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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 30, 1984

Women's Discussion
Scratched At ForumN
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By Dan Martin

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—Because of failure to recruit a spokesman for the anti-women's ordination position, planners of the SBC Forum have scrapped plans to stage a discussion of the volatile issue.

The Forum, a meeting aimed at pastors and other ministers, will meet from 1:30 to 5 p.m. Monday, June 11, in the Music Hall of the Kansas City Convention Center. It marks the first time for the Forum, which will join a number of other meetings preliminary to the annual session of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 12-14.

"We made a strong effort to make this an inclusive program," said John Hewitt, pastor of Kirkwood Baptist Church in suburban St. Louis, local arrangements chairman for the Forum. "We made every effort to involve people on both sides of the issue and were not able to find someone to speak from a convictional, biblical standpoint against ordination of women."

Because of the inability to obtain a spokesman opposed to ordination of women, Hewitt said, the program now will feature an address by Sara Ann Hobbs, director of the missions division of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Hobbs, the only woman to occupy such a post in any of the 37 state Baptist conventions, will speak to the gathering on "Women as Ministers."

"She will not be half of a discussion," Hewitt said. "She was not even asked to speak to the Forum until the idea of a pro and con discussion broke down."

Bill Bruster, pastor of Central-Bearden Baptist Church of Knoxville, Tenn., and public information chairman for the Forum, said four prominent spokesmen opposing the ordination were asked to speak, but all declined.

Bruster said those asked were C. Mark Corts, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church of Winston-Salem, N.C.; Adrian Rogers, former SBC president and pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn.; Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas and a co-leader of the inerrancy movement in the SBC, and Morris Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas.

In response to the refusals, Hewitt said: "I personally am disappointed that Southern Baptists have been denied the opportunity to hear convictional, biblical treatment of the subject of women's ordination from differing viewpoints. I am disappointed that we have difficulty in our denomination celebrating our diversity in the spirit of open dialogue."

Hewitt also responded to charges the SBC Forum is a "rebel Pastors' Conference," or an alternate Pastors' Conference.

"We are inviting all persons in town (Kansas City) for the SBC to attend. The purpose is to draw more persons to the convention itself by offering this addition to existing pre-convention meetings. We are not anti-Pastors' Conference, we are pro-SBC.

"We are encouraging those messengers and visitors who are not going anywhere on Monday to try something different. There is a strong need (in the SBC) for a non-political, inclusive, positively helpful meeting like the SBC Forum. We are responding to that expressed need."

Hewitt also released the revised program for the meeting.

SBC FORUM

1:30-5:00 p.m., Monday, June 11, 1984
Music Hall, Kansas City Convention Center

Presiding—Gene Garrison, pastor, First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City

Opening Scripture—Charles Wade, pastor, First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas

Music—Lowell Dotson, minister of music, Providence Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.

1:45-2:15—David Mathews, pastor, First Baptist Church, Greenville, S.C., "Preaching and the Sovereignty of God"

Music—Lowell Dotson

2:25-2:55—Kirby Godsey, president, Mercer University, Macon, Ga., "The Spirit of Learning and Learning of the Spirit"

3:00-3:30—Sara Ann Hobbs, director of the missions division, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Raleigh, N.C., "Women as Ministers"

Offering Prayer—Raymond Langlois, president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention and pastor, Judson Memorial Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn.

3:40-4:10—Duke K. McCall, chancellor of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and president, Baptist World Alliance, "The Revelation We Proclaim"

4:10-4:30—mini concert, Dean Wilder, concert and recording artist and professor of music, William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo.

4:30-5:00—Kenneth Chafin, pastor, South Main Baptist Church, Houston, and newly elected Carl Bates Professor of Christian Preaching at Southern Seminary, "An Encouraging Word"

Benediction—John Hewitt, pastor, Kirkwood Baptist Church, Kirkwood, Mo.

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Mobile College
Picks President

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Baptist Press
5/30/84

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)—Michael A. Magnoli, vice-president for development at Mobile College, Mobile, Ala., and a member of its first graduating class, has been named president of the college, effective Aug. 1.

Magnoli, 38, a 1967 graduate of Mobile College, has a master's degree in science from the University of Alabama, a Ph.D degree in science from the University of Southern Mississippi and a Ph.D degree in higher education administration from the University of Alabama.

He came to Mobile College in 1978 as director of development and was named vice-president in 1981. During this time he played a significant role in securing funding for construction of the college's fine arts building, building the college's annual fund with alumni and the community, and implementing a planned gifts program to build the college's endowment.

From 1968 until 1978 he was with the Mobile County Public School System, first as a teacher then as assistant principal.

In 1973, he became coordinator of the Education Parks Planning program for the school system and in 1974 was named coordinator of the Environmental Education program and also was coordinator of the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) program. Following that he was an administrative assistant for planning and prepared comprehensive long-range plans for the school system, including business, physical plant, administration and curriculum functions.

He was born in Roswell, N.M., into a military family and lived in a number of places throughout the U.S. He graduated from high school in Selma, Ala.

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Elder Issues Challenge
For Bold Mission Thrust

By Jim Lowry

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—If Southern Baptists are to be successful in Bold Mission Thrust, they first must understand the disharmony the denomination is experiencing, says Lloyd Elder.

Elder, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, issued 10 challenges for Southern Baptists to consider in achieving goals of missions and ministry in a new book, Blueprints, released June 1 by Broadman Press.

Elder, who was reared in a Southern Baptist family of 15 brothers and sisters, said the book grows out of his firm belief and confidence in Southern Baptists as a people of God with resources to meet some of the tremendous responsibilities.

"I am strongly committed to the goals of Bold Mission Thrust, and yet I hear and feel these tremors in the denomination," Elder said. "We cannot just cry slogans related to Bold Mission and hope that all will be well. We must understand and attend to the rumble, the disharmony, Southern Baptists are experiencing if we want to move toward our goals."

Elder said he is seeking to join with others to understand where Southern Baptists are as a people of God and then work together for the renewal of our denomination.

"The fruit of such renewal will be a commitment of our total resources—human, financial, physical and spiritual—toward remaining true to our spiritual nature as a people of God; maintaining our democratic and voluntary relationships; fulfilling our worldwide missionary-evangelistic purpose, and being God's people and channels of his grace to a sad, broken world," he continued.

Southern Baptists, Elder believes, are in the midst of a crisis of change brought about by our enormous success as a denomination. Symptoms of change he cites include a growing need to operate routinely and within policies and program assignments rather than seeing policy and purpose in the light of goals; and commitment to one's personal goals above the goals of Christ's kingdom. He lists a total of 11 symptoms.

"We need to hear each other with a willingness to acknowledge truth regardless of who utters it," Elder said. "Various diagnoses show Southern Baptists are not in agreement on the key problems of the denomination. That, in itself, seems to add fuel to the conflict, but this doesn't have to be. Our appraisals of where we are as a denomination will differ."

He said he considers the book a denominational blueprint which is not the final and finished product, but a look at issues and concerns which must be dealt with in any plan for renewal of the denomination.

"Organization renewal calls for a desire for truth and understanding, with honesty that can be painful," he explains. "Even in a secular setting, it calls for a change of mind and a willingness to change that we Baptists call repentance. Without this, there can be no renewal."

Elder's challenge to the denomination for organizational renewal relates to purpose and heritage, biblical beliefs, spiritual awakening, servant leadership, communication strategies, shaping change, conflict resolution, commitment to action and building by the blueprints.

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African Prince Abdicates
After Christian Conversion

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Baptist Press
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HANNIBAL, Mo. (BP)—From a Nigerian village where his father sat on the throne, to a Midwestern Baptist college where he was the only foreign student on campus, Bako Sidi has experienced a cataclysmic lifestyle.

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Sidi, who graduated this May from Hannibal-LaGrange College, a Southern Baptist liberal arts college located in Hannibal, Mo., was once heir to the throne in the tiny village of Damba in northern Nigeria, but abdicated his designated rule after converting from idol worship to Christianity.

Sidi, now approximately 40, was eight or nine when Southern Baptist missionary F.E. Runyan held house meetings in the village of 1,000. Sidi took a step few boys in his position would. "I became one of the first fruits of their work. I accepted Christ," he said. "I was the first Christian in the whole village."

Although Sidi's father, Sidi Ayuba, and his mother, Ladi Sidi (the "senior wife" of his four wives), never fully accepted his conversion, Sidi remained the preferred son, a privilege which worked in his favor when the time came to seek an education.

Runyan wanted Sidi to attend a Southern Baptist primary school in the town of Kawo, and approached Sidi's father about the prospects. The chief was reluctant, "because he thought that if I went away, I would not come back to succeed him," Sidi recalled. "But the missionary told him he was going to educate me so I would become a better chief...better in life, better in leadership. He eventually agreed for me to go and be educated."

Sidi attended the primary school for five years, then continued his education at the Baptist high school in Jos. His father died while Sidi was in high school and never knew of his son's intentions to forsake his old life and to serve God as a Baptist minister.

Sidi counts among his spiritual parents Runyan, "the man who took me from my village"; Dewey and Betty Merritt, a missionary couple he later met at the Baptist Pastors' School in Kaduna, and the Rev. Wiley Faw, a missionary from Kentucky who served for a time as acting principal of the Baptist high school Sidi attended.

Sidi completed three years at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomosho, was called to work as an associational minister in northeastern Nigeria, and later was a coordinator of Sunday school work for the Nigerian Baptist Convention.

By this time, Sidi had a family of his own.

While Sidi was still in high school, his mother had paid the "bride's price"—a dowery—and arranged for her son's engagement to Kawu, a girl who had grown up in a nearby village. Sidi and Kawu, who shares his faith, were joined in a Christian wedding ceremony in 1971 after he graduated from seminary. However, hard times were to try their union.

Early in their marriage, their four-year-old son, Danjuna, developed sickle cell anemia.

Sidi sought a job close to home and joined the staff of the Pastors' School in Kaduna, where he became an instructor in Old Testament, evangelism, church history, and other subjects. He taught there six years, during which time his family endured yet another trial—the illness and death of their younger son, Bala, from typhoid fever.

In time he recognized a need "that I should be more educated, to be more serviceable to my people," and learned the principal of the Pastors' School had obtained a full scholarship through the Nigerian Baptist Convention for him to study in the United States. He arrived in Hannibal, Mo., December 29, 1982, and enrolled for spring semester classes on the Hannibal-LaGrange College campus.

Sidi's introduction to life 6,000 air miles from home came in different packages. One exciting surprise was seeing snow for the first time, an experience he describes as "something like the rapture." He also was intrigued by the variety of foods served in the States, like pizza, and "the stuff you call catsup."

There were other challenges.

U.S. history became his most difficult subject, and he was forced to drop the course mid-semester before attempting it again. And life away from his family tended to cause him depression and despair.

"It wasn't that easy to adapt to the situation here. Many times I was down. Many times I was attending class in body, but not in spirit. But the people were really friendly. I found I was loved by almost everyone, and that helped a lot," he said.

That love was demonstrated in a very practical way last Christmas, when through the efforts of the college's Married Students Club, and the First Baptist Church of Ferguson, Mo., —whose members were moved by his testimony—Sidi received a special Christmas gift: a plane ticket home to visit his family during the four-week holiday break. The gesture touched him deeply.

"I never thought of the possibility of going back home, so I never even prayed for it," he said. "That is one of the things I will never forget for the rest of my life."

The honor student majored in theology at H-LG, and will relocate to Kansas City, Mo., to pursue graduate studies for a master of divinity degree at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. It will be three more years of study before he can return home to his wife and five children.

Once he completes his education, he will return to Kaduna where he hopes to continue on the staff of the Pastors' School, and perhaps someday be pastor of a church of his own in his predominantly Muslim nation of 90 million.

He worries about the government of his country, which he fears is "not stable." He also worries about his family, which is suffering the effects of spiraling inflation and the pressures of life without husband and father. But Sidi's commitment is firm.

"I just trust God will take care of them," he says. "I made up my mind to come back, but I can say it wasn't easy."

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Dallas Baptist College
Requests Name Change

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Baptist Press
5/30/84

DALLAS (BP)—The Dallas Baptist Board of Trustees has voted to recommend that the institution's name be changed to Dallas Baptist University.

The board's recommendation will be considered by the Christian Education Coordinating Board of the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) and ultimately by the convention itself in its annual meeting in October. If approved, the name change would become effective in January 1985.

The board also approved a change in the academic organizational structure which would change the names of the five schools which now make up the college. Each school would become a college upon the approval of university status by the BGCT.

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