

BAPTIST FEATURES

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May 2, 1968

Senator Calls for Public Hearings on "Sick" Movies

EDITORS NOTE: Sen. Margaret Chase Smith (R., Maine) has in recent years been a moving force in efforts to deal with the problem of obscenity in motion picture films. She is interviewed on this subject by James O. Duncan, editor of the Capital Baptist, weekly publication of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

QUESTION: Mrs. Smith, you have been concerned about what you have called "sick" movies for many years. To what do you attribute the increased interest in these movies?

ANSWER: Over the past decade, the Supreme Court has, rightly, knocked out censorship laws of all types. In doing so, however, the court opened the way to permit the showing of movies filled with sick violence, sadism, degeneration -- produced both in the United States and abroad -- to children. It was hoped that the movie industry could police itself, with respect to that made available for children. A new code was developed by the Motion Picture Association of America but this code applies to far fewer than half of the movies exhibited in this country and no really effective system was devised by which movies with obscene or otherwise objectionable material could be barred to small children.

In recent years more and more such violent, sadistic, sick movies have been produced and are being shown in neighborhood theaters attracting large audiences of young children.

The courts have rejected censorship and the motion picture industry has proved inadequate to meet the responsibility adults must bear for the young. The problem becomes daily more urgently in need of a solution.

QUESTION: You mentioned children. Who goes to the movies?

ANSWER: The Motion Picture Association of America has reported that 52 per cent of movie audiences are 19 and under. Children 10 to 14 account for about 16 per cent of the total paid admissions: children nine and under account for another 16 per cent. Movies are a \$3 billion-a-year industry. It would seem safe to guess that children in their early adolescence or younger contribute about \$1 billion to the industry annually.

QUESTION: Have there been any studies done that might indicate that a child who sees these movies has a behavior problem?

ANSWER: Leonard Berkowitz of the University of Wisconsin has cited a number of limited studies made of children exposed to visual violence on the screen. These studies seem to indicate that children exposed to such visual violence tend to react more aggressively when exposed to similar real-life situations than other children not exposed to the same degree or length of visual violence. A number of such studies are reported in "Aggression: A Social Psychological Analysis" by Professor Berkowitz. The findings are not complete, however, and Professor Berkowitz does not make an absolute finding, although he finds the weight of evidence pointing to the probability of the relationship between what the child sees on the screen and what he does when confronted with certain real-life situations.

QUESTION: If there is something wrong with the movies why doesn't the industry itself clean it up?

ANSWER: There is, first of all, no code which applies to all movie makers in this country. The code applies only to a limited few American studios and producers. Many producers operate outside the code and find it profitable to do so since there is no longer any booking control over theaters. Secondly, the code has never applied to foreign film producers who in recent years have provided a larger and larger share of screen violence served up to children.

Finally, and in all candor, I would suggest that there is another reason: money. To some of the more unscrupulous movie makers the children's quarters and dimes are so alluring they cannot be resisted. This in turn has had the unfortunate tendency to relax the regard for the code by association members. It might almost be said that profitable bad movies tend to drive out the good.

QUESTION: I believe you have introduced a resolution in the Senate expressing your concern over these films. What does your resolution propose to do?

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ANSWER: ~~Senate Resolution 9~~ proposed creating a special Senate committee to study the dimensions of the problem, the possible need for corrective action and what kind of action could be taken without in any way infringing on the rights of adult Americans to see those movies they want to see. The purpose is to investigate film classification as it has been adopted and applied in other countries, and determine if such a system is needed and, if needed, feasible in this country without violating our anti-censorship stance.

This resolution provides no legislative "cure" for the problem of violence and sadism in movies shown children. It does not seek censorship in any form: it does not seek to curb the rights of any person to make or exhibit movies. It merely sets out to determine if there is a problem and if such a problem is found, how best to find an answer.

QUESTION: Isn't this very close to government censorship?

ANSWER: At one time in this country we did have government censorship. The Supreme Court has ruled in a number of cases that such censorship violates the citizens' rights. At the same time the court has held open the door to classification when it applies only to children while permitting complete freedom for adults.

My concern is that no attempt be made to impose censorship on what adults may wish to see; and that every reasonable protection be given to children against undue violence, sick sex, sadism and degeneracy.

~~Government censorship is unthinkable in a free society: self-censorship by the industry has not provided the degree of protection to children that seems necessary. The court has indicated a possibility that a medium can be struck and it is our duty as legislators to find that middle course.~~

QUESTION: Like books banned in Boston, wouldn't classification automatically increase box office receipts from the curious?

ANSWER: No doubt there would be such a "thrill seeker" audience generated by a "not good for children" designation placed on certain films. Our concern is solely for minor children. If a film were so designated it is not likely that it would be shown as the feature attraction on Saturday afternoons in neighborhood movie houses catering largely to children because if its audience of children were barred the theater would not find it profitable to show the movie. The curious who would be attracted would be adults, and therefore beyond the scope of any classification legislation as I see such legislation.

The only right that movie classification legislation, as I see it, might abrogate is the right to exploit children. The only freedom abrogated would be the freedom to do untold and terribly serious damage to small children's minds.

QUESTION: Do you plan public hearings and what can the concerned person do?

ANSWER: If the special committee is created by the Senate it would be my hope that extensive public hearings would be conducted. I do not see how adequate legislation could be developed otherwise. There must be every opportunity for all parties concerned to express their opinions and provide factual testimony. Only with that kind of background can such a committee hope to function.

Finally, for concerned parents: If you are concerned indeed, find out what the picture is like before you drop your youngster off at the neighborhood movie theater Saturday afternoon. It may take a few minutes of your time, such time would be well spent.

As a beginning, the Senate Commerce Committee has indicated there will be several days of hearings on my proposal. Those interested and concerned with the problem might want to express their views in writing to Senator Warren Magnuson, chairman of the Commerce Committee.

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May 2, 1968

**Historical Society Honors
Carver On Birth Anniversary**

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Historical Society, meeting here in connection with the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, formed a motorcade to Wilson County, Tenn., where they held a memorial service commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of the late William Owen Carver.

The Baptist group presented a facsimile of a bronze plaque honoring Dr. Carver to be erected in the foyer of the New Hope Baptist Church in Hermitage, Tenn., his home church where he was ordained and where he served his first full-time pastorate.

Dr. Carver, a long-time president of the Southern Baptist Historical Society which conducted the service, was largely responsible for creation of the SBC Historical Commission.

A noted educator, author and Baptist statesman, Dr. Carver taught at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville for 50 years, heading the missions department much of that time.

He also founded the Woman's Missionary Union Training School at Southern Seminary in 1907. Since then, the name was changed to Carver School of Missions and Social Work, and later merged with Southern Seminary.

During the 100th anniversary ceremonies at the New Hope Church, one of his former students, H. Cornell Goerner, secretary for Africa, SBC Foreign Mission Board, delivered a tape-recorded message on "W. O. Carver - The Many-Sided Man."

Mrs. Ollin J. Owens, of Columbia, S. C., president of the Historical Society, presented to the SBC Historical Commission a book entitled Small Songs for Small Children which had been presented her and her sister by Dr. Carver in 1919.

During the meeting of the Historical Commission, emphasis on the program was placed on the use of art in Baptist churches, and its role in interpreting Baptist history.

Josephine Sellers, a recent doctoral graduate of Syracuse University, spoke on "Art in Southern Baptist Churches," using paintings, art glass windows, baptistry decorations and displays of church architecture to illustrate her address.

Erwin M. Hearne Jr., an artist from Dallas who has painted a number of pictures depicting great moments in Baptist history, gave a survey of his experiences in illustrating Baptist history.

Other major addresses were brought by Gaye L. McGlothlen, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Nashville, W. Morgan Patterson of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, and Lynn E. May of the Historical Commission staff.

Officers of both the Historical Commission and the Historical Society were re-elected. Fred C. Schatz, dean at Belmont College here, was re-elected chairman of the commission, and Mrs. Ollin J. Owens of Columbia, S. C., was re-elected president of the Historical Society.

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Indiana Baptists Name Lawson
Brotherhood, Evangelism Head

5/2/68

INDIANAPOLIS (BP)--L. E. Lawson of Littleton, Colo., will become the secretary of evangelism and brotherhood for the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana on May 13. He was elected to the position by the convention's Executive Board.

Lawson has been pastor of the Windermere Baptist Church, Littleton, a suburb of Denver, for the past year. Previously he was a pastor in Oklahoma and Texas.

A native of Texas, Lawson is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene, Tex., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth. Before entering the ministry, he was a football coach.

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Southern Seminary Worker
Chosen Secretary of Year

LOUISVILLE (BP)--A woman who never wanted to be a secretary has been named Secretary of the Year by the Louisville chapter of the National Secretaries Association.

Miss Clara A. McCartt, secretary and administrative assistant to the president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was presented the award at a luncheon April 27.

At the seminary Miss McCartt serves as a "girl Friday" to President Duke K. McCall. Her specialty is caring for the many details of the office, freeing her boss to handle major policies.

Prior to coming to Southern Seminary, Miss McCartt was McCall's secretary while he served as executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

For 32 years Miss McCartt has been in the service of Southern Baptists. During this time she worked in the Tennessee Baptist Convention, the Baptist Sunday School Board, both in Nashville, and the First Baptist Church of Memphis, Tennessee. She served as assistant editor of The Sunday School Builder and The Elementary Guide.

She is author or co-author of Your Church Secretary (Prentice-Hall) and How to Organize a Church Office (Revell), designer of the Master Membership Record System for churches published by the Sunday School Board, and author of an hour-long pageant, "Light of the World," distributed by the Foreign Mission Board.

Because of her concern for church secretaries, Miss McCartt, a Certified Professional Secretary, initiated the annual Church Secretaries Institute held each summer on the Southern Seminary campus. In 1959 she taught an eight-week secretarial procedures unit at University of Louisville.

A member of Crescent Hill Baptist Church, Miss McCartt has been church librarian since 1953.

When Miss McCartt finished high school in Morristown, Tenn., she was unable to attend college because of the depression. Since then she has done independent study at Northwestern University, Georgetown College, and the University of Louisville. Next year Miss McCartt plans to continue her education at nearby Catherine Spalding College.



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