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460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

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Retirement Just Step
To Next Job for NaylorBy Donald S. Hepburn
For Baptist Press

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The long Texas summer was nearing its end when the daily Santa Fe train pulled into the Fort Worth depot. A tall, lanky youth of 19 stepped from the aging pullman. His long anticipated journey to Fort Worth had become a reality.

Surveying the sprawling north central Texas town, he was impressed. The bustling city was a far cry from Ada, Okla., the community of 12,000 from which he'd come.

A trolley takes him to "The Hill" south of town. Standing out on that bald prairie surrounded by Johnson grass, brown from summer's heat, he is greeted by three plain but imposing structures. At long last, Robert Ernest Naylor had arrived at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to prepare for ministry.

That day in August, 1928, marked the beginning of a relationship between the man and institution which would flourish over the next 50 years. So unique would the relationship be, that each would become the personification of the other.

Naylor, who retires in July as president of the world's largest theological seminary, traveled through Oklahoma Indian Territory as a child with his preacher father. But he planned a career in business. He was a senior at East Central State College of Oklahoma when he felt God was "calling him into the ministry."

He had his first pastorate at a small church in his home town area by his second year in the seminary. "It was 180 miles by the Frisco Railroad from Fort Worth to Ada," Naylor says. "I was working my way through school at J. C. Penney and Co. and didn't get off until about 10 p.m. Saturday night.

"I would catch the 11 p.m. train to Ada, sleep all the way, and arrive about 5 a.m. I preached first in Ada, then made the rounds to three or four congregations, and after the last evening service caught the 3 a.m. train back to Fort Worth."

It was also during his second year in the seminary that Naylor met a young coed from Virginia. Goldia Dalton was studying for the diploma in religious education. The romance grew and on August 29, 1930, they were married.

After graduating with the master of theology degree in 1932, Naylor was prepared for his task of ministry. "I had been prepared to go out into the world with a ministry that God would give me. Place had no significant identity. Anywhere would describe that for me," he says.

That "anywhere" became Arkansas. During the next 13 years he served as pastor of the First Baptist Churches of Nashville, Malvern, and Arkadelphia.

During these years the Naylor's became parents of three children.

From Arkansas, the Naylor's went to Enid, Okla., where he served as pastor of the First Baptist Church. In 1947 he was called to the First Baptist Church of Columbia, S.C. There he served until 1952, when the congregation of Fort Worth's Travis Avenue Baptist Church sought him to return to Fort Worth and serve as pastor.

Although only graduated from the seminary nine years earlier, Naylor had been elected in 1941 to the seminary's board of trustees. By 1955 he had chaired several trustee committees and had been elected board chairman. When seminary President J. Howard Williams died

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in 1958, the board of trustees named Naylor acting president; then president.

The presidency of a seminary was not a job which Naylor would have sought. "I believe God chose me, and I must do the best I can," he would often remark. To the uninitiated, his comments would be somewhat disarming. But, they reflected a deep sense of humility which the man held for his appointment.

"Christian commitment and calling, service, what we refer to as the will of God in the individual life, has this quality (humility)," he says. "There isn't any job that we would call a Kingdom job. The bigness of it has very little to do with it. As far as I am concerned, it could have been president of the whole wide world or just two of the continents, and I would have felt no different.

"Or, it could have been pastor of one of the smaller churches here in Fort Worth, and I would have felt no different. It's the same sense of privilege, of unworthiness, and of divine choice before which any man ought to remain humble but a little bit in awe, never presuming to understand why."

When Naylor became president of Southwestern in 1958, there were 2,395 students. Twenty years later, there are over 4,100 students.

Careful to claim no personal credit for the growth, he says "An institution that is what it ought to be has its growth and has its response. And our growth represents the approval of our people." Naylor feels an institution like Southwestern "changes the kind of world in which we live."

"The dynamic to which it is geared flows in the bloodstream of a world's life," he says. "Just as much as a transfusion changes the course of a human body, it changes the course of world history."

Considering physical growth, the seminary's more than two hundred acres have been settled with over 500 married student housing units, a medical center, a student center, a children's center, and a physical fitness center now under construction.

The operating budget has grown from \$1.4 million to over \$6.4 million, always on the basis of solvency. Endowment funds are up from \$3.7 million to the present \$12 million. Net assets total \$35 million.

Although he will not pinpoint his accomplishments, Naylor does have a definite idea of how he would like his administration to be evaluated.

He would, "like for the years to be measured in terms of my original commitment to the institution, to my own commitment to God. I would like for it to be said, in the context of all that has taken place, simply, that he was true to the basic principles of the institution and to his own personal integrity as a man called of God to a task. If the final verdict in it is faithfulness, then I will be more than satisfied that it had been adequately measured."

Naylor's attitude reflects an expression which he has often quoted to his students. That is, "No man is greater than the institution."

Expression of such an attitude helps one to understand this complex, yet private man-- particularly when he talks about his pending retirement from the seminary presidency.

"The idea of relinquishing or turning loose, or turning away or stepping aside are not actually phrases with me," he says. "I want it to represent as having no claim to the enterprise."

Rather, he would prefer his retirement to have, "a sense of stepping into the next job. Just like I came to the seminary, from a job that was enough for any man in life. I have no sense of changing that flow of life at all."

Entertainer Bryant Asked
To Accept SBC Nomination

By Norman Jameson

MIAMI (BP)--Anita Bryant has been asked to accept a nomination for a vice presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention when it meets in annual session in Atlanta June 13-15, but she hasn't decided whether or not to accept.

Miss Bryant and her husband Bob Green agreed in separate telephone interviews that it would be an "honor" for the entertainer to be nominated. But she said that since she knows little about the position and doesn't want to become part of anything she can't be active in, she could not say whether she would accept a nomination.

Miss Bryant, a Southern Baptist, will address the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference June 11 during an auxiliary meeting preceding the annual SBC meeting in Atlanta. Organized protest had been announced by the newly formed Atlanta Human Rights Coalition, established by the Atlanta Gay Rights Alliance, the American Civil Liberties Union, socialist groups, Unitarian ministers, some rabbis and others in Atlanta.

The request to accept a nomination for vice president came "many weeks ago" according to Green, who manages his wife's career and appearances. He said he couldn't remember who made the request. SBC leadership positions are elective and traditionally "candidates" are unannounced. The SBC has two vice presidential posts.

"Whether it (a nomination) will happen or not, I don't know," Miss Bryant said. "I don't worry about those things. I would be very honored, but whether it will happen, I'll just have to wait and see."

Discussing the gay demonstrations, Green said the groups are playing "word games" by changing the focus from gay rights to human rights and that "whatever is being planned has happened in every city in the United States where we've been in the last year and a half." He said he sees the same signs, same faces and hears the same slogans everywhere, even in Canada.

Miss Bryant said she hoped her appearance at the conference will have a "positive effect" on the tone of the convention.

"People will see life as it really is," she said. "They will see the harassment we've had to endure. If these (pastors) are strong leaders and the men of God they're supposed to be, I would think that it would make them all the more determined to stand up for God and his righteousness. And wanting to preach the pure word, they will address themselves to these kinds of issues, to homosexuality or whatever it might be, to get their people to repent. Even Jesus himself said, 'I didn't come to bring peace, I came to bring a sword.'"

Miss Bryant, who has earned a reputation she dislikes as a campaigner against homosexuals' rights, has just completed the legal work necessary to form Anita Bryant Ministries as a non-profit, tax free enterprise.

Anita Bryant Ministries' main thrust will be to establish and operate counseling and live-in centers that would "offer hope" to homosexuals and runaway teenagers who often must resort to prostitution to live.

"The church has been remiss in not really addressing itself to these kinds of individuals," Miss Bryant said, "because a lot of ministers don't really understand how they get that way in the first place."

The centers, to be set up first in Miami, Wichita and St. Paul where homosexual rights ordinances have been repealed, will offer education to church leaders, she said, and be a "loving gesture to the community." Miss Bryant feels she would be a "hypocrite" if she went into the cities condemning a lifestyle without offering an alternative.

"If you really love someone you want to tell them the truth so that they can repent of their sins and come out of that lifestyle," she said. "But they have to want to do it."

Miss Bryant, who prefers to be identified as simply a "pro-family mother" rather than an "anti-homosexual rights campaigner," says the "fishbowl" she's lived in since the first homosexual ordinance repeal in Dade County, Florida, has put her under immense pressure.

"You can't win no matter what you say," she said. "You're going to have one side mad at you or everybody. So I've stopped being concerned with the criticism of men. I'm concerned with the criticism of God and that's the only way I can handle it."

Her efforts have also earned her numerous death threats and created the need for security wherever she travels. She says she welcomes the security and takes "great precautions" but is not afraid for her life "because my hope is in eternity and the Lord Jesus Christ is my peace and joy."

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Travelers Warned
Of Georgia Stations

Baptist Press
5/22/78

ATLANTA (BP)--Rip-off artists in service stations along Georgia's Interstate 75 effectively fleece unsuspecting motorists--mostly vacationers--according to a recent report by the New York Times News Service.

Baptists using that route to attend the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta, June 13-15, have been warned to beware of dishonest stations. Timothy Ryles, administrator of Georgia's Office of Consumer Affairs, said complaints from motorists indicated that up to one-fifth of the 500 service stations along the route prey on unsuspecting tourists.

The New York Times report listed some exotic swindles such as : --Dropping Alka Seltzer tablets into the battery which causes a minor explosion, smoke and foam--clear evidence of the need for a new battery.

--An attendant may slice a tire, then spray water on it to show a leak.

--Barbecue sauce mixed with alcohol, then sprayed on the alternator creates a cloud of smoke and the smell of electrical disaster.

--With the car on the service rack, the attendant squirts oil under the shock absorbers, giving the appearance of a dangerous leak, and then issues a pitch for new shocks all around.

Convention participants are advised to be doubly sure their vehicles are in proper running order before setting out for Atlanta.

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