



BAPTIST PRESS

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79-90

Lobby Disclosure Battle Heats Up in House Panel

By Carol Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--Churches lost a round in the battle to gain exemption from the Lobby Disclosure Bill pending in the House Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations of the Judiciary Committee.

Rep. Carlos J. Moorhead, R-Cal., introduced an amendment to H. R. 81 which would have excluded bona fide religious organizations from coverage under the bill's provisions, as urged by numerous religious groups, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. But before that could be voted on, Rep. Herbert E. Harris, D-Va., offered a substitute amendment which would exclude church organizations from the requirement of reporting contributors but leave them covered by the rest of the measure's terms.

When debate bogged down in parliamentary maneuvering, Harris withdrew his amendment long enough for the Moorhead amendment to be voted on. Voting with Moorhead were Reps. Thomas N. Kindness, R-Ohio, and Robert McClory, R-Ill., but their votes were not enough to carry the amendment, which lost, 5-3. Harris' amendment then passed.

Moorhead argued that the First Amendment guarantees of free exercise of religion would be violated by including churches in the bill. "If we want to keep this bill constitutional, so it can stand the test of the courts, this exemption is important," he said. "Beyond that, we are a nation of people strongly oriented to churches which build our moral standards. It is wrong for us to harass them."

Moorhead also pointed out that churches "are not in the same bag with everyone else with financial motives. They view speaking out on social and moral issues as a basic part of their ministry. We would be interfering with freedom of religion."

When the subcommittee completes its work on the bill it will go to the full Judiciary Committee for a vote before reaching the House floor. A bill which included churches passed the House in the last Congress.

No lobby disclosure bills have been introduced in the Senate in this Congress. Attempts to move such a bill out of committee failed in the Senate last year.

-30-

Baptist Volunteers Move
Large Medical Inventory

Baptist Press
6/1/79

ALEXANDRIA, La. (BP)--Louisiana volunteers are providing support services for vocational missionaries as they prepare approximately \$200,000 worth of quality medical supplies for shipment.

The supplies were donated to Louisiana Baptists by the manager of a nursing home in Shreveport after a Dallas hospital firm had phased out the items.

John Winters, director of the Louisiana Baptist Men and Boys division, said after the nursing home personnel realized they couldn't use the supplies, they asked if Baptists could.

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Winters knew medical missionaries always needed supplies so he had the items checked for quality and they were found to be in excellent condition.

Moving the supplies from storage in one Baptist church to another 125 miles away was an exercise in prayer and Baptist cooperation, Winters said.

When it was learned it would cost \$200 to rent trucks, Don Varnado, a Franklinton, La., hospital administrator, said a man in his church would take care of that. Then two men volunteered to drive the trucks.

John Stagg, a pilot active in Wings for Christ, said he would fly the drivers to Shreveport. Baptist men loaded the trucks in Shreveport and Baptist men unloaded them in Alexandria.

And the inventory is being made by experienced medical personnel, enlisted by Mr. and Mrs. Jim Hughes, members of Pineville's First Baptist Church, and employees of Rapides General Hospital in Alexandria.

The next step is getting the supplies to the medical missionaries.

"We have been working with the SBC Foreign Mission Board from the beginning and they are now dealing with missionaries in Central America, Mexico, Honduras and other places to see who needs supplies," Winters said.

When the need is determined, trucks and drivers will be needed to make deliveries of thousands of items such as disposable breathing tubes, oxygen tent canopies, grosses of blood sample syringes, 500 tonsil sponges, infant feeding tubes, oxygen face masks, catheters and other items.

Working out the details to finish by early summer has taken many hours and many telephone calls. "But," Winters said, "it has been a beautiful operation of Baptist volunteers with a concern and a willingness to share when there is a need."

-30-

Total SBC Giving Tops
\$87 Million Through May

Baptist Press
6/1/79

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)-- Southern Baptists contributed \$87,951,588 to national mission causes during the first eight months of the 1978-79 fiscal year, according to figures compiled by the denomination's Executive Committee.

That figure, which is 10.01 percent ahead of the same point last year, includes \$42,024,876 in undesignated contributions to the national Cooperative Program unified budget, and another \$45,926,712 in designated contributions.

The undesignated Cooperative Program portion is 11.05 percent ahead of the same point last year and the designated portion, which includes mainly the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong mission offerings, is 9.08 percent ahead. The Cooperative Program portion is about one-third of the contributions of SBC churches received by state Baptist conventions.

For the month of May, the eighth month in the fiscal year, total giving amounted to \$11,112,077, only 1.35 percent ahead of last May. That breaks down into \$5,107,888 Cooperative Program (7.87 percent ahead) and \$6,004,189 in designated giving (3.61 percent behind last May).

With four months to go in the 1978-79 fiscal year, the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program budget needs \$21,975,124 to reach its \$64 million basic operating and capital needs goal. The total budget is \$75 million, which includes \$11 million in Bold Mission Thrust challenge funds.

Bold Mission Thrust is the SBC's goal to proclaim the message of Christ to the entire world by the year 2000.

-30-

Seminary Presidents Endorse
Criswell-Robison Conferences

By Orville Scott

DALLAS (BP)--Six Southern Baptist seminary presidents said they support a plan for a series of nationwide conferences by W. A. Criswell and evangelist James Robison to affirm the Bible as the authoritative word of God.

In Dallas for the Southern Baptist Inter-Agency Council meeting, the seminary presidents asked to meet one evening with Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas. In their first joint news conference the next morning, the presidents said they are deeply concerned about "blanket accusations" by some ultraconservative Baptists "regarding the view of the Bible by those who teach at the seminaries."

News media reported that Paige Patterson, president of the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies, and Houston Appeals Court Judge Paul Pressler said alarm over "liberal" teachings in Southern Baptist seminaries had prompted meetings in at least 15 states. Patterson said one of the purposes of the meetings was to encourage messengers to elect a president committed to biblical inerrancy at the SBC annual meeting June 12-14 in Houston.

The presidents told reporters they know of no Southern Baptist seminary professors who fail to uphold the principles of the "Baptist Faith and Message" statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Kansas City, Mo., in 1963.

"I would be glad to stand on the floor of the convention or the Pastors' Conference or anywhere else and answer any questions of any sincere Southern Baptist," said Duke McCall, president of Southern Seminary, proclaiming his support for the authority of the Bible. "We are brethren trying to preach the gospel to a lost world."

All of the seminaries, except Southern at Louisville, Ky., and Southeastern at Wake Forest, N. C., have officially adopted the Baptist Faith and Message as the doctrinal statement for all faculty members.

Southern and Southeastern seminaries require faculty to subscribe to an abstract of principles adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in a special session in 1858.

The abstract of principles is the oldest statement of faith adopted by any group of Southern Baptists, said McCall, and is "even more explicit and fundamental than the 'Baptist Faith and Message,' adopted more than a century later.

Southern Seminary trustees, however, have voted for the faculty of their Boyce Bible School, the seminary's diploma-granting Bible school, to sign the "Baptist Faith and Message" statement. The abstract of principles, currently signed by faculty of the seminary itself, is in an unamendable part of the seminary charter, McCall said.

McCall added that he has polled his faculty and found them in agreement with the "Baptist Faith and Message" statement and also feels that because the Southern Baptist Convention adopted it in 1963 that Southern Seminary, as an SBC agency, should support it.

Southeastern Seminary takes the same position. The seminary catalogue says, "Southeastern Seminary is an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention and is guided by the action of the convention messengers at Kansas City, Mo., 1963, wherein they adopted the Southern Baptist Convention's statement of faith and message as a guideline for all convention agencies."

The seminary presidents said they asked to meet with Criswell, pastor of the 20,000-member First Baptist Church of Dallas, to talk about mutual concerns.

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They said Criswell told them that plans are to hold about 15-20 conferences within a year sponsored by the James Robison Evangelistic Association and others and involving some of Southern Baptists' leading pastors as speakers. The first is scheduled in St. Louis Aug. 13-15.

William Pinson, chairman for the seminary presidents' and president of Golden Gate Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., said of the talk with Criswell: "We talked about different words including 'inerrant' and 'infallible' and tried to decide what words best express our convictions."

"We all felt our hearts beating in harmony," said Russell Dilday Jr., president of Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth. "We were able to correct some things and to help insure that the channels of communication stay clear and open."

"Each president indicated he'd be glad to speak at the conferences (affirming the Bible as the authoritative word of God) provided they weren't political and did not involve attacks on Southern Baptist institutions," said Milton Ferguson, president of Midwestern Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

Criswell assured the group that the meetings would be devoted strictly to affirming the Bible as the authoritative word of God and to a recommitment to evangelism and missions.

Criswell asked McCall of Southern Seminary if his school would host one of the Bible conferences. McCall said Southern Seminary would do so under the conditions expressed by Criswell.

Pinson told the group of his concern that Golden Gate Seminary affirm the Bible by being a vital part of mission strategy in the west. "We need a thousand new churches in California right now and several hundred in the northwest," said Pinson.