



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

March 2, 1966

Future SBC Approaches
Suggested for 1970's

REGIONAL OFFICES

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Editor/161 Spring Street, N.W./Atlanta, Georgia 30303/Telephone (404) 523-2593

DALLAS R. T. McCartney, Editor/103 Baptist Building/Dallas, Texas 75201/Telephone (214) RI 1-1996

WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Editor/200 Maryland Ave., N.E./Washington, D.C. 20002/Telephone (202) 544-4226

NASHVILLE (BP)--In a rapidly changing world, what approaches should Baptist churches and the Southern Baptist Convention use in the decade of the 1970's in order to best minister to a world in need?

Forty-one study groups within the denomination are in the midst of a two year study, grappling with this perplexing question. The significant answers they have suggested thus far were released recently here.

The depth study, called "'70 Onward", resulted in a 6-page "Message to the Churches and Denomination" from the 41 study group chairmen. In brief, they suggested:

--that churches project "a more effective and courageous program of sex education for our children and youth;"

--that churches get involved in the total life of the community, "engaging in fellowship and cooperation with other churches and denominations;"

--that churches increase their social ministries to meet the needs of distinctive groups such as children, the aged, the handicapped, divorced persons, alcoholics, juvenile delinquents and those with special needs;

--that denominational agencies correlate their work to avoid overlapping even if it requires consolidation and elimination of agencies or reassignment of staff responsibilities;

--that the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee continue "to explore the possibilities of a change in the name of the convention until a suitable name is found;"

--that denominational leaders "study the possibility of encouraging and promoting a spirit of brotherhood and Christian love toward those of other denominations;"

--that denominational leaders also give "encouragement and guidance in areas of inter-faith involvement when it does not compromise our convictions and witness," and that "such an emphasis by the denomination be considered to be projected for one year;"

--that the denomination "restudy and re-evaluate relationships between church and state in view of changing times and altered questions, especially as related to health and education"

The suggestions came from what is called a "grass roots" study by a cross-section of 615 Baptists representing every area of the denomination. The chairman of the 41 study groups met in Nashville last May to draft the suggestions summarizing the opinions expressed in the separate committee studies, but their suggestions were not made public until the recent Executive Committee meeting.

The Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Kansas City, Mo., during 1963 voted to ask that the grass-roots study be made. The convention will consider the long-range plan as its 1967 meeting in New Orleans.

The 6-page document was distributed to members of the Executive Committee, as information and as the opinion of the 41 study group chairmen for the 70 Onward program.

Two public opinion surveys distributed to the Executive Committee generally verified and backed up the statements, giving statistical summaries on how some Baptists feel about each of the suggestions.

The first survey was a poll of 715 Baptist denominational leaders and pastors and members of the 41 '70 Onward study groups. The second survey was sent to 537 Baptist pastors, laymen and laywomen reflecting a cross-section of the denomination.

Both surveys disclosed general agreement with the "Message to the Churches and Denomination", although agreement to some specific items was rated only "moderately strong" or "weak."

Biggest disagreement in the first survey came to the statement suggesting continued study of the SBC name change. Twenty-one per cent disagreed with the statement, and 76.5 per cent agreed, including 20.4 per cent who "mildly agreed."

-more-

Twenty per cent in the same survey disagreed with the proposal to re-study and re-evaluate relationships between church and state in the light of changing times and altered questions

About 17 per cent disagreed with calling on denominational leaders to encourage and promote "a spirit of brotherhood and Christian love toward those of other denominations."

The Message to the Churches began by saying, "Believing that we either progress or stagnate, the changing times demand changed methods, that our churches are interested in serving God and people to the best of their ability, and that our denomination wishes to serve the Lord and the churches in a more excellent way, we make the following recommendations to the churches of our fellowship in a spirit of humility and sincere earnestness, with the desire to help each church become increasingly effective and adequate in our challenging day."

One of the 20 itemized suggestions to the churches cautioned churches "to be aware of the tendency to cling to traditional concepts and practices when they do not adequately meet modern conditions and needs."

Another said, "The church must continuously re-think the institutional aspect of her life and ministry in the light of the New Testament. This may mean the presentation of a changless Christ to a changing world by a changed method."

Other statements to the churches suggested in part:

--that churches engage in long-range planning culminated in the 1970's, and that they study the nature, purpose, function and areas of work they are pursuing;

--that churches place more emphasis on the home and guard against excessive meetings and demands that will discourage family life;

--that the churches seek ways to implement the imperatives of the gospel in every area of community life;

--that the churches have a renewed emphasis upon prayer and commitment undergirding the employment of proven methods and programs of Southern Baptists;

--that the churches emphasize an improved quality of worship;

--that the churches avail themselves of the social services and resources in the community;

--that the churches guard against the tendency to meet schedules rather than meet needs;

--that the churches orientate new converts and new members, that they minister to inactive and indifferent members, and that they be more involved in "redemptive discipline;"

--that the churches study evangelism in depth and avoid a stereotyped, single method of evangelism and seek instead perennial evangelism;

--that the churches "be more discriminatory and discerning in demands for a trained as well as dedicated pastor, "and to be "careful in the ordination of ministers;"

--that sister churches in a community realize "that we are not competitors but partners in God's work;"

--that the churches guard against becoming upper middle-class in culture, and that they become "a cross-section of all redeemed humanity, who love the Lord and each other;"

One section said: we call upon the local church to cultivate a brotherly and compassionate spirit toward other Christians, feeling that we can co-operate without compromising."

Another said: "The church that does not propose to increase her specialized ministries will be left behind."

In the "Message to the Denomination," other statements recommended:

--that the denomination restudy the philosophy undergirding its Sunday School program, and that study continue on the philosophy of age-level grading;

--that study be given to "provide necessary help in bringing churches together with prospective pastors;"

--that aids be prepared for the churches to use in meeting "ethical and social obligations in the community and world about us;"

--that study be undertaken toward preparation of materials for Bible study plans suitable for families of varying ages;

--that emphases be developed toward personal involvement of churches and members in the total mission program of the convention;

--that convention agencies provide "help and instruction for our youth that will properly equip them for their confrontation with current moral and intellectual issues of the world."

-30-

Health, Education Plans
Affect Church Agencies

3-2-66

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Lyndon B. Johnson, in a special message to Congress on health and education, proposed programs which will affect Baptist hospitals, colleges, children's homes, and summer camps.

It included such areas of interest and concern as the Head Start program under the War on Poverty, the school lunch and special milk programs, aid to elementary and secondary school children, higher education, alcoholism, and family planning.

In the sweeping two-part message on health and education, the president pointed out that during the past three sessions of Congress there have been enacted "20 landmark measures in health and 19 in education." He said the appropriations for health programs had doubled and funds for the office of education had increased more than five-fold.

Among his health proposals were recommendations for (1) strengthening the system of health care, including hospital construction and renewal; (2) meeting special health needs, such as alcoholism, family planning, and nutrition for needy children through special milk and lunch programs; (3) training needed health workers; and (4) advancing research.

In education some of the measures recommended would (1) expand the Head Start program for pre-school children under the War on Poverty; (2) strengthen the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; (3) extend and expand the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963 and the Higher Education Act of 1965.

While 18 million school children will receive lunches under the school lunch program this year, President Johnson charged that too little of this assistance has been directed toward children who need it most. The same is true under the special milk program, he said.

The current school lunch program provides grants to states for lunch programs in public and private schools. The special milk program provides milk for public and private school pupils, and for nonprofit camps, homes, and other children's institutions.

The president proposed the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 which he said would channel both of these programs to the more needy children. It would assist schools serving low-income districts to acquire kitchen and lunchroom facilities, provide pilot school breakfast programs, and start demonstration summer programs to provide food service at child-care centers and playgrounds.

President Johnson also called for beginning a special food service at multi-purpose centers authorized under the Older Americans Act of 1965. This would enable local organizations to offer meals to the elderly without charge or at reduced prices.

In the health proposals, the president called the Hill-Burton program for hospital construction "an outstanding example of creative federalism in action." He made budget requests for \$270 million for facilities construction under the Hill-Burton Act. The act provides grants and some loans for construction of public and private hospitals.

The fact that one-third of the nation's hospitals "are now in obsolete condition" calls for legislation to mobilize public and private resources to revitalize them, the president said. He pointed out that this would require a loan and grant program to assist in hospital renewal projects.

However, the president said that modernization must go beyond the bricks and mortar stage. "We must find new ways to lower the cost and raise the quality of health care, to organize health services more efficiently, to develop information systems."

-more-

--that aids be prepared for the churches to use in meeting "ethical and social obligations in the community and world about us;"

--that study be undertaken toward preparation of materials for Bible study plans suitable for families of varying ages;

--that emphases be developed toward personal involvement of churches and members in the total mission program of the convention;

--that convention agencies provide "help and instruction for our youth that will properly equip them for their confrontation with current moral and intellectual issues of the world."

-30-

Health, Education Plans
Affect Church Agencies

3-2-66

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Lyndon B. Johnson, in a special message to Congress on health and education, proposed programs which will affect Baptist hospitals, colleges, children's homes, and summer camps.

It included such areas of interest and concern as the Head Start program under the War on Poverty, the school lunch and special milk programs, aid to elementary and secondary school children, higher education, alcoholism, and family planning.

In the sweeping two-part message on health and education, the president pointed out that during the past three sessions of Congress there have been enacted "20 landmark measures in health and 19 in education." He said the appropriations for health programs had doubled and funds for the office of education had increased more than five-fold.

Among his health proposals were recommendations for (1) strengthening the system of health care, including hospital construction and renewal; (2) meeting special health needs, such as alcoholism, family planning, and nutrition for needy children through special milk and lunch programs; (3) training needed health workers; and (4) advancing research.

In education some of the measures recommended would (1) expand the Head Start program for pre-school children under the War on Poverty; (2) strengthen the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965; (3) extend and expand the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, and the Higher Education Act of 1965.

While 18 million school children will receive lunches under the school lunch program this year, President Johnson charged that too little of this assistance has been directed toward children who need it most. The same is true under the special milk program, he said.

The current school lunch program provides grants to states for lunch programs in public and private schools. The special milk program provides milk for public and private school pupils, and for nonprofit camps, homes, and other children's institutions.

The president proposed the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 which he said would channel both of these programs to the more needy children. It would assist schools serving low-income districts to acquire kitchen and lunchroom facilities, provide pilot school breakfast programs, and start demonstration summer programs to provide food service at child-care centers and playgrounds.

President Johnson also called for beginning a special food service at multi-purpose centers authorized under the Older Americans Act of 1965. This would enable local organizations to offer meals to the elderly without charge or at reduced prices.

In the health proposals, the president called the Hill-Burton program for hospital construction "an outstanding example of creative federalism in action." He made budget requests for \$270 million for facilities construction under the Hill-Burton Act. The act provides grants and some loans for construction of public and private hospitals.

The fact that one-third of the nation's hospitals "are now in obsolete condition" calls for legislation to mobilize public and private resources to revitalize them, the president said. He pointed out that this would require a loan and grant program to assist in hospital renewal projects.

However, the president said that modernization must go beyond the bricks and mortar stage. "We must find new ways to lower the cost and raise the quality of health care, to organize health services more efficiently, to develop information systems."

-more-

Included in the education proposals is a four-year extension of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, and expanded coverage. This act provided education aid to children in all elementary and secondary schools in the nation.

The new proposals would raise the family income formula for allocating education aid for "disadvantaged" children from \$2,000 to \$3,000. Additional funds would be earmarked for children of American Indians and migrant workers.

In higher education the president recommended a three-year extension of the Higher Education Facilities Act of 1963, and increased loan funds for college students.

The special message to Congress called for research and the cause, prevention, control and treatment of alcoholism, for an education program to foster understanding, and for work with public and private agencies on the state and local level to include alcoholism in their health programs.

The president said he had requested a "sizable increase" in funds available for research, training and services in family planning. He stated that the nation has a "growing concern" to foster the integrity of the family and the opportunity for each child. All families should have "access to information and services that will allow freedom to choose the number and spacing of their children," he said.