



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 13, 1970

### Baptist Leader Asks Public Funds To Fight Pornography

WASHINGTON (BP)--A staff member of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission proposed here that government funds be provided to train school teachers to present sex education "in a positive, healthy and effective manner."

In testimony before the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, Harry N. Hollis, director of special moral concerns for the SBC Christian Life Commission, said that one of the positive ways to deal with the influence of pornography in the country is to have responsible programs of sex education in every school.

Hollis testified that such programs are needed in addition to the education on sex that is offered in homes and churches.

Both in his testimony and in answer to questions from panel members, Hollis said the ultimate solution to the problems of pornography will be found not in laws but in people. The best way to handle this is "through the home, the schools and the churches," Hollis stated.

"In the long run the most effective way to check pornography will be for churches and synagogues to reach a wholesome appreciation of sexuality as a good gift of God, for schools to offer correct information about sexuality, for businesses to reject erotic exploitation in advertising, and for citizens to use pocketbook power to oppose the obscene," Hollis observed.

In proposing government funds to train public school teachers in sex education, Hollis also suggested federal funding of adult education programs so that interested parents could get help in communicating with their children about sexuality.

"If funds can be provided to help parents and teachers understand the new math, why should there not be an expenditure of money to help adults communicate the old and wonderful phenomenon of sexuality?!" Hollis asked the commission.

The Commission on Obscenity and Pornography was authorized by Congress in 1967 to recommend solutions to the smut problem in the nation. All but one of the 10 commission members were appointed by former President Lyndon B. Johnson. Its report is due in September, 1970.

In his testimony, Hollis pointed out that the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans last June specifically voted to ask the Christian Life Commission to give special attention to ways to correct and overcome the abuses caused by pornography.

He added that he could not speak for the entire denomination, only for himself, and added that the commission he serves is concerned not only about sexual obscenity but the "obscenity of deteriorated family life, the obscenity of racism, the obscenity of the rape of the environment, the obscenity of war, and the obscenity of violence."

Hollis, the lone clergyman in a long list of witnesses, told the commission that it is extremely difficult to provide documentation of the casual relationship between pornography and anti-social behavior.

However, he said it was his impression, based upon graduate study, and on information gained as a pastor, teacher and counselor, that "pornography can serve as a trigger to set off anti-social acts in troubled individuals."

Since such data to support or refute a relationship between the two is probably impossible to obtain, Hollis urged the commission to give serious consideration to the value of what he called "common sense arguments" in reaching conclusions about the problem.

Among the common sense questions suggested by Hollis were:

\* "Is it true that legitimate advertising in the various media influences us to buy consumer products, but ideas for sale in the pornographic line do not have an impact upon the values and the actions of youth and adults?"

\* "Is it not possible that continued exposure to the ideas that mate-swapping, sexual anarchy, and sadism are normal may lead some to question their own normality and perhaps even experiment with deviant patterns?"

\* "Are not children who are just on the threshold of learning about sex likely to be jolted by exposure to pornography's distorted views?"

\* "Are we to believe that great books, such as the Bible, can have a positive influence on forming good character but that pornographic books cannot influence one negatively?"

Hollis explained to the panelists that common sense "may very well be...all that can lift us out of the continued confusion brought on by waiting for conclusive empirical data that may never be found."

The Baptist commission member cited the fact that Baptists have fought courageously for freedom in times past. He emphasized that he was not calling now for "an oppressive censorship to curtail liberty and creativity."

In appealing for more stringent laws to control the smut traffic, Hollis said that "constitutional controls are needed not to abridge freedom but to provide a stable moral climate in which freedom can be enjoyed."

In the dialogue that followed Hollis' 20-minute testimony, the panelists praised him for presenting "positive approaches" to the problem of obscenity.

One commission member, a sociologist, commented on the Baptist stand on liberty and asked Hollis if he would support legislation "to prevent adults from reading or viewing anything they wanted to."

"Yes, if it is obscene, I would," Hollis declared.

Hollis enlarged on his statement, referring to a Supreme Court decision, *Roth v. United States*, where Justice William J. Brennan Jr., declared in a majority decision that "obscenity is not within the area of constitutionally protected free speech and press."

"Not only are Southern Baptists firmly opposed to pornography, but it is my strong impression that the majority favor increased legislative and non-legislative actions to check its spread," Hollis said.

"From our Christian perspective, Southern Baptists oppose pornography not because it deals with sex, but because it degrades sex," he added. "Pornography selects its facts. Its major harm is not that it reveals too much but that it tells too little."

Hollis listed seven different areas in which pornography contradicts the teachings of Christianity, concluding that "the overwhelming concern of Southern Baptists and many people of other religious denominations can be traced...to a Christian understanding of sexuality which pornography subverts."

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Criswell Urges Resolutions  
To Be Mailed To Committee

5/13/70

DALLAS (BP)--The president of the Southern Baptist Convention, W.A. Criswell, issued a statement here suggesting that persons wanting to present resolutions at the Southern Baptist Convention in Denver, June 1-4, mail copies in advance to the resolutions committee chairman.

This would allow the committee to start its work early, before the first convention business session on Tuesday morning, June 2, said Criswell, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas who ends his second term as president of the denomination in June.

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Criswell emphasized, however, that resolutions must be presented to the convention in session before they could be included in the resolutions committee's report, but sending them to the chairman early would give the committee more time for consideration.

Chairman of the resolutions committee will be Russell H. Dilday Jr., pastor of Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church in Atlanta. Criswell asked that resolutions be mailed to Dilday at the church, 2715 Peachtree St., N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30305.

The full membership of the resolutions committee will be announced the day before the convention opens, Criswell said.

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#### Baptist Layman and Philanthropist Honored

DALLAS (BP)--"A few of his Baptist friends" have honored Carr P. Collins Sr., noted Baptist layman and philanthropist, with a tribute that attracted nationwide notice for the Dallas insurance magnate and the Baptist causes that have benefited from his generosity.

W. A. Criswell, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, expressed formal thanks to Collins in behalf of the convention. Prominent among the head table guests was Porter Routh, SBC Executive Committee Chairman.

Letters of congratulations from President Nixon, Vice President Agnew and Texas Governor Preston Smith were presented.

Although the sponsors and agenda personalities represented a galaxy of state and national Baptist leadership, all walks of life and all faiths were represented at the mammoth birthday tribute.

Approximately 2,000 guests came to wish Collins a happy 73th birthday and hear eulogies from Dallas Mayor Erik Jonsson; Jimmy Allen, San Antonio pastor and president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas; J. K. Haines, board chairman of Bishop College, a Negro Baptist institution in Dallas; W. R. White, president emeritus of Baylor University, Waco; and Criswell.

Sharing in the limelight were Collins' wife Ruth, and their children: U. S. Congressman Jim Collins, Carr P. Collins Jr. and Mrs. Ruth Collins Sharp.

Luman Holman from Jacksonville, Tex., president of Texas Baptist Men and chairman of the Baptist Foundation of Texas Board, headed the large group of men who planned the appreciation dinner. E. H. Westmoreland, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, Houston, chaired the program committee.

Special notice was made of Collins' organizing talents in the history of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and his injection of sound business procedures in the affairs of the Texas convention, including the founding of the Baptist Foundation of Texas.

The presidents and delegations from Baylor University, Dallas Baptist College, East Texas Baptist College, Hardin-Simmons University, Howard Payne College, University of Corpus Christi, Wayland Baptist College and Bishop College were present to remind guests of the millions of dollars and the years of leadership Collins has given to Christian education through the SBC.

In his response, Collins stated, "I'm no saint, and don't try to make me into one... it's easy to give." He closed with an appeal for all in the audience to live the Christian life and observation that his rags-to-riches life "has been pretty interesting."

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