not oppose the granting of the order prayed for" by plaintiff Duecy, causing Executive Board officials to question whether the hospital association and the plaintiff are cooperating.

The controversy came to a head when 17 of the 27 members of the Arizona Baptist Hospital Association voted to change their articles of incorporation so that the trustees of the three hospitals would elect their own successors, by deleting the article which states that trustees shall be elected by the state convention.

Writing in the Arizona Baptist Beacon, Convention Executive Secretary Charles L. McKay said, "In my honest opinion, some of the trustees of our Baptist hospitals are determined to sever all relationships of our hospitals with the churches of the convention.

"...These men voted to take ownership of the hospitals from the churches and vest all authority in themselves and in the future to others (not even Baptists) that they themselves would elect....Your Executive Board," McKay continued, "has been forced to employ attorneys to seek to nullify the action taken by the trustees...to transfer ownership, and/or control from the convention to the trustees themselves."

In the same issue of the Baptist Beacon, the Executive Board gave public notice of a hearing on March 17 to consider the possibility of dismissing each of the 17 hospital association members who voted for the changes in their articles of incorporation to "sever ties."

The hearing was scheduled to allow the 17 men "to show cause, if any you have, why you... should not be, for just cause, recalled (dismissed) as a trustee of the Baptist Hospital Association of Arizona..." Under the convention's constitution, the Executive Board has the power to recall trustees if they are given a hearing to state their views.

None of the 17 trustees showed up at the hearing. Instead, they sent an attorney and a court reporter along with a telegram stating their reasons for refusing to be present.

The telegram from the 17 men said, "We have concluded that we should not appear, but that we should make a statement concerning the charges made in the notice and summons.

"...We wish to point out that the Articles of Incorporation of the Arizona Baptist Hospital Association and of the three Baptist hospitals make no provisions for recall and that we do not believe the Executive Board has the right or the power to effectuate recall.

"We have at all times attempted to be faithful in our trusts to cooperate with the convention insofar as our trusts permit us to do so...We have been unable to comply with some of the orders of the Executive Board which we have felt were inconsistent with the directions of the convention messengers and with our duties as trustees," said the telegram.

The Executive Board took no action to recall the trustees, but recessed subject to reconvening upon notice from the president.

At the board meeting, it was reported that the J. Allen Guinn Jr. Charitable Foundation had withdrawn their offer to purchase the Baptist Hospital of Phoenix and that the \$24,000 in earnest money had been returned to the foundation.

A few days after the hearing, the Arizona Republic, daily newspaper in Phoenix, reported that a suit had been filed against the 26 directors of the hospital association by the state convention, asking the court to declare null and void the amendments to their articles of incorporation which would sever ties with the convention.

The suit also asks the court to permanently enjoin the hospital association from taking any action which would be "in violation of their legal and fiduciary obligation to the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention."

The courts have not yet ruled on any of the suits filed. The convention's Executive Board has still not settled what it will do about recalling the hospital trustees, and the hospital association has not indicated what it would do if they are recalled. More court maneuvers are likely to follow.

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Watts Resigns Presidency
Of European Seminary

3/24/70

RUSCHLIKON, Switzerland (BP)--John D. W. Watts has resigned as president of the Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon, but will retain his post as professor of Old Testament.

In announcing his decision, Watts said he was "torn between the wish to teach and the need to administer...."

He surprised the seminary's trustees when he reported his decision at their annual meeting, according to a report from European Baptist Press Service based at the seminary here.

The president of the seminary is appointed by the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, in consultation with the trustees.

A trustee committee is expected to meet here with J.D. Hughey, secretary for Europe and the Middle East for the SBC Foreign Mission Board, in April to discuss finding a permanent successor to Watts as president.

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In Richmond, Hughey said he regretted Watts "is unwilling to continue as president, but I am greatly pleased with the prospect of his continued capable service to European Baptists as professor of Old Testament. He is known and appreciated all over Europe."

Watts, 48, earlier had been granted a year's leave of absence which will start in July, 1970. While on leave, he will be visiting professor of Old Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville.

During the 1970-71 academic year, John Allen Moore, veteran staff member at the seminary and European field representative of the SBC Foreign Mission Board, will be the seminary's acting president. Moore teaches missions classes at the seminary.

Watts is one of the original staff members of the Ruschlikon seminary. He came here in 1948 when the seminary was opened.

He has been professor of Old Testament since 1948. From 1958 to 1963, Watts was dean at the seminary. He became president in 1964.

The seminary has been going through internal changes during the past year, European Baptist Press reported. Committee work has been expanded to carry out all the essential functions of seminary life, trustees were told. Student representatives participate in faculty discussions, and the faculty has representatives in student organizations.

In other actions, the trustees adopted a resolution of appreciation for Watts' service as professor and president.

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Texas Firm to Offer
Church Computer Service

3/24/70

NASHVILLE (BP)--For the first time in the history of the Southern Baptist Convention, churches are being offered a church records computer service through the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The board has signed a five-year contract with Membership Services, Inc., in Irving, Tex., for a church records service to be known as "Broadman System Seventy."

"Our service lets the computer do the busy work while your secretaries do the people work," Joe Cleveland, president of Membership Service, said.

The service will do records in the areas of membership, finance, prospect location and attendance.

"For example, in recording gifts we can give the amounts given by each age group and in each geographic area of town. This analysis can be a boost to any stewardship campaign," Cleveland pointed out.

Designed by ministers of education in Southern Baptist churches in consultation with experts in data processing, the system will be especially valuable during peak work loads in the church, such as during a Vacation Bible School planning period.

It can aid the church in finding the right persons to teach the right classes in Sunday School, mission organizations or other organizations, Cleveland said.

"It has been pointed out that just making up class member lists for Sunday School takes up to 90 hours of work in the average church. Our system keeps these lists up to date each week," said Jimmie Sheffield, church consultant for Membership Services.

The service is being used by First Baptist Church, Dallas; Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta; Kathwood Baptist Church, Columbia, S.C.; Crestview Baptist Church, Austin, Tex.; Plymouth Park Baptist Church, Irving, Tex., and several other Southern Baptist churches.

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McClellan Cites Gains
In SBC During 50 Years

3/24/70

FORT WORTH (BP)--Significant gains--and losses--have characterized Southern Baptist involvement between 1910 and 1970, Albert McClellan, program planning secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, said here.

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McClellan addressed a Founders' Day audience at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. The seminary is 62 years old this March, and has been located in Fort Worth since 1910.

"We have gained many things," McClellan said, "including stability, consistency, size and awareness of others."

While recognizing the difficulty of specifically pinpointing losses or gains, McClellan listed areas in which he believes barnacles have accumulated on Southern Baptist hulls.

But he ended each negative note with a positive affirmation that noticeable improvement has already begun to take place.

"We have been unwilling," he said, "to openly debate great issues. We have had no hesitation to debate labels and people, but considerable hesitation to debate ideas. We have seemed afraid to throw our wares to the marketplace, lest flaws be found.

"At last," McClellan asserted, "this characteristic seems to be changing."

Other negative aspects which McClellan said he believes are beginning to be scraped away include:

1. Pre-occupation with the mechanics of "relevance" at the expense of the "ageless character of our mission."
2. Timidity in asserting the claims of the Christian faith as vital in an age of science and materialism.
3. Inclination to mistake Christian dialogue with the world as surrender to the world.
4. Consolidation around outdated ideas. "Our definitions of reality and sin have been too limited. Our agenda for talk and action has been too much identified with the concepts of other men in other times."
5. Assumption that too many things are fixed for all time to come. "We have been entirely too rigid for free and open communication with the world. Because a few things definitely are fixed, such as the authority of the scripture, the local character of the church, the need for personal regeneration, and baptism by immersion on consent, we have assumed that special ways of stating these facts are also eternally fixed."
6. Tendency to build progress around a series of slogans at the cost of satisfying the doctrinal or spiritual.
7. Inclination to keep motivations rooted in frontier evangelism techniques in an urban age.
8. Measurement of ourselves more with technical methods than with dialectical content. "We are content, too often, to settle for an image that is based almost wholly on supercilious externals. I hear from seminary youth today a deep cry for Christian reality."
9. Tendency to diminish the vitality of the basic Christian experience. "Too few are caught up in the splendor of absolute and irrevocable obedience to the lordship of Christ. They live by their own minds, not his, and they relate to others through their own spirit, not his!"

McClellan concluded with three assertions:

1. Baptists have a future. "We have people, buildings, leadership and integrity. Above all we have a few basic Christian ideas, unique in the Christian world and still untried by the secular world."
2. God's spirit is moving among Baptists.
3. Our hope is an openness and freedom to be born out of today's dedicated youth.

Liberian Baptist U.N. Official
Advocates Vote For 18-Year-Olds

DALLAS (BP)--A Liberian Baptist woman who serves as president of the United Nations General Assembly said here that the world's youth is becoming knowledgeable enough to take a more active part in political affairs.

Miss Angie Brooks, the second woman and third African to hold the United Nations post, advocated giving the right to vote to 18-year-olds throughout the world.

"If they can be sent out to get shot at, they should be able to vote," she said. "The time has passed when only the older people should make decisions."

Miss Brooks spoke twice in Texas, once at a United Nations--sponsored event here, and later before a Black Methodist youth group in Brownwood, Tex., which used meeting facilities borrowed from Howard Payne College, a Texas Baptist school.

"There have been few periods in history when people were not concerned about disorders," she said in Dallas. "But it was thought before that youth were too uneducated to help cope with these problems."

Saying that today there is an entirely different situation, Miss Brooks said that youth should be allowed to take a more active part in political affairs.

Although youth have been vocal in their suggestions, they have not always been articulate enough, she added.

Pointing out that knowledge is spreading rapidly to younger and younger age groups, she urged that leaders let the "voice and passion of youth work with us in peace."

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Pentecost Elected New
Virginia Paper Editor

3/24/70

RICHMOND (BP)--Julian H. Pentecost, pastor of Grace Baptist Church here, has been elected editor of the Religious Herald, official publication of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, effective June 1.

Pentecost has resigned as pastor of the church effective the end of April, and will work during the month of May with retiring editor Reuben Alley, who will hand over the reigns of the editorship to Pentecost June 1.

Alley has been editor of the Religious Herald for the past 33 years, serving longer in the editorship than any other Baptist state paper editor currently editing one of the 30 state newspapers in the denomination.

Pentecost will become the eighth editor of the Religious Herald, which was started in 1828 as a successor to a monthly publication called the Evangelical Inquirer. Throughout its 142 year history, many of the editors have served lengthy terms, one for almost 50 years.

Alley bought the paper when he became editor in 1937 and transferred ownership to the Virginia state Baptist Association in 1950, as a gift.

Pentecost will be the third editor who was at one time pastor of Grace Baptist Church here. The first editor, Henry Keeling, was previously pastor of Third Baptist Church, which later became Grace Baptist Church. Jeremiah Bell Jeter, who bought the Herald in 1865 was also a pastor of Grace Baptist Church.

Before becoming pastor of the Richmond church, Pentecost was pastor of First Baptist Church, Waynesboro, Va., for nine years; and pastor of West End Baptist Church, Suffolk, Va., for four years.

A native of Virginia, Pentecost is a graduate of the University of Richmond, and received the doctor of theology in pastoral care from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. He was an intern in pastoral care at North Carolina Baptist Hospital, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Pentecost was elected to the editorship by the board of trustees for the Religious Herald, headed by attorney Lewis Booker of Richmond, chairman.

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