



FEATURES

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From Polio
To Pagliacci

By Jon Pedersen

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--On a balmy West Tennessee Sunday morning, young Clint Nichols stepped from the back door of his parent's farm house and headed for the barn to feed the family cows and chickens. Clint began to run toward the old barn.

Suddenly, he couldn't put one foot in front of the other fast enough, and with a sickening lurch he felt himself falling to the dusty ground. The feed bucket clanged and rolled in the dust near his head.

He hobbled back to the house and told his parents he could hardly walk. His father, Stanley Nichols, picked the boy up and carried him to his bedroom.

Clint could not feel anything but pain from his waist down. He then recalled having had "shooting" pains for some time--first on one side and the other. Now the throbbing pains met somewhere in his lower back.

Examinations at first indicated flu in his back, but then the reports confirmed that Clinton C. Nichols, age 12, had polio.

"At first I was disappointed, recalls Nichols, now chairman of the church music ministries division of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, because I could no longer be involved in football, basketball and the other sports which I had enjoyed so much.

But Nichols had another love and talent--music--which he pursued with zest:

"I guess I always had a flare for singing. I recall my oldest brother Ray and I would sit in the back seat of the car and just sing and sing. They didn't really have a lot of cars with radios in them in those days, so we'd sing all the songs we knew as we'd ride down the road.

"In church I always seemed to have trouble, singing too loud. Ray would punch me a lot of times to tell me to quiet down," the music professor said.

Upon completing Barlett High School near Memphis, Tenn., Nichols went to Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee where he earned the bachelor of music education degree. He received the master of sacred music degree from New Orleans Seminary in 1959. And for a time, he was minister of music for a church in Chattanooga, Tenn., traveling once a week to Atlanta to study voice with Ralph Errolle, New York Metropolitan Opera star. He gained acclaim with the Knoxville, Tenn., Symphony while a professor at Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn. Nichols was given an assistantship at Florida State University (FSU), Tallahassee, in voice and opera, where he earned the doctor of music degree. At FSU, Nichols studied voice with Elena Nikolaidi, a former Met singer.

At FSU, he met his future wife, Jarvis Rose. "At first she avoided me, having seen me portray the part of Pagliacci, who kills his wife in the play. She was scared of me; she would simply avoid me."

But Clint and Jarvis were eventually married, and left soon after, for New York City. Jarvis worked as a receptionist for CBS and sang at Radio City while Clint studied with such opera notables as Winfred Cecil, Carolina Segrera, Alberta Masello and Martin Rich. He had grants from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, William Matthes Sullivan Foundation, and New York State. In the process, he won a contract with the New York City Opera at Lincoln Center, where he became a leading tenor--"another dream come true."

"One consideration I had in going to New York was that there was a doctor there who thought that he could provide me with an experimental, mechanical leg brace. The doctor did fit me with a specially designed brace, which helped my appearance on stage and my ability to communicate with the audience, and eliminated a great deal of my limp."

During the Nichols' time in New York, he was tenor soloist for the Riverside Church of New York, with Buryl Red at the Manhattan Baptist Church, but eventually felt God leading him away from New York. Nichols, raised a Southern Baptist, had been active since childhood in the Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, where the well-known Robert G. Lee was pastor.

Lee, a former Southern Baptist Convention president, had written letters of encouragement to the young Nichols.

And Tommy Lane, the minister of music at Bellevue, really laid the groundwork for the man who would become well known in New York opera circles as a tenor who sang with keen thrust, eerie force and accuracy.

The Nichols moved back to Tallahassee to complete his doctorate and then to the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg to teach and sing. From there, they went to Wingate (N.C.) College, a Baptist school, where he served as chairman of the music department.

"I thought that this was going to be the place where we'd finally settle down. We had a good job in a beautiful country setting, a nice house, animals for the children, Coleman and Roselyn," recalls Nichols.

But that changed when the opportunity came to teach at the New Orleans Seminary, he said: "I felt that this was the place to be in terms of teaching more lives in preparation for ministry.

Nichols maintains a solid, husky physical appearance. He owns and flies a twin engine, private plane and is often seen on campus, in the summertime, riding his bike along the oak-lined campus streets.

"Many feel sorry for Dr. Nichols when they first see his slight limp and hear the whispered remark that he had polio," a friend notes.

But the pity is short-lived. He takes a "back seat" to no one in accomplishments--"with or without polio," the friend concluded.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers

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North Central Thrust Begins
New Church Every 10 Days

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4/22/77

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--Since the North Central Missions Thrust got underway at the beginning of 1974, one new Southern Baptist church has been organized every ten days in the seven participating states.

E. Harmon Moore, executive secretary of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, made the announcement here at a meeting of the North Central steering committee.

"Reports show a total of 109 new churches in Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota during that period, "which averages out to almost exactly one new congregation every ten days," Moore said.

The North Central Thrust is a cooperative effort of the seven states to double Southern Baptist work in their area by 1990.

Robert Wilson, executive secretary of the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, who will serve as chairman of the 1978 emphasis, said the 1978 goal is for 397 new churches and chapels. Wilson told the steering committee here that "a unique feature of 1978 is that 397 sponsoring churches are now being enlisted as a springboard for that new work.

"We're inviting the pastors of those 397 sponsoring churches to a kickoff meeting next January 5-7," Wilson said, "together with other leaders in the North Central Missions Thrust." That meeting will be held in the Downtown Hilton Conference Center in Kalamazoo, Mich., and is expected to attract 580 persons from the seven-state area.

Robert J. Hastings, editor of the Illinois Baptist and publicity chairman for 1977, reported that "The Idea Book" will be ready for distribution at the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City in June. "The Idea Book," believed to be the first of its kind, gives the exact location and brief description of all 397 sites for potential new churches in the seven states.

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April 22, 1977

77-74

Groups Study Modern Implications of Baptist History

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Historical Commission and its auxiliary Historical Society spent two days here conducting business and examining techniques and implications of "Communicating Baptist History Through Contemporary Media and Art Forms."

The Historical Commission re-elected Richard D. Patton, pastor of First Baptist Church, Portland, Tenn., as chairman; approved a 1977-78 budget of \$246,950, which includes \$17,000 from the commission's program reserve funds; and proposed a 1978-79 budget of \$282,750.

The 1977-78 budget represents a \$31,211 decrease from the originally proposed budget of \$278,161. The new budget figure is based on Historical Commission income and a \$200,000 allocation from the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Coperative Program unified budget which the SBC Executive Committee will recommend to the annual session of the SBC, June 14-16, in Kansas City, Mo.

The commission also voted to launch a major pamphlet series over the next several years on significant events, movements and leaders in Baptist history to help Baptists and others gain a better understanding of Baptist history and heritage and its implications for contemporary life and issues.

In other action, the commission discussed long range plans and presented its 1977 Norman W. Cox Award for outstanding historical writing in either the commission's publication, Baptist History and Heritage, or The Quarterly Review, published by the SBC Sunday School Board.

The award, which is open to all writers, went to Thomas R. McKibbens Jr., associate pastor, Broadway Baptist Church, Louisville, for an article, "The Life, Writings and Influence of Morgan Edwards," in Jan.-Feb.-March, 1976 issue of The Quarterly Review.

Other Historical Commission officers are Walter B. Shurden, associate professor of church history, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, vice chairman; and Marguerite S. Babb, editor of The Quarterly Review, secretary-treasurer.

In a separate business session, the Historical Society elected Leon McBeth, professor of church history, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, as president; Paul Brewer, professor of philosophy at Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tenn., as vice president; John S. Moore, pastor of Manley Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington, Va., secretary; and Lynn E. May Jr., the Historical Commission's executive director, as treasurer.

Next year's meeting of the two organizations is set for April 24-26 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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Dr. Cannata was held On
Firearms 'Misunderstanding'

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4/22/77

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (BP)--The Ethiopian government has completed all investigations and closed the case involving missionary physician Samuel R. J. Cannata Jr., Dr. Cannata said in a telephone call to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Dr. Cannata was released from custody on a "guarantor," similar to U. S. bailbond, on April 19, following 16 days of confinement. Two days later he informed officials of the board that he had been formally cleared and the guarantor had been lifted.

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"I was held for 16 days for investigation of a firearms technicality caused by a misunderstanding of a local official," Dr. Cannata said. "I was released on Tuesday, April 19, on the signature of an American Embassy official. My passport and all identification papers were returned to me," he added.

Dr. Cannata has a license to possess firearms to help rid some farming areas of destructive animals.

He said the police and other officials were extremely nice during the entire investigation. Mrs. Cannata was given "unlimited access" to her husband during his entire detainment. Now, Dr. Cannata continued, the case appears to be closed without charges or a trial.

"I am convinced that the Lord was in it from the very beginning," Cannata said. "I have been personally blessed immensely." Dr. Cannata added he also had found many opportunities for witnessing while under confinement.

Dr. Cannata's questioning and arrest followed political developments in recent months which have resulted in house-to-house searches by government troops. Those searches, the Ethiopian government has said, are directed primarily at the U. S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and three Ethiopian groups they blame for turmoil in the country.

The questioning of Dr. Cannata appears unrelated to any of these actions.

While Cannata was being detained, word was received that the government had granted a work permit for a new missionary pastor to enter the country. Davis L. Saunders, the Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Eastern and Southern Africa, said he understood the investigation of Cannata did not relate to any official government position on Southern Baptists.

Dr. Cannata has been a pioneer of Baptist work in the country. Southern Baptist missionaries were first sent to Ethiopia in 1967. Dr. Cannata arrived the following year when he was transferred from Rhodesia.

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IMPORTANT CORRECTIONS

In graph seven of Baptist Press story mailed April 20, 1977, entitled "Board Recommends Help for Baptists in Canada," change the end of the sentence from . . . affiliate with the Southern Baptist Convention (on a national level). . . to . . . affiliate with Southern Baptist work.

In graph three of Baptist Press story mailed April 21, 1977, entitled "IRS Extends Time to File Form 990," change the final part of the second sentence from . . . made it effective as of May 15, 1977 . . . to . . . made it effective immediately.

Student Mission Auction
Cashes In On Success

Baptist Press
4/22/77

LOUISVILLE (BP)--A room full of seminary students and visitors bid a grand total of \$680 at an unusual auction at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here.

The auction was unusual because funds collected will go to send students around the United States and abroad for summer mission work, and because of the items being sold.

Drawing the highest price was a magic show by student David Garrard, which brought \$110. Another money-maker, which went for \$85, was a candlelight, "Filipino-style" dinner for two with Dr. and Mrs. Bryant Hicks of the Southern Seminary faculty, former missionaries in the Philippines.

Other items which went off the auction block were an airplane flight over "romantic downtown Louisville," which sold for \$40, a variety of shirts autographed by seminary faculty members, and a number of personal services by various seminary administrators, including completion of next year's income tax return by treasurer Richard Broome, which brought \$15.

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When Southern Baptist
Missions Came to the Omni

Special Report for Baptist state papers

By Jack U. Harwell

ATLANTA (BP)--From all over Georgia and surrounding states, they began pouring into the Omni in downtown Atlanta, two hours before scheduled starting time for the world's largest missionary appointment service.

At the 7:15 p.m., starting time, church buses were lined up for blocks, unloading Baptists of all ages who came to see 18 new missionaries appointed by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Somewhere between 14,000 and 15,000 persons prayerfully joined hands and hearts to make the huge sports arena "a giant cathedral," responding to William L. Self, pastor of Atlanta's Wieuca Road Baptist Church, who declared in his opening prayer: "God will make of this sports palace a giant cathedral--a great place of worship, commitment and sacrifice."

More than 1,300 singers in brightly colored choir robes of many shades formed a mass choir under the direction of Jack Gantt and Paul McCommon.

They lead 15,000 voices in singing "To God Be The Glory" as young people from the Hobarth Baptist Church in Tucker, Ga., led a parade of flags representing the 84 nations where Southern Baptists support more than 2,700 missionaries.

In his opening remarks, Self said, "This is the most significant Baptist meeting in Atlanta since the Baptist World Alliance met here in 1939 . . . We are letting the whole world know that Southern Baptists are big people in a big business."

Searcy S. Garrison, executive secretary of the Georgia Baptist Convention, led in a recommitment of all Georgia Baptists resources to "evangelization of our beloved Georgia . . . (and to) the appeal of the Home Mission Board to congregationalize America by the end of this decade . . . and to assure the Foreign Mission Board that we will walk with you and our wonderful missionaries to the ends of the earth."

J. Bennett Henderson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Cornelia, Ga., and chairman of the personnel committee at the Home Mission Board, presented 68 home missionaries who had been appointed the week before in Atlanta. They were to be publicly commissioned on April 24 in Birmingham.

James L. Sullivan, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and parents of the 18 missionaries about to be appointed drew hardy applause.

Baker James Cauthen, "Mr. Foreign Missions" for Southern Baptists, challenged 15,000 hearers to go and make disciples." He said, "It is a worldwide labor that brought us here tonight. We are here on the business of seeing Emmanuel.

"Multiplied millions stand in a need of a word from a loving, saving God," Cauthen, the Foreign Mission Board's executive director, told an applauding crowd. He said the 1976 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions was just a few dollars short of its \$29 million goal.

Louis Cobbs, personnel secretary for the Foreign Mission Board, then presented the 18 missionary candidates, challenging them "like Gideon's 300, to be scattered about the world in God's Holy Light."

Each of the 18 missionaries spoke briefly of their families, their home churches, their spiritual pilgrimages and their call for foreign mission service. The audience wanted to applaud after each testimony, but Cobbs asked them to refrain.

At the end of the 18 testimonies, the entire Omni congregation gave a lengthy, standing ovation to the group.

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Cauthen then gave each missionary appointed a special certificate, issuing this the FMB charge to the group: "You are going because Jesus said go and you are in for the thrill of a lifetime because he goes with you."

Dr. Ohlen R. Wilson, dentist from Alma, Ga., and a member of trustees, led in a dedicatory prayer, saying "Father we command these servants to thy tender care."

At 9:20 p.m., Cauthen extended an invitation for young people to respond to foreign mission service, for preachers to consider God's call overseas, for laymen to go wherever God might lead and for re-dedication to world missions advance for all.

For more than 30 minutes people streamed from every aisle to the platform. About 300 persons responded, including preachers, laymen, parents, and numerous teenagers from the massed choir.

Cauthen said: "Now it is God's moment. What do you say back to him?"

Grady Wilson, famed associate of Billy Graham and a Foreign Mission Board member from North Carolina, led in a special prayer of dedication for those who had responded. At 10:00 p.m., Mrs. W. Jack Smith of Brunswick, Ga., led in the closing prayer.

Groups walked slowly back to buses to head for many cities in Georgia and beyond and hundreds lingered long after the historic service had ended, rejoicing in the decisions made in the Omni.

One Georgia pastor said: "Ten young people from my church walked the aisle tonight indicating some interest in foreign mission service." Tears in his eyes told the joy and pride that only a parent or pastor can know."

Another pastor said: "God has spoken to me clearly and undeniably that he wants me to go to Brazil, but my wife isn't ready yet. Pray for her."

Truly, it was a historic night for Baptists in Georgia . . . and for Baptists everywhere. It was a thrilling launch pad for Baptists in Georgia of the Southern Baptist Bold Mission effort to win the world in the final quarter of this century.