



BAPTIST PRESS

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78-90

**Baptists Condemn
 Tuition Tax Credits**

NASHVILLE (BP)--Baptist leaders in Texas and Washington have issued almost simultaneous protests of tuition tax credit legislation passed by the House of Representatives and being considered by the Senate.

The 192-member executive board for the two million member Baptist General Convention of Texas called on their congressional representatives to reject all attempts to provide tuition tax credits for private elementary and secondary schools, saying the credits would create "unfair competition" between public and private schools.

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, D. C., said that the "unprecedented action" taken by the House was "bad public policy, financially inequitable, and simply incompatible with the guarantees for a free and democratic society."

Wood said tuition tax credit legislation fails the so-called "three-prong test" established by the U. S. Supreme Court to determine the constitutionality of government action. That test requires that laws (1) must have a secular legislative purpose, (2) must have a "primary effect" that neither advances nor inhibits religion, and (3) must avoid excessive government entanglement with religion.

James M. Dunn, director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, said tuition tax credits would "put the federal government in the position of encouraging parents to withdraw their children from public schools," and would clearly violate the constitutional provision for the separation of church and state.

The resolution passed by the Texas Baptist executive board said the resultant competition between public and private schools would be unfair because public schools must "accept and keep every child; they must, by law, provide a vast range of services not demanded of private schools; and they would be left with the burden of those children who are the most difficult and expensive to educate."

The resolution further stated that tuition tax credits would: create political divisions along religious lines; increase inflation by escalating education costs because it would be used as an opportunity to raise tuition even higher; would be a windfall to low-quality institutions and outright segregation academies; would benefit the most affluent at the expense of the less well off; and would favor religious bodies already heavily involved in private education.

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Singles Ministries
 For All Churches

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HOUSTON (BP)--The annual Single Adult Conference sponsored by the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission viewed "singleness" as a factor common to all individuals and stressed the idea that single adult ministries belong in all churches, regardless of size.

About 1,000 single adults from the Southwest, ranging in age from early 20's to early 80's, attended seminars at First Baptist Church in Houston.

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Baptists "hav traditionally assigned th singl adult ministry to larger churches," said James K. Varner, pastor of the Woodhav n Baptist Church of Houston. Varner, whose 500-member church has an active single adult program, said that churches of all sizes should minister to all people--single or married. He noted that half the churches in the Southern Baptist Convention and other major denominations have fewer than 200 members.

Sarah Frances Anders, director of the sociology department at Louisiana College, said that single adults compose about 35 percent of the adult American population and in fact, "We are all born single."

* Church History Prof
Claims 'Trend' False

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Baptist Press
6/6/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A claim that the Southern Baptist Convention is moving toward an unregenerate church membership by baptizing an increasing number of preschool age children has been refuted by an assistant professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Richard D. Patton, chairman of the SBC Historical Commission, claimed he "discovered a growing trend toward the baptism of preschool age children" when he addressed a recent joint meeting of the commission and the Historical Society. He also said the number of adults being reached is on the decline.

Now Tom Nettles, a Southwestern professor, has issued a public statement saying Patton's claims are not supported by statistics. Using figures listed in the "Quarterly Review," a comprehensive book of facts published by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nettles says the percentage of preschool children baptized has remained "extremely close to one half of one percent for over 10 years."

And he says the percentage of adult baptisms was the same 32.1 in 1976 as it was in 1971. In fact, he says, in 1977 the adult percentage of baptisms was 42.6 percent, which "represents a remarkable increase in adult baptisms rather than a decrease."

Patton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Portland, Tenn., stands by his findings, also derived from statistics in the "Quarterly Review." He says that before 1965, there were too few preschooler baptisms to record and the fact that that category now comprises one percent of the total indicates a trend in that direction. He says also that in California and Florida, preschooler baptisms comprise closer to two percent of the total.

The adult baptism figures quoted by Nettles, Patton says, are listed in a single category and do not account for adults crossing denominational lines and joining SBC churches by baptism or the adults who consider their baptism as a child insincere and are actually being baptized for the second time.

"My primary concern," Patton says, "is that people are making an effort to baptize three and four and five-year-olds. And I'm just opposed to that."

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Missionaries' Son Killed
Just Aft r They Arrive

Baptist Press
6/6/78

COLUMBIA, S.C. (BP)--Gerald Bruce Young, 26-year-old son of Southern Baptist missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Hilmon E. Young, was killed in a South Carolina automobile accident June 3, just two days after his parents began their service in Ghana, West Africa.

Young apparently fell asleep at the wheel while driving to his home shortly after midnight.

The Hilmon Youngs are missionary associates in Ghana, where he is a maintenance worker at the Nalerigu Baptist Medical Centre. They returned to the states for their son's funeral. Young was the father of two small children.

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Golden Gate Seminary
Graduates 101 Students

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--Jesse C. Fletcher, president of Hardin-Simmons University, told the largest class ever graduated from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary to "remember God's sovereignty always and He will see you through."

Fletcher told the 101 graduates to, "affirm again that God is sovereign. His sovereignty extends over all things and His purposes are being worked out in all things. Some of you may not know where you are going to be serving yet. You are all dressed up with nowhere to go, and you may ask, 'Lord, are you sure?'

"Don't worry," Fletcher said. "God has a purpose for you. God deals with us purposefully. He will not lose sight of you.

"So, when you walk across this stage, I want you to come across for more than just a degree. I want you to come across it with a sense of purpose from God."

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American Home Support
Asked of Family Conference

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6/6/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--National representatives of six religious faiths, including Southern Baptist Convention President Jimmy Allen, have formally appealed to the organizers of the 1979 White House Conference on Families, asking that the conference focus on the development of a national policy which will support the American family.

In a written statement to HEW Secretary Joseph Califano, who has responsibility for the conference, the religious leaders expressed concern that various groups may try to manipulate the conference into an opportunity to publicize "alternative lifestyles."

"We recognize," says the statement, "that families must adapt to cultural change; but we view as regrettable the implications from some quarters that marriage, parenthood, and family life represent outworn or obsolete social institutions."

The statement declares, "We are disquieted by the many negative and deprecatory statements and actions which, in recent years, have sought to undermine many of our traditional family values. Powerful forces, representing highly explosive issues, may well attempt to use the White House Conference on Families to advance the causes they espouse."

President Jimmy Carter announced earlier this year that he will convene the conference in Washington, D.C., Dec. 9-13, 1979, with the conviction that "our families remain the most lasting influence on our lives."

"In spite of the hazards," said Foy Valentine, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, "this conference presents America with a golden opportunity to begin the development of a public policy on family life which will utilize those values and ideals without which neither families nor nations can survive." Valentine and David Mace, professor of family sociology at the Bowman-Gray Medical School of Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C., submitted the statement to Califano.

In addition to Allen, the statement was officially endorsed by Bishop James Armstrong, United Methodist Church; Robert C. Campbell, general secretary, American Baptist Churches, U.S.A.; The Rev. Monsignor Francis J. Lally, department of social development and world peace, U.S. Catholic Conference; Robert J. Marshall, president, Lutheran Church in America; Bishop James K. Mathews, United Methodist Church; and Elton Trueblood, professor of philosophy, Earlham College.

In their statement, Valentine and the other religious leaders outlined 11 "positive goals" which they said they could support, both as agenda items for the conference and as elements of some type of national policy on family.

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The goals for the support of families include basic economic security, adequate housing, healthy neighborhood environments, adequate physical and mental health services, proper working conditions, and consumer protection.

Other stated goals are the coordination of social and professional services to help families in trouble; encouragement of government agencies, public agencies, and mass media to maintain a broad policy of family advocacy and to support public education which seeks to guide and assist families; scrutiny of public policies and laws to insure that their impact on families is positive and supportive; acceleration of study and research in the field of close relationships; and exploration of the marriage and family enrichment emphasis as a possible means of matching remedial services with preventive services.

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Southeastern Establishes
'Minister's Wife' Fund

Baptist Press

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--A fund to help women prepare for the challenges of being a minister's wife has been established at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in honor of Esther Jillson Adams, the wife of Theodore F. Adams, pastor-emeritus of the First Baptist Church of Richmond, Va.

"When we arrived on the Southeastern campus ten years ago for Ted to be visiting professor of preaching," Mrs. Adams said, "I noticed that many of the student wives just didn't have that happy feeling. The pressure of the husband's studies created some problems for the wives, and things weren't what they had hoped for. I found out that some of them never expected to be a minister's wife. Some had poor concepts of what was involved in being a minister's wife."

The Adamses soon found themselves involved in discussions and conferences for student wives. "Many times," Adams said, "the wife will feel that her husband is growing away from her intellectually." So the Adamses held a conference for more than 100 on the role of the minister's wife. Other members of the faculty taught Bible courses to help narrow the academic gap between wife and husband.

"We wanted the seminary to be able to invite outstanding persons to come to the campus and lead discussions for the student wives," Adams said. "There are many women we know who have had wonderful experience in being a minister's wife because they have had happy marriages. We're grateful that the fund will provide resources for the seminary to do this for the wives."

A Beaver Dam, Wis. native, Mrs. Adams once told the Southern Baptist Ministers' Wives Conference that she could think of no other profession "to which my husband might have been called which would have given me the opportunity to live so abundantly."

When she was chosen Southern Baptist "Minister's Wife of the Year" in 1957, she said that although "we live in a fish bowl, and often are lonely because we can't have intimate friends," really all the minister's wife should want is to "be like any other Christian laywoman trying to do her best with the Lord's help."

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