



(BP)

-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

August 29, 1991

President Bush vetoes
first abortion-funding bill

By Tom Strode

Washington - A

91-131

WASHINGTON (BP)--President George Bush has used the first of what promises to be several vetoes of congressional attempts to weaken abortion-funding restrictions this year.

On Aug. 17, the president vetoed a District of Columbia appropriations bill (H.R. 2699) that would have allowed the district government to pay for abortions with local tax money.

The House of Representatives had passed the bill by a vote of 239-180. The Senate had OK'd it by a voice vote.

"From the outset of my Administration, I have repeatedly stated my deep personal concern about the tragedy in America of abortion on demand," Bush said in a statement released on the day of the veto. "As a nation, we must protect the unborn. H.R. 2699 does not provide such protection."

In a June 4 letter to congressional leaders, President Bush had promised to veto any bill relaxing legislation and regulations restricting government funding of abortion. As many as six other such pieces of legislation moving through Congress appear destined to be vetoed.

The president reiterated in the statement announcing the veto that he is opposed to the use of congressionally approved funds for abortion except when the life of the mother is threatened. Such a restriction was included in the last three District of Columbia spending bills, he pointed out.

The bill vetoed by Bush prohibits federal funds to the district from being used for abortion but not funds raised by the local government. Under the Constitution, Congress has authority over the District of Columbia.

It appears doubtful there will be an attempt to override the veto, a congressional source said. Rep. Julian Dixon, D.-Calif., chairman of the House District of Columbia appropriations subcommittee, is expected to strike the abortion-related language so the bill will receive the president's approval, the source said.

"I would encourage Southern Baptists to let President Bush and their representatives know of their support for the president's veto of this terrible bill," said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"It is important for people in Washington to know of pro-life sentiment in this country. There is a well-financed and intense campaign on the part of pro-abortion forces to minimize such support."

In a written statement Kate Michelman, executive director of the National Abortion Rights Action League, said the veto "is another in a long series of attacks by President Bush on the fundamental right to choose whether or not to have an abortion. Once again the poor women of our nation's capital will suffer."

Thomas hearings to begin;
most senators undeclared

By Tom Strode

Washington - 11

WASHINGTON (BP)--The hearings to help determine whether Clarence Thomas will be the newest justice on the United States Supreme Court will begin Sept. 10 with a certain element of unpredictability.

President George Bush's July 1 nomination of Thomas has resulted in vocal supporters and outspoken opponents lining up, while some groups have refused to take a position or have adopted a wait-and-see attitude.

The Christian Life Commission, the public policy and religious liberty agency of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a religious liberty organization, have chosen not to take positions on the nominee, leaders of both groups said.

The Senate Judiciary Committee, meanwhile, appears uncertain in its eventual verdict, although there have been some signs in the federal judge's favor. Three of the six Republicans on the committee have made public statements of support for Thomas, while none of the eight Democratic members have declared their opposition, according to congressional spokespersons.

The nomination of Thomas, who serves on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, probably has raised the most debate in the civil rights arena, although his views on abortion and the "natural rights" approach to law also have been questioned.

Although he was raised in poverty in the segregated South, Thomas, as a conservative black, has been criticized because his approach to dealing with racial discrimination has differed from the mainstream of the civil rights movement. His tenure as chairman of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission from 1982-90 has been a focal point of opponents' criticism.

He was described as "a man with a singular disrespect for the rule of law, an apparent indifference to fundamental civil liberties, contempt for Congress and the judiciary, and a painfully cramped view of government's role in repairing the damage of discrimination" by Arthur Kropp, president of People for the American Way Action Fund, in announcing the group's opposition to Thomas.

"I think in this case, if the Senate Judiciary Committee is color blind, he cannot be confirmed," said John Buchanan Jr., policy chairman of People for the American Way and a white Southern Baptist. "If I had said some of the same things ..., I would not be confirmed."

"That's complete hypocrisy," said Tom Jipping, legal affairs analyst of Coalitions for America. Thomas' opponents say the government should not be "color blind" in dealing with discrimination, but now they want the committee to be just that, Jipping said.

"Last year, People for the American Way criticized George Bush for appointing too many rich, white guys.

"They don't want people who are going to interpret the Constitution. They want people who are going to support their liberal agenda."

Jipping said, "He has said for 10 years he favors affirmative action. He is opposed to quotas, to racially discriminatory public policies."

Gary Bauer, president of Family Research Council and Citizens Committee to Confirm Clarence Thomas, as well as a Southern Baptist, said "any fair and detailed examination of Judge Thomas' civil rights record at (EEOC) confirms he was an effective enforcer of civil rights laws."

--more--

Groups opposing Thomas, in addition to PAW, include the NAACP, AFL-CIO, Human Rights Campaign Fund (a homosexual rights group), National Abortion Rights Action League, and United Church of Christ, as well as other civil rights, labor, professional and women's rights groups.

In addition to Coalitions for America and Family Research Council, organizations endorsing Thomas include Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, Concerned Women for America, Eagle Forum, Knights of Columbus and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. At least two local NAACP branches also are supporting the nominee.

Among the groups remaining neutral are the American Civil Liberties Union and the Urban League.

"While not taking a position on a particular nominee, we certainly want to encourage the appointment of Supreme Court justices who believe in the rights of unborn children under the Constitution, who manifest an understanding of the Judeo-Christian values which undergird both the Constitution and our system of law, and who understand the fundamental right of religious liberty in a way which will ensure that opinions like the Smith decision (in which the Court rejected the compelling state interest test in free exercise cases) will not be repeated, said Richard D. Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission.

"We would encourage all Southern Baptists to give Judge Thomas' writings and statements close scrutiny and let their consciences guide them as to how they should respond in relation to their individual senators," he added.

The Baptist Joint Committee will maintain its practice of never having taken a position on a nominee to the court or a candidate for public office, Executive Director James M. Dunn said.

"We are concerned that the appropriate, serious and probing questions about Judge Thomas' views on church-state separation and the free exercise of religion be pursued in the hearings," Dunn said. "It's in every American's interests to know what a potential Supreme Court justice believes about the first freedom

"I know very little about Judge Thomas' views on church-state relations, nor do I know anyone who knows much. That's why I simply want to say we need hard questions that anticipate full responses to be included in the questioning."

One group in the 10-member BJC has taken a position on Thomas. The Progressive National Baptist Convention, a predominately black denomination, voted at its meeting in early August to oppose the nominee. The general secretary of the convention did not return a phone call from Baptist Press before its deadline.

"The question is not his personality, but a conservative trend of 10 years" that is undermining civil rights, John Mendez, a pastor in the PNBC, said at the convention, according to Associated Press. "This man represents that trend."

Dunn said he knows of no other BJC members who have taken a stand.

There appears to be some consensus that approval of Thomas is likely at this point. A painstaking examination of the nominee seems certain.

The coalition in opposition "is broad enough and the questions we have raised serious enough that the committee will do a very thorough job in the hearings," Buchanan said.

While Buchanan said defeat of Thomas was not impossible, "I would say it's going to be difficult . . .," he added.

"We will get a majority of the committee. How big a majority that will be I don't know," Jipping said.

Tentmaking: long on potential
but short on application

By Donald D. Martin

FMB-F

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Tentmaking is the Concorde of missions -- it's a great idea that's hardly used.

Ideally, a tentmaker completely supports his or her Christian ministry overseas working in the host country's marketplace. But like the supersonic Concorde, tentmaking has yet to take off and live up to its potential.

The commercially flying Concorde is but 15 years old, but tentmaking is as old as Christianity. The Apostle Paul supported his biblical church planting ministry by making tents. William Carey, who launched the modern missionary movement, supported his work in India through teaching and making shoes. But tentmaking today is long on heritage and short on application.

Southern Baptists support 3,899 foreign missionary personnel, including 299 International Service Corps workers, but have only 37 tentmakers overseas. Out of about 700 U.S.-based mission agencies surveyed in 1988, only 70 had placed tentmakers overseas. And out of 71,000 mission personnel sent overseas from the United States, only about 900 are tentmakers.

So far, limited evidence exists that the tentmaking movement has been successful, said Mike Barnett, who enlists tentmakers for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"There's no doubt in my mind that God is calling out marketplace people to get involved in ministries overseas," he said. "But we're still very much at the beginning of the movement."

Other observers make similar points. Although a high interest remains in tentmaking, a number of adjustments are needed, according to an article reviewing the last 10 years of tentmaking. Gary Taylor, with Frontiers, a mission group that works with tentmakers, said in the article burnout plagues the movement. Some mission agencies even have stopped sending out tentmakers because of poor results related to discouraged tentmakers and unfocused ministries.

When the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board launched its tentmaking program in 1989 it sought to address these weaknesses, said Tom Prevost, director of the International Service Department, which oversees Barnett and the tentmaking program.

"Approaches beyond the Foreign Mission Board's tentmaker program vary widely but the FMB chooses to link a person to a self-supporting job and, most importantly, a Southern Baptist mission. This makes for a complicated tentmaking puzzle," said Barnett.

"I don't see the Apostle Paul as the primary model for our tentmaker program," he said. "He's more like our career missionary. It seems that Aquila and Priscilla are the real marketplace tentmakers that Paul enlisted, disciplined and trained for his church planting team."

Some groups use a model of Paul, working highly independently, he said. "But we have decided not to set it up that way. That's not the part of the tentmakers movement we're involved in. Other tentmaking groups recognize this and are rooting for us, but they have taken the other side."

Tentmakers who work with Southern Baptist missions overseas usually develop new branches of ministry often difficult for missions to accomplish, given their limited budgets and personnel.

But the arduous task of blending tentmakers into a particular mission's overall strategy appears complicated. However, once a tentmaker-mission relationship is established, it often combines the strength of a professional minister and a marketplace Christian.

Good examples are June and Grady Lackey, who recently returned to their home in Lubbock, Texas, after working 14 months as tentmakers in Kwangju, South Korea, Barnett said.

"Just as Paul enlisted Aquila and Priscilla in his church planting strategy, Southern Baptist missionaries in Kwangju located a job opportunity teaching English at a private language institute and sent a request for a tentmaker to the board."

Besides their teaching, the Lackeys also held a weekly Bible study in their home and assisted the missionaries in church planting. They were responsible for 40 new church prospects and several professions of faith.

If the Lackeys had worked alone, their departure either would have ended or weakened their Christian ministry in South Korea. However, their connection with the Southern Baptist mission there kept their work alive. A tentmaker who works as a "Lone Ranger" lacks this essential long-term support, Barnett said.

Yet for all the advantages of a tentmaker-mission relationship, it is one of the hurdles the Foreign Mission Board's tentmaking program has to clear, said Barnett.

Because tentmaking is a fairly new strand in the fabric of Southern Baptist foreign missions, not all mission planners immediately think to weave tentmaking into the strategy of a mission or a region.

"Most missionaries who have worked with tentmakers say it's been a real asset for their overall ministry," he said. "It's a way to multiply the ministry of missionaries. And it has no impact on the their budget."

Some missions have written tentmaking into their strategy, Barnett explains. Yet annually, as foreign mission planners both at home and abroad grapple with the best use of limited budgets and personnel, tentmaking does not automatically come to mind.

"That's what we haven't done," Barnett said. "We haven't sold them that this would be beneficial, productive for a ministry."

The Foreign Mission Board also plans to establish better communication between all types of tentmakers and sponsoring groups. In January at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center, a number of tentmaking groups will convene to explore ways of developing a stronger nationwide network.

This new network, referred to as the Tentmakers International Exchange, or TIE, would be a clearinghouse for prospective tentmakers and sending agencies. The network may help validate this option for Southern Baptist overseas missions, Barnett said.

"I'm optimistic about the tentmaker movement," he said. "It's a thing of the future."

But for now tentmaking bides its time, packed with potential and looking for its place in world missions.

The Concorde has found its niche, jetting the world's elite from continent to continent.

Barnett hopes tentmaking will shake its current status and become a well-worn mission shuttle.

--30--

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

Provost urges Southern
to focus on 'inclusion'

By Pat Cole

SOTS-71

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Declaring the Southern Baptist Convention denominational battle is over, new Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Provost Larry L. McSwain urged the school to expand its role as an institution of "denominational inclusion."

During Aug. 27 convocation services opening the fall semester at the Louisville, Ky., school, McSwain said anyone who doubts conservatives have won the 12-year fight for control of the SBC should "take a high school course in political science." Still, he maintained Southern Seminary must be a place that includes all Southern Baptists regardless of their theological/political persuasion, educational attainment, economic background, ethnic origin or gender.

The school should pursue a future of "excellence without arrogance," McSwain emphasized: "What must be maintained in this place is the reality that the brightest and most resourceful do have at least one place in this convention, but never as a snobbish elite that excludes any with the willingness to learn."

McSwain, who became provost Aug. 1, formally was installed during convocation by seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt. A member of the Southern Seminary faculty since 1970, McSwain had been dean of the School of Theology for three years.

McSwain expressed his commitment to implement the "Covenant Renewal" document approved by the seminary's faculty and trustees earlier this year. He insisted the seminary will not sacrifice academic excellence by abiding by the covenant's provision that future faculty openings be filled by conservative evangelical scholars. Rather, he said the covenant can help "broaden the perspectives" of the faculty.

"I have never understood how you can claim academic freedom as a value and exclude conservative views from the educational experience any more than I believe you can claim academic freedom in an institution that refuses to teach its students liberation theology or feminist theology," he said.

The seminary's faculty always has been fully committed to the authority of Scripture, McSwain said. "The covenant spells out what some have misunderstood. This faculty has stood and continues to stand unreserved in its commitment to the full and complete authority of Scripture as the norm for faith and practice."

McSwain described the Southern Seminary classroom as "a marketplace of ideas, where every current of contemporary thought can be explored and where students are challenged to know the theological foundations on which they stand and are given freedom to think for themselves."

The classroom must remain the central focus of the seminary's mission, he said: "The heart of Southern Seminary is what happens when a professor walks into (the classroom) and begins the magical experience of interaction with a group of students who want to learn. As long as we have that, we can lose everything else and still have a dream."

In addition to traditional learning opportunities, McSwain challenged the seminary to be an "increasingly international" school. New openings in Eastern Europe and the "explosion of Baptist life in Latin America and the Pacific Rim" demand the seminary step up its global awareness, he said.

The seminary must always be vigilant to build a nurturing community that cares for itself, McSwain stressed. "The most important understanding of Christian discipleship in every arena of life is that people matter," he said. "The excellence of the Christian life is one with God at the center, self affirmed as accepted in love by the God who created us and all that exists, and others cared for as equals in God's concern."

--more--

During convocation, three professors signed the Abstract of Principles, the seminary's confessional statement since its founding in 1859. Signing the original copy of the document were Leigh Conner, associate professor of psychology of religion and pastoral care; Craig Loscalzo, assistant professor of Christian preaching; and Jon Rainbow, assistant professor of social work.

--30--

WMU executive Bobbie Sorrill
marries Art Patterson Aug. 24

By Susan Todd Doyle

WMU-F

Baptist Press
8/29/91

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Bobbie Sorrill, associate executive director for Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, and Arthur "Art" L. Patterson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Mason, Ohio, were married in Birmingham, Ala., Aug. 24.

The announcement was a surprise to the staff at WMU, who were informed on Aug. 26 the wedding had taken place. Sorrill and Patterson had hinted for months they would marry before the end of the year. But the couple wanted the ceremony to be private and without fanfare, with only immediate family and a few close friends in attendance.

The couple has not announced residence location or career plans.

Sorrill and Patterson met about four years ago when they were introduced by Carolyn and Joe Crumpler. At that time, Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler was executive director of WMU. Joe Crumpler is pastor of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Cincinnati. Both Sorrill and Patterson participated in the Crumplers' wedding in August 1989.

Sorrill has been with WMU since 1968. During her tenure at WMU, she has directed children's work, been a consultant in associational WMU work, supervised the general administration department and directed the education division. Currently Sorrill directs the missions program system which is responsible for designing and implementing church WMU and associational WMU programs.

Patterson has been pastor of the Mason's First Baptist Church since 1968. He has been active in all levels of leadership within the Southern Baptist Convention. Most recently he served as a trustee of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. He has also served as a trustee of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Patterson's marriage to Sorrill is his second. His first wife, Jeanette Benson Patterson, died in 1977 after an extended illness. This is Sorrill's first marriage.

Patterson has three children -- Nancy Carol Patterson, an aquatics director in Redwood City, Calif.; Alicia Margaret Patterson Cowell, a broker living in Mason, Ohio; and Laurie Alycen Patterson, a student at Baylor University.

The bride's brother, Harold W. Sorrill Jr. of Clinton, Md., performed the ceremony. June Whitlow, associate executive director of WMU, was the bride's attendant. Patterson's brother-in-law, Ron Howard of Austin, Texas, was his attendant. Music for the wedding was provided by Bill and Dellanna O'Brien. Dellanna O'Brien is executive director of WMU. Bill O'Brien, is director of the Global Center of the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University.

--30--