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**Missionary Income Tax:
Relief May Be in Sight**

By Anita Bowden

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials express hope that Congress will pass a bill which would relieve them from paying most of the approximately one million dollars in annual income tax for missionaries living overseas.

H.R. 1319, the bill which board officials and congressional observers believe will pass both houses of Congress before April 15, restores a \$20,000 exclusion for qualified employees of public charities and religious organizations living overseas, with the exception of those living in the more developed countries.

The current law, the Foreign Earned Income Act of 1978, had eliminated the exclusion for all countries.

The Foreign Mission Board has missionaries in only 11 countries or territories not covered by the bill. Those nations where missionaries will be subject to income tax under the pending legislation are: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Republic of South Africa, Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Scotland and Switzerland.

Sidney C. Reber, director of the board's management services division, estimates 1979 taxes for missionaries in these countries will approximate \$54,000.

Although H.R. 1319 did not include a provision to reinstate the \$20,000 exclusion when it left the House of Representatives and moved to the Senate, the Senate Finance Committee tacked on a rider which includes the exclusion.

The bill, with its rider, must now go to the full Senate and be passed, then go into a conference committee made up of members of the Senate Finance Committee and the House Ways and Means Committee. A conference committee is called whenever one house of Congress alters or adds to a bill originally presented by the other house.

The House Ways and Means Committee may require additional hearings, but board officials and their congressional advisors are not too concerned about this possibility.

"The rider includes a provision related to taxation of foreign investments in U.S. property," Reber said. "Because the House has been interested in closing a tax loophole in this area, we think they won't make a big issue of the exclusion provision."

"Concerned Baptists should write to their congressmen in support of H.R. 1319," he added.

Cauthens to Visit China
With BWA Delegation

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Baker J. Cauthen, retired executive director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, and his wife Eloise, will visit China March 5-26, their first return since 1949 when they and other missionaries left in the face of advancing communism.

The Cauthens will be among a Baptist World Alliance delegation of about 25 people from several countries and will visit Canton, Shanghai and Peking where they hope to worship with Christians.

Trip objectives include an assessment of participants in church services, Christians' needs and how BWA can help, according to Robert S. Denny, BWA executive secretary. Possibilities for help include consultants, money and Bibles, Denny said.

Expenses for each member of the delegation will be paid either by that individual or by his organization. The Foreign Mission Board voted in January to ask the Cauthens to represent the board on this trip and to pay their expenses.

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Record Appointment Years
Turn Decade's Slower Pace

By Mary Jane Welch

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The growth rate in missionary personnel slowed in the 1970s, but record appointments in the last two years marked a turn in the pace, Louis R. Cobbs told the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in its January meeting.

"We would hope the last two years mark the beginnings of results of Bold Mission Thrust," said Cobbs, secretary for missionary personnel.

Although the 332 appointments in 1979 represented a slight decrease from the record 350 in 1978, the number passed the 300 mark for the second time in board history. Net increase in the total missionary force, which in 1979 passed 3,000 for the first time, was 507 for the decade. In the 1960s it was 1,010.

This slowing in growth rate occurred although the total number of appointments increased from 1,892 in the 1960s to 2,550 in the 1970s. Cobbs attributed the slowing to a higher percentage of persons going overseas in auxiliary categories, completing service in one to four years.

The 1979 appointees were sent to 57 countries to fill 61 different types of jobs, but the number of career missionaries appointed for certain strategic positions was low. Among the 150 career missionaries commissioned, only 56 were appointed to church development categories. Yet 70 percent of the requests from the field were for that category. Requests for medical personnel were fewer, but only two physicians and one dentist and no nurses were appointed for career medical service.

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The 2,552 career missionaries continued to dominate the work force, although missionary associates, missionary journeymen and special project medical workers rose to a total of 456. Personnel in these categories serve terms of four years or less and rarely attend language school.

Of the 57 countries receiving new workers, Argentina received the greatest number--16. That total exceeded all the countries in West Africa, which got 14, or East Asia, which received 10. Other countries receiving the most missionaries were South Brazil, 14; Kenya, Windward Islands and Philippines, 13 each; Japan, 12; Tanzania and Ghana, 11 each; and North Brazil and Colombia, 10 each.

The new personnel came from 36 states and seven foreign countries. Leading the list was Texas, the traditional leader, with 53 appointees. Alabama with 29 and North Carolina, with 18, traded places in rank from last year. Other states giving top numbers of missionaries were Tennessee, 17; Kentucky, 15; Florida, 14; Georgia, 13; Missouri and Louisiana, 12 each; and Oklahoma, 11.

Of the 116 new missionaries who graduated from Baptist colleges, the largest number, 19, attended Baylor University, Waco, Texas. Other leading suppliers among Baptist schools were Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., and Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., with 11 each. Another 164 appointees were graduates of non-Baptist colleges and universities. Eighty-four were seminary graduates.

A statistical profile of the average career missionary couple showed them to be slightly older than their counterparts in 1978. The average man was 32.4 and the woman 30. They had 1.3 children. The 150 career missionaries included 70 couples, eight single women and two single men. The average missionary associates were 46 years for men and 47.6 for women, a little younger than those in 1978. Missionary journeymen averaged 23 years of age.

The missionary personnel report also revealed 230 losses in 1979 through retirement, death, resignation and completion of terms. Resignations accounted for 121 losses. Cobbs remarked that the 4.5 percent loss through resignation was the lowest he knew of among mission boards. Reappointments of resigned missionaries totaled 29 last year, down one from the previous year.

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Mother-Daughter Psychics
Put Out of Rockwood Church

By Mike Chute

Baptist Press
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ROCKWOOD, Mo. (BP)--A mother and daughter who say they "firmly believe we're doing God's work" were disfellowshipped from Rockwood Baptist Church in Independence, Mo., for their practices in fortunetelling.

Rockwood's pastor, Sidney Scott, said such practices are unbiblical. He defended the action of the 1,200-member church as consistent with the grievance procedure against a brother described in Matthew 18.

The mother-daughter pair participated in a psychic fair in Kansas City. Publicity from that event identified the women as Southern Baptists, which prompted Scott to investigate their practices.

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"It became a problem for many of us--the people in the church," said Scott. "We felt like something needed to be done. We felt the mother and daughter needed to be confronted for in-depth information concerning their practices."

After investigation by the pastor and three deacons, the deacon board asked the women to renounce their fortunetelling. When they refused, the deacons recommended to the church that fellowship be withdrawn.

The mother, Mrs. Lolaverne Stephenson Rubenstein, called the action "an abomination" and "an inquisition." "There's no other word for it," she told Associated Press. "I firmly believe I'm doing God's work." Mrs. Rubenstein has been a palm reader for 10 years.

Her daughter, Fern Robin, uses crystal balls in her psychic reading. She said though the church disapproved of her beliefs she doesn't do anything the Bible says not to.

"I don't do spells," she said. "I don't talk to spirits. I don't do anything the Bible says is not right to do. I have read, I have studied, I have prayed. I wouldn't do it unless I really felt it was God's choice for me."

Ms. Robin rejects the fortuneteller tag, saying rather she is "a person occasionally God will send visions to. I'm not a con artist. God seeks everybody. I've just tried to be a little more attuned. If everybody could really talk to God, I'd be out of a job. They wouldn't need me."

Scott said an investigation into members' activities is not a practice of the church where he has been pastor for seven years. "Some of these things finally come to the surface and you have to go ahead and deal with it however agonizing it might be," he said.

"I'm sick about it," said Ms. Robin. "I think we have a problem because my mother and I so literally believe the Bible. When it says you can do it, we have accepted that a human can do it. What we're doing is pointing people to God, telling them about Jesus."

Scott and the Rockwood church would argue that practices of the pair are not biblical. Deut. 18:10-11 reads: "There shall not be found among you... anyone who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer or a medium, or a wizard or a necromancer."

Scott said the couple may worship at Rockwood, and would be received as members again if they said they discontinued their practices. But Ms. Robin said her family would worship at home.

Fast Growing Mission Has No Time To Constitute

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Crossroads Baptist Church, San Antonio, could well be the fastest growing mission in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The 2 1/2 year-old congregation has 330 members but has been growing so fast it hasn't found time to constitute into a church. On Easter Sunday, 1977, several "seed families" from University Park Baptist Church of San Antonio led services in a school cafeteria.

Within a few months, 50 members called a leading San Antonio basketball coach, Jimmy Towers, as pastor. He made headlines when he announced that God was leading him to become a full-time pastor just at the peak of his 12-year career as a high school basketball coach.

His Memorial High School team had a 21-7 record and was challenging for the San Antonio area championship with almost the entire team to return the next year.

"It would be hard for a person not actively involved in church work to understand my decision," Towers told shocked reporters. "In Christianity a person puts himself in a position of being totally submissive to the will of God."

Towers says the main "secret" of the church's growth is in the quality and quantity of visitation. About 30-40 members turn out each week to contact prospects including visitors to the services.

There's also Sunday School outreach and inreach visitation and weekly contacts by deacons with each of the families assigned to them through the family ministry plan.

Within a three-mile radius of the church, the population has grown in four years from 200 to 10,000 people. School census projections indicate there will be 50,000 people by 1985.

But it's more than a population boom that's made Crossroads grow. Of the 224 additions during the past church year, 64 were by baptism and in some cases included entire families.

Towers said he started out "being numbers conscious" but he stopped. "The growth has been so great it doesn't leave any doubt as to who's in charge," he said. "The centrality of the whole experience has been the unquestionable leadership of the Holy Spirit."

The church is beginning construction on its second building, a 2,500-square-foot education building to house the children and youth. The facility will also include a 24-hour prayer chapel in conjunction with the practice of church members to have someone there praying at all hours.

As soon as the new building is finished, plans call for constructing an 11,000-square-foot activities building that will be temporarily used for worship and education until the church can build a 2,000-s at sanctuary.

As to when that happens, Towers says simply, "We don't know the Lord's timetable. We've underestimated all the way."