

**(BP)****BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICESBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Craig Bird, 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 (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hasteley, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

January 7, 1983

83-2

Social Issues Derailed
During 97th Congress

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Expectations ran high among advocates of controversial causes such as tuition tax credits, public school prayer and abortion restrictions when the 97th Congress came to town two years ago.

The mix of a new President who promised to push these issues with a Congress expected to be decidedly more conservative seemed to spell the last chance for legislative movement in these areas.

But in the end the causes--all pushed by the New Right--fared no better in the 97th Congress than they did in the previous one. They stirred a lot of fury and debate, but brought about no significant change in the law of the land.

Based on early surveys and comments from members of the 98th Congress which convened here Jan. 3, the social agenda of the New Right appears to have missed its best chance.

With the 97th Congress concentrating on President Reagan's budget and tax cut from the beginning, controversial social issues were consigned to the back burner. When they finally surfaced late in the second session--mostly in the Republican-controlled Senate--they proved so divisive that the heated debates they sparked may well have cost them supporters.

Though numerous tuition tax credit proposals were introduced from day one of the 97th Congress, none went anywhere until President Reagan began pushing a White House version late in the second session.

With this administration push, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Robert J. Dole, R-Kan., held together a shaky coalition of tuition tax credit supporters long enough to have a highly-modified and watered-down version of the Reagan proposal out of committee but it never was considered on the Senate floor.

Opponents of the measure charged that tuition tax credits would be a drain on the federal treasury in a time of mounting budget deficits and that they violate the First Amendment's ban on a government establishment of religion. In addition, proponents were divided over how tough to make the bill's anti-discrimination provisions against schools that discriminate on the basis of race.

Proponents of state-sponsored prayer in public schools moved on two fronts during the 97th Congress. Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., the veteran champion of New Right causes, pushed legislation to strip the Supreme Court and lower federal courts of jurisdiction of school prayer cases.

Although no hearings were held on his court-stripping proposal, Helms offered it as an amendment to a debt ceiling bill last September. But the measure failed after numerous unsuccessful efforts to end a filibuster against it.

Early last summer, President Reagan fulfilled a campaign promise by proposing a constitutional amendment on school prayer but it also failed to move.

-more

The Senate Judiciary Committee held three hearings on the Reagan proposal but with time waning in the session, committee Chairman Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., told the President he would reintroduce the measure in the 98th Congress, indicating it wouldn't move in the 97th.

Reagan's prayer amendment met with even less success in the House of Representatives where Judiciary Committee leaders kept it bottled up and an effort to discharge the measure from the committee produced less than 60 of the necessary 218 signatures to bring it to the floor for a vote.

Abortion was a similar story in the 97th Congress with anti-abortion forces divided over which legislation to push. Some favored a Helms proposal, a human life bill which would have declared that life begins at conception and barred federal courts and the Supreme Court from striking down anti-abortion legislation.

Others supported a constitutional amendment by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, which would have given Congress and the states authority to restrict or ban abortions. Senate judiciary subcommittees cleared both proposals but only the Hatch amendment passed the full Judiciary Committee. But Hatch withheld it from full Senate consideration in exchange for commitment for early consideration in the next Congress.

One conservative cause--a court-curbing amendment designed to end busing--was attached to a Justice Department authorization bill in the Senate but died in the House Judiciary Committee. The House did attach an anti-busing rider of its own to a regular appropriations measure for the Justice Department, but it was deleted from the stop-gap funding bill Congress eventually passed for that agency.

Congress cleared one important piece of civil rights legislation which sparked heated debate--a 25-year extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. The extension applied to the preclearance section of the act which requires nine states and portions of 13 others to get Justice Department approval before making any voting law or policy changes. The Senate also modified one of the permanent sections of the act to make proving violations of the act easier in court.

The 97th Congress also made several tax law changes affecting churches and charitable religious organizations. The large tax cut passed during the first year of the Reagan administration liberalized both the amount and scope of foreign earned income which Americans abroad--including missionaries--can exclude from U.S. taxes. This change was urged by the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board. The new law also reduced the "marriage penalty tax" to prevent married couples with two incomes from being taxed at a higher rate than two single persons with incomes identical to those of the married couple. It also permits taxpayers who use the standard deduction in filing income tax returns to deduct charitable contributions.

In the tax hike passed during the second year of the Reagan administration, Congress increased the ability of churches and denominations to provide more adequate retirement plans for their ministers and lay employees.

Finally postal rates for non-profit mailers took a roller coaster ride during the 97th Congress. Late in the first session a shortfall in a postal subsidy appropriation led to a doubling of non-profit rates in early 1982. But last summer Congress added some additional funding to that subsidy bringing subsidized rates down some but not to the point where they had been. Then in the stop-gap funding measure for 1983 Congress provided funds to allow for a normal annual increase in preferred rates.

-30-

Church Matches Jobs
With Kansas Unemployed

By John Hopkins

Baptist Press
1/7/83

COFFEYVILLE, Kan. (BP)--Southeastern Kansas is experiencing nearly 17 percent unemployment but First Southern Baptist Church in Coffeyville is offering a solution.

-more-

Pastor D.L. Mitchell said his congregation decided to do something when "we became aware 15 families in the church were out of work. We decided to start a job swap. We simply find people who have odd jobs they want done and we put them in touch with someone who needs a job."

Mitchell said, "I see people walking around in a state of depression. People have little money, they're running out of unemployment benefits, but their family needs go on."

Two major foundries, the major employers in Coffeyville, have both closed down.

Economic indicators in the area show that for every individual laid off from one of the foundries or its supporting plants and factories, the community can expect to see another three or four persons laid off.

"We have received terrific support from the community," Mitchell said. "We want to be certain we do not jeopardize the individual's unemployment benefits and most jobs do not involve cash payment."

Applicants sign a waiver, releasing the church from any responsibility connected with the employment of work performance.

Mitchell said the project "goes beyond helping someone find a job. It helps the unemployed person regain a feeling of self-worth, and it has shown the community that First Southern Baptist Church has a real concern for people."

Keith Hunt, manager of the local J.C. Penney store, said he heard about the program and decided "I can help myself and at the same time help someone who needs a job." Hunt, who does not attend First Southern, requested someone to help do odd jobs on some duplexes he owns. He will pay with certificates for either food or clothes and "they don't even have to take a certificate for my store unless they want to."

Volunteers work each afternoon, answering the phone and taking applications. Peggy Carnes, charter member of the sponsoring church, said there were about 30 applicants the first day, and "now we have more jobs than we do workers."

"It's pretty hard for people to come in," said Mitchell. "They have been rejected so many times in their efforts to find work but as word gets out we will have more workers come in. It's still new, but when they find out we care and can help them, they will be in," he said.

The community is caught up in the spirit of the project, as evidenced by those who stop Mitchell in restaurants and on the street to ask about the progress of the project or to express appreciation for what First Southern Baptist Church is doing for people of the Coffeyville community.

-30-

Dunn Downplays Baptist
Drop In 98th Congress

By Gerri Ratliff

Baptist Press
1/7/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--The decline of Southern Baptist members of Congress--from 36 in the 97th Congress to 30 in the 98th--should not be viewed with alarm, said James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

"The vast majority of voters do not know their representatives' and senators' religious affiliation," said Dunn.

A prestigious study done in 1982 reveals that members of Congress take their religious orientation, values and motivation very seriously, he said.

"But in spite of all the public attention to religious affiliation," he said, "it has been our observation that the particular denominational alignment of a member of Congress is not a critical factor in determining how he votes on issues. Nor does it reflect a particular political philosophy."

-more-

Voters are more interested in the effectiveness of their representatives' and senators' constituent work than in their religious label, Dunn said.

"A careful look at the composition of Congress challenges the myth of a born-again bloc vote," he said. "It is encouraging to me that Southern Baptist members of Congress mirror the healthy diversity that one finds in the denomination as a whole."

In the 98th Congress, six senators and 24 representatives are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Southern Baptist members of the Senate are Thad Cochran, R-Miss.; Wendell H. Ford, D-Ky.; Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore.; Jesse Helms, R-N.C.; J. Bennett Johnston, D-La., and Strom Thurmond, R-S.C.

Among representatives with Southern Baptist affiliations are Ike F. Andrews, D-N.C.; D. Douglas Barnard Jr., D-Ga.; Tom Bevill, D-Ala.; James T. Broyhill, R-N.C.; Dan Daniel, D-Va.; Jack Fields, R-Texas; Newt Gingrich, R-Ga.; Albert Gore Jr., D-Tenn.; Kent R. Hance, D-Texas; W.G. Hefner, D-N.C.; Jack Hightower, D-Texas; Steny Hoyer, D-Md.;

Also 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.; Trent Lott, R Miss.; William H. Natcher, D-Ky.; Claude Pepper, D-Fla.; Carl D. Perkins, D-Ky.; Harold Rogers, R-Ky.; I.T. Valentine, D-N.C.; and Charles O. Whitley, D-N.C.

The only new Southern Baptist member of Congress is Valentine.

-30-

Hispanic Woman
Ordained To Ministry

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

Bapist Press
1/7/83

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Mrs. Justo Gutierrez, a mother of two daughters, has been ordained by New Orleans' First Spanish American Baptist Church.

Although Gutierrez is the third woman ordained to the ministry by New Orleans Baptist churches she is the first Hispanic, Raphael Melian, associate director of Louisiana Baptist language missions, said.

"Her ordination is the first of a Hispanic woman in the Southern Baptist Convention according to the Home Mission Board and is significant because cultural practices among Hispanics place women as homemakers," he explained. "It is unusual for a Spanish congregation to ordain women."

Gutierrez is working part-time with the New Orleans Baptist Association office (associate director of education and training working with ethnic congregations) and the First Spanish American Baptist Church (minister of education).

The ordaining council was composed of 12 ordained Baptist ministers who spent more than an hour and a half interrogating before voting unanimously for ordination. Melian said there were "a few ministers who chose not to attend the council because a woman was being considered."

Prior to the ordination, Gutierrez shared her understanding of ordination. "I became a Christian after I moved to New Orleans because of the influence of an aunt. After receiving a degree in sociology at the University of New Orleans and working as a vocational counselor I felt I wanted to serve the Lord.

"After attending a Sunday School workshop I became interested in teaching Sunday School, studied the courses and later was asked to lead conferences."

She and her husband, both native Cubans, married in 1972 and she continued with her conferences. "One day I was prepared to lead a conference but no one attended. As I pondered my future, my pastor came by and, after talking about my interest, said 'It's a wonder you're not in this full-time.' A seed was planted and later, after prayer and talking with my husband, I realized God was calling me to work full time."

-more-

By this time, her job was terminated and she felt this was a good time to enter New Orleans Seminary to prepare for a Christian vocation.

"I was pregnant with our second child. I skipped two classes, gave birth to her, returned the following week and subsequently received my degree," she said.

But why ordination?

"The question kept popping up during seminary but I never gave it much thought," she said. "My pastor confronted me with the idea and as I studied the scriptures I could find no reason not to be ordained.

"I feel you are called by God and God does not make exceptions whether you are a man or woman. My understanding of ordination is that this is a setting apart to a specific responsibility. This follows my concept of ministry, serving spiritual needs of people whether they are men or women."

She has no ambition to become a pastor. "I would be doing what I'm doing whether I was ordained or not," she said.

Her husband is happy about "having a reverend in the house. He has been very supportive. He's a very secure man and very understanding," she said.

-30-

Baptist Joint Committee
Names Dilday, Ratliff

Baptist Press
1/7/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--A recent seminary graduate and a Home Mission Board student missions volunteer have joined the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Robert H. Dilday, 27, who graduated in December from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, was named special assistant to Executive Director James M. Dunn.

Gerri Lynn Ratliff, 21, completed work in December for a journalism and speech degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She will work with the Baptist Joint Committee and the Washington bureau of Baptist Press as a newswriter for the next several months.

Dilday, whose undergraduate degree is from Baylor University, will assist Dunn in special projects for the Washington-based agency and also will write for Baptist Press and Report from the Capital, the Baptist Joint Committee's monthly publication. During 1982 he was an intern at the Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine.

Ratliff, who plans to enroll in law school next fall, also has had experience as a journalist, working during her student days at the University of North Carolina as reporter on the Daily Tar Heel. From 1979 to 1981 she edited the campus Baptist Student Union publication, Carolina Communion.

-30-

CORRECTION--In (BP) story, "Valentine Lists Ten 'Good Things' Of 1982," released 1/4/83, line 3, graf 1 is in error. Instead of "wrote in a great column in USA Today." it should read "wrote in a guest column in USA Today."

Thanks, (BP)

CORRECTION--In (BP) story, "WMU Raises Rates in 1983 On Four Quarterly Magazines," released 12/30/82, line 11 in graf 3 is in error. Instead of "it has been almost two years since the SBC agency..." it should read "it has been almost three years..."

Thanks, (BP)