



BAPTIST PRESS

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November 1, 1974

Justice Blackmun Asks
Return to Basic Ethics

74-73

ATLANTA (BP)--Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun, a United Methodist layman, called here for a return to basic moral and ethical principles in the nation and particularly in the legal profession.

Blackmun's remarks were delivered as the first Robert Tyre Jones Jr. Memorial Lecture at the Emory University School of Law here. Jones is better known to sports fans as the immortal Bobby Jones, who won 13 major golf tournaments to establish himself as one of the game's all-time greats. He was also an attorney.

Justice Blackmun cited several personal traits in Jones which led to his accomplishments, including natural talent, a pleasant disposition, willingness to overcome personal weaknesses, a drive for competition and the ability to see the sport in perspective with other interests.

Jones' finest characteristic, however, Blackmun said, was his unimpeachable integrity.

Citing Watergate-related scandals in the nation's life, Blackmun compared the times to those during the ministry of Nehemiah, the prophet, when the city of Jerusalem fell into ruin.

He suggested that the nation is "in the midst of a wave of moral and ethical confusion. "The balance has been missing. The compass has been askew. It seems that the old value guideposts are no longer there, or at least are no longer looked to and relied upon," he declared.

Blackmun blamed situation ethics and the so-called "new morality" for the current state of affairs. "We have rationalized and compromised and made excuses," he said.

Citing recent writings of psychologist Karl Menninger, the Supreme Court justice called for a renewed sense of sin.

Blackmun also appealed to fellow lawyers to maintain high moral, as well as legal, standards. He acknowledged that moral principles "are of a higher order" than the law itself, but stated that the law "necessarily has moral dimension."

He listed numerous recent examples of lawyers who have compromised or been accused of compromising their principles, including an attorney who played one of the Watergate tapes at a party; Otto Kerner, the former Illinois governor and federal judge sentenced to prison for accepting a bribe; Ed Reinecke, former lieutenant governor of California, recently convicted of perjury;

U.S. Senator Edward J. Gurney, indicted on charges of conspiracy, perjury and bribery; former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, who resigned his office and was subsequently disbarred following charges of tax evasion on kickbacks during his tenure as governor of Maryland and as vice president; and former President Richard M. Nixon, who was forced to resign after it was revealed that he had participated in the Watergate coverup.

The legal profession, Blackmun said, must be concerned about "our ethical responsibilities outside and beyond the courtroom" and committed to "what is just and moral as well as barely legal."

He described the moral dimension of legal practice as presenting the "terror of responsibility."

Group Seeks Reconciliation With 'Dissident' Baptists

STOCKHOLM (BP)--Leaders of the government-recognized All-Union Council of Evangelical Christians-Baptists (AUCECB) hope that their quinquennial congress in Moscow, December 9-12, will be a time of reconciliation with the so-called "dissident" Baptists in the Soviet Union.

Alexsei Stoyan, director of the AUCECB's international department, told Sven Svenson, editor of the Swedish Baptist weekly, Veckoposten, that the congress will seek to bring an uncounted number of dissident Baptists back into the fellowship.

The dissident group, known as "initiative Baptists," pulled out of the All-Union Council in the early 1960's in protest against reported government restrictions.

Stoyan said that 9,506 members of the dissident group have returned to the All-Union Council in recent years. No figure was available, however, as to the number of persons still remaining outside the fellowship.

About 600 delegates--including ministers, preachers, and members of church councils--will attend the December meetings in Moscow. They have been elected from regional, inter-regional and territorial conferences throughout the Soviet Union.

Ilya Ivanov is president and Alexsei Bichkov, secretary of the All-Union Council which reports 525,000 members in about 5,000 churches.

Stoyan said that the entire work of Baptists in the Soviet Union will be dealt with in reports, deliberations and discussions during the four-day congress. The congress theme deals with "preservation of the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," giving room for discussion of the Baptist unity question.

"During these past five years, since our last congress we, as Soviet Russian Baptists, have experienced God's blessing in our work," Stoyan told Svenson. "Many have come to believe in God and have joined our churches.

"We have tried to coordinate all our resources and efforts in an activity that we believe is in accordance with God's call to us. Important questions have been the subject of deliberations within the board of the Union, in particular the question of how we shall be brought up to be true followers of Christ both in our churches and in our daily lives."

Stoyan reported also that two groups of preachers, totaling about 200, have finished a correspondence course on theological subjects, organized by the union. In addition, he said, seven ministers have been allowed to study theology in other countries.

The All-Union Council is a member of the Baptist World Alliance. The 525,000 believers in the churches give the USSR the third largest Baptist population on the world, falling behind only the United States (29.4 million) and India (734,203).

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SBC Cooperative Program Giving Continues to Rise

11/1/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--National Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program unified budget receipts for October--the first month in the 1974-75 fiscal year--exceeded the October 1973, total by more than \$240,000.

The National Cooperative Program receipts, funneled by Southern Baptist churches through 33 state Baptist conventions covering 50 states, totaled \$3,132,304 for this October, according to figures released by John H. Williams, director of financial planning and assistant to the executive secretary of the SBC Executive Committee.

That total represents a 15.66 per cent--or \$424,216--increase over the previous October and amounts to approximately one third of total Cooperative Program receipts received by state conventions. The remaining two-thirds goes to state convention supported missions ministries.

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Designated giving to causes of the SBC, the nation's largest Protestant evangelical denomination, showed a dramatic 67.42 per cent increase over the same month in 1973, rising \$162,965 from the \$241,719 given last October to \$404,684 given this October.

Total national Cooperative Program and designated giving for October increased 19.91 per cent over last October, rising from \$2,949,807 to \$3,536,988. That represents a \$587,181 increase.

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In Baptist Press story, mailed 10/31/74, headlined, Seminary Elects Cate to Faculty, Grants Increases, please add as graph 4:

He also has been pastor of churches in Kentucky and Georgia, is a member of the board of trustees of Furman University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and is a former member of the General Board of South Carolina Baptists.

Thanks.

--Baptist Press