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January 18, 1972

Missionary Nurse Killed, Others Wounded in Gaza

GAZA (BP)--Southern Baptist Missionary Nurse Mavis Orisca Pate was shot and killed, and another missionary and his daughter were wounded when Arab guerrillas ambushed them as they drove near a refugee camp late Sunday, Jan. 16.

Miss Pate, 46, of Ringgold, La., died of bullet wounds in the head. She and Missionary R. Edward Nicholas and his three daughters were attacked near the Jeballiyah refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

Within minutes, Israeli soldiers arrived and took the victims to a nearby military hospital. Miss Pate was pronounced dead about an hour after the attack.

Following the attack, the soldiers combed the camp looking for the assailants.

Dr. Merrill D. Moore Jr., missionary physician at the Gaza Baptist Hospital, told an SBC Foreign Mission Board official that Miss Pate was probably unconscious from the time she was hit, around 6:20 p.m.

She was accompanying Nicholas and his three daughters to Tel Aviv, where she was to pick up a car and drive it back to Gaza. The girls were returning to the school for missionary children in Tel Aviv.

Dr. Moore said of the shooting: "This was not a special attack on the hospital. This was an isolated incident just like other similar isolated incidents. They (the guerrillas) probably did not know whom they were attacking. They just saw a car traveling toward Israel."

The victims were transferred from the Military hospital to another hospital in Beersheba where surgeons removed two bullets which struck Nicholas in the thigh and pelvic region. Carol Beth, the oldest daughter, was treated for a slight wound in the foot. The two other girls were not injured.

Nicholas was said to be in satisfactory condition and was to be released within a few days.

He is chaplain and business manager of the Gaza Baptist Hospital. Miss Pate was supervisor of the operating room and instructor of nursing.

She was to be buried in a plot behind the nurses' quarters on Tuesday, Jan. 18, following a funeral service in the hospital chapel.

A memorial service was to be held for Miss Pate in her home church, Social Springs Baptist Church, Ringgold, La., Sunday, Jan. 23. Baker J. Cauthen, executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, and John D. Hughey, secretary for Europe and the Middle East, were to attend.

Staff members of the board held a memorial service in Richmond, Va., Monday, Jan. 17.

Miss Pate's survivors include her mother and stepfather, Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Oden of Ringgold. Her father, J. B. Pate, died in 1945.

The family requested that, in lieu of flowers, memorial contributions be sent to the Gaza Baptist Hospital either through the Ringgold church or the Foreign Mission Board. The church's address is Route 3, Box 683, Ringgold, La., 71068.

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Nicholas was involved in an earlier incident attributed to the guerrillas. In March 1969 he and his daughter Joy, then nine, were returning from Tel Aviv to Gaza when an explosive charge detonated beside the road as they passed. The car was damaged, but they were only shaken.

Miss Pate went to the Gaza Hospital in mid-1970 following a furlough in the United States. Earlier she had been stationed in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and Thailand.

Appointed a missionary in 1964, she had been operating room supervisor at Medical Center Hospital in Tyler, Tex., for six years. She took a leave of absence from that job to supervise the operating room of the hospital ship Hope during its first voyage.

She was graduated from North Louisiana School of Nursing, Shreveport, and Northwestern State College of Louisiana, Natchitoches.

Nicholas has been hospital chaplain since 1958. He and his wife were evacuated from Gaza and then from Lebanon during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

He is a native of Centreville, Mich., and a graduate of Bob Jones University, Greenville, S.C., and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He was pastor of churches in Louisiana prior to missionary appointment.

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas have a son, their oldest child, in addition to three daughters.

Miss Pate is the third Southern Baptist missionary to have been killed violently while on the field in less than six months. Mr. and Mrs. Paul Potter were beaten and stabbed to death in their home in the Dominican Republic in July.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Photo of Miss Pate to be mailed to editors of state Baptist papers.

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Alabama College Dean Named
Bluefield College President

1/18/72

BLUEFIELD, Va. (BP)--The academic dean at Judson College in Marion, Ala., Charles L. Tyler, has been named the new president of Bluefield College, a Baptist junior college here.

Tyler will become the sixth president of the Virginia school on July 1, 1972, according to an announcement by William Winfrey, vice chairman of the school's board of directors, on behalf of the board chairman, George Z. Cruise.

He will succeed Chas. L. Harman, president of Bluefield College since 1946, who announced plans last May to retire. Harman will serve as president until Tyler takes over in July.

For the past five years, Tyler has been academic dean of Judson College, a Baptist four-year women's college in Marion, Ala. Previously, he was chairman of the humanities division and head of the religion department at Mitchell College, Statesville, N.C.

He is a graduate of Baylor University, Waco, Tex.; Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville; and Vanderbilt University, Nashville. He is a native of Houston, Tex.

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Court Hears Arguments
Against Death Penalty

1/18/72

WASHINGTON (BP)--Should capital punishment be abolished because it is "cruel and unusual punishment" in violation of the Eighth and Fourteenth Amendments of the U. S. Constitution?

The U. S. Supreme Court on January 17 heard four hours of arguments on this question. At issue are four cases dealing with four persons sentenced to death, two for murder and two for rape.

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An opinion from the court, destined to be a "landmark decision" no matter which way the court decides, will affect the lives of 697 persons on death row in 34 states. There is no indication when the decision will be handed down.

A large number of major denominations and religious groups filed briefs supporting the abolition of the death penalty in the United States.

Attorneys for the four men sentenced to death, two in Georgia and one each in Texas and California, all argued that the death penalty is "cruel and unusual" because it is used primarily against the poor and members of minority groups, particularly black persons.

Jack Greenberg, attorney for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., told the court that of 65 persons put to death in Georgia in recent years for rape, 58 were black.

Among the 74 persons currently on death row for rape, 63 are black. All 74 are imprisoned in 10 southern states. In Texas, statistics show that if a black man is convicted of rape, he has an 88 per cent chance of getting the death penalty. Whites and Mexican-Americans have a 22 per cent chance of the death sentence, the court was told.

Briefs submitted by the religious organizations supported claims that the poor, outcast and black persons are most likely to receive the death sentence for crimes.

The death penalty is "a function of poverty . . . and also a function of race," declared Leo Pfeffer, a prominent church-state attorney, in a brief prepared for the Synagogue Council of America and its constituents, the American Jewish Congress and a number of civil liberties groups.

"The disproportionate number of nonwhites executed constitutes cruel and unusual punishment," their brief maintained.

The National Council of Churches, made up of 33 denominations, joined with the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, the United Methodist Church, the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S., and a number of other religious groups and denominations, in appealing to the court to outlaw capital punishment.

The death penalty should be judged "cruel and unusual punishment" because of the "inherent fallibility of every judicial proceeding, . . . the possibility of executing an innocent man, . . . and because the evils of the death penalty are not remedial," they declared.

"Judicial procedures are beyond man because man is man, imperfect in experience, imperfect in wisdom, imperfect in understanding of his fellow man," attorneys for the 13 major religious groups said in the brief.

"We can tolerate an imperfect justice if we do not take life," their brief continued, "because of the need to protect society. But we cannot tolerate imperfect justice when we inflict an irreversible penalty."

A brief submitted by the West Virginia Council of Churches declared that the death penalty infringes on religious freedom. The snuffing out of a prisoner's life prohibits his seeking his own salvation, they maintained.

The brief of the West Virginia church group cited the word "free" in the First Amendment. They said that while this does not imply the right to be free from incarceration, it "clearly imports a right to seek one's salvation free from any impending urgency."

In arguing for the right to impose the death penalty, attorneys for California, Georgia and Texas claimed that capital punishment is a part of the nation's "moral heritage." Also, they plead that it is a permissible deterrent to crime.

Justice Potter Stewart asked the prosecution lawyers to define "cruel and unusual punishment." Ronald M. George, attorney for California replied that it means "torture or a lingering death . . . barbarous, wanton or unnecessary pain."

Georg further maintained that capital punishment might be a more meaningful deterrent to crime "if it were carried out more." He insisted that the rising crime rates since executions were stopped would bear this out.

A Stanford law professor, Anthony G. Amsterdam, arguing for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund in two of the cases, said the trend of nations in the western hemisphere is toward the abolishment of capital punishment and that public opinion is rising against it in the United States.

Amsterdam insisted that "society would not tolerate executions if they were administered evenly and without discrimination."

A Baptist VIEWpoll taken in January, 1971, showed that the majority of a representative panel of Southern Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers approve of the death penalty for persons convicted of murder. According to the findings, 66.3 per cent of the pastors and 56.2 per cent of the teachers approve of capital punishment.

The Southern Baptist Convention in 1964 at Atlantic City adopted a brief resolution concerning capital punishment, but deleted two key sentences by a slim vote calling "for the abolition of capital punishment in the states and federal jurisdictions where it is now legally prescribed." As adopted, the brief resolution affirmed "the sacredness of human life in general" and called on legislators and public officials "to study seriously the facts relevant to this issue with a view to enacting constructive legislation which will alleviate abuses where they exist."

The last state execution took place on June 2, 1967, in Colorado.

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Stewardship, Laity, Radio-TV
Structure Changes Recommended

1/18/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--A committee assigned to study the organizational structure of the Southern Baptist Convention will recommend reorganization of the SBC Brotherhood and Radio-Television Commissions, and reassignment of stewardship and Cooperative Program promotion to the SBC Executive Committee.

If approved, the recommendations would mean dissolving the SBC Stewardship Commission as an agency of the convention and returning to a pattern of organization in the SBC prior to 1960 when the Stewardship Commission was organized.

Prior to 1960, the SBC Executive Committee was responsible for stewardship and Cooperative Program promotion.

The recommendations from the restructure committee, called the Committee of Fifteen, must be approved by the SBC Executive Committee which meets here Feb. 21-23, and by the Southern Baptist Convention, which meets in Philadelphia, June 5-8.

Only recommendations concerning three agencies, the Brotherhood Commission, Radio-TV Commission, and Stewardship Commission, will be presented at this time, said E. W. Price Jr., chairman of the restructure committee and pastor of Green Street Baptist Church, High Point, N.C.

"The committee has reviewed various alternatives dealing with the Christian Life Commission, the Education Commission, the Historical Commission, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary, but is not prepared until all agencies are studied to make any proposal," said the committee in an 11-page typed report to the SBC Executive Committee.

The report added that the committee is now starting a study of the six SBC seminaries, and will conclude with a study of the Southern Baptist Foundation and four boards.

Price said in a telephone interview that when the study is completed the committee will make some recommendations regarding each of the agencies and boards, and that there is a possibility that in some cases the committee will recommend no major changes in structure. Two more years may be necessary to complete the study.

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Appointed in February, 1970, by the SBC Executive Committee to review implementation of a 1960 restructure study, the committee's membership and responsibility was enlarged later in 1970 to "study the entire SBC structure with the privilege of making recommendations to change or modify these assignments."

Although a few minor recommendations have been presented previously by the committee regarding compatibility of retirement programs and administration of the Baptist Program magazine, the proposals approved by the committee in January mark the first major restructure recommendations.

Six basic principles were listed by the committee in making the proposals. Consolidation of overlapping SBC programs into fewer agencies was cited in two of the six basic principles.

"Since the assignment of related programs to different agencies creates problems and inefficiency in administration, the proper grouping and coordination of related programs under fewer agencies would accomplish better work on behalf of the churches," said the report.

"Consolidation of programs and/or agencies which would provide better stewardship for utilization of limited resources is desirable whenever overlapping purposes, duplication of services and increase in administrative costs become(s) evident," the committee continued.

Other guiding principles stated that any changes should increase and not decrease effectiveness, that magnitude of concern for a program does not necessarily imply the need for a separate agency or the size of the agency; that the convention exists to assist the churches in bringing men to God through Jesus Christ, and that the convention does its work through programs assigned to agencies responsible to the convention.

Currently, there are 19 agencies of the convention--four boards, seven commissions, one standing committee, six seminaries, and a foundation. In addition, there is a Woman's Missionary Union Auxiliary and an Executive Committee.

If the Committee of Fifteen's initial proposals are accepted, there would be one less agency.

The committee will recommend that effective Oct. 1, 1973, the programs of the SBC Stewardship Commission be assigned to the SBC Executive Committee and that the Executive Committee be reorganized to give a proper elected representative base for personnel in this area.

The date of the transfer of responsibilities could not occur before 1973 since approval by two successive sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention is necessary to dissolve an agency, according to the denomination's bylaw requirements.

The committee recommended "that assurance be given to the Stewardship Commission staff that every consideration be given to the continued utilization of each one in the transfer with as little change in relationships and benefits as possible."

Financially, assets held by the commission, now amounting to about \$400,000, would be transferred to the Executive Committee, and Cooperative Program budget allocations to the commission would be assigned to the Executive Committee.

Seven reasons were listed by the committee in recommending the change.

"Better teamwork" was cited as a factor in three of the listed reasons. "It will provide for a new breakthrough in Cooperative Program promotion by placing it along with stewardship promotion in a positive position to make possible greater teamwork of all programs in their promotion," the committee claimed.

It would also "restore a three-way partnership in promotion of stewardship and the Cooperative Program" that had existed from 1919 to 1960 between the Executive Committee, the SBC agencies, and the state conventions, the committee said.

The commission, with offices at the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, currently has seven professional staff members. Offices of the Executive Committee are located in the same building.

Offices of the Brotherhood Commission are located in Memphis, while the Radio-Television Commission is located in Fort Worth.

Most of the recommendations regarding these two agencies seems to be designed to promote better cooperation and coordination of their work with other SBC agencies.

The committee recommended creation of an advisory committee to the SBC Brotherhood Commission, plus reorganization of the commission membership to include a 10-member local board composed of one-half laymen, one-fourth pastors, and one-fourth state Brotherhood department directors.

The advisory committee would be comprised of all other state Brotherhood department directors, a representative of the six SBC seminaries, the state convention executive secretaries, and one staff member each from the Sunday School Board, Foreign Mission Board, Radio-TV Commission, Christian Life Commission, Woman's Missionary Union, and Stewardship Commission. Each group would select its own representative.

With regard to its program, the committee recommended that the commission "develop, project and implement plans and programs involving men and boys in the total mission scope of SBC activities (such emphases as mission learning experiences, mission involvement, personal involvement, personal witnessing, evangelism and financial support) and make plans and programs available to the local churches." The agency's program statement should be rewritten accordingly, the committee said.

Further, the committee recommended that "all activities of Baptist men and boys be continually studied, analyzed, developed and implemented by the commission in cooperation with the agencies of the convention that could most effectively and successfully expedite the work."

Four reasons were cited by the committee: (1) involvement of laymen is one of the biggest challenges of the SBC; (2) all SBC agencies work with laymen; (3) a highly coordinated, but not necessarily an organizationally centralized approach is necessary; and (4) the proposals can effectively coordinate and promote lay involvement in all SBC programs.

Commenting on the proposals in a telephone interview, Price said that the committee "sees the work of the commission as it is now, even with some enlargement; but if there are cases of overlapping and their work could be done more effectively in another area, the commission should feel free to move in that direction."

Concerning the Radio-Television Commission, the committee recommended expanding the commission's membership to include not only one representative from each qualified state, but also two staff members of the SBC Foreign and Home Mission Boards and Sunday School Board, plus one staff member each from the Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood Commission and each of the six seminaries.

The agency staff representative members, however, would have no voting privileges but "shall act in an advisory capacity only," the committee proposed.

Three responsibilities of the commission were summarized: (1) to provide programming materials to the radio and television industry, (2) to provide personnel, skills, equipment and technology for television and radio production and distribution to all organized entities of Southern Baptist life as they may request, and (3) to leave to each agency the content of such programming as it makes use of the commission's staff and skills.

The committee further proposed that the commission's charter and program statement be revised to incorporate the proposed changes.

Three major reasons were cited: (1) better coordination among SBC agencies and the commission, (2) more latitude to the agencies in using their own creativity in presenting a wider range of programs, and (3) a coordinated approach can best achieve SBC goals and objectives.

"The agencies which could use in their programs mass media should, where possible, utilize the skills which have been abundantly evident in the Radio-Television Commission . . .," said the committee.

Price, commenting on the proposals, said that it does not mean that all agencies of the SBC "must" use the commission to produce their broadcasting programs, but the committee hopes the commission will become the primary source of producing radio and television programs for all agencies.

Price acknowledged that the committee was not recommending a consistent organizational pattern for the Brotherhood and Radio-TV Commissions. "We don't feel we have to be consistent with every commission," he said. "We're trying to make every commission flexible enough to meet a particular need. We started off at one time with the idea of trying to make a consistent pattern, but found that was simply impossible."

Price added that there also might be inconsistencies with current program statements for the agencies, and that changes in the program statements would be assigned to the program subcommittee of the SBC Executive Committee.



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