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95th Congress Faces Humanitarian Issues

By Carol Franklin

WASHINGTON (BP)--Congress will face many humanitarian issues as the new session begins, according to an article in the January 1977 issue of Report from the Capital, monthly publication of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here.

John W. Baker, director of research services for the Committee, previews issues Congress must grapple with such as the economy, registration of lobbyists, welfare reform, food stamps, health care, energy and the environment and a host of other problems of interest to the Christian community.

A new version of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill, originally introduced in the 94th Congress, was introduced shortly after the new Congress convened. This bill aims at reducing unemployment to 3 percent over a four year period with the federal government serving as an employer of last resort.

According to Baker, the Humphrey-Hawkins Bill will serve as the basis of administration efforts to provide jobs for the unemployed.

"The administration will try to shape it to suit its own program. So will other interests. Some will make a determined effort to kill the bill," Baker noted.

Congress is divided on the issue of a tax cut, according to Baker. "With two powerful chairmen on opposite sides of this issue, there will probably be time-consuming friction and compromise before Congress can present a bill to the new president for his signature," he said.

Baker also noted that a lobby registration act introduced in the 94th Congress will be reintroduced in the 95th Congress and will probably pass fairly rapidly. The act was opposed by churches.

"Many of the churches feel that the influencing of pending legislation is a part of their religious activity (i.e., legislation affecting liquor and drugs, war and peace, etc., needs input from the religious community). To the extent that government, in such a bill, attempts to limit or control lobbying by religious groups, it is defining for the churches the limits of their religious mission," Baker said.

Welfare reform will be costly and the pressures for other programs "may keep Congress from achieving any major reforms during 1977," according to Baker.

A delay in reforming the welfare system will mean that the problem of food stamps must still be solved, Baker said. In 1976, the Senate passed legislation which was supposed to eliminate 1.4 million people from the food stamp program. The bill was put off in the House. The new secretary of agriculture, Robert Bergland, has indicated a desire for an expanded program.

Baker says that some kind of health insurance program will probably emerge from Congress this year although the process will be made more difficult by "the cross pressures of labor, the American Medical Association, the National Hospital Association, and public interest pressure groups."

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In the area of energy and the environment, Baker sees stronger strip mining controls since Carter campaigned on that and Morris Udall (D.-Ariz.), the new chairman of the House Interior Committee, favors such legislation. Baker foresees a battle on air and water pollution laws.

The possibility of divestiture of the oil companies "could create a confrontation between the Congress, the new president and a powerful special interest group," according to Baker.

Additional problems which Baker sees for the new Congress are such issues as the Community Development and Block Grant Program, the Panama Canal Treaty, arms sales, and many others.

Baker concluded, "The 95th Congress has more than its share of problems to confront. Those who have watched Congress at work realize the long hours that most of these representatives put in on the job and the dedication which they show to the task. It is difficult to envy them their jobs this year."

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"TV Powerful, Uncontrolled"
Says Witness at TV Hearing

Baptist Press
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By Irma Duke

RICHMOND (BP)--"Television is the most powerful source in our society today and it is not controlled," a Southern Baptist college professor said here at the third of four television and morality hearings sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

John P. Dever, associate professor of religion and sociology at Averett College in Danville, Va., was one of 15 speakers at the forum in the headquarters building of the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

When asked if television reflected or shaped society, he said there was an interaction. He said it reflects trends and sometimes runs ahead of the trend, "leading us down the primrose path."

Richard M. Stephenson, executive secretary of the Baptist General Association of Virginia said of television, "Such a powerful instrument should be used not to lower, nor even simply reflect, but to raise the values of our society."

"It is important to seek to move TV programming from the negative column to positive contributions toward a better quality of life for us all," Stephenson said.

Dever talked about the "no-fault morality." He quoted one television industry representative, "You can't tell the public what they want." Dever suggested this may be true, "But if parents, teachers, and ministers carried out their responsibilities by the Neilson Ratings we would give our children a steady diet of chocolate cake, snow days, and no Sunday school."

However, Robert S. Alley, chairman of the department of religion at the University of Richmond (Va.), said, "Commercial television offers to American viewers a considerable amount of high quality drama and comedy." He continued by saying, "'MASH' approaches life and death with a sensitivity and feeling that causes many a sermon to pale in comparison."

Alley suggested that even programs with immorality were teaching moral values.

C. Welton Gaddy, director of Christian citizenship development for the Christian Life Commission, asked Alley about programs that have both immorality and morality, how a person keeps from focusing on immorality.

Alley responded that television "can open all kinds of doors, and discussions of issues" which can highlight moral things. He suggested parents should watch television with their youngsters rather than having the television babysit children.

He indicated there are some shows on television that are in poor taste, but viewers need to be their own censors. If television is imposing its morals, then, "We've got to find a way to deal with it without imposing our morals on it."

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Earlier, Alley had suggested that the church fails to recognize the ethical quality of much of television "as a result of mild profanities and a few sexual allusions."

Several witnesses testifying did agree that viewers should be their own censors, that they are responsible for what they are watching.

Eloise Parks, a high school sophomore and the only teenager who has appeared as a witness at any of the regional hearings, said she is convinced the responsibility mainly is the viewer's, not the producer's or sponsor's. "Every time we watch these shows we are showing our support for violence and sex on television.

"Southern Baptists are not a small group," she said. "We are made up of almost 13 million members. I believe that if we unite in our objections and act, instead of just talking, maybe we can accomplish something."

Winford L. Hendrix, minister of education-administration at First Baptist Church, here, suggested boycotting. "Until we, as religious people, genuinely oppose violence and exploitation of sex in television by boycotting such programming television will not improve. This, along with boycotting sponsors, may well be our answer to cleaning up television programming."

Another witness said that television obeys the law of supply and demand. Timothy T. Brendle, pastor of the Goshen Baptist Church, Spotsylvania, Va., said, "We get what we approve of. We as the consumer do in fact have more control over television programming than does the FCC (Federal Communications Corporation).

The witnesses testified about the problems of sex and violence depicted on TV, but some expressed a greater concern with what they said is insinuated.

"I don't think the only problem is with actual nudity or sex, but it's the idea that stories put across that's dangerous. These types of shows teach that premarital sex and having affairs are okay and that everybody is doing it, when, in reality, not everyone is doing it," said Miss Parks, the daughter of Keith Parks, missions support division director of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, Richmond.

Along these same lines, Stanley A. Nelson, director of the student section of the Foreign Mission Board, said he would call for "television to be more forthright and deal less with the innuendos." Speaking as a father, he said once four letter words are demythologized, they "lose their power . . . rather than sex and violence, the snicker is the immoral quality of the tube."

Members appearing on the panel for the Christian Life Commission were Gaddy, W. David Sapp, director of organization for the agency and Harry N. Hollis Jr., director of family and special moral concerns.

Any Southern Baptist church members were welcome to testify. Requirements were only that they reserve a time to be heard and agree to put their testimony in writing.

The fourth and final hearing will be held in San Francisco.

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Foreign Board Hears Reports;
Sets \$112,000 for Mass Media

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1/12/77

RICHMOND (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board appropriated \$112,000 from 1976 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for Foreign Missions funds for mass communications facilities and equipment, appropriated \$25,000 for world relief and asked a missionary to fill a one-year assignment in relief and disaster response work.

The board also appropriated \$15,000 for the production of a children's film and heard reports from Baker J. Cauthen, executive director, and the department of missionary personnel.

The Lottie Moon appropriations, set aside for use in mass communications, were part of numerous early appropriations from the 1976 Christmas offering. Of the \$112,000 for mass communications buildings and equipment, \$11,000 is for equipment in Peru; \$50,000 will renovate and furnish a communications center in Hong Kong and another \$25,000 will purchase equipment for it; and \$26,000 is for a mass media center in Monrovia, Liberia.

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Cauthen expressed appreciation for "very heartening" early reports coming in from individual churches which have met or surpassed their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goals.

"There is no parallel to the Lottie Moon Offering in the whole world, . . . nothing of the dimension of this offering," he said.

John R. Cheyne, field representative for Eastern Africa, will serve as an associate to W. Eugene Grubbs in relief and disaster response work for one year beginning in April, 1977. Cheyne will be on furloughing missionary status.

A report compiled by Louis R. Cobbs, secretary of the department of missionary personnel, was presented in his absence by associates in the department. In 1976, a record 268 new missionaries reinforced and expanded the efforts of Southern Baptists around the world, increasing the total number of Southern Baptist missionaries from 2,667 to 2,715, according to the report.

The appointees came from 30 states, the District of Columbia and five foreign countries. Leading the list were Texas with 43; Tennessee with 21; Georgia with 15; Alabama, Arkansas and Kentucky with 14 each; and Oklahoma with 13, according to Cobbs.

The board appropriated \$25,000 from world relief funds for two countries. Turkey will receive \$5,000 for earthquake relief and Lebanon will receive \$20,000, with \$15,000 for general relief efforts and \$5,000 for repair to damaged churches.

A new children's film, to be produced in Africa by ZEB Moss, mass media consultant for Africa, with assistance from two missionary journeymen, will be based on a 1976 Foreign Mission Graded Series Book for older children, "School Someday."

The board also appropriated \$7,936 to assist with the replacement of personal property of missionaries Mr. and Mrs. William O. Hern. The property was destroyed during the war in Beirut, Lebanon.

Evangelistic Efforts Cited
In Western South America

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Baptist Press
1/12/77

By Teresa Shields

RICHMOND (BP)--In Western South America, Southern Baptist missionaries and national Christians are busy implementing plans to reach every person in that area with the gospel, according to J. Bryan Brasington, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board area secretary for Western South America.

"In Latin America there is a chorus we sing," Brasington told the January meeting of the board. "It goes like this, 'not by the sword, not by any army, but by the power of the Holy Spirit.' I believe Latin America can be won for Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit."

He went on to explain that in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile and Peru, evangelism is at the heart of the work of Southern Baptist missionaries.

"Southern Baptist Missionary Donald R. (Don) Smith reports that in Venezuela the gospel is spreading," Brasington said, "through new leaders, new voices speaking out, new missions, new radio programs, new extension study centers and new church support thrusts. It is a new and encouraging day."

Major city evangelism campaigns are planned for 1977 in Maracaibo and Caracas, Venezuela, plus continued local church efforts. In addition, Baptist radio and television ministries prompted almost 8,000 people last year to write for free correspondence courses offered. Of these, 334 trusted Christ as a result of the programs or through the courses, Brasington indicated.

In Colombia, over 30,000 Bibles were distributed to homes in Cali through joint efforts of evangelicals and Catholics. Also in Cali, a telephone devotional ministry was begun.

In the mountain areas of Colombia, Baptist mobile medical ministry clinics are proving to be successful. He also reported that plans are being made for mass evangelism campaigns in major cities of Colombia during the month of February 1977.

The Ecuadorian Baptist Convention adopted the theme, "1977--The Year of Evangelism." At the 1976 youth congress, Brasington said the young people accepted the challenge to win the youth of Ecuador to Christ. They, along with the Ecuadorian Baptist Convention have planned evangelistic campaigns in churches and on campuses.

Rocio Salazar, an art student in Quito's Central University said, "for too long the Communists have been the only ones to receive permission to present their philosophy to the student body . . . we believe that when we followers of Christ take a stand for him on campus, others will follow our example."

Doors are open wide for the presentation of the gospel in Chile, according to Brasington. Recently Southern Baptist missionaries distributed 6,000 New Testaments to army personnel in Northern Chile. Missionaries say that there is now an open door in this area for Southern Baptists to go and preach, if there were people to go through the door.

In Peru, problems with visas being granted have been temporarily resolved. Three missionary couples have been granted reentry permits. Since the last missionary couple was appointed to Peru in January 1975, there is a "desperate need for additional career missionaries" here, Brasington explained.

Obscenity Issue Again
Before Supreme Court

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By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
1/12/77

WASHINGTON(BF)- The U.S. Supreme Court will make a new effort to help the states determine what constitutes obscenity, according to a brief order released here.

Federal and state courts have been deluged during the past few years with appeals of convictions for displaying, distributing, and selling allegedly obscene motion pictures and printed materials.

Since 1973, the courts have been guided primarily by the Supreme Court's ruling in *Miller v. California*, a case which established that local communities must have discretion in defining what is obscene.

In addition, Miller set up three guidelines to help the courts define obscenity: (1) "Whether 'the average person, applying contemporary standards' would find that the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest . . .;" (2) "Whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law," and (3) "Whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic political or scientific value."

The new case now before the court challenges an Illinois law on grounds that it is vague, indefinite, and overbroad. The state, on the other hand, claims that it has met Supreme Court guidelines in writing the law.

Wesley Ward was convicted of violating the law in the spring of 1972 and sentenced to one day in jail and a \$200 fine. His conviction was later upheld by two Illinois courts, including the state Supreme Court.

Ward was convicted of distributing and selling two magazines dealing with sado-masochism and sex. In his appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court, Ward attacked the Illinois law, contending that it failed to give a "specific definition" of sexual conduct which was patently offensive.

In its *Miller* decision in 1973, the high court ruled that "state statutes designed to regulate obscene materials must be carefully limited."

While agreeing to hear the Illinois case, the justices denied hearings to three other sex-related cases.

The court denied a motion by a group of California men convicted in Iowa for mailing obscene materials from California to Iowa. A lower federal court earlier upheld Iowa's right to try the defendants.

Another group of California defendants had their petition for a hearing refused as well. They claimed that the jury which heard their case was given improper instructions to apply national, rather than local, obscenity standards in deciding their case.

The high court also declined to hear the appeal of a Washington State man employed by the Federal Government who was fired by the civil service commission for publicizing his homosexuality. The employee claimed that his First Amendment free speech rights were abridged, but a lower federal court held that the government's interest in public service efficiency outweighs the free speech claim.