

December 12, 1974

74-98

**Inflation Abroad Skyrockets;
Mission Funds Fell the Pinch**

By Mary Ann Ward

RICHMOND (BP)--Many Americans are outraged about inflation. Some are seriously suffering. Most simply pay the new price, "bite the bullet" and go their merry way.

For many Southern Baptist missionaries, the problem is much more serious.

They have to pay exorbitant prices for some goods purchased overseas--\$2.12 for a box of cornflakes in Ethiopia, \$1.51 for a 15 ounce can of corn in the Ivory Coast, \$2.50 a pound for hamburger in Tokyo, and almost one dollar for either a can of frozen orange juice or a box of facial tissues in the Bahamas.

High prices for a few items don't begin to tell the story, though. Many factors, including the devaluation of the American dollar, greatly increased oil prices, inflation in the United States and other countries, have hit the missionary where it hurts--his or her billfold.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission board has had to budget \$3.5 million more for 1975 to support missionaries than it did in 1974.

While some prices in other countries might not seem too bad by United States' standards, they still are devastating to missionary morale. If a housewife here could take a shopping spree in the Philippines she'd find bananas are three cents each--a real bargain. To her maybe--but the missionary says, "Not so." Last year bananas were a penny a piece--inflation at 200 per cent.

In the Ivory Coast one kilo (about 2.2 pounds) of rice had gone up to 74 cents in August from 38 cents in January. Mrs. James W. Smith in Israel said the medium jar of mayonnaise that cost 45 cents in January was \$1.20 in September, before a recent devaluation of Israel's currency.

Herbert D. Billings in Guatemala reported electricity jumped 96 per cent on October 1. In Ethiopia, the land rover purchased by the mission for \$7,000 five years ago now costs \$14,000.

In some countries missionaries pay prices equivalent to the United States, but they're also affected by inflation because in many of those places it wasn't too long ago when prices were much less than stateside prices.

What are missionary families doing to adjust to changing economic patterns? Robert L. Stanley in the Philippines reports that most missionary families in Manila are using air conditioners sparingly and are turning hot water heaters on only once or twice a week because electricity is so expensive.

G. Edwin Engstrom, who directs a dormitory for missionary children in Manila, said the dorm has eliminated use of all air conditioners and only turns on the hot water two nights a week.

In the Bahamas, missionary Antonina Canzoneri bought a freezer to economize while Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Brown have stopped eating out once a week and she now only uses her clothes dryer for permanent press, hanging out the others.

Mrs. David L. Martin in Trinidad said her family changed its eating habits. This means less meat, more beans, dried peas and cheese, fewer items at each meal and using more bread to fill out the meal.

"We have steak once a quarter, literally," she said.

Mrs. Martin said missionaries buy wholesale goods when they can. She even buys her hairspray wholesale at a factory.

Missionaries in the Ivory Coast also buy wholesale. When they found food companies would sell wholesale to missionaries as a group, they began buying food by the case and dividing it among the mission families.

"The wife must spend her time bargain-hunting in order to feed and clothe the family," said Mrs. Charles V. Whaley Jr., missionary to Japan.

Mrs. Martin said missionaries seldom do the quick thing because its usually the most expensive thing. This means instead of using frozen and convenience foods, meals must be prepared from scratch.

"We don't just walk in, look in the freezer and set out a quickie meal," she said.

Although all missionary wives have "homemaker" in their job description, time spent shopping for bargains and cooking meals from scratch (making bread instead of buying it, making their own mayonnaise, using fresh vegetables instead of cans or frozen, etc.) is time that most would rather spend doing some ministry-related task.

Cost-of-living adjustments are a standard part of the Foreign Mission Board's missionary support structure, according to Winston Crawley, director of the board's overseas division.

The amount of the supplement is determined in relation to different costs-of-living in different settings, Crawley said. Currency exchange rates, availability of goods and services, differences in living patterns and rates of inflation are taken in account to determine the amount of income adjustment for missionaries in each country. The basic intention of the board, Crawley said, is to provide and maintain for each field roughly the same basic purchasing power for missionaries.

Missionary James O. Teel Jr., in Argentina said the board has kept up with the times. "In spite of run-away inflation and complicated matters of exchange and cost-of-living within each country," he said, "somehow cost-of-living adjustments are made in time to avert dire financial difficulties for missionaries. I am grateful for this, and for the fact that the Foreign Mission Board has remained on such a sound financial basis."

Ordinarily, cost-of-living adjustments are made annually in the operating budget. But when inflation or decline in exchange rate is as much as eight to 10 per cent in a calendar year, Crawley said, the board may take emergency action.

Even then, Robert Stanley (Philippines) said inflation is so rapid now that "Adjustments seldom can be made quickly enough to avoid some budget-stretching."

Mr. and Mrs. Wayne L. Hasenmeyer in Japan were hindered in their evangelistic outreach when they couldn't begin work on time. They finished language school in Tokyo and planned to move directly into pioneer evangelism on the northern island of Hokkaido. Their move was delayed because of rising construction costs of their home. "Their simple house with three small bedrooms cost 300 per cent as much as it would have cost seven years ago," according to Mrs. Whaley.

In Israel, Mrs. Smith said, "We are reluctant to launch any new projects because we can't depend on the financial picture being in focus from day to day."

Devaluation of Israel's currency now provides some relief, but prices will probably rise further to cause a pinch again, according to Crawley.

In making necessary allocations to protect missionary income from over-all decline, the board has had a reduced buying power left for capital needs, support of institutions and other aspects of our work budgets, Crawley said.

What the board does and will do in the future is up to Southern Baptists. "History has indicated that Southern Baptist giving has run slightly ahead of inflation in the United States, but in worldwide inflation, we're losing ground," said Jesse C. Fletcher, director of the board's mission support division.

"We have only one safety valve and that's proportional giving by Southern Baptists," he said.

**Baptists Join in Brief
Against Parochial Laws**

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Baptist body here joined other religious, educational and civil liberties organizations in a "friend of the court" brief before the U. S. Supreme Court seeking to overthrow two Pennsylvania laws that provide state aid for parochial schools.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, of which James E. Wood Jr. is executive director, joined the other groups in this appeal to the Supreme Court believing that the principle of religious freedom is jeopardized by the provisions of the two Pennsylvania laws.

Commenting on the brief, Wood points out that "the Baptist Joint Committee is continuing a role it has exercised for the past 27 years, namely of expressing through judicial means its opposition to legislation that is aimed at providing public funds to schools maintained by religious institutions."

Wood further observed, "These Pennsylvania statutes must be regarded as circumventing both the letter and the spirit of the establishment clause of the First Amendment as well as being in conflict with Supreme Court decisions which since 1947 have clearly and consistently prohibited public funds to parochial schools."

In taking his position, Wood defended "both the right and role of church schools in our free society." He further defended the previous decisions of the Supreme Court denying public funds to church schools as right "for the future of both the church and state in America."

The case is known as Meek V. Pittenger. A three-judge district court ruled that the Pennsylvania statutes involved are not in violation of the state and federal constitutions. The decision was appealed to the U. S. Supreme Court, which noted probable jurisdiction on Oct. 15, 1974. Oral arguments in the case will be scheduled sometime early in 1975.

The statutes at issue (Act 194 and Act 195 in 1972) provide various forms of aid for the operation of church-affiliated and other nonpublic elementary and high schools in Pennsylvania.

Under Act 194 the public school authorities are required to furnish "auxiliary services" to children in nonpublic schools on the premises of their schools up to a cost of \$30 per pupil. The program includes guidance, testing, remedial and "such other secular, neutral, non-ideological services as are of benefit to nonpublic school children and are presently or hereafter provided for public school children" in Pennsylvania.

Act 195 requires the state to purchase and to lend to nonpublic school pupils "textbooks which are acceptable for use in any public, elementary, or secondary school of the Commonwealth," up to a limit of \$10 per child.

Also, Act 195 requires the state to purchase and to lend "instructional materials and equipment" to nonpublic schools, up to a limit of \$25 per child. "Instructional materials" are defined as books, records, tapes and films and "such other secular, neutral, non-ideological materials as are of benefit to the instruction of nonpublic school children."

The question which the Baptists and the others in their brief asked the Supreme Court to decide is this: do the provisions of the Pennsylvania laws which provide the above services, instructional materials and equipment for church schools violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution? This clause states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." It is made applicable to the states by the Fourteenth Amendment.

Previously, the Supreme Court has invalidated state laws giving public aid to church schools if they violated any one of three tests: do the provisions have a sectarian purpose, do they have a sectarian effect, and do they involve excessive entanglement of church and state in their administration?

The contention of those filing the brief is that the Pennsylvania laws violate all three tests.

In addition, it is contended that the laws, if they are continued in effect, would violate political entanglement of church and state. The brief asserts that "each time they were to be

financed, the legislature would be embroiled in conflicting efforts to have their amounts increased or reduced."

In an earlier decision, Board of Education V. Allen (1968), the Supreme Court upheld a New York law providing textbooks for children in parochial schools. The brief of the religious, civil liberties and educational groups asks the Supreme Court to review this decision as it relates to the Pennsylvania textbook law.

The brief contends that the textbook program as approved by the court for New York "has not worked out as expected." It declares, "In the absence of careful policing, sectarian books have in fact been financed out of state funds. This fault in the program cannot be corrected without an impermissible degree of administrative entanglement."

The educational groups joining in the friend of the court brief are the American Association of School Administrators and the National Education Association.

Church groups, in addition to the Baptists, signing the brief are the Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church and the Unitarian Universalist Association.

The Jewish groups include both religious and civil liberty interests. They are the American Jewish committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Jewish Labor Committee, Jewish War Veterans, National Council of Jewish Women, Union of American Hebrew Congregations and United Synagogue of America.

-30-

Zaire Declares Dec. 25
No Longer National Holiday

12/12/74

The government of Zaire has decided that December 25 will no longer be a national holiday. Baptists in the country report that they will still observe Christmas, perhaps with more special meaning than ever before.

People in Zaire may celebrate Christmas in their homes and churches, but schools and businesses will be open December 25. Throughout the time of Belgian rule in Zaire (formerly the Congo), December 25 was a national holiday. The decision to abolish the holiday is part of the now independent government's national movement toward "l'authenticite," appreciation of the African heritage and a reevaluation of Western influences, according to a report from the Baptist World Alliance.

-30-