

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

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, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

December 20, 1974

74-102

**Government, Private Groups
Move to Feed Hungry People**

By Stan Hasteay

WASHINGTON(BP)--Protestant, Catholic and Jewish spokesmen joined here in calling on the U. S. Government to provide immediate food aid to help relieve the growing hunger crisis in the world.

The religious leaders appeared before an ad hoc committee of U. S. senators, who conducted a day-long hearing on the hunger crisis. The hearing was chaired by Sen. George S. McGovern (D.--S.D.), who also serves as chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs.

McGovern, who along with a number of other national legislators attended the recent World Hunger Conference in Rome, has introduced a resolution in the Senate calling for increased U. S. spending to meet the immediate food needs of the starving in Bangladesh, the Sahelian area of Western Africa, India and other parts of the world.

McGovern's resolution specifically calls for a 10 percent reduction in military spending by the United States, the Soviet Union "and the other nations of the world." It also challenges the oil producing nations to set aside 10 percent of "their increased revenues."

McGovern claims that those two steps could result in making \$27 billion available for spending on hunger in the immediate future. He recommends that such funds be administered through the world food authority "for the express purpose of alleviating hunger in the world and developing the productive capacity of the world's agricultural economy."

The senator's plan to cut military spending and increase food aid is not given much chance of passage in the current session of Congress.

Although no official Baptist representative was present at the hearing, more and more Baptist persons and families concerned about the hunger crisis are discovering denominational channels through which to contribute directly to the starving.

Both Carl W. Tiller, an associate secretary and coordinator of relief for the Baptist World Alliance (BWA), and J. Winston Crawley, director of the overseas division for the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), told Baptist Press that designated contributions for meeting the needs of the world's hungry have increased over the past few months.

Tiller said that contributions from U. S. Baptists have been heavier than usual recently because of the wide publicity given to starvation conditions in Western Africa and to the devastating hurricane in Honduras.

"In the Sahel zone of Africa," he said, "most of the work has been done through Southern Baptist Convention missionaries." During May of this year, Tiller spent some time in Western Africa observing the needs first hand. He had high praise for SBC representatives there, saying they "have done a whale of a job."

Crawley likewise indicated an upsurge in donations sent directly to the Foreign Mission Board for distribution in particularly hand-pressed areas. "We have been receiving larger sums than in the past two or three years," he said, stating further that not since the disastrous civil war between Pakistan and Bangladesh have contributions run so high.

Like the BWA, the Foreign Mission Board has been receiving gifts designated for world hunger or more specifically for given geographical areas affected most severely by food shortages.

-more-

Both Tiller and Crawley emphasized the direct manner in which Baptist monies are administered so as to insure that the needy actually receive the full benefit of relief funds.

Tiller indicated that most BWA funds are administered through SBC mission personnel. "It all gets to the missionaries and there is no graft involved," he commented. And, he added, "The relief is given in Jesus' name."

Crawley pointed out that funds for hunger sent to the Foreign Mission Board are likewise channeled to missionaries and churches in needy areas where they are in turn passed along directly to the hungry.

Another indication of growing Baptist concern about hunger was the adoption of resolutions on the subject by at least nine separate state conventions during recent annual meetings. The Texas, North Carolina, Indiana, Mississippi, Arizona, Michigan, Florida, Kentucky, and District of Columbia conventions faced the question head-on.

At least one state convention, the Alabama convention, has initiated a state-wide effort to raise funds for the hungry, and Baptist leaders in Georgia and Texas have also taken steps to initiate action.

Planners of Freedom '76, a national conference for Baptist students and young adults, set Dec. 28-31, 1975, in San Antonio, Tex., will ask 10,000 expected registrants to contribute to hunger relief.

All these efforts indicate that Baptists, like many other Americans, are gearing up for a major effort to help alleviate the suffering of the hungry and starving throughout the world. Unlike many others, however, Baptists have the institutional machinery already in operation to insure that funds for hunger will be sent directly to the needy with a minimum of red tape and administrative expense.

-30-

Projected SBC Statistics
Show 1974 Increases

12/20/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--According to statistical projections released by the Southern Baptist Convention, the denomination continued to grow in 1974, with an increase of 220,000 church members, over \$200 million in mission expenditures for the first time, and the fifth highest number of baptisms in the convention's 129 year history.

The preliminary statistics, compiled by reports received from 23,278 of the 34,665 Southern Baptist churches, indicate increases in church membership; Sunday School, church music, Women's Missionary Union and Brotherhood enrollment mission expenditures; and total financial receipts.

Decreases are predicted in baptisms and Training Union enrollment. However, projected baptisms only decreased 0.27 percent to a total of 412,872, the fifth highest number in Southern Baptist history. This marks the fourth year in succession that the number of baptisms have exceeded 400,000. Prior to 1971, the convention experienced nine successive years in which baptisms were under 400,000.

The 1974 Church Training enrollment projections, which do not include new member or leader training registration, showed only a 1.77 percent decrease as compared with a 4.6 percent decrease in 1973. This represents a projected decrease of 34,500 church training members. Further projections of favorable change in church training statistics indicate that for the first time in several years, there was no loss in the number of churches reporting church training programs.

These projections should be "very close" to the final official figures which will be released in February, 1975, according to Martin B. Bradley, manager of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's research services department. At the time, the projections were computed, approximately 12,000 churches (about one-third of the total number of churches) had not reported.

For several years church membership has been increasing at approximately two percent each year and 1974 will be no different. Church membership is expected to reach the 12,517,468 mark, reflecting a gain of 220,122 or 1.79 percent.

-more-

The projections indicate an 11.5 percent increase in total financial receipts amounting to \$1,343,702,755. For the first time since 1966, the percentage of mission expenditures was greater than the percentage of total receipts. Mission expenditures showed a projected increase of 12.1 percent for a total of 216,969,463. This indicates the first time mission expenditures have exceeded \$200 million.

School enrolment continued to increase in 1974, according to the projections. The estimate indicates a 0.09 increase or 6,646 members, setting the total at 7,189,014.

If the projections are correct, the church music enrollment continued to climb in 1974. Statistics indicate a 4.98 percent increase or 62,381 members for a total of 1,315,009.

Brotherhood enrollment is expected to increase 1.07 percent. A gain of 4,934 members is projected for a total enrollment of 466,014.

After a 2.1 percent decrease last year, Woman's Missionary Union gained 21,718 for a 1.97 percent increase. Total WMU enrollment is expected to be 1,124,150.

These preliminary figures were reached by computing the actual figures from 23,278 churches, then projecting through statistical means the expected reports from the nearly 12,000 remaining churches.

Weighting factors were added to give an acceptable degree of accuracy to these projected figures for planning and decision-making purposes in the denomination, says Bradley.

-30-

Paul Stevens Slated
For NBC's Today Show

12/20/74

FORT WORTH(BP)--Paul M. Stevens, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, will be one of five clergymen interviewed on the National Broadcasting Company's Christmas Day broadcast of the Today Show.

Jim Hartz, Today Show host, will moderate a two-hour panel discussion on the role of religion in America today.

Joining Stevens on panel will be W. Sterling Cary of New York, president of the National Council of Churches; Brian Heher of Washington, director of the division for justice and peace, U. S. Catholic Conference; Jesse Jackson of Chicago, a black Baptist preacher and president of People United to Save Humanity; and Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum of New York, national director of inter-religious affairs, American Jewish Committee.

Some of the topics the ministers will address will include Christmas, Watergate and its moral and spiritual implications, the role of women in religion, whether there is a general drifting away from organized churches and its reasons, events that will bring people back to God, social activity in churches and synagogues, the ecumenical movement and world concerns versus politics.

"This means that Southern Baptists will be represented on the national television networks three times in less than two weeks," Stevens said.

Besides the Today show appearance Stevens will appear five days later on ABC's year end Directions program on Sunday, Dec. 29. That program will be a panel discussion titled "Religion '75." On Sunday, Jan. 5, NBC will air the first of its 1975 religious specials with "The Golden Spring," produced in cooperation with the SBC Radio-TV Commission. "The Golden Spring" studies the renaissance and its spiritual impact on religion, education and art.

-30-