



- - BAPTIST PRESS

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, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201-3355, Telephone (214) 720-0550

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

February 6, 1986

86-15

Postal Service Forecasts
Rate Increase In March

By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Postal Service Board of governors has announced a probable rate increase for non-profit mailers--including state Baptist newspapers and some church newsletters--although it has delayed a final decision until March 4.

Following a Feb. 4 board meeting, the governors issued a statement noting "it is prudent to tell the public now" about the expected rate increase. If approved during the March board meeting, the increase will take effect March 9.

The governors pointed to a reduction in postal subsidy appropriations approved by Congress and signed by President Reagan as the major reason for the second increase.

During December, the board of governors approved a rate increase that took effect Jan. 1. That increase, however, was based on the governors' assumption that the Postal Service would receive \$820 million in federal funds to subsidize non-profit mailing rates during 1986, said Bob Hoobing, a Postal Service spokesman.

Following the board's December decision, President Reagan vetoed the bill that contained the \$820 million figure and instead signed a substitute measure that contained only \$748 million. That final figure fell \$233 million short of what the Postal Service said it needed to maintain the 1985 level of subsidized rates.

Another factor in the overall postal rate picture is the anticipated implementation of a new budget-balancing act--the "Gramm-Rudman-Hollings plan"--recently approved by Congress, said Hoobing. Should that measure take effect as expected this spring, the predicted rate increase for non-profit, second-class mail would be about seven percent. Without the budget-balancing measure, the increase would be about four percent.

The Jan. 1 rate increase prematurely moved non-profit mailers from step 14 to step 16 of a 16-step plan begun in 1970 to phase out the postal subsidy. The additional increase would move non-profit mailers beyond step 16 and would require issuance of new rate charts.

--30--

BSSB Trustees Meet
In Spirit Of Unity

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
2/6/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Southern Baptist Sunday School Board trustees have voted without opposition to establish a new music publishing department and to proceed with plans to build a product distribution center.

The action came during a two-day meeting characterized by expressions of unity and support for the board and the Southern Baptist Convention.

"I pray the spirit of this meeting is a harbinger of our convention meeting in Atlanta," said Vice-Chairman John David Laida before the meeting concluded with trustees joining hands and singing, "Blest Be the Tie." Laida is pastor of First Baptist Church of Clarksville, Tenn.

The music publishing department, described by Board President Lloyd Elder as a "far-reaching change of direction and enlargement of the ministry of the Sunday School Board," will produce music products for sale through trade outlets to churches and individuals.

--more--

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

The new department, which will become operational Oct. 1, will publish products including print, vocal and instrumental audio and video items, music instruments and related products. A department director is expected to be elected at the August trustee meeting.

"There is a large demand for Christian evangelical music for churches. Also, we have never before attempted to reach the leisure or home music markets," said Jimmy Edwards, vice-president for publishing and distribution, who will oversee the operation of the new department.

The church music department of the board will continue to publish all church music program curriculum and periodicals, periodical recordings, Convention Press music books and any future Baptist Hymnals, Director Wesley Forbis announced.

"The two departments will work closely together, but they will perform distinct types of ministry," said Forbis.

Authorization to proceed with development of detailed plans, specifications and receiving bids for construction of a warehouse and product distribution center five miles from downtown Nashville was one of several recommendations that were part of a comprehensive space study. Approval to build the distribution center is expected to be requested at the August meeting.

Trustees also adopted a basic planning framework for long-term space needs based on service of the board to a denomination projected to grow to about 17.5 million members in the next 15 years. Southern Baptist church membership now is about 14.5 million.

Trustees also approved continued work by the trustee space committee and the administration on options including remodeling the downtown warehouse for offices and other uses and selling the downtown property and moving the entire board to another location.

"If we have a growing denomination, our successors (trustees and administrators) will have better information to make these decisions," said Elder.

In another action, trustees authorized earmarking \$1.55 million from program reserves over the next five years to fund development, production and promotion of new Holman Bible products and to expand the Holman sales force.

Also, trustees approved returning in 1987 to a summer schedule at Ridgecrest and Glorieta Conference Centers in which all conferences begin on Saturdays and end on Fridays. A rotating schedule that had allowed the addition of two summer conferences at each center while causing conferences to begin on different days of the week had been instituted in 1984.

Responses were adopted to two motions and one resolution referred to the board at the 1985 meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In response to a motion calling for the board to publish a new commentary, a multi-phased research project is being conducted to determine whether there is a need for a new commentary and, if it is needed, what its basic design should be. In addition to group interviews and a mail and telephone survey of potential users, a survey of messengers to the 1986 convention will be conducted.

Dessel Aderholt, director of the Broadman division, estimated that any recommendation concerning a new commentary might be made to the trustees in February 1987, and, if approved, the first volumes could be released in 1990 or 1991.

The response to a motion urging use of different versions of the Bible in Vacation Bible School materials noted that the King James Version will continue to be the basic text for VBS. Response to a resolution requesting updating of Sunday school literature noted that a curriculum content-design adjustment study was instituted in the fall of 1985 with changes to be implemented in 1990-91.

In his report, Elder described the Jan. 27 visit of four members of the SBC Peace Committee as "cordial, helpful, probing and candid. It is not an inquisitorial committee in fact or in spirit. I think it was a most helpful, trust-building meeting."

On another subject, Elder said a five-year management plan for BTN, the board's satellite telecommunication network to churches, is being implemented. He reported an encouraging response to a recent offer for free use of a satellite receiving system in exchange for a five-year subscription agreement. "It is possible for this excellent support system to be sustaining itself by 1990," he said.

Trustees also received a preliminary report on a board-wide marketing/ministry study currently under way.

In calling for the study about one year ago, Elder said the needs of the board and the denomination demand a hard look at products and processes. "We must break through layers and policies in which we do our work, we must respond to increasing competition of para-church groups and private industry and we must respond to the challenge of Bold Mission Thrust," he said.

Trustees also authorized opening new Baptist Book Stores in Macon, Ga., in October 1986 and in northern Virginia or Washington in April 1987.

Elected to one-year terms as trustee officers were Lloyd Batson, pastor of First Baptist Church, Pickens, S.C., chairman; Robert Bible, a businessman from Morristown, Tenn., vice-chairman and chairman of the executive committee; and Lynn Moench, a Nashville businessman, secretary.

--30--

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

Reagan Strikes Familiar Notes
In State-Of-The-Union Message

By Stan Hastey

Baptist Press
2/6/86

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Reagan, delivering his fifth State-of-the-Union message to a joint session of Congress, mentioned familiar themes such as family, abortion, school prayer and educational vouchers in a speech that otherwise majored on administration economic and defense policies.

Addressing lawmakers and the nation one week later than originally scheduled because of the Jan. 28 explosion of the space shuttle Challenger, the president pledged his continued efforts to push his social agenda through Congress. At its heart, he repeated, that agenda deals with family and community.

"Despite the pressures of our modern world, family and community remain the moral core of our society, guardians of our values and hopes for the future," Reagan said. He called those institutions "the co-stars of this Great American Comeback," adding, "Private values must be at the heart of public policies."

Of the three main ingredients of what he has on other occasions called a social "revolution," Reagan came down hardest on abortion, which he described as "a wound in our national conscience."

"America will never be whole as long as the right to life granted by our Creator is denied to the unborn," he said, adding a personal pledge: "For the rest of my time, I shall do what I can to see that this wound is one day healed."

He also promoted his proposed program of educational vouchers, a plan that would provide each family with school-age children a government check to spend at the school--private or public--of its choice. Such a program would "give parents freedom of choice," he said. However, he did not mention tuition tax credits, another plan to assist parents who send their children to private schools which was rejected by the Republican-controlled Senate two years ago.

Reagan continued the pattern of previous State-of-the-Union messages in asking Congress to pass school prayer legislation, saying, "We must give back to our children their lost right to acknowledge God in their classrooms."

--more--

Mentioning children in another context, he said crime rates have fallen for three consecutive years, in part because families and communities have banded together "to fight pornography, drugs and lawlessness, and to give back to their children the safe and, yes, innocent childhoods they deserve."

Reagan also addressed the nation's "younger generation," saying: "With all the temptation young people face, it sometimes seems the allure of this permissive society requires superhuman feats of self-control. But the call of the future is too strong, the challenge too great, to get lost in the blind alleyways of dissolution, drugs and despair."

He then suggested a coming together of faith and science. "Today, physicists peering into the infinitely small realms of sub-atomic particles find reaffirmations of religious faith; astronomers build a space telescope that can see to the edge of the universe and, possibly, back to the moment of creation."

Other major themes of the address included a defense of budget priorities, including a renewed pledge not to raise taxes or cut defense spending. He also unveiled an upcoming review of the nation's welfare programs.

On international matters, Reagan spoke hopefully of possible breakthroughs in U.S.-Soviet relations, in light of his recent "fireside summit" with Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Geneva and the latter's upcoming visit to the United States. "Surely no people on Earth hate war or love peace more than we Americans," Reagan said.

While the president's reception in the chamber of the House of Representatives was warm, lawmakers seemed more subdued than on other such occasions, perhaps reflecting the somber national mood following the Challenger tragedy. Many lawmakers also are forecasting stormy congressional-White House relations during coming months, as the president and Congress prepare to do battle over the 1987 budget and seek ways to reduce the growing federal deficit.

--30--

Closed Baptist Clinic Taunted
By Non-Christians In Benin

Baptist Press
2/6/86

BOHICON, Benin (BP)--Non-Christians are shouting curses at a Southern Baptist dental facility that has been closed all but three of the past 21 months because it has no missionary dentist.

In 1983 Southern Baptist missionaries opened the clinic in the small upcountry town of Bohicon, Benin, after negotiating nearly seven years with government officials. But they had to close eight months later when the career dentist assigned to the clinic left. Missionaries have tried to fill in with volunteers from the United States, but their visits have been irregular and unpredictable.

"The clinic is really a key ministry there," said Tom Starkey, the former missionary dentist who staffed it. "It opens up a lot of doors. The people could sense we were going out of our way to give them the best, and they really appreciated it."

Starkey, who said he left because of personal reasons, usually attended up to 15 patients every morning and worked in the laboratory in the afternoon. Mostly he pulled teeth, but he also did fillings, crowns and denture work. People came for miles to get help.

"But we weren't just repairing people's teeth," he said. "It's easier to present the gospel when they see we care."

Now, however, some are using the vacancies in the clinic to discredit the work. "People are passing by and shouting that the Christians' God cannot keep the clinic open," said Marilyn Bonnell, coordinator of health and social services for Southern Baptist missionaries in Benin. "This causes us a great deal of heartache. The testimony to the community is counterproductive when we have to close the doors."

--more--

The clinic's most urgent need is a volunteer or volunteers to staff it continuously until July or August, when a long-term volunteer is expected to take over. But the real need is for someone who wants to make a career out of practicing dentistry as a missionary to Benin, said Bonnell, adding that it would take about three years to prepare to practice in the country.

"We have a national staff on contract with nothing to do. However, we cannot let them go and then expect to have trained help on hand for the volunteers," she said.

The nearby nation of The Gambia faces much the same situation, said John Mills, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board area director for west Africa.

Southern Baptists have gained a foothold in The Gambia partly because of an upcountry dental program based in their facility at Farafenni. The program places Baptists near a river and at an intersection of two major roads--right where they need to be to reach people, Mills added. But in June a long-term volunteer is expected to vacate Farafenni, leaving a vacancy. "We need another long-term volunteer and a career dentist," Mills said. Again, if a career dentist were approved now, it would take him two to three years to begin practicing.

"It's hard to over-stress the need of dentists in these lands," Mills said. "In The Gambia, here's a Muslim country, and this is our key to it. In Benin, here is a Marxist country, and this is our key to it. One of the things that did impress the governments about our missions over others was that we were willing to do the kind of things others weren't. And now we don't have the person to do it."

--30--

CORRECTION: In BP stories released 1/31/86 and 2/3/86, please indicate volunteers Dan and Freddie Peters are BOTH of Castle Rock, Colo. (Mrs. Peters originally was identified as being from Oklahoma City. Her sister lives there and is the contact for a permanent address in the States while the Peterses are in Haiti.



BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

LYNN MAY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
901 COMMERCE
NASHVILLE, TN 37203

NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION