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August 3, 1983

83-114

Martin Luther King Holiday
Bill Easily Passes House

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. House of Representatives has voted overwhelmingly to make the third Monday in January a national holiday in honor of Martin Luther King Jr., the slain Baptist minister and civil rights leader.

The 338-90 vote came after 15 years of repeated but unsuccessful efforts to create such a holiday to honor King, assassinated in Memphis in 1968. If approved by the Senate and signed by President Reagan, the legislation establishing a 10th national holiday would take effect two years after enactment. The proposal is designed to coincide with King's birthdate, Jan. 15, 1929.

While some opponents charged during a brief 40-minute floor debate the cost of adding another national holiday would exceed \$200 million, supporters of the measure cited a Congressional Budget Office estimate it would result in a net increase of federal expenditures of only \$18 million.

Others argued cost should not be a factor. Citing the "cost to my race under that system of segregation that was so rigid in this nation," Rep. Parren J. Mitchell, D-Md., said: "Costs become irrelevant in this business and I certainly hope we do not hear any more talk of it."

Majority leader James C. Wright Jr., D-Texas, told colleagues while the full implication of King's dream of equality for all people "is illusive and may never be wholly fulfilled, it must be pursued and the distance narrowed between the promise of American principles and the reality of American life.

"Passage of this bill today will not fulfill that dream," he added, "but it will fuel it and provide an annual time of renewal."

House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., D-Mass., received a standing ovation after concluding the debate by urging members to honor King as a man who changed America "not by a force of arms but by a moral force.

"He asked us to become the country we always claimed to be; a country of equal justice, of equal opportunity, a country where all men--all men--are created equal," O'Neill said.

O'Neill reminded colleagues they were not deciding Martin Luther King Jr.'s place in history. "That place is already secure," he said. "It grows stronger each day. What we must decide is whether to ratify the decision of history or to remain silent."

The measure, opposed by the Reagan administration because of cost factors, faces an uncertain future in the Senate.

-30-

Hunger Problem, Sin
Connected, Matthews Says

By Tim Fields

Baptist Press
8/3/83

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--As many as one billion people in the world are hungry or malnourished continually and Southern Baptists cannot begin to address the problem until they deal with their own affluence, participants at a Christian Life Conference were told.

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David Matthews, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, S.C., said: "If we don't come to terms with our own affluence ourselves, history will force us to come to terms with it. The pattern of history is when the goods of creation are not shared, those with whom it is not shared will come and get it."

Matthews said Christians must view the problem of world hunger against the backdrop of great Biblical themes such as creation, sin, redemption and hope. "You would literally have to butcher the New Testament to believe Christians don't have a responsibility for the hungry," he said.

"The happy gospel of success, prosperity and peace of mind which is prevalent in the land is very difficult to square with the New Testament. To dismiss the hungry of the world by saying they somehow brought it on themselves or we have earned our prosperity is naive in the extreme," he said. "That kind of thinking may find great surprise at Judgment Day."

Matthews said the answer to the question "Why does God allow there to be hungry people in the world?" is because God's creation has been messed with.

There was no hunger problem in the garden of Eden, he said, "but the fall changed that."

Problems in the world have to do with sin. "Sin, which is a misuse of human freedom, affects more than the person who sins," he said. "Sin, like smoke from a fire, touches everything around it. We, like Adam and Eve, were expelled from the Garden and now live east of Eden. We are in need of redemption. We now have two alternatives. We can exploit creation or tend and care for it for the purposes of God."

He added: "We pay the consequence for our use of creation in terms of hunger, pollution of air and water, economic problems and the foolhardy proliferation of nuclear arms. The problem of world hunger and the problem of the nuclear arms race are inextricably bound together and we would not begin to get the solution to one worked out until we have worked out the solution to the other."

Matthews warned "Americans are on a hedonic treadmill. We are ever seeking a sense of satisfaction which evades. Our material goods are a narcotic. More and more is needed to have the same sense of satisfaction."

The pastor said in spite of the fact that the buying power of Americans has risen about 50 percent in the last 25 to 30 years we do not perceive ourselves as being more affluent. Statistics show most Americans--except for the very rich--want 25 percent more income than they now have. "Material things give us pleasure only initially. If we could see ourselves in contrast to hungry people, we might feel satisfied," he said.

Southern Baptists must deal with the question of what is enough, he said, adding: "We want security for our families but the problem is in knowing when we have enough security to meet our needs. Anxiety about the kind of security that food and other material possessions represent can be a lack of faith in God."

The problem of world hunger is not one that can easily be fixed, he said. "Americans are a fix it or forget it people. We are a 'can do' people but we must realize there are some problems we cannot fix and should not forget. Hunger is one of those problems.

"The problem of world hunger is so much bigger than we supposed in the beginning that it would be easy to get discouraged when we do not see any progress. We need to guard against the feeling that because we can't do everything to solve the problems of world hunger we don't do anything."

Matthews said the basic problems related to world hunger are poverty and distribution of food and wealth. "These are problems we can do something about. At the beginning of the present administration 47 cents of every tax dollar was spent on the military. Projections for the end of this administration are that 77 cents of every dollar will be spent on the military. We can do something about that," he said.

The problem of hunger is often one of the "out of sight and out of mind" variety, he said. The hungry are not often in our vision," he added. "The problem is not that church people do not care about the hungry; it's that they get extremely frustrated at knowing what they can do."

Matthews pointed out half the people of the world live on less than \$100 a year and said: "Consider how many church members could give the equivalent of one year's salary or more for these people and not miss it. We must come to the point where we say, 'I'm not responsible for solving the whole problem of hunger, but I am responsible for me and what I do'.

"Southern Baptists can begin to address the problems of world hunger by doing three important things. Money alone won't solve the problem but we can give money to the Home Mission Board and the Foreign Mission Board to help feed the hungry. We can learn the facts about world hunger and begin to respond where we can. We can pray for eyes to see the hungry...that we see Jesus in the hungry of the world.

"We can all do something about world hunger," Matthews said. "Everybody has some way of picking a piece of trash out of the river of life. Everybody can be a steward of whatever half acre they have been apportioned in life."

-30-

Baptist Student Unions
Send Missionaries, Money

By Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press
8/3/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--More than 700 college students are spending this summer working in churches, resort areas, pioneer ministries, music missions and a variety of other tasks--without salary.

These summer missionaries are sponsored by local Baptist Student Unions which also raised approximately \$1 million during the 1982-83 school year to support summer missions efforts.

Ralph Hopkins, associate director of the student department of the Kentucky convention, said students "gain as much as they give during the summer. For most of them, summer missions is a life-changing experience."

BSUs in Kentucky raised nearly \$45,000 and sponsored 42 missionaries.

Through the missionary selection process, which includes detailed application forms and interviews, Hopkins said efforts are made to match student interest with available positions. "Summer missions not only expands their missions knowledge, but the experience helps students make definite vocational choices," he said.

For example, Jill Blackburn, University of North Carolina, Charlotte, was able to pursue her interest in working with children and youth by spending this summer ministering to youth at the Stonewall Jackson state youth correctional center. Cheryl Kennedy, Campbellville College, Ky., has spent the summer traveling throughout Wisconsin as part of a chapel on wheels program, presenting puppet shows and Christian drama during county fairs and state fairs.

"We emphasize a missions lifestyle every day, but by participating in summer missions students see firsthand the needs of other people and learn what it means to live each day as a Christian witness," said James Greene, director of student work for the North Carolina convention.

Kay Huggins, associate director in North Carolina, said 66 of their 102 BSU summer missionaries have worked as youth directors in local churches. More than \$66,000 was raised by North Carolina BSUs.

Hopkins said the tie between BSU summer missions and local churches is twofold. Many churches benefit from the work of summer missionaries and more than one-half of the mission support funds come from local churches as BSU members lead revivals and music and drama presentations in churches in return for love offerings.

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In addition, local churches donate time and resources to aid student groups raising summer mission funds. For example, in Ohio students were asked to set aside one dollar per week for missions. In exchange for their \$52 contribution, they were treated to a banquet hosted by First Baptist Church, Gahanna.

Donna Blackburn, associate in the Georgia student department, said student groups are encouraged to raise money through church and community service projects. The BSU at Armstrong State College, Savannah, sponsored a work day for senior citizens.

Sacrificial giving was emphasized in the BSU of Kennesaw College, Marietta, Ga., and Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta. During one weekly meeting, more than \$400 was donated by the 35-member student group.

Columbus College BSU students wrote more than 200 celebrities and asked for donations of items they could auction for summer missions. Many responded, including comedian Bob Hope and the late University of Alabama football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant.

Statewide, Georgia students raised more than \$74,000 and provided 37 BSU missionaries.

Roy Cotton, special ministries coordinator for the Virginia convention student department, summed up the feelings of most workers when he said, "Student summer missionaries are just living out the Great Commission. Participating in missions helps students discover their strengths and weaknesses, their gifts and talents."

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Sunday School Board bureau of Baptist Press

CORRECTION: In BP mailed 8/2/83, in sixth paragraph of "Canada Study Committee Named; Roach Chairman", please correct identification of James W. Jones, an at large member of the study group. Jones is evangelism director not missions director for the Michigan Baptist Convention. He assumed his new post August 1, 1983, after serving 23 years as pastor of First Baptist Church of Trenton, Mich.

Thanks, BP

Louisiana Volunteers
Doing Well In Zimbabwe

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

Baptist Press
8/3/83

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Harral J. Scott Jr., learned to "wait on the Lord" and "hang loose" when he became part of the well drilling crew in Zimbabwe.

Scott, the first Louisiana Baptist volunteer to return from a month of drilling water wells in the Gokwe area of that African nation, said "be ready to rough it and don't get uptight about a situation. God is in control."

He knows from experience.

When the ram shaft bent, Scott was left in the village for three days while the other two crew members spent time in Harare for repairs. "There was no telephone. When they left to get repairs they had to look here and there and three days later returned to camp."

Scott, a member of First Baptist Church, LaPlace, read in the Louisiana Baptist Message about the drilling rig. "I had experience as a college student with a similar type of rotary rig. I knew I could do that kind of work and felt God wanted me to volunteer."

His concerns included time off from work, funds for the trip and assurance his family would be cared for while he was away.

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"I told God I had control only over myself to make myself available. He would have to take care of the other things."

Church members provided the funds for travel. "Not only did people provide travel funds, one person paid for my wife to go to the grocery store and stock up on food.

"Others said they would take care of the cars if they needed repairs. As it turned out both cars malfunctioned and the air conditioning compressor went out while I was gone."

Scott acknowledged apprehension about going to a country where only recently bandits robbed a Zimbabwe Baptist and burned his truck of grain.

"I was uneasy, especially when I first got there. But I was apprehensive when I first moved to the New Orleans area too. By the time I was ready to leave I had entirely different feelings. I realized if we can trust Him for salvation, surely we can trust Him for other things."

Scott felt no racial tension among the people in the villages where they worked. Before he left the country he jogged in Harare, the capital city, and shopped in the stores without concern. English is a common language in the country.

The drilling program was a "shakedown operation" for the rig. Several modifications resulted from the on-field experience.

Scott said they completed a well at Gwelo where the Baptist seminary is located. "But we attempted 11 holes before hitting water because we ran into granite."

Two days were spent drilling a 140-foot well to supply water for a nutrition center in Sanyati before moving into the "bush" country at Denda where no water is available in close proximity to the village.

"We were down 290 feet when I had to leave. A government artesian well some distance from the village is about 340 feet deep so we were within 50 feet of a possible water table."

Eight wells are planned at Denda. One will supply a hospital, another for a church. The village council will decide where the other six will be located.

From breakfast until bedtime the volunteer drillers also shared their Christian faith, distributed tracts and held devotional services.

"Out there you realize you are responsible for your own actions. There are no cops on the corner. When you get yourself into a situation, you get yourself out of it. We remembered we were representing God and we respected the other person and nobody got into any trouble," Scott said.

White Americans taking a shower while standing on a soft drink box (feet sticking out under a canvas tarp) was something the Zimbabwe folks had not seen.

They watched with interest. "But," Scott said, "I had never seen anyone butcher a cow so I watched them doing their thing."

At night the people would retire to their houses and the Americans would have their privacy. "We had it to ourselves then. We would sit around the campfire and watch the Southern Cross, a constellation in the sky, and watch the moon come up. It is a desert night which is indescribable because here we don't have that kind of night."

The absence from family, expense and possible danger was worth the effort, Scott said. "That country is ripe for the gospel. Their experience ranges from backslidden Christians to those on fire for the Lord, as well as unbelievers, just as in our country.

"What we are doing is providing a base for their pastors and churches to take over for themselves. God looks at souls. He doesn't care if they are from Africa or here."