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March 14, 1975

75-41

**"Baptist Hymnal" Not Oldest--
Sacred Harp Was Original**

By Michael D. Chute

NASHVILLE (BP)--At first, it was amusing with all the fa-fa-fa's, sol-sol-sol's, la-la-la's and mi-mi-mi's. But watching the singers' expressioned faces, one knew they sang their songs for praise and not amusement.

The small congregation skipped from page to page in the oblong songbook, singing through the notes first, then the words. The songs are not familiar to the ordinary Southern Baptist. The title of the songbook is "The Sacred Harp (Denson edition)."

To receive the full blessing of Sacred Harp singing, one must sing. It's not listener's music; it's singer's music.

The Sacred Harp singing was part of PraiSing '75, which launched the new edition of the "Baptist Hymnal." However, Sacred Harp singing came about long before there was a "Baptist Hymnal" or even a "Broadman Hymnal"--predecessors of the new edition.

In the last years of the American colonies, Baptist people were known as Old Baptists. They were country folks who opposed--and were opposed by--the other religious denominations linked with England. As Baptists grew in numbers, they grew in their antagonism to control--with r from the government or from any centralized authority, even Baptist.

While Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Roman Catholics sang psalms--and perhaps because of this--Baptists remained cold to psalm singing. They decided to develop their own music, Old Baptist music. Their preachers collected hymns (poems) which had been written by Baptists. However, these hymns were published without tunes. For many years these tuneless books were all they had and all they needed.

The Old Baptist tunes found in "The Sacred Harp" are melodies of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. They are tunes that were sung in these areas for hundred of years, but without religious texts. To such known and loved tunes as these, the Baptists began to sing their equally beloved religious poetry.

Many of the folk tunes in the Sacred Harp have been included in the new "Baptist Hymnal." These include "Holy Manna," "Promised Land," and "Restoration" (now called "Arise").

These tunes were known by the early Baptist people, but were not recorded in any book form until Benjamin Franklin White authored and published "The Sacred Harp" songbook in 1844. Although the work was revised eight times, the Denson Revision, instigated by Seaborn M. and Thomas J. Denson, is the most widely used today. Called the "deans of the Sacred Harp," the Denson brothers died before their edition was completed in 1936.

"The Sacred Harp" is not a church hymnal, though its contents are religious songs. Most of those who use the songbook would call it "just Old Baptist songs."

Sacred Harp music is four-part music. The four parts have been composed so that each voice part is equal. When the other three parts are brought up to equal importance with the melody, this part is bound to lose the prominence the modern ear feels it should have. The practice of each harmonic part, except the bass, being sung by both men and women submerges the tune more deeply.

The most interesting feature of the Sacred Harp is the shaped noteheads. Its "fa sol la mi" notes are Old English. Today the fa-sol-la has completely died out in Britain, so its use in "The Sacred Harp" represents its sole survival in the world today.

"The Sacred Harp" is not only a songbook; it's an institution.

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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Baker Urges Caution
In Child Care Bill**

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Baptist representative told a joint congressional committee here that while Baptists generally support child care legislation they are concerned about possible violations of the principle of church-state separation in the funding and administration of child care programs in churches and other nonprofit agencies.

John W. Baker, associate director in charge of research services for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, appeared before the panel which is considering two bills calling for the federal government to provide funding and supervision of both public and private child care facilities across the nation.

Declaring that although Baptist conventions and conferences "generally have looked with favor on public policy which is constructively child and family oriented," Baker cautioned the panel that the Baptist Joint Committee, which is supported by nine Baptist bodies, has "serious reservations" about the measure being considered.

Those reservations, he said, "center around traditional Baptist concerns for religious liberty and separation of church and state."

More specifically, one of Baker's objections to the present drafts of the bills, S. 626 and H.R. 2966, has to do with the absence of safeguards to prohibit religious discrimination in employment in federally-funded child care facilities.

He also questioned a section of the bill which calls for federal financing in the construction of child care facilities when such funding might benefit religious education programs in churches. Such construction grants, he asserted, might be interpreted by the courts as a violation of the constitution.

He further warned that provisions in the bill calling for government controls in monitoring, evaluation, licensing, inspection, fiscal control and accounting procedures of child care programs as applied to church-operated facilities pose the danger of creating "excessive entanglement" between church and state.

Baker also told the committee that churches and other nonprofit organizations might "be tempted to use available public funds to expand their programs of sectarian enlistment, evangelization and proselytization," which would amount to a clear violation of the constitutional principle of separation.

Appearing with Baker were three other religious spokesmen, a Catholic, a Lutheran, and a Methodist, none of whom raised questions relating to potential church-state conflicts in the legislation.

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**Harold R. Price Named To
Penn-Jersey Baptist Post**Baptist Press
3/14/75

HARRISBURG, Pa. (BP)--Harold Raymond Price, 43-year-old minister of music at First Baptist Church, Rockville, Md., has been elected to direct church training and music for the (Southern) Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey, effective April 15.

Born in Yeagertown, Pa., he is a graduate of Wheaton College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Formerly Price served as music and youth director for First Baptist Church, Westerlo, N. Y.; Richard Heights Baptist Church, Tuscon, Ariz.; and First Baptist Church of Lake Worth, Ft. Worth, Tex.

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Mrs. W. R. Alexander
Dies In Dallas

Baptist Press
3/14/75

DALLAS (BP)--Funeral services were held at First Baptist Church here for Mrs. Eva E. Alexander, 87, widow of W. R. Alexander, the late executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention's Annuity Board.

Alexander was the board's chief executive officer from 1947 to his death in 1954.

Burial for Mrs. Alexander was in Bala-Cynwyd, Pa., a suburb of Philadelphia, where her husband also was interred. Both were natives of Philadelphia.

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Illinois Baptists Hear
Report On Embezzlement

Baptist Press
3/14/75

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--The board of directors of the Illinois (Southern) Baptist State Association heard a progress report here regarding misappropriation of funds from the Baptist Children's Home in Carmi.

The board also approved a \$100,000 state mission goal and announced two personnel changes. James E. Godsoe, general language missionary in Illinois since 1965, becomes director of language missions and Brotherhood. John Whitman, the IBSA associate director of communications, will take on increased duties as managing editor of the Illinois Baptist. Robert J. Hastings is editor.

In regard to the misappropriation of funds, James E. Paynter, the children's home's former business and development director, has been indicted twice by the White County grand jury--once for allegedly converting a \$500 check intended for the home to his own use and once for allegedly transporting \$36,721 across state lines.

Paynter, an employee of the home since 1966, pled not guilty to the theft of the \$500 check and is free on \$5,000 bond. He has not appeared in court on the second indictment, which alleges he deposited the \$36,721 in an Evansville, Ind., bank.

Auditors have discovered total losses from the children's home of more than \$103,752, from January 1, 1972, through August, 1974, and IBSA has filed a claim for that amount against its bonding company.

The Illinois Baptist state paper reports that spot checks for the year 1971 "indicate further embezzlement, but the books were not audited prior to January 1, 1972 because it was uncertain whether insurance coverage would justify the additional expense."

The IBSA's attorney reported that the state body will recoup over \$30,000 of losses besides whatever settlement is made by the bonding company.

"This includes some \$5,000 in residue checking accounts opened by . . . Paynter plus a \$25,000 equity in a house purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Paynter in Auburn, Ill.," the Illinois Baptist reported.

The board was told that all possible steps have been taken to tighten all bookkeeping procedures of Illinois Baptist institutions to prevent future misappropriation of funds.

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CORRECTION

In BP story mailed 3/13/75, entitled "Home Board Names Personnel; Elevates Evangelism," change "president of West Georgia College" to read "vice-president of West Georgia College" on page 7, paragraph 5, line 2.

Thanks--
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