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January 8, 1987

87-2

Phone Lines To Aid  
'Concerts Of Prayer'

By Art Toalston

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A new toll-free number can help Southern Baptists reach out and touch the world. It's 1-800-ALL-SEEK (1-800-255-7335).

In December, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees urged Southern Baptist churches to begin "concerts of prayer" for world evangelization Feb. 1. The toll-free number will provide the latest prayer concerns from across the world.

The PrayerLine number can be dialed from every state except Virginia, Hawaii and Alaska. For Baptists in those states, a regular toll call will be needed, 1-804-355-6581.

Both numbers, to be activated Jan. 26, can be used 24 hours a day.

Foreign Mission Board trustees have called for concerts of prayer the first Sunday of every month in church worship services, Sunday school classes and church training programs.

A concert of prayer, said R. Keith Parks, board president, involves "God's people joined in united, focused, extraordinary prayer for global evangelization."

"I am convinced," he added, "there has never been a great spiritual, evangelistic mission effort unless it was preceded by prayer."

Calls for concerts of prayer are not new, Parks added. In the late 1700s, a Baptist association in England urged prayer for revival and the spread of Christianity. Within a decade, the first Baptist missions group was organized. And its first pioneer, William Carey in India, sparked the modern missionary movement which continues to this day, encompassing Southern Baptists' 3,700-plus foreign missionaries and those of other evangelical persuasions.

Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust efforts to share the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000 "will never be accomplished without massive prayer," insisted Minette Drumwright, the board's special assistant for intercessory prayer.

Missions may be at "an historic moment," Drumwright said, as Christian leaders are busy sharpening strategies for reaching the world with the gospel. But the most magnificent strategies are powerless without prayer. In fact, the ultimate strategy is prayer."

In addition to its phone lines for relaying prayer concerns, the Foreign Mission Board will continue its monthly prayer alerts. More than 23,000 Southern Baptists currently are on the mailing list.

And, Drumwright noted, the concerts of prayer will complement the National Missions Prayer Plan to be launched during the 1987 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and the 1988 Week of Prayer for Home Missions.

The National Missions Prayer Plan will seek to enlist every Southern Baptist in daily personal prayer for world evangelization. It will be coordinated by the denomination's Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood Commission.

Carolyn Weatherford, WMU executive director, said the Foreign Mission Board trustees' call for concerts of prayer is "another real, valid way to get every church in the Southern Baptist Convention to focus its prayer" for world missions.

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Drumwright listed three hoped-for results from the concerts of prayer: that churches will gain a "heightened, deepened, broadened global awareness" through the times of special prayer each month; that more people will be called into missions involvement; and that "God's power will be unleashed into lives, situations and nations in extraordinary ways."

Momentum toward a plea for convention-wide prayer for world missions began to build after an Oct. 12 prayer meeting when about 30 of the 84 Foreign Mission Board trustees prayed in shifts throughout the night. And in his sermon to the Southern Baptist Convention last year, Parks urged special prayer "at least once a month ... that the world's untold billions will hear and believe in Jesus."

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Gallup: Americans Favor  
Religious Studies In Schools

By Stan Hasteay

Baptist Press  
1/8/87

WASHINGTON (BP)—Three-quarters of the American people favor the study of religion in public schools, a recent Gallup Poll shows.

Conducted late last year, the survey asked respondents if they would object to public schools' teaching about the world's major religions, using the Bible in literature, history and social studies classes, making facilities available for use by student religious groups or offering elective courses in Bible studies.

In all four categories, respondents overwhelmingly endorsed the concept that the public school is a proper forum for such studies.

On the question of teaching about the world's major faiths, 79 percent said they would not object, with only 16 percent saying they would. On using the Bible in literature, history and social studies classes, 75 percent answered they would not object, with 20 percent opposed to the idea. The same margin — 75-20 — favored offering elective biblical studies.

Indicating that a large majority of the public favors the concept embodied in the 1984 Equal Access Act, respondents by a 74-21 margin said they do not object to providing student religious groups with use of school facilities after hours.

Only 5 percent of those surveyed indicated they had no opinion on each of the four questions posed.

The findings were based on in-person interviews with 1,559 adults above age 18 conducted in more than 300 scientifically selected localities across the nation. According to the Gallup organization, samples of this size have only a likely 3 percent margin of error in either direction.

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Church-State Debates Of 99th  
Congress May Abate In 100th

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press  
1/8/87

WASHINGTON (BP)—With a shift in the control of the Senate and the election of new House leadership, speculation swirls around how church-state questions will fare during the 100th Congress. As congressional agendas are set, the question is perhaps not whether any of those issues will result in actual legislation during the next two years but whether they will receive much attention.

Members of the 100th Congress, apparently preoccupied with fiscal and foreign policy questions, may be less willing to spend time addressing church-state issues than were members of the 99th Congress — who addressed a wide range of such issues but failed to reach consensus on most of them.

The 99th Congress, which adjourned in mid-October, was characterized by both political partisanship and landmark legislation. Despite fierce internal disputes that at times threatened to paralyze the two houses, Congress passed major reforms in areas ranging from the federal tax code to illegal immigration, from the environment to drug use.

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The single piece of legislation receiving perhaps the most national attention also posed the greatest challenge to the religious community. The Tax Reform Act of 1986, which provided the most dramatic revision of the federal tax code in more than 40 years, threatened to strip the tax-exempt status of church pension and welfare groups.

As signed into law by President Reagan, the sweeping tax revision retained the tax exemption of such groups, including the Southern Baptist Annuity Board. Had the legislation included the House of Representatives' original provision to strip that exemption, however, Congress in effect would have exposed to taxation the part of the church's ministry that provides pension and welfare benefits to ministers and other church workers and their survivors. Such an unprecedented threat led to a massive lobbying effort against the provision by virtually the entire religious community.

The new tax law -- which took effect Jan. 1 -- also included other provisions affecting churches, church-related institutions and their employees. Among those provisions were the restoration of ministers' eligibility to declare mortgage interest and property tax deductions in addition to their tax-exempt housing allowances and the revocation of non-itemizing taxpayers' eligibility to claim deductions for charitable contributions.

Although only one reached a floor vote, several proposed bills that would have affected public schools also raised church-state questions.

Senate majority leaders said they would bring a proposed constitutional amendment authorizing silent prayer in public schools to a vote by the full Senate during 1986. That vote never materialized.

The proposed legislation -- S.J. Res. 2 -- was approved 12-6 by the Senate judiciary committee in October 1985. Its supporters said it was needed to nullify a 1985 Supreme Court ruling that struck down an Alabama law requiring a moment of silence for prayer or meditation at the beginning of each school day.

Opponents argued such an amendment was unnecessary since silent prayer already is lawful in light of Supreme Court decisions and since such a measure, lacking any secular purpose, simply would promote religion.

In September 1985, the Senate rejected legislation to remove state laws authorizing devotional exercises in public schools from the jurisdiction of federal courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court. The bill, introduced by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., drew opposition from senators all along the ideological spectrum.

Two proposals were introduced in an attempt to create a voucher program that would allow public funds to be spent in private -- including church-related -- schools. Although differing in detail, each of the proposals would have allowed parents of educationally disadvantaged children to obtain vouchers that could be "spent" at the school -- public or private -- of the parents' choice.

The first of the two was introduced by U.S. Secretary of Education William J. Bennett and backed by the Reagan administration. During a House hearing, the measure, known as The Equity and Choice Act (TEACH), met with opposition from both Republicans and Democrats. Eventually, the Education Department stopped efforts to gain the bill's passage during the 99th Congress.

The other proposal was introduced by seven Republican congressmen in an effort to respond to some of the criticism directed at the TEACH plan. The Children's Options for Intensive Compensatory Education Act (CHOICE) would have allowed federal Chapter 1 funds to be used at private as well as public schools but would have limited the use of those funds to special instructional and support services. The TEACH plan would have expanded that use to include general tuition as well as compensatory services.

The 99th Congress also saw Senate confirmation of the nomination of Frank Shakespeare Jr. as new U.S. ambassador to the Holy See. Appointment of Shakespeare, a former ambassador to Portugal, came despite protests from a number of religious and church-state organizations and an unsuccessful attempt to convince the Supreme Court to hear a case challenging the constitutionality of such a diplomatic appointment to the Holy See, also known as the Vatican.

Other proposed pieces of legislation in the church-state area came in reaction to two recent Supreme Court decisions.

In 1986, Congress for the third consecutive year failed to pass legislation to overturn a 1984 Supreme Court decision on sex discrimination. In *Grove City College v. Bell*, the court held that colleges and universities — including those affiliated with religious bodies — must comply with Title IX of the Civil Rights Act forbidding sex discrimination. The court ruled, however, that only the specific program within a school that discriminates against women — rather than all programs — will lose federal funding when discrimination is proved.

The so-called "Grove City" legislation, which would have broadened the coverage of Title IX from "program specific" to "institution wide," was stalled by a dispute over abortion. The U.S. Catholic Conference and anti-abortion groups contended the legislation could broaden abortion rights to a point where Catholic hospitals that receive federal aid could be forced to perform abortions. Despite the fact two House committees approved the measure, its sponsors did not push for floor action because of the abortion dispute.

Two bills were introduced to overturn a 1986 high court decision concerning the wearing of religious apparel by military personnel. Neither of the measures introduced in response to the decision — which denied the right of an Orthodox Jewish Air Force officer to wear his skull cap while on duty — reached a floor vote.

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Family, Friends Accept Christ  
At Convicted Killer's Funeral

By Orville Scott

Baptist Press  
1/8/87

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (BP)—Richard Andrade became a Christian only two weeks before his execution for murder in Huntsville, Texas.

But the testimony of his conversion resulted in about 60 of his family and friends praying to receive Christ at his funeral in Corpus Christi, Texas, said the seminary student who witnessed to Andrade during the nationwide Prison Invasion Dec. 5.

During the prison revival Andrade overheard Scott Moneyham, a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, telling another death row inmate how to become a Christian.

"I've got 14 days to live. Do you think there's time for me?" Andrade asked.

Moneyham assured him there was time and led the condemned inmate to accept Christ.

As a newborn Christian, Andrade asked, "Would you pray that my family will be saved?" Subsequently Moneyham was invited by a relative of Andrade's to tell of the experience at his funeral.

Moneyham told, not only about Andrade's conversion, but explained the plan of salvation before the congregation and a Catholic priest who was conducting the funeral service. At the close, Moneyham invited the congregation to bow their heads and pray to receive Christ. About half of about 130 people at the service complied.

Afterward an aunt of the executed man told Moneyham, "I prayed that prayer, and I really meant it."

As Moneyham was leaving, another woman caught up with him and asked, "Can you explain to me why I feel so different. I prayed that prayer, and I feel different."

Andrade's sister-in-law, who had invited Moneyham to speak, told him the following morning, "The whole family is different now."

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Henry Addresses  
NOBTS Graduates

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—"You're called to minister," Jim Henry told winter graduates of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. "You don't have an eight hour day, you don't have a 12-hour day, you don't really have a vacation. You are on call to Jesus Christ."

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., said, "That doesn't mean that you have to burn out, but I have never seen a man that put Jesus first, appropriated his time for his family, walked with the Holy Spirit and loved his job who ever burned out."

Henry told the 75 graduates to "remember your human condition. We're never above our people, we're always a part of the people .... We are men of a sinful nature dealing with people who are sinners.

"Remember also that you will be criticized by other church members," he said. "One of the shocks of your ministry, if you haven't already had it, is you'll find out not everybody loves you." Henry said if a minister learns to evaluate criticism and takes it with a sense of humor, "you can learn from your critics, and it will make you a better person."

Henry said ministers should be sure of their calling "because there will be times when all you have to stand on is the fact that God called you." When those times come, "the fact that God sent you will give you courage," he said.

"And wives, husbands, stand by your spouse. Don't you get tired. If you do, stand together," he said. "When (your spouse) can come home, and know that he's got a light there, he'll go back to the battle."

Ministers have "a holy commission," Henry said. "You're a handful of people in the world that the Holy Spirit has said, 'I want you only to bear witness to the light.'"

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Spring Climbs  
Educational Ladder

Baptist Press  
1/8/87

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—A little more than seven years ago, Harry "Nick" Spring had only a high school diploma. Today, he holds four degrees and "Dr." precedes his name.

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary conferred on Spring the doctor of education degree during December commencement exercises. His major was psychology and counseling.

Spring first came to the seminary in October 1979 as a 33-year-old student in the associate of divinity degree program. Before, he was a bivocational minister involved in insurance, real estate and swimming pool sales, bringing in a sizeable income.

From the start, Spring knew he would work toward a doctorate, although he did not know in what field of study. Spring believed God wanted him to be "the best servant" he could be, and that advanced education would better prepare him.

"After my first counseling class, that was it." Spring says, noting, he knew then his primary studies would be in psychology and counseling.

Today, at age 40, Spring holds three positions. He is director of counseling at Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala.; director of the non-traditional academic program at Mobile College; and counseling consultant at Alpha House in Gautier and Biloxi, Miss.

During the past seven years, Spring has earned the A.Div. degree in pastoral ministries from New Orleans Seminary, a bachelor's degree from Mobile College, and the Master of Religious Education and Doctor of Education degrees from New Orleans Seminary.

Spring gives much of the credit for his achievements to the seminary's faculty and administration, especially "professors who prayed with me, encouraged me, and accepted the calling God had given me."

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