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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Congressman Favors Repeal
Of 'Integrated Auxiliaries'**

By Carol Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--"I enjoy an occasional chance to kick (the) Treasury (Department) in the face," a powerful congressman said at a Baptist conference on "Taxation and the Free Exercise of Religion" here.

U. S. Rep. Barber Conable (R.-N.Y.), ranking minority member of the House Ways and Means Committee, which must consider all tax legislation, said he would be glad to consider introducing a bill into the Congress which would repeal the 1969 provision which added the term "integrated auxiliaries" of churches to the tax code.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS), a subdivision of the Treasury Department, issued regulations defining "integrated auxiliaries" after Congress used that language.

Numerous religious groups have protested the regulations, claiming that by defining what is an integrated auxiliary of a church, government has stepped into unconstitutional territory and tried to define religion. Not only do the churches disagree with the definitions the IRS has offered, they object to government assuming the right or ability to do so at all.

Conable also noted that most taxpayers assume that "tax reform" means "tax relief." "That isn't so," he said. "We, in Congress, mean 'revenue neutral' when we talk about tax reform. What we give you in apples we'll take away in oranges."

To illustrate his point, Conable explained that raising the standard deduction, a priority of the administration, would probably hurt charitable giving. As the standard deduction rises, more taxpayers use that rather than itemizing their tax returns. The tax incentive for charitable giving is therefore decreased, Conable suggested.

On the other hand, a proposal that may be a part of President Carter's tax reform package would replace the charitable deduction with a tax credit for charitable giving, Conable said. This would be allowed on top of the standard deduction. He theorized that this would encourage increased charitable contributions.

John W. Baker, associate director of research services of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, asserted that "inequality of treatment is built into the Internal Revenue Code and into the regulations of Internal Revenue Service."

Baker stressed that this inequality is not deliberate but rather the result of differences in church structure among American religious bodies which government does not understand.

He described three classes of churches: hierarchical, quasi-hierarchical, and congregational. The organizational structures of these groups range from those with clear lines of control, responsibility, and authority to those without such lines of control, according to Baker.

Most tax regulations, Baker said, fail to take these differences into consideration and thus discriminate against religious groups in all three classes.

Baker suggested that churches must assume responsibility for educating both church members and lawmakers about these differences and challenge unequal treatment wherever it occurs.

Southern Seminary Gains
An 'Ogbomosho Campus'

LOUISVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary here, which in 1950 became the first educational institution to offer degrees in the nation of Nigeria, will resume that practice in a newly-revised agreement with the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary at Ogbomosho.

The relationship, established this summer in a visit to Ogbomosho by Southern Seminary Provost Roy Lee Honeycutt, restores the degree-granting function of the Louisville seminary.

From 1950 through 1968, Southern Seminary awarded degrees in cooperation with the Nigerian school. In 1968 the degree-granting focus shifted to the West African seminary.

Re-establishment of the practice by Southern Seminary's board of trustees will allow the Louisville institution to once again grant degrees, diplomas and certificates to graduates of the Nigerian seminary, which will function as an "operationally-separate unit" of Southern.

The action comes as a result of requests from the Nigerian seminary, the Nigerian Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Honeycutt explains.

Graduates of the Nigerian seminary often teach in public schools in that country, but were not being certified as university-trained teachers by the government because of the lack of a government charter for the Baptist seminary. (Nigerian universities are controlled and chartered by the government). As a result, alumni of the seminary received less compensation than university-educated teachers.

"Government officials account the affiliation of the Nigerian seminary and the Louisville seminary as an acceptable avenue of accreditation" because of Southern Seminary's accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Honeycutt said.

Honeycutt said the Nigerian government has recognized the school because of the revision and is able to certify alumni of the seminary as university-level teachers in Nigerian schools.

The current catalog of the African school includes an insert identifying the institution as the "Ogbomosho campus of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary." Southern's President and provost will sign diplomas granted to graduates of the Nigerian school. Southern Seminary's board of trustees will elect the Ogbomosho school's board of governors from nominations by the Nigerian Baptist Convention, and will elect faculty members through recommendations of the board of governors.

The relationship has met with a "very enthusiastic response" among Nigerian Baptist leaders, Honeycutt says.

Honeycutt describes the current relationship is "unique," noting that he knows of no other American seminary which has a degree-granting status with a foreign seminary. He said the Ogbomosho school "is the only school in Nigeria with an external relationship with a foreign accredited school."

Cole Resigns Editorship
For Baylor Post

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Baptist Press
10/6/77

WACO, Tex. (BP)--James F. Cole, editor of the Baptist Message, Alexandria, La., for 20 years, has resigned effective December 1 to become executive director of the Baylor University Alumni Association here.

Mrs. Dorothy Kronzer of Houston, national president of the alumni association, said Cole will assume his new position January 1 as successor to Raymond L. Vickrey who will become minister to single adults at First Baptist Church, Richardson, Tex.

Cole was pastor of First Baptist Church, De Ridder, La., prior to assuming the editorship of the weekly Louisiana Baptist newspaper. Before that he was a Texas pastor.

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He is a graduate of Union University, Jackson, Tenn., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth and did graduate study at Baylor and Columbia University. He holds a doctor of divinity from Louisiana College.

His wife, the former Helen Witten of Houston and daughter, Carolyn, now a social worker in Waco, are Baylor graduates.

Cole, immediate past president of the Baylor Alumni Assoc. and former president of the Southern Baptist Press Association, has served on various boards and agencies of the Louisiana Baptist and Southern Baptist Conventions.

The Baylor Alumni Association currently has about 40,000 members. Association offices are scheduled to be moved into the new \$500,000 Hughes-Dillard Alumni Center on the Waco, Tex., campus in February.

The Baptist Message board of trustees was scheduled to meet October 17 to name a committee to seek Cole's successor as editor.

Churchman, Lawyer Defend
Churches in Public Life

-30-

Baptist Press
10/6/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--Churches must work corporately if they are to be effective in helping achieve justice in society, William P. Thompson, president of the National Council of Churches and stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, declared here.

Some of the demands of the gospel may be met by individuals, Thompson told a Baptist conference on "Taxation and the Free Exercise of Religion." "But some," he declared, "can only be met on a broader basis: justice is less an attribute or achievement of individuals than it is of systems and structures of society, which can be corrected only by other forces such as the church, acting with full corporate intention as the obedient Body of Christ."

Thompson asserted that any retreat from corporate participation of the church in public affairs would be regression. "To insist that the church pursue justice and righteousness without affecting the public policy and law of the land, or to do so only through the intervention of individual members in dispersion, is to condemn it to frustration and futility," he continued.

Despite charges by some that church participation in public affairs is new and improper, Thompson said, "It should be plain that 'attempting to influence legislation' is for the churches not an innovation or an aberration but a part of their obedience. The 'innovation' is that there should be any connection between that aspect of their obedience and tax exemption."

Congressional action in 1934 which added the "substantiality" test to the tax code limits the attempts of nonprofit organizations to influence legislation to a proportion of activities which are not a "substantial part of the activities" of such an organization, he explained.

"Substantial" remained undefined until 1976 and, as a result, "many public charities were afraid to engage in any legislative activity...to the greater impoverishment of the public dialogue so essential to effective Democratic processes," Thompson said.

In 1976 "substantial" was defined on a sliding scale for nonreligious charities. Churches chose to remain under the old rules, deciding "it was better to live with the Devil they knew than the Devil they didn't and so remained under the fuzzy ambiguities of present law rather than seeking the deceptive clarities of the new section," Thompson said.

Thompson reminded the conference participants that "the churches were here before the Constitution or the commonwealth. They have dealt with many kinds of empires and economies and survived them all.

"They will continue to try to carry out their mission in whatever circumstances they find themselves...In the course of that mission, and as an essential part of it, they will try to call the nation to a condition of greater justice, righteousness and compassion, and if that includes 'attempting to influence legislation'--as it invariably will--then so be it," he declared.

In another address, a prominent New York attorney, who specializes in tax law, said that churches should not feel guilty over their exemption from real estate taxes because churches are not "ripping off the taxing authorities" by such exemption.

Frank Patton Jr., an attorney with the Guild of St. Ives, said further that in his view churches should not make voluntary payments to local governments to compensate for their tax exempt status.

"There's no reason at all for churches to feel they are trampling on the rights of elderly widows and other municipal tax-paying residents," he said.

Patton told conference participants that real estate tax exemption is not "handed out on a platter" by cities and other municipalities, but "it must be worked for."

The Union Theological Seminary trustee went on to say that such exemption "is as firmly established in this country as almost any legislative tradition could be" and is practiced in all 50 states. Such a tradition has been established by "enlightened legislatures," which "have recognized through exemption and other tax benefits the importance of churches to society," he said.

Patton reminded his audience that churches constitute only one category of organizations exempt from real property taxes. Others include schools, hospitals, cemeteries, other charitable groups, and most of all government itself.

Regarding fire and police protection and the feeling in some circles that churches should make voluntary contributions to help defray those costs to communities, Patton quoted from a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1971 (Walz v. Tax Commission) that such protection amounted to "no more than incidental benefits accorded all persons or institutions."

Patton said that in his view, a "more fundamental" problem is that churches themselves question "whether they really are worth their tax exemptions." He went on to argue that "a vigorous parish may be of inestimable benefit to the community."

As a consequence, he concluded that "churches have, or ought to have, far better things to do with their money than to make payments in lieu of taxes to the local government. If the church is not doing better things with its money, then it ought to re-think its mission."

-30-

NOTE TO EDITORS: A wrapup on the conference on "Taxation and Free Exercise of Religion," sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, will be mailed Friday, Oct. 7.