



November 18, 1975
Christian Citizenship and
The Bicentennial Celebration

75-181

By C. Welton Gaddy
For Baptist Press

To celebrate an event is happily to deviate from the routine in order to honor the occasion or to recall it appreciatively.

Likewise, the celebration of an ideal, truth or principle involves positive interpretation and appropriate commemoration for the purpose of preserving this ideal, truth or principle for the future.

That which is to be celebrated during the Bicentennial embraces the American Revolution, the birth of the nation and the fundamental principles involved in both. Thus, we may best honor the events of 1776 and most appropriately preserve the principles involved through the development of a responsible, dynamic citizenship in 1976.

Among self-governing people, loud proclamation of praise for the nation and dramatic public displays of loyalty to the nation are far less important than persistent political action aimed at the good of the nation.

The most meaningful observances of the nation's birthday will be those which lay hold of peoples' passing excitement over a festival in such a manner as to nurture political conscientiousness and to provoke responsible and consistent citizenship involvements.

Churches will miss, perhaps, the greatest educational opportunity of this generation for citizenship development if the teachable moment of the Bicentennial is not grasped for instruction in Christian citizenship. We can no longer tolerate either an acid pessimism regarding the political process or an unconditional blessing of that process.

Now is the time for Christians to study the government of this nation from the perspective of what the Bible says about the nature of government. The year of national celebration is the year for laboring the manner in which Christian discipleship must be expressed through responsible citizenship.

Churches in the Southern Baptist Convention can make a tremendous contribution to the Bicentennial observance by preaching and teaching the importance, methods and goals of Christian political action.

The Bicentennial year may turn out to be a good experience. Americans may come to understand the development of responsible citizenship as an authentic mode of celebration. Concepts such as "Liberty and justice for all" may elicit commitments to vigilant support on their behalf rather than rhetorical allegiance alone.

The American Revolution may continue as citizens recover the significance of political action. All of the evidence is not in. Direct results of the celebration are yet to be seen.

Christians have a particularly significant role to play in determining the outcome of the year. Opportunities abound for molding the kind of citizenship that will benefit the nation and glorify God.

To lay hold of these opportunities in the development of citizenship "worthy of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27) will be appropriately to recall the experiences of 1776, responsibly to observe the emphasis of 1976, and helpfully to give hope for a celebration in 2076. (BP)

**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
James Lee Young, Feature Editor

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, Tex. 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996**MEMPHIS** Roy Jennings, Chief, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38104, Telephone (901) 272-2461**NASHVILLE** (Baptist Sunday School Board) Gomer Lesch, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 254-5461**RICHMOND** Richard M. Styles, Acting 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

November 18, 1975

75-181

D. C. Body Elects Woman;
Votes on Busing; Right to Die

WASHINGTON (BP)--The District of Columbia Baptist Convention elected a woman president and passed resolutions involving busing, a person's right to die and appreciation for retiring Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas's commitment to freedom of religion and expression.

The D. C. Convention, which is aligned with both the Southern Baptist Convention and the American Baptist Churches, elected Mrs. Alliene Tilley, retired director of nursing at St. Elizabeth Hospital, Washington, as president.

The second woman to hold the convention's top elective post in its 99-year history, Mrs. Tilley is a member of East Washington Heights Baptist Church, Washington, and had served during the past year as the convention's vice president and chairperson of its executive committee.

Prompted by implications of the Karen Ann Quinlan case, the convention urged after debate, that "our courts should recognize that a person of sound mind may lawfully covenant in writing with his family that extraordinary medical means not be used to prolong his life where no reasonable hope of recovery shall exist.

"Where this covenant is clear," the resolution concludes, "and where proper safeguards are provided to insure an independent judgment on the case involved, the family and attending physicians shall not be held liable for carrying out these wishes."

The convention defeated a motion to table the resolution and then voted down a proposed amendment which would have authorized termination of extraordinary life support by a unanimous decision of the immediate family in concert with a team of physicians and a judge.

Spirited debate was engendered on a resolution on "Busing and Quality Education."

The resolution which was approved holds that "We affirm our support for equal opportunity in housing purchase, leading to the elimination of segregated housing patterns," and "that where an integrated housing pattern does not yet exist, a reasonable amount of busing may be desirable to provide children with equal quality education, wholesome racial attitudes, and better preparation for life in our diverse society."

The resolution also provides "that this busing must not be of such a nature as to interfere with the physical and educational needs of the child."

The resolution on religious liberty and the Supreme Court expressed appreciation for the 36 years of service by Justice Douglas and "his unswerving support of the First Amendment rights of freedom of religion and expression . . ." It further encouraged "President Gerald Ford . . . (to) replace Justice Douglas with a person who has a commitment to religious liberty."

A motion to pass the essence of this resolution, but deleting any reference to Justice Douglas, was defeated.

-more-

The Executive Board of the D. C. Convention, during the annual session, approved employment of Joseph Smith as director of campus ministries for the convention. Smith currently serves as Baptist chaplain at the University of Maryland, jointly employed by the D. C. Convention and the Baptist Convention of Maryland.

The convention climaxed with a communion service, led by William Hull, pastor of First Baptist Church, Shreveport, La., and served by persons of various ethnic backgrounds, both sexes, different ages and professions and lay and ordained.

The D. C. Convention's 1976 annual meeting will be held November 11-12 at the Clinton Baptist Church, Clinton, Md.

-30-

Thanksgiving--1st Official
Observance, 200 Years Ago

Baptist Press
11/18/75

WASHINGTON (BP)--This Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27, Americans will be observing not only the birth of the United States but the Bicentennial of the first official Thanksgiving Day observed simultaneously by representatives of many Colonies.

Official days of Thanksgiving were common in the Colonies when the Revolutionary War broke out. Massachusetts Bay Colony legislators passed a Thanksgiving proclamation on Nov. 4, 1775, declaring Thursday, Nov. 23 as a Day of Public Thanksgiving.

Actually the custom of proclaiming a day of Thanksgiving was more than a century old, but the Revolution added a new element. The traditional "God Save the King" was replaced by "God Save the People," in the Colonies.

George Washington had just taken command of the troops at Boston, with soldiers arriving from Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Rhode Island for the siege of Boston.

Washington ordered his troops to observe the day of Thanksgiving in Massachusetts, "with all the solemnity directed by the legislative proclamation . . ." Nov. 23, 1775, thereby became the first colonial Thanksgiving officially observed by representatives of many Colonies.

In December 1777, Washington ordered his troops to observe the first Thanksgiving Day for all of America, as directed by the Continental Congress as a result of the victory at Saratoga. His army observed it on Dec. 18, the day before they marched into Valley Forge.

Later, Washington became the first President to issue a Thanksgiving proclamation. In 1778, he designated the fourth Thursday in November as the national Thanksgiving Day, which still stands.

-30-

Court to Decide: Abortion
Rights for Minor Women

Baptist Press
11/18/75

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U. S. Supreme Court announced here that it will decide whether unmarried women under 18 years of age must have parental consent before qualifying for a legal abortion.

In another action, the high court ruled that states must pay unemployment compensation to women unable to work because of pregnancy.

The abortion suits were appealed to the court by the State of Massachusetts and the mother of three underage daughters. They are challenging a U. S. district court ruling that the Massachusetts law requiring parental consent for abortions performed for unmarried women under age 18 is unconstitutional. The district court also forbade the State of Massachusetts from enforcing the law.

-more-

The state law under challenge requires the consent of both parents unless they are divorced or one or both is dead. If one or both of the parents refuse, consent may be obtained after a hearing from a superior court judge.

Violation of the consent law brings with it a fine ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 or a jail sentence between three months and five years, or both.

Massachusetts is being opposed by a minor woman and her parents who contend that the state law invades a minor's right to privacy in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution.

The high court's decision on unemployment benefits for pregnant women resulted from a case brought by a Utah woman, Mary Ann Turner, who challenged that state's law making pregnant women ineligible for such benefits for a period extending from 12 weeks before childbirth to six weeks after childbirth. The Supreme Court of Utah earlier ruled in favor of the state.

Although the woman was initially forced to leave her job for reasons unrelated to pregnancy, her unemployment benefits were cut off 12 weeks prior to her expected date of delivery.

The U. S. Supreme Court, relying in part on a similar decision striking down school boards' mandatory maternity leave regulations, declared that the Constitution requires "that unemployment compensation boards, no less than school boards, must achieve legitimate state ends through more individualized means when basic human liberties are at stake."

The court, in a similar case, decided to let stand a decision by the Supreme Court of Ohio requiring the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. to extend accident and sickness benefits to women employees on pregnancy leave.

-30-

Michigan Baptists Urge
Hunger Offering at SBC Meet

Baptist Press
11/18/75

MARQUETTE, Mich. (BP)--Michigan Southern Baptists, meeting here, passed a resolution dealing with the urgency of the world hunger situation and an accompanying motion calling for an offering of at least \$100,000 for world hunger at the Southern Baptist Convention's national meeting next June in Norfolk.

The Baptist State Convention of Michigan also approved a \$1.29 million budget and elected a new president.

The world hunger resolution called on Baptists to use the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board as the channel for world hunger and disaster relief. Then registered "messengers" to the convention voted to urge the SBC Executive Committee and/or the program committee for the 1976 convention to consider receiving the offering for world hunger.

The motion also called on the Baptist State Convention of Maryland to receive a similar offering at its annual meeting in 1976.

Richard Rogers, pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, Lansing, Mich., was elected as the convention's new president.

The \$1.29 million budget includes a \$503,165 goal of Cooperative Program contributions from the convention's churches, with 22.5 percent of the Cooperative Program figure to go for world missions through the SBC Cooperative Program. That's a one-half percent increase over last year. The balance of the \$1.29 million budget will come from the Southern Baptist Sunday School and Home Mission Boards and other sources.

The convention also received a resolution noting that moving of the convention's executive offices to 15635 Twelve Mile Road, Southfield, Mich., a Detroit suburb, was complete. The convention's new telephone number is (313) 557-4200.

Next year's convention will be held Nov. 9-11 at First Baptist Church, South Lyon, Mich.

-30-