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April 13, 1973

Foreign Board Urges SBC To Reinforce Vietnam Missions

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board meeting here adopted a resolution calling on Southern Baptists to reinforce mission efforts in South Vietnam and to double the missionary force there in the near future.

The board also asked Southern Baptists "to saturate our missionaries, their Vietnamese Baptist coworkers and all other Christians with intense, consistent prayer," and "to provide resources to allow Southern Baptists to assist as concerned Christians in the rehabilitation of the Vietnamese people."

The action was urged, the resolution stated, because of "staggering" physical and spiritual needs in the country, and "limitless" opportunities brought about by the recent cease-fire.

It followed a report sent to the board on those needs and opportunities by Southern Baptist Missionary Lewis I. Myers Jr. His report was based on a meeting of the executive committee of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Vietnam.

"Baptists could stand tall and cast a long shadow in Vietnam during the next five years if personnel and resources were immediately available," Myers said in the report.

"This may be the most critical five-year period in the history of Vietnam," Meyers said. Most Vietnamese people are thinking in terms of a moral rebuilding as well as a physical one-- what an open door!"

"People are crying," Myers said, "for someone to assist in agricultural cooperatives, small fisheries and light industry--not just in terms of financial investment but principally in terms of training national personnel to work and manage these economic ventures."

He and other missionaries attending the executive-level meeting said they are "staggered by the challenge of the land, the open doors for spreading the kingdom," and "severe personnel limitations in trying to respond to the future."

Summer changes in personnel, with some leaving for furlough and others returning, will leave 17 "slots" for service and nine missionary families to fill them, he noted. This is with no projected expansion in current work.

Missionaries on the field are already carrying more than their share of the load, Myers said. They work as pastor-advisers to dozens of home churches who are without trained national leadership and give themselves to lay leadership training in addition to the normal load of direct evangelism.

Giving adequate coverage to established work or considering new projects are only part of the personnel problem. Contacts in several locations have already requested the help of a missionary, but personnel are not available to send, he added.

Not only are large geographical areas untouched, but large segments of the population also await a witness, Myers said. Both the military and student groups would be responsive, if there were missionaries to develop the work.

In a few months there will be a total of eight field evangelists in South Vietnam, but only six of these will have evangelism as their major responsibility. This means there will be approximately one evangelistic worker for every three million persons, Meyers said.

He explained that as lay leadership training is taken to a given area, the field evangelist becomes the key to the program. "This compares to having one preacher in my native state of Mississippi," Myers said, "and that preacher spending one-half of his time teaching in a college or other training program.

"Surely," he concluded, "there are young pastors somewhere who can see the overbalance, hear the challenge of the president of our Southern Baptist Convention 'to put the salesmen where the prospects are' and feel 'strangely warmed' over the challenge of committing their ministry in foreign mission service."

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Woman Seminary Professor
Ordained to SBC Ministry

4/13/73

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (BP)--Elizabeth G. Hutchens, associate professor of religious education at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, was ordained to the gospel ministry here by Baptist Temple.

Miss Hutchens, a child care and child development expert at the Baptist seminary, is currently on sabbatic leave and is serving as a chaplain intern at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, a federal government mental health institution in nearby Washington, D.C.

She is the first woman staff member of a Southern Baptist Convention agency ordained to the gospel ministry, and is believed to be the fifth woman ordained to the gospel ministry by a Southern Baptist-affiliated church. She is the second in Virginia.

News reports on the ordination indicated that she was accepted by the hospital as a chaplain on the understanding that she would be ordained, since federal regulations require ordination of persons functioning as staff chaplains. Until her ordination, she has been classified by the hospital as a "chaplain intern."

She plans to return to Southern Seminary in August when her sabbatic is ended, feeling that her calling is teaching, at least for the present. Though she said she has no plans to serve as pastor of a church, she has not closed the door to that possibility, nor rejected the possibility of serving as a chaplain.

"Many hospitals are seeking women chaplains," she said. "They give the same pastoral care as a man, but are perceived differently."

At St. Elizabeth's hospital, she has been conducting worship services, leading discussion groups, counseling on religious matters, and visiting ill patients. Her new status as an ordained chaplain rather than unordained chaplain intern does not change her responsibilities.

Her ordination, requested by Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville where she is a member, took place at Baptist Temple here. Glynn R. Ford, pastor of the church, presided at the service.

She was examined for ordination by a presbytery of Baptist ministers reported to be the largest group to examine a candidate for the ministry in the Mount Vernon Baptist Association. The group voted unanimously to recommend her ordination.

Miss Hutchens is a native of Newton, N.C., and holds degrees from Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.; George Peabody College, Nashville; Southern Seminary in Louisville; and Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, where she earned the doctor of education degree.

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Hannibal-LaGrange College
Given Separate School Status

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--The Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist Convention approved here a proposal to reinstate Hannibal-LaGrange College in Hannibal, Mo., as a separate junior college of the convention with its own board of trustees.

The move will separate the Hannibal-LaGrange school from the Missouri Baptist College, which since 1967 has operated campuses in both St. Louis and Hannibal, Mo.

The convention's Executive Board, in a two-day meeting here, voted to elect a separate board of trustees for Hannibal-LaGrange College, and to approve a charter to reinstate as a separate junior college the school that was founded 115 years ago.

Two months ago, the future of the school in Northeastern Missouri was in question. Trustees of Missouri Baptist College had proposed that unless \$500,000 could be raised almost immediately, the Hannibal campus might be closed. The proposal to close the school was one of four alternatives suggested by the Missouri College trustees.

Baptists in northeast Missouri and residents of the city of Hannibal reacted almost immediately. In almost a month, they raised pledges totalling more than \$125,000 to keep the school alive, and asked that the college be given separate status.

Action by the convention's Executive Board gave the school a new lease on life, with approval also given for an immediate \$500,000 fund campaign and a long-range goal of raising \$1 million to continue operation of the junior college.

In 1967, the convention noted to merge the Hannibal-LaGrange College with the then fledgling Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis, putting both campuses in St. Louis and Hannibal, Mo., under one board of trustees.

This year, the St. Louis campus will graduate its first senior class as a four-year liberal arts college. Hannibal-LaGrange College will continue as a junior college with its own board of trustees.

Almost immediately after the convention board action, the new Hannibal-LaGrange board of trustees slated a meeting to elect officers and appoint a presidential search committee.

In other action, the convention's Executive Board named Miss Alberta Gilpin, who for the past six years has been director of Baptist Young Women's work, as the new executive secretary of the Missouri Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

Effective July 1, Miss Gilpin will succeed Miss Mary O. Bidstrup who is retiring after 25 years as Woman's Missionary Union executive secretary.

The board also voted to employ W.L. Reyholds, systems analyst for the McDonnell-Douglas Aircraft Corp., in St. Louis, as business manager for the convention.

After discussion on the possible need for an independent audit of convention books, the Executive Board adopted a resolution expressing confidence in the integrity of the convention's executive secretary.

There was no opposition, though there were several abstentions, on the motion, which read: "That the Executive Board of the Missouri Baptist Convention, meeting in regular session April 10, 1973, after lengthy and exhaustive discussion pertaining to the work of the executive secretary, Dr. Earl O. Harding, wishes to go on record as unequivocally and absolutely expressing complete confidence in the integrity, dedication and character of our executive secretary."

The motion came as a substitute measure to a motion calling for an independent audit of the convention books, after minutes of the board's executive committee circulated to board members questioned expenditures totalling \$53,150 for which there were no supporting documents or invoices, as cited in a management letter from the auditor. The executive committee had approved the \$53,150 in expenditures even though there was no documentation on how the funds were spent.

It was pointed out that the executive committee had approved a motion, though not unanimously, stating that "we have found no evidence of mismanagement and misappropriation of funds."

Following a question period with the auditor, Ernest Wolf of the accounting firm, Wolf and Buehler, board members engaged in a lengthy period of prayer before approving the substitute motion expressing confidence in the administration.

Later, another motion was approved asking the executive committee to restudy the structure of the convention and report back to the board at a later date.

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Foreign Board Elects
Saunders to Africa Post

4/13/73

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, meeting here, named Davis L. Saunders to its newly created administrative post of area secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa, effective June 1.

Saunders, missionary field representative for that area since 1968, has been living in Nairobi, Kenya. In his new position he will join six other area secretaries assigned to board headquarters in Richmond.

Since 1958, H. Cornell Goerner has been administrative head of the board's work in all of Africa South of the Sahara. Under his leadership it has grown to include 19 countries and more than 600 missionaries. The area was divided Jan. 1 at Goerner's recommendation, and he has retained responsibilities in West Africa.

Saunders' territory includes Angola, Botswana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rhodesia, South West Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Saunders and his wife were appointed missionaries to Nigeria in 1951. Five years later he was one of three missionaries chosen to survey East Africa for prospective places to establish new mission work.

That year the Saunders family settled in Nairobi, the first Southern Baptist missionaries to arrive in Kenya. From 1964 until 1969 he was principal of the Baptist Theological Seminary of East Africa in Arusha, Tanzania.

Saunders, currently enrolled at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, expects to complete requirements for the doctor of theology degree this spring. He received the bachelor of divinity and master of theology degrees there before missionary appointment.

Born in Walterboro, S.C., Saunders grew up in Charleston, where his father taught at The Citadel, the military college of South Carolina. He was graduated from The Citadel and spent two years in the U.S. Marine Corps before going to seminary.

As a seminarian he was pastor of Fredonia Baptist Church, Vevay, Ind., for a year.

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