

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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October 12, 1972

**Dreucillar Fordham Becomes
First Woman Pastor in SBC**

NEW YORK (BP)--Mrs. Dreucillar Fordham here has become the first woman to serve as pastor of a church affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Metropolitan New York Baptist Association accepted into full membership the Christ Temple Baptist Church, a black congregation which Mrs. Fordham has served as pastor since the church was founded in 1953.

The church, also affiliated with the Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc., is now affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention by virtue of its membership in the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association.

During its annual meeting at nearby Greenwich, Conn., the association voted unanimously to accept the Christ Temple church, along with a Chinese church located in Chinatown, a Ukrainian church in Brooklyn, and an American Baptist Convention-affiliated congregation in Montclair, N.J.

Kenneth Lyle, superintendent of missions for the association, called the action "highly significant" for the SBC, but added that it was accepted by the New York association as "no big thing."

Last October, the New York Association approved the church's application for membership under a "watchcare" relationship. According to association procedure, churches which apply for affiliation must wait one year before the vote on accepting them as members.

Although she was not ordained by a Southern Baptist congregation, Mrs. Fordham becomes the first ordained woman to serve as pastor of a Southern Baptist church.

She was ordained in 1942 by the New Hope Baptist Association in New York City. She had been active for 35 years as a gospel singer before she was ordained.

Four women, three during the past year, have been ordained by Southern Baptist churches, but none has served as pastor of a SBC-affiliated congregation.

The first woman ordained by a SBC church in 1964 became pastor of an American Baptist congregation. Ordination of the second woman was revoked earlier this year by the ordaining church when news media carried reports that she was three months pregnant at the time of her marriage. Other women have been ordained by a church in Richmond, Va., and recently in Washington, D.C.

Mrs. Fordham, in an interview earlier this year, seemed undaunted about any opposition she might encounter as the first woman pastor in the 11.8 million-member Southern Baptist Convention.

She said she's encountered opposition before, in the Progressive National Baptist Convention, by black pastors who refused to accept her as an equal.

She said she felt that attitudes and prejudices toward women serving in role previously held only by men are changing.

Mrs. Fordham, a widow, added that she has been received very warmly by the Southern Baptist pastors in the New York association, and that she enjoyed very much attending the Southern Baptist Convention last June in Philadelphia.

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She said she became interested in her church affiliating with the SBC association because of her involvement with the Central Harlem Association of Neighborhood Churches' Endeavors (C.H.A.N.C.E.), which Southern Baptists helped organize. Her 150-member congregation, Christ Temple, is located at 161 131st Street in Harlem.

Lyle commented that "deep, abiding relationships" have come from all of the pastors involved in C.H.A.N.C.E. "I think they've really come to trust us as we trust them, and therefore they're willing to open up their lives and become involved."

Lyle described Mrs. Fordham as "a very gentle person who is deeply concerned about Harlem and reaching people for Christ."

In addition to accepting the four new churches into full membership, the New York Association also accepted applications for membership from two black churches in Newark, N.J., the first churches in Newark to seek SBC affiliation; and another black church in Harlem.

The association also adopted long-range plans for establishing 120 new congregations in five years. Lyle said the association currently has about 80 churches with 8,000 members.

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Foreign Board Adopts 1973 Budget,
Names New Officers Missionaries

10/12/72

RICHMOND (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, in its major meeting of the year, approved the largest budget in its history--\$38,891,996--elected a new slate of officers and appointed 11 new missionaries.

The 1973 budget exceeds that of 1972 by \$3,594,198.73. Foreign Mission Board Executive Secretary Baker J. Cauthen explained that the current increase was necessitated by the increased funding for missionary support approved by the board this year.

The increases reflected inflation and dollar devaluation in many countries around the world, which had in effect reduced the missionaries' financial resources.

During the year a special committee on missionary support brought recommendations, which the board adopted, on cost-of-living supplements, allowances for missionary children, support for children attending college, length-of-service allowances for active missionaries and supplements for emeritus missionaries.

These steps are possible, Cauthen said, because of the increased giving by Southern Baptists through two main channels: (1) the Cooperative Program, the unified system of support for all denominational causes within the Southern Baptist Convention; and (2) the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions.

In 1973, the board anticipates an increase of nearly \$1.5 million in Cooperative Program receipts, with \$16.3 million expected. This year, the board received a record \$17.8 million through the Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

"We recommend the budget for 1973, therefore, with gratitude to God for laying upon the hearts of Southern Baptists the stewardship of resources enabling this budget to be considered," said Cauthen.

"We also realize that the money provided here is less important than the dedication and heroic service reflected in the lives of missionaries who give themselves so fully to the work of our master as he calls to a world task," he added.

W. Douglas Hudgins of Jackson, Miss., was elected president of the board. He succeeds Drew J. Gunnells Jr. of Montgomery, Ala., who completed two one-year terms. Hudgins is executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

Eleven new missionaries were appointed by the board to serve in six countries.

The new missionaries are Mr. and Mrs. Clive R. Buttemere of Shellman, Ga., appointed to Costa Rica; Dr. and Mrs. Robert L. Edwards of Lake Jackson, Tex., Columbia; Mrs. and Mrs.

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Kenneth L. Goad of Cleburne, Tex., Vietnam; Mr. and Mrs. Richard N. Horn of San Pablo, Calif., Japan; Miss Carolyn Rober son of Fort Worth, Rhodesia; and Mr. and Mrs. Toby R. Walker of Oklahoma City, Argentina.

In other actions, the board elected Wilbur N. Todd as associate secretary for resources and services in the department of missionary education, effective Nov. 1. Todd has been supervisor of the general accounting section of the treasury department since August, 1969.

Resources and services is one of three units in the missionary education department. The others are publications, and program and product development, headed by G. Norman Price and Fon H. Scofield Jr., respectively.

George H. Hays, missionary to Japan for 24 years, was elected field representative for East Asia, effective Jan 1. In that role Hays will provide a personal link between the board and some 365 missionaries in Japan, Okinawa, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao.

The board heard a report by a six-man Committee that has studied factors affecting the growth and development of Baptist churches in 13 Latin American countries. The study was made over the past four years.

In general, the committee concluded that more Southern Baptist Missionaries are needed in Latin America, but more importantly, they must be especially trained for and committed to the establishment and development of churches.

Other new officers elected by the board are Austin W. Farley of Richmond, a pharmacist, as first vice president; Glen E. Braswell, executive secretary of the Colorado Baptist General Convention, as second vice president; and Mrs. R.B. Carter of Richmond, an active laywoman, as recording secretary. Miss Elizabeth Minshew of the board's executive staff was re-elected assistant recording secretary.

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Supreme Court Confronts
Tough Abortion Questions

10/12/72

By Beth Hayworth

WASHINGTON (BP)--The United States Supreme Court has an opportunity in its new session to speak on a subject that has major moral and religious implications--abortion.

In what is almost sure to become a landmark decision affecting abortion laws in all the states, the Supreme Court must confront questions that are both philosophical and moral as well as legal.

Does a woman have a constitutional right to decide for herself if she will have an abortion? What about the rights of the physician who performs the abortion?

Does a fetus have constitutional rights? If so, what is the obligation of the state to protect the rights of the unborn? How should these rights be balanced against the rights of the "born"?

At what point does "human-ness" occur in the fetus? Who should decide at what point "personhood" begins in the fetus? Should that determination be a medical one, or a religious and philosophical one?

These are some of the questions presented to the court during rearguments on two cases the court delayed action on last year. The two cases are Jane Roe v. Henry Wade and Mary Doe v. Artuhr K. Bolton.

At issue are the anti-abortion laws in Texas and Georgia where lower courts have issued declaratory judgments that the state laws are "overbroad" and "unconstitutionally vague," and that a woman "has the right to choose whether to have children."

Also, the three-judge panel in Texas agreed that the Texas law "gives no meaningful indication to physicians of the conditions under which an abortion may legally be performed."

The assistant attorney general of Texas, Robert C. Flowers, said during his 30-minute presentation that "it is the position of the state of Texas that the fetus is a person from the time of

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conception." The state maintains that the "potential" is there, he said.

"The human-ness of the fetus is the crux of the moral and legal debate over abortion," the Texas brief maintained.

Mrs. Sarah R. Weddington of Austin, Tex. represented a group of women attacking the state's abortion laws.

"We are not here to advocate abortion. We are not here to ask the court to say that abortion is good. We are here to plea that the decision should be made by the individual and she has a constitutional right to make this decision," Mrs. Weddington urged.

The problem in Texas, Mrs. Weddington said, is that even though the law has been declared unconstitutional by the lower court, women still are not able to receive an abortion because doctors fear they will be prosecuted if they perform the operation.

Upon questioning from Justice Potter Stewart, Mrs. Weddington admitted that her task before the high court in this case would be "impossible" if it were established that the fetus were a "person."

Several of the judges were obviously troubled over the issue of determining when the fetus becomes a "person." Both Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and Justice Stewart persisted in questioning the lawyers for both sides as to who should decide this and in what framework it should be decided.

"Should it be "a medical, religious or a philosophical question?" Burger asked. Flowers insisted that it should be a medical decision and cited the Texas brief containing many pages of scientific data on the growth stages of the fetus.

Justice Harry Blackmun, a former counsel to the Mayo Clinic, told flowers that "the medical profession itself does not agree on when life begins."

Justice Thurgood Marshall asked if there is any medical testimony that says the fetus is a person at the time of conception. Flowers said he knew of "no court" saying where the dividing line occurs.

"This is the only question the court has to answer," Flowers insisted.

In the Georgia case, Mrs. Margie Pitts Hames of Atlanta represented a group opposed to the Georgia law which permits abortion only to save the life of the mother. The Georgia law allows an abortion also if there is danger to the health of the mother, if the child may be mentally or physically defective or if the woman has been raped.

Mrs. Hames discussed the procedures in the Georgia law which she described as "unfair," an "invasion of privacy" and too costly. She was critical also of what she called an "unreasonable amount of red tape" that a woman seeking an abortion must go through.

Abortion must be viewed as a health matter, Mrs. Hames insisted. "The real question this court is faced with is whether abortion will be placed in the legal health field or left in the illegal field."

Representing the state of Georgia was Mrs. Dorothy T. Beasley, assistant attorney general for Georgia. Mrs. Beasley insisted that a part of Georgia's public policy "is to protect fetal life." While declaring that the "victim of abortion is the fetus" not the mother, Mrs. Beasley admitted that "there is a grey area where it is not known when life begins."

But, Mrs. Beasley contended, "the fetus has the right to be left alone."

Justice Harry Blackmun asked several times why the briefs did not discuss abortion in light of the Hippocratic Oath which he called "the definitive statement on medical ethics for centuries." Mrs. Hames said the oath "is not relevant now" and that some medical schools are not using it.

Blackmun read from the Hippocratic Oath (ascribed to the Greek physician Hippocrates who lived from 460 to 377 B.C.,) the phrase "...give to no woman an instrument of abortion."

The oath was formalized when abortions were prevalent, Blackmun noted. "They were not safe then," Mrs. Hames responded.



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