



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Oklahoma Baptists
To Divest Hospital

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Baptist Medical Center here will be transferred without charge from ownership and operation by the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma to a nonprofit, nonstock corporation composed primarily of Baptist laymen.

The Oklahoma convention's board of directors moved to divest themselves of the hospital at a meeting Dec. 6.

The recent conflict between the hospital's directors, Oklahoma Baptists and members of the hospital staff over the order by the Oklahoma Baptist board to stop gender dysphoria procedures (sex change operations) was not specifically stated as a reason for dropping hospital ownership.

The directors did pass a resolution stating that continued operation of the hospital by Oklahoma Baptists has become "impractical" because of continuing and increasing encroachments "by the federal government and other entities" on the convention's ability to exercise operational controls over the hospital.

The 50-member corporation that will take over operation of the hospital is composed of 30 Baptists and 20 non-Baptists and will be known as Baptist Medical Center of Oklahoma, Inc.

The name Baptist will remain with the 500-bed facility as long as three conditions are met: 1. At least 60 percent of the members and directors of the corporation are members of churches cooperating with the state Baptist convention and are approved by Oklahoma Baptists; 2. The Baptist chaplaincy program presently in effect at the hospital must be continued in all significant aspects; 3. No gender dysphoria surgery or abortions on demand may be performed at the hospital.

The contract drawn up for the transfer of the facility and its properties says the three conditions will no longer apply "in the event the medical center changes its name so that the word Baptist is no longer used in connection with the hospital."

The board's action came after its hospitals and retirement centers committee had made a study of Baptist operation of hospitals in Oklahoma and brought the recommendation for divestiture.

Oklahoma Baptists also operate hospitals in Enid, Miami, and Grove. The Baptist directors also voted that its hospitals committee consider carefully alternatives to the convention's ownership and operation of these three hospitals. The committee will report at the directors next meeting in May.

Joe L. Ingram, state convention executive director-treasurer, told the board members that the procedures for turning the Oklahoma City hospital over to the new corporation may require four to five months. Procedure will include the re-issuing of some \$30 million in bonds which have been issued to finance the hospital. The bonding transaction will relieve the Oklahoma Baptists of all indebtedness, obligations and law suite related to the hospital operation in Oklahoma City.

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The state Baptist convention will support only the chaplaincy program at the hospital, and the Oklahoma Baptist University School of Nursing will continue its relationship with the Baptist Medical Center. Many of the laymen on the new corporation are prominent Oklahoma City businessmen who have been serving on the hospital's governing board.

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Supreme Court Closer To
Decision on Tenn. Pastor

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--Justices of the U. S. Supreme Court are one step closer to deciding a major church-state case after hearing oral arguments in the case of a Baptist minister from Tennessee who was sued after running for the state constitutional convention.

The high court was asked by the attorney for Paul A. McDaniel, pastor of the Second Missionary Baptist Church in Chattanooga, to strike down a provision in the Tennessee state constitution dating to 1796 which declares that "no minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination whatever shall be eligible to a seat in either house of the legislature."

Tennessee's constitutional prohibition, which had not been challenged in court until this year, declares that ministers and priests should be excluded from public office because they "are by their profession, dedicated to God and the care of souls, and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their functions."

McDaniel ran for a seat from the 29th House District in Tennessee's election for a special constitutional convention. In a four-way race, he won easily but was challenged in Hamilton County chancery court by Selma Cash Paty, an opponent who ran second to McDaniel. That court upheld his election but on appeal the Tennessee Supreme Court ruled for Paty.

McDaniel was granted his seat, however, when Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart stayed the Tennessee ruling until the Supreme Court could decide the case.

In challenging the decision of Tennessee's high court, McDaniel's attorney, Frederic S. Leclerco of Knoxville, argued that the state prohibition was enacted at a time in American history when anti-clericalism was prevalent. It was not the intention of the founding fathers, he contended, to exclude the clergy from holding office.

Leclerco cited not only the First Amendment's guarantee to free exercise of religion, but stated that a "respectable argument" could be made for his client from Article VI of the federal Constitution, which states that "no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States."

McDaniel's free exercise argument, summed up in a written brief submitted this summer, says that Tennessee "exact[s] a cruel penalty--it relegates Rev. McDaniel and other ministers to the level of second class citizenship."

An assistant attorney general of Tennessee, Kenneth R. Herrell of Nashville, argued before the high court that the state's interest in the law is the separation of church and state. He cited the First Amendment's clause forbidding the establishment of religion as sufficient foundation for Tennessee's prohibition against clergy in public office.

Justice John Paul Stevens interrupted Herrell at one point to ask if the state's absolute conception of separation of church and state could be carried to the theoretical extreme of denying to all regular church-goers access to public office. Herrell responded that the state would have a legitimate interest in such a provision.

At another point in Herrell's presentation, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger asked if Tennessee's prison chaplains are paid by the state and Herrell again answered in the affirmative.

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Burger also posed the question if all members of denominations which make every adherent a minister automatically would thereby be excluded. Herrell once more answered, "Yes."

In a conversation with Baptist Press after the hearing, McDaniel said the state has no compelling interest in forbidding him and other members of the clergy from holding office. He said the state's argument to the Tennessee Supreme Court that to allow clergy to hold office would give them disproportionate influence because of the people under their spiritual care is not valid. He indicated that he functioned as any other member of the Constitutional Convention.

The justices will now take the case under advisement, with no decision likely until sometime after the first of the year. Because of the illness of Justice Harry A. Blackmun, the remaining eight justices will decide the case.

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Court Rules Out Payment
To N. Y. Parochial School

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12/8/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--Nonpublic schools are not entitled to reimbursement for expenses incurred under state regulations which have been ruled unconstitutional, the U. S. Supreme Court held here.

In a 6-3 decision, the high court dismissed the claim of Cathedral Academy of New York City, a Roman Catholic parochial school, which for five years has sought reimbursement for state-mandated expenses during the 1971-72 school year.

A 1970 New York law authorized payment to parochial schools for a number of educational services, including testing, maintenance of enrollment and health records, and personnel qualification records.

The Supreme Court declared the New York law unconstitutional, however, in the spring of 1972. In response to the 1972 decision, the New York state legislature enacted a new law authorizing reimbursement to nonpublic schools for expenses incurred in anticipation of state funds. This second law, after lengthy proceedings in lower courts, has now been declared similarly unconstitutional.

Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, who wrote the majority opinion, said that because the purpose of the second New York law was identical to the first, "It is for the identical reasons invalid."

Stewart countered an argument by Cathedral Academy that the once-only payment called for under the second New York law would not excessively involve government in the affairs of a church. "The prospect of church and state litigating in court about what do s or does not have religious meaning touches the very core of the constitutional guarantee against religious establishment, and it cannot be dismissed by saying it will happen only once," Stewart said.

To have ruled in the school's favor, Stewart declared, "would mean that every such unconstitutional statute, like every dog, gets one bite."

The New York law, Stewart concluded, would "of necessity either have the primary effect of aiding religion... (or) result in excessive state involvement in religious affairs."

Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and Justice William H. Rehnquist dissented in a brief statement, saying that a 1973 decision permitting a one-time reimbursement payment to Pennsylvania private schools should govern the present case.

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Justice Byron R. White, who has consistently voted to uphold nonpublic school aid plans, also dissented, saying that the high court majority "continues to misconstrue the First Amendment in a manner that discriminates against religion and is contrary to the fundamental educational needs of the country."

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Foundation Reports
Record Growth

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foundation experienced record growth during 1977, pushing total assets to over \$20 million for the first time, according to reports given at the annual meeting here.

Executive Secretary-Treasurer Hollis Johnson III announced that the foundation's total assets increased \$3,610,346 to \$21,089,025, the largest single year dollar increase in the history of the foundation. The percentage increase of 20.7 percent was not the largest ever.

The foundation also received the largest single gift in its history with income designated to the Southern Baptist national Cooperative Program. An anonymous donor invested \$1,836,750 with the foundation by establishing two trusts. The donor presented an outright gift of \$651,750 and established a charitable annuity of \$1,185,000 over which he will maintain control of the principal.

Eighty-five percent of the income from both trusts is designated for the operating budget of the Cooperative Program. The other 15 percent will be distributed to other Christian organizations. Johnson said the gift has already earned over \$100,000.

Johnson and administrative assistant Christine Bess were reelected for 1978. Other foundation officers reelected to one-year terms were G. Frank Cole Jr., president and chairman of the executive committee; J. Thomas Bryan, vice president; William E. Crook, recording secretary.

Income produced from the foundation assets in 1977 was \$1,140,149, an increase of \$116,671 over 1976, again a new high.

Johnson, who just completed his first year as chief operating officer of the foundation, said 1977 was a "rewarding year" for him. His figures show operating expenses have increased an average of 7.7 percent annually over the past 10 years, while the book value of assets has increased 9.3 percent annually.

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O'Hair Files 'In God We Trust' Suit, Not FCC Petition By Bary Garrett and Stan Hasteley

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AUSTIN, Tex. (BP)--Madalyn Murray O'Hair, the famed atheist, continues to make waves among certain segments of the nation's religious community. Some of the waves are caused by facts, but others are the result of false rumors repeated so often that they give the appearance of truth.

It is a fact, however, that Mrs. O'Hair has filed a lawsuit to remove the motto "In God We Trust" from U. S. coins and currency. All of the rumors concerning her connection with petition RM 2493 to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) are false.

The "In God We Trust" suit was filed by O'Hair on Sept. 1, 1977, but has gone largely unreported. No date has been set for oral arguments in the case, according to a spokesperson for the U. S. District Court for the Western District of Texas here.

The case, O'Hair et al v. Blumenthal and Conlon, was filed after O'Hair threatened to sue the federal government over the motto in a speech last summer at the dedication of her atheist center here. Respondents are W. Michael Blumenthal, U. S. secretary of the Treasury, and James Conlon, director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

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The motto is the only issue at stake, according to the district court source. The action is totally unrelated to false rumors that have circulated for the past two and one-half years that O'Hair had filed a petition with the FCC to have religious broadcasting removed from the airwaves.

A much more limited petition was filed in 1974 by two California men with no ties to O'Hair asking the FCC to limit the granting of permits to licensees who would engage in exclusively religious radio and television broadcasting. That petition, RM 2493, was unanimously rejected by the FCC commissioners on August 1, 1975.

In spite of the action, however, numerous broadcasters have continued to identify O'Hair as the petitioner. As a result, yet another new wave of protests from ill-informed people has flooded the FCC in recent weeks.

Another incorrect version of RM 2493 is that it is a bill in Congress to eliminate religious broadcasting. This rumor is as false as the rumors about Mrs. O'Hair and the FCC.

Yet another myth subscribed to by many church people and some journalists is that the Texas atheist was responsible for the Supreme Court decisions on prayer in schools. The facts are as follows.

Mrs. O'Hair was not connected in any way with the landmark 1962 decision in the New York case in which the court said that a government written and approved prayer, required by government to be recited by school children, is unconstitutional.

She was a party in an auxiliary case in 1963 when the court ruled that governmentally required religious devotions for school children, such as Bible reading and/or recitation of the Lord's Prayer, violate the Constitution.

The legal suit over the motto "In God we Trust" is being followed closely by the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, D. C., which will report new developments in the case as they occur.

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Edgemon Spotlights
Practical Training

By Jim Lowry

Baptist Press
12/8/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--Training Christians in practical ministries for use in everyday situations topped a list of concerns voiced by the newly-elected Southern Baptist church training director at the annual meeting of state Baptist convention church training secretaries here.

This training, especially for new Christians, said Roy T. Edgemon, not only would help Southern Baptists share their faith on a day-by-day basis, but would directly apply to the training needs for volunteers in the new Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Mission Service Corps.

Edgemon, who will serve as director of the church training department of the SBC Sunday School Board, said Southern Baptist agencies "will be cooperating more now than ever before" in implementing the Mission Service Corps and meeting SBC goals of evangelizing the nation and the world.

According to Edgemon, America is experiencing a spiritual awakening that will require discipleship training of laymen and ministers in sharing their faith.

Edgemon said that discipleship, based on the biblical "Great Commission" to take the gospel into all the world, begins with salvation but must be followed by baptism, instruction in living the Christ-like life, and a demonstration of the importance of Bible study, prayer and a daily commitment.

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"We live in a day when the laity realize that they are ministers," Edgemon said, "and a time when they want to use their talents. "These people must be trained in practical ministries and specific skills," he continued.

"In church training, our imperative is to recognize the spiritual awakening, and teach evangelism with integrity, especially with new converts," Edgemon said.

"Church training must be a place where people can receive help in their commitment to grow as disciples and discover their gifts. We must teach Baptists doctrine, history, polity and organization," he concluded, "so they can be in the know about what God is doing in the Southern Baptist Convention."

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Bi-Vocational Pastor: A
Key to SBC Growth

By Judy Touchton

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12/8/77

ATLANTA (BP)--The bi-vocational pastor--the tent-making preacher who works secularly to make a living--is the backbone of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), says James Nelson of the Home Mission Board.

Some 9,415 bi-vocational pastors exist in the denomination, according to the 1976 Uniform Church Letters compiled by the SBC Sunday School Board. Of the 35,073 churches supplying letters 27 percent said their pastor was employed secularly in addition to serving their church.

Lyle Schaller, a church growth specialist, predicts that by 1985 half of the ministers in the country will be bi-vocational.

Although some have challenged the use of the term "bi-vocational," Nelson says, "you have to have some kind of term and this seems to have caught on. Everyone seems to be talking about the bi-vocational pastor."

Emmanuel McCall, director of the Home Mission Board's department of cooperative ministries with National (black) Baptists, says, "I would say that at least 70 percent of our black pastors would be considered bi-vocational." Oscar Romo, director of the board's language missions department, says, "Much of our work has been developed by the bi-vocational pastor."

Raymond Rigdon of the SBC Seminary Extension Department insists bi-vocational pastors represent "one of the greatest potential resources in the denomination" as does SBC President Jimmy Allen. However, many SBC leaders see him strictly as a liability.

Some seminary professors refuse to suggest to their classes that bi-vocational ministry is a life option. The biggest single problem facing the bi-vocational minister is denomination awareness, including seminary awareness," Nelson says.

Bill Slagle of the board's church extension department has encountered some opposition to the bi-vocational option. "The idea is not very attractive to some people. Professors and students have the feeling--perhaps rightly so--that after they've spent three years getting a degree they don't want to make their own living.

"But anytime I look at a list of approvals for Church Pastoral Aid (a salary supplement for mission congregations to allow a full-time pastor) the backgrounds of the people we approve are interesting. Within just about a year we will run the gamut of possibility... engineers, storekeepers. As I look at these people I think, 'If they could be encouraged to spend another two years making their own living after they graduate, they could build churches.'"

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With Church Pastoral Aid the department funds approximately 600 pastors. "But we have 6,000 places where we need to start work," Slagle says. "It's just a matter of extending our resources."

The church extension department is working on a pilot project with the Kansas-Nebraska and the Northern Plains Baptist Conventions in which each is selecting five places where they could start churches with bi-vocational pastors; then Slagle helps the convention locate prospective pastors.

Slagle has trouble finding the bi-vocational pastors, however. "We don't have the romanticism that goes with some mission opportunities. Anyway you look at it, it's a difficult thing--to pastor a church and make your own living. They're not going to be running over us for places."

Nelson proposed a similar project for SBC's Bold Mission Thrust plan to evangelize the nation, involving five older conventions and cooperation with five newer conventions.

He believes the SBC is entering another expansion era. "The churches are going to be started and Southern Baptist denominational agencies cannot support them. There are going to be that many! So there's only one answer and that's the bi-vocational pastor."

Whatever the advantages or disadvantages, Southern Baptists must realize bi-vocational ministry is not a new phenomenon, a short-time trend, a changing fad, says Nelson. "Our expansion in past years, was almost totally dependent on bi-vocational pastors," Nelson emphasizes.

Bob Dale, formerly with the Sunday School Board's church administration department and now professor at Southeastern Baptist Seminary in Wake Forest, N. C., says the Sunday School Board is concerned about the bi-vocational pastor "simply because we are aware that there's a whole segment of our smaller churches that will likely always be served by bi-vocational people and we want to relate to them and understand them."

The church administration department recently completed a major research project to build a profile of the bi-vocational pastor. The project--in the last phases of analysis--will be the "most extensive profile of the bi-vocational minister that has existed to this point in our denomination," says Dale.

Although the statistics are not yet completely interpreted Dale says they show there are more well-trained bi-vocational pastors than first thought.

Nelson insists, "The danger is to equate the bi-vocational pastor with the educationally deprived. Rigdon adds: "It's a real stereotyping to assume that the bi-vocational pastor and the educationally-disadvantaged pastor are synonymous. Although most bi-vocational pastors do not have seminary training, many do."

Nelson hosted the first national consultation with bi-vocational ministers in September. From that consultation and from personal contacts some limitations on the ministry of bi-vocational ministers were identified.

The overriding reason for ineffective bi-vocational ministers, for example, is the lack of time for planning, learning, study, visiting and for family, the consultation showed.

The denomination could most help bi-vocational ministers, the consultation also reported, by holding meetings--associational, state and national--on weekends or at night when most bi-vocational pastors can be away from jobs.

One bi-vocational pastor summarized his feelings at another conference: "A secularly working minister in a sense is committing both physical and spiritual suicide because of too much work and pressure and too little time for recreation, prayer, Bible study and ministerial duties."

Until recently the convention ignored the bi-vocational, says Nelson. Ken Carter, the Home Mission Board's director of small church and revival evangelism, muses, "I really think that for a while we, as a convention, kind of got the 'big church-itis.' If we're going to do something, we've got to consider the 23,000 small churches, many of which have bi-vocational pastors."

Glenn Fields, associational director of missions in western Montana, has several bi-vocational ministers in his area. He says, "There might still be a little more romance left in the pioneer situation. And maybe the whole idea of this bi-vocational ministry will stir the pioneer spirit...cause a replay, a re-enactment of the pioneer church-building days."

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Women Gain Partial Victory
In Battle For Work Rights

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12/8/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--Companies may not penalize women returning from mandatory pregnancy leave by denying them seniority rights, the U. S. Supreme Court ruled here.

At the same time, the court ruled, employers are under no legal obligation to pay sick leave to women while they are temporarily removed from the work force to give birth.

The high court's unanimous decision sought to clarify the extent of legal rights of pregnant women under the Civil Rights Act, one year after ruling that pregnant women are not entitled to disability benefits during maternity leave. That decision, involving the General Electric Co. (GE), was condemned by leaders in the women's movement as a blow against their objective of equality between the sexes.

Both the GE case and the present one, involving pregnancy leave policies at the Nashville (Tenn.) Gas Co., have to do with application of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, a portion of which reads that an employer may not "limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee because of ...sex."

The Nashville case involved Nora D. Satty, a clerk in the customer accounting department at Nashville Gas Co. Although she had accumulated almost four years' seniority when she began her maternity leave, company policy stripped her of seniority benefits when she returned to work 10 weeks after going out on maternity leave.

In addition, Satty discovered upon her return that her old position had been eliminated and that the best the company would offer her was a temporary job at a lower salary than she had earned previously. While holding the temporary job, she unsuccessfully applied for three permanent positions, all of which were awarded to employees who had begun working for Nashville Gas Co. after Satty's maternity leave began.

The high court ruled that such a policy of discriminating against employees forced to take maternity leave and subsequently denied seniority rights violates the law.

Justice William H. Rehnquist, who wrote the court's opinion, said that the company policy both deprived affected employees of employment opportunities and adversely affected their status as employees in violation of the provisions of Title VII. The policy, Rehnquist continued, "imposed on women a substantial burden that men need not suffer."

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