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January 26, 1996

96-15

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Wildmon's AFA buys Times ad  
to challenge 'trashy talk'

By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press  
1/26/96

TUPELO, Miss. (BP)--A campaign to fight "trashy TV talk shows" entered a new phase Jan. 21 with the publication of a full-page advertisement in The New York Times' Sunday edition.

"SHAME!" said the large headline atop the ad, which was purchased by the American Family Association, based in Tupelo, Miss.

"Shame on you trash talk show producers who fill our children's minds with moral rot, on you TV stations which bring their perverse programs into our communities, (and) on you greedy advertisers who sponsor trash talk shows simply to fill your coffers with money," the ad read.

The AFA board of directors voted in October to launch the campaign, which is being guided by Donald E. Wildmon, AFA president and a United Methodist minister.

"The purpose of the ad was to shame them. What we're trying to do is publicly identify these companies and the kind of trash they're sponsoring," Wildmon said. "I know our people are committed to this. They're fed up with it, and I think the majority of Americans are fed up with this trash."

According to Wildmon, AFA staffers and volunteers are monitoring several talk shows, including six mentioned in the ad: Donahue, Geraldo, Jenny Jones, Maury Povich, Ricki Lake and Sally Jessy Raphael.

The ad directed "shame" toward several advertisers, listed below with some of their products and subsidiaries:

-- American Home Products Corporation: Advil, Robitussin, Dimetapp and Centrum.

-- Grand Metropolitan Inc.: Burger King, Green Giant, Pearle Vision and Pillsbury.

-- Hasbro Inc.: Kenner, Playskool and Milton Bradley.

-- Philip Morris: General Foods international coffees, Post cereals, Maxwell House and Kraft.

-- Remington Products Co.: Remington appliances and shavers.

-- Clorox Company: Formula 409, Hidden Valley dressings and Brita water filtration.

-- Procter & Gamble: Cover Girl, Crest, Oil of Olay, Pantone and Tide.

-- Unilever: Calvin Klein, Lipton, Mentadent and Vaseline.

-- Warner-Lambert: Benadryl, Sudafed, Listerine and Schick.

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The AFA advertisement complains of recent talk show themes, such as "fathers who think they're studs," "women who marry their rapist," "teens who have sex for status" and "my daughter is living as a boy."

"We are fed up with your calloused and arrogant disregard for the impact your filth is having on our children. We are not going to take it any more. We are fighting back!" the ad said.

The advertisement urges readers to fill out a petition at the bottom of the page and send it to AFA, which plans to share responses with the sponsors of the programs.

Donations to AFA are also solicited by the ad, but a note at the bottom of the petition coupon tells readers, "If you cannot contribute at this time but still want to participate in helping fight the ... talk shows, please return the form without a contribution."

The AFA campaign is similar to an effort launched last fall by U.S. Sens. Joseph I. Lieberman, D.-Conn., and Sam Nunn, D.-Ga., along with former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett.

The three political figures targeted talk show advertisers and have aired television commercials that urged advertisers to eliminate their support of offensive shows.

Wildmon praised the effort by Lieberman, Nunn and Bennett but said there is no specific coordination of the two campaigns.

"We are not in official contact," Wildmon said. "What we've done is encouraged our people to contact primarily Sen. Lieberman. We know where William Bennett is coming from, and Sam Nunn is leaving the Senate, so we've asked people to contact Sen. Lieberman and express appreciation for his stand."

The AFA's board voted to launch its campaign two weeks before the effort by the Washington figures was announced, Wildmon said.

The AFA campaign has received endorsements from people who would have been unlikely supporters in the past, Wildmon suggested. "I've got dyed-in-the-wool liberals who are now saying the same things that I said five years ago. They're calling me and thanking me," he said.

Wildmon said he received a call recently from a liberal journalist from a northern state. "We would agree on almost nothing else, but we agree on this," Wildmon stated.

Suggesting he is optimistic about the future of the campaign, Wildmon added, "The whole talk show conglomerate is in some pretty serious trouble now. ... I get the feeling the tide is shifting our way," he said.

As evidence of the turning tide, Wildmon cited the recently announced retirement of Phil Donahue who pioneered the daytime talk show in its present form and who first aired his program more than 29 years ago. Donahue's decision came after a key television station in New York City dropped his show, causing his already-sagging ratings to plummet further.

Information on the AFA's monitoring effort may be obtained by calling (601) 844-5036.

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Born-again 'Jane Roe:'  
'best year of my life'

Baptist Press  
1/26/96

WASHINGTON (BP)--When Norma McCorvey, known in America's struggle over abortion as Jane Roe, stood before a crowded meeting hall on the eve of the 23rd anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision bearing her name, she grieved with abortion opponents instead of celebrating with abortion advocates.

In her first public speech since being baptized in a Dallas swimming pool in August, McCorvey spoke briefly to those gathered Jan. 21 at a Georgetown University chapel for the National Memorial Service for the Preborn and Their Mothers and Fathers.

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"She said, 'Jane Roe is dead, but if she were here, she would ask your forgiveness,'" said Patrick Mahoney, a longtime pro-life activist who spoke at the service and was part of a group which met with McCorvey the previous night.

"I think Sunday she was just coming to say she was sorry and ask for forgiveness. It was just amazing to see her hugging (former Operation Rescue leader) Randall Terry and other pro-life leaders."

Will Dodson of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission said after attending the service:

"Jesus Christ has changed her life. There is no other explanation for the change in her life. She seems to be a woman at peace with God. I pray that others will experience the forgiveness, the healing and the radical change in their hearts which Norma McCorvey has experienced."

The next day, about 60,000 pro-lifers participated in the annual March for Life to protest abortion. It was the first anniversary Norma McCorvey has spent as a pro-lifer. Twenty-three years before, the high court delivered the decision in her case, Roe v. Wade, and another, Doe v. Bolton, declaring a right to abortion, in effect for any reason throughout pregnancy.

The watershed moment which brought McCorvey to the opposite side in the abortion battle occurred July 22 of last year, when she made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ at Hillcrest Bible Church in Dallas. She did so after lengthy talks with Flip Benham, director of Operation Rescue National, and the loving ministry and witness of Emily Mackey, the 7-year-old daughter of O.R. National office manager Ronda Mackey who invited her to church. Less than four months before, O.R. National's office had moved next door to the abortion clinic where McCorvey worked.

When she was baptized Aug. 8, she had resigned as marketing director for the clinic, but she indicated she still favored abortion rights in at least some cases in the first trimester and she was not planning on breaking off her 21-year lesbian relationship with her housemate, Connie Gonzalez.

She has changed in both areas.

"I am pro-life across the board," McCorvey told World magazine, according to its Jan. 13 issue. She says she opposes abortion even in the cases of rape, incest or when the mother's life is threatened, according to the Jan. 21 issue of The Washington Times,

"I am not a lesbian. I'm just a child in Christ now," she told The Washington Times. She said her relationship with Gonzalez has been nonsexual the last three years.

"We decided we'd rather be friends than lovers," McCorvey told The Times.

As another mark of her growth in Christ, she told World, "I don't cuss as much as I used to!"

After a lifestyle which included lesbianism, drugs, alcohol and her abortion advocacy, McCorvey called these the "best six months of my life," according to The Times.

She works as a volunteer at the Operation Rescue office. From there, McCorvey seeks to witness to employees of the clinic where she worked and to counsel in the parking lot women who are entering the clinic for an abortion.

"I only go over there now to witness to people," she told World. Five other employees, including Gonzalez, have left the clinic at least partly because of the influence of McCorvey or others at O.R. Two have professed faith in the Lord Jesus. O.R. helped all of them find jobs, according to World.

"You just have to introduce people to Jesus," McCorvey told World as her solution for changing abortion advocates. "I think that's the bottom line. If they would just know Jesus and know how good he is."

Benham told The Times, "When people see Norma and realize Jesus has forgiven her, they say, 'Maybe there's hope for me.' The abortion industry is crumbling under the weight of its own sin, and they don't have enough fingers to keep in their crumbling dike."

Vicki Saporta, executive director of the National Abortion Federation, told The Times, however, "Most of the pro-choice community does not think that her change of heart has affected the issue or movement at all."

Claiming to be a victim of rape, McCorvey challenged the state of Texas' anti-abortion law, resulting in the 1973 decision. McCorvey later said she had not been raped.

In addition, McCorvey never had an abortion. She gave the baby up for adoption. In 1989, Gannett News Service reported McCorvey's daughter had been located and she was strongly pro-life, according to an adoption search consultant.

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Compiled by Tom Strode.

**Cowboy-country Baptist heading relief in Steelers' home state**

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
1/26/96

DALLAS (BP)--Like many Texans, Jerry Bob Taylor has Dallas and Pittsburgh on his mind during the days leading up to Super Bowl Sunday. But in Taylor's case, the focus is Dallas Baptist Church in Wilkes Barre, Penn., about 200 miles east of the Steelers' hometown.

Beginning Jan. 26, Taylor is on-site coordinator for Southern Baptist disaster relief in eastern Pennsylvania, where floodwater displaced at least 8,000 people and damaged more than 4,000 buildings. Dallas Baptist was one of several emergency food service sites under his direction.

Floods began when the snow from a crippling blizzard earlier this month melted. The American Red Cross classified the floods in Pennsylvania and West Virginia as a level-five disaster, the worst possible ranking.

Volunteers on a disaster relief unit owned jointly by the New England, Pennsylvania-South Jersey, New York and Maryland/Delaware Baptist conventions are serving meals to flood victims in Wilkes Barre. Workers on a Georgia Baptist unit will provide additional support in that same area.

South Carolina and Tennessee Baptists are serving meals from their disaster relief units at churches in Bedford and Mecknicksburg, Penn.

Meanwhile, Baptists from Ohio, Kentucky, North Carolina and Tennessee provide food service and "mud-out" cleaning help at sites in neighboring West Virginia.

When Taylor retired last year as manager of Circle Six Ranch Baptist Camp near Stanton, Texas, he said he would be available for disaster relief "anytime, anywhere, at a moment's notice," according to Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men.

"I told him to make sure this time he wore a Dallas Cowboys sweatshirt under his uniform," Dixon said. "Somebody might get the wrong idea looking at that yellow disaster relief jacket."

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**Involvement in World Changers shows youth can change things**

By Susan Word

Baptist Press  
1/26/96

ATLANTA (BP)--Low visibility, ice, wind and thunderstorms may have delayed scheduled airplane arrivals and travelers' plans, but the weather would not deter the more than 160 World Changers leaders who came to Atlanta for training, Jan. 18-21.

The four-day training event involved national staff, project coordinators, construction coordinators, associational coordinators and housing agency representatives.

Sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, based in Memphis, Tenn., World Changers involves youth and adults in housing repair and renovation projects in low-income areas.

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Russell Griffin, Brotherhood's assistant vice president of program services, captured the significance of the event when he told participants at the Friday evening banquet, "There are more people here tonight serving in leadership roles than the number of participants at the first World Changers project five years ago." Griffin reflected on the "early days" of World Changers, which began in Briceville, Tenn., in 1990 with 137 youth and adults.

Since that time, World Changers has involved more than 20,000 young people and adults in more than 80 "hands-on" missions projects nationwide, even in Puerto Rico, Mexico and Nicaragua. In 1996, World Changers has expanded to 39 projects in 24 cities and Managua, Nicaragua. More than 10,000 youth and adults are expected to participate.

A highlight of the weekend was a general session in which Richard Ross, youth ministry consultant for the Baptist Sunday School Board, addressed the topic, "The World We Are Trying to Change." Referring to youth participants, Ross cited recent statistics concerning drug abuse, violence, teen suicide, juvenile delinquency, sexual abuse and single-parent families to paint a picture of the world of many of today's teens. He alerted the audience that Southern Baptist youth are no exception, and many hurting youth will be present at their projects during the summer.

Ross challenged the leaders to model positive family relationships and seek opportunities to affirm and encourage participants at their projects. He detailed several ways participating in a service project such as World Changers can help troubled teens.

"Teaching today has to be concrete and immediate," Ross said. "A service project is an ideal experience for today's struggling youth. It's the most practical form of Christian education."

In addition to changing teens' focus from themselves toward others, strengthening their self-concept and surrounding them with caring adults, a service project challenges some of their negative feelings of hopelessness which often lead to suicidal thoughts, Ross explained.

"World Changers is a testimony to youth that things can change," he said. "Life isn't hopeless!"

"What Richard said hit close to the heart of many of the youth leaders present and challenged all of us to remember whose world we most want to change," said Andy Morris, World Changers director. "The worlds of the residents who receive assistance, the community and even the local Baptist association may change, but if we fail to reach the young people, we have failed."

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Word is an editor at the Brotherhood Commission.

Haitian: Full parking lot  
is sign of God's blessing

By Barbara Denman

Baptist Press  
1/26/96

MIAMI (BP)--It's been said often about this Haitian pastor: When the parking lot at Eglise Evangelique Baptiste Bethel is filled to the max, St. Louis Felix starts another church.

But don't believe it. Felix is much more deliberate and systematic than that.

Instead, whenever the Haitian pastor discovers a group of church members living in a specific Miami neighborhood he finds them a location to worship, trains a young man to serve as pastor and sends them forth on a missionary venture. He has done this 10 times in 15 years.

But the perplexing thing is that despite his best efforts, several months later when the mission is thriving, the parking lot of the mother church becomes filled again.

Felix smiles when he tells this scenario. Because for him, a full parking lot is a sure sign of God's blessings.

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"It's a burden on our hearts to start new churches," Felix said. "The first thing we do is pray. Then I bring it before the members. Then we find one man to lead." The process -- which reflects classic church-starting strategy -- also includes surveying the targeted area and beginning a home Bible study before establishing worship services.

No one really knows how many Haitian emigres live in the Miami area. Estimates range from 100,000 to 150,000. The number is increasing almost daily as families are being reunited in the States.

Haitians are probably the most evangelistic of all ethnic groups in Florida -- and the most aggressive in starting new churches. In the past decade the number of Haitian Baptist churches in the state has more than doubled to 146 from 60, at last count.

While this is being done, Florida Haitian pastors also are starting new congregations in Haiti, where 90 new churches and missions have been launched.

The Haitian people "thirst for the gospel," Felix said. "They have been deceived as they put their hope in their government. Now they are putting their hope in Christ to bring true deliverance to their country."

Felix's burden for people to come to know Christ reaches beyond his fellow Haitians. "I have a burden for Haitians to receive salvation, but also Cubans and Americans. My English is limited, but my heart is not limited."

It's that burden that God is blessing -- even in the parking lot.

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O.S. Hawkins says believers  
must 'church the market'

By Lee Weeks

Baptist Press  
1/26/96

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--At the close of the 20th century, the church faces the challenge of evangelizing a generation of people who harbor no guilt in wanting something for nothing -- and they want it now -- said O.S. Hawkins, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas.

The post-baby boomers, or "Generation X" as they are called, are looking for meaningful relationships denied to them, at least in part, as children of massive divorce, Hawkins said.

"They're homesick for a home they've never had," Hawkins said during his spring convocation address Jan. 23 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Still, Hawkins said, God's Word remains the answer for a postmodern world thirsting for prosperity and immediate gratification.

"You've got something to offer people that's personal, that's present, that's provided in him," Hawkins said. "And you know the irony of the whole thing, the very things for which they are looking and searching -- we have the answer for. It's in the Word of God."

But contrary to segments of the popular church-growth marketing philosophy, Hawkins said, God's Word must not be compromised or watered down to make church attractive.

"You don't find that in Scripture," he said. "You don't find them marketing the church. You find them churching the market. You find them finding a place and going out, not to meet the wants of the people, but the needs of the people. The lost man doesn't know his need.

"Don't be afraid to talk about the blood of Jesus Christ," he said at Southeastern's Binkley Chapel in Wake Forest, N.C. "Go to the cross and stand there a while and really see it."

Quoting from Ephesians 1:7, Hawkins said the answer to the desires of Generation X is: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace."

Hawkins said desires for instant gratification at no cost and guilt-free living can only be met in God's Word.

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"They want something for nothing. It's already purchased for them in the blood of Jesus Christ. They don't know it's a free gift of God given to them through the cause of Christ in his precious, shed blood."

Hawkins said the destructive philosophy of "If it feels good, do it" must be countered with a call to accountability.

"That's what this world is looking for -- guilt-free living, but they won't find it until they come to take personal responsibility for it and get under the blood of Jesus Christ," he said. "Guilt is not necessarily our foe. It's our friend if it is authentic guilt. Guilt is God's way of saying you have sinned. Confession is saying, 'I agree.'"

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**Prison's female chief chaplain  
says all humanity 'doing time'** By Melanie Childers

**Baptist Press  
1/26/96**

LA GRANGE, Ky. (BP)--Suzanne Jeanes McElwain is bending bars of gender roles in her effort to help prison inmates find spiritual breakthroughs.

Named last year as chief chaplain at the Luther Lockett Correctional Complex, La Grange, Ky., McElwain became the first woman to serve in that capacity through the state's prison system.

A member of Broadway Baptist Church, Louisville, and a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, McElwain worked at Wayside Christian Mission and Kentucky Alliance for the Mentally Ill before joining the Luther Lockett staff as assistant chaplain about two years ago.

McElwain's gender created some conflict at first, she acknowledged.

"The first time I led a Sunday service, they all got up and left," McElwain said, noting many inmates tend to think conservatively. That was more than a year ago.

"They've tried me, pushed me ... but I do feel called here," she said. Today it is common to see scores of inmates in weekly worship and as many as 30 at a lively Thursday afternoon Bible study she leads.

Most inmates have grown to accept her, said McElwain, who is endorsed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's chaplaincy commission. When she announced her new position during one Bible study, many responded with "amen."

"I'm thankful for you being here to share the Word with us," one inmate commented later.

Warden Steve Berry said the administration has been pleased with McElwain's contribution to the prison complex.

"She's very good," he said. "She has a lot of energy for the job."

As chief chaplain, McElwain is responsible for scheduling all religious programs, coordinating volunteers and ensuring adequate opportunities for inmates' religious expression.

"I am basically the pastor of this facility," she said. "I am a facilitator to make sure spiritual needs are met."

McElwain usually arrives on the yard by 7 a.m. and has the chapel doors open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. daily. In addition to leading Bible studies and worship, she spends considerable time helping inmates deal with family emergencies -- arranging visits to seriously ill family members or to funeral services. Additional time is devoted to counseling.

About 1,000 men are imprisoned at Luther Lockett, a medium-security institution. The overwhelming majority of them have been convicted of violent crimes or sex crimes.

"It's not cool to be a Christian on this yard," McElwain said, noting a popular attitude that Christ was killed on the cross because he wasn't smart enough to avoid it.

"We've got a lot of unchurched men here," she said. "A lot of unbelievers, and a lot of people with an unhealthy (image of) God."

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Yet McElwain doesn't claim a righteousness that sets her apart from the inmates.

"Since I've come here, I've recognized that we're all doing time," she said. Humanity has been struggling to regain wholeness from the first broken relationships between God and Adam and Eve, she noted.

"We're all separated from God. These inmates are doing time, I'm doing time. That's where I connect with them."

McElwain expressed deep gratitude toward Woman's Missionary Union and her formative church, Walnut Street Baptist in downtown Louisville, for helping her hear God's call. She entered seminary in 1983 expecting to prepare for a career in missions.

"It didn't work out the way I thought," she admitted. "Whoever would have thought God would call me to prison?"

Yet McElwain's strong commitment to prison chaplaincy is evident.

"I want to see God move on this yard," she said.

McElwain emphasized the role of the Christian community in developing ministry to prisoners. "I need volunteers," she said. "Anything a church needs on the outside, I need in here."

For example, inmates have requested a choir director to lead them in an ensemble.

"Music is relaxing and pleasant, and it's usually a big part of (Christian worship) services," McElwain noted.

Some inmates even have offered to contribute to a fund that would increase the chaplaincy staff and establish a clinical pastoral education program at the complex.

McElwain also noted the importance of church members' prayers for inmates' rehabilitation.

"A transformed spirit is the only thing that will change them," she said.

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3-on-3 basketball links  
students, new president

By Jennifer Mauldin

Baptist Press  
1/26/96

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Grab your hightops and put on your court clothes. It's time to win an easy one.

That may have been running through the minds of students after Mark Coppenger, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's new president, challenged them to a game of basketball. He put out an open invitation for teams of three to join him and his two teen-age sons, Caleb and Jed, courtside.

In two nights of basketball, five teams showed up to challenge the new president of the Kansas City, Mo., seminary. Students say it was a physical game where everyone was playing to win.

"If you didn't like the president, it was a time to hit him with an elbow," Jackie Flake, Midwestern student from Arkansas, said jokingly. "There was no boasting," he commented more seriously. "Everyone tried to have a humble spirit and a Christian attitude even though internally all of us were out to win."

But more important than the action on the court was the interaction between families.

"It was a relaxed time to be with the president in a informal, non-threatening way," Flake reflected.

A courtside observer agreed. "The basketball game became the focal point for meeting new people and fellowshiping with students and wives," said Jack Wilkerson, vice president for business and finance with the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, who was in town visiting the campus and happened to watch the game.

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Wilkerson said he saw some good basketball. "They pushed and shoved hard and called their own fouls, but after the game the score of who won become the secondary issue.

"I saw the president's wife (Sharon) move about and talk and care for people. She was fellowshiping and drawing people in to what was going on," Wilkerson added.

Wilkerson said he believes the game shows Coppenger and his family want to fellowship and have fun with the students of Midwestern, noting, "Dr. Coppenger is open and available to students. The basketball game was just an embellishment of his sincerity."

Speaking at a chapel service after the game, Coppenger thanked all the teams that came out to play and the people who showed up to watch. Then he downplayed his contribution on the court. He joked, "We survived. With the help of my boys, we did just fine. We got about five games in before I went into cardiac arrest."

But students remember the score and say Coppenger, playing to win, kept up with the rest of the players. "His sons were good," Flake noted, "but Dr. Coppenger contributed, too. I knew he was athletic, but some of his shots made me do a double take."

HOUSE MAIL

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