

April 5, 1961

Baptists Eye Capital  
Education Aid Battle

By the Baptist Press

(March news roundup)

Southern Baptists eagerly watched Capitol Hill developments in Washington in the newest, most intense effort staged by the Roman Catholic Church hierarchy to win public tax aid for their sectarian schools.

Other developments in March--concern over their own Convention finances, a somewhat optimistic enrolment report from the seminaries, and plans for the forthcoming annual Convention session--could not capture the Baptist spotlight from the Washington debate.

That debate centered over two points--Shall the aid-to-education bill in Congress provide direct grants to sectarian Catholic as well as to public schools? and Shall loans by the government, at what many say bear interest considerably below commercial charges, be made available also to sectarian schools?

Baptists praised President John F. Kennedy for sticking to last year's presidential campaign promise he would resist Catholic efforts to secure tax aid for their schools, even though he is a Roman Catholic. The hierarchy put him on the spot in his first months in office.

Yet, even while the debate centered over federal aid to schools below the college level, this battle was likely to draw attention away from laws enabling federal grants to colleges regardless of affiliation.

Baptists have traditionally determined to keep church and state separate. They insist denominations, including themselves, must pay for the separate sectarian schools they wish to operate. If these religious-affiliated schools can not make their way on private support, then they have no right to appeal or demand government help, Baptists argue.

Baptists view the Constitution in granting religious freedom as not allowing the public treasury to support schools which teach one set of religious dogmas.

President Kennedy himself believed it would be a violation to open the public till to Catholic demands. So adamant were the hierarchy and certain Catholic congressmen and senators, it seemed a federal aid-to-education bill leaving Catholics out would face certain defeat.

Rep. Frank Thompson (D., N. J.) told a House committee studying federal aid-to-education the majority of his mail from Catholics was against hierarchy demands. Thompson noted: "I happen to be a Catholic and my mail indicates that more people of my faith oppose the hierarchy's position than support it."

A separate loan bill to aid parochial schools was introduced in the Senate. There was disagreement among eminent Constitutional lawyers as to whether such a bill, if passed, would stand review by the Supreme Court of the United States. The \$351 million, low-interest loan bill carries a provision for quick test in the courts to decide its constitutionality.

On the political scene, three Southern Baptists were appointed to posts in the new administration. Former SBC president Brooks Hays became assistant secretary of state for Congressional affairs; Paul Geren of Dallas, former envoy, became deputy director in the Bureau of Economic Affairs, and William D. Moyers, formerly newsman at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, became associate director for public affairs and secretary of the National Peace Corps Advisory Council.

An early March report showing Cooperative Program receipts for SDC agencies trailed last year at the same period by 5 per cent prompted more concern over giving. A veteran retired Baptist leader, Dr. M. A. Huggins of Raleigh, N. C., said the Cooperative Program is endangered by selfishness and by favoritism.

Seminary enrolments at eight Southern Baptist schools aren't really down, as many feared. Instead they are up for the first time in three years--when you consider summer school students in the total--a report from the Education Commission of the Convention announced.

The total reached 5931. But, the commission added, the number of ministerial students at pre-seminary levels is down by 345 over a year ago.

Plans continued for the 1961 session of the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis May 23-26. Where to house all those wanting to attend received much of the attention. Downtown hotels were reported filled; distant motels were filling rapidly.

Baptist churches along the Atlantic shore near Cape Canaveral, Fla., announced they were joining other churches in a continuing prayer vigil when America's first man launches into space. The announcement stemmed from reports the first astronaut may be rocketed upward by or during June.

The Convention's Home Mission Board appointed 16 new missionaries. The Southern Baptist Foundation, investment agency, reported a record return on Baptist money it invested during 1960--a 5.46 per cent average.

A tornado streaking along the Missouri-Arkansas border destroyed the auditorium of Friendship Baptist Church, West Plains, Mo., during a Sunday night service. The pastor's wife was killed.

Baptists joined other Fort Worth citizens in fighting to keep a brewery out of the Texas city. It would be in smelling distance of a Baptist seminary.

-30-

#### March Report Holds Gains And Losses

(4-5-61)

NASHVILLE (BP)--Although Cooperative Program receipts here for March, 1961 surpassed those of March, 1960, the Southern Baptist Convention is still 2.79 per cent below first quarter receipts of 1960.

These were contained in the monthly statement from the Southern Baptist Convention treasurer here. March, 1961 Cooperative Program receipts for SDC agencies totaled \$1,429,859 compared with \$1,408,569 in March, 1960.

For the first three months of 1961, Cooperative Program income amounted to \$4,230,125 compared with \$4,351,571 for the first quarter of 1960. At the end of February, receipts were running about 5 per cent behind a comparative two months.

Designations for March, 1961 also exceeded those for March, 1960--\$1,804,865 against \$1,484,837. With designations, however, the 1961 year-to-date totals are running 5.36 per cent above those for three months of 1960.

The comparative figures are \$8,109,461 and \$7,697,033.

First quarter designations generally reflect the amount given through churches around Christmas in the Lottie Moon Offering for Foreign Missions.

The Cooperative Program is used as the foundation of support for SDC agencies. Each one sharing according to Convention-approved scale of distribution. When a Baptist church member contributes through the Cooperative Program, his money is divided according to the scale.

Before it reaches SDC agencies, a percentage (from 55 to 80 per cent depending on the state) is kept for state Baptist missions. The figures reported by the SDC treasurer here are only for SDC agency support, not including state-retained funds.

-more-

When a member designates his offering, it is forwarded intact to the particular agency to which it is designated.

-30-

Housing's 2 Enemies:  
'No Show' And Doubler

(4-5-61)

ST. LOUIS (BP)--A strange new epidemic is plaguing the hard-pressed housing bureau here for the 1961 Southern Baptist Convention.

It's the wave of double room reservations. A double room is usually thought of as one room taking care of two people. Not so the new wave: In this case, one person makes two reservations, at different hotels.

The housing bureau is painstakingly sorting out the overlapping rooms, canceling one in order to find places for scores of other messengers still seeking a room.

The biggest headache still remains from the old enemy--the "no show." This is the fellow who, after making a reservation, fails to appear at the Convention and fails to cancel his space. It may mean some Conventioneers return home needlessly, thinking there is no room for him in St. Louis.

Over 500 "no shows" were reported at the 1954 Convention here. The housing bureau is pleading with persons who must back out to cancel their reservations in fairness to other messengers.

-30-

Tornado Wrecks Church  
In Georgia Village

(4-5-61)

UNADILLA, Ga. (BP)--Easter services of the Unadilla Baptist Church were a challenge to rebuild a "more beautiful church" as replacement for the one wrecked two days earlier by a tornado.

The storm lifted the roof off the three-story brick building which was the tallest structure in this town of 1300 population south of Macon. The walls were cracked and condemned, making the loss estimated at approximately \$100,000.

Construction started earlier in the week on a \$30,000 addition to the educational building. Work now is suspended pending plans for an entirely new church plant.

Pastor A. B. Hosea took his Easter text from Rom. 8:28, using the statement that "all things work together for them that love God." He said that through "unity, sacrifice, prayer and work will emerge a more beautiful church" to replace the storm ruins.

-30-