



## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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### Nashville Church Avoids Bomb Blast

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--First Baptist Church, Nashville, narrowly avoided destruction when police disarmed a 300-400 pound bomb just 20 minutes before it would have exploded in the neighborhood of the large downtown Southern Baptist church.

"The bomb would have caused tremendous damage," said assistant police chief Paul Uselton. "It certainly would have leveled all the buildings in that immediate area, including the Trailways Bus Depot...and the First Baptist Church across the street at Seventh and Broadway."

The bomb, made up of dynamite and plastic explosives and a timing device, was found in a car parked beneath the Classic Cat II, a night club at Sixth and Broadway, which features exotic dancers.

Jimmy Dunn, minister of education and administration at First Baptist Church, said the staff became aware that police were handling a bomb scare in the neighborhood but that no one contacted the church to suggest evacuation. The staff remained on the job. H. Franklin Paschall, a former Southern Baptist Convention president, is pastor.

Describing the bomb as the "largest ever found and disarmed by the Metro Nashville bomb squad," police said it was discovered because of the curiosity of the operator of a liquor store adjacent to the Classic Cat. She noticed that the car, later identified as a stolen car, had been parked there all day.

When a liquor store customer investigated at her request, he found it unlocked and full of wired explosives. Police arrived quickly, disarming the bomb about 20 minutes before it would have exploded at 3:15 p.m., Thursday, Aug. 30.

The Classic Cat II, which police have in the past identified as a gathering place for prostitutes, was heavily damaged by fire a week earlier and was closed for repairs. Police have speculated a competitor is trying to run the night spot completely out of business.

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Religion Bill in India  
Arouses Strong Protests

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BANGALORE, India (BP)--A bill currently before India's lower house of Parliament would restrict Christian witness if passed, but the new government has stated the bill will not be accepted.

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The Freedom of Religion Bill, introduced by O. P. Tyagi, would prevent "conversion by force," which Dr. Rebekah A. Naylor, Southern Baptist missionary press representative, said could include presentation of God's judgment and the result of sin.

Social ministries, including hospitals such as the one operated by Southern Baptists in Bangalore, India, could be suspected of using physical ministry to force conversion, added Dr. Naylor, a missionary physician.

In introducing the bill, Tyagi said it was to protect all religious minorities in India, including Christians.

Presentation of the bill resulted in massive demonstrations all over India by Christian groups, Dr. Naylor said. "Often the Christians were joined by other minorities such as Muslims in the protests."

The new Janata (secular) government has categorically stated that the bill will not be accepted, Dr. Naylor said. Tyagi is a member of the Janata party.

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Radio-TV Commission  
Adds Broadcast Veteran

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8/31/79

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Charles E. (Chuck) Hall, a veteran broadcaster, has been named manager of the newly developed broadcast services department of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

The broadcast services department will handle work done by the former special projects department.

Staff members ascertain and help churches, associations, state conventions and agencies with media needs. They produce spot announcements and special programming for radio and television, offer professional advice for improving the broadcast of worship services, conduct full statewide campaigns involving all aspects of the communications media, and provide a liaison with local broadcast stations and Southern Baptist churches.

"In addition to the skills already employed by members of the new broadcast services department, we wanted to add another degree of television expertise to the department to meet the needs of local churches with quality efforts," said Robert B. Taylor Jr., head of the commission's broadcast division. Hall and the broadcast department will report to Taylor.

"Hall has had extensive background in television production and direction," Taylor said. "He will not only produce but he will train our present producers in even more effective methods of proclamation."

Recipient of several prestigious broadcast awards, Hall has worked for 21 years at WHAS-TV, Louisville, Ky., where he was one of two senior producer-directors. He has also been a writer and producer at WLWT-TV, Cincinnati, and WSAZ-TV, Huntington, W. Va.

For the past 13 years he has had primary responsibility at WHAS-TV for live coverage of many major sporting events, production of promotional and public service announcements, and a telethon, "Crusade for Children," to benefit handicapped children. The telethon, seen throughout Kentucky and southern Indiana, has raised more than \$1 million in each of the

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last three years, said Taylor, former top executive at WHAS.

W. C. Woody, who headed the former special projects department, will continue to handle specific assignments in the broadcast services department as the special projects supervisor.

In this capacity, Woody will remain in charge of the commission's Time Rite agency, which buys advertising time when needed, and will also be responsible for projecting, planning and developing media programs and campaigns with other denominational agencies and associations. His responsibilities will also include developing satellite usage plans as they relate to broadcast applications and the broadcast services department.

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#### Volunteer Teams Alerted About Needs in Dominica

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Volunteer teams in 28 states were alerted to the possible need for relief efforts in Dominica as a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board official left to survey damage on the island in wake of Hurricane David, the most destructive tropical storm in the Caribbean this season.

John R. Cheyne, the board's associate consultant for relief ministries, planned to arrive in Dominica September 1 to survey damages and report urgent needs and long-range relief possibilities.

The Foreign Mission Board will make \$10,000 available for emergency relief needs in Dominica, and the Baptist World Alliance will provide another \$5,000. Cheyne planned to survey any other damage that the hurricane might cause in the Dominican Republic or Haiti.

Rebuilding will be a major part of relief efforts, according to Cheyne, but the board's general relief fund, which finances all non-food-related relief programs, is nearly depleted.

State Baptist Men's organizations have been told that volunteer relief teams might be needed. "We already know electrical engineers are urgently needed to restore the island's electric power which was wiped out by David," Cheyne said.

News reports indicate nearly 300 homes in the capital city of Roseau were destroyed and approximately 85 percent of the structures on the island were flattened.

Nine Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers are stationed on Dominica. Although phone lines are down and no direct word has been received from them since the storm passed, advance word indicated they were prepared for the hurricane and were taking shelter in sturdy buildings.

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## Baptist Group Joins Battle Over Methodist Liability

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review a California court decision holding that the United Methodist Church may be held liable in lawsuits filed against a Methodist-related group of bankrupt retirement homes.

The Baptist agency, in a legal brief submitted to the high court August 31, accused the California Court of Appeal of endangering "religious denominations as they now exist" by allowing 162 former residents of Pacific Homes to sue not only the retirement facilities themselves but their sponsoring denomination as well. The suits total \$366 million.

United Methodist Church theologians and historians testified in the California court that their church polity is connectional, rather than strictly hierarchical. But the court of appeals ruled last March that the UMC is a hierarchical church.

Nearly a year earlier, a lower California court had held that the UMC is no more than a spiritual confederation and not a jural entity that could be sued under California state law. That court warned that allowing the retirement home residents to sue the church "would effectively destroy Methodism in this country" and "would have a chilling effect on all churches and religious movements by inhibiting the free association of persons of similar religious beliefs."

The Baptist Joint Committee brief, written by research director John W. Baker, argued that the diversity of church polity among denominations requires courts to refrain from placing them into the categories of "hierarchical" or "independent." Various shades between the two extremes, including "quasi-hierarchical," "modified hierarchical," "connectional," and "cooperating congregational" churches, must be acknowledged, the argument continued.

The brief also maintained that the California Court of Appeal disregarded state law which holds that in matters of church polity or discipline "the state, and its courts, have no legitimate concern or jurisdiction."

The Baptist brief underscored that point by declaring that "because ecclesiology is based on theological beliefs and understandings, the state is not a competent definer or interpreter of the nature and pattern of religious intraorganizational relationships."

Without question, however, the issue in the California case which most concerns denominational officials of all faiths has to do with the legal obligations of agencies and institutions bearing their names. The Baptist Joint Committee brief declares that the California decision, if allowed to stand, "would unconstitutionally mandate the demise of religious denominations as they now exist."

The Baptist agency also stated that it finds "offensive" the notion that because various churches and institutions share the same name, any one of them may be legally accountable for the others. Noting that most Baptist churches have chosen to cooperate for missionary, evangelistic, and social purposes, the brief warns that the California court position would even make local congregations liable for the actions of any other local church.

The high court will take the Baptist brief under advisement along with those of other groups urging the justices to accept the case for full argument and decision.