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March 11, 1980

80-40

Status of Two Hospitals

Kept Under FMB Review

By Susan Cahen

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A hospital evaluation team has commended Southern Baptist hospitals in the Middle East and South Asia for improvements made in the last two years but urged that the status of two of the hospitals be kept under review.

The team also recommended that the overseas division of the Foreign Mission Board make a careful study of the future of health care ministries overseas because of the ever-increasing need for financial subsidies to hospitals and the acute shortage of medical and paramedical personnel.

J.D. Hughey, secretary for Europe and the Middle East, reported the team's findings to the Foreign Mission Board during its March meeting. The team, which included Hughey, made its initial survey trip in October 1977 and its follow-up evaluation in late 1979.

The hospital in Ajloun, Jordan, will continue as a 30-bed primary care unit subject to review, Hughey said. Efforts will be made to continue at the Gaza hospital, he added, but an improved financial picture is needed at both institutions for them to continue.

Although medical ministries in Yemen and India were also included in the survey, the most dramatic changes were recommended for the Ajloun and Gaza hospitals. At Ajloun the hospital reduced the number of beds from 50 to 30 and closed its school of nursing after the 1977 survey. The Gaza hospital underwent major renovations to change its posture from mostly surgical to general.

The two most pressing problems facing the hospitals are money and personnel, Hughey said. Hospital administrators and chaplains are needed in Jordan and Yemen. Nurses are needed everywhere, he said, but notably in Yemen where national nurses are not available.

The evaluation team called attention to the need for ever-increasing subsidies, Hughey said, and pointed out that hospitals must seek to generate local income. Otherwise, the team said, alternate forms of needed medical ministries, such as community health or service in non-Baptist institutions, must be sought.

The Ajloun hospital, which reduced its subsidy requirements in 1979, had to have more money in 1980 and its administrator estimates the hospital will require a 15 percent annual increase just to keep the hospital going.

The high subsidy to the Gaza hospital was maintained in 1979 and increased \$10,000 in 1980. The evaluation team recommended that efforts be made to attain a financially feasible general hospital. One of the main reasons for continuing the hospital, Hughey explained, is to provide practice opportunities for students in its school of health sciences (mostly nursing).

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The hospital in Jibla, Yemen, Hughey said, is rather primitive by American standards but is probably the best in Yemen. Although it is better supplied with doctors than it has been at any other time in its 12-year history, it needs a hospital administrator, several career nurses, a chaplain, a laboratory technologist and other support personnel.

The evaluation team commended the Jibla hospital staff for carrying a heavy load but encouraged them to upgrade, a necessity as medical care progresses in Yemen. Hughey noted that the hospital building there will probably need to be replaced in 10 years and questioned whether capital funds would be available when the time comes.

On the initial survey trip, Hughey said, the team urged each hospital to have a chaplain or chaplains (missionary and national) to provide leadership in spiritual functions. Recently national chaplains have been employed in Ajloun and Gaza.

The team also suggested that the hospital improve staff relationships; arrange times for continuing Bible study, evangelistic instruction and discipleship classes; and emphasize personal evangelism.

"The hospitals have made possible a Christian witness by Baptists in areas where no other way was likely to be found," Hughey said. He added that the three hospitals in Middle East countries serve Muslim populations that are highly resistant to Christianity.

"Christianity is made attractive by our medical work," Hughey continued. "Our missionaries are 'doing the gospel' and are seizing many opportunities for verbalizing it. Some people are accepting Christ. Churches have been established in Jordan and Gaza."

No church has been established in Yemen, Hughey said, but he is confident that before the end of the century there will be Christian churches scattered across that land. Right now, he added, the only Christian service in Arabic in the entire country is the one held at the hospital on Sunday evenings.

Hughey did not comment on the team's recommendations for the hospital in Bangalore, India, since it is no longer under his administrative jurisdiction. But, Dr. Franklin T. Fowler, another team member and medical consultant for the board, said there were few major changes recommended for that hospital and the main comments were very favorable.

Mostly the proposed changes were in the areas of administrative detail and indigenous growth, Dr. Fowler said. The Bangalore hospital is not in a strong Muslim area like the other institutions.

"This is a much stronger hospital where potentials are greater both in medical care delivery and spiritual effectiveness. But in all fairness, this hospital is on a different, more specialized level entirely," Dr. Fowler commented.

Hughey and Dr. Fowler were part of the special team which evaluated medical missions institutions in the Middle East and South Asia. William R. Wakefield, the board's secretary for South and Southeast Asia, was part of the team in the Bangalore evaluation.

Members outside the board included Dr. Timothy Pennell, professor of surgery at Bowman Gray School of Medicine of Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.; J. Cecil Hamiter, president of the Baptist Memorial Hospital, Gadsden, Ala.; Gwen P. Smith, a nurse educator and the wife of board staff member Truman S. Smith; and Dorcas Fowler, also a nurse educator and Dr. Fowler's wife.

Train Accident Sets Stage For Christian Witness, Love

GAZA (BP)--As Ghanim Abu-Shihada was baptized last Easter, his Southern Baptist missionary friends remembered the first time they saw him nearly 10 years earlier.

An adventurous 11-year-old, Ghanim and some other boys had decided it would be fun to jump on a slowly moving train. Ghanim fell beneath the train. Barely alive and with his right arm and leg nearly severed, he was brought to Baptist Hospital in Gaza.

The missionary doctor amputated his arm and leg and repaired his fractured skull. His parents hoped he would die because they could not afford to support a deformed child.

But the missionaries at the hospital wanted him to live, J.D. Hughey recalled as he told Ghanim's story in a March report to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Tenderly the hospital staff cared for Ghanim and loved him.

A missionary journeyman gave Ghanim a Gospel of John in Arabic, which one of the nurses read to him. They assured him of God's love and told him about the special love Jesus brings when you allow him in your heart.

When he was better the missionaries gave him his own room at the hospital, taught him English and sent him to school. Later he worked as the hospital telephone operator.

Last year Ghanim, who had been born into a Muslim family, was baptized. Now he is a computer programming student at Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College, Miami, Okla. He serves as international counselor for his college's Baptist Student Union and has spoken at churches and on television.

He knows, more than most, the value of medical missions.

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Broadcast Deregulation Revives on Two Fronts

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Broadcast deregulation, which died in the 1979 Congress, is resurfacing again on two fronts.

In Nashville, the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention is urging Southern Baptists to oppose a Federal Communications Commission proposal and legislation in the U.S. Congress leading toward deregulation of radio.

In Washington, the U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to decide if the Federal Communications Commission may decline to review radio licensees' program content when broadcast licenses are renewed or transferred.

The FCC's position is that the Communications Act of 1934, under which the agency operates, gives it the discretion to allow "marketplace forces" to determine the content of radio stations rather than to impose its own standards.

Also, three bills currently before Congress also point toward allowing deregulation. They are H.R. 6121 in the House and S.611 and S.622 in the Senate.

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Harry N. Hollis Jr. and William H. Elder III of the Christian Life Commission are urging Southern Baptists to oppose such legislation and also to write to the FCC, 1919 M St., N.W., Washington D.C., 20554, before March 25 to protest its deregulation proposal.

The FCC is now receiving public comment on the Deregulation of Radio Proposal until March 25 when the opportunity for public comment closes. Another 90 days, until June 25, will allow time for organizations and individuals to react in writing to any of the public comments received by the March 25 deadline.

Those who oppose deregulation argue that "marketplace forces" will not serve the public interest. "The FCC should be in the business of regulating on behalf of the public, not of special interests," declares Hollis, who testified before House and Senate Subcommittees in last year's successful effort by a wide range of groups to kill deregulation efforts in Congress.

"Deregulation is bad news for those who believe that the airwaves belong to the people," Hollis said. "It is a sad day indeed when the FCC, as the agency charged with the responsibility of upholding the public interest, now proposes to abandon its responsibility to marketplace forces."

"That overlooks the problem of the advertiser who is out to create a public desire for products and services," Elder added. "The market is not simply responded to, it is also shaped and molded, and broadcasters are particularly effective in doing that shaping. A responsible society recognizes that susceptibility to media influence and so refuses to accept the idea that whatever sells must be good for it."

Hollis and Elder believe that deregulation will lead to omission of much of what is now aired under public service requirements, including much religious programming. They reject industry arguments that broadcasters automatically will know what is good for the public.

"It is likely that only the 'electronic church,' which pays the broadcasting companies with money which it solicits in connection with its broadcasts, would survive," Elder said.

Although most broadcasters, including many religious broadcasters, approve the deregulation proposal, groups such as the Christian Life Commission, the United Church of Christ and the U.S. Catholic Conference have voiced opposition.

Meanwhile, on the Supreme Court front, the high court agreed to take on a cluster of cases for review later this term. No date has been set for oral arguments, but the justices are expected to render a decision before the current term ends in June.

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Smith Named To Correlate
Foreign Missions Prayers

Baptist Press
3/11/80

RICHMOND, V. (BP)--Long-time Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board staffer Rogers M. Smith has been named special assistant to the board's executive director with primary responsibility for correlating intercessory prayer.

In announcing the change in Smith's responsibilities at the March board meeting, Executive Director R. Keith Parks took the first step toward fulfilling a vision that he told of in his inaugural speech in January.

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"I have a vision of thousands of Baptists making a prayer adoption of missionaries, of national leaders and pastors, of each board member, of each staff member in order that God's grace and power might flow in us and through us," he said at that time.

Besides encouraging Foreign Mission Board staffers in intercessory prayer and serving as a liaison to prayer groups across the convention, Smith will serve in several other capacities. He will continue administering Margaret Fund scholarships for missionary children, take on new responsibilities for working with the board's 253 emeritus missionaries and with state Baptist foundations, and serve as an unofficial pastor for staff members with sickness or death in their families.

Smith was administrative associate to former Executive Director Baker J. Cauthen for 21 years after working as the board's associate secretary for promotion and as a field representative.

In his new responsibilities, Smith said he hopes to help utilize the prayer potential of Southern Baptists, not only in praying for missionaries and the countries where they work, but also in praying for home missions and for people in every country of the world. "We've got to help our people realize that God's power is available," he said.

Steps have already been taken to involve Foreign Mission Board staff more in weekly chapel services, to begin morning devotions in all offices and to provide a prayer room where employees can go for brief prayer periods during the day.

Smith said his job will not be to develop a prayer program for Southern Baptists, but to work through those already carried out by organizations such as Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood, and Sunday School. One state Woman's Missionary Union executive, Mary Essie Stephens of Alabama, he said, already has offered to mobilize prayer groups in her state within hours to pray for emergency prayer requests from the Foreign Mission Board.

Although he has visited with missionary children and emeritus missionaries when possible in the past, Smith said he plans to arrange trips specifically for visiting all emeritus missionaries in particular areas to collect information about their living conditions, make sure they're taken care of and assure them that the board cares about them.

In working with state Baptist foundations, he will help foundation secretaries interpret foreign mission needs to those interested in giving direct contributions to the Foreign Mission Board or in making a provision for the board in their will.

Smith said he already has begun some of his new responsibilities and the transition should be completed by June 1. Before coming to the Foreign Mission Board, Smith, a native of Waco, Texas, had served as a Baptist student secretary and teacher in the school of religion at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and secretary of the student department of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.

A graduate of Baylor University, Waco, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, he is married to the former Evelyn Melton of Fort Worth. They have two grown children.