



BAPTIST PRESS

New Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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December 22, 1982

82-184

Non-Profit Postal Rates

Face 'Normal' Increase

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Preferred-rate mailers such as Baptist state papers face only a one-step increase in postal rates following congressional passage of a catchall funding measure to keep most government agencies running through fiscal 1983.

In contrast to the stop-gap funding bill Congress passed late last year which doubled postage costs for state papers and a wide range of other non-profit mailers, this year's version calls for a normal annual increase in preferred rates to be maintained through Sept. 30, 1983.

Specifically, non-profit rates will be maintained at step 14 of a 16-year phasing process Congress began in 1970 to adjust these rates toward full attributable costs in annual increments. Due to a shortfall in the 1982 funding of the postal subsidy, the phasing was eliminated last January, causing rates to leap from step 10 to step 16. But last summer, Congress appropriated additional funds for the subsidy, bringing rates back the step 13.

Rates had been expected to go somewhat higher than step 14 in 1983 after both Senate and House appropriations committees recommended funding the postal subsidy at \$708 million--a figure which would have put non-profit rates between steps 14 and 15.

But in its version of the stop-gap funding measure, the Senate decided to keep the rates at step 14 and Senate-House conferees agreed to the Senate version. This puts cost estimates for the subsidy at \$789 million, well above the \$500 million recommended by the original administration budget which would have pushed rates beyond the step 16 levels.

Though the cost of moving to step 14 will vary among non-profit mailers, the increase will be in line with previous rate hikes under the phasing process.

For The Baptist Record, a Baptist publication in Mississippi, the new rates will involve a 16 percent increase in postage costs, according to Editor Don McGregor.

McGregor, who was president of the Southern Baptist Press Association when rates skyrocketed a year ago and has continued to monitor the rate situation, said his annual cost will climb from \$215,252 to \$250,094.

"I'm pleased," he said. "It's a whole lot better than it could have been."

Despite the fact that the phasing process is still two years ahead of schedule, McGregor said in light of last January's action, this year's funding level of the subsidy "is not a bad solution to the problem."

The Postal Service is expected to implement the new rates in early January. Congressional sources don't expect a regular 1983 appropriations bill for the Postal Service to be passed since the stop-gap measure provides funding through the end of the fiscal year.

October-November CP
Gifts Up \$1.5 Million

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptists gave \$15,357,398 to national and worldwide mission and education efforts in October and November--an increase of almost \$1.5 million over the same two months last year.

November, the second month of the Southern Baptist Convention fiscal year, produced gifts of \$7,385,139 to the Cooperative Program, the unified giving plan of the SBC, for an increase of 5.13 percent.

That left the Cooperative Program \$1,495,123 (10.79 percent) ahead of the figures for October-November of 1981.

Individual figures from the 34 state conventions are not meaningful since there are still 10 months left in the fiscal year but nine conventions show an increase of 30 percent or more in their contributions from a year ago.

Northern Plains (made up of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota) has contributed \$40,560 after sending in \$7,524 in October-November 1981, (and just \$57,796 the entire year). Colorado's first two months total \$52,151 compared to \$27,051 last year.

Three states have made major dollar increases over last year.

Texas is up \$488,700, Florida has increased \$242,910 and Oklahoma is ahead of last year \$170,172. Nine conventions are behind last year's giving rate.

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Bangham Named Associate Director
Of Baptist Mens Work

By Mike Davis

Baptist Press
12/22/82

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Bill Bangham, associate editor of World Mission Journal, will become associate director of the Brotherhood Commission's Baptist Men's Department Jan. 1, 1983.

He will concentrate on missions curriculum for Baptist Men and will assist in national, regional, state and associational Baptist Men training efforts.

Bangham, a native of Maryland, is author of Journey Into Small Groups and is a former director of Biological Laboratories at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. He has authored a college textbook on biology and has worked in several printing and environmental businesses.

Bangham is a graduate of Parsons College, Fairfield, Iowa, and took post graduate work in human development and interdisciplinary studies at George Washington University and the University of Maryland.

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(BP) photo to be mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Brotherhood Commission

Baptist Medical Team
Dispatched To Yemen

Baptist Press
12/22/82

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board dispatched a five-person disaster response team to Jibla, Yemen, Dec. 20, just a week after an earthquake took at least 1,500 lives and left many other persons injured and homeless.

The board also released \$50,000 in hunger relief and \$20,000 in general relief funds for Yemen, the latter to be used at Baptist Hospital in Jibla, where the team will work for as long as a month.

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The response team includes two orthopedic specialists, two registered nurses and an aide. Three members, Weems R. McArthur, Panama City, Fla., and nurses Sue Ann Holland, Gulfport, Miss., and Beverlyann Milam, Jackson, Tenn., will spend the holidays separated from their families. The nurses are both former journeymen to Yemen.

The other doctor, Donald E. Pearson, Orlando, Fla., and the aide, Pearson's 16-year-old son, Jeffrey, will keep the commitment they made even before the earthquake rolled across Yemen--to spend some time with each other over the holidays.

When the appeal came for a team to go to Yemen the Pearson family, which also includes Jeffrey's mother and three sisters, agreed Pearson should participate but he should also keep his commitment to Jeffrey. The solution: Jeffrey would accompany the team as an aide, traveling at the family's expense.

The earthquake, the worst in Yemen in 16 centuries, hit a mountainous region about 60 miles north of Jibla on Dec. 13 leveling several villages of sun-baked brick dwellings and heavily damaging many more.

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CORRECTION--In (BP) story, "Morris Early Elected Head Of Southern Baptist Foundati n," released 12/7/82 the final line is in error. Instead of a "record total of \$249,032" the last line should read "9.9 percent (\$249,032) to a record total of \$2,762,000."

Thanks,
(BP)

BMT Success Tied To
Commitment, Mission Leaders Told

By Patti Stephenson

Baptist Press
12/22/82

ATLANTA (BP)--Southern Baptists are "moving in the right direction" to meet B ld Missi n Thrust goals, but the "fuel for the thrust is not money or organizations but the commitment of God's people to these goals he has given us," Gerald Palmer, Home Mission Board vice president of missions, told the annual conference of state missions directors.

In his address, Palmer cited evidence that Baptists are committed to the SBC aims of communicating the gospel to every person and boosting the number of Baptist churches to 50,000 by the year 2000.

The example of accelerated growth among language groups "is the response you can only work for and pray for then let it happen and try to catch up," Palmer said, adding "the respons has outrun our resources but we cannot stop."

To further illustrate BMT results Palmer noted 27 new churches were started in North Carolina last year, "more than in the past 20 years," and reported 400 new churches began in California during the past four years.

Palmer stressed that "for the first time the Home Mission Board has a national strat gy for starting new work, not just in pioneer areas, but with new and old state conventions alike committed to the importance of new work." The resulting partnership between the HMB and state convention leaders is essential "for a task which is bigger than all of us," he said.

BMT goals, which are "woven into the very fabric of the Home Mission Board's objectives to evangelize, start new churches and minister," transcend all programs and amount to a "modern restatement of the Great Commission," he concluded.

James Nelson, retiring director of the associational missions division, stressed the importance of cooperation at the associational level.

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"The timing for aggressive associationalism is right and fits the mood of the country in the desire for more participation, decentralization of their governing influences and a personal touch," Nelson observed. The Home Mission Board now has "the biggest opportunity in its history to move aggressively into mission planning with the association," he declared. While "tensions exist denominationally, basically there is a desire for cooperation and that seems to be the prevailing mood as the denomination moves in Bold Mission Thrust."

Tommy Starkes, associate professor of Christian missions at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed issues confronting home missions, including its own definition.

"Missions is as much crying out against social injustice as it is witnessing to your neighbor," Starkes declared. "It is maintaining a balance between law and gospel, judgment and grace."

Starkes noted he supports for church growth but expressed concern over "the assumption that it's always God's will that a church should show numerical growth." He voiced fear that "measurable goals, such as Sunday school attendance, may take precedence over not-so-measurable goals, such as how much ministry a church performs."

Urging "you've got to choose between Amos and Amway," Starkes warned against churches "buying into the American corporate business model of success." Churches must choose whether to "speak out for the dispossessed or to set goals and meet goals and think they've done God's will," he claimed.

The New Orleans professor described the church as "never an end in itself but an instrument of the kingdom. Sometimes we think we've done it all when we grow a church when that's just the starting point for missions."

Starkes emphasized the interest of New Orleans seminary professors in missions and told directors of plans for NOBTS professors to assist in witnessing efforts in Pittsburgh, Pa., before the 1983 Southern Baptist Convention.

Bill Peters, director of missions for the Northwest Baptist Convention, was elected chairman of the state missions directors group, succeeding Arthur Walker, director of missions for Ohio.

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House Passes Resolution
On Religious Persecution

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
12/22/82

WASHINGTON (BP)--A sense of Congress resolution condemning "all forms of religious persecution and discrimination whenever and wherever they occur" has passed the U.S. House of Representatives.

The resolution is the result of nine hearings held by the House Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations according to Rep. Don L. Bonker, D-Wash., chairman of the subcommittee and sponsor of the measure.

"From all available evidence presented to the subcommittee there can be no doubt that the free exercise of religion is limited in most parts of the world," Bonker said.

Citing a list of international religious persecution and discrimination problems, Bonker said, "The said truth is that few countries of the world enjoy the religious freedom that is so treasured in the United States, a freedom that is rooted in the history and traditions of our country and sanctified by the Bill of Rights."

"One thing is certain," Bonker added, "religious persecution will never be checked unless someone takes the time to monitor and expose what is going on and governments are held accountable."

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The resolution states that Congress condemns and opposes "religious persecution and discrimination wherever practiced, encouraged or tolerated by national governments."

It further calls for the President and other U.S. officials to seek the establishment of a working group on the elimination of religious discrimination and persecution at the 39th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Though the Senate took no action on the resolution, a spokesman for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee said consideration of a resolution addressing freedom of religious expression is expected early in the next Congress.

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Tennessee Board Restores
Estill Springs Property

By Al Shackelford

Baptist Press
12/22/82

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP)--The Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Board has voted to convey the property of Bethel Baptist Church of Estill Springs to the newly-organized Paynes Baptist Church.

In August, Franklin County Chancery Court Judge Earl H. Henley ruled that the property of Bethel Baptist Church (formerly Paynes Baptist Church) revert to the TBC because of a breach of trust.

The decision followed a July 29-30, 1981, trial brought by members and former members of the church, charging that the (Bethel) congregation did not fulfill a provision in the deed requiring the church to "adhere to, maintain and propagate the doctrines, faith and practices of missionary Baptist churches to cooperate with the local Baptist Association, Tennessee Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention."

Following the decision, Bethel Baptist Church filed an appeal.

Bethel's attorney, Gary Gober, surfaced the issue in the November annual convention of the TBC, making a motion that the convention restore the property to Bethel Baptist Church. Messengers referred the motion to the executive board. Gober attended the convention as a messenger from Park Avenue Baptist Church in Nashville.

During its December meeting, the Executive Board unanimously adopted a recommendation of its administrative committee "that the property of Paynes Baptist Church be conveyed to the plaintiff at the proper time in the appeal process upon the advice of the Tennessee Baptist Convention attorney."

On Sept. 19, a new Paynes Baptist Church began meeting in the office building of Duck River Baptist Association. That congregation, which now has 53 members, was acknowledged by the association at its annual meeting in October.

On Dec. 12, the membership of Paynes Baptist Church voted to ask the Executive Board to convey the title of the property to its trustees.

The property in question was purchased in 1963 with a grant from the Executive Board for \$1,500 at the request of First Baptist Church of Estill Springs, then sponsor of the Paynes congregation and Duck River Baptist Association.

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