

October 25, 1974

Ex-Con Tells Youth
Drugs, Crime 'No Good'

74-69

By Teena Andrews
for Baptist Press

The infamous George "Machine Gun" Kelly was once asked by a fellow prison inmate, "Are you religious?"

"No, I'm a Baptist," Kelly answered.

Jack Brown, the former inmate who asked the question of Kelly, resided for 20 of his 70 years at such places as Leavenworth and San Quentin prisons. Brown was a Baptist too, of sorts, at least having been reared by Baptist parents. But, like his friend Kelly, religion really had little place in his life.

The former prison mate of Al Capone, the Birdman of Alcatraz, and the notorious Clyde Barrow (of Bonnie and Clyde), and a former drug addict for 30 years, Brown is now rehabilitated and estimates he has told his story to more than five million young people.

Brown's life was one of crime and drugs until his Christian conversion experience 12 years ago. He got into drugs as a teenager while working for a carnival. Most of his crimes, he says, were drug-related and non-violent. Often "con-games," they yielded large amounts of money needed to support his habit.

In his book, *Monkey Off My Back*, Brown vividly describes his life in prison, which included a stretch on death row because of a fight.

"It was a fight over a poker game," said Brown. It took more than 200 stitches to close his own wounds, he noted, and prison officials thought the other man would die. All men in the prison to be tried on capital charges were put on death row, Brown continued.

"I was there for three months before I found out that the man wasn't even dead," Brown added.

The Southern Baptist layman now believes, "The Lord let me live to take my message to kids in schools to warn them against dope and crime." He estimates that he speaks 20 times a week and notes, "There's not a preacher in America who speaks as often as I do."

Now in his 70s, Brown says he underwent a "genuine conversion experience" 12 years ago at First Baptist Church, Van Nuys, Calif. The former "con man" admits he was "conned" into attending the church by his daughter who wanted him to hear the youth choir.

Harold Fickett, the pastor of the Van Nuys church, started Brown on his speaking career by asking the former convict to give a testimony to the young people 10 days after he became a Christian.

"When they gave the invitation, two boys were saved," Brown recalled. He spoke to the entire congregation the following Sunday and 40 more conversions resulted, he said.

"Pastor Fickett began getting doors opened for me to speak in schools after that, Brown said. The governor of California, at that time Edmund G. "Pat" Brown (no relation), encouraged schools to let the former prisoner come and speak against crime and drugs.

Brown--the ex-convict--was on parole at the time and Gov. Brown pardoned him because of his work.

-more-

The former convict said he do sn't preach but just gives his testimony and tells about his prison xperiences. "I always give a witness," he says. "In any kind of business, you can give some kind of Christian witness without being offensive."

Brown called the glamorizing of former big-time gangsters through movies and television "disgraceful" and gave Baptist Press his views on prison reform.

"People are always for an underdog, and movie companies can make a lot of money by making a criminal look like an underdog whom society has taken advantage of," he noted.

Brown believes that prisons should generally be smaller for rehabilitation, with more vocational and trade schools. He also believes in shorter prison sentences. "There is a right tim and a wrong time to release a prisoner. And if a man has to serve too long, the proper time may be lost," he said.

Brown also feels it's important for a prisoner's spouse and family to stand behind him or her. He largely credits his own rehabilitation to his wife, Pearl, and her faith in him.

"If a man's wife stays with him (while he is in prison), he has a 10 times greater chance for rehabilitation. It's when they lose everybody that some people go off the deep end," h explained.

The man who used to shave Al Capone believes prisons are going in the right direction but too slowly. He also believes, "young people need to get into prison reform. And prison running needs to be in the hands of people who know something about human behavior. Sure this costs money, but it also costs the taxpayers a great deal of money to keep men and wom n in prison," he noted.

Now a member of First Baptist Church in Arlington, Tex., Brown participates in some prison revivals. He noted, "There are some opportunities in prisons for real evangelism. And the doctrine of grace would appeal especially to convicts."

But young people--in all denominations and in schools everywhere--are those he really wants to warn not to spend their lives as he previously did--with the "monkey of drug addiction on their backs." (BP)

-30-

Gainer Bryan Sr.,
Dies in Georgia

10/25/74

WAYCROSS, Ga. (BP)--Gainer E. Bryan Sr., longtime Georgia Baptist Convention leader, died here Oct. 24 at age 80 after a long illness. He had lived at Baptist Village, Georgia Baptists' home for the elderly almost three years.

He and the late Calvin Pratt of Columbus, Ga., were credited with originating the Baptist Training Union "M" (Mobilization) Night, now an annual Southern Baptist Convention-wide emphasis.

Bryan retired in 1962 after almost 25 years as Training Union secretary for Georgia Baptists. He had previously spent 15 years in Georgia Baptist Sunday School department.

He had been vice president of the Georgia Baptist Convention and received an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Mercer University, a Baptist school in Macon, Ga.

Survivors include his widow; one son, Gainer E. Bryan Jr., former editor of the Maryland Baptist state paper and now editor of the Gwinnett Daily News in Lawrenceville, Ga.; one daughter, Mrs. Thomas J. Holmes of Newnan, Ga., whose husband is assistant to th president of Mercer University for Atlanta and former pastor of Tattnall Square Baptist Church, Macon; five brothers and two sisters.

Funeral services were held at Ammie S. Paige Memorial Baptist Church in his hometown, Riddleville, Ga., with burial in the church cemetery.

-30-

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
180 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37218
(615) 244-2855
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

October 25, 1974

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234
Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

Compassion For Elders
Tests Society's Greatness

By Stan Hasteay

NASHVILLE (BP)--A leading authority in the field of aging said here that one of the tests of a great society is the "compassion and respect shown to its elders."

David A. Affeldt, chief counsel of the Special Committee on Aging in the U.S. Senate, addressed a banquet group of over 200 Southern Baptists gathered here for the denomination's premier Conference on Aging.

The conference, which lasted three days, was the denomination's first major effort to implement a 1973 SBC resolution calling for increased attention to developing program plans and resources in the aging field.

Affeldt called attention to a number of achievements in the field during the past several years, including a 68.5 per cent increase in Social Security benefits, enactment of the historic Medicare legislation, establishment of a national hot meals program, creation of a national senior service corps and passage of a comprehensive pension reform package.

On the negative side, Affeldt stated that in other ways, the nation has "struck out" by not solving many "everyday problems affecting older Americans."

The foremost problem confronting the nation's aging, he said, is a "retirement income crisis" which affects more than five million Americans above age 65.

Of those, 3.5 million live below the government's poverty line. Affeldt noted that these older citizens live by a "rock bottom standard" of \$2,120 for a single aged person and \$2,660 for an elderly couple.

Still another 1.3 million older citizens are not classified as poor because they live with their families.

Neither do the official poverty figures include 2.3 million persons in the 65 and above category who live in institutions, nursing homes or other extended care facilities.

According to Affeldt, the "number one enemy" causing the income crisis for the elderly is inflation. Despite a recently enacted 11 per cent Social Security increase, he said, the nation's inflation rate of 20 per cent over the past two years has already obliterated any possible immediate gains for older Americans.

Health care is another area which cuts deeply into the budgets of the elderly, Affeldt said. He cited statistics showing that persons 65 and older account for 27 per cent of all money spent on health care despite the fact that they make up only 10 per cent of the U.S. population.

Even Medicare, Affeldt noted, covers only about 40 per cent of the total health care expenditures of the elderly. He stated that in 1973, the per capita out-of-pocket expenses for medical care for the elderly came to \$311 as compared with \$237 in 1966, before Medicare was enacted into law.

One possible solution, he suggested, would be enactment of a new national health insurance program providing better benefits for older citizens.

Affeldt said that property and income taxes also adversely affect the aged by penalizing them more severely than any other segment of the population.

He cited the example of a New Jersey widow who paid almost \$800 in property taxes during a recent year, despite having an income of less than \$1,200. That left her with about

\$7 a week for food, clothing, medical care, transportation and other basic expenses, he said.

Affeldt also revealed that as many as one-half of the elderly living on pensions needlessly overpay their income taxes each year because of complexities on income tax forms, an entirely new set of tax rules affecting them, and a lack of awareness of deductions, credits and exemptions due them.

Responding to the problem, the Senate's Special Committee on Aging has prepared a checklist of itemized deductions which the elderly can claim.

In addition, Senator Frank Church (D.-Idaho), chairman of the Senate committee, has introduced the Older Americans Tax Counseling Assistance Act designed to help in preparing income tax forms.

Affeldt pointed also to transportation as a major problem area confronting the aged. Only 47 per cent of those over 65 are licensed to drive, he said, leaving the majority to seek less convenient means of moving about. This results in a feeling of "solitary confinement" among many of the elderly.

The lack of adequate nursing home care also constitutes a major difficulty encountered by older Americans, Affeldt said. He termed such deficiencies as "symbolic of a careless attitude toward the elderly" which overlooks religious, moral and practical considerations.

Affeldt objected to the common practice of discriminating against older members of the nation's work force in employment practices.

He said that workers in the 45 and above category are often faced with dismissal from their jobs and loss of pension benefits at the time they can least afford it.

"Too often," he said, "the aging worker discovers that he is the first to be fired but the last to be hired" because of age discrimination.

He warned against "relegating to the sidelines" many of society's "most talented and experienced personnel."

One solution to the employment problem, Affeldt suggested, is dispelling "false stereotypes" about older employees.

He told the Baptist audience that "this is where you can be helpful."

-30-

Baptists Call for Attitude
Change by Church on Aging

10/25/74

By James Lee Young

NASHVILLE (BP)--Citing alienation and prejudice against older people in the church and community, two Southern Baptist denominational leaders called for a complete review and new direction in attitudes and methods of relating to and dealing with aging.

"Moral outrage against exploitation of the elderly, both subtle and blatant, is most effective when translated into legal action and more sound community planning," said C. Welton Gaddy, director of Christian citizenship development for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Calling for "partnership structures" for cooperation between church and community in improving the lot of the elderly, Randall Lolley, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., lamented the large numbers of "nameless, faceless, powerless" senior citizens who "flounder for recognition."

Gaddy and Lolley spoke at the first national Conference on Aging sponsored in Nashville by the Southern Baptist Convention's Inter-Agency Council.

-more-

Both cited the need for careful and responsible attention to legislation as one among several means of contributing to improvement in the national and community life of the elderly.

"No person in our society should be so ignominiously dehumanized in living arrangements," for example, Gaddy said, "as many elderly presently are. Healthier integration of the elderly into the total life of the community can be achieved by housing officials sensitive to the aged's need for both privacy and social existence."

"Employment, health, housing, adequate income and productive activity will be check points" for fulfilled and necessary participation in the life of the nation and community, Lolley said.

With church and community working together, Lolley noted, the day could come when "some of the most beautiful and beneficial days of a person's life could well come past retirement for us. Church and community, he added, "must work toward the day when the positive aspects of aging achieve at least as much attention as the negative aspects of aging.

"The models are emerging," Lolley continued, such as the elderly group in Boise, Idaho, called the Extra Years of Zest Club (EYZ). The group, Lolley said, has a "far-reaching program of activities which allows older persons to help other elderly individuals in a wide number of inventive and often cheerful ways."

The plight of the elderly will not be worked out solely by them, however, Gaddy and Lolley stressed. Rather, Gaddy noted, "Public attitudes and actions toward senior citizens inestimably define the aged's opportunity for meaningful existence."

Another first-day speaker for the conference urged Southern Baptists to pay due respect to each stage of life. Frank Stagg, a New Testament professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, assailed as "silly" the attitude that only the more youthful are acceptable in society. And he labeled as foolish the policies of companies that require persons to retire at age 65 or younger.

Gaddy and Lolley noted that older persons lack the status in contemporary society previously accorded them.

"Roles once clearly understood are now ambiguous," concerning the elderly and society in general, Gaddy said. "Long-cherished values, both moral and cultural, have been called into question. . . Further complicating the matter is the inability of the home . . . to facilitate satisfactory social adjustments for its aging members," he said.

Lolley continued the theme of needed involvement: "It goes without saying that both church and community must get at the work of geriatrics in our times.

He called on Christians to be the "living sacrifice church," and the "dead/alive people of God"--dead to themselves and alive to God and others.

"The dead/alive people of God take the energy of their lives and decided where they are going to pile the one fistful of sand which they have in their hands. This is the context in which the people of God gingerly shape structures in their communities and in their world," Lolley said.

Gaddy noted that the question of dealing with and for the elderly involves not only their living standards but also the manner, ethics and regulations concerning old age and dying:

"A preoccupation with and an expertise in keeping people alive has provoked some profound moral questions related to health care. What are the ethics involved in prescribing a new medication which will heal one malady at the expense of aggravating another? Should a patient be kept alive mechanically even if all communicative and relational facilities are dead?"

Gaddy noted that preventive programs of health care "have still not received adequate attention and support and said a national comprehensive health plan is needed to cover the aging under 65 as well as those above.

He decried the "depth of prejudice extant in current attitudes toward the aged" as "obvious in the rank inconsistencies of stereotyping." He also assailed a "subtle kind of age discrimination present even among the churches and agencies of our denomination (Southern Baptists)."

"Aged persons are daily confronted by prejudice--stereotyping, segregation, and discrimination--because no distinct roles have been defined around which personal activities can acquire social meaning," Gaddy said.

"Any attempt to improve the present situation must focus its efforts upon both the nature of a human being and the nature of society. Less ambitious attempts to alter the course of affairs will ultimately fail," Gaddy said.

-30-

Stevens Predicts Baptist-
Owned Satellite By 1984

10/25/74

By Bonnie Sparrow

FORT WORTH (BP)--Paul M. Stevens, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Radio and Television Commission, said here that 1984, in spite of George Orwell's dire predictions, could prove happy ones for Baptists.

In his address to the commission's board of trustees in Fort Worth, Stevens "dreamed aloud" that "in 10 years there will be a Baptist-owned satellite in the sky that will make it possible for every home in America, and in the world, to hear the Christian gospel."

He said that, hopefully, the Radio and Television Commission, the Home and Foreign Mission Boards and the Sunday School Board will jointly own the satellite.

"All these agencies would, hopefully, be involved in the satellite's use at selected times and periods to broadcast to the heart of America, and the world, the Christian gospel," he said. "We could express our feelings and interpret God's word in a Southern Baptist ministry that would take on new dimensions."

He said he had spoken with representatives of a law firm which specializes in communications and "what they tell us, after careful study, will prevail."

Stevens predicted that the satellite ministry to the world would cause the ministry of the Radio and Television Commission, and of other agencies, to mushroom.

"The penetration of all the homes with the gospel is the aim, goal and purpose of the Radio and Television Commission," he declared. "The commission has behind it a great denomination that backs its purpose, loves it and understands it as it seeks to minister to a lost and uncaring world."

Stevens warned the trustees that television is no longer a new instrument in the world of communications.

"We are receiving indications that the doors to free television are being closed," he said. "All these years they have been wide open, but with high prices and the bleak economic picture, we have come to the stage in the life of our agency, in which the Radio and Television Commission will have to fight for everything it gets."

On a brighter note, he said, "No broadcaster in America is in a more favorable position than the Radio and Television Commission to face the future effectively. That is because, he said, "we have a full cut ministry given to us by God. We have to preach Christ unceasingly, and I believe he will see us through from the beginning to the end."

Earlier in the day Charles G. Fuller, chairman of the commission's board of trustees, asked the trustees to exert their individual influence, to speak up in meetings, to be informed about the Radio and Television Commission and to make the commission's work known in local state conventions.

"We serve in an exciting time," said Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va., and president of the statewide Baptist General Association of Virginia. "The broadcast media says that it only reflects society. I say that it shapes society and as members of
-more-

the Radio and Television Commission we must do our part to influence the media as it helps shape society."

To do this, Fuller urged that the trustees understand the procedures of the denomination. They should recognize, he said, that the Radio and Television Commission stands in between "a deliberate moving denominational administration--which is, on the whole, what it should be--and a fast-moving media world which does not understand the Baptist way."

Fuller cited such misunderstandings from the media as "a year which begins in October and ends in September, and 12 million people who say they are interested in seeing the gospel on the air, but they can only afford \$2,166,000 to do it with."

Representatives of other Southern Baptist agencies at the meeting included recently retired executive secretary of the Woman's Missionary Union and Miss Carolyn Weatherford, her successor, who attended as one of her first official acts as WMU chief executive.

Miss Hunt told the trustees that Southern Baptists have made a tremendous investment in her life and that she expected to continue to participate, in some capacity, in Baptist life.

"Now that my official job is finished, I am reminded anew that we must rise above the panic, methods and techniques that we have developed into lines that tend to separate," she said. "We must keep in mind the mission that unites us--we are one people proclaiming the message of Christ in one world today," Miss Hunt said.

"I don't see myself facing any newer challenges than the ones which confronted Miss Hunt," Miss Weatherford said. "I believe that many Baptists have failed to see the world-wide impact of WMU. I want to communicate to pastors and their wives and to church staffs more of what WMU is about."

Miss Weatherford feels strongly that "WMU is coming along with young women," and she expressed an interest to "today's career woman, as well as the homemaker who has accepted a job outside the home.

"I am really committed to the primary purpose of teaching, doing and supporting missions," she said. "I feel strongly that the WMU is the organization in the Southern Baptist Convention through which a professional Christian woman may, vocationally, rise to the very top in her chosen vocation as a Christian worker. That's also true on a volunteer level."