



BAPTIST PRESS

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77-5A

Civil Rights Battle Still Rages, Says Hooks

By Dan Martin

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--The civil rights battle is still raging, the president-elect of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) said here.

Benjamin Hooks of Memphis, a commissioner for the Federal Communications Commission, spoke at a national seminar on contemporary moral issues, sponsored by the Christian Life Commission, social concerns agency of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

"There is a lack of media attention on civil rights today," Hooks told more than 500 people from 25 states. "Many white people of good will think the battle is over.

"But, when you see all the things that are happening, you see that the battle is still on, you see that in this country, in spite of all the glittering lights, there is a lot of suffering going on."

Hooks, a Baptist minister and an attorney, noted: "I hope I can get you to see we can't rest . . . where we are; either we're going forward or we're dying."

The newly elected chief of the oldest civil rights organization in the nation disavowed violence as a means to achieving social justice, while noting many young people today are advocating violence.

"I can never personally condone violence . . . I do not feel that it has ever accomplished anything . . .," Hooks said in response to a question from the audience.

Explaining that he understands the frustration of many black young people, because "we are not seeing the change we thought we were going to see," Hooks added: "And their desire to resort to violence, I cannot be part of."

In his address, Hooks spoke of "goals, time tables, and quotas," and said court tests are coming up which deal with the whole question of such affirmative action.

Hooks averred that "God himself intervened in human history, taking Thomas Jefferson's pen to write the words in the Declaration of Independence that the equality of men was endowed by God.

"It was not endowed by the Magna Carta, Parliament, Congress . . . or any other but by God himself. And since it came from God, no one has the right to abridge it.

"We have been trying for 200 years to make those words become truth . . . that all men are created equal. We have the opportunity today to make those words come true. I believe God has called upon us to make the words come true," Hooks said.

The civil rights leader said Martin Luther King Jr., was raised up like God raised up Moses to talk to Pharaoh to walk through this nation telling black and white people that "we have to fulfill that pledge."

He noted that the suits against "reverse discrimination" are "an assault against the gains which have been made."

But, speaking to the primarily white audience, Hooks said history is not necessarily the most important thing. "The priority question is where do we go from here?" he said.

He listed three areas of prime concern: jobs, welfare and criminal justice.

"We are concerned about jobs, and I am not concerned about whether they are from the private sector, or CCC or WPA.

"I think a nation this rich can provide jobs for everyone.

"Our second concern is cleaning up the welfare mess," Hooks said, adding that when reformers talk about doing away with Aid to Dependent Children, they are "talking about doing what Pharoah did.

I want you to realize there are people who are not lazy, who will work, old people, people with heart ailments, high blood pressure, children who did not ask to be born, but who are here anyway."

Hooks third priority is for "simple, elementary justice."

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Lindaman: Church Must
Plot It's Own Future

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RIDGECREST, N. C. (BP)--The church, faced with an onslaught of increasingly rapid technological and social changes, must be responsible for its own future "through its individual members called by God," a leading authority on futurism said here.

In the face of an "information revolution that has barely started, "along with prospects for sweeping telecommunications changes and other innovations in the next decade, the church must plan for its own future if its role is to be worthwhile, said Edward B. Lindaman, president of Whitworth College, Spokane, Washington.

Increased interdependence of the human family, world hunger and soaring population growth in much of the world, are among issues the church must confront, said the former national president of the United Presbyterian Men, U. S.

Lindaman, a member of the Congressional Advisory Committee on Decision Making on Research and Development Policies and Priorities and a former aero-space executive, addressed 250 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders on futurism in a Futurism Conference at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center.

Education concerning futurism, according to Lindaman, is paramount for church members and denominational leaders to insure that they keep purpose and direction before them and "don't get swamped" by significant and sweeping changes that will come inevitably to the church, society and the world.

"Without purpose, human beings can be inundated by facts," said Lindaman. "We had better know who we are, who God is and where we're going," or hordes of information "will swallow us."

"We don't need all this information unless we know what life is about. We anticipate this--it's real. The communications revolution is just around the corner and it has a capacity for good or evil."

The knowledge that society has been and still is "stealing resources from the future" must be included in educating the church for the future, Lindaman said.

He called for a biblical view of the stewardship of resources and help for church members in forming a better and more accurate world view. And he asked for a reevaluation of the use of church members in ministry and decision-making processes.

Lindaman said he believes the American government is moving toward increased control of people's life styles, but that the grass roots people will be increasingly involved in determining restrictions and freedoms.

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"When the people at that level are involved in the process, it becomes theirs. They generally know more than leadership gives them credit for knowing," Lindaman said.

Whatever happens in the future, he continued, the Christian has hope in Jesus Christ: "As a Christian, we can't refuse hope; that would be treason." The possibilities for the future of Christ's followers are exemplified by faith and hope, Lindaman said.

"Faith must be fed by hope to survive. And hope is a hunch that the frontiers of possibilities aren't determined by the limits of the actual . . .

"Everything now possible was at one time impossible . . . We have to look at our mission and apply our brains to the quantum jump "that is coming in the immediate and distant future of humanity.

It may be a future of space station colonization and the building of entire cities in space, said Lindaman, an early leader in the Apollo space project.

It could be one in which new galaxies and systems inhabited by other beings will be discovered, he noted.

"The possibilities are limitless!"

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Human Rights Not a Fad
Government Official Says

Baptist Press
3/23/77

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Concern for human rights is not a fad in the United States, a top U. S. State Department official said at a national seminar on moral concerns here.

"I would like to get the message around the world that people who want to have good relations with this country know we are going to take human rights pretty seriously," declared Datus C. Proper, officer in charge of the office of policy planning of the Latin American Bureau of the U. S. Department of State.

The career state department officer, speaking at the meeting sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, noted that there has been a marked shift in concern for human rights since President Jimmy Carter took office.

"Things have changed in this nation since the 1970s," he said. "Then, you couldn't get public interest. People didn't pay a lot of attention to human rights and neither did the executive branch (of government)."

He added that the level of consciousness is higher now, and predicted that the concern for basic human rights "will not pass."

He defined basic human rights as the "right not to be tortured, the right not to be murdered, the right not to be thrown into prison for long periods without trial."

The diplomat, however, told the more than 500 Southern Baptists from 25 states that the United States now "claims basic human rights transcend national boundaries."

Proper, however, warned that "balance" must be considered in international relations and cited Brazil, where concern for human rights is offset by the United States' desire to prevent nuclear proliferation.

"We must say which is more important in the long run. Human rights are important, but it is also important that no more countries get the atomic bomb."

The question of balance also must be considered in Uganda, he said, where "terrible conditions" exist, but any statements could endanger the lives of American missionaries.

"The President is faced with that kind of situation and has to be most careful," Proper said.

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Proper talked of specific dilemmas facing this nation which have been spelled out in an option paper presented to President Carter and his cabinet.

He cited economic policy versus human rights as one of the dilemmas and said "some people around the world say that the right to eat is a pretty basic human right and (they) say this country has not been very concerned with economic rights.

"There is no question that we are the world's greatest resource glutton and our critics say we are talking about human rights in order to make us feel a little better about using up the world's resources," he said.

Another dilemma, he said, concerns whether to have a single or flexible standard of human rights.

While a single standard is appealing, he said, there are questions of whether to treat Chile, a European style democracy, and Haiti, a primitive land, the same.

Also, involved, he said, are questions of how to deal with serious civil disturbances in Argentina and Uruguay, where guerrillas almost overthrew the government.

"Personally," Proper said, "I think we must have a fairly flexible stance on human rights "

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Public Pressure, Not Prison,
Urged for Pornography

Baptist Press
3/23/77

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Convictions and jail sentences are not the way to deal with pornography, Hal Wingo told a national seminar on moral concerns here.

Wingo, news editor of People magazine, speaking to more than 500 participants at a seminar on moral concern, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, referred to the conviction of Larry Flynt, publisher of Hustler magazine.

Flynt was sentenced in Cincinnati to seven to 25 years in prison on charges of pandering obscenity. The conviction is now being appealed.

"He (Flynt) has got to be dealt with," Wingo said. "But I cannot condone him being put in jail. There are better ways to deal with problems such as these."

"I'd like to see him drummed out of the business by community pressure . . . by people not buying what he has to offer."

Wingo, son of a Texas Baptist preacher, called Hustler a "real piece of smut," and said the critical issue in the case is not Flynt or the magazine--"neither of which are worthy of much serious consideration on a scale of journalistic worth.

"Larry Flynt is an embarrassment and an irritant to the body of responsible publishers in this country," Wingo said, "adding that the battles which have established principles of freedom of expression "have not been won over the rights of the virtuous."

Flynt, he said, is guilty of poor taste . . . bad taste, gross taste. "But when tastes become a criminal offense, punishable by prison . . . the wagons of censorship will begin to draw into an even tighter circle from which none of us will escape."

Wingo warned that the "time could come when some people could take offense--with legal resource--to the manner in which certain elements of the Christian faith express their witness."

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Noting that the U. S. Supreme Court did not envision jail sentences when it said each community should set its own standards for obscenity, Wingo said a "reasonably intelligent, thoughtful society can find suitable needs short of prior restraint of publication to control access to unsavory materials without denying their right to exist.

"There must be room for the Larry Flynts and Hustler magazines of this world in a free society. He (Flynt) has as much right to print his filth as I have the right to ignore it and use my influence against its distribution in my community."

Wingo said he believes Flynt's conviction will be overturned by the Supreme Court and "then we'll start all over again" to define and attempt to control obscenity and pornography in this country.

Asked by a participant if he would say that pornography is to the mind what heroin is to the body, Wingo said he believes people can see pornography without damaging themselves. "It has a lot to do with the intent of those who see it," he said.

He asked participants what they have been doing to set standards in their own communities. "There are things you can do to keep from having these things flaunted," he said in reference to pornography. "Nothing hysterical. No marching. No flags. Sensible."

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No More Blind Alleys
For Seminary Student

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KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--It's Friday night.

Moonlight madness time at North Kansas City Pro-Bowl.

Wendell Davis and several of his Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary friends bowl for \$4.50 an hour per lane.

Wendell, a first year divinity student at the seminary, is blind.

But the Friday night bowling parties are one of his favorite fun activities.

A couple of months ago, two of his bowling buddies, Reba Harris of Oklahoma and David McQuown of Missouri, had a great idea.

Why not build a sort of "seeing guide rail" to help Wendell gage distance and angle on his approach to the line?

So they got busy.

Between classes one week, the two seminary students invented and constructed special bowling equipment for Wendell, an eight-foot guide rail made out of plastic plumbing pipe.

Now, one extra friend climbs into the car on those Friday nights--Wendell, his pals, and his plastic guide rail.

They bowl.

They also care for each other.

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(BP) Photo mailed to Baptist state papers.

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Converted Buddhist Monk
Baptist Leader in Thailand

BANGKOK, Thailand (BP)--Wan Petchsongkram, converted Buddhist monk whose zeal and speaking ability have caused him to be called "the Thai Billy Graham," is emerging as one of the outstanding leaders among Baptists in Thailand.

Within the past year he has been elected president of both the Thailand Baptist Theological Seminary in Bangkok and the Association of Baptist Churches in Thailand. In addition, he is in great demand as a speaker throughout Thailand, having preached in 50 of the country's 72 provinces.

Now the Thailand Baptist Convention has singled him out as the speaker for a five-night convention-wide revival to be held in Bangkok May 4-8.

Petchsongkram's experiences as a Buddhist monk give him avenues for witnessing to Buddhist friends and acquaintances and telling them "Christ is the answer," according to Southern Baptist missionary Maxine (Mrs. Robert R.) Stewart, press representative for Thailand.

Petchsongkram went to live in a Buddhist temple when he was 6 years old and assisted the monks there in their daily rounds until he was 17. Then he became a student monk and studied Buddhist teachings. He was ordained a Buddhist monk at age 21 and attained the high rank of Barian 5 within the following five years.

However, he had entered monkhood to please his relatives and get an education. He grew tired and unfulfilled. He left the temple and acquired a teaching position at a temple school, according to Mrs. Stewart. Because of misplaced funds, there was not enough money to pay the teachers so his job at the temple school did not last long.

On the way back and forth to the temple school, Petchsongkram had noticed the Thonburi Baptist Chapel sign which said, "Come unto me ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Having decided to go by to see what was being taught, he went in. He enrolled in an English class and in some other activities of the Baptist chapel. He wanted to know what caused Christians to love and help others, according to Mrs. Stewart.

After going to the chapel only a short time, he made a profession of faith. "He hadn't really believed at that time, but was impressed with the members' warmth and fellowship and he wanted to find out what made them that way," Mrs. Stewart said. He "wanted to really understand it (Christianity) and felt like he could not really see the inside workings of the group unless he were fully accepted as a member and was baptized."

He did not tell his wife until a year later and she did not accept Christ for three more years. At that time they were living on the chapel property and Petchsongkram was caretaker for the chapel.

He learned about the seminary and enrolled. It was at the end of his second year when he really came to know Christ, according to Mrs. Stewart.

In his third year, Petchsongkram was called as pastor of the Bangkla Baptist Church. After having been a Christian for only a month, his wife became a pastor's wife. They served the Bangkla church for more than seven years.

Today, Mrs. Stewart says the former Buddhist monk is in great demand for Christian revivals, camps, Bible conferences, leadership conferences and schools. "He is often referred to as the Thai Billy Graham," said Mrs. Stewart.

Because of the stronghold Buddhism has on the Thai people, this converted monk is having a tremendous influence on the spread of the gospel in Thailand, she said.

Wrapup

Synical 'Dry Rot' Stifles
Action, Seminar Told

By Robert O'Brien

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Southern Baptists from across the nation spent three days at a national seminar here confronting an array of complicated moral issues--and deciding whether Christians have any fresh thoughts and acts to bring to bear on them.

Theologian Roger Shinn, professor of social ethics at New York's Union Theological Seminary, asked the pivotal question:

"Are the churches capable of clear and prophetic thinking about contemporary crises of humanity" or are they "so compromised by existing systems that they cannot find freedom for fresh thoughts and acts?"

More than 500 persons from 25 states took on no easy task as they grappled with moral priorities in such wide ranging areas as economics, race relations, media, preaching, churchmanship, feeding the hungry, nurturing families, global human rights, and male-female roles.

No concensus on complicated issues developed--nor was it expected to develop according to the seminar's sponsor, the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission.

"In formed conversation of priorities is our goal," said Christian Life Commission staffer, C. Welton Gaddy. "We have not intended," added Foy Valentine, the Commission's chief executive, "to assume anything...in regard to the church. We started out with a strong emphasis on evangelism, ended with an emphasis on the Christian faith, and dealt in between with specific moral issues in the context of our conviction that Jesus Christ is Lord."

The seminar confronted ways Christians can apply biblical admonitions to reach out to needs of others when no absolute blueprint exists.

"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," Shinn said.

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.

The question is not whether we list the order of priorities, it is: "Will we as Christians avoid the dry rot of synicism, which keeps us from doing anything," declared Clyde Fant, pastor of First Baptist Church, Richardson, Tex.

Arthur Simon, executive director of Bread for the World, a national Christian organization, seeking solutions to world hunger, told of practical approaches to hunger, such as urging a public policy on establishment of food reserves to save millions of lives.

The problem is not simple, Simon says, when you consider the many factors--such as energy and population--which bear on the hunger situation.

U.S. Sen. Dale Bumpers (D-Ark.) and a top State Department official both backed President Carter's firm stand for global human rights as a part of public policy.

Concern for human rights is not a passing fad in the United States declared Datus C. Proper, officer in charge of the office of policy planning of the Latin American Bureau of the State Department.

"I would like to get the message around the world that people who want to have good relations with this country know we are going to take human rights pretty seriously," Proper said.

A New York newsman, Hal Wingo, news editor of People magazine, dealt with the moral dilemma of combatting pornography.

Convictions and jail sentences, he declared in reference to the recent conviction of Hustler magazine publisher Larry Flynt, are not the way to deal with pornography. He said he would like to see that "piece of smut...drummed out of business...by people not buying what he (Flynt) has to offer."

Wingo, son of a Texas Baptist minister, said Flynt is "guilty of gross taste but when tastes become a criminal offense, punishable by prison...the wagons of censorship will begin to draw into a "even tighter circle from which none of us will escape."

Scanzoni--John and Letha--a husband/wife team of family and marriage experts from Bloomington, Ind., said the church must come to grips with the Christian dimension of liberation of women.

Traditionally, women "have been permitted to cook church dinners but not serve the Lord's Supper," declared Letha Scanzoni, an author and lecturer.

In the course of their discussion on the moral dimensions of male-female relationships, they blasted the hierarchical male-over-female relationships espoused by certain persons on Christian lecture circuits. John Scanzoni, professor of sociology at Indiana University, compared that kind of domination to the kind Hitler instituted in Nazi Germany.

John Killinger, professor of preaching at Vanderbilt University Divinity School and Krister Stendahl, dean of Harvard University Divinity School, spoke to the moral dilemmas of preaching and churchmanship.

Killinger called for ministers to free their minds of old habits, familiar routines, and respond keenly to a fresh spirit of the times as a priority in preaching the gospel.

Stendahl decried secularization of evangelism and church affairs, declaring: "If (the apostle) Paul spoke our language he would say to us: 'Remember that you cannot sell Jesus as the world sells toothpaste. You cannot run a church as the world runs a corporation with Harvard Business School graduates.'"

Federal Communications Commissioner Benjamin Hooks, president-elect of the NAACP, warned his predominantly white audience that the civil rights battle is not over--even though "many whites of good will" think it is.

Hooks, a Baptist minister, denounced violence as a method for achieving equality, but said this country must still work to eliminate prejudice and reminded his audience that hatred would do them in more quickly than drinking or smoking.

Speakers' analyses, combined effectively, observers noted, with equally sophisticated uses of music and humor.

Ken Medema of Montclair, N.J., a blind singer-pianist turned philosopher-preacher with extemporaneous theme interpretations--that spoke of being Christian, of discipleship, of wonder, of fellowship.

"For a man who does not see, he paints vivid images; he has prophetic and poetic insights," said John Claypool, Jackson, Miss., pastor, who also led theme interpretations.

Leading his listeners on a voyage through the "saga of life,"--touching on childhood, adolescence young adulthood, "middle-escense and aging"--Claypool said, "I want to float with you down the stream of life, finding out what are the priorities of life, what are the resources of life."

Comedian Jerry Clower regaled his audience with his particular brand of rural Mississippi humor, but became serious saying that problems of world hunger and inter racial hatred are not laughing matters.

But he said, "If you are involved in some movement and can't smile about it, you need to get over in the corner and see what side you're on...There's only one place where there 'ain't any laughter, and that's Hell."