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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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July 27, 1972

"People Who Care" Must Help
With Prison Reform, Cash Says

By Beth Hayworth

WASHINGTON (BP)--Johnny Cash, popular country music star who spends a lot of time giving his Christian testimony at religious rallies, appeared before a Senate subcommittee here to talk about one of his favorite subjects: prison reform.

Honored last year with a doctor of humanities degree from Gardner-Webb College, a Baptist school in North Carolina, Cash declared in his quiet earnest voice that the biggest need in rehabilitating prisoners is "for people who care."

Ministers, deacons, rabbis and other responsible community citizens must get involved in one-to-one caring relationships with prisoners, Cash told the Senate panel.

"Money will not do it," Cash stressed in his "gravel" voice. "The public must care and get involved...it all comes down to caring."

The Senate subcommittee on penitentiaries is considering a number of bills aimed at reforming the criminal justice system. Sen. William Brock (R., Tenn.) sponsor of one of the bills, introduced Cash and two recently paroled men, Glen Sherley and Harlan Sanders.

Sherley testified that he was a "three-time loser at Folsom prison" when Johnny Cash "reached down a hand to me...that and only that pulled me out of the mud." Sherley has appeared on several of Cash's shows, and Cash has helped Sherley get a start as a country music singer.

Earlier Sherley told the committee that in prison, "a man's life is worth no more than a pack of cigarettes, because people will take anything you have, including your pride."

Sherley called prison life "a subculture where it's easy to be a cog in the wheel." .. Hardened criminals, he said, can be reached "only with concern and love and care...and you've got to feel the caring." The ex-convict judged that the emotional growth of most of the people in prison "was aborted in childhood."

Cash again repeated the need for local citizens to be involved. Work could be done on the state and local level where "governors and mayors could ask for and enlist aid from ministers, clergymen, responsible businessmen and other citizens who care," Cash said.

Earlier Burdick observed what seemed to be the theme of the poignant testimonies heard from the two ex-prisoners in that growded hearing room in the sedate Senate office building, saying: "We need more Johnny Cashes."

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Sunday School Board
Statistical Clerk Dies

7/27/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--Della Frances Bell, 53, statistical clerk in research services for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here, died suddenly July 24. She had gone to work as usual that morning.

Funeral services were held July 27 at the Delbert-Glenn Funeral Home in Owensboro, Ky.

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A native of Philpot, Ky., Miss Bell had been manager of Baptist Book Stores in Owensboro, Richmond, and Albuquerque. She served as book storemanager for 15 years in Richmond, from 1955-68, until she moved to Albuquerque to manage the store for one year before moving to Nashville.

She was also education director for First Baptist Church, Pulaski, Va., and Oakland Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va. She was promotional and educational director for Central Park Baptist Church, Birmingham, and taught commercial work in Kentucky and Ohio for five years.

In Virginia, she was secretary of the state Baptist Training Union Convention, and associational Training Union director for Valley Baptist Association, and secretary of the Southeastern Education Workers Association.

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Ad Wanting to Buy Church
Gets Best Possible Results

7/27/72

PROVIDENCE, R. I. (BP)--For five days, Providence Baptist Church here ran an advertisement in the real estate section of a newspaper here headlined, "Wanted to Buy--A Church."

After no response, Pastor Marion Hayes thought they had spent \$13.30 in vain, and the congregation would have to continue meeting in a hotel instead of their own building.

Shortly after the ad was cancelled, a woman called to ask if they still needed to "hire a house." When Hayes explained his congregation's needs, she said without identifying herself, "Oh, you're Southern Baptist. You'll probably do then." She said she'd call back.

Three weeks later, she did. Mrs. Arthur Carlson, a member of Parkside Community Church, said she had talked to the trustees of her church who favored some arrangement between the two congregations.

She said the church had prayed that God would show them some way they could continue the ministry of their church, and that the possibility of the Baptist church taking up a ministry in their community seemed to answer their prayers.

Visiting the church, Hayes found the facilities ideal for his 54-member congregation. There were 10 active members of Parkside, almost all in their 70's and 80's.

After joint services, the Parkside church voted unanimously to "turn the building over to you, lock, stock and barrel," said Mrs. Carlson. Parkside even included the \$4,200 in the church treasury.

Suspended somewhere between ecstasy and shock, Hayes and his congregation moved into the new Parkside Providence Baptist Church, bringing most of the membership of both churches together.

Mrs. Carlson later told Hayes that the first person to see the ad was Miss Emily Paine, 88, a direct descendant of Baptist pioneer Roger Williams.

Hayes and members of the church are convinced that it pays to advertise.

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Board Trustees Change Names
Of Assemblies, Adopt Budget

7/27/72

GLORIETA, N. M. (BP)--Trustees of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board meeting here at Glorieta Baptist Assembly voted to change the name of their meeting place to Glorieta Baptist Conference Center.

The board also voted to change the name of the Ridgecrest Baptist Assembly in Ridgecrest, N. C., to Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center. Both name changes are effective immediately.

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In other actions, the trustees adopted a record budget, approved expanded services in church architecture, and made several changes in periodicals. The board also adopted a resolution commending the work of Broadman Bible Commentary editor Clifton J. Allen.

Names of the two assemblies were changed to reflect the new year-around nature of the programs at Glorieta and Ridgecrest, and to communicate an emphasis on conference-type programs in addition to the traditional assembly gatherings, board officials said.

"We have a number of leadership and Baptist conference programs already scheduled for the fall and winter sessions," said Bob Boyd, director of the board's Conference Center Division (formerly called the Assembly Division).

"We want to encourage inquiries from groups interested in adding their own meetings to those already scheduled," Boyd told the trustees.

In adopting the new budget, the board set a sales budget for the year ending Sept. 30, 1973, at \$46,885,000. It is an increase of \$2,659,000 over the current budget.

Net earnings for the new budget are projected at slightly over \$2 million. Net earnings are used for working capital, reserves, and fixed assets. Other income derived from sales is used for assisting churches through education and service programs; cooperative work with state conventions, and other Baptist Convention support.

The board's church architecture department will offer a new interior design consulting service to churches on a cost-recovery basis, with approval of the board. Churches requesting the service will reimburse the board at established rates for the time spent on the project by interior designers and draftsmen, plus travel expenses.

The church architecture department will continue to render service relating to educational design at no cost to the churches, board officials pointed out.

Trustees voted to delete several curriculum periodicals, including Youth in Search and Youth in Search: Teacher, both Sunday School publications.

Other publications deleted by board action include: Source for Leaders, a church training periodical for adults; and People, a monthly leisure reading magazine.

All deletions become effective, October, 1973.

Trustees voted to add two new publications. Encounter, a new Sunday School devotional magazine for youth, will begin publication in October, 1972. A new magazine for parents of preschoolers, Living with Pre-Schoolers, was approved for publication beginning October, 1973, by the Sunday School department.

Trustees acknowledged the "significant service" of Clifton J. Allen as general editor of the Broadman Bible Commentary.

Allen was commended for his "painstaking diligence in editing within a (tight) . . . production schedule, his tact and sensitivity in keeping open channels of understanding among writers and editors, and his persistence in holding the project to its purpose."

Trustees further expressed gratitude to Allen for "his unswerving commitment to the Bible as the authoritative guide in faith and practice, always relevant and needing understanding more than defense, and his realistic concern for the need of preachers and other serious students of the Bible which can be met so well through the Broadman Bible Commentary."

Trustees heard from Bookstore Division Director W. O. Thomason of the proposed opening on Aug. 26 of the first Lifeway store to be located in Jackson Mall Shopping Center, Jackson, Miss. The new store, the first of its kind, will sell general and religious material.

Elected president of the trustees was Scott L. Tatum, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church, Shreveport, La. Tatum succeeds Conrad R. Willard of Miami.

DeVaughn Woods, Nashville layman and executive vice president of Genesco, Inc. was named chairman of the board's Executive Committee.



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---FEATURES

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EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of four articles on "Christian Morality and National Politics" written for Baptist Press by Phil Strickland, associate secretary of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission. Strickland delivered a series of addresses on this topic at a citizenship conference sponsored this summer by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission at Glorieta Baptist Assembly.

Political Involvement:
Try, it, You'll Like It

7-27-72

By Phil Strickland

"I really can't do anything," is a statement frequently heard in conversations among Baptists concerning political action.

It reflects an attitude that is far too common--the attitude that the individual cannot really do anything to affect his government.

But if that attitude is right, it is indeed tragic. For it would mean that we have ceased to be a democracy and have become, instead, an oligarchy, a government of the elite and powerful.

The individual can still be heard in our country. But to be heard, he must understand political power. He must know how to speak the political language. And far too few Americans have learned to speak the language of government and decision making.

To have effective political influence, the first requirement is to do the necessary homework. It means doing homework on political power.

Who are the real decision makers in a particular area? Who knows the politicians? Who is involved in legislative activities? Which power structures influence a particular individual? Some legislators, for example, are known for their commitment to a particular person, industry, or other group.

To be effective, it is also necessary to understand the legislative process. What are the basic rules of the game? What power does the school board have? the city council? the Speaker of the House? the Governor?

One must not understand just the written rules, he must understand how the game is really played behind the scenes. Very few decisions are actually made when an issue comes to a vote on the floor of the legislature. Nor are they often made in formal committee hearings. Most political decisions are made over lunch, in the office, on the telephone, and in other places remote from the formal halls of government.

One must also do his homework on the issues in which he is interested. Nothing compromises a person's effectiveness as much as not really knowing what he is talking about. If one leads a legislator to act on inadequate or false information, he will lose all effectiveness with him when that legislator discovers he has been misled.

Determining priorities is another important step in effective political action. It is amazing how much time, money, and effort are wasted on legislation already certain to pass or certain to fail. Priorities must be determined in the light of political reality. Not only must one determine what is most important, but also what is a realistic possibility.

Finally, it is important to do your homework on the representative himself. What does he do for a living? What are the names of his wife and children? What church does he attend? How does he make decisions?

The best way to answer these questions, of course, is to establish a personal relationship with the legislator. And that relationship should be developed in a Christian way, with concern and sensitivity to his needs. All legislators are not crooks. But all of them, like

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all of us, are sinners. Often they desperately need the help of concerned people in making difficult decisions or finding forgiveness when they do make mistakes.

The best way, of course, to really learn how to be politically effective is to jump into the political world. Try it. You'll like it. It's an exciting world.

There may not be much you can do at first. But you can at least find others who feel as you do and get to work with them.. Work for a candidate or for an issue. Contribute. Pass out brochures. Type name cards. The list is endless.

The person who genuinely wants to be involved will not find it difficult to locate a starting point. There are many who need to get more deeply involved--to the point of actually running for political office. There is a desperate need today for elected officials with Christian values.

The greatest enemy of democracy is apathy. When people don't care about government enough to get involved, it will cease to be responsive to the needs of the people. It is not easy to wrest with the difficult decisions of government. The chambers of politics may be fraught with difficulty and temptation for the Christian. We must always remember, however, that Christ walks there before us. And one of the most rewarding experiences of life is to try to walk with Christ as He goes to the difficult places of life.

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NEXT IN THE SERIES:

2. The Economy May Be the Key Political Issue
3. Welfare: The Candidates' Stands Compared
4. The Ecology Crisis: Till Death Do us Part