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March 26, 1982

82-49

Church, Resort Dispute
Apparently Is Resolved

DB

WICHITA FALLS, Texas (BP) -- A dispute between a church group and a resort owner, which saw a minister detained for an hour by sheriff's deputies, apparently has been resolved.

The controversy, which occurred March 19, involved First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, the Almont Resort near Crested Butte, Colo., its owner, Milt Steiner, and Howard (Chief) Chapman, the church's minister of recreation.

It began when Chapman, who has been on the North Texas church's staff for 12 years, took a group of 90 young people and sponsors on a five-day skiing trip to Colorado. Included in the group was Morris Chapman, the pastor, who is no relation to Howard Chapman.

Accounts of what followed differ greatly. They do agree, however, that the center of the controversy was \$2,785.

According to Ron Harris, minister of media for the church, Chapman "took with him a check for what was thought to be the total bill for room and board," about \$3,000. "At some point during the five-day stay, it was discovered that the bill would be more than expected -- approximately \$2,700 more."

Harris, acting as official spokesman for the church, said the resort apparently quoted two figures, one for rooms only, and the other for room and board. The difference, he said, was \$6 per day for 90 people.

Harris said Chapman was informed of the difference on Friday, March 19, the day the group was to leave. Steiner, however, told the Rocky Mountain Baptist, journal of the Colorado Baptist General Convention, that Chapman "put me off" about the bill every day, and that on Friday (March 19) another conversation--not the first--took place.

Steiner said Chapman offered to mail him a check for the \$2,785, but the owner "wanted my money now." He said Chapman was going to give him a personal check for the difference, and "told me he would go to his cabin to get the check." Instead, according to Steiner, Chapman "went outside, got on the bus and went off skiing for the day."

Harris said the group left its luggage in several small cabins, but left sound equipment in the lodge. "When the group arrived back at the resort from skiing, they found the lodge locked. Not knowing the situation, as we know it, the group retrieved their equipment, loaded up and left for home," he said, adding that the "kids just got what belonged to them."

In Steiner's account, the group was warned not to go into the lodge to get the equipment; that it was impounded for nonpayment.

According to Harris, however, the "kids didn't know it was being impounded. Nobody said they were holding the sound equipment until they got a check...."

The accounts also differ as to how the equipment was retrieved. Steiner maintains the group broke into the lodge; the church says they entered through an open door.

"They broke down the door," Steiner said, adding he has a "busted door...to prove it."

Harris said he talked to members of the group, and believes "they found an open door."

Steiner said when he returned to the lodge and found the sound equipment gone, he telephoned the Gunnison County Sheriff's Department, who in turn called the Chaffee County Sheriff in Salida.

In Salida, deputies briefly detained Chapman, holding him until he wrote a personal check for the \$2,785.

Harris said the "arrest" was "not that big a deal to the people on the trip," and that the deputies appeared when the group stopped to eat. "Chief went with them, and the rest of the group went on to eat," he explained, adding that the pastor did not accompany the recreation minister to the sheriff's department "because he (Howard) had financial responsibility for the trip."

Steiner, who said he is a Presbyterian, and that his daughter is a member of a Southern Baptist church in Florida, said he decided not to press charges since the bill was paid. He added he held the check until Wednesday, March 24, before depositing it.

"I am not down on any church," he said, but admitted he was upset with Chapman.

In the aftermath, erroneous reports were circulated that Morris Chapman, the church's pastor, was arrested. "Wire reports that the pastor was involved and/or arrested are inaccurate," Harris said.

The media minister added that the church has "pretty much tried to get back to normal business," and said the "misunderstandings and resultant incidents are unfortunate. Every step has been taken to clear up any remaining inaccuracies or misinformation."

And, Harris told Jim Young, editor of the Rocky Mountain Baptist: "We were proceeding in good faith and not trying to do anything dishonest. We are good for our bills and would have paid regardless."

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Heartsick Pastor Receives
Help for Church Hungry

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Baptist Press
3/26/82

AVONDALE, Colo. (BP)--It was a routine mission work report. Mission pastors file them every month.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board receives thousands of the reports from all over the country. Those who file them probably wonder if they ever are read.

This one was.

Pastoral missionary Bond Brown, of Redeemer Baptist Church, Avondale reported in January:

"Some of our church members are in desperate straits financially. I have spent time this month helping them find jobs, food and trying to help them not lose their cars, washing machines, get medical care, etc.

"Some of our church members are so poor, I could just cry. I am overwhelmed at times by their struggle to survive and greatly admire their abiding faith in Jesus Christ and their faithfulness to his church.

"How I wish I could help more, but frankly, I don't know what else to do. Some of these people are among our most faithful witnesses for Christ. God help them."

After receiving the report, the Home Mission Board sent the church \$500 for hunger relief--proof the reports are read, and felt.

Missions Leader Opposes
Budget Cuts for Housing

By Jim Newton

AB

WASHINGTON (BP)—Calling for justice in funding federal low income housing, a Southern Baptist missions leader urged members of Congress to re-examine the proposed 1983 federal budget in terms of the needs of people, not money.

Wendell Belew, of Atlanta, said: "I would encourage you to look afresh at the priorities of this budget to ascertain what is best for our land, to see these expenditures not just in terms of dollars and cents, but rather in terms of people cringing in the shadows of vacant houses, hunting for a place of warmth, seeking to gather their children about them, but with no place to lay their heads."

Belew, director of the missions ministries division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, gave testimony opposing federal housing budget cuts before the subcommittee on housing and community development for the committee on banking, finance and urban affairs of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Belew pointed out the proposed 1983 budget provides \$32 billion less than the amount needed to maintain federal housing programs at present levels. The largest proposed cut for any activity of the federal government in 1983 is a \$8.5 billion cut in low income housing programs, Belew said.

"Do not let this tragedy happen to the poor, the young, the elderly," Belew pleaded with the committee headed by Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez, D-Texas.

Belew warned if the budget cuts are approved "in the absence of just concern, there can only grow anger, chaos and anarchy. All the armaments we can build can never protect us from ourselves. We may be creating an explosion...in our very midst.

"Can it be possible that our nation will devise techniques and funding for a military establishment capable of maiming or killing half the people of the world, but remain incapable of maintaining adequate housing in our nation?" he asked.

It is incredible, he added, that acres of housing which could change the nature of community, state and nation could be supplanted by the cost of one aircraft carrier. It also is incredible, he said, that in seeking to gain superiority or equality with the Russians in military strength, America might also gain equality with the Russians in housing, forcing "impoverished multitudes into small rooms with inadequate heating."

It is "certainly far from realistic" to believe the private sector will meet housing needs previously met by government," Belew observed. "The private sector is not especially interested in low income housing," he added.

Since the most lucrative investments in housing are in condominiums and upper income housing, neither is it realistic to expect a "trickle down effect" from builders, Belew warned.

Churches and synagogues will try to help, but their major financial responsibility is not housing, Belew told the congressional hearing. It is important that churches and benevolent organizations do the best they can to correct the horrifying housing shortages for poor, especially the elderly, but it is not possible for them to do that alone," Belew insisted.

"Not only is it not possible, it is not (morally) just that a government which is supported by these people becomes so calloused and oblivious to the hurts of its own land that it refuses to become a partner with those who would seek to make an effort to provide adequate housing for the needy," Belew said.

Belew told of several housing and ministry projects sponsored by Southern Baptists who strongly support separation of church and state, but have in some cases sought "a partnership of mutual support" in the area of housing for the needy.

One such project, he related, is in the Bronx, N. Y., where volunteers in five work teams from Southern Baptist churches have helped an interdenominational religious group called the Bronx Shepherds rebuild and refurbish 135 apartments in five abandoned buildings.

Since materials in the renovation project have been purchased with federal funding, the budget cutbacks may mean that no new work can be done in years ahead, Belew said.

Similar testimony came from Roman Catholic Auxiliary Bishop James Lyke of Cleveland and Stephen Hoffman, director of social planning and research for the Jewish Community Federation, Cleveland.

Gonzalez, chairman of the subcommittee, expressed appreciation for the testimony of the religious leaders and complimented Southern Baptists especially for their concern for the poor and needy.

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Missionaries in Bangladesh
Safe After Bloodless Coup

RB

Baptist Press
3/26/82

DACCA, Bangladesh (BP) -- Southern Baptist missionaries serving in Bangladesh, where the military staged a bloodless coup, are safe, they reported in a cable to the Foreign Mission Board March 25.

The Army chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Hossain Mohammed Ershad, toppled Bangladesh's President Abdus Sattar, 76, on March 23 and then declared martial law and suspended parliament. Ershad told the nation in a radio broadcast that his goal is to re-establish democracy and hold general elections as soon as possible.

Southern Baptist missionaries in the country are James and Betty McKinley from Kentucky; Howard and Maxine Teel, Alabama; Thomas and Beverly Kirkpatrick, Oklahoma; Thomas and Gloria Thurman, Mississippi and Alabama; and James and Guinevere Young, Mississippi.

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Missionary Awaits Charges
In Honduras Auto Fatality

RB

Baptist Press
3/26/82

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (BP) -- Southern Baptist missionary Stephen Baillio was jailed overnight and later released on bail after the car he was driving stuck and killed a woman near Tegucigalpa, Honduras, March 14.

The Alexandria, La., native said he was driving about 35 miles per hour when the woman stepped off a bus, parked on the wrong side of the highway, and walked directly into the path of his car. The missionary family was returning home from morning worship services.

Baillio, 34, took the injured woman to a hospital in Tegucigalpa, where she died about three hours later.

Baillio was held in custody overnight, then released to his home under "house arrest" for the next four days. He was released on bail March 19 pending filing of formal charges.

It is customary throughout Latin America for drivers involved in injury accidents to be jailed and charged, regardless of specific circumstances in the accidents.

Baillio said by telephone he was overwhelmed by the visits of about 30 members of his Honduran church, who came by his home to offer their support. Members of three churches assisted the family and the Woman's Missionary Union of one church spent one night in prayer for the missionary.

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New Name, Administration
For Gaza Baptist Hospital

RB

GAZA (BP)--Southern Baptists have completed transferring administrative control of financially-troubled Gaza Baptist Hospital to the Church Missionary Society of England, the Anglican missions agency which opened the hospital in 1879.

The decision to transfer control of the institution came last May after the Anglican agency offered to take back responsibility for the hospital rather than see it close.

Southern Baptist missionaries watched with mixed emotions earlier this year as workmen lowered the old sign from the entrance to the grounds. The name, Gaza Baptist Hospital, was painted over and replaced with a new name--Ahli Arab Hospital.

Each Southern Baptist missionary on staff, except administrator Thomas Adkins, was given the option of staying on under the Anglican administration. Adkins has become business manager for the School of Health Sciences adjacent to the hospital.

Missionaries whose duties related more closely to the school also transferred there, while the rest of the 17 missionary personnel related to the hospital remained there. The Foreign Mission Board will continue paying the salary of those under Anglican administration. One missionary has resigned for unrelated reasons since the transfer was announced.

Under the agreement with the Anglican Church, Southern Baptists will continue to operate the school and a Baptist congregation will continue to meet on the hospital grounds, assuring a Baptist witness in Gaza.

"The year 1981 was traumatic for everyone concerned with the Baptist Hospital in Gaza," Adkins said. He said 80 percent of the hospital's half-million-dollar budget had to come from patients fees, a goal which became increasingly difficult to attain in a territory with a 130 percent annual inflation rate. Under these conditions, he said, "There had to be a limit. We reached that limit."

The financial situation at the hospital reached the crisis point when the patient load fell and hospital workers' wages rose 64 percent. To compensate, the hospital terminated 47 of its 109 employees and paid severance pay amounting to a month's pay for each year of employment, as required by Gaza law.

Shortly after the new administration took control Jan. 1, it opened a dental clinic and re-opened the intensive care unit.

"We have felt the Lord's leading very clearly all along the way," Adkins said. Despite the difficult decisions involved in Baptist withdrawal from sponsoring the hospital, he noted that the missionaries have seen the "Holy Spirit bring many people to confess Christ as Savior. I am very optimistic about the future witness for our Lord here in Gaza, even though I am sure it will be difficult."