



## 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  
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. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 4, 1983

83-69

### Dunn Asks Panel To Reject School Prayer Amendment

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Warning President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment would lead to prescribed rather than voluntary public school prayer, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs Executive Director James M. Dunn asked a Senate Judiciary panel to reject the measure.

Dunn cited a paper released by the White House when the amendment was originally proposed stating state governments and local school boards would be free under the amendment to compose their own prayers. "If groups of people are permitted to pray," the White House document explains, "someone must have the power to determine the content of such prayers."

Dunn's remarks to the Senate Subcommittee on the Constitution came during two days of hearings on the president's proposal, S.J. Res. 73. No further hearings are scheduled, according to a judiciary panel spokesman who said the committee leadership plans to move the measure out of committee this spring.

Two law school professors also expressed concern the amendment would involve state agencies in the prayer writing business.

"The amendment would lead to control of the content of prayer," charged Walter Dellinger, law professor at Duke University School of Law.

Yale University Law School professor Burke Marshall said the primary objection to the Reagan amendment "is that it inescapably leaves the matter of choice of the prayer or prayers to be offered as part of a school program up to the agents of the state."

None of the legal community witnesses during the hearings recommended passage of the amendment as the administration proposed it, while most opposed passage of any amendment.

At one point, Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, subcommittee chairman and co-sponsor of the measure, indicated to Dellinger the panel will undoubtedly change some of the language before voting the amendment out of committee.

As proposed, the Reagan amendment reads: "Nothing in this Constitution shall be construed to prohibit individual or group prayer in public schools or other public institutions. No person shall be required by the United States or by any State to participate in prayer."

In his testimony, Dunn cited a 1982 Baptist Joint Committee statement opposing all constitutional amendments on school prayer. He also cited statements adopted by 10 state Baptist conventions last fall.

In a reversal of previously held positions on public school prayer last summer, the Southern Baptist Convention, one of the nine Baptist bodies affiliated with the BJCPA, went on record endorsing President Reagan's proposed amendment. Despite the White House acknowledgment that state governments and local school boards would be authorized under the amendment to write prayers for use in local schools, the SBC resolution declares the amendment does not call for "government-written and government-mandated" prayer in schools.

Asked about the disparity of Baptist views--Dunn told Hatch a majority of the conventions which have addressed the issue have taken positions against school prayer legislation.

Earlier, Dunn cited statements from two of the nine Southern Baptist affiliated state conventions repudiating the 1982 SBC resolution.

-more-

Messengers to last fall's Kentucky Baptist Convention, Dunn said, pointed out "the Constitution as it now stands offers ample protection for worship." Missouri Baptist Convention messengers, he noted, opposed "any effort of government to become involved in the writing of prayers or in the religious instruction of our children."

The church-state specialist also referred to resolutions adopted last year by two other member bodies of the BJCPA, the Progressive National Baptist Convention and American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.

Among witnesses supporting the amendment were Secretary of Education T.H. Bell, Deputy Attorney General Edward Schmults and representatives of the Moral Majority, Christian Voice and National Association of Evangelicals.

Other groups opposing the proposal were the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., the New York City Bar Association and the National Education Association.

-30-

Cooperative Program  
Gifts Top \$50.8 Million

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press  
5/4/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist support of the Cooperative Program continues at record levels but the present pace is behind some budget projections.

As of March 30, halfway through the Southern Baptist Convention fiscal year, the national Cooperative Program has received \$50,825,754. The unified giving program, which is voluntary at all levels, supports the mission and educational programs of the 14.9 million member denomination. This is the first time contributions have passed \$50 million just six months into the fiscal year.

If giving continues at the same rate the last half of the fiscal year, the \$100 million basic budget would be surpassed but the \$6 million challenge budget, would fall approximately \$4.2 million short.

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, said: "The commitment to missions has always motivated Southern Baptists to support the Cooperative Program. Certainly the Foreign Mission Board, the Home Mission Board and the six SBC seminaries would have to limit their visions if the challenge budget isn't met.

"However, I am confident Southern Baptists will continue to provide the necessary means to share the saving message of Jesus Christ with the entire world. I know Southern Baptists aren't immune from the economic realities of the day. Yet giving to missions and to training of ministers and missionaries through the Cooperative Program is up almost 80 percent from five years ago--an increase of \$22.6 million since 1977-78.

"Southern Baptists have dreamed the vision and paid the price for many years. I think we will continue to do so."

Five state conventions far outside the boundaries of the Old South are the leaders in percentage increase of their contributions to the national Cooperative Program. Northern Plains (Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota) is 61.75 percent ahead of last year; Colorado is up 25.33 percent and New York is up 25.19 followed by Hawaii (22.25) and Nevada (21.96). Of the 34 cooperating state conventions, 17 have given at least 10 percent more to the Cooperative Program than they had last year at the same time and only two are behind the 1981-82 rate.

Twelve states have given at least \$150,000 more to the Cooperative Program than last year. Florida (which is up 21.07 percent) is \$626,810 ahead, followed by: Georgia (\$534,804), Alabama (\$311,816), Oklahoma (\$289,128), Tennessee (\$245,055), Louisiana (\$224,314), Virginia (\$213,043), Mississippi (\$202,585), Texas (\$202,537), North Carolina (\$180,505), Missouri (\$171,814) and South Carolina (\$169,800).

Colinga, Calif., Church  
Damaged By Earthquake

COLINGA, Calif. (BP)--First Southern Baptist Church in Colinga, Calif., reported destruction of its fellowship hall but only minor damage to its main auditorium in the devastating earthquake May 2.

Pastor Frank Reuter, said the fellowship hall was knocked off its foundation, had sunk nearly two feet into the ground, had all its windows broken, was "leaning precariously" and was "a danger to be near." The church parsonage "looked as if a tornado had hit it," Reuter said, with everything spilled from the cupboards, taken off the walls, with broken glass and furniture strewn all over the floors.

He had been checking on church members and had not had time to estimate the amount of damage. After checking with the members, Reuter took his wife and two young children to Stratford, but was back at the church Tuesday morning.

The home of one member who lived directly across the street from the pastor was totaled, as were the homes of some people who had been attending the church, but were not members. Several of the members reported fireplaces knocked out.

Reuter said two women members of the church were on the plaza at the time the earthquake hit but neither of them was injured. Both of them were in shock, but had no physical injuries except a scraped knee on one of the women.

As Reuter completed his telephone reports, his last comment was, "Pray about our new building for us."

-30-

Father And Son  
Graduate Together

By Bob Stainback

Baptist Press  
5/4/83

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--For Ernest L. Johnson II, and Ernest L. Johnson III, May 14 will be a doubly important day.

The father and son, whom friends and family call Ed and Eddie, both graduate that day. Ed Johnson will receive a master of divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, while Eddie will graduate from Gardner-Webb college in Boiling Springs, N.C.

Since the time of the two graduations is only a half-hour apart, and since both father and son would like to see each other graduate, a special arrangement has been made. The president of Gardner-Webb will award Ed Johnson's degree to him at the same time Eddie receives his.

It will be a joyous end to a road that hasn't always been easy. Sacrifices have been the rule for Mrs. Linda Johnson, wife and mother, and for John, 16, and Patricia, 11, as well as for Ed and Eddie. In addition to working full-time as an assistant comptroller at the Marine Corps Air Station in Jacksonville, N.C., and taking care of two growing children at home, she has typed all of her husband's papers for seminary courses.

Johnson says his wife "has supported me and lifted me up. She looked after two children and provided the financial resources."

The long road did not start when at Southeastern three years ago, but with his admission to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington two years earlier. In order to receive the seminary's master of divinity degree, a person must first graduate from a four-year college.

Johnson's dream goes back 21 years when they made a commitment to ministry. Not knowing how they could afford the education, he joined the Marine Corps for the educational benefits. They had one child then, one-year-old Eddie. Johnson decided to sign up for a second hitch. He says, "I thought I had it made. The job I was in had a bonus of \$10,000 for reenlisting."

-more-

However, he suffered a blow to the head as the result of an accident just a few days prior to reenlistment and was declared permanently disabled.

By this time the couple had two children and the Marines would not pay enough of his education for him to begin college full-time. His father had previously purchased 52 percent in a food distributorship. When his partner was found guilty of embezzlement, he offered the other 48 percent to Ed. So a new career began.

As the business steadily improved, Johnson settled back into the life of a faithful and active church member.

The food distributorship grew to be extremely successful until, as Johnson says, "Almost as quickly as it had begun, the bottom fell out. At 38 years of age I found myself without a job. My wife and I kept talking about it." Haunted by their commitment to ministry of fifteen years earlier, they determined to pursue that objective, even if it meant giving up everything they had.

He already had approximately two years of college work behind him when he entered UNC-Wilmington in the fall of 1978, he has worked as much as possible during the week and on weekends. The last year has been particularly rugged, working during the week as the chaplain for a large shopping mall in nearby Raleigh and on Saturdays at the Marine Commissary in Jacksonville. He has also been available for supply sermons whenever possible on Sundays.

Now that he is almost at the end of these five hectic years, he says of the experience, "There have been a lot of rewards and some costs. My biggest concern was the separation from my family."

After graduation, Johnson would like to enter the pastoral ministry in a church as soon as the right place becomes evident. He also feels strongly drawn to hospital or industrial chaplaincy as a possible alternative.

Son Eddie? There's one more similarity besides graduation day: he wants to attend seminary at either Southwestern in Fort Worth, Texas, or follow his dad's footsteps at Southeastern.

-30-

(Stainback is student newswriter at Southeastern Seminary.)

Viet Couple Left as Refugees,  
Will Return as Missionaries

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
5/4/83

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Long and Mary Pham have been there--and they're going back.

The couple will soon return to Southeast Asia--as Southern Baptists' first Vietnamese missionaries--to work with thousands of refugees who still huddle in camps, halfway between home and the unknown. Eight years ago the Phams were refugees themselves.

In 1975 the two fled South Vietnam a few steps ahead of the conquering North Vietnamese. American embassy personnel had evacuated Saigon, accompanied by most other Americans. Communist forces had bombed the Saigon airport. Drove of Vietnamese searched desperately for a way out of the city.

Baptist missionary Walter Routh, already safe in the Philippines, returned to Saigon and personally transported Pham and 50 others to the airport and out of the country.

"Two of my brothers and three of my sisters were able to escape also, but later I found that my mother and one of my sisters were unable to have freedom," Pham said. "I cried." He hasn't seen them since.

Mary escaped with her parents and sisters but left two brothers behind.

-more-

The two began life anew, and married, in the United States. Things have gone well for them since, thanks to hard work and a helping hand from Southern Baptists. But they remember the agony and terror of separation from home and family, the despair of the refugee camps, the mixture of hope and fear that churned their insides when they stepped onto U.S. soil for the first time.

Nobody learns such things in a book, and the Phams relive memories almost daily as they work with resettled refugees in the Louisville area. As minister to Vietnamese at Ninth and O Baptist Church, Pham, preaches in his native language, helps refugee families find housing and work, teaches them the mysteries of life in America, meets arrivals at the airport.

The Phams will do some of the same things as missionaries in the Philippines at the refugee camp in Bataan, "home" for 12,000 or more Vietnamese, Cambodians and Laotians. They'll lead a church, teach English and basic job skills and try to share some hope.

Hope comes in short supply these days in the camps. Refugee sponsors in countries like the United States are much harder to find than when the "boat people" of Southeast Asia made front pages every week a few years ago.

"What they need most is a friend," Pham says of refugee families, whether they have made it to a new home country or still languish in the camps. He needed a friend himself more than once, and Southern Baptists were there.

A string of Southern Baptist missionaries touched Pham's life in South Vietnam. Sam James led him to faith in Christ and baptized him when he was 15. Bob Davis encouraged him as a youth leader at Grace Baptist Church in Saigon (where he met his wife-to-be, Mary). Joe Turman trained him as a young pastor. Lewis Myers helped him continue to grow when he entered active air force duty.

And when South Vietnam finally collapsed, Walter Routh (now an independent Baptist missionary in the Philippines) helped Pham get out.

In the United States, Birmingham's Lakeside Baptist Church sponsored Pham and helped him gain citizenship, enter Samford University and get into refugee ministry in Birmingham-area churches. He graduated from Samford in 1978, married Mary in 1980 and received his seminary degree the following year at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

But the couple's commitment to be missionaries is more than a way of saying thanks to Southern Baptists. It dates back at least 10 years to Pham's days as an air force recruit in South Vietnam, traveling from village to village filled with refugees from the war zone.

"I met a lot of people and noticed the hurt on their faces as the effect of war and misfortune passed through them," Pham explained. "It touched me a lot. It made me decide to be a missionary."

When he came to the United States Pham was disappointed to discover the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board ruled out appointment of most naturalized citizens as missionaries, a policy designed to encourage foreign-born Baptists to serve in and through their own national conventions. But he didn't give up. He waited.

The Foreign board modified that policy last year, making qualified naturalized citizens eligible for missionary appointment to countries other than their original homelands. The Phams wasted no time applying and were matched with the Bataan camp assignment. Later they'll work among Filipinos as church starters.

They were appointed missionaries in April at a service in Indianapolis. Mary's mother was there, holding the Phams' brand-new son, Benjamin. So was Sam James, the missionary who baptized Pham in South Vietnam.

Pham, 32, did a little preaching. "There are three things I love: God, my country and my family," he told the gathering. "I lost my country. I lost my family. But I still have God."