



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2356
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041

DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996

NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-5461

RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

February 20, 1973

Johnny Cash Premieres Film On Christ for Baptist School

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--Country and western superstar Johnny Cash premiered his new movie, "The Gospel Road," on the life of Christ before a packed theater here, donating proceeds of the premier to a North Carolina Baptist school that earlier had given him an honorary doctorate degree.

About \$7,000 received through the film premier was given to Gardner-Webb College in Boiling Springs, N.C., which awarded Cash the doctor of humanities degree in September of 1971 because of Cash's humanitarian work with prison inmates.

"Why? Because they did so much for me it made me feel at home," Cash responded when asked his motivations for giving proceeds to Gardner-Webb.

Cash, dressed in his traditional black, called the premier of the film "the highlight of my life," adding it was a "real thrill to me" to see the marquee saying "Gospel Road."

"It was an even bigger thrill when I saw that big 'G' rating," Cash added. "I just hope that this will be the first of many films which are fit for our children as well as ourselves."

The movie, shot in Israel, is a documentary on the life of Christ as told, both in music and narration, by Cash.

Cash financed the picture himself. His wife, country music singer June Carter Cash, played the part of Mary Magdalene.

The premier was marred by a telephone threat on the life of Cash. While the 777-seat theater audience was watching the film, a phone call was received by a member of the Cash party at the theater box office. The caller threatened Cash's life, but also said where he was when he made the call.

Police escorted Cash away from the theater. Later they arrested a suspect believed to have made the call, taking him to the Charlotte jail for questioning.

Cash returned to the theater 40 minutes later to introduce the second showing of "The Gospel Road" during the premier performance evening.

Concerning the film, Cash had this to say: "There comes a time in a man's life when he feels it's time to do something for the world, and for me this film is it. It is the story of Christ.

"We think this is one of the few serious offerings on the screen today that can be seen by all members of the family, and we are proud of it," Cash said.

Cash, along with singer Joe South and Kris Kristofferson, provided music for the film.

City officials presented the noted entertainer a key to the city during his visit.

Baylor University Med Center
Revises Policy on Abortions

DALLAS (BP)--Baylor University Medical Center here, the second largest of the Southern Baptist-owned hospitals, has revised its policy to permit carefully screened pregnancy terminations during the first three months for reasons other than danger to the mother's life.

The decision, following the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling said the policy revision would be "accompanied by intense emphasis on counseling and related activities."

Previously, Baylor had allowed only therapeutic pregnancy termination where the mother's life was in danger.

Under the new policy, the patient's physician and another Baylor staff physician, must approve the procedure and determine that it is "medically advisable."

After the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, previous rules will apply at Baylor. They basically state that a committee of at least three physicians must determine that continued pregnancy would endanger a mother's life.

The Baylor statement said:

"Since the decision of the Supreme Court to nullify Texas' law on termination of pregnancy, the officials of Baylor University Medical Center have engaged in extensive discussion of the religious and moral as well as the medical and legal considerations involved.

"Consultation was obtained in each of these fields in an effort to arrive at an answer that recognizes the commitment of Baptists to preserve the value and dignity of human life and fulfills the medical center's obligations to patients and the public.

"After long deliberation, the medical center policy regarding interruption of pregnancy has been revised to permit certain specialists on the medical staff to perform these procedures during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. The patient's decision for the procedure will be only one factor.

"In addition, affirmative judgment by the patient's physician and another Baylor staff physician that the procedure is medically advisable will be required. Termination of pregnancy after the first 12 weeks will require therapeutic justification and the same strict procedures will be followed as in the past.

"The medical and administrative officials and the governing board at Baylor University Medical Center approach this problem with deliberate concern about the deep beliefs and questions of conscience involved. A major basis for the new position is that when these procedures are done, they should occur in a hospital setting where the patient's life and health can be best protected and where the environment for the patients, physicians and others involved reflects concern for all facets of the problem rather than merely the legal and technical aspects.

"The change in policy at Baylor will be accompanied by intensified emphasis on counseling and related activities."

-30-

Executive Secretaries Elect
George Bagley As President

2/20/73

BILOXI, Miss. (BP)--Executive secretaries of 33 Baptist state conventions, meeting here for their annual session, elected George Bagley as president of the Association of Baptist State Executive Secretaries.

Bagley, executive secretary of the Alabama Baptist State Convention, succeeds as president W. Douglas Hudgins, executive secretary of the Mississippi Baptist Convention and host for the annual meeting.

Other officers elected by the secretaries include vice president, W. Perry Crouch of North Carolina; secretary Richard Stevens of Virginia; and Inter-Agency Council Representative Searcy Garrison of Georgia.

-30-