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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
 901 Commerce #750
 Nashville, Tennessee 37203
 (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

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85-4

Conservatives Have No Plans
 To Lose SBC Vote: Pressler

By Norman Jameson

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Leaders of an effort to steer the Southern Baptist Convention on a more conservative course have no contingency plan for losing the SBC presidential election in Dallas in June, according to Paul Pressler, a Houston layman.

"God hasn't brought us this far to lose," said Pressler, who has laid wide tracks across the country to rally Southern Baptists around battle flags of inerrancy and conservatism.

He addressed 75 Oklahoma pastors, directors of mission and evangelists Jan. 11 at an Oklahoma City luncheon.

Conservatives in sympathy with Pressler who have controlled the SBC presidential elections since 1979, are rumored to be considering forming a separate convention should their candidate, as yet unnamed, lose to a moderate candidate, as yet unnamed. Current SBC President Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, has not said whether he will seek reelection.

If, however, "liberals are able to manipulate a momentary majority, a lot of people will be disappointed," Pressler said of the annual SBC meeting, scheduled June 11-13. "If that happens, I won't be responsible for what follows."

Pressler, a Houston appeals court judge, said he was "in the area" to preach a weekend revival at Faithway Baptist Church, Rufe, 190 miles to the southeast.

Pressler currently is a member of the SBC Executive Committee, having been elected at the 1984 annual SBC.

Some of his friends wanted him to tell them the progress the group is making in its battle to excise "liberalism" from Southern Baptist seminaries and agencies.

Participants met in a room reserved by Eldridge Miller, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sallisaw. Pressler said he updated participants on "how the liberals are organizing to wage Roy Honeycutt's holy war on Southern Baptists with Cooperative Program funds." Honeycutt is president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Honeycutt has become a primary target because he likened the current conflict among Southern Baptists to a "war against unholy forces."

Leaders in the effort to turn the convention to a more conservative stance have been very critical of recent efforts by college and seminary presidents to defend their institutions from allegations they are "liberal" and no longer adhere to historic Baptist theology.

At the same time, conservatives have been criticized for their coordinated efforts to control convention elections and resolutions, all the time denying they have any organization beyond "friends talking to friends" and "Christmas card mailing lists."

When asked if the Jan. 11 luncheon might be just such an organizational meeting, Pressler denied the two-hour luncheon was anything more than a friendly, informative get-together.

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Pressler said he would do the same for any group of Baptists. He especially covets invitations to speak on the campuses of Southern Baptist colleges and seminaries where he feels especially maligned.

He needs to speak on campuses, the target of most of his criticisms, because his side is not presented in Baptist media, he feels.

The meeting Jan. 11 and others like it are by invitation only, with no media invited, because "I want to be able to speak with my friends in candor," Pressler said. "We are misconstrued by those trying to attack us."

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RA's Raise \$27,000
For Bangladesh Goats

By Jack Childs

Baptist Press
1/18/85

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--At last count, Royal Ambassadors from 383 Southern Baptist churches had raised \$27,639.96 to purchase goats for needy Bangladesh families, the result of a story in the September 1984, issue of Crusader magazine.

Money for the goats continues to arrive daily at the Foreign Mission Board.

"Dilip's Goat," a story written by Frances Tennell Carter in the Brotherhood Commission's monthly magazine for Royal Ambassadors in grades 1-6, told how missionaries gave goats to families who could not afford them to provide them with milk. It focused on the excitement of the young boy named Dilip whose family had received a goat.

When asked why anyone would give them a goat, Dilip's poverty-stricken family was told by missionaries: "It is because God loves you and he wants others and us to help you."

The story concluded with a statement that \$13 would buy one goat for one family. Royal Ambassadors were invited to send their contributions to buy goats to World Relief in care of the Foreign Mission Board.

At that price, Royal Ambassadors had purchased a herd equal to 2,126 bleating billies and nannies. More importantly, that same number of poor families have been given hope through the caring of boys involved in missions.

In letters to the Foreign Mission Board which accompanied the money donated for the goat purchases, many Royal Ambassadors personally signed their names, ranging from the printed scrawl of early graders to more practiced penmanship of older Crusaders.

Many youngsters requested the names of families receiving goats so they might correspond with them, and there were numerous requests for photographs of the goats.

The most common means of raising money was through the collection of aluminum cans. Other groups made rice banks and placed them on tables for donations during Wednesday night church suppers. One enterprising RA chapter sold hot dogs to choir members between Sunday afternoon rehearsals and church training.

Some conducted fund raising campaigns in their churches using posters and bulletin inserts featuring pictures of goats. Others raised money by mowing lawns. One chapter donated money they had been saving to buy Royal Ambassador baseball caps. Yet another group performed a skit about World Hunger and charged admission. A bunch of fifth graders gave up snack food for a month and saved their money.

There were bake sales, newspaper collection drives, special suppers and added chores for a price at home--anything to raise money to help buy goats. One lad from Clarksvill, Tenn., gave the money he had received from the tooth fairy.

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"Dilip's Goat," a simple story about a boy and his needy family and their happiness from the gift of a goat prompted thousands of Crusader Royal Ambassadors to do more than recite their motto. "Help others in Jesus' name." They lived it.

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Sharp To Be Recommended
As Colorado Executive

Baptist Press
1/18/85

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (BP)—After being interim for nearly seven months, Charles E. Sharp will be recommended to Colorado Baptists Jan. 29 as executive director-treasurer elect.

If elected, Sharp will succeed Glen E. Braswell, who held the post for 22 years before retiring June 30. Sharp, director of church training and church music for the Colorado Baptist General Convention, has been interim director since Braswell's retirement.

The special session of the state convention will follow immediately the last session of the Jan. 28-29 state evangelism conference at Circle Drive Baptist Church, Colorado Springs.

Sharp's election would bring one of the more varied ministry backgrounds in the Southern Baptist Convention to the top administrative post in the state missions effort.

He holds an earned Ph.D from East Texas State University, Commerce, in music and educational administration. Prior to 1978 he taught or administered almost 20 years in public schools and at the former Decatur Baptist College (now Dallas Baptist University), East Texas Baptist College in Marshall, and Mobile College in Mobile, Ala.

Concurrent with his teaching ministry, he held part time staff positions as minister of music, youth and education in churches in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Alabama. During four summers between semesters, Sharp worked in resort missions through the Home Mission Board in New Jersey, Montana and South Dakota.

He also worked with the Home Mission Board as mission pastor in 1973-76, constituting Bellewood Baptist Church in Syracuse, N.Y. While there, he was a member of the administrative committee chairing the education committee of the executive board of the Baptist Convention of New York.

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Baptist College Employees
Laid Off In Budget Cuts

Baptist Press
1/18/85

CHARLESTON, S.C. (BP)—Baptist College at Charleston recently announced 40 employees will be laid off during the next five months.

While the South Carolina Baptist Convention-related institution declined to release the names of terminated personnel, a spokesman said the list included seven faculty and 33 staff members. None of the affected faculty have tenure.

The college's board of trustees met in December and authorized the lay offs and the elimination of several academic programs in an effort to ease a \$860,000 budget deficit.

Margaret Gilmore, the college's director of public relations, told the Baptist Courier, the South Carolina state Baptist newspaper, four faculty members and 21 staffers will be laid off Jan. 31. The other terminations are scheduled for May 31.

The trustees also voted to eliminate majors in art and guidance and counseling after next semester, as well as the school's English Language Institute, established to teach English to foreign students.

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Meanwhile the school has launched a \$1 million fund raising campaign which already has netted \$416,500 in cash. Cash and pledges from the trustees and their families amount to \$292,500.

Baptist College President Jairy C. Hunter Jr., said the changes indicate the school is "moving in the right direction toward tighter control and more efficient programs."

Baptist College had faced a \$1.5 million deficit in September. The board of trustees declared the school in a state of "financial exigency," allowing it to make immediate budget cuts and to terminate even tenured employees to save the institution from bankruptcy.

The board's latest action should trim more than \$1 million from the operating budgets of affected departments.

A special session of the general board of the state convention is set for Jan. 22 in Columbia to deal with Baptist College's financial crisis.

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Pre-Christmas Robbery Lets
Christians 'Love One Another'

Baptist Press
1/18/85

LA MESA, Calif. (BP)—All of Mike and Bonnie Hull's Christmas presents—and many other possessions—were stolen December 20.

It led to one of their greatest Christmas celebrations ever.

The Hulls, Southern Baptist foreign missionaries, live in Tijuana, Mexico, and work as church planters and coordinate mission work along the U.S.-Mexico border in the Baja area.

Robbers entered a front window of their home and took the unwrapped Christmas presents from under the tree and all the jewelry, money, tape players, the television set and three clocks (one an antique over 100 years old) and numerous other valuable items in the house.

"But God used this experience to give us the greatest demonstration of his love and the love of our fellow Christians we have ever had," Mrs. Hull said.

On Dec. 21 Wayne Eurich, director of metropolitan missions for the San Diego Southern Baptist Association of California, learned what had happened and began to call churches in the association to suggest a love offering be taken for the Hulls.

Christmas Eve he presented the Hulls a check for more than \$4,300.

"Mike and Bonnie could not take in the reality of the check at first," Eurich said. "When they realized what their fellow Southern Baptist has done for them, I've never seen anyone more excited on Christmas morning."

Mrs. Hull agreed.

"The Bible tells us, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you,'" she said. "We had been obedient to God and he had taken care of our needs.

"It also tells us, 'The world will know we are Christians by our love for one another.' We thank God we were able to feel the abundance of His love by the response of the church during our time of need. God really did take a very bad experience and turn it into a tremendous blessing."

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Gambling Industry
Eyes Southern States

By David Wilkinson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—As state legislatures have begun to convene, Southern Baptists are once again in the thick of the battle over legalized gambling.

Five states with heavy Southern Baptist populations have been cited by prominent gambling industry publications as prime targets for new legalized gambling.

Texas, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee, along with Kansas, were identified by The Blood Horse magazine as prime prospects for pari-mutuel racing legislation in 1985. Virginia and South Carolina were noted as states where gambling prospects for 1985 did not look promising.

Texas, long coveted as a key to expansion by the thoroughbred industry, looks more promising than ever because of pro-racing sentiments of Speaker of the House Gib Lewis. Gambling lobbyists are counting on Lewis to wield his influence in support of pari-mutuel legislation.

In the last session of the Texas legislature in 1983, racing legislation passed in the Senate and failed by only two votes in the House.

Georgia racing enthusiasts feel legalization of horse racing in neighboring Alabama last year will encourage legislators to legalize pari-mutuel racing in order to keep Georgia money at home. In Mississippi, racing supporters already have presented their case before a legislative committee, while activity in Kansas and Tennessee is expected to carry over from previous sessions.

On another gambling front, Florida was singled out by Public Gaming magazine as the state most likely to fall into the lottery camp in 1985. A petition drive collected 280,000 signatures last year, lacking only 20,000 signatures for certification for a vote. Lottery supporters claim the signatures should be valid in calling for a 1986 referendum vote, meaning an additional 20,000 signatures would gain the issue a place on the ballot regardless of any legislative action.

Proponents also claim public support in Florida runs 2-1 ahead of opposition.

In Arkansas, lottery supporters will continue efforts to collect 79,000 signatures calling for a state-wide referendum. They claim the 20,000 collected in 1984 will continue to be valid, leaving them with another 59,000 signatures to acquire.

In Oklahoma, Gov. George Nigh, a Baptist, has announced his support of a state lottery. And lottery advocates in Texas are expected to sell a lottery as the cure for a projected budget deficit of \$800 million.

Larry Braidfoot, an anti-gambling expert on the staff of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, believes the gambling industry's success in the 1984 elections will "encourage even more aggressiveness" in 1985. Last year four states approved lotteries, and Missouri also legalized pari-mutuel wagering.

"The time to organize opposition and to begin to contact legislators and other elected officials is now," Braidfoot urged. "We must derail the gambling industry before it gets up a full head of steam. Legislators need to hear our message before the pro-gambling propoganda puts stars in their eyes."

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Missionary 'Slow Down' Spurs
Church Growth In Tanzania

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
1/18/85

KYELA, Tanzania (BP)—Evelyn Knapp learned a long time ago that it doesn't take much mobility to make a difference in the lives of people.

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Her experience makes a good case study for what can continue in economically depressed Tanzania, even if the current fuel crisis permanently reduces missionary mobility.

Mrs. Knapp's lesson came in 1976 after a potentially fatal amoebic abscess of the liver kept her close to home for six months.

She "began to hurt a lot" the few times she tried to disobey doctor's orders and go out on bumpy roads to assist her husband, Doug, in his far-flung ministries in agriculture, church development and evangelism in Tanzania's 1,000-square-mile Kyela District.

"I feel like the Lord really gave me that illness for a reason," said Mrs. Knapp, a 21-year veteran of Southern Baptist missions in Tanzania. "Instead of going to more distant bush churches, I started attending a little church about a half-mile from my house and discovered the youth there had no leadership, no Sunday school and no one who cared about them or did anything for them."

That realization started a ministry which has spread over the entire district and into other parts of Tanzania in the past eight years. It has revolutionized the lives of thousands of young people and become an important factor in laying groundwork for Knapp's work, which has resulted in a five-fold increase in churches since 1975, at least 17,850 baptisms since 1978 and large increases in church membership and Sunday school enrollment.

"I started a Sunday school in that little church," Mrs. Knapp said, "and then realized they had no Bibles. So I started a Bible memorization program and gave them a free Bible if they learned a certain number of verses.

"Then, when they got the Bibles, I realized they didn't know where the book of Genesis was or the book of Revelation. They didn't know anything about the Bible at all. So I started what we call at home a Bible sword drill."

The young people, challenged to learn by someone who cared, practiced for hours and thrived on the competition. They grew in their Bible knowledge, and many began to accept Christ as Savior.

African Baptist pastors came from all over the area to see what had happened to the young people. "They'd never seen young people do things like that and had no idea they were capable of it," Mrs. Knapp said.

Soon the pastors began to beg her to do the same thing in their churches, but she couldn't accept because of her illness.

So, she took one of the young men she had trained, put him on a bicycle with a bunch of bright, yellow bananas to eat and sent him 20 miles away to help start a youth program.

Her decision turned out to be the best thing she could have done--train an African to reach other Africans.

The young man, Dicki Gidioni, bicycled from church to church. Today, most of the 215 churches in the Kyela District have strong youth programs. The district overflows with excited youth actively involved in Bible studies, Bible drill and choir competition and a variety of ministries.

"We now have a large reservoir of young people ready to serve wherever they're needed," Mrs. Knapp reported. "They know their Bible--a basic for a Christian--and they're confident in leadership roles."

Now whenever a pastor needs a new church leader, he looks first among the older young people who have come up through the youth program. At least 15 of the young men have become pastors in their own right.

The movement also will affect Tanzanian family life eventually.

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"We've been here 21 years, and I can count on one hand the number of Christian marriages we've had in this area," Mrs. Knapp said. "They've all been young people from our youth program in the last three years who've gotten old enough to get married."

The young people also have spilled over the borders of Kyela District and begun to have an impact in other areas of Tanzania where they now live. This gives missionaries great hope for the future as the youths move into positions of church and national leadership.

Meanwhile, Dicki Gidioni, the young man with the bicycle, has become chairman of a Tanzania-wide youth organization that grew out of the movement. Tanzanians call him "the father of youth work."

"If he's the father, maybe I'm the grandmother," Evelyn Knapp says with a laugh.

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

Baptist Integration Leader,
Thomas J. Holmes, Dies

Baptist Press
1/18/85

ATLANTA (BP)--Thomas J. Holmes, 67, died in Atlanta following cardiovascular surgery.

In 1966 Holmes drew international attention when he was dismissed from the pastorate of Tattnall Square Baptist Church in Macon, Ga., over integration of that congregation by a Nigerian student at Mercer.

Holmes wrote a book about that experience entitled *Ashes For Breakfast...A Diary of Racism*. It was co-authored by his brother-in-law, Gainer E. Bryan Jr., former editor of the *Maryland Baptist*. Holmes was named Georgia's author of the year in 1970 for that book.

Holmes was assistant to the president of Mercer University from 1966-80 and alumni director and Christianity professor at Mercer, 1960-65. He held many Georgia Baptist pastorates. After early retirement in 1980, he was director of development for Christian Council of metropolitan Atlanta and Atlanta Boys' Clubs. At time of his death he was interim pastor of Rainbow Park Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga.

He served as a director of Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and was a trustee of Mercer. He held many leadership positions in Atlanta Baptist Association and Georgia Baptist Convention.

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Church Divides \$50,000 Gift
To Missions Eight Ways

By Janis Whipple

Baptist Press
1/18/85

CRESTWOOD, Ky. (BP)--A \$50,000 anonymous donation in mid-December has allowed a Kentucky church to extend its missions reach and expand its mission giving.

The 550-member Ballardsville Baptist Church in Crestwood, Ky., in turn voted to send \$25,000 to Foreign Mission Board's world hunger relief fund and \$5,000 to Oneida Baptist Institute, a boarding school, grades 6-12, for underprivileged children and children with special disciplinary and learning difficulties (located in Oneida, Ky., the school is an institution of the Kentucky Baptist Convention).

Another \$5,000 will help cover expenses and materials for the church's mission project in Honduras, Feb. 16-Mar. 3. Seven of the last eight years the church has sent laypersons to work with Lesli Keys, missionary to Honduras, especially in mission construction projects. This year six church members will build a home for a national pastor.

The Detroit Rescue Mission where a former church member is director received \$5,000.

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Paul Justice, former pastor of the church got \$2,500 to help his work as a home missionary in Washington state, pastoring pioneer Southern Baptist churches.

Jefferson Street Baptist Chapel, Louisville, which provides Christian social ministries in the inner-city through such programs as emergency financial aid, food, clothing, nutrition and crisis counseling also got \$2,500 as did Ken and Beth Perkins, missionaries to Malawi with whom the church corresponds; and the first \$2,500 went to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, bringing the church's total gifts to the offering to \$4,390.

The experience has been "tremendous for the church," related Wayne Dozier, pastor of the church since December 1977. "The people have been astonished, surprised and pleased."

"I think (the experience) will make a difference in our attitudes toward future giving," concluded Dozier.

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(Janis Whipple is a staff writer for the Western Recorder, newsjournal of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.)

200 Preachers Ask To Explore
Foreign Mission Opportunities

Baptist Press
1/18/85

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—More than 200 Southern Baptist preachers asked to explore the possibility of overseas service last year as the Foreign Mission Board moved to sharpen its focus on general evangelists.

Most of them already have attended seminary and either have completed or nearly completed the pastoral experience necessary to be appointed a Southern Baptist foreign missionary, said John Floyd, director of the board's newly formed missionary enlistment department.

Last year the board hired Floyd, a former missionary himself, to organize an effort to find those preachers who haven't responded to God's call to missions. More than 1,000 prospects were contacted during the year, and nearly 250 have requested additional information.

About half of the overseas job requests for this year are for general evangelists. Last year about 315 general evangelists were requested; 68 were appointed or reappointed. In the United States 95 percent of the world's evangelical preachers minister to five percent of the world's population.

Names of prospects came from furloughing missionaries, directors of associational missions, missions professors, and a file of people who had written or phoned for information on foreign mission opportunities.

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News Analysis
Old Social Issues
Face New Congress

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
1/18/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—Despite 50 newcomers to its ranks and some significant leadership changes, the 99th Congress looked remarkably similar to its predecessor in the range of bills introduced during its opening days.

Among the early proposals were the familiar but controversial measures designed to reverse current public policy on school prayer and abortion—sponsored primarily by the same lawmakers who pushed them in the 98th Congress and earlier ones.

What may prove different in the new Congress is how much center stage time is given these proposals and other long-term items on the New Right's wish list such as tuition tax credits and anti-busing measures.

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During the 98th Congress, then-Senate majority leader Howard H. Baker Jr., R-Tenn., accommodated weeks of floor time for battles over abortion, tuition tax credit and school prayer measures--none of which came close to passage.

Early signals from new Senate majority leader Robert J. Dole, R-Kan., indicate he may stick with other priorities, at least until Congress finds some solution to the staggering federal budget deficits. Although Dole voted with Senate backers of school prayer and abortion legislation during the last Congress and steered President Reagan's tuition tax credit proposal through the Senate Finance Committee and to the floor where it was defeated, he has repeatedly voiced his intention to tackle the federal deficits early this year.

"Definitely at this point, the budget deficit is his number one priority," a Dole aide told Baptist Press. However, the aide emphasized Dole's initial intention to focus on budget priorities did not rule out the possibility of issues such as abortion and school prayer becoming priorities later.

The aide cited Dole's previous support of anti-abortion and pro-school prayer measures but said, "in terms of what is going to happen on the floor, no decisions have been made."

On the other side of Capitol Hill, the 1984 elections are expected to have little change on the cool treatment proposals on abortion and school prayer regularly receive from the Judiciary Committee.

In both houses, concern over the budget deficits appears to be paramount as indicated by the number of bills and constitutional amendments proposed to get red-ink spending under control. On its first day in session, 15 constitutional amendments on the budget process and/or budget deficits were proposed. In addition, five proposals to give presidents line-item veto authority were offered.

Although congressional and White House focus on budget deficits and several major tax reform packages does not preclude action on issues such as school prayer and abortion, it means they will occupy back-burner status for the first part of the 99th Congress. In addition, the new makeup of the House and Senate offers no realistic hope these issues will fare any better in the next two years than they did during the past four.

These long odds failed to deter long-time advocates of school prayer and anti-abortion measures from reintroducing their now-familiar proposals.

Among the most prominent were those sponsored by Republican Senators Orrin G. Hatch of Utah, Strom Thurmond of South Carolina and Jesse Helms of North Carolina.

As in the past, Hatch and Thurmond have proposed constitutional amendments requiring two-thirds votes in both houses of Congress and ratification by three-fourths of the state legislatures to reverse national policy on school prayer and abortion while Helms has submitted bills which require passage by a simple majority.

Hatch's proposed constitutional amendment on abortion (S.J. Res. 5) is virtually identical to his proposal which failed by 17 votes last year. It is designed to reverse the 1973 Supreme Court ruling which upheld a woman's right to privacy in abortion decisions by declaring that the right to an abortion is not secured by the Constitution.

Recalling last year's solid defeat, a Hatch spokesman told Baptist Press the numbers in the new Senate are "more against us." He added, "It is a fact we were soundly defeated. We are going to have to wait and see."

Hatch's proposed constitutional amendment to permit silent prayer and meditation in public schools (S.J. Res. 2) is identical to the one he offered last year, except it omits the "equal access" section because Congress passed equal access legislation last year. A spokesman said Hatch would wait for a Supreme Court Ruling on an Alabama silent prayer statute now pending before the high court before pushing the amendment in this Congress.

Hatch is among co-sponsors of a Thurmond proposal (S.J. Res. 3) identical to the school prayer amendment pushed by President Reagan in the last Congress which failed by 11 votes.

In S. 47, Helms reintroduced a bill sponsored in the past Congress which would strip the Supreme Court and lower federal courts of jurisdiction in school prayer cases. A similar proposal passed the Senate in 1979 only to die in the House Judiciary Committee.

When introducing his abortion bill (S.46) Helms said it would provide a permanent ban on federal funding of abortion and put Congress "clearly on record as finding that Roe against Wade was erroneously decided and that the Constitution sanctions no right to abortion."

Among other measures introduced were:

--Proposals to provide clergy and military personnel permanent relief from Internal Revenue Service Ruling 83-3 and any similar ruling which would deny normal tax deductions for real estate taxes and mortgage interest to the extent the taxpayer received a tax- exempt housing allowance toward these expenses.

--A proposal to make permanent a 1981 tax change giving non-itemizers a tax deduction for charitable contributions.

--Proposed constitutional amendments guaranteeing equal rights for men and women.

--Proposals to provide African famine relief.

--Various proposals on arms control, including a nuclear freeze, space weapons ban, and limitations on chemical weapons. (On Jan. 9, the Senate passed a resolution, S. Res. 19, expressing its support for the current U.S.-Soviet Union arms control talks.)

--A proposal to provide tuition tax credits for parents of private school students.

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Arab Baptist's Death
Produced Two Funerals

Baptist Press
1/18/85

WEST BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--Jerius Delleh, well-known Baptist leader in the Middle East, died Jan. 16 of natural causes.

Because of political tensions in the city, two funeral services were held, one in West Beirut at Mouseitbeh Baptist Church, where Delleh was pastor, and the other in Badaro Street Baptist Church in East Beirut.

Delleh, 62, had been editorial supervisor of Baptist publications for more than 14 years. He also taught church history in the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Jerius Delleh was a man of prayer," said Isam Ballenger, Southern Baptist director for Europe and the Middle East. Delleh crossed the "green line" separating East and West Beirut each day on his way to work. "As he passed guards, militiamen and others, he lowered his head and whispered a prayer for each person," Ballenger said.

Delleh, who was born in Palestine and later became a Jordanian citizen, moved to Lebanon in 1970 to work in the publication ministry here. He had supervised the preparation of 75 books and had written a book to be released this year.

His wife, Wedad, died a year ago. Delleh is survived by four children, a daughter in Paris and two sons and a daughter in the United States.

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*460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219*

LYNN MAY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
127 9TH AVE NO
NASHVILLE TN 37234

NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION