



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

December 6, 1984

84-176

Teleconference Focuses
On Foreign Missions

By Carol Sission Garrett

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Southern Baptists called in questions with worldwide scope during the first international foreign missions teleconference. Concerns ranged from what the denomination was doing in famine-stricken Ethiopia to provisions being made for missionaries in war-torn Nicaragua.

The teleconference was broadcast over the Baptist Telecommunication Network. Viewers gathered at more than 100 sites across the country to take part via satellite in interaction between top missions leaders, missionaries and lay leaders.

The project of Woman's Missionary Union and the Foreign Mission Board was designed to launch the Dec. 2-9 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

"We are certainly hoping to intensify interest and create greater awareness of the urgency and the importance of not only the dollars, but the week of prayer and study related to missions," said R. Keith Parks, president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

The teleconference originated in Birmingham, Ala., with a talk show-type format. Carolyn Weatherford, WMU executive director, and James Smith, Brotherhood president, joined Parks fielding telephone calls from audience participants. Moderator was Bill O'Brien, FMB executive vice-president.

O'Brien also engaged lay leaders from Mississippi, North Carolina and West Virginia in missions discussion. Interspersed with these discussions were live calls from missionaries in the Middle East and Hong Kong.

Fifteen of the many calls received were aired. Several viewers called in asking Parks about what was being done in Ethiopia and what they could do to help. Parks said having missionaries on the field in Ethiopia has enabled the FMB to transfer the money immediately and to relieve some of the pressing needs within a day's time from when help was asked.

"We already have transferred over \$200,000 in the last few days to assist in feeding people and to continue in what we've started through our missionaries who are stationed in Ethiopia," Parks said. He added the FMB had been doing agricultural missions in Ethiopia, trying to head off famine, long before the crisis was known to the American public.

The most significant thing Southern Baptists can do to help, according to Parks, is to continue to support the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, keeping the missionaries in place, "so we can respond to urgent need in Ethiopia and other places."

Weatherford pointed out 100 percent of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering gets to the mission field. "Not any of it is used to promote the offering. Not any of it is used for administrative costs at the FMB. All of it goes directly to the foreign mission field."

Parks told one caller the missionaries to Nicaragua had been removed from that country. He added, "We urged the missionaries to exert caution. At the same time, we recognize sharing the gospel has dangers." He said missionaries leave a country when their presence becomes a burden or a danger to the local people.

--more--

Speaking live from Hong Kong, foreign missionary Gerald Hale told one call r the future looked good for missions work there.

The 1997 transition from British Colonial rule to the People's Republic of China has caused uncertainty about what would happen to missions endeavors. Hale said present signs were they would be able to continue their open evangelization, expand their missions and stay in Hong Kong. Hale and other missionaries involved in the teleconference shared current prayer concerns with the audience.

Marty Perkins, WMU director from Moss Point, Miss., also stressed the importance of the Week of Prayer. She directly attributed the calling of three missionary couples from her church to these weeks of prayer. "We've learned to shoot high, and God has supplied all the resources for us," she said.

At the beginning of the teleconference, O'Brien told the audience they would "travel at the speed of prayer and missionary concern." During the hour and a half they were inspired to pray and give to foreign missions.

O'Brien closed with a challenge to have a lifestyle which would further the cause of Christ throughout the world.

"This form of missions education is really a matter of taking advantage of every new creation there is to keep on telling our basic story, which is the world needs the Lord, and we have the responsibility of sharing that," said Weatherford.

--30--

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Social Values Impact
Local Church Programs

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Pr ss
12/6/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Changing social values of Americans in the 1980s demand understanding and a willingness to alter church programs to minister to people's needs, according to a Southern Baptist Sunday School Board research specialist.

J. Clifford Tharp Jr., research associate in the Board's research services department, said the 1984 Monitor report on social values indicates the me-first attitude of Americans in the 1970s is being replaced by a hunger for relationships and a willingness to rely on the wisdom of others in decision-making.

Monitor is an annual study conducted by the New York research firm of Yankelovich, Skilly and White for subscribing organizations, including the Sunday School Board.

"People are wanting to form relationships," said Tharp, "and a significant portion is saying one source of relationships is the church. This places a responsibility on churches to have groups of which people can feel they are a part. It underscores the need for groups that are open and accepting."

In contrast to the 1960s when youth were suspicious of anyone over 30, Tharp said people today see value in wisdom and experience. "A church doesn't always have to be doing new things," said Tharp. "What is tried and true has value and may need to be continued."

Also, he noted, "There may be more of a willingness by church leaders to look to church programing experts for help and support."

At the same time, Tharp said people today are making choices on the basis of quality. For example, persons may be more interested in whether a church offers a quality program which meets their needs than in the denominational label of the congregation.

--more--

Also, he said, people want more information about the programs and goals of a church before they decide whether to join. "Prospective members are going to be valuating churches in light of priorities they have set for themselves," said Tharp. "If people go to a church and feel it doesn't meet their needs, they are more likely to move."

Tharp said a kind of regionalism is evident among Americans who are tending to be strong supporters of institutions so close to home and less interested in national and international organizations. "People may be more concerned about their church and perhaps their association and state convention than about the denomination as a whole," said Tharp. "It may be more difficult to get people involved at the SBC level unless they see what is happening there impacts their local situation. There is a need to show people how they can be influential at higher levels."

Tharp sounded a note of warning about a pragmatic spirit evident in the new realism of the 80s which says, "If it works best, use it."

"Pragmatism works best if you're not coming off a moral, religious or philosophical base. The pragmatic way, such as the end justifies the means, may not always be the Christian way," he said. He warned of potential conflicts in churches. "Some members could take a pragmatic view toward doing something and others would see it as inappropriate for a religious institution," said Tharp. "I see real potential for conflict if pragmatism runs contrary to Christian values."

Tharp urged church leaders to review social values research and demographic studies as tools for planning and goal-setting.

--30--

Parochial Aid Cases
Argued At High Court

By Stan Hastey

Baptist Press
12/6/84

WASHINGTON (BP)--One day after pondering the constitutionality of state laws calling for silent prayer in public schools, the Supreme Court considered a battery of arguments in a pair of parochial aid cases which will determine if public funds may be used to send public school teachers into parochial schools to provide specialized instruction.

One of the cases, from Grand Rapids, Mich., will settle the question of whether states may fund such programs, while the other, from New York City, will determine if a 1965 federal law providing remedial instruction by public school teachers in parochial school violates the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

(That clause, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion," forms the foundation for the historic principle of separation of church and state in the U.S.)

The high court agreed to hear the Grand Rapids dispute after two lower federal panels struck down the program, concluding it had the primary effect of advancing religion and excessively entangled state officials with parochial schools.

For the past eight years, the Michigan city's school board has leased space from parochial elementary and secondary schools to provide a wide range of services, including remedial and enriched courses in reading and math, as well as art, music and physical education courses.

Under the program, public school teachers go into the parochial schools carrying signs reading "Public School," which are posted on classroom doors. Religious artifacts and symbols are removed from classrooms before the public school teachers begin classes.

Kenneth F. Ripple, a University of Notre Dame law professor who represented the state of Michigan before the high court, defended the Grand Rapids practices, declaring that "fairness" as well as establishment clause considerations are at issue in the case.

--more--

Arguing Michigan has a compelling interest in providing broadly based educational opportunities for pupils in all the state's schools, Ripple insisted Grand Rapids school officials have been "particularly sensitive to the restraints of the establishment clause."

The fact that 30 percent of the city's school-age children attend a variety of parochial schools indicates a "long tradition of religious plurality," Ripple said, and warned the court against "frustrat(ing) the intent of the local community" on establishment clause grounds.

Michael W. McConnell, an assistant to the U.S. solicitor general, also argued the Grand Rapids policy is characterized by religious neutrality, declaring, "There has been no instance of religious indoctrination in this program."

Children, not parochial schools as such, benefit from the program, he added. McConnell, who presented the Reagan administration views in the case, said public school teachers go into parochial schools "solely for sound educational reasons."

But University of Virginia law professor A.E. Dick Howard told the justices the Grand Rapids practices amount to a "palpable" entanglement of local school officials with parochial school personnel who together engage in a "joint exercise of authority."

The "cumulative effect" of the arrangement, he argued, is public employees at public expense teach substantive courses on the premises of religious schools, thereby entangling church and state.

Howard also noted what he called the "double benefit" flowing to parochial schools in Grand Rapids, saying they are enabled to enlarge their curriculum while at the same time administering the program entirely on their own premises.

He added the presence of public school teachers engaged in a wide variety of course offerings enables parochial teachers to spend more time with fewer pupils, thus enhancing the church schools themselves. In such a situation, Howard insisted, it is the parochial schools rather than parents and pupils, which receive the actual benefits of the program.

The noted constitutional authority also told the justices that because religion "permeates and informs" the parochial schools' "very reason for being," the Grand Rapids practices clearly indicate a violation of the First Amendment's ban on an establishment of religion.

Among numerous interested parties on both sides of the Grand Rapids case who filed friend-of-the-court briefs is the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. That agency's general counsel, John W. Baker, filed a brief arguing against the constitutionality of the disputed program. Baker's brief was joined by the American Jewish Committee and the National Council of Churches.

During arguments in the New York City case, the justices heard the federal government's top lawyer, solicitor general Rex E. Lee, defend a section of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) known as Title I. That provision of the historic law mandates that federal funds for remedial reading and math and guidance counseling for pupils in poverty-stricken areas be distributed in a "comparable" fashion between public and parochial schools.

Lee asked the high court to overrule a lower federal panel's decision earlier this year invalidating Title I benefits to parochial schools, arguing there are "no instances of Title I teachers advancing religion" in the 18 years the program has been in effect in the nation's largest city.

After passage of the law, he said, New York City school officials undertook a "common sense examination" of the best way to implement Title I and concluded there was no "significant risk" of excessive governmental entanglement with religion in sending public school teachers into parochial schools to provide the remedial instruction and clinical guidance.

Lee concluded his presentation to the justices with a passionate plea that "it would be a real tragedy" if "such a successful program" were disallowed under the establishment clause.

Stanley Geller, a New York City attorney representing taxpayers who brought suit challenging the law, told the high court that while ESEA "is a good statute...there have never been enough funds" in Title I to service all eligible public school pupils in the city. He said he could not believe Congress intended such students be denied the benefits of remedial education in favor of parochial school pupils.

Geller also attacked the government's contention that no evidence exists of excessive entanglement of school officials with parochial schools benefiting from the program, arguing there is no proof of improper interaction because the city relies only "on the good faith and professionalism of the teachers" with no "system of surveillance."

The program benefits parochial schools directly, Geller added, in that the public school teachers "can become the school personified."

Although the Grand Rapids and New York City cases were heard back to back, the high court will issue separate decisions in the disputes, probably sometime next spring.

--30--

November Surge Brightens
Cooperative Program Picture

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
12/6/84

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--November contributions of \$9,693,000 through the national Cooperative Program have brightened the budget picture for the worldwide mission and education programs of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The November 1984 figures were 20.87 percent (\$1,673,565) above 1983 receipts for the same month. Two months into the 1984-85 fiscal year, the national Cooperative Program has received almost \$18.3 million, 9.84 percent ahead of the first two months last fiscal year.

The figures provided good news to balance a somber October report when voluntary contributions from the 37 state conventions affiliated with the SBC were \$8.6 million. In order to meet the 1984-85 basic operating budget of \$118 million, the national Cooperative Program must average more than \$9.83 million each month.

November 1984 receipts were a monthly record and marked the first time November contributions had passed the \$9 million mark. The first time the month had broken the \$8 million mark was 1983 (\$8,019,435). The figure is more than double the collections of six years ago (\$4,696,217 in November 1978).

National Cooperative Program receipts are distributed among 20 Southern Baptist institutions, according to a formula approved by messengers to the annual meeting of the 14.3 million-member convention.

One-half of all income goes to the Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., and 19.7 percent goes to the Home Mission Board in Atlanta. The six Southern Baptist seminaries (in California, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, North Carolina and Texas) share 20.6 percent.

The remaining 9.7 percent is split among the Executive Committee, the Annuity Board, the Southern Baptist Foundation, Commission on American Theological Seminary, the Brotherhood Commission, the Christian Life Commission, the Education Commission, the Historical Commission, the Radio-Television Commission, the Stewardship Commission and the Public Affairs Committee.

After two months, 31 of the 37 state conventions have increased their giving through the national Cooperative Program from last year. Seven conventions already have given more than \$1 million: Texas, \$3,227,997; Georgia, \$1,535,158; Florida, \$1,402,050; North Carolina, \$1,304,503; Alabama, \$1,241,166; Oklahoma, \$1,212,047, and Tennessee \$1,130,670.

--30--