



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 28, 1982

82-81

McCall Is Not A Candidate But
Never Refused Southern Baptists

By John M. Wilkes

ROME, Italy (BP)--Baptists should avoid political issues "which tend to close doors rather than open them," Baptist World Alliance President Duke K. McCall said at the close of a month-long European tour.

"I am grateful for the openness I have found for preaching the gospel in many countries, and I hope and pray we will find ways of helping our fellow Baptists even where we do not send missionaries," McCall said in an interview.

McCall, chancellor of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. addressed the annual European Baptist Federation Conference on evangelism and education at Ruschlikon, spoke to a peace conference in Moscow, visited Baptists in Bulgaria and Italy, and spoke at the assembly of the Baptist Union of Italy (UCEBI) in session at Santa Severa.

He observed that although the world is divided politically, "the gospel of Jesus Christ requires no particular political system to be the power of salvation."

"I am not an expert on the Soviet Union, but I found openness to preach the gospel in places I visited there," McCall said. He added, "I am greatly concerned about constraints placed on Christian believers in some other countries of eastern Europe."

Asked about a movement to nominate him as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans, McCall said, "I have not been in the race. I have not been posturing nor attempting to establish a position. As president of the Baptist World Alliance I have tried to move away from controversial matters and make it a goal to urge Baptists around the world to draw together and get on with the great commission."

He said he believes Southern Baptists also ought "to draw closer to Jesus Christ as saviour and lord and try to reflect the mind of Christ rather than pursuing personal, political, economic or social issues."

He said he has no personal need for another title or position, and has no ambitions to be in any race or candidacy. "But on the other hand when I resigned as president of Southern Seminary I didn't resign from the ministry, and I don't want to start saying what I will not do. I have never yet said 'no' to anything Southern Baptists have asked me to do."

McCall admitted that before his departure to Europe in early May he received telephone calls asking if he would accept a nomination for the convention presidency.

"I told those who called that I believe the office should seek the man and not the man the office, and because I was leaving for a month I could not possibly make any effort to respond, so I really thought all that was settled then."

He said he wants Southern Baptists to "keep moving together in the spirit of Christian koinonia to reach this world for Jesus Christ. It haunts me that Southern Baptists have so many resources, yet we tend to be introverted with our own concerns at a time when the whole world can blow up."

-more-

He said he feels the possibility of serving concurrent terms as president of the Baptist World Alliance and the Southern Baptist Convention "is not incompatible."

"If Southern Baptists will become more knowledgeably aware of the world we live in, we will find ways to reach that world with the simple gospel message of salvation and the security of being a redeemed child of God," he added.

"If my fellow Southern Baptists want to consider me as a possible convention president I will think it an honor. If they say they want me to serve, I shall--but above all I will not try to "politicize" the Baptist World Alliance," he said.

Questioned about the theological controversy among Southern Baptists McCall said he agrees with (C.H.) Spurgeon that the Bible is like a lion which can defend itself. "We should quit defending it and get on with proclaiming it." He expressed concern that people live as the Bible teaches rather than by selected phrases. "The more I travel the more I see those phrases aren't the same everywhere."

And he refuses to buy the rational process "by which some Christians want to make the Bible say what they think God should have said. The Bible is the Word of God and the Holy Spirit does honor the Word of God--its power is rooted in the working of the Holy Spirit."

He noted that in the Moscow conference, Billy Graham had the courage to act on his understanding of the lordship of Christ. "I'm very proud of Billy Graham for that. He stood before that very mixed audience and identified himself as a Christian and as a Baptist evangelist--and identified the source of war as human sin."

McCall said that in the Moscow visit "Graham did the cause of world peace a great service and also added immeasurably to the stature of the United States by standing so firmly as an American there and calling for even-handed disarmament."

-30-

Argentine Baptists Vote
Ministry To Military

Baptist Press
5/28/82

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (BP)--Argentine Baptists, during their annual convention, voted to distribute New Testaments and offer spiritual aid to military personnel in the Southern Argentine port of Comodoro Rivadavia.

Some 2,000 Baptists voted to start the port ministry during the annual meeting of the Argentine Evangelical Baptist Convention, held May 22-25 in Rosario.

By May 27, 2,000 New Testaments reportedly had been distributed by members of the Baptist church in the port city, a major naval base about 500 miles northwest of the South Atlantic islands where Argentine and British troops are fighting. Baptist leaders also were planning to begin recreation programs and screening religious films for military personnel stationed in or passing through the port.

Convention leaders also were authorized to write a letter to Baptists around the world, explaining their view of the current conflict. Argentine Baptists have called for a peaceful settlement of the dispute, but say they support their government and Argentine sovereignty over the islands. An earlier letter issued by the convention asked for prayers from Baptists around the world and understanding of the Argentine Baptist position.

For more than 150 years, Argentina has considered the disputed islands rightfully theirs and called them the Malvinas. Britain has called them the Falkland Islands, a Crown Colony inhabited by about 2,000 persons.

Southern Baptist missionary Leon White reported no new events jeopardizing the safety or work of 52 missionaries in the country. White became president of the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Argentina after Robert Burtis died May 15 after suffering a heart attack.

-more-

White said about 30 missionaries attended the convention in Rosario. Gerhard Claas, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance, spoke at the meeting.

Argentine military officials have not responded to the Baptist convention's offers of chaplains for Argentine troops and sailors, White said. But Baptists have distributed at least 10,000 New Testaments to military personnel nationwide.

-30-

Former Presidents Of SBC
React To Rogers Statement

By Toby Druin

Baptist Press
5/28/82

DALLAS (BP) —Adrian Rogers' suggestion that Southern Baptists should be free to support those convention programs with which they agree and exclude others would be disastrous if applied to the unified budget of a local church, several former convention presidents say.

Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., and SBC president in 1980 and mentioned by some for the presidency again, said in a press conference in Rome, Ga., recently that Southern Baptists "have made a golden calf of the program ... it's almost easier to be against the virgin birth than the program."

He said he feels it is "not only illogical, it is immoral to ask a man to support with his money and his influence ... things that are theologically repugnant to him," implying Southern Baptists should feel free to exclude from their support parts of the denominational program with which they disagree.

Seven former convention presidents, all of whom said they had read Rogers' remarks in Baptist Press stories, were asked for response by the Baptist Standard, news journal of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Several saw a move to the practice as reverting to the days before the birth of the Cooperative Program in 1925 when each convention agency sought funds on its own.

"That's the same old thing," said Carl E. Bates, professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and president 1971-72. "The people who have the best salesmen get the most money."

Jimmy R. Allen, president of the denomination's Radio and Television Commission, and president, 1978-79, said the program is not a mechanism for dividing mission money but it is a "relationship -- an attitude of mutual mission concern."

"The Cooperative Program has been used of God to create a process to grow the greatest single mission program in the world," Allen said. "It would be tragic to return to a process in which dramatically presented causes receive the attention of the Baptist family while other causes are starved for missions support. That kind of process would cripple Bold Mission Thrust and I am sure no Baptist leader would want to see that happen."

Franklin Paschall, pastor of First Baptist Church, Nashville, and president 1967-68, said the Cooperative Program "is not divine and is not a golden calf. It is not to be worshipped. It is always subject to modification when Southern Baptists in annual session vote to do it."

"But the Cooperative Program is by far the best way I've seen, taking into account all denominations and independent approaches to missions and by far the most effective."

Not everyone is 100 percent happy with the Cooperative Program, Paschall said, but added neither is usually everyone happy with the budget of a local church. On the local church level and in the SBC, he said, persons who want to give more to a particular cause than is budget may do so.

-more-

Wayne Dehoney, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville and president 1965-66, said "the genius of the Cooperative Program has been to give a balanced witness to the world. To apply this principle (of exclusion) on a local budget basis would be devastating to a church budget. It says to church members, 'Don't give to the budget, just to the activity that you are most interested in.'"

Dehoney said churches, such as Rogers', which feel they have other needs, should not be criticized by other churches or the denomination.

Dehoney said the emphasis on "total dollars and percentages is a very unfair yardstick. Because, turn it around to the other side -- the Cooperative Program institutions are doing exactly the same thing, going outside the Cooperative Program and all of them putting on capital fund drives. You can't have it both ways."

Owen Cooper, the Yazoo City, Miss., layman who headed the convention 1973-74, said very Southern Baptist church is independent and can designate to or withhold its money from any purpose or institution it desires.

"However, the strength of the convention lies in the fact that we are willing -- most churches are willing -- to cooperate in actions and activities and to support agencies that have resulted from the collective wisdom of all the churches," he said.

"No church would agree with the same sense of affirmation that all programs are equal in their own evaluation," he said. "But most churches are willing to go with the program that has been adopted by the majority."

Jaroy Weber, now of Dallas, and president 1975-76, hesitated to comment on Rogers' remarks. "In our denomination we have this individual freedom to speak for change which we must do without meriting censorship from others.

Herschel H. Hobbs of Oklahoma City, president 1962-63, said the Cooperative Program is the lifeline of Southern Baptists missionary outreach and to broaden it as Rogers suggested "would threaten everything we are doing in missions and evangelism around the world."

He said he believes the Cooperative Program was revealed to Southern Baptists by God, and to follow the support practices which predated 1925 would be "a retreat." However, he said, "to be true to my own Baptist convictions and those held by Baptists throughout the years, a church must be free to give as it decides."

"There is a point beyond which you cannot go in your beliefs and claim to be a ... Southern Baptist... (but) at the same time, we must allow enough room within our stated faith for our diverse people to live with and work within in comfort.

"Southern Baptists have never been an extreme people," Hobbs said. "We are noted for our middle of the road position. We are not fence straddlers, but we are moderates in our position."

"The competency of the soul in religion is part of our faith. To violate it is to violate the basic principle of Baptists through the ages. In so doing we would become a creedal people - something Southern Baptists have always refused to do.

Neither W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas and president 1969-70, or James L. Sullivan, retired president of the Baptist Sunday School Board and president in 1977, could be reached for comment.

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, said it appeared to him that to carry Rogers' exclusion premise to the ultimate would be to revert to the days when the agencies were funded on an individual basis.

He said the Cooperative Program Study Committee, which is now at work, is expected to comment on its work soon and could address it in its report.

Congress Makes Effort
To Renew Postal Subsidy

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--Congressional efforts to restore a portion of the government's postal subsidy to nonprofit mailers such as Baptist state newspapers received a boost when the U. S. Senate passed a spending bill rolling back rate increases which earlier this year hit such publications with huge increases.

The move came when the Senate passed an urgent supplemental appropriations bill to fund the federal government from June 20 to Sept. 30, or roughly the final quarter of the current fiscal year.

Attached to the appropriations measure was an amendment by Sen. Quentin N. Burdick (D-N.D.) returning second class mailers, including religious periodicals, agricultural publications, county newspapers, veterans materials and others, to Step 13 of the 16-step plan initiated in 1971 and designed to make all classes of mail pay their own way by 1987.

Also passed was a separate amendment introduced by Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) rolling back to Step 13 all second, third and fourth class subsidies.

Although passage of the Burdick and Stevens amendments send a signal of hope to beleaguered mailers, many of whom found their rates more than doubled last Jan. 10, congressional experts warned that the effort is still uphill because the House of Representatives supplemental appropriations measure, passed earlier this spring, does not contain the rollback provision.

An aide to Burdick told Baptist Press that the field of battle for the moment is the House appropriations committee, several of whose members will be named to a conference committee of House and Senate members who must now hammer out a compromise acceptable to both chambers.

If the conference committee were to agree to the Senate provision rolling back the postal rates, the final version of the bill would still have to receive the approval of President Reagan, who has threatened a veto because of other provisions in the measure.

The Burdick aide said the conference committee will begin its deliberations June 7. She said further that the key for the moment is to "keep pressure" on the entire House appropriations committee, made up of 55 members. Despite the obstacles yet facing the bill, she predicted the chances of final passage as "pretty good."

Meanwhile, as Congress adjourned for the Memorial Day recess, the House of Representatives had yet to pass a budget for fiscal year 1983, which begins Oct. 1.

The Senate version of the budget bill, already passed, includes an increase in postal subsidies which would put second class mailers back at Step 13 through Sept. 30, 1983.

Like the supplemental appropriations bill, however, the budget measure faces several obstacles. Even if passed by Congress and signed into law by Reagan with the postal subsidy increase, the budget must then be funded in a separate appropriations process.