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91-2

Nashville's Baptist Hospital
moves to elect board trustees

By Wm. Fletcher Allen

N-^{CO}
(QND)

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptist Health Care System board of trustees on Dec. 19 approved amendments in the charter of Nashville's Baptist Hospital which authorizes the hospital to elect its own trustees.

Currently the Tennessee Baptist Convention's committee on nominations annually presents a slate for convention messengers' approval.

The board action permits an increase in number for the hospital board and allows the board to elect its successors when vacancies occur.

Board Chairman Guy Bates, a layman from Joelton, said the corporate reorganization approved at the regular meeting was part of the board's plan "to prepare the hospital for the challenges of the 1990s." The vote was unanimous, with one abstention.

Bates said the current 27 trustees will comprise the initial membership of the new Baptist Hospital board.

"These board members know the needs of this institution and it makes sense for this group to be the responsible governing body," he added.

TBC Executive Director-Treasurer D.L. Lowrie said he was unaware of any plans for such action. He said he first learned of the move when he was reached by telephone about 7 p.m. the day of the meeting.

Lowrie said he was advised by David Stringfield, Baptist Hospital president. "I had no prior information," he said.

A letter from Stringfield explaining the board's action was delivered to Lowrie's office in Brentwood about 5 p.m., Dec. 19. Lowrie was out of town.

Lowrie said he had not yet received an official document. "We will want to review and study the situation," he said. He contacted three convention leaders by conference call Dec. 20 to schedule a meeting.

"I plan to sit down with Bill Bates, Paul Durham, and Raymond Boston and discuss the entire matter," he said. A meeting is scheduled for Jan. 10 of the executive board's Christian service committee, chaired by Boston, a Dyersburg pastor. Bates is TBC president and Durham is executive board president.

"These officers and I will withhold judgment until we see the document. Then we hope to sit down with President Stringfield and Guy Bates and see where all parties stand."

In the meantime, Lowrie said, TBC attorney Robert Taylor will study appropriate documents regarding TBC-Baptist Hospital relationships. Taylor is a former Baptist Hospital trustee.

"I have conf rred with him," Lowrie said, "and he will be ready to receive information and advise us."

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"The hospital will continue to maintain a close working relationship with Baptist churches, the Tennessee Baptist Convention, Belmont College, the Tennessee Baptist Children's Home, and other Baptist institutions," according to Guy Bates.

Stringfield and Bates agreed that the hospital will continue to be "a not-for-profit hospital providing high quality health care in a Christian environment."

The statement said the board action was effective as of Dec. 19.

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Missionary attrition rate rises;
FMB planners look for solutions

By Donald D. Martin

N-FMB

Baptist Press
1/7/91

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Overseas missions gained only one missionary for every 49 the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appointed from 1987 to 1989, according to the latest attrition report.

The figures contrasted sharply with the years 1980 through 1986, when every 49 additions resulted in a net gain of 12 overseas personnel. Thirty-seven of the 49 replaced those who had retired, resigned, completed service or died. From 1987-89, it took 48 of the 49 to replace losses.

A combination of fewer missionary appointments and slightly higher rates of resignations and retirements caused the change, reported Jim Slack, a consultant in the board's research and planning office.

Slack told trustees on the Foreign Mission Board's strategy committee in December that if such negative trends in personnel enlistment and retention are left unchecked, Southern Baptists' Bold Mission Thrust goal of having a foreign mission force of 5,000 by the end of A.D. 2000 will be in jeopardy.

But FMB leaders hope an appointment upturn recorded in 1990 will continue and that it will help reverse the recent trend. Slack said the year's final total of 414 additions is encouraging. Similar annual gains through A.D. 2000 can assure the Bold Mission Thrust goal is within reach, he said.

To reach the goal, appointments for the next 10 years must increase annually by 2.58 percent. Appointment increases have averaged 2.52 percent in the last decade. The board needs to close the gap by only 0.06 percent, Slack said.

However, the next few years are critical, he noted. If appointments do not continue to increase in these years, the board will have to appoint more than 600 people a year toward the end of the '90s to reach its goal.

Slack explained how quickly the attrition picture can change. The drop in net gain on the field occurred because the declining appointments, a slight rise in retirements and a slight increase in resignations all hit at the same time, Slack said.

"We've had equally high retirements before. We've had equally high percentages in resignations before. And we've had drops in appointments before. However, those three have never occurred in the same year. If it were not for the convergence of these three categories, we wouldn't have been moaning over what we face but rejoicing because we still have one of the lowest attrition rates" among missionary-sending agencies, Slack said.

In the 1980s, the Foreign Mission Board lost an average of 38 missionaries annually for every 1,000 in service. However, 1989's loss rate reached 47 per 1,000. What concerns mission administrators most is not 1989's loss rate -- there were two other years in the '80s when losses were higher -- but the fact that 1989 sustained a four-year trend in rising missionary losses.

The board's total attrition rate of 4.7 percent in 1989 is still below most other missionary-sending agencies. Yet, since 1986 losses have increased each year, establishing a rising trend in missionary losses. The attrition rate for 1990 is not yet available.

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Slack said the drop in appointments actually helped reveal problems that could have gone unnoticed for years.

"If appointments had been normal, say equal to 1986 when we appointed 411 new mission workers, this report would have said, 'We're doing well.' Our losses are well within highly respected categories," Slack said.

For most of the 1980s, appointments rose steadily. Annual increases more than compensated for attrition losses. The board enjoyed similar growth in two-year assignments through the International Service Corps (ISC) program. However, toward the end of the '80s a drop in appointments stripped the board of its attrition hedge and accentuated the seriousness of the increase in resignations and retirements, Slack said.

"Now we can't say we're doing great. Because of these ratios, we now have to watch it. We have to be careful with each (attrition) category," he said.

In 1990 the board reversed its enlistment decline by appointing or reappointing 236 career and associate missionaries and by placing 178 long-term mission workers overseas through the ISC program, bringing the year's final mission force total to 3,861.

Mission leaders are pleased with 1990's totals, but they recognize the upturn is largely due to ISC's record year of 178. In two years these people will return home. The board will then have to match this year's record just to stay even, said board President R. Keith Parks.

"The bigger this (ISC) group gets, the faster we have to run just to stay even," Parks said. "We would be on a much stronger upward trend if our growth had been in career missionaries, rather than in the two-year people."

So where do mission administrators look for fixes?

Mission workers leave the field in one of four ways: retirements, resignations, deaths, and completion of service. No category exists for terminations because when missionaries are fired, which is rare, they are allowed to resign. These numbers dissolve into the resignation category.

Retirements are part of the process. In the 1990s, as the board pursues its enlistment goals, large groups of missionaries who joined the board after World War II will continue to retire. In the 1980s, retirements averaged about 45 a year, reaching 84 in 1989. Potential retirements in the 1990s will average 79 a year, reaching a peak in 1995 with 93 possible retirements.

Yet mission administrators can do little except plan for these losses. Resignations are where administrators can have the greatest effect.

A growing number of resignations are occurring among missionaries who were between the ages of 28 and 32 at the time of their appointment. In 1989, this baby-boomer group accounted for 42 percent of all missionary resignations.

Missionaries also are resigning earlier in their careers. In 1989 there were 174 resignations. More than 50 percent of those resigned before completing two four-year terms. The majority said they were resigning because God was leading them into a different ministry or a "change of call."

Isam Ballenger, vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, said the reasons that lead to resignations are complicated and not easily categorized. The younger generation of new missionaries seems to approach missions with more demands, he said.

"I do see in some of the new, younger missionaries different expectations that were not there in earlier generations," he said. "They often want things well laid out for them. And I sometimes don't see evidence of the stamina of the older generations of missionaries.

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"When you consider the missionaries retiring now, after 30 or 35 years of service, there's a difference. It's not just with the missionaries, it's with staff as well. We're all probably more materialistic. We tend to want things faster, and we change more," Ballenger said.

Some missionaries don't always consider missions a lifetime commitment, he added. Some, even before they are appointed, foresee a change of call. "Some may say in the back of their minds, 'I'll go into this, but the Lord may call me into something else later.'"

Slack said mission administrators also find it difficult to identify warning signs in the earlier stages of a missionary's career that may lead to resignation. A missionary's struggles to adjust to a new language and culture often shroud deeper frustrations.

"How do you scrape away all those stresses of starting a new life in a foreign country and get at the issues that make people question their call to missions?" Slack asked.

Mission leaders say if they can help new missionaries make it through two terms overseas, they almost assure their chances of never resigning.

Betty Law, vice president for work in the Americas, heads a new committee to review how the board gathers information on why missionaries resign. Different missions on overseas fields collect that information in different ways. This has made it hard to establish problem areas to address, she said.

"Many times missionaries don't express their needs early enough," Law said. "Often by the time they state their frustrations or problems, they've made up their minds to resign. It's an irrevocable decision.

"Some think, 'If I share this it means an automatic resignation.' Well, it doesn't. It just means we now can help you," she said.

"We have to find ways to say, 'It's all right to share those concerns with us. Everyone has had the same concerns at one time or another. Let's see if we can work through it.'" When that happens, Law said, not only is a potential loss to the mission field defused, but the mission force becomes stronger.

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(BP) graph mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Christian martyr emerges
from Sudanese civil war

F-FMB

Baptist Press
1/7/91

PIBOR POST, Sudan (BP)--Civil war in Sudan has produced a martyr -- a crippled pastor named Mamma.

Mamma, stricken by polio some 10 years ago, had become pastor of a congregation among the Murle people in southern Sudan. Civil war forced his congregation to become refugees on the run. Wherever they moved, they carried Mamma on a stretcher.

Details of Mamma's death are sketchy. According to a letter received by Southern Baptist missionaries Sam and Ginny Cannata, the pastor was killed by rebel fighters as he was teaching a group of believers.

"Mamma had nothing materially in this world but he has many treasures in heaven," the Cannatas noted in reporting Mamma's death to Christians in the United States. "We believe he is walking and leaping and praising his Lord for all the churches that will spring up among the Murle people -- because the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church."

The Murle people number more than 100,000 in southern Sudan. Only 2 percent are members of Christian congregations, according to mission researchers. The remainder practice traditional African religion involving numerous gods and spirits of ancestors.

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The Cannatas' first contact with Mamma came in 1981 in the remote Sudanese village of Pibor Post, where the missionary couple was stationed from 1980 to 1984. Cannata, a physician, treated Mamma for the polio, hoping his paralysis was only temporary. But Mamma's mobility never returned and Cannata advised his family to take him home. The family, however, built Mamma a small hut nearby so he could remain near the doctor.

Before long, villagers in a literacy class led by Mrs. Cannata began telling her that Mamma also wanted to read. They insisted she visit him. Reluctantly, the missionary stopped by Mamma's hut. She showed him a book and, to her surprise, he pointed out letters he had learned from her students.

Mrs. Cannata began tutoring Mamma and soon realized he was a capable student. Mamma quickly learned to read, then began studying Bible passages newly translated into Murle. His Bible study led him to faith in Christ and, as his faith grew, a number of believers embraced him as their pastor.

In the wake of Mamma's death, the Cannatas are asking for prayer that other Murle believers will rise up to take Mamma's place in the Christian movement among their people. And they're asking for prayer that Mamma's killers "may find the Jesus that transformed Mamma's life."

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Ruling forebodes
dangers, CLC warns

By Tom Strode

N-EO
(CLC)

Baptist Press
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WASHINGTON (BP)--The death by starvation and dehydration of Nancy Cruzan forebodes even greater threats to the sacredness of human life, two staff members of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission have said.

Cruzan, 33, died Dec. 26, 12 days after a court in Missouri ruled that feeding through a tube into her stomach could be stopped. Her death at Missouri Rehabilitation Center in Mount Vernon came amidst a national debate over the morality and legality of allowing a patient to die by refusing to continue giving her food and water.

Richard D. Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, said he was "very disturbed" by the ruling that allowed Cruzan to die.

"The commission is opposed to the definition of hydration and feeding as extraordinary medical means to maintain and prolong life," Land said. "I think that the Cruzan case sets a very dangerous precedent. Americans who are clearly disturbed by this have every reason to be. It's a further sign of the erosion of the protections around the sanctity of human life in our culture."

Cruzan was admitted to the rehabilitation center in October 1983 after being severely brain damaged in an automobile accident in January of the same year. The feeding tube already had been inserted. She was not on a respirator at any time while she was at the center, said Barbara Shoun, public relations director at the rehabilitation center. Her condition was classified as a "persistent vegetative state."

In 1987 after the rehabilitation center staff denied their request, Joe and Joyce Cruzan, Nancy's parents, asked a county probate judge to authorize an end to the feeding through the tube. The case finally reached the United States Supreme Court, which ruled in June 1990 by a 5-4 vote that the state could continue providing food and water since the parents did not provide "clear and convincing" proof that Cruzan would want to be allowed to die.

The Cruzans asked for a new hearing in August before the same judge after three persons came forward to say that Nancy Cruzan had indicated to them before the accident that she would rather die than live in such a condition. The judge authorized stoppage of giving food and water through the feeding tube Dec. 14.

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"The law often has to 'draw lines' about what is right and wrong, legal and illegal. The line has been drawn to permit a family to cut off food and water to a brain-damaged patient," said Michael K. Whitehead, general counsel for the CLC, while expressing sympathy for the Cruzans.

"But if the law permits starvation, will it permit suffocation? Can a family choose to cut off air supply by covering the nose and mouth of a patient? When will the law move the line even further to permit lethal injection as a faster, more compassionate way to terminate undesirable life?"

The legal line is being tested again in the case of another patient at the Missouri Rehabilitation Center. Pete Busalacchi recently was blocked by a temporary restraining order from moving his daughter, Christine, 22, to a facility in another state. Busalacchi wants to transfer his daughter, who sustained severe brain injuries in an auto accident in 1987, to a state where the requirements for removing a feeding tube are less stringent.

Christine Busalacchi, while classified, like Nancy Cruzan, as in a "persistent vegetative state," is able to smile at particular people and to move her right hand on command, Shoun said. Busalacchi was not able to respond in such ways when she was admitted to the center three years ago, Shoun said.

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Brotherhood president projects
\$6 billion CP milestone

By Jim Burton

N-CO
(BHOOD)

Baptist Press
1/7/91

MEMPHIS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Cooperative Program's cumulative receipts since 1925 will reach \$6 billion in 1991, projects James H. Smith, Brotherhood Commission president.

"We firmly believe that Southern Baptists will reach that milestone this year," said Smith. "It is a sign of the strength of our denomination. In the midst of difficult times Southern Baptists remain committed to missions."

In 1989, Southern Baptists reached the \$5.23 billion mark. With annual giving by all Southern Baptist churches to the Cooperative Program's unified budget averaging more than \$350,000,000 per year, the \$6 billion milestone could be reached, Smith said.

Established at the Southern Baptist Convention in Memphis in 1925, the Cooperative Program will be 66 years old this summer.

"The Brotherhood Commission wants to do its part to assure that \$6 billion is reached this year," said Smith. "I am challenging Baptist Men and Baptist Young Men's units to make stewardship a matter of personal and corporate prayer concern."

Creating a stronger Cooperative Program identity among laymen is a key to continued growth in missions support, Smith said.

"Missions support is the responsibility of each Southern Baptist," Smith continued. "That support begins in the home where stewardship decisions are made. Men need to lead their family in that decision-making process."

James Powell, Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission vice president for Cooperative Program promotion, noted this milestone is significant.

"This gives people even more encouragement to look at what has been done and encourage them about what can be done in the future," he said.

Every congregation has a part in reaching Cooperative Program milestones, he continued.

"A rural country church should look at this figure and realize that it is a fantastic amount of money and that they are a part of it," said Powell.

"Regardless of the size of the congregation every congregation is participating and having a part," Powell said. "That is the real key to the Cooperative Program."

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"Some people don't understand the Cooperative Program because (they say) it is too big. The Cooperative Program is not too big, the job is big," he concluded.

The Cooperative Program unified budget for missions includes support for state convention work, church planting, Baptist colleges, children's homes and hospitals. On the national level, mission boards, seminaries, commissions and agencies receive Cooperative Program monies. There are now more than 7,300 career Southern Baptist missionaries serving in the U.S. and abroad whose ministries receive Cooperative Program support.

The Brotherhood Commission is the Southern Baptist agency charged with responsibility for missions education of men and boys. Its task assignments include praying for and giving to missions while interpreting and undergirding the work of the church and the denomination.

The Brotherhood Commission receives just under \$1 million a year in Cooperative Program funds.

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(BP) graphic mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Brotherhood Commission