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December 10, 1969

**Texas Baptists Ask Government
Program For Family Planning**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The head of the Texas Christian Life Commission told a senate committee here that further delay and inaction on the part of Congress concerning the population explosion "would be downright immoral."

James M. Dunn, presenting a resolution of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, appeared before the subcommittee on health of the Senate Labor and Public Welfare Committee in support of a bill to enlarge the government's role in planned parenthood programs.

The Texas executive was one of several witnesses appearing before the subcommittee during two days of hearings on proposals to extend family planning services. Sen. Ralph W. Yarborough (D., Tex.) is chairman of the subcommittee.

Dunn cited the action taken by Texas Baptists in their 1968 convention supporting "the right and responsibility of family planning" and urging that "full family life education must be available to all citizens, particularly to the poor and uneducated."

Specifically, Dunn said he had "clear directions" from the 1969 session of the Texas Baptist Convention to support a particular bill sponsored by Sen. Joseph D. Tydings (D., Md.). Tydings' bill calls for spending \$450 million over the next five years to expand government programs of research and to provide voluntary family planning services to all who desire them.

Under the proposal a national center for population and family planning would be created to coordinate the various government activities of public information, research and program planning and development concerning family planning and birth control.

The bill also would give authority for grants to be made to nonprofit organizations and institutions to assist in the establishment and operation of voluntary family planning projects.

Dunn told the senate group that "there is an urgent Christian thrust" for action now and that among churchmen "impatience is mounting" for increasing government action on birth control information.

"If a cure for cancer were discovered and a vaccine available, the Congress would do everything possible to make it accessible to all," he pointed out, adding: "to fail to do this kind of research and sharing of information would be murder," he warned.

"Yet with scientific advances at our fingertips that could break the chains that bind many in poverty, despair and disease," Dunn continued, "we have not taken the relatively small steps which would release thousands from their prison of ignorance."

Citing the need for research on human reproductions, Dunn said that freedom of choice is possible only when the alternatives are clear. "Thousands of American mothers do not know the options that are theirs. Death and suffering accompany this ignorance," he declared.

Dunn focused particularly on concern for the "dignity of millions of human beings." They demand, he said "that we not exhibit a careless disregard for their being brought into the world without the slightest possibility of being fed and educated decently."

This posture "has deep theological, philosophical and ethical roots," Dunn said. He explained:

* "It is one thing to replenish the earth, quite another to burden it.

* "It is one thing to acknowledge freedom of conscience, quite another to deny by inaction the facts necessary to make choice a reality for the individual involved.

* "It is one thing to accept family planning as a basic human right, quite another to assume the responsibility which is government's."

The moral values involved in the need for family planning and birth control information "add a note of urgency to the need for positive government action," the Texas Christian Life Executive challenged.

Dunn concluded by explaining that there was some confusion about the stand of church groups on the need for government action in providing birth control information. He admitted that at one time or another "every Christian denomination...has opposed birth control."

"This is no longer so," he declared

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11.4 Million Members
Estimated In SBC

12/10/69

NASHVILLE (BP)--Statistical projections based on early profile analysis indicate that membership in Southern Baptist Convention churches will be 11.4 Southern Baptist leaders were told here.

If the unofficial projections are correct, church membership would have increased by 132,500 over the 1968 total church membership.

Probable decreases were projected in Sunday School, Training Union, Brotherhood and Woman's Missionary Union enrollments, and in the number of baptisms compared to 1968. An increase was projected in music ministry enrollments.

"The churches involved in this estimate are not completely representative of all Southern Baptist churches. Some church size categories and state conventions are over represented due in part to the sequence of associational meetings," said Martin Bradley, secretary, research and statistics department, Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. However, allowance is made for this in the statistical process of projection.

The estimate disclosed a possible decline in number of baptisms from 373,025 to 368,288. This would be a decrease of 4,737 from the 1968 total.

The total Training Union ongoing and cumulative enrollment was projected to be 2,649,612 compared to 2,725,097 in 1968, a decrease of 75,485.

Sunday School enrollment was projected as 7,405,166 in 1969, a decrease of 140,347.

Woman's Missionary Union enrollments were projected as 1,291,258 for 1969, a decrease of 116,415.

Brotherhood, the men's and boys' mission education organization, was projected to decrease by 15,661 with a total enrollment of 433,077 for 1969.

Music ministry continued upward with an estimated total enrollment of 1,065,805, an increase of 27,515.

Total mission gifts were projected to be \$134,373,708 for 1969, an increase of \$6,349,977.

Final statistics based on church letters from more than 34,000 SBC churches will be released by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's research and statistics department in February.

The preliminary statistical projections were released here during sessions of the Southern Baptist Planning and Promotion Conference.

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Belmont Dean Dies In Car
During Hospital Visitation

12/10/69

NASHVILLE (BP)--Woodrow W. Phelps, 55-year-old dean of students and Bible professor at Belmont College here, died in his car of a heart attack as he was driving to visit patients at several local hospitals.

Daily hospital visitation was a long-time routine for the professor, who had taught at the Baptist school for 14 years. Previously, he was a pastor in Fort Worth, Tex.

It was the second time in a one-week period that a well-known Southern Baptist leader had suffered a fatal heart attack while driving in an automobile. William H. Pitt, capital giving and endowment services director for the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission, died four days earlier 30 miles north of Baton Rouge, La., where he was leading a fund drive.

A native of Arkansas, Phelps was a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

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