



BAPTIST PRESS
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October 1, 1970

Louisiana Baptists May
Release Second Hospital

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--The Executive Board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention voted to recommend that Baptist Hospital here be released to its trustees. If approved by messengers at the convention's annual meeting in Shreveport in November, it will be the second hospital to be severed from convention ties. Last year the convention released its hospital in Baton Rouge.

The hospital's board of trustees had requested that the hospital be allowed to participate in a new federal loan program in which the government would pay 3 per cent of the interest rate on funds borrowed from a private lending agency for hospital improvement and expansion. If this was denied, the trustees asked for release from the convention.

The Executive Board voted not to permit the hospital to participate in the government program and then recommended releasing the institution to its board of trustees.

Commenting on the recommendation, Robert L. Lee, executive secretary of the convention said, "The actions of both the hospital trustees and the executive board involved a painful effort to solve the building crisis with which the trustees have grappled for a number of years. The recommendation for release will be made to help insure meeting the medical needs of the community in the best way possible. The release will enable the hospital to secure financial resources through all available channels."

Baptist Hospital of Alexandria has a 6 million dollar expansion program on the drawing boards.

In other action the Executive Board adopted a record budget of \$3,900,000 for 1971, a \$50,000 increase over the current budget. Southern Baptist Convention causes would receive 31.5 per cent of all Cooperative Program receipts as compared to 31.4 per cent this year.

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Pope Studies Missionary Plan
To Revive Church in Red China

10/1/70

HONG KONG (BP)--The Pope is studying a plan to revive the Roman Catholic Church in Communist China, according to an article in China Mail, a Hong Kong daily newspaper.

The plan could precede attempts by Pope Paul VI to resume contacts with Mainland China, speculates the article.

The proposed plan, which the newspaper calls "historic" was drawn up early this year by a group of Hong Kong missionaries and has reportedly been under intensive study by Vatican officials. Communist China failed to respond to the Pontiff's last effort to make contact in 1967, when the country was in the midst of its "cultural revolution."

A Reuters News Service release from the Vatican said earlier that a private meeting of experts from several missionary orders would discuss the Hong Kong plan.

The document is said to include detailed information about the "underground" church in China today and also prospects for strengthening Roman Catholicism there.

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"It is hoped the first attempt at renewed dialogue will link up with the Pope's Asian tour in November," concluded the China Mail article.

Last July the Pope hoped to see "a sign of better days" in Communist China's decision to free the most Rev. James Edward Walsh, an American missionary Bishop who was in prison for 12 years of a 20-year sentence on espionage charges.

The Pope called the release of Bishop Walsh "good news" and the first of its kind to arrive from Mainland China. At that time he stressed the Roman Catholic church's goodwill toward Communist China.

Observers interpreted Pope Paul's remarks as an overture for contacts between the Vatican and Peking. The Vatican has diplomatic relations with the Chinese Nationalist Government in Taiwan.

A 1967 address by the Pontiff, which commemorated the 20th anniversary of the creation of a Roman Catholic hierarchy in China and the 40th anniversary of the consecration of the first Chinese bishops, contained an offer to "discuss peace" with Chinese Communist leaders.

Peking met the 1967 speech with denunciations of the Vatican as a center of "imperialist" propaganda.



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