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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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March 12, 1971

**Texas Baptists To Vote  
On School's Independence**

DALLAS (BP)--For the third consecutive year, the Baptist General Convention of Texas will decide whether or not to grant independent status to a convention-owned school, and will ponder the fine points of separation of church and state.

When the convention meets in Houston next October, messengers will hear recommendations from its Executive Board to free the University of Corpus Christi to seek outside financial support and operate as a private institution.

They will also decide whether the "spirit" of the convention's church-state separation policy would be violated by a lease-back proposal for a dormitory now owned by Howard Payne College, Brownwood, Tex.

Meeting here for quarterly session, the convention's Executive Board endorsed a plan which would allow Howard Payne to sell a men's dormitory to the city-established, tax-free Brownwood Higher Education Authority for \$1 million. The city organization would obtain the \$1 million purchase price by the sale of municipal bonds.

The Baptist school would then lease back the dormitory for 20 years and repurchase it at the end of that period for \$1.00.

By a two-vote margin, the convention's Executive Board approved a ruling by Board Chairman James Harris of Fort Worth to submit the matter to the annual convention.

Harris made the ruling, he said, because questions have been raised about whether the plan, previously approved by the convention's Christian Education Commission and program coordinating committee, violated the convention's church-state policy.

"It is, in effect, the use of the state by the church," declared Texas Convention President Jimmy R. Allen of San Antonio, who rose at the Executive Board meeting to oppose the plan.

"It violates the spirit of our policy," Allen continued. "Grass roots Baptists who believe strongly in separation of church and state will be impatient with anything they think is manipulation or camouflage of the real issue.

"The men who proposed this are men of good character and good intent," added Allen, who is also a member of the Howard Payne board of trustees. "It's that gray area of interpretation which Baptists have trouble with," he said.

Christian Education Commission Secretary Woodson Armes told the Executive Board that both the commission and the program coordinating committee do not believe the plan violates the policy.

"First, it seems to us," Armes said, "that Howard Payne College has the right, with convention approval, to sell one of its buildings and in turn lease it back from the purchaser.

"Second," he said, "it appears to us that the tax-free status of the Brownwood Higher Education Authority is similar to a charitable foundation such as our Texas Baptist Foundation. The tax-free status of Howard Payne College is no different from the tax-free status of the Brownwood Higher Education Authority."

Proponents of the plan say it would allow the school to consolidate its \$878,130 indebtedness into a long-term, tax-free program at an interest rate of 5 to 6 1/2 per cent which would save between \$600,000 and \$700,000 in interest payments over the next 20 years.

The Higher Education Authority was established in January under a two-year-old state law which allows an incorporated city to establish such an authority. It would have no taxing power and the city would have no jurisdiction after original appointment of self-perpetuating trustees.

The nine-man authority board includes six Texas Baptists. Four of them are Howard Payne trustees, one is the school's vice president of fiscal affairs and another is a former trustee.

Executive Board approval of the University of Corpus Christi release follows similar approval by both the Christian Education Commission and program coordinating committee. The request for independent status originated in January with the school's board of trustees.

In 1969, the Texas Baptists released Baylor College of Medicine in Houston and last year Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas was turned loose so the schools could seek state funds.

Jack Blackmon, mayor of Corpus Christi and chairman of the school's board has offered 200 acres of the campus to the state of Texas for use as the higher level institution the state is considering locating there. The offer was made contingent on convention approval.

The school, which has experienced financial problems ever since its founding in 1951, stirred controversy last year when it accepted a \$500,000 line of credit from the Small Business Administration. The action came after the school was devastated by Hurricane Celia just 30 days before school was scheduled to open.

The convention softened a recommendation that the school repay the federal money or withdraw from the convention by instructing the school to repay it with money borrowed from some agency other than the federal government.

University President Kenneth Maroney said the convention's action did not precipitate the decision to seek independent status. Long plagued by financial problems, the school has wanted to bring non-Baptists onto its board of trustees to strengthen its community support. Under convention policy, only Baptists may serve on an institution's board. Only about 5 per cent of the Corpus Christi area population is Baptist, he said.

In a related matter, the Executive Board approved sweeping changes in the Texas Baptist Disaster Relief Program after hearing recommendations of a committee authorized by the 1970 convention.

Changes include increasing the convention's disaster relief fund from \$25,000 to \$50,000 and establishing a \$500,000 line of credit to be administered to disaster-struck institutions with Executive Board approval. Funds borrowed against the line of credit would be repaid with insurance settlements.

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Foreign Board Commissions Five,  
Plans April Meeting in Kentucky

3/12/71

RICHMOND (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in its March meeting here appointed three new missionaries and employed a physician for a year of special project service and three medical students for eight-week stints in Baptist hospitals this summer.

The board also heard plans for the agency's slated meeting and missionary appointment service in Louisville in April, scheduled to coincide with a board of trustees meeting at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annual youth night.

In major reports to the board, the agency's secretary for Africa told of "optimistic" prospects of continuing missionary presence in Nigeria, and the director of the board's Overseas Division discussed the developing trend for the word "mission" to displace the terminology, "missions."

The new missionaries are Dr. and Mrs. William M. Hilbun Jr., of Amory, Miss., employed for a one-year term in Nigeria where he will be a special project physician;

-more-

Mr. and Mrs. James L. Kellum Jr., of Lynnwood, Wash., appointed for evangelistic work in South Vietnam; and Miss Rita Roberts of Roanoke, Va., appointed for social work in Brazil.

Three men employed under the board's medical missions receptorship program are Randolph Duffer, student at the Medical College of Virginia here, who will go to Yemen; David Tharpe, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, to Thailand; and Donald Meier, University of Tennessee Medical School, Memphis, to Gaza.

Under the receptorship program, carefully-selected medical and dental students serve eight to 10 weeks in Baptist medical institutions overseas on the invitation of the missions involved.

Baker J. Cauthen, executive secretary of the board, outlined plans for a public commissioning service of new missionaries in Louisville on April 21 in connection with the board's next full meeting.

Cauthen told the board that "no slowdown in missionary appointments is planned for 1971." He added that the number of candidates for missionary journeymen training is the largest ever, with about 80 young persons expected to be approved by the board by April 20.

Baptist leaders in Nigeria want continued assistance from the board in missionary personnel as well as financial aid, reported H. Cornell Goerner, the board's secretary for Africa. Goerner recently returned from a tour of missionary installations in West Africa.

A meeting with officers of the Nigerian Baptist Convention provided "a frank discussion of the problem of securing visas for new missionary personnel and the long-range prospects for continuing missionary service in that country." Goerner said.

"While fully aware of problems growing out of government policies," Goerner continued, "the convention leaders are mildly optimistic concerning the future of our joint efforts in Nigeria and do not feel that there is a deliberate effort to phase out all Christian missions."

"We can anticipate a wholesome and desirable increase of self-support and independence on the part of the Baptists of Nigeria," he said, "but there will be need and opportunity for assistance from American Baptists for some years to come, especially in the more highly specialized fields."

Even specialists must be content with roles as servants rather than supervisors, to work alongside and often under the direction of their African colleagues, Goerner told the board. For those who go "in a true spirit of Christian humility and service, the door will long remain open," he said. "We should by no means conclude that the day of opportunity in Nigeria is ending because of current visa problems."

Goerner's month-long tour in West Africa also included an inspection of the new Baptist center in Dakar, Senegal; a meeting with missionaries and national Baptist leaders in Liberia; dedications of new church buildings in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and Lome, Togo; and meetings with missionaries in Ghana and Dahomey.

A trend has developed for the use of the word "mission" to displace "missions," Overseas Division Director Winston Crawley told the board members. The shift "from missions to mission" implies that in the past the spread of the gospel was understood as the responsibility of a few people to go out from Christian lands to "heathen" lands, Crawley said.

Today's understanding is that all of the people of God are involved in the mission of the church, that Christendom is now diffused throughout the world, and that the entire world is a mission field, he continued.

The phrase "from missions to mission" is valid and valuable, said Crawley, but he said he believes it can be misleading. The use of the word "missions" should be retained, and people should understand how mission and missions are related.

The word "mission expresses an idea, a general truth, whereas "mission" stands for specific actions as practical expressions of that truth, said Crawley. The terms should be kept in dynamic relationship to each other instead of being polarized, he added.

"From missions to mission" expresses the fact that in earlier years missions were over-emphasized to the neglect of mission, said Crawley. "It is dangerous if it now leads any to overemphasize mission and neglect missions," he said.

"If everybody feels sent to the world in general but no one is sent anywhere in particular, the very mission of the church is rendered sterile," Crawley concluded. "The general mission of all God's people to all the world must be made concrete and effective through many specific sendings of specific people to specific places—that is, through missions, he concluded."

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RECEIVED  
MAR 15 1971  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION, SBC