



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #75
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Mary Knox, 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, 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

August 11, 1988

88-129

House committee approves bill,
despite church-state questions

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

WASHINGTON (BP)--Three days of arduous markup by the U.S. House Education and Labor Committee has brought a \$2.5 billion child-care bill one step closer to passage.

In the end, the 19-14 vote to send the Act for Better Child Care Services -- better known as the ABC bill -- to the full House of Representatives was split almost along party lines.

Rep. Pat Williams, D-Mont., one of only two Democrats voting against the legislation, opposed the bill on church-state grounds. Throughout the markup process, Williams unsuccessfully attempted to amend the bill's church-state language. At one point, Williams and Rep. James M. Jeffords, R-Vt. -- the panel's ranking minority member and the only Republican to vote in favor of the bill -- cast the only votes in favor of strengthening the legislation's church-state safeguards.

The church-state issue revolves around how to offer federal financial assistance to church-based child-care providers without violating the First Amendment's ban on an establishment of religion. About one-third of all day-care services in the nation are provided by church-related facilities.

The bill's current language would allow church-related providers to receive federal funds through the ABC program as long as they avoid religious instruction, worship or other sectarian activities. Church providers could not use federal funds to build new facilities and could not discriminate on the basis of religion against children whose care is subsidized with federal funds. But the bill would allow church-based child-care centers to exercise religious preference in hiring employees and to use federal funds to repair or renovate facilities.

Rep. Dale E. Kildee, D-Mich., House sponsor of the bill, said the church-state question is how best to enable churches to participate in the program without violating the Constitution. He said the area of religion always has been dealt with somewhat differently in legislation, and he does not think child care should be asked to bear a heavier weight than any other social program.

"Every accommodation we've made for religion can be found in other legislation," Kildee argued. "We are within the bounds of the Constitution."

But Williams contended it is "totally unrealistic to believe that church-related centers will not -- intentionally or inadvertently -- instill religious values in little children," adding, "That's OK with me as long as the government doesn't fund it."

Williams' first amendment would have allowed a day-care center that receives federal funds to be affiliated with, but not controlled by, a religious institution. His second amendment would have defined child care as an educational program as well as a social program. Regulations for federally funded social programs are less restrictive than those for education programs.

In addition, Jeffords unsuccessfully offered two amendments that would have banned religious discrimination in hiring and admissions. "Once we make it easier to discriminate on the basis of religion, we make it easier to clothe racial discrimination in the cloak of religion," he argued.

Committee Chairman Augustus F. Hawkins, D-Calif., also expressed concern about the bill's church-state language. But Hawkins opposed each of the amendments, saying adoption would kill the bill in committee.

Rep. Fred Grandy, R-Iowa, introduced an amendment that would have exempted federal funds received by churches in the form of certificates -- which he called "indirect assistance" -- from the bill's church-state requirements. Grandy said the amendment, which failed 12-19, was an effort to "clarify attempts to include religious institutions" in the program.

The House version of the ABC bill would authorize the distribution of \$2.5 billion in fiscal 1989 -- and additional funds in the subsequent four fiscal years -- to states for child-care services for children up through age 12.

Under the proposal, states would be required to distribute 75 percent of the funds as certificates with which parents could purchase child-care services from licensed providers or as direct subsidies to day-care providers. States would be able to use 15 percent of the funds to increase the availability of day care and 10 percent for administrative costs.

The House bill would target assistance to families whose incomes do not exceed 115 percent of the state median income, with a priority for children from low-income families.

In order to receive federal funds under the ABC proposal, day-care providers would have to meet certain health and safety standards set by the state. Within five years, providers would have to meet federal standards that would be set by a national advisory board.

--30--

HMB provides training
for church planters

N-HMB

Baptist Press
8/11/88

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board intensified its efforts to enlist and place church-starter missionaries by conducting a five-day seminar at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

The seminar was part of the board's ongoing response to a challenge to enlist and place 1,000 missionary church planters across the nation, said David Bunch, director of the board's church extension division.

The challenge has been issued repeatedly by Home Mission Board President Larry L. Lewis, who has emphasized the need for experienced, well-qualified individuals as missionary church planters.

Bunch noted the training session, held during Home Missions Week at the conference center, marks a shift in strategy for the board: "We're trying to take the initiative, whereas in the past we've left the initiative to state conventions and associations and we've responded to their requests. The HMB initiated more church starts in the 1950s and 1960s, but we've moved away from that in recent years."

Bunch and Jim Hill, director of the board's church-starting department, said the board is expanding its efforts to enlist and place church-starter missionaries in strategic locations for three-year assignments.

Hill pointed out the Atlanta-based agency always has appointed missionaries assigned to start new churches, but the emphasis in recent years has been to use seminary students or recent seminary graduates with limited experience to start new churches and remain as pastors.

Currently, 613 missions personnel are related to the church-starting department in various categories.

Board administrators hope to appoint 10-12 experienced couples this year and double that number next year for the special three-year assignment.

At least 12 of those new church planters are needed to start churches in Nevada as a result of "Here's Hope" revivals planned in the spring prior to the Southern Baptist Convention in Las Vegas.

--more--

The emphasis on starting new churches is part of the convention-wide goal of 50,000 Southern Baptist churches and church-type missions by the year 2000. To achieve that goal, the SBC must double the current rate of starting new churches and missions, Bunch said.

Baptists have been starting about 400 to 600 churches and missions per year, but they have been losing half that number each year to maintain an annual net growth of 200 to 300. To reach the 50,000 goal, the convention must start about 1,500 churches and missions a year in order to maintain a net growth rate of 800 per year.

About 35 people interested in becoming missionary church planters attended the Glorieta training session.

The conference covered such "how to" topics as starting a church using a revival, working with a sponsoring church, identifying and reaching church prospects, effective methods of visitation and personal evangelism, using special events, advertising, direct mail and telemarketing, developing and training core groups, planning a church budget, launching a new church and the role of the church planter.

--30--

Patchwork more than hobby
for two Texas Baptist women

By Terry Barone

F-Texas

Baptist Press
8/11/88

DALLAS (BP)--For Oleta Edwards and Verna Crutchfield, patchwork is more than a hobby. It is a way for them to share their faith in Jesus Christ.

And that is what they did on a partnership missions effort between Texas and Australia Baptists July 24-31. Neither woman is a stranger to Australia, because both have participated in three previous partnership missions crusades to "the land down under."

Edwards, a member of First Baptist Church in Eula in west Texas, has shared through her patchwork on each of the previous partnership efforts.

On her first crusade to Melbourne, Crutchfield, a member of First Baptist Church of Kerrville, shared in public schools and nursing homes and counseled families with severely handicapped children. Crutchfield is a retired professor at Angelo State University who has a doctor of philosophy degree in speech pathology and mental retardation.

In each of the other crusades -- Sydney, Adelaide and this year in Perth -- the women have worked together on the same team and have shared in a variety of places.

"We have been in civic centers, community centers and even in a casino," Edwards said. "We didn't know it was a casino at the time, but we did it anyway."

Crutchfield added, "After the patchwork demonstration, we were able to talk with the manager of the casino, and were able to witness to him."

Craftwork is popular in Australia, and demonstrations like those that the cousins by marriage lead attract people who normally would not attend a religious meeting.

"We've had 100 people come from as far away as 60 miles to see one of these demonstrations," Edwards said.

The presentation takes 40-45 minutes, but sometimes the women remain for hours because people ask questions about the patchwork and their Christian testimonies.

Both Edwards and Crutchfield take part in the demonstrations. "Lives are like patchwork," Edwards said. "Both must have a pattern. Jesus is our pattern."

The women also talk about how light plays an important part in patchwork in bringing out the colors. "We tell those who attend the demonstrations that Jesus is the light of the world," Edwards said.

--more--

The women enjoy the demonstrations because they have opportunities to invite people to evangelistic meetings sponsored by the churches with which they work, Crutchfield said.

Both women feel they have been led by God to participate in partnership missions efforts.

Crutchfield had been to Australia in the late 1970s and noticed that the people she met never talked about their religious lives or their churches.

"So, when this (partnership missions) came up, I wanted to come to share Christ with these people because I care about them," she explained.

Edwards was not too sure about participating in the partnership efforts at first and remarked, "I'd like to see the rest of Callahan County first."

But while reading Acts 22 one day, she "began praying and asked the Lord to speak to me. I told him I was available if he wanted me to go. He has provided all my needs for each trip," she reported.

Both women said they participate in the partnership efforts to meet whatever needs they are capable of meeting. "But we cannot do it on our own strength," Crutchfield said. "It must come from the Lord."

Both women keep in touch with the churches in which they have served and with the people with whom they have worked closely.

"It's not a popular thing to be a Christian in Australia," Crutchfield said. "We keep in touch with these people to encourage them.

"You get delayed returns on these mission trips. We always know when someone has been converted or baptized or when the church is in a building program."

The women said they each receive an average of a letter a week from Australia. And they answer each one.

"You just can't believe our postage bills," Edwards said. And she joked, "We could use a secretary to help us keep up with our correspondence."

--30--

Aid people in need,
Baptists counseled

By Leisa Hammett-Goad

N-HMB
Baptist Press
8/11/88

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Southern Baptists should be the church for stressed families, the abused, hungry and elderly, participants in Home Missions Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center were told.

Home missionaries and laypeople told conference participants not to neglect these groups as candidates for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Nathan Porter, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board domestic hunger consultant, claimed people tend to dismiss the reality of hunger in the United States because it does not compare to conditions in other countries.

The American poor do not have the stereotyped bloated bellies of the third world, but cuts in federal programs have worsened conditions, Porter said. As a result, infant mortality and skin and gum diseases are increasing in the United States due to poor nutrition, he added.

Two-thirds of all Americans are poor, and, despite racial stereotypes, poor whites outnumber poor blacks by more than two-to-one, he noted: "We need to focus where we live and be sensitive and caring about our problems. ... We may not have starvation but we have human suffering, indignity, inadequate housing and medical care."

--more--

Seventy million Americans have difficulty providing life's basic necessities -- food, clothing and transportation, Porter said.

"We become judges, with an attitude of whether people deserve assistance, rather than what we can do as a nation to use God's gifts to help those who hurt," he said. "Don't worry about people taking advantage. Help anyone. That's what Jesus Christ did."

Fran Porter, Porter's wife and director of Sanctuary Home, a Waco, Texas-based center for abused women, said churches need to help the many abused people in their midst.

Most of the residents in Sanctuary Home are Southern Baptists and typify abused women across the nation, Mrs. Porter said. At least one third have children who are also beaten.

Half the women in the United States will be physically abused at some point in their lives by the men with whom they live, she added. Each year, nearly 6 million wives are abused by their husbands, making physical abuse the leading cause for injury to women, greater than car accidents, rapes or muggings.

Abused women stay in their conditions because of blatant fear, dependent children, financial dependence, and lack of employment, marketable skills and transportation, she added. "An abused woman has few alternatives to staying in a violent marriage," she said.

Mrs. Porter encouraged churches to develop closeness among members and support women who are in abusive situations. She also suggested collecting paper and canned goods and making toiletry kits for shelters. "Be the church," she urged.

Not all families may suffer abuse, but many suffer stress, noted Harold Hime, the board's consultant for youth and family ministry.

"Every Sunday morning families sit in church with all their finery, looking like they have got the world by the tail, but inside they're dying," said Hime.

"We've got so much stress in our families because we've never dealt with all our emotional baggage. ... We believe that dealing with stress means changing other people. The only person you can change is you."

Hime encouraged people to review the ways they were raised and discard residual anger and negative patterns that continued to produce stress in their adult lives.

B.J. Dier, national home missionary for senior adults, said members of churches who are age 65 and older often have high stress levels because of isolation, loneliness and neglect.

Senior adults are the church's greatest potential, he said: "Don't tell me that a person who has attended church 50 years is useless because of their age. They have to be challenged. They are looking for something to do.

"We need to impress on people that if we harness the power, skills and energy of older people, it will revolutionize our churches. When retirees catch a vision for ministry in their golden years, it is one of the most exciting things that can happen. And they don't have to go to Zimbabwe to be a missionary."

Churches cannot assume the elderly will be active in church by virtue of their age, Dier said. Contrary to popular belief, senior adults do not become more religious as they age, he added: "We need to evangelize older people. One of the saddest things to think of is a person spending their last days without a loving, caring community."

Dier encouraged conference participants to develop ministries in their churches to meet the unique needs of senior adults. "We all are going to be old someday, and it's each person's inalienable right to have the benefit of a caring Christian relationship," he said.