



**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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77-98

**Board Denies Charges  
In \$1.5 Million Suit**

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here says allegations made by a former employee, who is suing the board for \$1.5 million, have been proven untrue to its own satisfaction by "a prolonged investigation" by the board.

Don Burnett, 38, a personnel placement counselor at the board who was terminated after a leave of absence, alleges in a civil suit in Circuit Court of Davidson County that he was forced out of his position after he had revealed that "one or more individuals at the executive level were possibly involved in serious improprieties."

"One of the executives allegedly involved was . . . W. O. Thomason," then executive vice president, the suit said.

Thomason resigned in Nov. 1976 for personal reasons involving the care of a wife who has been an invalid for a number of years and other pressing personal responsibilities, a board spokesman said. He entered the private practice of consulting and counseling in association with Nashville psychologist Glenn Larson.

Thomason is named as a co-defendant in the suit, along with the Sunday School Board and Nashville psychiatrist, Dan Calhoun, to whom the board referred Burnett for psychiatric consultation.

Burnett, a nine-year employee at the board, alleges that the board had him arrested in what he says was an unlawful attempt to commit him for treatment at a local psychiatric hospital.

The suit cites severe monetary loss, damage to personal and professional reputation and severe emotional distress and charges "assault and battery, false imprisonment, gross negligence, defamation and outrageous conduct."

The civil action further states that Burnett, after talking with board president, Grady C. Cothen, and several other superiors, agreed to a psychiatric evaluation to prove his stability but that he refused Dr. Calhoun's suggestion that he be hospitalized for tests. He said he learned in the interview that Calhoun was a neighbor of Thomason.

Following this, Burnett alleges the board had him forcibly taken by Nashville police to another psychiatrist whom he charges was "arranged for" by the defendants to co-sign with Calhoun to have him committed. That psychiatrist, the suit said, refused to do so after Burnett said he was a "rational and reasonable person who was being victimized." Burnett said police freed him after his personal doctor vouched for his stability.

In a prepared statement, Cothen said:

"This unfortunate affair represents a personal tragedy. It arises from a series of problems which occurred over a period of many weeks.

"We made a prolonged investigation of the allegations by Mr. Burnett. Finally, in consultation with my administrative advisors and psychologists, it was my opinion that for the welfare of Mr. Burnett, his family, our employees and the Baptist Sunday School Board, that he should seek psychiatric consultation.

"The procedures used in the management of the matter were upon the advice of our legal counsel," Cothen continued.

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Before and after the incident referred to in the complaint, I personally urged Mr. Burnett, and later Mr. Burnett and his legal counsel, to take a leave of absence with full pay and benefits and seek medical help. Instead, he initiated legal action."

Cothen, who said allegations in the suit "are incorrect," said Burnett was dismissed in Nov. 1976 after several months of leave with pay because of his failure to seek recommended medical help.

The Sunday School Board has 30 days to file a reply to Burnett. No date has been set for court action.

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Gift Annuity Rates  
Raise 'Could Help'

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NASHVILLE (BP)--A recent decision by the national Committee on Gift Annuities to raise uniform gift annuity rates makes contributions to a favorite Southern Baptist institution more attractive for donors, two denominational investments experts say.

The committee, comprised of 25 members from 750 secular and religious gift annuity issuing agencies, raised the rates governing the value of making such contributions, during the 16th Conference on Gift Annuities in Minneapolis. Darold H. Morgan, Southern Baptist Annuity Board president, is a member of the committee.

The committee's action increased the rates for both single life and joint life gift annuities, a move that could affect a future increase in the number of gift annuity agreements administered by some foundations and agencies of the 12.9 million member Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), according to Morgan and Hollis E. Johnson III, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Foundation.

The committee's action increased the rates for both single life and joint life gift annuities. Single life annuity rates were increased on a scale from .2 percent to 2 percent. Rates for joint life gift annuities went up from .2 percent to 1.6 percent.

The specific rate used to determine the annual income that will be earned through a gift annuity agreement is dictated by a donor's age.

For instance, the new rate for a donor 35 years old is 4.5 percent. Older donors receive higher rates. A 65-year-old donor who enters into a single life gift annuity agreement may now earn a rate of 6.2 percent.

In retirement terminology, the phrase "single life" refers to protection for one person. The term "joint life" refers to protection for one person and his or her beneficiary.

When a person enters into a gift annuity agreement with a religious, charitable or educational institution, he or she does two things: They make a gift to the institution, and they buy a "fixed income" (set amount) for life, Morgan said.

Johnson said that a portion of the gift is also deductible for income tax purposes for the year in which the gift is made. Additionally, he said, a part of the gift's annual income is tax exempt.

The committee's action could be helpful to the fund-raising efforts of Southern Baptist institutions and agencies, said Johnson and Morgan.

While some were predicting only a slight increase in gift annuity agreements for Southern Baptists, Johnson said he would make no predictions, but effective publicity could bring some increase.

In many cases, the donor would give the entire amount of principal of the gift to the organization if he or she could afford it. But he or she decides on a gift annuity because they need to make some provision for income during their lifetime, Morgan added.

He gave an example using one of the new rates to illustrate how a gift annuity works.

Suppose a donor 65 years old decides to contribute \$1,000 to a Southern Baptist institution by using a single life gift annuity agreement.

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For a 65-year-old donor in a single life agreement, the new gift annuity rate is 6.2 percent. This means the gift of \$1,000 would earn an annual income of \$62 for the rest of his or her life (6.2 percent of \$1,000), Morgan said.

The committee recommends the range of rates and the form of annuity contracts for its member organizations. It informs and advises its member organizations concerning national legislation and in the various states affecting gift annuities.

The Future--Discouraging  
And Encouraging Words

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Baptist Press  
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By James Lee Young

ATLANTA (BP)--Population growth at home and in other countries, influx of immigrants to the United States, population shift, a global-system perspective and changing family styles--these and other issues will have far reaching effects on Southern Baptists in the next 25 years, says a Southern Baptist demographic expert.

While Orrin Morris of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (HMB), Atlanta, does not subscribe to a "doomsday" theory of humanity's future, he does cite some "discouraging words" that he believes have significant implications for the future of Southern Baptists.

At the same time, however, Morris, a regional coordinator in the HMB's planning section, also stresses some "encouraging words," to counter the negative.

Population growth is at the top of his list on the discouraging side of the board. Last year the population passed the 4 billion mark and while the current growth rate of 1.9 percent "may not seem high in itself," says Morris, "when it is applied to the world's population, it represents an increase of 204,932 people per day.

"At this rate, in only three years the world's population grows by the number of persons in the U.S.'s population. Given current projections the world population is expected to increase to 6.25 billion by the year 2000. This means that in only 23 years the world will be inhabited by 58 percent more people."

Among the reasons for Morris's concern is if population growth continues as projected, North America's increase by the year 2000 will "result in four more people per square mile. In South Asia, their growth will result in 140 more persons per square mile.

This will strain South Asia's resources to the point, according to an estimate, "that each square mile of cultivated land will have 390 more people to feed compared with 37 per square mile in North America," he says.

Morris quotes a United Nations official from India: "'To cope with the population increase, India needs to build 1,000 new schoolrooms every day from now on for the next 20 years, 1,000 new hospital wards... and 10,000 houses every day...for the next 20 years.'"

According to UNESCO estimates, he says, 400-500 million children suffered from malnutrition and starvation in 1973...According to UNESCO, the availability of food per capita has not increased since 1936 and actually decreased in the last decade."

Consider other projections. "At the present rate of energy consumption--3.5 percent per year--U.S. energy use doubles every 20 years...In the past several years the whole world has become aware of our voracious appetite." Five percent of the world--the U.S.--consumes 20 percent of the world's coal, 30 percent of its oil, and 49 percent of its natural gas, Morris says.

On the encouraging side, Morris cites, "The world is learning the meaning of the words cooperation and interdependence. The infrequency of wars could be taken as a manifestation of such a change."

He notes the "call for a new ethic in the use of material resources," the viewing of intermediate technologies "practical options to Yankee technology," development of life styles compatible with short-term scarcities--pride in saving and conserving rather than conquest--and a sense of identification with future generations...

Population shift in terms of mobility, growth and the sundry, related problems will affect Southern Baptists, as they will the rest of society, says Morris.

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Present realities and projections have a definite effect on Southern Baptists' planning for the future and are major reasons for task force and group seminars of Southern Baptist leadership concerning Bold Mission strategy through the year 2000 and for such conferences as the Futuristic Conference sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board, March 1977. Morris originally prepared his findings and presented them for the conference.

While Bold Mission strategy concerns missions primarily from the standpoint of evangelizing the world, the Futuristic Conference highlighted some major issues with which Southern Baptists must grapple along with society, but in a Christian Baptist biblical context.

But grappling with the issues, considering population changes, the shift from survival to role-identification education, changing family styles and other tensions, will have a definite effect on Bold Mission strategy, denominational leaders like Morris believe.

For example, in considering how best to project Bold Mission efforts, the Home Mission Board has considered a multitude of possibilities.

"The three largest urban regions will account for one-half of the U.S. population in A.D. 2000," Morris says. "The largest will remain the Atlantic Seaboard followed by the Lower Great Lakes and California.

"The Florida Peninsula will more than double. Six more of the 15 largest regions will nearly double--the Gulf Coast, East Central Texas-Red River, Northern Georgia-S.E. Tennessee, Puget Sound, Colorado Piedmont and Metropolitan Arizona.

"The fastest growing regions will be the South and Southwest. Las Vegas, Nev., may increase 50 percent from 1980 to 2000. The Florida Peninsula and Metro Arizona follow in that order. The Sun Belt is truly the population magnet for the next two decades.

"Nevertheless," Morris cautions, "many external constraints can alter the expected development, i.e., inclement weather, prolonged energy and water shortages, unionization of the South, or war."

Southern Baptists increasingly stress their growing multi-ethnic, pluralistic nature, and, according to Morris, this will become even more pronounced over the next 25 years, if present trends continue.

The U.S. has entered its third largest wave of immigrants in its history, according to Morris. "The first wave was during the 1880s when 5.25 million persons entered the country, at a rate of about 515,000 per year.

"The second wave began at the turn of the century and tapered to a trickle in the 1930s. During the first decade 880,000 entered each year.

"So far this decade only about 24 percent of all immigrants have been Europeans, while about 60 percent of all immigrants from Asia, Africa and Latin America have entered the country... Only about 100,000 Africans have immigrated to the U.S. compared to 2.1 million Asians and 4.3 Latin Americans (legally)."

"And so far this decade 40 percent of the registered immigrants to the U.S. have been from Latin America and nearly 30 percent from Asia.

Increasing immigration, Morris believes, will mean that "sometime in the mid-1980s pressures will mount for American institutions to become bi-lingual or else severely restrict immigration."

Other observations from Morris include:

--"The population characteristics of the 1950s and '60s were abnormal; families were large; marriage was nearly universal and occurred early and family migration was high.

--The impact of the Post War Baby Boom will dominate U.S. society for the rest of the century.

--The pulpit will still be central in church life. Probably the roles of ministers will be torn between supportive structures for survival-oriented elderly and awareness-oriented young adults. Churches will have increasing demands on their programs, in terms of life cycle, group needs.

"No matter which way one is drawn, the impersonality of electronic media and the irritation of an increasingly crowded society will demand that the minister be warm, personal and self confident but not arrogant, professional but not authoritarian.

--Southern Baptists' list of values will "likely be expanded to magnify terms which have been around a long time but will be viewed from a new perspective." The 'sins' are cited parenthetically:

Stewardship (waste and over-consumption); harmony (disharmony and exploitation); cooperation (conflict and competition); inter-generational planning (generational nearsightedness); interdependence (independence and isolationism); responsible parenthood (overpopulation).

"Frankly, the days ahead are filled with great challenges and opportunities for God's people. As a matter of fact, only God truly understands the whole system..." Morris concludes.