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April 5, 1971

**Baptists Join Others Opposing
Education Voucher Experiments**

WASHINGTON (BP)--Opponents of projected educational voucher experiments by the Office of Economic Opportunity carried their fight to the U.S. Congress at hearings conducted by the House Education and Labor Committee.

Rep. Carl Perkins (D., Ky.), chairman of the committee, promised that representatives of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) would be given a chance at a later date to present their views for the educational voucher experiments.

In brief, OEO is seeking to conduct educational experiments by giving parents vouchers to be cashed by the schools of their choice, either public or nonpublic. OEO by such experiments is seeking to determine whether or not "parental choice" of the schools their children attend will improve the quality of education.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, one of the 18 representatives of national organizations opposing the voucher experiments, urged Congress to continue its support of education for democracy through publicly responsible schools.

John W. Baker, acting executive director of the Baptist agency, based his position on resolutions by the American Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Baptist Joint Committee itself.

The Baptist leader pointed out that "a major contribution of the Baptist faith to the world is that a genuine religious experience is a voluntary, uncoerced response to God." This principle of voluntarism in religion is violated, Baker said, when government uses tax funds for the support of religious schools.

Continuing his opposition to the use of public funds for vouchers in church schools, Baker said that Baptists view such legislation "as an unwarranted and unconstitutional attack by the state on the religious liberty of its people."

He opposed the voucher experiments as leading "to further polarization and fragmentation in the nation" and as "poor public policy" that would divide "limited resources for education between two competing systems of education."

Two hostile educational organizations, the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers, teamed up in support of educational experiments within the framework of the public education system but in opposition to experiments that they claimed would undermine the public schools.

A coalition of eleven other civil rights, educational and religious organizations presented a joint statement to the House Committee on Education and Labor.

The stated purpose of this joint statement was twofold: (1) to stop the OEO feasibility studies and funding of voucher programs until Congress held extensive hearings on the subject, and (2) to restore OEO to its original purpose of providing programs to aid the poor rather than to engage in educational experiments.

The last two witnesses at the hearings were representatives of Americans United, long known for its opposition to public aid to parochial schools, and representatives of the National Association of Laymen, a Catholic organization that is seeking to institute reforms favorable to the laity in the Roman Catholic Church.

Ed Doerr of Americans United said that the proposed voucher experiments violate every test of constitutionality laid down by the Supreme Court on the "Establishment clause" of the First Amendment. He attacked educational vouchers as giving most aid to Catholic schools and as further dividing the nation racially, economically and politically.

Joseph O'Donoghue, executive director of the National Association of Laymen, appealed to Congress to stop the educational voucher experiments "as an unjustifiable intrusion into the internal affairs of our church."

O'Donoghue claimed that "if the government begins to support general education in parochial schools the efforts of Catholics to revise church priorities or establish alternate forms of religious instruction will be frustrated through government action."

The Catholic layman attacked the position of the Bishops of his church in seeking public aid for parochial schools as contrary to the growing desire of the Catholic people in the U.S. A. He further claimed that the Bishops in refusing to open the financial books of the church to public inspection were making it impossible to determine whether or not the Catholic church has adequate resources for the support of its schools.

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SBC First Quarter Gifts
Increase 8.9 Per Cent

4/5/71

NASHVILLE (BP)--Contributions through the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program unified budget for the first quarter of 1971 increased by 8.21 per cent over 1970 gifts, the denomination's Executive Committee reported here.

For the three-month period, a total of \$7,916,664 was given through the denomination's unified budget plan, an increase of \$600,664.

During the month of March, Baptists gave \$2.5 million through the Cooperative Program, an increase of \$136,156 or 5.09 per cent over March of 1970 gifts.

Porter W. Routh, executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee which released the financial report, said that Baptist missionaries, seminary professors and other Christian workers in the SBC should be greatly encouraged by the continued increase in Cooperative Program gifts.

Routh said that the 8.21 per cent increase in Cooperative Program gifts for the first quarter was "one of the largest quantity increases shown in several years.

"We want to thank every pastor and every church member for the new spirit of compassion and confidence reflected in this gain," Routh said, "It heralds a new day of advance for the churches."

Last month, Routh pointed out that in order for the SBC to meet its total operating budget for 1971 plus the capital needs that were not paid in 1970, Cooperative Program contributions would have to increase 7.72 per cent during 1971. To meet the total operating 1970 and 1971 capital needs allocations, an 11.48 per cent increase would be required, he said.

In addition to the \$7.9 million in Cooperative Program receipts, a total of \$15.3 million in designated gifts to specific mission causes was received in the first quarter of 1971, an increase of \$1.3 million or 9.4 per cent in designated gifts.

The \$15.3 million and \$7.9 million figures brought the grand total world mission gifts through the SBC to \$23.2 million, an increase of \$1.9 million or 8.99 per cent over grand total mission gifts for the first quarter of 1970.

Of the \$15.3 million in designated gifts received so far in 1971, \$15.1 million was given to the SBC Foreign Mission Board, most of it through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Mission.

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Of the \$23.3 million in total contributions, \$19.1 million has gone to support foreign missions, and \$1.6 million for home missions.

The financial statement, issued monthly by the SBC Executive Committee, includes only reports of contributions through national SBC channels, and does not reflect amounts given to support local and state Baptist mission programs.

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Southern Baptist To Head
United Ministry at Harvard

4/5/71

BOSTON, Mass. (BP)--A Southern Baptist campus chaplain at Harvard University, Mack I. Taylor, has been named chairman of the United Ministry of Harvard and Radcliff, an organization that coordinates the campus ministries of chaplains for 11 different religious groups on 51 campuses in the greater Boston area.

Taylor has been director of student ministries for the Greater Boston Baptist Ministries for the past two years. He will continue this full-time role in addition to his volunteer service as chairman of the interdenominational campus chaplain 's organization.

Participating groups include American Baptists and Southern Baptists, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalians, Friends, Jews, Lutherans, Methodists, Roman Catholics, Unitarians, and the Memorial Church of Cambridge, all of which have full-time chaplains recognized by the United Ministry of Harvard and Radcliff.

Only three years ago, Southern Baptists were denied chaplaincy status by the united ministries, but the president of Harvard asked the group to reconsider the decision. Taylor was recognized as chaplain two years ago.

There are more than 135,000 students enrolled in the 51 campuses in the greater Boston area.

A spokesman for the National Campus Ministries of the SBC Sunday School Board said it was highly significant for a Southern Baptist to be recognized as chairman of the group only two years after being granted chaplaincy status.

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Charlotte Church Lets Contract
On New Building Plant Downtown

4/5/71

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP)--First Baptist Church of Charlotte, where Southern Baptist Convention President Carl E. Bates is pastor, has let contracts totalling \$1.8 million for construction of a new church plant in downtown Charlotte.

The church will move its entire plant to new facilities about five blocks away where it has bought nearly two square blocks of Urban Renewal property.

Ground is scheduled to be broken on Easter Sunday, with construction expected to take from 18 to 20 minutes.

During a business session, the 2,600-member church voted to give the contract to Laxon Construction Co., to borrow \$1.5 million for the construction, and to start on a \$175,000 "extra effort" fund raising campaign.

First phase of the construction is to be an educational plant with an auditorium. A large sanctuary is to be erected at a later date.

C. C. Hope Jr., building committee chairman and Charlotte banker, said that the church had already saved \$818,000 for the building during the past seven years. The land was bought for \$439,000.

In 1963, the church considered the need for additional buildings, rejected the idea of moving to the suburbs, and instead agreed to purchase Urban Renewal land in downtown Charlotte for a new church plant.

The new location, which includes 8.5 acres, is bounded by First, Third, Davidson and Alexander streets. The current sanctuary, built in 1909, is located at 318 S. Tryon St., where the church located 94 years ago.

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