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SBC Members of Congress
Mirror Political Diversity

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Southern Baptist members of the 97th Congress reflect the diversity of the nation's largest Protestant denomination.

Like the 13.6 million Southern Baptists in the U.S., the 36 members of the new Congress known to be affiliated with Southern Baptist churches hold views all along the political spectrum, but with a decidedly conservative bent.

The diversity is immediately apparent in the Senate where three of the six members with Southern Baptist ties gained chairmanships of three important committees when the Republicans became the majority party following last November's elections.

Conservative Senators Strom Thurmond, who heads the Judiciary Committee, and Jesse Helms, who chairs the Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry Committee, stand in contrast with Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., new chairman of the powerful Appropriations Committee and one of the Senate's most liberal Republicans. Hatfield, who comes from a Conservative Baptist Association background, currently is a member of an SBC congregation here.

The controversial issue of prayer in public school illustrates the variety of positions held by Baptist members of the Senate.

Helms, a long-time advocate of changing either the Constitution or the law (by limiting federal court jurisdiction) to counteract Supreme Court decisions barring state-mandated prayer in schools, will have the added support of Thurmond's position as head of the Judiciary Committee in this Congress. Their position is opposed by Hatfield.

Though Helms of North Carolina and Thurmond of South Carolina contend what they seek is "voluntary prayer," proponents of church-state separation insist proposals such as the Helms Amendment to S. 450 which died in the 96th Congress, open the door for state-mandated prayer in schools.

Hatfield's stance coincides with the position of the Southern Baptist Convention which was reaffirmed at its 1980 meeting in St. Louis, supporting the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions on the basis of the church-state separation requirement of the First Amendment.

Other Southern Baptist members of the Senate are Thad Cochran, R-Miss.; Wendell H. Ford, D-Ky.; and J. Bennett Johnston, D-La.

In the House of Representatives, 30 of the 45 Baptist members are known to have SBC affiliations.

Among the veteran members are Carl D. Perkins, D-Ky., chairman of the Education and Labor Committee; Claude Pepper, D-Fla., chairman of the Select Committee on Aging; and Trent Lott, R-Miss., new minority whip.

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Other House members with SBC affiliations are Ike F. Andrews, D-N.C.; Wendell Bailey, D-Mo.; D. Douglas Barnard, D-Ga.; Tom Bevill, D-Ala.; David R. Bowen, D-Miss.; Jack T. Brinkley, D-Ga.; James T. Broyhill, R-N.C.; James M. Collins, D-Texas; Dan Daniel, D-Va.; Jack Fields, R-Texas; Newton L. Gingrich, D-Ga.; Ronald (Bo) Ginn, D-Ga.; Albert Gore Jr., D-Tenn.; and Kent Hance, D-Texas.

Also, W.G. Hefner, D-N.C.; Jack Hightower, D-Texas; Jon C. Hinson, R-Miss.; Carroll Hubbard Jr., D-Ky.; Earl Hutto, D-Fla.; Edgar L. Jenkins, D-Ga.; Walter B. Jones, D-N.C.; Gillis W. Long, D-La.; Jim Mattox, D-Texas; William H. Natcher, D-Ky.; Harold Rogers, R-Ky.; Albert Lee Smith Jr., R-Ala.; and Charles O. Whitley, D-N.C.

Regardless of their political ideology, the Southern Baptist members of Congress are elected as representatives of all their constituents of their district or state—not just those who share their religious affiliation.

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Grand Canyon Coach
Now in Hall of Fame

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PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Dave Brazell, baseball coach at Grand Canyon College for 27 years, has been inducted into the American Association of College Baseball Coaches Hall of Fame.

Brazell started the baseball program at the Southern Baptist-affiliated college in 1953. Since 1968, when the Antelopes became eligible for post-season play, Brazell has taken his team to the playoffs every year.

He compiled a 721-361 record, and in 1980, the team was champion of the National Baseball Tournament. Seventeen of his players have been All-American, two of whom were honored in 1980.

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Dunn 'Realistic,' 'Hopeful'
On Church-State Relations

By Stan Haste

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The new director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs says he is "realistic but hopeful" about the future of church-state relations in the United States despite the rise to power of a president and political party publicly committed to profound changes in the area.

James M. Dunn, who became the fourth executive director of the Washington-based Baptist agency Jan. 1, pledged to "applaud and support" initiatives of President Ronald Reagan's administration for church-state separation and human rights.

But Dunn, 48, also promised to "push for change where change is needed" and to criticize when government policy runs counter to historic Baptist positions.

Dunn said: "The responsibility of this agency to bear Christian witness to questions of public policy—specifically religious freedom—is so consistent and so overwhelming and so overriding, that the relative difference in the way we relate to one administration or the other is very unimportant."

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Dunn recalled a bitter conflict between the agency's first chief executive, Joseph M. Dawson, and then President Harry S. Truman over the latter's appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican, and noted that the Baptist Joint Committee "is not without a history of dogfights."

"I expect sometimes to have to fight," he added.

He emphasized, however, that opposition to any incumbent president will not be based on party affiliation. "It is not Democrats or Republicans alone who oppose taking public moneys and spending them for private and parochial schools," he declared, citing one of the issues expected to be debated vigorously in coming months.

When asked to assess the potential influence and staying power of the religious right, whose positions on church-state issues almost uniformly run counter to those of his agency, Dunn said the movement's danger "may lie in the fact that it has no consistent, noble, theologically sound vision for America."

"The danger exists not in that they are a massive, well-organized, ideologically coherent threat," he said. "The danger exists in that they have missed the profound theological roots that any Christian witness has to have. They haven't studied church history. They are not in harmony with the discipline of Christian social ethics."

Asked to identify other pressing issues to be confronted by the Baptist Joint Committee, Dunn cited a cluster of education issues, including prayer in schools and tuition tax credits; what he called "bureaucratic intervention" into church affairs; attempts to restrict personal liberties through proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution and what he termed "quality of life" issues, including hunger, crime and privacy.

One of his most "anguishing" tasks, Dunn said, will be to limit such a broad agenda in order to maximize the agency's effectiveness. "If we do anything well," he elaborated, "we will have to do fewer rather than more things."

Dunn, who for 12 years was director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, insisted the Baptist Joint Committee is eager to serve sister denominational agencies in an enabling role. He added he will maintain an open-door policy for all denominational agencies and institutions wishing to use the Baptist Joint Committee as a base for their work in Washington.

Another pressing task, Dunn noted, is how to involve more Baptists in the process of influencing government on key issues. A project already begun is development of a network of Baptists throughout the country who would be available instantly to work on specific bills in Congress.

The overriding job of the Baptist Joint Committee, Dunn insisted, "is serving as eyes and ears for Baptists who will hear and see" as they seek to relate to government.

The fact that Baptists disagree with one another on virtually every public issue does not discourage him. "In that diversity there is vitality," he said.

The Baptist Joint Committee has a serious stewardship to maintain a tradition of holding up the best in Baptist life, the best in Baptist theology and the best in Baptist history, he added.

"In that sense we must be rock-ribbed conservatives" in clinging to "what Baptists have fought and died for."

At the same time, he declared, "we need to be dangerously innovative in trying to find ways to communicate this Baptist distinctive...on the complex issues and problems of the day."

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Veterinarian Gives Up Practice
For Volunteer Mission Work

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
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WACO, Texas (BP)--Jack Terrall wanted to serve God. Problem was, he wasn't sure how to go about it.

A veterinarian, he was tied to a thriving animal hospital in Bedford, Texas. But Terrall felt an urgency to use his skills in a ministry that two medical mission trips to Honduras had compounded. So last summer Terrall, still lacking a definite plan of action, sold his practice in order to "wait on the Lord."

"Jack's argument was that if we sold the practice, we'd be ready when the Lord opened the door," said wife Joanne.

In a matter of weeks, the Terralls' pastor, Douglas White of Bellevue Baptist Church, Hurst, Texas, suggested they join Mission Service Corps, the Southern Baptist plan to field 5,000 full-time lay volunteers in the United States and around the world.

The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board directed the couple 90 miles south to the World Hunger Relief Farm in Waco, a 17-acre farm owned and operated by several Baptist laymen to develop hunger relief projects.

Terrall is charged with animal health care on the farm, which has cows, goats and rabbits. "Most big production farms around here would give anything to have a full-time vet!" gloats World Hunger Relief President Bob Salley.

"Small is beautiful" summarizes the philosophy of the World Hunger Farm, where every resource is utilized to the fullest in an ingeniously simple "food cycle" that Salley and his associates hope to reproduce in poverty stricken nations.

In the cycle, doe rabbits, which can produce an enormous number of meal-size offspring in a year, are mated as quickly as possible. Their manure is mixed with red wiggler worms to make a rich fertilizer for "grow beds," five-by-thirty-foot soil platforms that produce as many vegetables or grain as half an acre of fertile ground.

Some of the grain is fed into the "Energy Center," a special still that produces alcohol for fueling farm machinery. A useful by-product of the still is a protein rich mash that is fed to the cows and goats.

Nothing is wasted, and the whole process is applicable to numerous Third World areas where poor farmers with little land and inadequate technologies struggle to survive and feed local communities.

Terrall is working to improve the rabbit and goat stock for actual export to target countries (one is Haiti, poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere, where World Hunger Relief is financing construction of a similar farm. Other projects are on the drawing board for India and Africa.)

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He also manages the cattle herd, now numbering over 50, and a massive hay baling-selling project the farm has undertaken on agreement with nearby Texas State Technical Institute.

The Terralls receive some financial support from Bellevue Baptist Church and from friends. They cover other expenses with their own funds. They hope to become self-supporting in 1981 through investments, and to continue their volunteer ministry for years to come.

Why have the Terralls, as laypersons, made such a major commitment to missions? "Every Christian should have a personal ministry," Terrall says. "It may be jail ministry, or work with the elderly, or sharing Christ on the street corner. For us, it's agricultural missions.

"It's like Jesus said. He gave us a talent to use. You don't have to use it for others, but if you don't, he's going to be pretty upset."