



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

Editor: Dan Martin
Managing Editor: Dan Martin
Circulation Director: Dan Martin

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

December 8, 1983

83-187

News Analysis

**At Midpoint, 98th Congress
Is Rejecting Social Agenda**

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Resisting White House pressure, an assertive 98th Congress stayed the course on the volatile public policy questions of abortion, tuition tax credits and school prayer during its first session.

Fueled by Reagan administration support, these controversial social issues were again the focus of numerous congressional hearings and heated political rhetoric. Two proposals--a constitutional amendment on abortion and President Reagan's tuition tax credits package--were considered on the floor of the Republican-controlled Senate.

Although Senate rejection of these measures came as no surprise, the votes against them were stronger than expected. In June, a constitutional amendment sponsored by Sen. Orrin G. Hatch, R-Utah, to overturn the Supreme Court's landmark Roe v. Wade ruling that the Constitution protects a woman's right to privacy in abortion decisions was defeated 49-50, one vote short of a simple majority and 18 votes shy of the two-thirds required for passage of a constitutional amendment. Near the end of the session, the Senate handed the president another setback, rejecting his tuition tax credit measure, 59-38.

While these sharp defeats do not guarantee the two issues will not resurface next year, they at least signal their administration and congressional backers face a steep, uphill battle.

Lack of broad support for Hatch's abortion amendment became obvious early when it almost failed to get out of the same Judiciary Committee that a year before had approved a more restrictive version. Although Congress continued its restrictions on federal funding of abortions and placed a new ban on abortion insurance coverage for federal employees, anti-abortion legislators suffered another defeat in November when a rider offered by Sen. Roger W. Jepsen, R-Iowa, aimed at reversing the high court's Roe v. Wade decision, was tabled on a 42-34 vote.

President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment to allow state-sponsored oral prayer in public schools also ran into trouble in the Senate Judiciary Committee before a compromise action sent it, along with a "silent prayer" version pushed by Hatch, to the Senate floor without recommendation.

The lack of consensus among school prayer amendment proponents and the absence of a clear endorsement by the Judiciary Committee could spell problems for the measures when they reach the Senate floor. Full Senate consideration could come as early as February or March, according to a spokesman for Judiciary Committee chairman Strom Thurmond, R-S.C.

In a related area, the Senate Judiciary Committee favorably reported a bill to bar public elementary and secondary schools from denying equal access to students meeting for religious purposes during noninstructional periods. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala., is expected to face competition on the Senate floor from a version sponsored by Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., which applies only to secondary school students.

--more--

Similar equal access bills are pending in the House, but those measures would bar federal funds from schools which deny equal access rather than provide the judicial remedy contained in the Senate bills. One measure, sponsored by Rep. Trent Lott, R-Miss., applies at the elementary through college levels while the other, sponsored by Rep. Don Bonker, D-Wash., follows the Hatfield bill in limiting its scope to secondary schools.

Most observers give the equal access measures, requiring only a simple majority for passage, a better chance at enactment than the constitutional amendments on school prayer.

On another church-state front, Congress repealed a 115-year-old ban against U.S. diplomatic ties with the Vatican. The repeal, included in an authorization bill for the State Department, was pushed initially by Sen. Richard G. Lugar, R-Ind. The action, however, does not guarantee resumption of diplomatic relations with the Vatican. Should President Reagan decide to pursue appointment of an ambassador to the Holy See, Congress would still be directly or indirectly involved in funding decisions for a new diplomatic mission.

In what is considered one of its major accomplishments, the 98th Congress moved early to bolster the nation's financially-troubled Social Security system with a major reform package. The bipartisan action included a sharp hike in Social Security rates for ministers and all other self-employed persons.

To partially offset this increase Congress agreed to provide Social Security tax credits of 2.7 percent in 1984, 2.3 percent in 1985, and 2.0 percent in 1986-89. After that, the new law would replace the tax credits by lowering the self-employment tax base and by providing a tax deduction of 50 percent of Social Security taxes paid.

Ministers participate in Social Security as self-employed persons by law, though some members of Congress are looking at legislation to give churches and ministers the joint option of participating as employer-employee.

The Social Security reform package also extended mandatory coverage to all employees of non-profit organizations, including non-ministerial employees of churches. Previously, non-profit employee participation was optional.

On another clergy tax policy issue, some members of Congress seemed inclined to reverse an early 1983 Internal Revenue Service ruling which eliminated a double housing benefit for ministers. The ruling disallows the normal deduction for mortgage interest and property taxes to the extent a minister has received a tax-exempt housing allowance for these expenses.

Separate bills introduced by Rep. Stan Parris, R-Va., and Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., would reverse the ruling's application to clergy. The Senate bill, which links ministerial and military housing tax policy, may have a better chance of moving. Despite a large number of cosponsors, the Parris bill has not moved in the House, lacking the support of Ways and Means Committee chairman Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill.

Other first session actions included:

Passage of legislation designating the first Monday in January as a national holiday in honor of black civil rights leader and Baptist preacher Martin Luther King Jr. King became the second American, along with George Washington, to be so honored. The House passed the bill 338-90 in August while the Senate followed in October with a 78-22 vote.

Preservation of current non-profit postal rates by rejecting President Reagan's request to drastically cut a postal subsidy which provides reduced rates for non-profit mailers. The appropriations measure approved by Congress keeps current rates through fiscal 1984.

A House-Senate split on the nuclear freeze question with the House voting 278-149 in favor of the freeze resolution while the Senate rejected its version, 58-40.

Failure to pass the Equal Rights Amendment as the House of Representatives fell six votes shy of the required two-thirds on a 278-147 vote. No vote occurred in the Senate, though a Judiciary panel held hearings on the proposal.

HMB Directors Promote
Graham, Discuss Income

ATLANTA (BP)--Jerry B. Graham has been elected assistant to the vice president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board by the board's executive committee.

At its December meeting the committee also discussed needs for additional 1984-85 income.

Graham, associate director of the board's church extension division, was promoted to assistant to Vice President Gerald Palmer in the board's mission section, effective Jan. 1, 1984. He will succeed James N. Lewis, who is now director of the board's Associational Missions Division.

Graham, a native of Oklahoma, has been on the board's Atlanta staff for seven years, serving previously as associate director in the missionary personnel department and in associational administration.

Previously, he was director of missions for two Baptist associations in Maryland, and pastor of churches in Virginia and Texas.

He is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., where he earned the doctor of ministry degree, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth; and University of Corpus Christi, in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Although the executive committee took no action, several members voiced concern about what they called "inadequate increases" in SBC Cooperative Program income for 1984-85.

Charles Nunn, executive director of Richmond Baptist Association, said budget approval by the Southern Baptist Convention last year to build a new SBC office in Nashville has had an "unfortunate" effect on missions.

"I'm upset about that as a director for the Home Mission Board, and I can assure you that directors of the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond are also upset," said Nunn.

In response, Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner explained although the SBC Executive Committee has not made a decision on 1984-85 budget recommendations, early reports indicate the Home Mission Board will receive an increase of only about three percent in Cooperative Program funds next year.

Tanner did not blame the lack of increase on the decision to construct a new SBC office building, but admitted "there has to be some influence and relationship" to the 1984-85 budget.

Because of the big increase in SBC capital needs budgeting, it is doubtful the two mission boards will receive any "challenge funds" over and above the operating and capital needs budget. "Some of the more creative things in mission advance the Home Mission Board has been able to do have been possible because of the challenge budget," Tanner said.

Board members took no action on the matter, but expressed their concerns vocally during the meeting.

In remarks to the HMB Executive Committee, Tanner and Vice President Leonard Irwin reported gifts through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for 1983 had reached \$22.5 million, an increase of 9.8 percent, and amounting to 90.1 percent of the goal. Irwin said by the end of the year, total gifts through the offering are expected to reach \$22.6 or \$22.7 million.

Tanner also reported to the Executive Committee on the current study of relationships between the SBC and Canadian Baptist churches, saying he was greatly encouraged by the work of the appointed study committee.

Although Tanner has previously taken a strong stand in favor of a proposal to seat messengers from Canada at the Southern Baptist Convention, he told board members he had great confidence the study committee would reach the best possible decision for all concerned groups.

HMB Approves 53
For Mission Service

By Patti Stephenson

ATLANTA (BP)--The executive committee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board approved 53 persons for mission assignments during their December session.

Included were 10 missionaries, 10 missionary associates and 33 persons who will receive pastoral assistance.

The appointed missionaries are: Don and Reta Beall of Altus, Okla.; Robert and Anna Dunn of Florence, Ky.; Vincent and Marilyn Inzerillo of Seattle, Wash.; James and Marilyn Redding of Memphis, Tenn., and Timothy and Deborah Salladay of Castro Valley, Calif.

Named missionary associates are Howard and Sandra Anders of Louisville, Ky.; Leroy and Carolyn Fountain of Montgomery, Ala.; Ron and Amy Meron of Fremont, Calif.; Sidney and Janice Hopkins of Doraville, Ga.; Evelyn Myers of Mt. Clemens, Mich., and Alan Stegall of Buzzard Bay, Mass.

The Bealls will move to eastern South Dakota where he will serve as director of associational missions. He is a graduate of Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford, Okla., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and Luther Rice Seminary in Jacksonville, Fla. He has been pastor of Southside Baptist Church in Altus since 1974.

Mrs. Beall holds degrees from Southwestern Oklahoma State University and is a former language arts teacher.

The Dunns will remain in Kentucky as he becomes associational director of missions for nearby Cincinnati, Ohio. He has served as pastor of First Baptist Church of Dent in Cincinnati since 1981 and as moderator of the Cincinnati Baptist Association. He is a graduate of Murray (Ky.) State University, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Mrs. Dunn is a graduate of Murray State University and Xavier University, Cincinnati. She has taught school in Florence since 1972.

The Inzerillos will remain in Seattle where he will serve as a catalytic missionary. He holds degrees from the University of Washington in Seattle and Southwestern seminary. He has been pastor of Valley Baptist Church in Seattle since 1980. She is a graduate of the University of Washington in Seattle and serves as a homemaker.

The Reddings will move to Nashville, Tenn., where he will work as language missions program leader. He is a graduate of Belmont College in Nashville and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary in New Orleans, La. He is former pastor of Lamar Heights Baptist Church in Memphis and served as a foreign missionary in Peru 1964-79.

Mrs. Redding is a graduate of Belmont College and also served as a missionary to Peru. She is a former school teacher and business manager.

The Salladays will remain in California where he will serve as a student worker in San Francisco. A graduate of Baylor University in Waco, Texas, and Golden Gate seminary, he is a former Baptist Student Union director at the University of San Francisco. She is a graduate of Mississippi State University in Starkville, Miss., and works as an administrative operations manager with IBM in San Francisco.

As missionary associates, the Anderses will move to St. Albans, W.Va., where he will serve as an evangelism intern with the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists. He is a graduate of Baylor University, the University of Oregon in Eugene, and Southern seminary. He is a substitute teacher in Louisville schools and has held evangelism intern positions in Maryland and Kentucky. Mrs. Anders is a graduate of Baylor University and has also served as an evangelism intern in Maryland and Kentucky.

The Fountains will work in Montgomery, Ala., as church starters. He is a graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge, La., and is former assistant manager of Curtis Industries in Atlanta. She is a graduate of Grambling (La.) State University and served as a secretary in the Home Mission Board's black church relations department 1979-83.

The Merons will move to Huntsville, Ala., where he will work in language missions. He is a graduate of California State University in Hayward, and Golden Gate seminary. Since 1981, he has been pastor of Tuburon (Calif.) Chinese Baptist Mission. She is a former preschool teacher in Fremont and now serves as a homemaker.

The Hopkinses will continue to live in Georgia where he will serve as a church planter apprentice in Lawrenceville. He is a graduate of Mercer University in Macon, Ga., and Vanderbilt Divinity School in Nashville, Tenn. He has served as minister of youth/education coordinator and church staff and program coordinator at First Baptist Church, Atlanta, and is a consultant for Home Cell Ministry, Inc., in Doraville, Ga.

Mrs. Hopkins is a graduate of The Woman's College of Georgia in Milledgeville, and has worked as a teacher in Georgia, Texas and Tennessee schools since 1965.

Evelyn Myers will remain in Michigan where she will serve as a church planter apprentice in Auburn, Mich. She holds a diploma from Boyce Bible School in Louisville, Ky. She served as minister of music for the Pennsylvania van program of Southern seminary 1982-83 and participated in the HMB's Praxis program in Goodrich, Mich., last summer.

Stegall will work as a church planter apprentice in Buzzard's Bay, Mass. He is a graduate of Presbyterian College in Clinton, S.C., and Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in Hamilton, Mass.

Those approved to receive church pastoral aid and their places of service are: Ivan and Frances Brock, Goldendale, Wash.; Daniel and Sybil Chapman, Springfield, Mass.; Alonza and Jo Anne Dale, Mesa, Ariz.; Robert and Donna Farber, Medford, N.Y.; Asa and Gwyn Finklea, Plainfield, Vt.; Ronald and Joy Graham, Shipshewana, Ind.; Darrel and Barbara Hamil, Rufus, Ore.; William and Mary Harkins, Glenville/Arnoldsburg, W.Va.;

Leonard and Cynthia Herringa, Inwood, W. Va.; Tandy McConnell, Milton, Pa.; Martin and Denise McPheron, Ottawa, Kan.; Glenn and Doris Ridall, Stewartstown, Pa.; Dwayne and Doretha Thompson, W. Jordan, Utah; Richard and Shirley Van Bebber, Gilman, Ill.; Gene and Melanie Vincent, Bargersville, Ind., and Eric and Ann Wyatt, Terre Haute, Ind.

Approved for language pastoral aid are Jaime and Paulina Prieto, Honolulu, Hawaii.

--30--

CORRECTION--In (BP) story "Evangelism Directors Plan For Simultaneous Revivals," mailed 12/7/83, please change name of Little Rock evangelist from Johnny Jackson to Paul Jackson.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

College Enrollment Up
At Southern Baptist Colleges

By Lonnie Wilkey

Baptist Press
12/8/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--In a year when college enrollments were predicted to decline, Southern Baptist colleges and universities reported a 2.9 percent increase in fall enrollm nts.

According to figures released by the institutions to the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, 94,769 students enrolled in credit courses for 1983, compared to 92,076 in 1982. The figures do not include students enrolled in non-credit courses.

Missouri Baptist College in St. Louis had the largest percentage increase (41 percent) as 574 students enrolled in 1983 compared to 406 in 1982.

--more--

Large gains were also seen at Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, Ga., (25.7 percent); Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark., (20.5 percent); William Jewell College in Liberty, Mo., (18 percent) and William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss., (16.9 percent).

Most of the colleges said the increases resulted from more aggressive recruiting and new course offerings.

Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark., experienced the largest decrease (11.1 percent) as student enrollment dropped from 1,691 in 1982 to 1,504 in 1983. Baptist College at Charleston (S.C.) was close behind as it underwent a 10.8 percent decrease, falling from 2,174 students to 1,940.

In a comparison of states, 4,747 students enrolled at Missouri's four Baptist colleges (Hannibal-LaGrange College, Missouri Baptist College, Southwest Baptist University and William Jewell College), an increase of 17.1 percent.

Mississippi's three Baptist institutions (Blue Mountain College, Mississippi College and William Carey College) reported 5,632 students, a 7.2 percent increase.

Kentucky's three schools (Campbellsville College, Cumberland College and Georgetown College) enrolled 3,959 students, an increase of 7.1 percent.

Georgia's institutions (Brewton-Parker College, Mercer University, Shorter College, Tift College and Truett-McConnell College) enrolled 8,820 students, an increase of 4.5 percent.

Texas, with eight Baptist colleges (Baylor University, Dallas Baptist College, East Texas Baptist College, Hardin-Simmons University, Houston Baptist University, Howard Payne University, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and Wayland Baptist University), reported an enrollment of 21,714, a 2.9 percent increase from 1982.

North Carolina's seven Baptist schools (Campbell University, Chowan College, Gardner-Webb College, Mars Hill College, Meredith College, Wake Forest University and Wingate College) enrolled 16,213 students, an increase of 2.3 percent.

Tennessee's three Baptist colleges (Belmont College, Carson-Newman College and Union University) enrolled 5,209 students, a 3.5 percent increase.

Alabama colleges (Judson College, Mobile College and Samford University) reported an enrollment of 5,414, a 2.1 percent increase.

Virginia's Baptist colleges (Averett College, Bluefield College, University of Richmond and Virginia Intermont College) reported 6,413 students, an increase of 0.9 percent.

South Carolina's four Baptist colleges (Anderson College, Baptist College at Charleston, Furman University and North Greenville College) had a 4.2 percent decrease to 6,618.

Arkansas, with two institutions (Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Baptist College), enrolled 1,992 students, a 4.9 percent decrease.

Florida's two schools (Palm Beach Atlantic College and Stetson University) experienced a 1.8 percent decrease with 3,493 students enrolled during the fall.

States with just one Baptist college include California (California Baptist College, 678 students, a 2.7 percent increase); Arizona (Grand Canyon College, 1,301 students, a 3.7 percent increase); Louisiana (Louisiana College, 1,039 students, a 1.1 percent decrease) and Oklahoma (Oklahoma Baptist University, 1,527 students, a 2.6 percent increase).

In terms of total enrollment, Baylor University in Waco, Texas, is the largest Southern Baptist college with 10,818 students. Other schools in the top 10 in number of students are Mercer University, 5,064; Wake Forest University, 4,818; University of Richmond, 4,499; Samford University, 4,042; Campbell University, 3,787; Mississippi College, 3,573; Furman University, 3,033; Stetson University, 2,782 and Houston Baptist University, 2,738.

Reagan To Push Senate For
New Tuition Tax Credit Vote

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--Despite a recent Senate vote decisively rejecting them, President Reagan has renewed his commitment to push for tuition tax credits in the 98th Congress.

Reagan told 21 Catholic, Jewish and evangelical supporters of tuition tax credits he will push the Republican-controlled Senate for a new vote as early as next spring. According to one participant in the Dec. 7 meeting, Reagan said it is wrong to say he failed to lobby the Senate hard enough to insure passage of his measure before it was voted down, 59-38, on Nov. 16.

Robert P. Dugan Jr., director of the Washington office of the National Association of Evangelicals, told Baptist Press after the 30-minute meeting that another, unidentified participant confronted Reagan with the accusation that his effort had been inadequate. Reagan replied that senators "knew he was all out for it," Dugan said.

Dugan, who recently joined a Southern Baptist congregation in Falls Church, Va., praised Reagan for what he called the president's "tenacity" and added: "The president is certainly committed" to a new effort to push the controversial proposal through.

Dugan also expressed disagreement with opposition to tuition tax credits by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, saying, "I think it's a crock that (tuition tax credits) will destroy the public schools."

The Southern Baptist Convention and numerous state conventions have gone on record repeatedly in opposition to tuition tax credit legislation.

Asked if reasonable hope exists that a new Senate vote as early as next spring might succeed in light of the Nov. 16 defeat, Dugan said participants in the White House meeting told Reagan "there was an inadequate grass-roots call" before the November vote. Reagan "needs to articulate (support of tuition tax credits) as part of his broad vision for America," he said.

Another participant, National Christian Action Coalition head William Billings, told reporters after the meeting some of those present told the president they will condition further support for tuition tax credits on Reagan's ability to reverse recent changes in the Social Security law requiring churches to pay Social Security taxes on their employees.

Billings said the taxes, if implemented next year as scheduled, will be the first ever demanded of churches by the government and that the White House can anticipate hundreds of protesting fundamentalist pastors "chaining themselves to the fences out here."

--30--

Peruvian Volunteer Killed
At Irrigation Canal Site

Baptist Press
12/8/83

MATARA, Peru (BP)--A Peruvian volunteer worker died following a freak accident Nov. 25 at the construction site of a Baptist-initiated irrigation canal at Matara, Peru.

A rainstorm had sent Hector Caberara, 52, and three other workers to a cliff for shelter when a large rock shifted, striking Caberara and breaking his back. He died two hours later.

Ken Bowie, Southern Baptist missionary and project coordinator for the canal, said the victim lived about 300 yards from the canal. His widow and five grown children will be among the 50 to 60 families whose farmland will be irrigated when the project is complete, probably by year's end.

"We feel like we had a very good opportunity to minister to the family and to the community," Bowie said. "We were able to help out with some of the funeral arrangements. We are sad that Hector died in such a tragic way on the job."

--more--

The project is a joint effort involving Baptists, the local government and volunteers from the community, Bowie said.

Southern Baptist human needs funds provided a vehicle to transport materials and workers to and from the site from Cajamarca, about one-and-a-half hours away. Southern Baptists, through a \$42,000 appropriation, also are providing meals for the workers at the site, as well as surveying and drawing equipment.

The government is providing technical personnel and the materials for the project, including cement and gravel.

Bowie and Scott Wilder, a Southern Baptist special assignment worker from Palo Alto, Calif., have been on-the-site coordinators.

Bowie said the canal, a little less than three feet wide and less than two feet deep, has been dug entirely by hand. Huge boulders in the side of a mountain have been chipped manually as well.

--30--

State Leaders Cite Factors
In Sunday School Gains

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
12/8/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Starting Sunday schools, conducting enlargement campaigns and setting goals for growth were key factors in Sunday school enrollment gains, several state leaders say.

Across the Southern Baptist Convention, Sunday school enrollment is projected to have increased in 1982-83 by 2.1 percent--161,251--according to figures released Dec. 7 by the research services department of the Baptist Sunday School Board. The projected increase, the largest one-year gain since 1976, would bring Sunday school enrollment to 7.8 million.

Shirley Miebs, acting director of religious education for the Alaska Baptist Convention, attributed the statewide gain of 800 to starting missions and Sunday schools, including language work with Japanese, Korean and Hispanic groups. Also, she noted, "More pastors are now seeing the Sunday school as a great evangelistic tool."

In Texas, where 1,529 Sunday schools have been established in the last seven years, approximately 87 percent have developed into church-type missions, according to Richard Sims, administration consultant in the Sunday school division.

Cecil Roenfeldt, associate in the Florida Sunday school department, said the 128 Sunday schools started in the state in 1982-83 accounted for an enrollment gain of 5,376 and 540 new classes and departments were begun through the new Sunday schools.

Adrian Hall, Nevada Sunday school director, said associational directors of missions were instrumental in starting 20 Sunday schools in the state last year, 63 in the last three years.

Associational enrollment/enlargement campaigns were held in 25 North Carolina associations in 1983. Robert Stewart, state Sunday school director, said 2,603 persons were enrolled in Sunday school during campaign weeks in the 283 participating churches.

In the Raleigh-Durham area, 47 churches which participated in a 1983 metro enrollment/training clinic registered a net enrollment gain of 1,300 for the year.

In Phoenix, Ariz., where a similar metro clinic was held early in 1983, a 17 percent enrollment gain was reported by participating churches.

Jerry Harris, Sunday school director for the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, said the Super Spiral, an accelerated Sunday school growth plan, is enabling church leaders, "to develop a mindset and spirit for growth. It's the most grassroots movement I've ever been a part of.

--more--

"We're developing a Gideon's Army which will know how to grow churches through the Sunday school. Our associational moderators and directors of missions unanimously voted that participation in the Super Spiral was the most important thing we could do to reach people."

A major emphasis of 8.5 by '85, the effort to increase Sunday school enrollment to 8.5 million by Sept. 30, 1985, is working with churches to set and report enrollment goals.

To date, 800 associational Sunday school directors and 2,035 8.5 by '85 church representatives have been trained to work with churches in setting goals and developing plans to reach the goals. For 1982-83, the first year of the three-year emphasis, a total of 12,691 or 35.8 percent of SBC churches reported goals to the Sunday School Board.

Cradle Rolls, outreach programs to reach and minister to parents of infants not enrolled in Sunday school, were started in 1,278 churches in 1982-83, surpassing a goal of 750

Kathy Burns, preschool and children's Sunday school consultant for the Alabama Baptist Convention, said, "We're educating our pastors that Cradle Roll is an outreach tool to reach couples, parents and grandparents for Jesus Christ." A total of 57 Cradle Rolls were started in Alabama last year.

Harry Piland, director of the Sunday School Board's Sunday school department, challenged state leaders to continue their efforts, despite obstacles such as discouragement, opposition or the idea people are tired of hearing about 8.5 by '85. "Some people haven't heard about it yet," he said.

Noting only 30 million among a U.S. population of 229 million are enrolled in any Sunday school, Piland emphasized, "People are reachable. They will respond. They want somebody to say, 'I care about you.'"

He called for outreach and evangelistic efforts in every part of the United States.

"Let us tell the Good News to all the men, all the women, all the boys and girls everywhere," Piland said. "Let's go down in history as the generation which had the strength and the faith in God to see it through."

--30--

Vatican Ambassador Plans
Denied By White House

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
12/8/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--White House aides have denied a published report that the administration informed the Vatican Dec. 7 it wants to resume full diplomatic relations and intends to name presidential envoy William A. Wilson as U.S. ambassador.

Responding to a Washington Post report that Reagan intends to name Wilson to head a new diplomatic mission to the Vatican, a White House spokeswoman told Baptist Press Dec. 8 no decision had been reached on appointment of a Vatican ambassador.

The White House confirmed only that Reagan is "pleased" Congress provided him the authority to proceed with discussions which could lead to the upgrading of diplomatic relations with the Vatican and the administration is "in consultation with Vatican authorities."

Congress gave Reagan the green light to pursue establishment of full diplomatic ties with the Vatican by repealing a 115-year-old ban against funding for a Vatican diplomatic mission. Congress will still be directly or indirectly involved in funding decisions for a new diplomatic mission but it has given no hint of significant opposition to resumption of U.S.-Vatican diplomatic ties.

In the absence of formal diplomatic ties, Reagan and several other presidents have named personal representatives to the Vatican.

--more--

Action by Congress in lifting the long-standing ban and signals from the administration pointing to its pursuit of a diplomatic mission to the Vatican drew a stern warning from Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs Executive Director James M. Dunn on the consequences of the possible policy shift.

Describing establishment of U.S.-Vatican diplomatic ties as "clearly a violation of the principle of church-state separation," Dunn said the move toward such action is "further evidence of massive ignorance of First Amendment guarantees."

The American electorate, Dunn said, "should not permit the Congress or the President even to consider sending an ambassador to a church, no matter how politically popular such a move might be."

Establishment of formal Vatican ties, Dunn continued, would be "a terrible precedent open to charges of favoritism, a guarantee of divisiveness and an untimely tear in the fabric of civility and cooperation between religious groups."

The church-state specialist further warned such a move would prove to be "a short sighted foreign policy which arouses fear and invites suspicion of every kind of Christian missionary. Their far-flung healing and helping ministries will actually be at risk and in some instances their lives will be endangered.

"Anti-Christian and anti-American sentiment is so strong in many parts of the world that even slight evidence of a U.S.-papal partnership jeopardizes the credibility of missionary ventures," he explained. "Violent opportunists use any pretext to attack Christian causes and American interests. When the two--the cause of Christ and American self-interest--b come officially intertwined we are inviting trouble."

--30--

Oriental Circus Church
Wins 16 New Believers

Baptist Press
12/8/83

JAKARTA, Indonesia (BP)--Oriental Circus Baptist Church, a fellowship of traveling circus performers in Indonesia, has baptized 16 new members.

During October and November four circus ring hands, 10 younger performers and two children of the circus owners and managers made professions of faith.

The new growth came under the ministry of Southern Baptist missionaries John and Nell Smith of Mississippi, who were temporarily living in Jakarta, the troupe's base city. The Smiths began the church six years ago after leading several circus members to Christ.

The newest believers were baptized in a swimming pool at the large dormitory-like house where the troupe stays while in Jakarta. The church, whose members are Oriental Circus employees and their families, was featured in the 1982 Southern Baptist children's mission study book, "Church in the Big Top," and a 30-minute color movie, "Oriental Circus."

Before the Smiths' latest visit, church members had lost some of their excitement. Three key leaders had left the circus for various reasons. The Smiths had been away for three years because of illness and visa problems.

"It's not easy to be a good Christian in their situation," said Smith, urging continued prayer for the circus church. "But they keep on."

--30--