



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

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\$200,000 Sought by BWA For Earthquake Relief

Bucharest, Romania (BP)--The Baptist World Alliance (BWA), along with the European Baptist Federation, is seeking a minimum of \$200,000 for Romania reconstruction, following the devastating earthquake of March 4, Chester J. Jump, Jr., chairman of the BWA relief and development committee, has announced.

The quake, measuring 7.2 on the modified Richter scale, killed 1,541 people and injured 11,275. Eight members of the Baptist community (which numbers around 160,000 church members and perhaps an equal number of others under pastoral care) were killed. Injuries within the Baptist community have not been tabulated.

One of the two buildings of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Bucharest--a gift of Southern Baptists in 1924--has been severely damaged and is no longer in use.

Nine Baptist churches of Romania have been damaged to the extent that they may have to be demolished and replaced, according to officials of the Baptist Union of Romania.

The governmental authorities will have to decide whether they are in dangerous enough condition to require demolition, but the Baptists believe it is unsafe to continue to use them, and that they are beyond repair.

The BWA program of reconstruction in Romania was worked out with Baptist Union officials by a delegation consisting of Carl Tiller, BWA staff executive for relief and development; Gerhard Claas, executive of the European Baptist Federation; Denton Lotz, fraternal representative of American Baptist Churches (USA) for eastern Europe; and John David Hopper, fraternal representative of the Southern Baptist Convention (USA) for eastern Europe.

The delegation and Baptist Union officials met with George Nenciu, Deputy Minister of Cults for the government.

At the meeting Claas expressed the concern of Baptists of the world for all the Romanian people, regardless of creed or politics. He observed that Baptist compassion takes in all who suffer, and that the BWA would like permission to be helpful on a broad scale, as well as giving assistance to the Baptist community of faith.

The BWA program, with three aspects, was proposed by Claas and approved as follows:

First, Baptist participation in rehabilitation or reconstruction of a public hospital. In Bucharest nine hospitals were damaged; in the provinces, others.

Second, replacement of one of the damaged Baptist churches.

Third, replacement of the damaged seminary building.

In conversation with the Baptist Union officers, the visiting delegation expressed the hope that the BWA can help rebuild or restore all nine of the damaged Baptist churches, though the initial program covers just the church at Brasov.

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The total cost of the work on the churches and the seminary could run as high as \$670,000. Although most Romanian Baptists are working class people, whose average monthly salary per worker is less than \$85, it is hoped that they will raise a large part of the overall cost of the program, officials said.

Southern Baptists have agreed to make \$25,000 available immediately, according to Mr. Hopper. He added: "Southern Baptists will want to take part in the overall program, but the rebuilding of the seminary will be a special interest of ours. I hope that the Foreign Mission Board and our people will give substantially more than the initial promise."

American Baptists, according to Lotz, will contribute at least \$25,000 through their division of international ministries, and are likely to give additional amounts through their world relief committee.

Baptists in West Germany will give generously, according to Claas, hopefully as much as \$20,000.

Many of the nine churches had been damaged in an earthquake in 1940. Some were further weakened by bombardment during World War II. The 1977 earthquake put the finishing blow to their further usefulness.

The BWA will receive gifts for the Romania program from its member bodies and from individuals. It also will welcome gifts from individuals. Donations may be made payable to the BWA and sent to its offices in Washington. Under the agreement, all grants will ultimately be channeled through the BWA-EBF office in Hamburg. It is not advisable for others to attempt to send money directly to Romania, according to Tiller.

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'Confront Societal Issues'
Cothen Challenges Leaders

Baptist Press
3/22/77

By David Wilkinson

RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--"The future for Southern Baptists is still on very flimsy ground," according to the president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, Grady C. Cothen, unless the denominational leaders identify and cope with the confusing and often conflicting issues of modern society.

In his keynote address during the first day of a five-day Futuristic Conference here at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, Cothen pinpointed several major issues and challenged the audience of 250 SBC leaders to utilize available resources to respond to those issues.

"We aren't talking about the Sunday School Board producing more materials for greater sales or the denomination raising more Cooperative Program money," Cothen said. "The issue, in my judgment, needs to be 'Do we understand ourselves and our reactions to the times? Do we understand at least a smattering of the problems with which our age is confronted?'"

"If Southern Baptist leaders don't understand something of these issues, we may very well lose the day by default simply because we haven't come to grips with the realities of our times."

Cothen stressed issues in education, economics and philosophy, that he believes are confusing Christians and hampering the Christian message.

Problems have arisen in secular education because by law state-supported education cannot be committed to values, and cannot impose moral and ethical standards, Cothen pointed out.

While the results may have been unintentional, said Cothen, who served in Southern Baptist higher education for ten years, he believes that many secular institutions have become committed solely to the scientific approach to knowledge which can be acquired only through proof, demonstration and experimentation.

Some of the nation's leading institutions of higher learning, he said, now advertise a scientific approach to the study of religion.

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"I have no objections to the scientific method or scientific study of religion at all," Cothen emphasized, "but matters of faith aren't proved, they are perceived. And God is not demonstrated, he is experienced.

"Thus, the weight of knowledge epitomized in our state-supported education is almost by implication, though not by intention, antithetical to our understanding of how we know God and how we know his purpose.

"Out of this milieu of higher education," he continued, "there come generations of amoral educated pagans who have--because of the educational system--no appreciation for or understanding of Christian values.

"We must not be willing to accept paganism in the name of education," he continued.

"In other words, we need to be keenly aware of what it is the educational world is saying to us, not yield an inch, and then enter the fray equipped with the eternal truth."

Christians are also experiencing confusion in the area of economics, according to Cothen. He gave the example of the theory of redistributing wealth and natural resources for the benefit of all society.

"This concept comes from Christians," he said. "And it may be serious. Many religious organizations are leaving this school of thought. They seem to be opting for the principle that says that anything that produces jobs, brings income and secures taxes is an acceptable thing to us."

But, he indicated, many Christians do not realize such a concept of redistribution of wealth and resources is not a "collision course with the Democratic structures of our society. Freedom and equality are mortal enemies, to paraphrase Will Durant."

This redistribution concept, he claimed, will require the command of government over economy and the management of wealth.

"The religious world faces a whole array of issues as a result of this type of (economic) thinking," he stated. "We need to think through the economic structures that we believe Christians can at least go along with.

This is needed, he said, to avoid becoming confused by the appeals of our Christian faith to meet the needs of the whole world with societal structures, "that "make possible wealth to help meet those needs."

Cothen decried the philosophy of "naturalism," which he said leaves no room for a supreme being and creator of the universe, and suggests that man is strictly a product of his environment. This philosophy, he said, has permeated every segment of American society and is perplexing to many Christians.

Cothen claimed that the forces of "naturalism" contribute to the decline of morality and the removal of ethical and Christian support for today's society.

"These forces tend toward the destruction of the family unit," he said, "and in combination are almost more than we're able to confront. They also blow theological truths, making it very difficult to isolate a biblical or Christian point of view, and they confuse people in identifying and understanding the issues of their lives.

"Our's is a religion of revelation," Cothen said. "Therefore, we need to be certain that we aren't falling for naturalism's attractive words that lead into intellectual and spiritual dead-ends."

"When our decedents look back 25 years from now, what will be their feeling about us?" he asked. "Are we going to abuse this hour when the whole world is saying, 'What does it mean to be born again?'

"This is our time," he challenged. "This is God's time."

Moral Dilemmas Have No
Simple Answers, Shinn Says

By Tim Nicholas

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--While the OPEC nations' price increases have been "merely inconvenient" for America's economy, a leading theologian said here, "one estimate is that they contributed to 20 million deaths in one year" in India.

Roger L. Shinn, professor of social ethics at New York's Union Theological Seminary, outlined a scenario of contrasting ethical dilemmas at a national seminar of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission.

The price increases, he told 500 persons from 25 states, "did the world a favor" by forcing to "pay attention to a problem while there is still some lead time for meeting it."

But he outlined a progression from price increases, to escalation of petroleum-based synthetic fertilizers, to loss of 10 million tons of crops in India--which is unable to pay increasing fertilizer costs--to a resultant loss of 20 million lives by starvation.

Most of life's major decisions have a moral dimension, said Shinn, one of six major speakers at the opening session of the three-day seminar which is confronting a wide range of contemporary moral priorities.

He argued against a "lifeboat ethic" which holds that affluent nations should survive in their lifeboats of plenty, while needy mankind drowns around them.

Not only can "drowning people, if armed, sink a lifeboat," he said, but the lifeboat nations, such as the United States, are interdependent on the rest of the world for economic survival.

"This country cannot handle all the world's troubles," he said, but to "keep our lifeboat afloat requires some kind of human economic relations with a lot of people outside of it."

He declared that the "issue of justice is starkly neglected" and that valid, unbiased information is lacking in human efforts to make difficult moral decisions.

He decried what he called "corruption" of the Hebrew and Christian tradition of man's dominion over the earth "into a license to plunder the earth."

Shinn challenged his audience to explore whether the churches "are capable of clear and prophetic thinking about contemporary crises of humanity," or whether they are "so compromised by existing systems that they cannot find freedom for fresh thoughts and acts."

That question, he said, will not be answered at this seminar, but it is worth pondering as Christians seek to apply their faith to their moral decision making.

"The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount do not in themselves tell us whether to let the SST land in America, how to come to an agreement in the SALT talks, . . . how to get more food to Bangladesh, or whether to permit gene-splitting," he said.

Morality is not a box, he said, although people often pretend it is. "Now and then people enter the 'box of morality' and make a decision there. Then they come back out and go about the work of their lives, making decisions about business, politics, marriage and family relations, career choices, and the things that really matter to them," he said.

Human Right A Ticklish
Issue, Bumpers Declares

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JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--U. S. Sen. Dale Bumpers (D.-Ark.) applauded President Jimmy Carter's stand on human rights and at the same time cautioned him about how far he can go with that stand.

"There's a limit to what we can do for dissidents," Bumpers said at a national seminar on moral priorities, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission here.

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"Nobody likes another country meddling in their internal affairs," he said. "Carter will have to limit his help to expressions."

The senator referred to intimations of help from then U. S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles for the Hungarian Freedom Fighters in 1956. They arose against Soviet occupation troops and neither the U. S. nor the United Nations intervened in the fighting which ended with the Communists in control of the country.

"The State Department knew they couldn't help them, and led them on," he said.

In an interview he said Carter has not made any overt promises of physical help to dissidents and that the president will have to be "very careful and use a lot of economic sanctions-- both with countries which are friends and those which are not friends.

"Our assertion of moral leadership will have a hollow ring if human rights are not zealously guarded," he said.

"Some of my colleagues have demonstrated considerably more concern for the Solzhenitsyns, the Bukovskys, the Sakharovs and the Ginsbergs, than they have for the poor, the downtrodden, and especially the blacks in this country," he added.

He said that some in Congress who speak for Soviet dissidents "voted against every civil rights bill that ever came before Congress."

Bumpers said that as long as such barriers as the Berlin wall stand "the Soviet system will be a graphic, open, and abject manifestation of failure for all the world to see."

The senator, active in energy legislation, told the seminar participants that he believes President Carter's energy proposal, to be submitted to Congress April 20, will include a plea for the U. S. to begin driving smaller cars. In Italy, he said, all the cars average 30 miles per gallon. "The U. S. is struggling to get 15," he said.

He estimated the nation could save 2½ million barrels of oil a day if we could raise average mileage to 30 miles per gallon and use 10 percent less imported oil.

"We've got to start burning more coal; it's the only choice we have," he said, noting that energy research and development surged from a cost of \$4 billion in 1975 to a projected cost of \$8 billion in 1978.

Research into "complicated, inexhaustible" forms of energy such as solar, geothermal, fusion, and hydrogen are being carried out now, he said. Until about the year 2000, he added, Americans will be provided energy with a mixture of coal, oil and solar energy, "until some of those more exotic fuels are available. And we're going to make it."

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Tyner Named Evangelism
School Coordinator

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MANILA, Philippines (BP)--Grover F. Tyner, a Southern Baptist missionary from Georgia, has been chosen as coordinator for the school of evangelism to be held here during a Billy Graham Evangelistic Crusade November 23-27.

Tyner is president of the Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary in Baguio. As coordinator of the evangelism school, he is responsible for making arrangements for the school as well as enlisting the attendance and participation of its proposed 5,000 students, according to William T. Roberson, Southern Baptist missionary press representative.

The evangelism school will be held in the new civic center located on land dredged up from Manila Bay.

Involving all national pastors, foreign missionaries and theological students in the Philippines, the school "will go a long way toward providing the spiritual thrust of the crusade," Roberson said. It will be especially valuable to the Philippines because almost all clergymen in the Philippines have received their formal education in English. Roberson said Baptist leaders in the Luzon and the Mindanao Baptist Conventions plan to capitalize on the crusade by well-planned follow-up within the churches.

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'Drug Abuse Education
Needed at Early Age'

By Liz Skillen

THOMASVILLE, N.C. (BP)--Is there any age too young for drug abuse education?

"Is there any age too young to watch television," counters William Springs, Jr., Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, Inc., psychologist:

"Every third commercial tells children that whenever they feel bad, they should take this pill or that medicine to feel good again."

The best way to fight such conditioning toward drugs, says Springs who works also with High Point, N.C.'s Drug Action Council, is a preventative education program of your own. So younger children on the Mills Home campus here attend a drug abuse class taught by Springs.

"We watch puppet shows and color in coloring books," the psychologist says. "With these younger groups, the class is purely educational."

Springs uses a different approach, however, for older groups. "I give it to them straight. Sometimes I even get a little bit gross, but young people need to see drug abuse as it really is."

Role playing, he says, can be tremendously effective in teenage classes if everyone gets into it. After dividing a group into two teams and assigning parts, representatives from each side act out assignments with help from their teams.

"A good situation to use is big brother telling little brother why he shouldn't start using drugs, the counselor notes:

"A lot of great reasoning comes out, and anything from their own lips is worth ten times its weight in gold compared with my statements."

A major reason many young people give for taking drugs is that an adult told them not to. Springs "congratulates" these youngsters for being a basketball, letting someone else dribble them around.

Discussions about why people take drugs, he says, inevitably get into relationships--not being accepted, peer group pressure, rebellion against authority.

As an argument for standing up for yourself, Springs shows "Is It Always Right To Be Right," a film narrated by actor Orson Welles.

Springs includes the Children's Homes staff in the program--to help them in preventing and dealing with drug abuse. He cites facts--like, "Inhalants, glue, are the most addicting and immediately harmful of all drugs. But it is also important for adults to understand why drugs are used and how to react if an experimenter is discovered.

"Addicts don't start out to be addicts," Springs tells his students--youths and adults. "That may sound trite," he says, "but it's one of the most important things that can be said about drug abuse."

According to statistics, he continues, 90 percent of all addicts began their drug experience by smoking marijuana.

"Whether that fact is just symptomatic of a life style of violating norms, or a statement that 'grass' leads to harder drugs, I couldn't say.

"But I definitely make the point in drug education classes--experimenters may not intend to become habitual users, but neither did the addict," Springs concludes.