



-- BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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January 29, 1982

82-17

North Carolina Baptist Building
Sold; Controversy May Be Renewed

ASHEBORO, N.C. (BP)-- The North Carolina Baptist Building, center of controversy earlier this year, has been sold to a research firm for \$1.7 million.

At its Jan. 26 meeting, the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina approved without opposing vote the sale as well as construction of a \$1.9 million office complex on a four-acre site in Cary, a southwestern suburb of Raleigh.

Under terms of the sale, the Instrument Society of America will pay the convention \$1.7 for its downtown office building, of which \$1,425,000 will be in cash. A total of \$230,000 will be credited as rent, which the convention will pay to use the building until it vacates it later this year.

The plans for the new building include first floor office space for the Baptist Foundation of North Carolina, and for the Biblical Recorder, journal of the convention.

The action may renew the controversy which occurred over the proposed sale and move in May of 1980. Then, the general board voted to sell the building to P & S Investment Co., Inc., of Greenville, N.C., for \$1.7 million, of which \$600,000 would be in the form of a tax-free donation to the convention.

J. Marse Grant, editor of the Biblical Recorder, opposed the sale and the move in editorial columns of the 116,500 circulation weekly.

Subsequently, P & S Investment Co., Inc., withdrew its offer. The general board renewed its action that the building was for sale, and was affirmed by messengers to the 1981 state convention in Greensboro.

Also, since then, Grant has announced he will take early retirement from the editorship, planning to terminate in September of 1982.

On the evening of the January 26 general board action, trustees of the Biblical Recorder, in a telephone conference call meeting, voted to purchase a tract of land in East Raleigh for \$40,000 from the Raleigh Baptist Association.

Grant said a decision has not been made about whether the Recorder will a move to the new Baptist Building, or will build its own facilities. Recorder officials say purchase of the land does not necessarily mean the newspaper will build, and added that trustees will discuss the matter at their March meeting.

While Recorder trustees have not made a decision, foundation directors already have signalled they wish to occupy space in the new complex.

When members of the general board were informed of the Recorder trustees action -- which occurred as they were still in session -- they passed a resolution asking for an explanation.

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The resolution, proposed by Leon Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church of Goldsboro, noted the board "respects the autonomy of the Biblical Recorder as an agency of the convention" but "expresses ... our profound interest in the offices of the Recorder being located in the new Baptist building office complex."

"If the Recorder board indicates interest (either short term or long term in being separately housed) ... we request the Biblical Recorder board to share details of its plans ... such information being the reason for relocating outside the Baptist building and the method of funding for the purchase of a new building," the resolution said.

Wayne Tuttle, pastor of Pine Grove Baptist Church of Rockingham, who seconded the motion, commented: "We are all in the same ballgame. Let's work together. This building of theirs is ridiculous."

The board approved a recommendation of its building committee that it relocate on a four-acre site in Cary, owned by George H. (Buck) Jordan Jr. of Cary, rather than on a previously-approved site owned by the David Martins, also of Cary.

Convention president Frank Campbell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Statesville, said the building committee examined 15 building sites and received six offers of donations before selecting the Jordan site.

General board president Dewey Hobbs, pastor of First Baptist Church of Marion, said the proposed new location "technically" does not comply with instructions of the 1981 state convention in which messengers approved relocation on one of the two sites offered by the Martins.

Hobbs explained the Jordan site was selected after the Raleigh City Council denied zoning on one of the Martin properties and the building committee said it felt it would take too long to get the other Martin site ready.

Campbell said the Jordan site will have to be rezoned, but added "we have been assured by Cary city leadership of their help in processing the request within their required guidelines."

As a safeguard, however, the recommendation provides for an alternate site, which already is properly zoned and has been promised by a donor, if needed.

Convention leadership said a move was decided after it was determined necessary repairs over the next few years would exceed the difference between the sale price and construction costs for a new building, thus making it more economical to consider a new facility.

The board awarded a \$1,951,639 contract to the Davidson and Jones Construction Co. of Raleigh to build the 53,500 square foot, four level brick building.

In the convention action which approved the sale and relocation, messengers instructed the executive committee and the general board that costs to construct a new building could not exceed the price realized from the sale of the current building by more than \$750,000.

John McCulloch, a Baptist layman and convention architect, said construction could begin as early as March 1, and completion is expected within "eight or ten months."

The convention must vacate the building by July 30, 1983. If it has not moved before January, 1983, it must pay rent at the rate of \$15,000 for the first month and \$20,000 for each month thereafter.

The Instrument Society of America, a national non-profit association of engineers and others interested in instruments and controls, will use the building as a training center, and plans to renovate 25,000 square feet of the 47,000 square foot building for lease.

(BP)

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Pastor Is Key Factor
In Increased Giving

By Toby Druin

DB

BALCH SPRINGS, Texas (BP)--First Southern Baptist Church did better than pretty good when it gave \$9,250 to foreign missions through the 1981 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

But then, over the past couple of years, the congregation which averages 110 in attendance has made setting new missions giving records the rule rather than the exception.

There are probably many reasons the congregation on the southeast rim of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex could give for their increased missions concerns, but the most obvious is their pastor, Robert M. Parham Jr.

Parham, 55, is a missionary to Nigeria. Oh, he has been pastor of Balch Springs congregation for almost five years, but he assured he is a missionary to Nigeria. Mention the West African country or invite him to tell you about it, and he won't take long convincing you his heart is still there.

And he would be there, along with his wife, JoAnn, if the choice were his.

Parham, however, is a victim of multiple sclerosis and is medically retired from the Foreign Mission Board. He is able to be pastor of the Balch Springs church, he says, only because the people there have assumed many pastoral responsibilities and do not require him to keep regular office hours.

JoAnn married Parham in 1949 with the knowledge that he felt called to foreign missions, went with him to Nigeria as a missionary, but says she never felt such a calling herself.

"If I had married someone in the Army, I would have gone where he went," she said. "It was a miracle we were appointed. I told the board that I did not feel called, but I had the commitment and knew I could make a contribution if I went."

The Parhams were appointed in 1953, and he worked as an evangelist, agriculturist and hospital business manager. The area he served was larger than Texas and Louisiana combined.

In 1965, when they were home on furlough, he was driving one day to First Baptist Church, Leesburg, Fla., where he was to speak at a banquet when suddenly he was struck with double vision.

"I closed one eye and drove on," Parham said.

The next day he went to an ophthalmologist and then to a neurologist. Tests for diabetes were negative and he was told to go home and rest.

He stayed in bed for 10 days and took further tests but no cause of the double vision was discovered. Without saying anything to the Foreign Mission Board about the problem, they returned to Nigeria and he had no difficulty for a year.

"But one day when I was visiting with a pastor my speech suddenly became garbled," he said. JoAnn took him to a nearby hospital at Ogbomosho.

The tests there confirmed that he had multiple sclerosis.

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Parham's initial reaction to the news was, "That's okay; we'll beat this game," he said. "But the doctor told me, 'This is no game. It's serious business.'"

Parham continued to try to minister with JoAnn doing all his driving and limiting his hours on the field. But his health continued to deteriorate. His speech was "terrible," he said, and his vision and legs were greatly affected.

Finally, the day came when JoAnn had to remind him that he had once said if it got so bad he could not serve effectively he would come home to the United States.

They returned in 1971 and have been here ever since except for a brief time soon after their return when Parham's health improved briefly and he was able to go back.

JoAnn returned to school when they came back and earned master's and doctorate degrees in education at the University of Florida. They came to the Dallas area in 1976 and she joined the faculty of Dallas Baptist College, teaching elementary education.

Parham's illness prognosis is uncertain. "My vision and speech come and go," he said. "Most of the time I just try to not think about it and go ahead."

He ministers to the people at Balch Springs as his health will permit and their missions giving record indicates he is communicating his concern to them.

"But every night," he says, "I dream I am in Nigeria."

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

Belmont College Staff Wife
Abductor Held Without Bond

CO
Baptist Press
1/29/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—John Lumley, an escapee from a Mississippi prison, is being held without bond for the Jan. 27 abduction of a Belmont College administrator's wife and their two children.

Lumley, who told police officers he had escaped from prison to see his dying mother in Boston, also was charged with the armed robbery of a Nashville convenience store. He confessed to both crimes, according to Nashville police.

Lumley had abducted Carole Troutt, her daughter Carole Ann, 6, and son Jack, 4, from a downtown department store parking lot; made her withdraw money from her bank; drove around Nashville and its suburbs; then stopped and left the car, harming no one.

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EDITORS: Jan. 27 is correct date. Please change date in our Jan. 28th release to read "Jan. 27," not Jan. 23.

Thanks,

Baptist Press

Voting Rights Extension
Provokes Senate Debate

By Larry Chesser

WB

WASHINGTON (BP)--Despite the fact that 62 U. S. senators are currently sponsoring the indefinite extension of the Voting Rights Act passed overwhelmingly by the House of Representatives last October, the measure is meeting some strong opposition from the Reagan Administration and Senate judiciary committee leaders.

While much of the battle last year in the House centered around the act's controversial pre-clearance provision which requires nine states--mostly in the south--and portions of 13 others to obtain justice department approval before making election law changes, the primary debate in the Senate appears to be over whether proof of "intent" to discriminate should be necessary to demonstrate a voting law violation.

As the subcommittee on the Constitution opened a series of eight hearings on the measure, Chairman Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., and Atty. Gen. William French Smith all argued that such "intent" to discriminate should be the basic test. They charged that a provision in the House-passed bill allowing voting rights violations to be proven by showing that election laws or procedures produced discriminatory "results" would lead to proportional representation or quotas.

That charge was intensely disputed by Senate sponsors of an identical bill, S. 1992, as well as by leaders of the civil rights community during the opening two hearings.

Sen. Charles McC. Mathias, R-Md., called the charges "unfounded," pointing to a provision in the bill specifically stating that the lack of proportional representation in and of itself does not constitute a violation of the act.

At issue is what Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., described as "clarifying language" added to Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act--a section prohibiting the denial or abridgement of the right to vote which applies throughout the U. S. The new language, Kennedy said, explicitly states "that any practice which 'results' in such denial or abridgement is prohibited."

Mathias and Kennedy explained that the clarification in Section 2 was necessary because of a 1980 Supreme Court decision requiring specific evidence of "intent" to discriminate in a case involving at-large election procedures in Mobile, Ala. That ruling, they contended, is inconsistent with the intent of Congress in enacting the Voting Rights Act.

Civil rights leaders, including Benjamin L. Hooks of the NAACP, contended that the "intent" test is difficult and sometimes impossible to prove.

Hooks also declared that the change in Section 2 to permit demonstration of a violation by showing discriminatory results "will not run afoul of the well-established constitutional tenet that no minority group has the right to proportional representation."

In addition to the disputed section allowing a "results" test as opposed to an "intent" test, other questions surrounding the bill still have to be resolved. These include "bail-out" provisions for those states and localities covered under the pre-clearance requirements and whether the extension should be an indefinite one as passed by the House or for 10 years as advocated by the Reagan Administration.

It also remains to be seen whether the concerns raised by Hatch, Thurmond and the administration can convince enough of the 62 co-sponsors to change their position on the bill. Otherwise, they have enough votes not only to pass the bill, but also to end any filibuster that might occur.