



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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"Dr. Naylor" Appointed SBC  
Medical Missionary to India

By Larry Jerden

FORT WORTH (BP)--When "Dr. Naylor" reports to the Baptist hospital in Bangalore, India, as a medical missionary some time in 1974, it will not be the man known across the Southern Baptist Convention as president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

In fact, it will not be a man at all.

"Dr. Naylor" will be a pert, 5-foot-4, 29-year-old woman surgeon--the daughter of seminary president Robert P. Naylor.

It comes as no surprise to those who know her that Rebekah Naylor was appointed recently by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board as a medical missionary to serve in India.

She felt the call to missions as a member of the Girl's Auxiliary at the age of 13, and decided several years ago on a mission career "after 18 months of prayer and commitment."

She said in an interview here that she can't remember when she decided to become a surgeon, but it was well before she even considered missions.

Her ultimate destination, after a semester at the seminary her father heads and a period of missionary orientation, will be the Foreign Mission Board's new 80-bed hospital in Bangalore, India--Baptists' only means of getting missionaries into the country.

She feels strongly that the hospital, and medical missions, offers a "prime opportunity" for a Christian witness in India. "Our primary purpose must be the communication of the gospel by whatever means we have available to us," she said.

Dr. Naylor has always been one to make the most of opportunity. Her excellence in academics has been noted from high school through medical school. She was first in her Fort Worth high school class of 650 students; magna cum laude from Baylor University in Waco, Tex.; third in her class at Vanderbilt medical school, Nashville; and was named to Alpha Omicron Alpha, national honorary society of medicine that admits the top 10 per cent of the national medical graduates.

On completion of her residency in surgery at Dallas' Parkland Hospital, she reflected on the challenges and opportunities of being something of a rarity in American medicine--a woman surgeon.

"I was lucky in medical school--there were six women in my class of 48," she recalled. Parkland Hospital, however, never before had a woman in the field of general surgery.

"That added a small amount of pressure, but people will always accept you if you are such a person as to be respected," she noted.

What was harder for her medical co-workers to accept than her sex, she said, was her Christianity.

"Most of the people I dealt with at Parkland were nonChristians. They were antagonistic if you are the type to quote scripture, but they were not disrespectful," she said.

"My missionary plans provided an opportunity to talk with them, because everyone talked about their plans, but they couldn't understand why I would make a long-term commitment to work in a foreign country under difficult conditions. They could understand a short-term project, but not the life-long commitment.

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"But for me the call to India is a great opportunity. India is open for witness. We (MDs) have added responsibility since we are the only ones who can enter right now," she said.

When she touches down in India, it will be far from her first encounter with another culture. As daughter of a minister, she traveled extensively overseas.

In 1955 she accompanied her parents to the Baptist World Congress in London, and from there on to Europe and the Near East. Again in 1960, she went to a similar congress in Rio de Janeiro, visiting in missionary homes in South America. In 1967, she spent 10 weeks in a Baptist hospital in Thailand on a pharmaceutical company grant.

"I saw missions first hand, and that just reinforced all I had been taught in church organizations about our missionaries and the needs of the world," she said.

Dr. Naylor even sees some cultural preparation for missionary work in her residency at Parkland. For one thing, her role in teaching as a resident will prepare her for the teaching she hopes to eventually do in India. But beyond that, she said, she works 100-120 hours a week, and this was "great training" for missions.

"Also, the fact that Parkland is a city-county hospital means we deal with indigent patients, most of them Negro or Latin. The cultural difference between them and the Anglo when we try to communicate can be almost as difficult as if we didn't speak the same language--this, too, is additional preparation."

Language school will probably follow seminary and orientation, even though English is the official language of India, because there are hundreds of dialects spoken in the populous nation.

Dr. Naylor gives credit to her home for whatever success she has achieved--a Christian home that moved location as her father changed pastorates, leading eventually to Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth and then to the presidency of the seminary here.

Her brothers, she said, set the example for her, since they are 10-12 years older than her. One is a scientist in Delaware and the other an attorney in Pecos.

And the "baby" is a surgeon. Does this surprise the seminary president? "No," said Robert P. Naylor, "We think our Rebekah is quite a girl."

Proposed Program  
Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference  
Memorial Coliseum, Portland, Ore.  
June 11, 1973  
Theme: "Equipping the Man of God"

MONDAY MORNING

- 9:15 Hymn and prayer--Richard Stephens, executive secretary, Baptist General Association of Virginia, Richmond, Va.  
9:20 Welcome and response  
9:35 Special music--Anton Disselkoen, minister of music, Bethany Lane Baptist Church, Baltimore, Md.  
9:40 "I Love to Go Soul Winning"--Padgett Cope, pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark.  
10:00 "Believing God in the Desert"--J.C. Mitchell, pastor, First Baptist Church, Winter Park, Fla.  
10:25 Special Music, Steve Bushey, minister of youth and music, Tower Grove Baptist Church, St. Louis, Mo.  
10:30 "The Pastor's Other Family"--Charles Fuller, pastor, First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.  
10:55 Congregation singing--offering  
11:05 "Equipped as Pastor"--Harper Shannon, pastor, First Baptist Church, Dothan, Ala.  
11:25 Special music and testimony--Jack Carter, minister of music, Kempsville Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, Va.  
11:35 "The Must of the Filling"--Jack Taylor, pastor, Castle Hills Baptist Church, San Antonio, Tex.  
12:05 Adjourn

MONDAY AFTERNOON

- 1:45 Hymn and prayer  
1:50 Testimony: "God's Word in My Life"--W.R. Davenport, president, Campbellsville College, Campbellsville, Ky.  
2:00 "Call of God to the City"--Clyde Martin, pastor, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.  
2:20 Special music--Earl Davis, minister of music, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.  
2:25 "Preaching to Broken Hearted People"--Jaroy Weber, pastor, Dauphin Way Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala.  
2:50 Election of Officers  
3:00 Offering  
3:10 Testimony: "The New Bob Harrington"--Bob Harrington, chaplain of Bourbon Street, New Orleans, La.  
3:20 "Equipped as an Evangelist"--John Bisagno, pastor, First Baptist Church, Houston, Tex.  
3:45 Hymn and special music  
3:55 "Equipped to Love"--E.V. Hill, pastor, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Los Angeles, Calif.  
4:25 Benediction--B. Grey Allison, president, Mid-American Baptist Theological Seminary, Little Rock, Ark.

MONDAY EVENING

- 6:45 Hymn and prayer--Miss Bertha Smith, director, Peniel Retreat Center, Cowpens, S.C.  
7:00 Testimony: "Learning to Follow Jesus"--Jess C. Moody, pastor, First Baptist Church, West Palm Beach, Fla.  
7:10 Presentation of new officers  
7:20 Special music--Steve Bushey, St. Louis, Mo.  
7:25 Testimony: "Called to those who hated"--Rachel Saint, missionary to the Auca Indians of Ecuador, Wycliffe Bible Translators  
7:40 Offering and prayer  
7:50 "Survival Techniques"--S. Franklin Logsdon, itinerant Bible teacher, Largo, Fla.  
8:15 Special Music  
8:20 "Jesus Still Saves Around the World"--Joseph B. Underwood, consultant in evangelism, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va.  
8:40 Special recognition  
8:45 Hymn and special music--Ed and Bette Stalnecker, evangelistic singers, Memphis, Tenn.  
8:55 "When Do Preachers Preach"--Robert G. Lee, pastor emeritus, Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis Tenn.  
9:40 Adjourn