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WASHINGTON--Candidates silent on abortion, homosexual rights in debate.
TENNESSEE--Trends expert's book cites 'True Love Waits.'
CALIFORNIA--Farrakhan filling vacuum with anger, pastor warns.
DALLAS--Trustee sought executive session to pose Annuity Board questions.
SOUTH DAKOTA--To spin 18 basketballs at once, speaker credits 'determination.'
TENNESSEE--BSSB names Mathis director of pastor-staff leadership.

**Candidates silent on abortion,
homosexual rights in debate**

By Tom Strode

**Baptist Press
10/7/96**

WASHINGTON (BP)--While President Clinton and Republican challenger Bob Dole debated a variety of topics for 90 minutes Oct. 6, not once did they discuss two of the most contentious issues in the recently adjourned Congress.

Neither partial-birth abortion nor homosexual rights was raised in questions from Public Broadcasting System newsman Jim Lehrer or in comments by Clinton and Dole in the first presidential debate at Hartford, Conn. Although Dole described the president as a liberal, he failed to bring up either issue, even though Clinton and Congress clashed on both in the September votes.

Clinton vetoed the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act, which prohibits a grisly procedure in the second half of pregnancy, in April. The House of Representatives overrode the veto in mid-September, but the Senate fell short of the two-thirds majority required. Clinton endorsed the Employment Non-discrimination Act, which would have given homosexuality the same legal standing as race and gender in the work place, but the Senate defeated the bill by one vote.

"This debate was more significant for what the candidates did not talk about than it was for what they did talk about," said Will Dodson, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's director of government relations.

"They did not talk nearly enough about the moral issues over which this nation is divided. Ignoring these issues will not make them go away and will not unite Americans. Their positions on the moral issues in general, abortion in particular and partial-birth abortions especially, are of concern to a large portion of society and should be of concern to all of us."

Family Research Council President Gary Bauer called it a "purely economic-driven debate," according to The Washington Times.

"Dole could have pointed to issues like Clinton's support of gays in the military," Bauer told The Times. "The political challenge for him was to reach out to Reagan Democrats, but I doubt it was effective because he didn't hit the social issues."

The candidates responded to more than 20 questions on issues such as Medicare, Dole's 15 percent tax cut proposal, foreign policy, health care, campaign financing reform, drugs and educational choice.

When Dole cited the increase in marijuana and cocaine use among young people during Clinton's presidency, Lehrer asked the president if he bore some of the blame.

"Now do I think that I bear some responsibility for the fact that too many of our children still don't understand drugs are wrong, drugs can kill you, even though I have consistently opposed the legalization of drugs all my public life and worked hard against them? I think we all do, and I hope we can do better," Clinton said.

Dole acknowledged to Lehrer he still favored elimination of the Department of Education and adoption of a school choice initiative that would allow parents to send their children to private schools.

It "seems to me that we ought to take that money we can save from the Department of Education and put it in opportunity scholarships," Dole said. "I don't fault the president or the vice president for sending their children to private schools or better schools. I applaud them for it. I don't criticize them. But why shouldn't everybody have that choice? Why shouldn't low-income Americans and low-middle-income Americans?"

Such private school choice programs should be done only at the state or local level where they are "raising and spending most of the money," Clinton said.

The appointment of federal judges also was not discussed during the debate.

"A particularly important issue in this race which needs to be seriously addressed is the appointment of Supreme Court justices," Dodson said. "Whoever is president for the next four years is likely to shape the Supreme Court for decades to come. This will have a far greater impact than anything else the president will do in the next four years."

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**Trends expert's book
cites 'True Love Waits'**

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Being a virgin is "turning into a badge of pride," nationally known trends analyst Faith Popcorn has written in her book "Clicking."

Popcorn, publisher of "The Popcorn Report," is credited with making the word "cocoon" a verb by predicting the retreat of people from corporate life to home-based businesses. She is known for her accuracy in leading people and corporations to "future fit" themselves for success by being aware of business and lifestyle trends.

In a chapter on "Mancipation," a coined word Popcorn uses to describe the "emancipation of men ... unshackled from the bondages of macho-ism," she references the Southern Baptist-led teenage sexual abstinence campaign, "True Love Waits."

Popcorn cites research indicating the percentage of 20-year old men who have never had sex is greater today. She said chastity generally nets respect rather than ridicule.

She calls the signing of True Love Waits pledge cards "a new Click for Teens," adding in parentheses, "could this be the start of a shift away from the enormous number of unwanted pregnancies?"

Popcorn concludes mancipation is "a forward attitude that welcomes individuality and self-worth."

Richard Ross, True Love Waits campaign spokesman at the Baptist Sunday School Board, said, "It is not often that a program of the Sunday School Board is credited with fueling an observable trend in culture. This trend, in fact, has been confirmed in an Associated Press story indicating fewer babies were born to unmarried mothers last year, the first drop in nearly two decades. I see this as another high-water mark for the campaign."

The drop, of 4 percent, was reported by the National Center for Health Statistics.

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**Farrakhan filling vacuum
with anger, pastor warns**

By Karen L. Willoughby

**Baptist Press
10/7/96**

FRESNO, Calif. (BP)--Louis Farrakhan wants the allegiance of all black Americans -- including the black church -- but he is a false prophet, a black Christian apologist warns.

Farrakhan's Nation of Islam already has more than 30,000 adherents; another 200,000 belong to splinter groups and many more people in evangelical Christian churches support the aims of the black militant organization, Jerry Buckner, a black Christian apologist, said during a Nation of Islam awareness seminar Oct. 5 at the California Baptist Building in Fresno.

Buckner, pastor at Tiburon Christian Fellowship in Tiburon, Calif., is perhaps the nation's foremost expert on the Nation of Islam, California's black church extension director Tom Kelly said. Buckner has spoken on the issue at many denominational and state convention gatherings. He has been studying the movement more than 25 years.

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"There are a lot of supporters of the Nation of Islam," Buckner said. "This was demonstrated at the Million Man March (led by Farrakhan) in Washington. Many blacks who claim to be Christian and even one black pastor -- and I do see a difference between a black pastor and a black Christian pastor -- shouted out loud, 'He is our leader. He is our leader for the entire world.'"

There are several reasons for being concerned about the growth of the Nation of Islam, Buckner said. As he gave them, he said white Christian leaders need to be bold in confronting white racism and in saying racism is a sin that God is not going to tolerate.

"White racism played a major role in producing the Nation of Islam and other black militant groups," Buckner said. "White America needs to understand: If there hadn't been white racism, there would be no Nation of Islam.

"The church has been weak and impotent and noneffective in addressing racism as a sin," Buckner continued. "People are attracted to Farrakhan because he has a bold approach in confronting racism in America."

The Nation of Islam is correct when it says white Christianity has not appreciated that the Bible is a book composed of many different colors, Buckner said.

"Some white ministers are afraid to preach on racism, white racism, from their pulpit because they are afraid of losing their job," Buckner said. "Well, if their job is more important than Jesus, they need to get out of the ministry."

The Nation of Islam is fighting white racism with black racism, Buckner said. Black Muslims say Jesus was black because in Revelation it says his hair was as wool; therefore, it must have been styled in an afro.

"The black community is so hungry for a black hero, for a black leader after the death of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. that they are willing to follow anyone," Buckner said. "We are oftentimes following things because we are emotionally as blacks caught up in how well the person speaks. A lot of times we don't look at what he teaches but how well he speaks and we get deceived by that. And Farrakhan speaks well. He articulates well. He puts most black preachers to shame when he articulates."

Farrakhan says the historical Jesus is not the Jesus of today, that Jesus only was a type of the real messiah, Buckner said. He made reference to a four-hour videotape of Farrakhan's 1994 Easter service that was titled, The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the Imprisonment of Minister Louis Farrakhan. This tape is readily available to blacks at Nation of Islam mosques, Buckner said.

"In his speech Farrakhan says 75 percent of what you read in the Bible referring to Jesus is referring to a future man, and that the man who lived 2,000 years ago is considered a type, a sign of the real," Buckner said. "You will hear him say the historical Jesus of 2,000 years ago that was born in Bethlehem is not the Messiah, that Jesus and Elijah are one and the same. You will hear him say he -- Farrakhan -- is Elijah, meaning Jesus.

"Then (on the tape) Farrakhan begins the unfolding of the crucifixion and relates it to himself, saying, 'I am hanging on a cross right now. I'm on Calvary right now and the more I suffer, the more our people are raised to consciousness ... you don't have to look for Jesus. I represent him!'

"Farrakhan says, 'I was born to die for you and I love the thought of dying for you,'" Buckner said. "Now that's not just more than a mouthful. That's blasphemy," or claiming for oneself the attributes and rights of God.

"I've come to warn you that Farrakhan has redefined the Jesus of the Bible," Buckner continued. "We have to warn our people about the Nation of Islam because many blacks in the church and outside the church don't know what he's really saying regarding Jesus Christ of Nazareth."

The day of atonement at the Million Man March was about a redefinition of the word atonement from a biblical perspective, Buckner said. The Nation of Islam's concept of atonement or salvation is deliverance from the white man's hell on earth. The day of atonement for the Nation of Islam is uniting the black community together as righteous black gods in a sinful world dominated by whites. Once white domination is thwarted, blacks will be delivered from ignorance, illiteracy, poor education, bad health and all the other evils that now plague the black community.

"It is a sad phenomena that many of our black clergy are giving in to Farrakhan," Buckner said. "There is a war not only between Christian pastors fighting him but even some of the other black churches.

"I believe a lot of this is happening because either they're ignorant of the Word of God, extremely liberal, militant or they are more socially minded than biblically minded," Buckner continued. "Everywhere I seem to turn I hear people talk about how black they are and how beautiful.

"We are seeing a move in our black community that we need to be aware of," he continued. "When we let blackness supersede the black book, the Bible, we are in trouble. This little cancer in the church is going to spread."

Already the church is composed of 60 percent black women, and the Nation of Islam mosque, 80 percent men, Buckner said. He acknowledged that Farrakhan is more effective at reaching black men than is the church, and suggested it is because Christians are not ministering effectively enough in the streets and in the prisons.

"The Nation of Islam is effective because there is a vacuum," Buckner said. "The real issue is not what the Nation of Islam is doing. The real issue is what the church has failed to do."

But what is the Nation of Islam doing? What is Farrakhan saying?

"The goal of Farrakhan is to divide the country into two nations, the black-only nation and the white-only nation," Buckner said. "The goal of Farrakhan is to get every black church to become a black mosque. Now don't let him trick you! That's his goal, that every black church become a black mosque in the name of blackness and black humanism.

"Farrakhan has been, if I may use the expression, anointed from hell to get black people to unify in the name of blackness and to not get hung up on the fact that you are a Muslim, Baptist, Methodist but to unify around the fact that you are an oppressed black people and that the white man is responsible for all of your problems," Buckner said. "This is how they get so many blacks in, because a lot of us are hurting. A lot of us are angry, still, at white America, so Farrakhan just hammers that fact."

Buckner paused for effect.

"There is a time bomb ticking in America," he said. "Black Muslims are successful at directing that anger at whites and Jews and anybody who gets in their way. Islam's goal is possibly even to start a second civil war.

"Farrakhan is unifying the black community into a separate black militant army," Buckner continued. "He appeals to those who are angry, rejected and don't have a sense of belonging. He appeals to them by preaching a message of racism, violence, hatred and revenge.

"Farrakhan states that no black person should pay any taxes. He asks for a separate black nation. He feels that all black prisoners -- they should open their cells and let the black prisoners free and go to Africa. He even wants the U.S. government to set up a separate country and pay him \$25 million to run it," Buckner said. "Farrakhan's racism is raising hatred between blacks and Jews and blacks and whites to a dangerous level that could ignite riots, terrorism and, even worse, a civil war.

"We simply have to wake up to the fact that the explosion of the World Trade Center was an opening shot in an all-out war between America and Islam -- I'm talking about not only the Nation of Islam but Orthodox Islam as well," Buckner said. "Traditional Islam's goal and the Nation of Islam's goal, even though they are different theologically, both are to take over the world.

"But thank God for Jesus. He said I have already overcome the world," Buckner said. "We must not let both of these religions try to take over the world. We must as Christians stand firm for our belief and get out there in this war to stand up for Jesus."

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**Trustee sought executive session
to pose Annuity Board questions**

By Joni B. Hannigan

**Baptist Press
10/7/96**

DALLAS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention Annuity Board had equity holdings in the Walt Disney Company prior to the 1996 SBC annual meeting in New Orleans, but quickly divested the holdings prior to the time messengers passed a resolution challenging Disney's "antifamily, antiChristian" trend.

However, a few weeks later a trustee discovered the Annuity Board had repurchased the stock and, for the second time in less than a quarter, quickly divested it.

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The resolution passed at the 1996 SBC meeting expressed "deep disappointment" with Disney and urged Southern Baptists "to give serious and prayerful reconsideration to their purchase and support of Disney products." The convention also approved an amendment for a potential boycott of Disney stores and theme parks.

Other church groups and the American Family Association have lauded Southern Baptists for their stand. Following the SBC lead, other evangelical denominations have adopted similar resolutions.

The Annuity Board's repurchase and quick sale of the Disney stock caught the attention of newly elected Annuity Board trustee George B. Walker. A certified public accountant with more than 40 years of experience in the financial world, Walker said he was surprised by the mistake, given the high caliber of Annuity Board money managers.

The Annuity Board, with more than \$5 billion in assets, hires outside managers to oversee the detailed purchasing and trading of investments for its pension plan funds. These managers are aware of the Annuity Board investment policy which filters investments to make sure companies are not involved in the liquor, gambling, pornography or tobacco industries, or any company with products, services or activities publicly recognized as incompatible with the moral and ethical posture of the Annuity Board.

Walker, a member of Oaklawn Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C., said in a telephone interview he tried to use parliamentary procedure during a July meeting in Chicago of the Annuity Board's 50-member trustee board to get the attention of other trustees in order to learn more about the situation.

"I had decided ... that the best way to get answers was to go into executive session without staff members present," Walker said, "just to bring us together as a body of trustees to find out what the investment committee had discussed (concerning the stock)." Walker said he believed the situation had been discussed in great detail during the investment committee meeting, but the audit committee on which Walker serves had not finished with its meeting in time for him to join the investment committee meeting. Trustees are "encouraged," Walker said, to be involved in all aspects of all of the committees, so they can exercise their full legal responsibilities regarding Annuity Board business.

Walker's motion for an executive session failed in a trustee vote by show of hands.

Annuity Board staff appear to be willing to discuss matters with individuals, Walker said, but they shy away from "full disclosure" of certain issues to the trustee board as a body, when press might be present. "During our orientation (as trustees) a general theme was of mutual trust between staff and trustees," Walker said. "The apparent evasiveness and the lack of being able to get into an open discussion ... goes against what we talked about," he said.

Asked by Baptist Press to respond, Thomas E. Miller, senior vice president for public relations at the Annuity Board, said:

"This is a non-issue. The Annuity Board does not own stock in Walt Disney. The senior vice president for investments, in the weeks prior to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans, instructed managers who held Walt Disney to sell it. This was done.

"There was never a breakdown of procedures or controls. On the contrary, procedures and controls worked exactly as they are supposed to. Sometime after the convention a single manager acquired Walt Disney. When this was discovered in the usual review and report process it was ordered sold, and a letter went to all managers directing them not to hold Walt Disney.

"Trustees of the Annuity Board, like trustees of all SBC boards, have established a committee structure to ensure that detailed consideration and acquired expertise can be applied to every program activity and proposed action prior to presenting it to the full board. The trustees always have been, and remain, in full control. The trustees voted not to go into an executive session.

"There are no secrets kept by staff from trustees," Miller said. "Every trustee can ask any question and get an answer. Every trustee can raise an issue with a standing committee, and it will be addressed. Then, if the individual trustee remains dissatisfied, he or she can ask for full board consideration. At that point, any question is the property of the full board of trustees.

"As for response to any alleged statement by a trustee reported in the media, the Annuity Board staff does not communicate through newspapers with trustees," Miller said. "We communicate directly, and we respect the privacy of that communication."

Walker provided a copy of an Aug. 8 letter to trustee board chairman Richard Scott in which Walker recounted why he had wanted to go into executive session.

"Because of each trustee's fiduciary responsibility," Walker wrote in his letter, "I felt there were questions relative to the Disney stock that every trustee should hear discussed in order to be informed. This (being properly informed) would allow each trustee to vote on the acceptance of the report of the investment committee without any reservations. I felt an executive session was the appropriate setting to do this. If the investment committee could not furnish sufficient answers, then staff would be called in to provide explanations."

Walker said in an interview that coming into the first meeting of the Annuity Board and hearing about the stock fumble caused him to begin asking questions about how the policies are carried out.

Denying he has an "agenda," Walker said he simply believes there should be internal controls in place to preclude things like this from happening.

"If it was a mistake, then the policy needs to be improved upon," Walker said. But if there's a breakdown in internal controls, that needs to be fixed also.

Walker said Annuity Board staff knows there are many "conservatives" on the board who are supportive of the new SBC leadership and the conservative direction of the convention.

"They think that at sometime everybody's job is or will be in jeopardy. I don't think that's true as long as everyone's doing their job," Walker said. "I don't know of any new trustee who's come on with an agenda."

Hearing from the staff about his particular questions in private is not going to help the whole board realize their responsibility, Walker contended. "If every trustee can be held personally liable -- then every trustee should be knowledgeable about all of the goings on," Walker said. "If a conflict of interest is presented, or even just the appearance of a conflict, that needs to be explained."

"I support the divesture of Disney. I think that it is in the best interest and is indicative of the SBC as expressed -- that we should not be investing in one of the very companies we've openly criticized," Walker said. "I know you can't police every one, but this is an obvious one. We can certainly do our part on the Annuity Board and if it has to start with us, that's where it needs to start."

Several sources agreed to an interview but later declined to go on the record.

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Art Toalston contributed to this story.

**To spin 18 basketballs at once,
speaker credits 'determination'**

By Julie Nall

**Baptist Press
10/7/96**

ELKTON, S.D. (BP)--"How do you spin 18 basketballs at one time?" one might ask Bruce Crevier, who holds the Guinness World Record for the feat.

His answer: determination. For Crevier, determination means "accomplishing a seemingly impossible task by breaking it down into achievable goals," he said. So to spin 18 basketballs, "take it one ball at a time."

This message, which he garnered from Christian speaker Bill Gothard, is at the core of Crevier's presentation to youth groups and camps; elementary, junior high and high schools; colleges and universities; churches and business organizations; and prisons.

Crevier, who attends First Baptist Church, Elkton, S.D., is a special guest performer for CBA and NBA basketball halftime shows. Among his television appearances are NBC's "Today Show," "The CBS Evening News," "NBA Inside Stuff," "The 700 Club," "Live with Regis and Kathy Lee." He also has appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers worldwide.

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"Young people are very impressionable -- I can remember my older brothers impacting me," Crevier said. He grew up in rural South Dakota, the second-youngest of 12 children. His older brothers and sisters were involved in sports. Two older brothers learned how to spin a basketball in college and shared their newfound talent at home. Sister Tonya picked up the skill and did even better than the brothers. Watching his siblings encouraged Crevier, a second-grader, to learn and perfect spinning balls.

Crevier later received letters in three high school sports, then graduated from and played basketball for the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. Growing up, he hoped to have a profession related to sports, but he also hoped to share his Christian faith.

"A lot of people view Christianity as only on Sunday, but Jesus tells us to 'Take up your cross daily and follow me,'" Crevier said. "Christianity is not just a once-a-week thing. It's a way of life."

Because he knows how impressionable young people are, Crevier takes any opportunity that comes his way to impact them with his central idea. "The message I give in schools is that you can become a champion in life -- not by making the most money, but by being an overcomer in situations that come your way. I use an athletic platform to share with

kids, 'You don't have to follow the crowd.' If I can impact just one kid, it makes it all worthwhile."

Being knowledgeable about right choices and actually making the right choices is where the word "wisdom" comes into play, Crevier tells his audiences. "Wisdom is simply applying what we know to our lives. Those who are winning in the game of life are those consistently applying the right choices to their lives."

While most inspirational entertainers perform and then speak, Crevier is outstanding in his field because he mixes his performance with his message, said Bobby Shows, a member of the Missouri Baptist Convention missions education and ministry development team, which scheduled Crevier for the state's 1996 Challenger Congress Oct. 12-13 at Windermere Baptist assembly. In his many years of dealing with youngsters, Shows named Crevier as the top communicator in working with children.

Crevier and his wife, Diane, have traveled throughout the country -- and in many nations overseas -- to share their message of inspiration. Crevier's personal favorite part of his presentation includes his five children: Jacob, Caleb, Isaiah, Katie and Josiah. But he does not have a favorite group that he ministers to.

"As far as sharing the gospel, you can't beat the prison setting because they're so open to the gospel," he said. "As far as enthusiasm, you can't beat elementary or junior high school. As far as equipping, you can't beat an on-fire youth group."

Crevier may be contacted at Route 2, Box 92, Elkton, SD 57026; phone/fax (605) 542-4101.

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BSSB names Mathis director of pastor-staff leadership

By Charles Willis

**Baptist Press
10/7/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Don R. Mathis, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Winchester, Ky., since 1994, has been named director of the Baptist Sunday School Board's pastor-staff leadership department, effective Nov. 1.

Mike Miller, director of the board's church leadership services division, said Mathis' denominational background "uniquely qualifies him to meet the needs of professional ministry staff in churches of varying sizes. His experience in leading a state convention staff adds another level of skill in relating to constituents across the denomination. He also will be the program leader for the board's pastor-staff assignment from the Southern Baptist Convention, working with Brooks Faulkner in personal development issues and Ralph Burrage in resources development."

Mathis said he is "excited about this role in light of the opportunity it affords to make an impact on pastors and staff across the convention."

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The pastor-staff leadership department is responsible for resources and services for the personal and professional development of pastors and other ministry staff persons.

A native of Hopkinsville, Ky., Mathis has been pastor of churches in Kentucky since 1964, including Crofton Baptist Church; Green River Baptist Church, Cromwell; Southside Baptist Church, Princeton; and Central Baptist Church, Corbin, in addition to Central Baptist in Winchester. He was executive director-treasurer of the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists from December 1991 to February 1994.

During his pastoral career, he has served as an associational moderator, Sunday school director, evangelism director, vice moderator, and on numerous committees.

In the Kentucky Baptist Convention, he was president in 1985-86. He also has been president of the pastors' conference, a member and president of the executive board and a member of a variety of committees.

Nationally, he has been a member of Southern Baptist committees, a trustee of the Sunday School Board and a member of the board of overseers of Boyce Bible School at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, among others.

He also has been a trustee of Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College and of Southeastern Kentucky Baptist Hospital, an intern supervisor at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Cumberland College and Southern Seminary, as well as a lecturer and preacher for denominational institutions and events.

He has written for a variety of denominational publications, including leadership materials produced by the Sunday School Board.

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