



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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81-69

Anglicans Offer Solution To Gaza Baptist Hospital

By Susan Cahen

GAZA (BP)--The board of trustees of the Gaza Baptist Hospital has recommended that administrative responsibility for the hospital be transferred to the Church Missionary Society of England by Jan. 1, 1982.

The trustees, related to three Southern Baptist hospitals in the Middle East, consider this the most viable alternative to closing the financially beleaguered institution.

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials will discuss this and other options and expect a recommendation on the hospital's future to be made at their May board meeting in Richmond, Va.

The Church Missionary Society, an Anglican evangelical missions agency which opened the Gaza hospital in 1879, continues to hold title to hospital properties because clear title could not be obtained after Southern Baptists took over the medical work in 1954. It offered to take back responsibility for the hospital when they heard the Foreign Mission Board might have to close the institution.

If terms of the transfer agreement are worked out, Southern Baptist missionaries who want to will remain at the hospital on loan to the new administration. Most have indicated they would like to remain. The Baptist church on the hospital grounds would continue meeting there and the school of health sciences would still gain access to its buildings through the hospital grounds and be affiliated with the hospital for training.

Under the proposed agreement, the school would remain under the auspices of the Foreign Mission Board even though it might be affiliated with the hospital. School property is adjacent to the hospital but is not part of land titles still held by the Church Missionary Society.

The hospital, school and church are the main thrust of Baptist witness in Gaza. Although results have been slow, as in many Muslim areas, there was a revival last year with 28 professions of faith. Many have remained secret believers because of the Muslim faith's importance to social structure.

Tommy Adkins, a hospital administrator and a Southern Baptist missionary, said it is very important to keep a witness in Gaza. "We feel quite confident that if the Anglican church takes over, we will be able to have a witness here under this arrangement."

The serious financial crisis at the hospital was brought about by several factors. The patient load has fallen and workers' wages have risen 64 percent. To compensate for these, the hospital terminated 47 of its 109 employees. Gaza law dictated that these people be given severance pay at the rate of one month's pay per year of employment based on current pay scales.

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Because of the 64 percent increase, severance pay for the 47 workers depleted the hospital's 1981 operating budget. The Foreign Mission Board has made an emergency appropriation to help defray the termination pay costs and keep the hospital operating another three months. Additional funds will be needed if the Foreign Mission Board continues to operate the hospital until January.

If missionaries are given the go-ahead to work under the Anglican administration, they will retain their status as Southern Baptists and continue to be paid by the Foreign Mission Board.

Missionaries work under similar arrangements in countries where it is impossible or impractical to begin a new work but where the board feels there can be an effective witness through the established work of a government or other agency. Physicians have taught in government hospitals and universities, nurses have worked in government-sponsored public health programs and seminary teachers have taught in schools maintained by other denominations.

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Missions Leader
Gillespie Dies

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4/28/81

MIDDLETOWN, Ohio (BP)--J.T. (Tom) Gillespie, 88, Southern Baptist pastor, teacher and home missions leader, died April 27 of a heart attack.

Gillespie was involved in rural missions work at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board from 1950-53 and 1955-59. He retired from the board as director of its rural church program.

Gillespie taught at three Baptist schools, Oklahoma Baptist University, North Greenville Junior College and Gardner-Webb College, and was a graduate of Wake Forest University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He was a pastor in Arkansas and South Carolina and was director of city missions in Greenville, S.C. and Miami, Fla. After retirement he spent two six-month stints as a pioneer missions pastor, in Bangor, Maine and on Long Island, N.Y. He had preached as recently as Easter Sunday, both services, when he saw two professions of faith.

Survivors include 10 children. Two daughters among them are married to Southern Baptist pastors; Elizabeth to Ellis Julian in Hialeah, Fla., and Martha to Lewis Lowe in Augusta, Ga.

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Committee Members
Replaced by Smith

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4/28/81

DEL CITY, Okla. (BP)--Two members of the Southern Baptist Convention committee on resolutions and one member of the committee on committees have been replaced by SBC President Bailey E. Smith.

Barbara (Mrs. Jack) Taylor of Fort Worth, Texas, wife of the first vice president of the convention, and Carl Garrett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Columbia, Mo., told Smith they preferred not to serve on the committee on resolutions.

Garrett was himself a replacement for an appointee who was unable to serve because the state in which he serves does not qualify for representation under SBC bylaws.

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Replacing Mrs. Taylor is Jayne (Mrs. John) Dunaway, wife of the pastor of First Baptist Church, Corbin, Ky. Dunaway is a member of the SBC Executive Committee. Replacing Garrett is Vivian (Mrs. Henry) Simpson of Lillington, N.C., wife of an associational director of missions.

John R. Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, asked to be relieved of responsibilities as one of the Texas representatives on the key committee on committees.

Smith said schedule conflicts will prevent Bisagno from attending the 1981 annual meeting of the SBC in Los Angeles, June 9-11.

Smith appointed John Morgan, pastor of Sagemont Baptist Church of Houston as the replacement.

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Blacks Now Largest
SBC Ethnic Minority

Baptist Press
4/28/81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Black Southern Baptists are now the largest ethnic minority constituency in the Southern Baptist Convention, says an ethnic liaison consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Sidney Smith, a black consultant in church programs and services, says some 3,500 churches in every Southern Baptist state convention report almost 275,000 black members. The second largest group is Hispanics with an estimated 150,000 as members or attending Southern Baptist churches.

Writing in a monograph for the Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists to be published in 1982, Smith said when the SBC was founded in 1845, approximately one-third of its members were black. Slave membership was common though black Southern Baptists were in free churches too.

Though integration was predominant, Smith says, there was no pretense of racial equality. Even in black churches, pastors were often white, due to distrust of indigenous black gatherings.

The abolition of slavery brought both a black exodus from slave-relationship churches and the formation of black Southern Baptist churches. Free at last, these churches organized Southern Baptist associations in some locales and were a major part of the Southern Baptist population. In some places, like the Florida Baptist Convention in the 1880s, they were a majority, Smith says.

By 1900, most black Southern Baptists had found alternative membership in the National Baptist Convention of America. Most Southern Baptist work with blacks shifted from local church involvement to relationships through the Home Mission Board of the SBC.

After a half-century absence black churches began affiliation with the SBC again. In 1951, Community Baptist Church of Santa Rosa, Calif., and Greater Friendship Baptist Church of Anchorage, Alaska, joined. By 1980, there were approximately 600 predominantly black Southern Baptist congregations with an estimated 100,000 members.

Predominantly white Southern Baptist churches had attracted about 50,000 black members. Most of the black Southern Baptist churches are dually aligned with a National Baptist convention.

Black Southern Baptists have served the Southern Baptist Convention in leadership roles at all levels, from local and associational leaders, to state convention president to national agency staffs.

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A recent development among some black Southern Baptists is the forming of a Black Southern Baptist Fellowship to deal with issues of Southern Baptist life from black perspectives, Smith says.

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Baptists Must Profit from Past
Or Lose Service Opportunity

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4/28/81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists can either profit from the lesson of their 19th century forebears in relations with black Baptists, or they can repeat the error and lose the opportunity again to serve the black constituency in this country.

So warns Sidney Smith, a black consultant in the ethnic liaison unit of church programs and services of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"Summarily, the black community is largely convinced that the United States is repeating an era of the erosion of civil rights of blacks coincidental to the period of the ending of reconstruction in the last century," Smith told participants in the joint annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and Society.

Though the Southern Baptist Convention was heavily integrated with blacks, after the Civil War they perceived that white Southern Baptists were "either on the wrong side of civil rights, issues, silent, unwilling or unready to meet their needs," and left the SBC, Smith said.

Today, he said, black churches are usually thriving. Most are Baptist, usually members of a National Baptist denomination though there is an increase of black Baptist churches affiliating with the Southern Baptist Convention.

A study over the past two years by the ethnic liaison unit at the Baptist Sunday School Board showed no black Southern Baptist church that failed to baptize or add new members during the past year.

"The fastest growing Southern Baptist church in California, Mount Tabor in Los Angeles, took in more than 900 members last year and led the state in baptisms, while pushing its membership past 4,500. While not having these dazzling statistics," Smith said, "other black Southern Baptist churches are consistently growing."

Also, Smith continued, "most black Southern Baptist churches grow despite minimal emphases on religious education."

He cited a recent board survey which projected that on a given Sunday only about 15 percent of black Southern Baptists will attend Sunday School.

"This says," Smith reflected, "that while the traditional Sunday School outreach emphasis still works, there are other effective ways to reach people as well."

Smith also cited that the new black Southern Baptist church "is not likely to receive financial assistance to get started."

Smith cited four major lessons to be learned from black Southern Baptist church growth experiences: There are many effective ways for growing a church; the cultural context of racial/ethnic groups should be understood and utilized to reach people with the gospel; the informal body of knowledge about black church growth in the black community should be studied and shared to the church as a whole; and the dedication and commitment of black Southern Baptist churches are worthy of emulation in church growth.

"Armed with nothing but a commission from God, they build growing churches," Smith said.

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Baptist Churches Form New
Association In Costa Rica

By Annette Horton Herrington

SAN JOSE, Costa Rica (BP)—A new Baptist convention has been organized in San Jose among 17 churches who boycotted the annual meeting of the Baptist Convention of Costa Rica in December.

Representatives from seven of the dissident churches organized the National Association of Baptist Churches in Costa Rica and named David Guevara Arguedas president. Guevara, pastor of the San Pedro Baptist Church, is a former convention president and was instrumental in encouraging the churches to form the new organization. The new association, he said, is "to promote fellowship among Baptists and provide a means of reaching missionary goals that one church alone would have difficulty achieving."

The association went on record in its organizational meeting "as maintaining a self-supporting status—using only national funds instead of becoming financially dependent on foreign capital from missionary entities."

In the past, Costa Rican Baptists have received heavy financial assistance from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The new group, however, welcomed the participation of Southern Baptist missionaries in missions and church development projects. Missionary Don Redmon is pastor of the Spanish-language Rohrmoser Church which is a charter member of the new association.

The convention has officially severed its relationship with missionaries although the missionaries continue to work with individual convention-related churches, as invited.

Official dialogue between convention leadership and the mission organization broke down in December after the convention requested that the mission organization send one of its couples home. The mission refused, saying there was no moral, doctrinal or financial reason for the couple to be sent home and that it has the responsibility for approving its own personnel, not the convention.

Later, the Southern Baptist mission decided to withhold all financial support for the convention.

The organizational meeting of the new association was held at the Baptist camp in San Rafael de Ojo de Agua, with some 150 persons attending. The installation service for officers that followed was characterized by Guevara as a "fiesta"—a spiritual party—in contrast to the tension characterizing convention assemblies of the last few years. Guevara said his hope is that this move is "a return to basic Baptist principles and a new dawn for Baptist work in Costa Rica."

Sydney Goldfinch, chairman of the Southern Baptist mission, participated in the installation service, presenting the new leaders and offering a dedicatory prayer. Guevara delivered the sermon entitled, "Jealous for Healthy Doctrine," followed by testimonies by three founders of Baptist work in Costa Rica.

The national association also includes a regional association of eight Baptist churches in the Atlantic zone. This regional Baptist association is the first of its kind in Costa Rica and consists of both English language churches of Jamaican heritage and Spanish-speaking churches. Guevara hopes that soon the other churches will follow the example of the Atlantic zone and organize themselves into regional associations.

Second-Trimester Abortions May Be Limited To Hospitals

WASHINGTON (BP)—States may restrict all abortions performed during the second trimester of pregnancies to accredited hospitals, the U.S. Supreme Court has held.

By a 6-3 margin, the high court upheld an Indiana law passed shortly after the court's landmark 1973 ruling that states may not forbid abortions outright.

The Indiana statute sought to minimize abortions performed within the state with the hospital-only restriction. It contains other provisions banning saline abortions, restricting abortions in cases where the fetuses could be expected to live outside the womb, requiring a 24-hour waiting period before an abortion could be performed, and demanding parental consent for abortions on unmarried girls. Only the section restricting second-trimester abortions to hospitals was at stake in the high court test.

Indiana's attorney general successfully argued in his written brief that the Supreme Court specifically provided for such a restriction in its 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade*, the ruling which declared that first trimester abortions must be made available to women in consultation with their physicians. The decision held further, however, that states do have a legitimate interest in regulating abortions in the second and third trimesters, to the point of prohibiting them outright in the final three months of pregnancy.

That state interest, the court held in *Roe v. Wade*, includes the power to "regulate the abortion process to the extent that the regulation reasonably relates to the preservation and protection of maternal health."

The 1973 decision also spoke directly to the subject of a state's interest in regulating the location where abortions are performed by declaring that it has the power to decide "whether it must be a hospital or may be a clinic or some other place of less-than-hospital status."

Attorneys for a group called Gary-Northwest Indiana Women's Services argued on the other side that the hospitals-only restriction was too broad and had the effect of forcing many Indiana women to go outside the state to obtain abortions.

Noting that in 1977, when the case first went to court, only 16 percent of Indiana hospitals allowed abortions at all, the women's group insisted that physicians should be free to encourage abortions in the second trimester. Further, the state has "no compelling health reason" for the hospitals-only rule, the argument concluded.

The high court disagreed, however, ruling without comment that a decision last December by a federal district court in Indiana upholding the rule should stand. Justices William J. Brennan Jr., Thurgood Marshall and Harry A. Blackmun dissented, saying they could have given the case a full hearing before deciding the issue.

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High Court To Weigh
Texas Paternity Law

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WASHINGTON (BP)—Does the mother of an illegitimate child have a constitutional right to initiate a paternity suit more than a year after delivering the baby? Or do states have the power to impose such a restriction in the interest of fraudulent claims of paternity?

Those are among the questions the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to face in announcing it will review a Texas law imposing a one-year statute of limitations on paternity claims. Three Texas courts have already upheld the law.

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The case challenging the provision in the Texas Family Code was brought in 1979 by Lois Mae Mills against Dan Habluetzel, the alleged father of Mills' infant child. Mills missed the one-year limitation by a month, however, bringing suit against Habluetzel when the child was 13 months old.

Despite losing in the lower courts, including the Texas Supreme Court, Mills maintained in documents filed with the nation's high tribunal that the Texas law denies illegitimate children their due process and equal protection rights under the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution.

In his statement, Habluetzel's attorney argued that the Texas law should be affirmed because "the innocent man, in defending against a spurious or fraudulent claim of paternity, has a right to some protection." Habluetzel has maintained throughout the legal test that he is not the father of Mills' child.

The case will be held over to the high court's 1981-82 term which begins the first week in October.

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New Orleans Trustees
Approve Record Budget

Baptist Press
4/23/81

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—A record budget of \$4,728,753, has been adopted by trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary at their annual meeting.

The budget, a 12.5 percent increase over 1980-81, includes an 11 percent of living increase for faculty salaries.

The board unanimously named the seminary library the John T. Christian Library.

Christian was the first professor of church history and the first librarian. His personal library of 18,000 volumes, valued at \$40,000 in 1919, was turned over to the seminary and became the foundation on which the current holdings of more than 200,000 items was built.

Trustees, planning toward the future, also approved appointment of a long range planning committee to work on projected capital needs. The committee will be chaired by Bill Hamm of Shreveport, and includes Max Ainsworth of New Orleans, James Davison of Ruston, La.; Ken Emerson of Wichita, Kan.; Andrew Nolin of Montgomery, Ala.; and will be staffed by Clay Corvin, vice president for business affairs.

Trustees also elected two new members to the faculty, promoted three associate professors to full professorships, and elevated one assistant professor to associate professor.

David Perkins was elected as assistant professor of New Testament and Greek, and Howard Gerald Aultman was elected as assistant professor of music theory and piano, effective August 1, 1981.

Perkins, pastor since 1976 at the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, Ky., has been an adjunct teacher in the seminary's module in Atlanta. Aultman has been a contract teacher in the Division of Church Music Ministries for two years.

Three associate professors were promoted to professorships, and one assistant professor was promoted to the rank of associate professor.

Harold Bryson, Billy Simmons and Billy K. Smith, all of whom came to the faculty in 1976, were promoted to professors of preaching, New Testament and Greek, and Old Testament and Hebrew, respectively. Carlton Winbery was promoted to associate professor of New Testament and Greek.

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Dual Churches
'Bridge Builders'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—At a time when Americans may be becoming "retribalized," black multiple affiliated or dually aligned churches could serve this generation as "Christian bridge builders," says a black Baptist pastor who was among the first to lead a black church to become dually aligned with Southern and National (black) Baptists.

"By being anchored on both sides of the infamous racial divide, we in multiple affiliated churches can facilitate movement back and forth by constituents of both National Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention," said Harold T. Branch, pastor of the 105-year-old Greater St. John Baptist Church in Corpus Christi, Texas.

"By participating in the life of both," he said, "we can speak to both of oneness and unity in Christ."

"Black multiple affiliated churches have a unique and most significant ministry to perform in the 1980s, if we are to stop the drift of Godlessness, fragmentation and chaos that is evident all over America and our world," Branch told participants in the joint annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and Society at the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville.

Neither the National Baptist Convention nor the Southern Baptist Convention encouraged multiple affiliation in the beginning.

"They were not prepared or ready to deal with multiple affiliation," Branch recalled. "For years there was determined effort to ignore their disturbing presence...we attended evangelism conferences, Sunday School conventions, state conventions, and we were always treated as guests...but the black multiple affiliated churches would not go away. Neither would they be swallowed up wholly by either church tradition."

Black churches aligning with the SBC encounter alienation by some National Baptist leaders. "They face suspicion about motives and attitudes, are looked upon as 'Uncle Tom.'" In some places, there are fewer pulpit exchanges...they encounter sarcastic remarks (like) 'black Southern Baptists have jumped ship,'" he said.

Branch quoted Emmanuel L. McCall, of the Baptist Home Mission Board, "'History has not been kind to the Southern Baptist Convention in relating to America's blacks. However, we cannot wallow in the guilty mud of history.... How do we begin to affect reconciliation?'

"It begins simply with a white pastor desiring to know the nearby black pastor better and making those initial steps to get acquainted. It begins with members of a Southern Baptist church desiring to know members of the National Baptist church...with a Southern Baptist association realizing that it needs the mutual cooperation of the corresponding National Baptist Association for total impact on the area."

"I might say," Branch added, "that this initial step may be taken by the black pastor also. Great efforts should be made to lead members of churches in Christian knowing of each other. There must be at the heart of the thrust of multiple affiliation for black churches a deep concern for the fullest possible growth and maturing for witness and ministry of the members."

"To this end, black pastors and churches will take advantage of the best offered by both National Baptist Convention church tradition and Southern Baptist Convention church tradition," Branch said.