

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

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

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Richard T. McCartney, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1998
MEMPHIS Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) L. Bracey Campbell III, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, 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) 544-4228

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**Churches Must Comply
With New Retirement Law**

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--Churches, conventions and associations of churches, and church agencies and institutions which employ 20 or more persons are not exempted from a recently signed federal law extending the age for mandatory retirement from 65 to 70.

The only exceptions to application of the law signed by President Carter on April 6 involve tenured professors at colleges and universities and a relative handful of certain executives and policymakers within organizations.

Colleges may continue to retire tenured professors at age 65 until July 1, 1982, at which time they too come under the protective coverage of the new law.

"Bona fide" executives and policymakers who may continue to be retired at 65 include only those whose annuity income from the company or organization retiring them exceeds \$27,000 yearly. This figure does not include Social Security benefits or retirement benefits earned during previous periods of employment. The new law sets no date for bringing this provision to an end.

According to congressional staff members in both the House and Senate, churches and church groups are not exempted from the provisions of the law, just as they were not exempted from the previous ban against forced retirement before age 65.

Nevertheless, no organization which employs fewer than 20 persons is subject to coverage.

What this means in Baptist life is that the vast majority of local congregations may continue to set their own retirement policies. Those congregations with large staffs of more than 20, however, will be required to comply.

Similarly, state Baptist conventions and Southern Baptist Convention agencies and institutions will be required to extend their mandatory retirement policies to age 70 if they employ more than 20 persons.

The new law takes effect, January 1, 1979, for non-federal employees. Federal employees will be covered as of September 30, 1978.

In an interview with Baptist Press, a staff member of the Senate Subcommittee on Labor who worked on the legislation said that in any questionable cases of application of the law, he expects the courts to rule that virtually everyone is covered.

Asked about the self-employed status of local pastors, he predicted that in churches whose staffs exceed 20, pastors will be protected from forced retirement before age 70.

At the agency and institutional level of Southern Baptist life, the implications of the new law are clear. Simply stated, after Jan. 1, 1979, no employee can be forced to retire before age 70 if the agency or institution employs more than 20 persons.

Congressional leaders who pushed through the legislation have promised that their next step will be to seek elimination of any age limit for mandatory retirement.

**Mobile Dental Facility
Approved For Barbados**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist work on the Caribbean Island of Barbados will be enlarged with a mobile dental health care facility, much of it funded by a Southern Baptist dentist from Virginia.

Informed that the Barbados government had granted permission for the project and would permit entry of medical personnel needed to carry out the work, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board approved the plan during its May 9 board meeting in Richmond.

Dr. Thomas W. Ormes, a Purcellville, Va., dentist in a general practice, has provided a 1978 motor home which has been fully outfitted with dental equipment for the Caribbean ministry.

The island mobile ministry will be a "highly visible" program that should aid in identifying already established Southern Baptist work on Barbados, said Charles W. Bryan, the board's secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean. He added that it will meet a need for dental care on the island.

The project is expected to be set up under the Windward Islands Baptist Mission (organization of Southern Baptist missionaries), through the Barbados Baptist Convention and in cooperation with the government. The newly dedicated Barbados Baptist Theological College will serve as a home base.

Initially, lay volunteer dentists will carry out the program until a full-time dentist can be secured. Dentists will be free to distribute Bibles and Christian literature.

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**Resort Missions Planned
For Next Five Years**

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GRAND CANYON, Ariz. (BP)--For the next five years, Southern Baptist resort missions will emphasize special events and seasonal festivals.

More than 150 persons interested in resort missions made that decision at a national resort missions conference at Grand Canyon National Park.

The conference of resort missions leadership personnel, held every five years, sets the tone and suggests priorities for resort missions. The first such conference was held in 1973 in Callaway Gardens, Ga.

Joel Land, of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board department of special mission ministries, whose job includes coordinating resort missions projects, said a marked increase in resort projects resulted in the eastern half of the U.S. after the Callaway Gardens meeting. He expects this year's meeting in the west will stimulate resort missions in the western half.

Short-term resort projects, especially those held on holidays such as Easter, July 4th and Christmas, will receive additional emphasis over the next five years, Land said.

Since a survey taken before the conference indicated an interest in work in city parks, the participants suggested ideas for work there.

A resort missions manual was released at the meeting containing models for ministry and resources, as well as the theology for resort work.

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**Laotian Church Constituted
In Providence, Rhode Island**

Baptist Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (BP)--The Laotian Evangelical Baptist Church constituted in Providence, R.I., with almost as many members as the anglo mother church.

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The Laotian congregation, the second Southern Baptist Laotian congregation in the U.S., has 51 charter members. The mother church, Providence Baptist, has 81 resident members.

And it is likely Laotian members will soon outnumber members in the anglo church, said Marion Hayes, pastor-director of the Providence Baptist Church.

More than 135 Laotians, including 20 youth choir members, attended the constituting service. About 500 Laotians, many with a strong evangelical background, live in the Providence area.

The anglo church constituted in 1967 after beginning with seven members in 1966. In 1972, a dying community church presented the building to the congregation. Now, that building houses two Baptist congregations.

Hayes learned of the Laotian community in Providence when he was asked to perform a wedding for a Laotian family. He then contacted Joshua Vang, pastor of the Laotian Evangelical Baptist Church in Des Moines, Iowa, the only other Southern Baptist Laotian church.

At the invitation of Carlos Cobos, director of language missions for New England, Vang spent a week in Providence helping the Laotians organize a mission. Soon after his visit, the congregation, then meeting in homes, was invited to use the Providence church building.

The new church's pastor, Vang Her, receives a supplement from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's department of language missions.

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Religion Newswriters
Assoc. Set for Atlanta

Baptist Press
5/11/78

ATLANTA (BP)--Journalists who cover religion for secular news media throughout the United States will gather in Atlanta, June 11-12, for the annual national meeting of the Religion Newswriters Association.

The meeting, at the Peachtree Plaza Hotel in Atlanta, will precede the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 13-15, at the Georgia World Congress Center and run simultaneously with a number of satellite meetings surrounding the SBC.

Although RNA members will begin registration on Sunday, June 11, and open a hospitality room at the hotel, the first RNA session is set for June 12, to allow members to attend an address by Anita Bryant Sunday night at the SBC Pastors' Conference at the World Congress Center. Miss Bryant has drawn nationwide attention--and picketing by gays--in her efforts to defeat homosexual rights ordinances.

The RNA meeting will feature Don Ranley, associate professor of the University of Missouri's school of journalism; Wayne Smith, founder of Friendship Force, an Atlanta-based, non-profit exchange program of which Rosalynn Carter serves as honorary chairperson; a panel discussion on "How Religion Writers Deal with Theology;" the annual awards banquet; and election of officers.

The program gets underway on June 12, with an 8:30 a.m. continental breakfast and adjourns following the 7:30 p.m. awards banquet. Meeting dates were originally set for June 10-11.

W.A. Reed, religion news editor of the "Nashville Tennessean," serves as RNA president. Other officers are Marjorie Hyer of the "Washington Post," first vice president and president of the group's Supple Board of Managers; James Adams of the "St. Louis Post Dispatch," second vice president and membership chairman; Carol Fouke of the "Rockford (Ill.) Register-Republic-Star," acting secretary; and Ben Kaufman of the "Cincinnati Enquirer," treasurer.

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Unique Prison Group
Hears Graham Preach

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham preached the message of God's love to more than 900 inmates from county, state and federal prisons at the same time in his Memphis crusade.

Inmates at the Shelby County Penal Farm and from the state corrections center marched by cell block groups to the nearby federal institution to hear the famed Baptist evangelist. The inmates also heard Tennessee Gov. Ray Blanton and met Charles Colson, director of Prison Fellowship and former White House aide who spent seven months in federal prison on Watergate related charges.

Under the shade of the huge oak tree at the federal prison yard, Graham preached a straight forward message of God's love. "No matter what you have done to be here God loves you and I love you--everyone of you," he said.

Following Graham's evangelistic message based on John 3:16, an estimated 120 prisoners stood, indicating that they were making a commitment to Jesus Christ. Graham urged those making decisions to personally contact the chaplain in their prison to talk about their decisions and gave each person Bible study material and a copy of the Gospel of John.

Southern Baptist chaplains serve in each of the three prisons: Bill Beshears at the federal; Bill Bledsoe and Mike Duvall at the state, and Jimmy Whitlock at the county penal farm.

Most of the 900 inmates who attended the Graham service at the federal prison were not allowed to attend the Graham crusade at the Liberty Bowl that night. Even to leave the state prison and county prison farm to march in tight security groups to the federal prison was considered highly unusual. Although guards were everywhere, there were no firearms visible as they're not allowed inside the federal prison.

Prisoners sat on wooden boards placed over bricks during the service that had been postponed three times because of rain. Graham had declared he would stay in Memphis even after the crusade ended, if necessary, to preach to the inmates.

Before they left their own prisons and as they arrived at the federal prison the inmates were frisked. Armed guards marched beside the inmates as they walked from the state and county prison to the service.

For many it was the first time they had been able to leave their prison since they had entered. For some, when they returned, they rejoiced in a new sense of freedom--freedom in Christ.

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(BP) Photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Memphis bureau of Baptist Press.

Drawing Card Missing
For Skateboard No-Shows

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MARS HILL, N.C. (BP)--Colleges just aren't ready for the rigors of intercollegiate skateboarding as evidenced by Mars Hill College's difficult effort to promote its "first ever" skateboard tournament.

None of the seven schools that promised to send teams to the Southern Baptist college's tournament which offered team, individual and age group competitions, showed up.

But the event wasn't a complete "wipeout," although some of the contestants did. Fifty-five individual contestants tried to win \$200, a new motorcycle and skateboard prizes in categories like freestyle, slalom, giant slalom, downhill, consecutive 360s and cone jumping.

Some traditionalists observed that the "no-shows" wouldn't have been so "skate-bored" if Mars Hill had added a category more suitable to a Baptist college--"es²-skate-ology."

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**460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219**

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

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