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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

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**TV Guide Poll Shows Need  
To Reduce Sex and Violence**By Robert O'Brien  
For Baptist Press

Two Southern Baptist Convention agency representatives believe that a poll conducted for TV Guide on the controversial television "family viewing time" concept clearly establishes that Americans recognize a need for some device to reduce violence and sex on television.

Paul M. Stevens, president of the denomination's Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth, describes family viewing time as a "first step toward putting acceptable controls on the impact of television on American home life."

Meanwhile, Harry N. Hollis, director of family and special moral concerns for the SBC Christian Life Commission, Nashville, said, "Perhaps family viewing time is a small blessing, but it has not and will not solve the greater problem of unhealthy TV programming during the other hours of the day and night."

TV Guide reported that the poll, conducted by Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton, N. J., was done by telephone with a "scientifically selected sample of 1,024 Americans . . . all 18 or older and living in private households."

The poll showed that 82 percent favor, 7 percent oppose and 11 percent have no opinion on the family viewing time concept. That concept was established in 1975 by television executives to prevent programming "inappropriate for viewing by a general family audience" between 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. EST (6 p.m. and 8 p.m. CST).

It also showed that 58 percent of those polled had never even heard of family viewing time and could not respond to the questions until pollsters told them what it is. The poll further revealed that 71 percent felt too much violence is depicted on television and 54 percent felt there is too much emphasis on sex.

The survey indicates, also, that 85 percent of the women (who made up one half of the sample) are more enthusiastic about family viewing time than men (77 percent), and that homes with children (86 percent) favor it more than those without children (78 percent). Geographically, percentages favoring were fairly equal--midwest (85 percent), northeast (85 percent), south (80 percent) and west (77 percent).

"My personal view is that family viewing time is acceptable until something better is found, and all of us should be vigorously involved in the search," Stevens said. He added he does not consider the family viewing time concept as a "smoke screen" laid down by the networks to allow them to program sex and violence during the rest of the day, as many have charged. Hollis said earlier that family viewing time could have the effect of deception by attracting attention from other irresponsible programming.

"The poll should serve notice to the television networks that many Americans are deeply distressed about the content of television programs," said Hollis, noting that 82 percent favor family viewing time and that most believe television depicts too much sex and violence.

"Since family viewing time is designed to help families, it's important to study what parents had to say about this approach," Hollis said.

Although two-thirds of parents (which made up 44 percent of the respondents) thought family viewing time does not keep children from seeing life the way it really is, only one in five found it "very helpful" to them in supervising their children's TV watching.

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One quarter of the parents said it was "not at all helpful," another quarter said it was "fairly helpful," 15 percent deemed it "only a little helpful," and 13 percent had no opinion.

"These views of parents do not inspire great confidence in family viewing time," Hollis said. "Instead, it is demonstrated once again that family viewing time is inadequate. We can be grateful that the Opinion Research Corporation poll has helped us see this."

In introductory remarks, the TV Guide article identified segments either opposing or supporting family viewing time. It said TV writers and producers are crying "censorship," another segment is calling it a "smoke screen" laid down by the networks, and another segment is saying that even though it isn't perfect, it's a step in the right direction and shows tangible results of the industry's determination to solve a long-time problem.

Both Stevens and Hollis oppose the idea of censorship of television--government or otherwise--and both call for ways to find responsible programming to eliminate filth and violence. Neither view family viewing as censorship.

Besides ruling out censorship as a solution, Stevens also opposes "allowing free time or license by writers and producers who can attach 'public beware' labels to a program to get it on the air.

"I've seen what these people are putting in American theaters today, with nudity, filth, violence and worship of the anti-hero," Stevens declared. "That way leads to moral cowardice on our part and to disaster for the nation's spiritual welfare. What we must do is continue to work within the parameters of the law, on the one hand, and the concerned American parent on the other. I for one intend to do that."

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House Passes Overseas  
Voting Rights Measure

Baptist Press  
12/12/75

By W. Barry Garrett

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U. S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted approval of a bill that would grant over 750,000 American citizens living overseas (including missionaries) the right to vote in federal elections by absentee ballot. The bill earlier had been passed by the U. S. Senate

When hearings were held in both the Senate and House of Representatives on the Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act of 1975, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs represented six Baptist bodies (including the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention) favoring the measure.

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, in his testimony, held that the right to vote is basic to the concept of citizenship. He argued that private citizens living abroad should have the right to vote in federal elections the same as government and military personnel.

The major difference between the Senate version of the bill and that passed by the House has to do with the liability of a citizen living abroad but voting in a federal election for state and local taxes. The Senate version prohibited states from applying state and local tax laws for such citizens solely on the basis of voting in federal elections in a state.

The House version, on the other hand, eliminated this provision and adopted a neutral position on the liability of the voter for state and local taxes. According to the bill passed by the House, there is no restriction on a state or locality to attempt to tax an overseas citizen voting in federal elections under this bill. Neither is there a limitation on the right of an overseas citizen to contest the imposition of such taxation under applicable law.

At the present time, a typical private American citizen outside the United States finds it difficult and confusing, if not impossible to vote in a presidential election, or for a congressman or senator in the state where he last resided. The reason for this difficulty is that many states impose such rules or confuse the absentee registration and voting procedures so as to discourage most overseas citizens from attempting to vote. The current bill is designed to overcome these difficulties.

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The House bill now goes back to the Senate, which can either accept the amendments made by the House or ask for a conference committee to work out the differences in the two versions. Indications are that the Senate will concur with the House version.

No opposition to the measure has been expressed by President Ford's administration. So a threat of a veto does not seem imminent.

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Importance of Local Church  
In Evangelism Underscored

Baptist Press  
12/12/75

By Toby Druin

CLEARWATER, Fla. (BP)--The strategic place of the local congregation in evangelism was underscored here in the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board evangelism section's annual meeting with directors of evangelism of state Baptist conventions.

A new strategy unveiled by the evangelism section for "growing an evangelistic church" and addresses by a nationally known pastor and a church growth specialist stressed the importance of the local church in winning America to Christ.

C. B. Hogue, director of the evangelism section, told the state directors that the new strategy is a process using events and experiences with an ultimate objective of growing an evangelistic church and helping the church "fulfill its bold mission."

Basically, the strategy, to be incorporated in a booklet and provided to Southern Baptist pastors, builds a foundation for evangelism through presentation of a theology of evangelism and sharing of the vision of winning persons to Christ with the pastor and people.

The strategy calls for equipping church members for evangelism by helping them to grow to spiritual maturity and discover their gifts for evangelism and then giving them opportunity to use those gifts in ministries and events such as church revivals, crusades, "joy explosions," and lay crusades.

Both Kenneth Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, Houston, and Peter Wagner, executive director of Fuller Evangelistic Association, Pasadena, Calif., cited the importance of the local church in evangelism.

"There's nothing like evangelism that begins and ends with the local church," Wagner said, explaining that evangelism outside the continuing support of the local congregation lacks staying power. Evangelism is never complete until the decision-maker is "folded" into the local church, he said.

He suggested six steps toward growing an evangelistic church: (1) Diagnose the health of the church; (2) Make a "faith projection"--a combination of goal setting and "possibility thinking"; (3) Know yourself--what your church's philosophy of ministry is, what it stands for, and the kind of people that make it up; (4) Mobilize the membership for growth by making maximum use of the zeal of new converts and gift of evangelism possessed by some of the members; (5) Know your community--pinpointing homogenous units; (6) Discover and use growth methods. "People are first; methods are last," he said.

Wagner identified four types of church growth: Internal--through the regular activities of the church; Expansion--bringing people to Christ and back to the church house; Extension--moving out and forming new churches; and Bridging--planting churches in different cultures.

Wagner said that 87 percent of the people of the world, now unevangelized, will require bridging--the crossing of two or more language or cultural barriers to present the gospel to them.

More than 43 percent of American citizens today, he said, are "unmelted" and "unmeltable" in that they cling to languages other than English or to cultures usually considered "foreign." The key to evangelizing them is to present the gospel to them in their own language and cultural setting, he said.

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The church growth specialist said that a church growing at the rate of 25 percent per decade is experiencing "poor" growth and growth at a rate of 59 percent per decade is "fair." Only 100 percent growth in a decade--a church doubling its size--is considered good, he said. Growth at 200 percent is excellent, 300 percent outstanding and 500 percent "incredible," he said.

Chafin, who directed evangelism at the Home Mission Board before moving to the Houston pastorate three years ago, said there is no shortcut around the local congregation in evangelism.

"Evangelism cannot bypass the local church and have any lasting effect," he said. "Every effective crusade builds on local church involvement."

He cautioned that evangelism cannot be isolated as a separate activity in a church. "Some churches do it and grow very fast and get very famous," he said, "but they are really one-church denominations."

Chafin warned that though the local church is autonomous it must not be isolationist, and as it is strengthened it should join hands with others and reach out to the larger community.

He said some 300 churches in eight associations of churches in the Houston area were joining hands to reach their area but were starting by strengthening each local church.

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Johnson Will Join  
Seminary Extension

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Bob I. Johnson will join the staff of the Seminary Extension Department of the six Southern Baptist theological seminaries here as associate director for extension center education, effective March 15.

Johnson, 41, who will soon complete requirements for a doctorate in education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, succeeds J. C. Bradley, who joined the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board as director of associational services.

Currently, the Seminary Extension Department, which offers courses through both correspondence and extension centers, has 230 centers in 36 states, with 5,207 students. Total Seminary Extension enrollment is 6,702 students in 49 states.

Johnson will assist Raymond M. Rigdon, Seminary Extension director, in developing and maintaining a system for locating, establishing and conducting extension centers in strategic locations and in promoting extension center education to make continuing education available to pastors and others in Baptist associations.

A native of Frankston, Tex., Johnson has held pastorates in Texas and Scottsdale, Ariz., and, from 1966-71, was superintendent of missions for the Kauf-Van-Hunt Baptist Area, Terrill, Tex. He has served as associate pastor in charge of Christian education and has taught a course at the seminary, while working on his doctor of education degree.

He is also a graduate of East Texas Baptist College, Marshall, and holds bachelor of divinity and master of religious education degrees from Southwestern Seminary.

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