



BAPTIST PRESS

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Seminary, Mexican Bible Institute Merger Okayed

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--In a "historic and unprecedented" move, trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary voted to merge with the Mexican Baptist Bible Institute in San Antonio.

The action, which came during the trustees' annual fall meeting Oct. 19-21, provides for Southwestern to assume control and ownership of the Institute from the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The proposal must be approved by two consecutive annual meetings of the BGCT. The first vote will be taken during the convention's annual meeting Oct. 27-29 in Waco.

Plans for transfer of control and operation will begin immediately, according to officials of both institutions. Official control would come following an affirmative vote at the 1982 BGCT meeting in Corpus Christi.

Under the new arrangement, the San Antonio school will be known as Hispanic Baptist Theological Seminary. Major emphasis will be in training Hispanic ministers in noncredit diploma, associate degree and master's degree programs.

Instructors in accredited programs would be adjunctive teachers on the Southwestern faculty and would be elected by Southwestern's trustees.

Trustees of Southwestern will be the governing body for the Hispanic seminary. An executive council nominated by trustees would serve as the liaison between the school and the entire board.

Daniel J. Rivera, MBI president, would continue as chief administrative officer of the new seminary.

The State Missions Commission of the BGCT currently governs MBI and would continue to provide supplemental funding and program guidance, according to Charles McLaughlin, commission director.

The merger was initiated by James H. Landes, executive director, and other BGCT officials.

"This should be the Hispanic training center for the whole world," Landes said. "It could not be as long as it was tied only to Texas."

In other action, the board approved several new courses, made one faculty appointment, elected new officers and heard the annual report of seminary President Russell H. Dilday Jr.

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Four communications courses were added to the curriculum as part of the new Center for Christian Communication Studies which has been established at Southwestern.

J. W. MacGorman, a member of the Southwestern faculty since 1948, was named the first Wesley Harrison Professor of New Testament. The professorship honors the late Wesley Harrison of Seymour, Texas, a long-time seminary benefactor.

James E. Coggin, pastor of the Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, was elected chairman of the trustee board. He previously served as chairman, 1967-69.

Ralph Pulley, Dallas attorney, was elected vice chairman. James E. Carter, pastor of Fort Worth's University Baptist Church, was re-elected secretary.

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Baptist Scores Religious
Teaching In Oklahoma School

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press
10/23/81

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Southern Baptist church-state expert says he supports a Roman Catholic couple who have taken an Oklahoma community's school board to federal court over what they claim is the unconstitutional teaching of religion in a public school.

Michael and Julie Budde sued the Adair, Okla., school board for permitting two women to engage in systematic religious instruction of children during school hours and in the classrooms of Adair Elementary School. School board officials have acknowledged that the practice has gone on unopposed for the last 38 years.

The Buddes took the school board, Superintendent of Schools Noel Winfield and Adair Elementary School principal Robert Boyd to court after their two daughters, a fourth grader and a first grader, were harassed by classmates because of their parents' objections to the practice. According to the Buddes' attorney, Greg Bledsoe of Tulsa, the children were taunted as "anti-Christian" and "communist."

Local pressure against the family became so intense, he said, that the Buddes removed their children from the school and placed them in a public school in nearby Claremore, where Michael Budde works.

In Washington, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs General Counsel John W. Baker said he agrees with the Buddes' action, noting that "all major denominations--including the Southern Baptist Convention--have formally endorsed" the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions outlawing state-required and state-sponsored religious exercises in public schools.

Baker also said the Adair controversy is "disappointing" in that injured Roman Catholic parents had to bring the suit. "Baptists, Methodists and others should have taken the lead," he declared, instead of joining those who are "disparaging the efforts of concerned Roman Catholic parents who have spoken out for a proper separation of church and state."

Noting that Baptists are strong in Oklahoma, Baker went on to declare: "We Baptists in particular should remember that our denominational forbears, fighting seemingly insurmountable odds as a tiny, persecuted, minority sect, helped forge the religion guarantees in the First Amendment. The fact that in many communities today Baptists may be in a majority does not mean we have a right to impose our views on present-day religious minorities."

He added: "We must ask ourselves if we would tolerate the kind of religious instruction being done in Adair if the teachers were Mormons or Black Muslims or Jews."

Attorney Bledsoe, who was reared a Southern Baptist, told Baptist Press that the Buddes' suit seeks temporary and permanent injunctions forbidding the religious instruction, as well as \$60,000 in compensatory and \$250,000 in punitive damages. The first hearing in the case will come Nov. 12 at the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma in Tulsa, when the request for a temporary injunction will be heard.

When the case comes to trial, probably after Jan. 1, 1982, the Buddes will challenge the arrangement between Adair school officials and the religious instructors on both federal and state constitutional grounds. Bledsoe said the Oklahoma Constitution has even more specific prohibitions against using the public schools for religious teaching than does the federal constitution.

Baker said if the Buddes' case eventually comes to the U.S. Supreme Court, his agency and other national religious bodies "will in all likelihood" join the Buddes as friends of the court "against the unconstitutional practice their young daughters encountered in the Adair Elementary School."

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Man Mugs And Robs
Emeritus Missionary

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10/23/81

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Olga Oliver Berry, a 79-year-old emeritus Southern Baptist missionary, apparently has recovered satisfactorily from injuries she received during a mugging and robbery.

Mrs. Berry, who worked with her husband, 87-year-old William H. Berry, for 41 years in Brazil, said the incident occurred Oct. 9 at 10:25 a.m. near the entrance of the Berrys' retirement quarters at the Wesley Highland Towers in Memphis.

She said her assailant struck her sharply in the small of the back as she approached her doorway and sent her sprawling on her face. He grabbed her purse and fled to a waiting automobile.

"I screamed and he turned to look at me," said Mrs. Berry, adding her assailant was a tall man but that she did not see him well enough to identify him for investigating police. She was treated and released at Baptist Hospital in Memphis, apparently suffering nothing more serious than bruises.

But, she said, the shock lingers on. "It's had an effect on me. I don't like to dwell on it, but it's there in the back of my mind. The Lord was good to me."

The Berry's who retired from mission service in 1963, did not lose much money, she said, but did lose a checkbook and credit cards.

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Brotherhood Consolidates
Organizational Structure

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Trustees reduced the organizational structure of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, named three area directors and elected officers to second one-year terms in a meeting at the Hotel Peabody.

The new organizational structure calls for three service areas: Brotherhood program, support and business. Former divisions of Royal Ambassadors and Baptist Men's work were incorporated into Brotherhood program services.

Trustees okayed the recommendation of Executive Director James H. Smith to name Norman Godfrey, associate executive director, as director of Brotherhood programs and services; Jack Childs, director of the marketing department, as director of support services; and Lynette Oliver, business director, will lead business services.

Brotherhood program services include Baptist Men, Pioneers, Crusaders, associational Brotherhood, Brotherhood administration and general editorial services.

Within support services are public relations and marketing, graphic, merchandise and periodical services.

Business services includes accounting, comptroller's office and building maintenance.

Elected to second terms as trustee officers were Jack Knox of Germantown, Tenn., chairman; James Gardner of Blytheville, Ark., vice chairman; and Fred Harris of Hatch, New Mexico, recording secretary.

In other action trustees declined to adopt a charter and bylaws setting up a national fellowship of Baptist men. They did establish a committee to determine ways of involving men in Southern Baptist activities.

The committee, composed of trustees, agency staff members and state Brotherhood leaders, was instructed to meet twice annually with concerned Baptist laymen to identify concerns and develop ways to involve lay people.

Trustees heard a progress report for constructing the Glendon McCullough Conference Center and agency offices and empowered a building committee to proceed with construction within budget limitations of \$160,000.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Memphis bureau of Baptist Press.

104 Missionaries, Chaplains
Commissioned By Home Board

By Jim Newton

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ATLANTA (BP)--In the largest commissioning service in its history, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board commissioned 75 missionaries and endorsed 29 chaplains in a joint service.

Carl Hart, director of the HMB chaplaincy division, explained there have been three previous services where chaplains had been endorsed, but never before had home missionaries and chaplains been commissioned in the same service.

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"Before, too many people had just looked upon chaplains' endorsement as a stamp of approval, but this recognizes the role of chaplains and says to Southern Baptists they too are missionaries," Hart added.

"In fact, they are the least expensive missionaries we've got, since their salaries are paid not by the mission board but by the institution which hires them."

The 29 chaplains endorsed by the board included 12 military chaplains and spouses, 9 hospital chaplains and spouses, 7 industrial chaplains and one for business-industrial chaplaincy.

The 75 missionaries commissioned included 28 involved in church extension, most as church planter apprentices; 14 in Christian social ministries; 16 in rural-urban missions; four in evangelism and three in black church relations.

All missionaries commissioned had previously been appointed by the board, and most already are serving on the field.

Personal testimonies on how the missionaries and chaplains felt God had been leading them were brought by Bettye Ann Lovelady, who works in black church relations at Mississippi Baptist Seminary in Jackson, Miss.; Jim Hill, church extension director for the Kansas City metro area; Jim Elrod, chaplain at Baptist Medical Center, Birmingham, Ala.; and David Campbell, Army chaplain at Ft. Benning, Ga.

In his charge to the missionaries, Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner warned missionaries and chaplains they could expect opposition and doubt, but emphasized God would give them strength to endure.

Urging them to always be sensitive to the needs of others rather than being concerned about their own problems, Tanner said, "You'll never see the world if you keep your eyes on your own pair of shoes. You have to get outside yourself to see the needs of others."

The commissioning service was held at Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., with a 150 voice choir and 15-piece brass ensemble from the church providing special music. Nelson Price, pastor, welcomed the 1,000 persons attending.