



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

September 16, 1986

86-133

Unexpected Patient Surge
Offsets Price Freeze

By Craig Bird

TERESINA, Brazil (BP)—When the Brazilian government went to war against inflation last February, the Baptist Society Clinic in Teresina was a prime candidate to be an early casualty.

Of course that wasn't the government's purpose but in the struggle to combat an annual inflation rate approaching 500 percent, the facility was caught between wage and price regulations and its own nonprofit structure.

Instead, a massive—and unexpected—surge in demand for the clinic's outpatient services took the clinic from near-bankruptcy to glowing fiscal health.

"Our story might not sound like a miracle to some folks," missionary Larry York from Alabama said. "But any hospital administrator who hears it will agree God had to have had a hand in it."

Late last February, by presidential decree, prices were frozen and salaries were adjusted. Most employees of the Baptist clinic qualified for increases of about 30 percent.

"We are nonprofit and don't turn anyone away for inability to pay," York explained. Despite the inflation, the clinic policy was to adjust charges only twice a year—in November and May.

In the four months since the last increase, inflation had ripped away at the clinic's financial base and it was clear the May adjustments would come none too soon.

As he listened to the president explain the regulations York, a self-described "calm person," bit off all his fingernails. That night, for the first time in his life, he took a tranquilizer.

His wife, Karen, wondered out loud if an increase in the volume of patients could be the answer, but York shrugged it off by saying, "You don't understand."

So, along with praying, York went over the books and the legal requirements for severance pay for the 12 employees he anticipated having to lay off and calculated the clinic had three months, at best, before the cash reserves were exhausted.

Karen mailed a request for prayers to "hundreds of people" who are on the Yorks' newsletter mailing list and each day at the clinic's devotional time, the situation was the focus of prayer.

A request for a variance from the program was buried in government red tape and the state Baptist convention had its own financial problems and couldn't provide monetary assistance.

In March York's "worst case" scenario was matched, figure-by-figure, by the actual financial postings and the clinic was eight weeks from closing its doors. In April came the miracle. Consultations with the staff doctors increased to 100 percent of capacity—a 45 percent increase—and fee payments for lab tests increased a staggering 85 percent.

York found himself announcing a second pay raise (in addition to the government-mandated one), hiring additional staff and putting money aside for future needs.

—more—

Looking back York recognized God's hand in two decisions made before the price freeze. An earlier expansion "to give us years of growing room" was completed in time to house the increased patient flow, and for the first time the clinic had experimented with advertising in the telephone yellow pages, introducing them to numerous clients.

He has no doubt this miracle is one for the (accounting) books.

--30--

Involvement Of Laymen
Sought By Texas Group

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press
9/16/86

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Describing themselves as "Mainstream Conservative Southern Baptists," four Texas Baptist laymen have called on laypersons across the Southern Baptist Convention to "get involved--now" to end the controversy that has plagued the denomination the last seven years.

Speaking to a crowd estimated by host pastor James Carter at "700 to 800" at University Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Sept. 11, the laymen, all deacons, urged a restoration of trust, integrity and unity among Southern Baptists. At the same time they called for an end to the fundamental-conservative publication, "The Southern Baptist Advocate, and criticized "liberalism" they said exists in the footnotes of the Criswell Study Bible.

The four--John Baugh, president of Sysco Food Systems, Inc., and member of Second Baptist Church of Houston; W. Dewey Presley, retired president of Interfirst Corp. and member of Park Cities Baptist Church of Dallas; Connally McKay, retired appeals court judge and member of Green Acres Baptist Church of Tyler; and Maston Courtney, attorney and member of First Baptist Church of Amarillo--said the Fort Worth meeting was the first of several they plan across Texas.

No dates were announced, but the next "prayer and information" meetings, they said, will be in Abilene, San Angelo and Amarillo. Others will follow in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and Houston and other areas. All will be open to the public. They called for an end to secret meetings in the convention, especially meetings of the SBC Peace Committee.

The laymen, who said they were "just four out of hundreds" who could have spoken, said they represented no denominational agencies and were financing the meetings out of their own pockets because of "deep, heartfelt concern" for the convention. They believe in the fundamentalists of the faith but are not "fundamentalists," they said.

All four have been active in the denomination. Baugh currently is a trustee of the Texas Baptist Foundation, although he said the next meeting of the board would be his last. His term expires this year. Courtney is also on the Foundation board. Presley is a trustee of Baylor University, a member of the administrative committee of the state convention and is a member and immediate past chairman of the SBC Executive Committee. McKay has been a Baylor trustee.

The four said they had informed SBC President Adrian Rogers and Peace Committee Chairman Charles Fuller of Roanoke, Va., of their meeting plans and offered to send Fuller a videotape of the meeting if he would share it with the Peace Committee. Fuller told the Baptist Standard, newsjournal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, about an hour before the meeting began that he was aware of the meeting.

The four laymen said they also had invited the last four presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention and Pastor W.A. Criswell of First Baptist Church of Dallas, to join in their effort. "If just one would (join)," said Courtney, "trust and integrity could be restored. Pray for that man."

The four charged that political maneuvering, a "spirit of McCarthyism," "Norrisism" and deceit have placed a "creeping, unsettling chill" over the denomination. They asked laymen to seek the dismantling of political frameworks so that integrity could be restored. Among actions they suggested to be taken by laymen would be for them to keep records of "wrongdoings--violations of Proverbs 6:16-19." They are encouraging lay participation because pastors face reprisals from the current denominational power structure, they said.

--more--

They distributed forms to be used by concerned laypersons "to keep a simple record of issues about which you read or hear in order to be fully informed." The form carried the name "Laity for...the Baptist Faith and Message" with the address P.O. Box 742904, Dallas, TX 75374-2904, Phone (214) 341-2499.

Another form asked for the names, addresses and church membership of "My Southern Baptist Friends in Other Churches" and gave the same address; another asked for persons to identify themselves with "Laity for...the Baptist Faith and Message" expressing love for "our missionaries Home and Foreign, giving generously to the Cooperative Program" and "encouraging" the seminaries and other SBC endeavors.

The laymen, speaking alternately, underscored their faith in Missions Texas, the effort focusing on building 2,000 new churches in the state and in Texas Baptist and Southern Baptist Convention institutions, particularly Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth and its president, Russell H. Dilday Jr. They affirmed their support of stands the Texas convention has taken on abortion, infanticide, pornography, gambling and state-mandated prayer in the public schools.

Presley said the paramount question today is "Will the Southern Baptist Convention split?"

"It is divided now and some are determined to reach absolute political control," he said. "The convention will be split end to end unless we free ourselves of these political tentacles and begin walking together in the freedom of Jesus Christ."

The Dallas layman said the group will do four things in their meetings—give factual information, speak the truth, request information when charges are made and provide opportunities for persons to speak to charges. Their purpose, he said, is to restore "truth, integrity and mutual trust and unity in the convention affairs" and "remedy as much as possible the wrongdoings of recent years."

They singled out for particular criticism secret meetings, especially of the SBC Peace Committee, and while urging freedom of the press, nevertheless called for the elimination of The Southern Baptist Advocate, labeling the independent publication begun in Dallas and now edited in North Carolina as undeserving of the "Southern Baptist" name and "the real peacebreaker" in the convention.

Baugh said had it not been for the vitriolic July 1986 convention issue of the Advocate, which has been published spasmodically over the last six years, the layman probably would not have held last week's meeting. The Advocate, Baugh said, "irreparably shattered the peace."

Meetings of the Peace Committee, Baugh said, have been carried out in a "clandestine atmosphere" and minutes of the meeting have been sealed for 10 years to deny Southern Baptists access to the deliberations. The committee was appointed by the "political hierarchy," he said, and includes 15 "fundamentalists" among its 22 members.

Also criticized were comments in the Criswell Study Bible, Baugh, cited a soon-to-be-published book, singled out one footnote on the seventh chapter of Exodus where God turned the river to blood. The CSB explanatory note on the passage, Baugh said, states "...which suggests that the 'blood' was filtered out by the sandy soil. This is not possible with literal blood. Thus the word may suggest merely a change in color." They distributed a sheet citing other examples.

Baugh said such commentaries by others have been deemed examples of liberalism by "fundamentalists." There are other such examples of "liberalism" in the Criswell Study Bible, he said.

"They have humanized a miracle," he said. "Truthfully, who are the liberals?"

In a brief question-and-answer session capping the two-hour meeting, persons from the audience asked about interest in the SBC about solving the controversy, when the next meetings would be held and the availability of tapes of the meeting. Baugh said he is asked about it everywhere he goes. Tapes will be available, he said.

One man, who said he was a member of First Baptist Church of Dallas, asked the laymen why they felt the "more conservative" movement began in 1979.

Baugh answered that in 1979 there may have been "some cause for concern" about some institutions, but it could have been handled better than through political maneuvering. The concern "got off track" into a desire for more and more control, he said.

Baugh was asked about his relationship to Edwin Young, his pastor at Second Baptist Church of Houston, and often considered one of the leaders of the fundamental-conservative group.

Baugh said he loved his pastor and his family and praised his ability as a communicator.

He said Young has stated he is on neither side of the controversy. He cited a sermon Young preached on "Side Streets" at the Southern Baptist Convention in 1980 as evidence he had not chosen sides. Baugh said he would "find it inconceivable that Dr. Young would be anything other than consistent in applauding the expectation that our conduct will reflect the expectations of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ...."

—30—

Paige Patterson
Denies 'Liberalism'

Baptist Press
9/16/86

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—Paige Patterson, managing editor of the Criswell Study Bible, denied Sept. 12 that a footnote in the Criswell Study Bible is an example of liberalism.

Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, responded to criticism of the footnote sounded by Texas Baptist laymen John Baugh, W. Dewey Presley, Connally McKay and Maston Courtney. "The note raises a question about the nature of what kind of blood it was, exactly what the author meant by that, but it does not deny the occurrence of an actual miracle," Patterson said.

"However," he said, "the note certainly could have been clearer and could have been written in such a way, with greater care, so as to dispel anybody's idea that an actual miracle of great significance did not in fact occur."

He said "quite a number of corrections" are planned for subsequent publication of the study Bible and expressed his gratitude "for anybody who helps us out," regardless of their intentions.

He said what is already out in the marketplace can't be changed, "but we certainly never said the notes to the Criswell Study Bible were infallible and inerrant—only the text of Scripture."

"We are deeply grateful, whatever the motives may be, for anyone who points out weaknesses in the Criswell Study Bible, or for that matter anything else we do that could be construed as a denial of anything the Bible says."

He added he hopes John Baugh will apply the same standards "by which he is judging our work to that of Roy Lee Honeycutt (president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.) and the Broadman Bible Commentary and others."

—30—

Second Teacher Group
Begins Work In China

Baptist Press
9/16/86

NANJING, China (BP)—A second group of foreign teachers invited by the Amity Foundation, a service organization established by Chinese Christians, has started a year or more of work in China.

The group, which includes seven Southern Baptists, swells the ranks of Amity-sponsored foreign teachers in China to 55. Along with teachers from the first group who are beginning a second year, the new group will be teaching English, German and Japanese language courses at 36 colleges and institutions in Shanghai and the provinces of Jiangsu, Fujian and Zhejiang.

—more—

Chinese Christians formed the Amity Foundation in 1985 to undertake health, education and social services in China. It is an independent organization not formally connected to Chinese churches. Its efforts, like the Amity Teachers Project, are open to Chinese and foreigners.

The new teachers attended a four-day orientation in late August at the newly opened conference center of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. They heard presentations on the current situation in China, educational reform, language teaching, the Amity Foundation's work and Christianity in China.

"Now you have come to work with the Chinese people from within," said Ting Yen Ren, Amity educational consultant. "In coming to China, many of you leave your families behind and you are prepared to adjust to a simple, harsh life in a Third World country." Amity staff members, he told the teachers, "really appreciate your spirit of self-sacrifice."

The 55 Amity teachers now in China were recruited by 14 different church-related agencies in nine countries, according to Philip Wickeri, the organization's overseas coordinator. The seven Southern Baptists are related to Cooperative Services International, Southern Baptists' office for involvement in countries such as China where there is no missionary presence.

Another developing Amity project, a printing press for Chinese Bibles and Christian literature, recently changed sites. Foundation officials will cooperate with the Jiangning Industrial Corporation near Nanjing in constructing a plant for the press. Nanjing Normal University, the original site, withdrew from the project because it was unable to meet the technical needs of the press operation.

The Amity Printing Press, jointly supported by the foundation and the United Bible Societies, also will print other materials "of service to society," according to Amity officials.

—30—

Avoid Star, Corporate Models
Corts Tells New Orleans Students

By Breena Kent

Baptist Press
9/16/86

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—"In the quest to be number one, there's a lot of sham, a lot of pretense, and a lot of phoniness," Thomas E. Corts told faculty and students at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during the school's convocation service.

"There are two dangerous public models that have the tendency to shipwreck your ministry,... the star system model...and the corporate model," said Corts, president of Samford University. "I hope that at the end of your ministry you will be able to say you avoided the star system; you avoided the corporate model; but Jesus was your role model."

The star system, Corts said, can "take someone from almost no public recognition and make him famous," adding this system has been "allowed to permeate the affairs of the church."

"Just like television stars and sports people give out endorsements, we use the names and reputations and identities of our stars to help sell books and services," said Corts.

"And probably the most needed system among Southern Baptists is a new format for finding pastors for churches, because almost every bright young pastor has got to find someone who will be his sponsor or recommend him beyond where he already is," he said.

Corts added most stars are also performers.

"A pastor is probably best known for his pulpit performance than anything else," said Corts. "If you say he's a fantastic visitor of the unchurched, it sounds good to me, but I'm afraid that's not what (church committees) are looking for."

Corts claimed "the hottest thing around is church growth." This is what places the pressure of the "corporate model" on ministers; that is, "if there's not 5.2 percent growth, then, brother, there's something slipping in your life."

He said many statistics churches use are wrong, and "an amazing number of baptisms are rebaptisms."

—30—



BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

SO. BAPT. LIB. & ARCH.
901 COMMERCE SUITE 400
NASHVILLE, TN. 37203

NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION