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Baptist VIEWpoll
Martin B. Bradley, Director

The Role of the Church on
Social and Political Issues

by Ken Hayes

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist pastors and Sunday School teachers have overwhelmingly indicated in a recent poll that churches should express their views on day-to-day social and political questions.

The poll, taken by the Baptist VIEWpoll, reveals that 76.3 per cent of the pastors and 70.8 per cent of the teachers on a representative national panel feel that churches should express their views on day-to-day social and political questions.

One fifth of the pastors and one fourth of the teachers polled feel that the churches should "keep out" of political and social matters.

Very few of the pastors (3.7 per cent) and Sunday School teachers (3.9 per cent) had "no opinion" on this issue.

Opposition to involvement of the churches in social and political issues appears to be related to religious conservatism, the poll disclosed. Religiously "conservative" panel members were more likely to oppose the churches' involvement in social and political issues than were the less conservative panel members.

The Gallup Poll organization reports from a survey of Protestant ministers that 74 per cent of their sample felt that churches should express their views on social and political questions, while 21 per cent opposed such involvement.

Both polls (Gallup and Baptist VIEWpoll) were conducted in February-March of this year.

The findings for the current Baptist VIEWpoll were based on 90 per cent response from the Baptist VIEWpoll panel, composed of approximately 300 pastors and 300 Sunday School teachers selected to represent a cross section of persons holding those leadership positions in the Southern Baptist Convention.

-30-

SBC Board Sends \$10,000
For Pakistan Relief

RICHMOND (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board here has contributed \$10,000 for a UNICEF cholera treatment project in East Pakistan.

On recommendation of Southern Baptist missionaries in Pakistan, the board sent the \$10,000 to the UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) office in New York to purchase medical supplies in the cholera relief project in Pakistan.

UNICEF officials in Dacca, after conferring with SBC missionary James F. McKinley, had suggested that the board underwrite the entire cholera project at a cost of \$53,000.

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However, "administrative officers at the board took the position that a smaller participation in this particular project was advisable," said John D. Hughey, secretary for Europe and the Middle East for the board.

Missionary McKinley had written Hughey: "We do know that \$53,000 is a lot of money. We also know that the lives of poor people of this land are of infinite worth and we here are under deep obligation to help them.

"While it is true that we would have little to do on the practical side of using the supplies provided by these funds, I doubt that any mission will ever have such an opportunity to help dying people in such a manner as this."

McKinley also told Hughey that the missionaries in East Pakistan are seeking other projects in which they might become involved personally.

"The situation in Pakistan and among the Pakistan refugees in India is growing more tragic daily," Hughey said. "The Foreign Mission Board and missionaries in East Pakistan are eagerly watching for new opportunities to help. Personal participation of outsiders is so far held to a minimum by the governments of Pakistan and India."

UNICEF special advisor to the executive director, V. A. M. Beermann, said that under normal circumstances about 1,000,000 cholera cases can be expected in any one year in East Pakistan. In view of the conditions which currently prevail, however, major cholera problems are expected this year.

The project to which the Foreign Mission Board is contributing is aimed at direct treatment of children and mothers during this crisis. Specifically, the board allocation will be used for disposable needles, syringes and infusion sets. These materials have already arrived in Dacca, board officials said.

-30-

Baptist School Honors Cash For Humanitarian Activities

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. (BP)--Country music superstar Johnny Cash received an honorary doctor of humanities degree from Gardner-Webb College here, which cited him for his humanitarian activities.

"Today we have met to honor one of the princes of American country music for his humanitarian activities on behalf of the humble and the poor, those who are the victims of drugs and alcohol, and the thousands locked behind prison walls," said a citation presented to Cash by the Baptist school.

The citation was read by Lloyd C. Boist, a bakery company executive and chairman of the school's board of trustees. President of the school, Eugene Poston, conferred the degree.

In a brief response, Cash thanked the Baptist institution for remembering "one who had such a lowly beginning and still is closely associated with those who have so little."

Commenting on prison rehabilitation, Cash told the estimated 3,500 persons attending the convocation that "no legislation or rehabilitation program is worth two cents if there is no one involved who really cares."

He gave a brief account of his first prison concerts, emphasizing the importance of the help given him by members of his musical troupe, who, like Cash, made the performances without pay.

At a luncheon honoring the country music star, Mrs. June Carter Cash also expressed thanks for the honor, saying "this is a great little middle-of-the-road school that still talks about Jesus Christ. It represents the hard-working people of this country."

Poston explained that the degree to Cash was given at the suggestion of Arthur Smith, a North Carolina country music singer who is a member of the school's board of trustees. Smith told the luncheon crowd he was proud to help pay tribute to Cash, especially because of Cash's religious work.

Earlier during the morning, Cash and his music group presented a free concert before an estimated 12,000 persons at the college's stadium.

