(BP) BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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

BUREAUS
ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

November 1, 1972

Coalition Hits Tax Credit Aid for Parochial Schools

By W. Barry Garrett

NEW YORK (BP)--Twenty national religious, educational, labor and civil liberties organizations in a joint statement condemned proposals for tax credits for tuition payments in church-related private schools.

The group, which included James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, also criticized both President Richard Nixon and Senator George McGovern for endorsing the scheme to give federal aid to the nation's parochial schools.

The statement, issued prior to the November 7 election, was the first act of a developing national coalition to deal with current problems in the church-state field. Future plans for th "consortium" will be to formulate the organization's objectives, to plan for activities in the legislative arena and to hold a national public conference on church-state problems.

The temporary chairman of the consortium is Alan Reitman of the American Civil Liberti s Union.

Wood, commenting on proposals before Congress, said that "there can be no question, as both advocates and opponents have affirmed, but that proposed legislation providing tax credits against tuition payments to nonpublic schools is primarily and specifically aimed at providing government support of parochial schools."

He continued: "This bold step toward government subsidy of schools must be viewed as a threat to the First Amendment and the separation of church and state. Meanwhile, it raises serious questions about the future of the public schools of America which remain, expressly because of state support, bound both to the 'no establishment' and 'free exercise clauses of the First Amendment."

The statement by the 20 organizations took the position that the tax credit proposals for aid to private schools are "contrary to the principle of separation of church and state inherent in the First Amendment's freedom of religion clauses."

The group said that the operational effect of tax credits to parents paying tuition to sectarian schools would be the same as other forms of governmental aid that have been declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

"For more than a hundred years, indeed until very recently," the statement continued, "it has been taken for granted that the separation principle, embodied in the First Amendment, prohibits government financing of church schools.

"Under that interpretation of the First Amendment, and of similar provisions in virtually every state constitution, both religion and government have enjoyed a freedom in this country unparalleled elsewhere. That freedom would be seriously impaired by the enactment of tax credit legislation."

The statement further declared that both President Nixon and Senator McGovern have misjudged the climate of public opinion on public aid to parochial schools. It charged that the proposals ar projected on the false ground that the only way to sav private schools is by massive governmental assistance.

-more-

The consortium opposed the "diversion of federal financing to sectarian schools throught tax credits" as a move to "gravely impair national efforts to end racial segregation in our educational system."

Organizations signing the statement are: American Civil Liberties Union, American Ethical Union, American Federation of Teachers, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, American Humanist Association, American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Americans United for Separation of Church and State;

Central Conference of American Rabbis, Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty, Jewish Labor Committee, National Association of (Catholic) Laity, American Association of School Administrators, National Council of Jewish Women, National Education Association, National School Boards Association, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Unitarian-Universalist Association, United Methodist Church, Board of Church and Society and United Synagogue of America.

-30-

Texas Executive Patterson
Announces Retirement Plans

11/1/72

ABILENE, Tex, (BP)--T.A. Patterson, executive secretary of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, told messengers to the annual convention here he plans to retire at the end of next year after 13 years as head of the nation's largest Baptist state convention.

Patterson, 66, will retire Dec. 31, 1973. He will reach the retirement age of 68 in April, 1974.

Under a procedure recommended by a special study committee in 1969, the Executive Board of the Texas convention would appoint a special 14-member nominations committee to select a successor to Patterson. Final decision on selection procedures will be made when the board meets Dec. 12.

During a 43-year career in the ministry, Patterson, a native of Floyd, Tex., has held seven pastorates in Texas and Oklahoma. Before assuming the top Texas Baptist post in 1961, Patterson wer pastor of First Baptist Church, Beaumont, Tex.

Previously, he had been pastor of churches in Dallas, Fort Worth, Colorado City, Roscoe, and Whitesboro, Tex., and in Hollis, Okla.

He has held many responsibilities on local, associational, state and national Baptist levels, and was president of the organization of Baptist state executive secretaries.

He is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth,where he earned the doctor of theology degree. Hardin-Simmons has also granted him an honorary doctorate.

-30-

BAPTIST PRESS

460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

LYNN MAY HQ
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE. NO.
NASHVILLE TN 37203

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention