



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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77-121

High Court Grants Stay to Baptist Minister

WASHINGTON (BP)--U. S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart has stayed a Tennessee Supreme Court ruling which denied an ordained Baptist minister a seat in the state's upcoming Constitutional Convention, despite his election to the post.

Stewart's temporary stay will remain in effect until the U. S. Supreme Court decides the case of Paul McDaniel, pastor of Chattanooga's Second Missionary Baptist Church, sometime this fall.

McDaniel and his attorney say they expect he will be able to take his seat, when the convention begins Aug. 1, with no difficulty.

At issue is a 107-year-old prohibition in the Tennessee constitution which bars ministers from seats in either house of the legislature. Constitutional Convention requirements are the same as those for a seat in the legislature.

The Tennessee Supreme Court upheld the Tennessee constitution, which declares: "Whereas ministers of the gospel are by their profession dedicated to God and the care of souls, and ought not to be diverted from the great duties of their function, therefore no minister of the gospel or priest of any denomination whatever, shall be eligible to a seat in either house of the legislature."

Similar prohibitions are in effect against "atheists and dualists."

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Southern Baptists Form
Research Fellowship

Baptist Press
7/8/77

DALLAS (BP)--The Southern Baptist Research Fellowship has been formed here by representatives of several Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agencies.

The group chose Leonard Irwin of Atlanta, director of the planning section of the SBC Home Mission Board, as president.

Albert McClellan, associate executive secretary and director of program planning for the SBC Executive Committee, Nashville, called the research fellowship a "mainstream denominational leadership group of the future.

"In our complex age," he said, "it is extremely hazardous to undertake any kind of program and institutional development without research. We cannot afford misdirection, false starts and costly mistakes. Research will help avoid these."

Irwin said the organization will, among other functions, promote the application of research in program development and provide a forum for developing research skills and sharing research efforts.

James H. Landes, Texas Baptist executive director, and Lloyd Elder, assistant to the executive director, discussed research relating to state conventions and specifically such things as the Good News Texas mass media campaign of Texas Baptists.

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In light of recent research for Good News Texas and the Living Proof media campaign, said Landes, Baptist need to do additional research to learn why they are in better favor with the public than was expected.

"We need to do research to determine how we can keep good favor and avoid the pitfalls of groups who've had it and lost it," he added.

Landes said research is also needed in Southern Baptist areas of family life and mission work.

"We need to investigate why the mission dollar is becoming less of the church's income."

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Baptist Leader Heads U.N.
Body in Nation's Capital

Baptist Press
7/8/77

WASHINGTON (BP)--James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs here, is the new chairman of the Council of Washington Representatives of the United Nations (CWRUN).

J. M. Dawson, the first executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee, began the tradition for concern for the U. N. by the joint committee. In 1945, Dawson attended the organization meeting of the United Nations in San Francisco. He went armed with 100,000 petitions from Baptists throughout the United States asking that the charter of the United Nations include a guarantee of full religious liberty for every human being.

For the past three years, Wood has served on the executive committee of CWRUN, a body which is composed of 168 organizations or their representatives and which has been active in the cause of human rights.

The group produced a statement on substantive issues that was recommended to the secretary general of the U.N. The section on human rights commended the Carter administration for its emphasis on human rights, urged United States ratification of the Genocide Convention, the convention against racial discrimination and the two international covenants on civil and political rights and on economic, social and cultural rights.

The United Nations Association of the USA has urged the U.N. to create an office of a U.N. high commissioner for human rights to investigate violations of human rights around the world.

Wood pointed out that the Baptist Joint Committee came into being partly as a result of Baptist concern in the United States about religious persecution in Romania, the protection of Baptist property in China during the 1930's and in opposition to diplomatic representation at the Vatican. Through the years, the world issues committee of the Baptist Joint Committee has dealt with human rights and religious liberty issues for all people in other nations.

CWRUN is an affiliate of the United Nations Association of the USA and maintains direct contact with the secretary general of the U.N. and with the United States representative to the U.N.

Other officers of the CWRUN are Frances Neely of the Friends Committee on National Legislation, vice chairman for legislation; Leonard Aries of the National Conference of Christians and Jews, vice chairman for program; Beth Perkins of the League of Women Voters, secretary; and Barbara McGarry of the American Foundation for the Blind, treasurer.

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Magazine Cites Stevens'
Commitment to Quality

By Clarence Duncan

Baptist Press
7/8/77

FORT WORTH (BP)--A major factor in the growth of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission is Paul M. Stevens' commitment to his denomination and to broadcasting quality in content and technology, according to the Jun 27 issue of Broadcasting, weekly magazine devoted to radio and TV.

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Observing that both Stevens and the Radio-TV Commission have come a long way," the article reviews the history of the agency from 1953 when Stevens became the director and producer of a single radio program ("The Baptist Hour") to the present organization of 131 staff members turning out 41 programs a week for radio and television.

The magazine cited Stevens' decision to make the commission market-oriented rather than product-oriented as a major factor in the broadcast industry's acceptance of programming of Southern Baptists, one of four major faith groups that produce religious programming.

"When a station manager comes to us it's like walking into a supermarket. We have enough variety in programs to make it hard for him to say no to us," the article quoted Stevens as saying.

"Another policy that sets the commission and Dr. Stevens apart from many other religious broadcasters is that the commission makes no appeals for money in its broadcasts," the article said. "The commission's entire budget comes from the Southern Baptist Convention which comprises 35,000 congregations."

The Broadcasting profile commented on three other items involving the Southern Baptist agency and its president--increasing television emphasis, efforts to elevate the quality of local church broadcasting and possible satellite distribution of commission programming.

While radio production makes up the majority of the commission's offerings to the industry now, the article said, the agency's new \$3.3 million videotape production facility is expected to change that. Stevens is quoted as saying, "We're going to seek to make ourselves indispensable to the TV industry."

The commission is involved in trying to elevate the quality of local church broadcasting through improved acoustics, equipment, and an upgrading of the entire process. "We tell the churches, 'You're expected to do just as well as anybody else on the air,'" the article quotes Stevens, noting that his staff was involved with 250 congregations last year.

"Stevens sees more ahead for the commission," the article says. "Besides increased television production, he is considering satellite distribution for the commission's programming."

The commission president says he hopes to do more writing on television and radio for the church after he retires, but when that will be he doesn't know yet, the article closes. "Since I entered this job I've never looked back," Stevens said. "It was a complete and absolute conviction that this was made for me and I was made for it."

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'Soap' TV Series Blasted
By Southern Baptist Leaders

Baptist Press
7/8/77

NASHVILLE (BP)--Three Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders who have previewed the first two episodes of "Soap," an upcoming prime time series on ABC-TV, have unleashed vigorous protests against what one of them calls "a 30-minute dirty joke."

Foy Valentine and Harry N. Hollis Jr. of the SBC Christian Life Commission, Nashville, have written to ABC President Fred Pierce asking that "Soap" be cancelled before it is shown.

SBC President Jimmy R. Allen of San Antonio, predicts: "This may be the spark which will ignite the anger of a public weary of being inundated with filth and deeply concerned about the moral climate of our nation."

"Baptists have historically been and now are strong supporters of the First Amendment and its precious rights of freedom, but we also believe that with freedom comes responsibility," declared Valentine, executive secretary of the Christian Life Commission.

"Robert M. Bennett, vice chairman of ABC's affiliate board, calls 'Soap' a 'sophisticated adult farce,'" said Hollis, director of family and special moral concerns for the commission.

"He is mistaken. 'Soap' is not sophisticated; it is a 30-minute dirty joke," declared Hollis of the series which deals with themes of adultery, homosexuality, transvestitism and impotency.

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Picking up on a New York Times quote from Fred Silverman, ABC's program chief, who reportedly said: "... in time it ('Soap') will be perceived as a moral show," Valentine declared:

"That statement has to rank as one of the truly ridiculous statements in the history of television. Some television people claim it will be a hit. I say it is a hit. It hits decency; it hits morality; it hits responsible sexuality; it hits family life; and hits the values without which no civilization can survive."

Allen and Valentine predicted that Southern Baptists and others will join together to express outrage if the show is aired. Valentine called on advertisers to reject it and Hollis and Allen indicated that advertisers may face economic sanctions from indignant viewers.

"Southern Baptists can be expected to unite vigorously with Roman Catholics, Methodists and others of like mind to call a halt to TV's gross immoralities represented by ABC's offering of 'Soap,'" Valentine declared. "Advertisers ought not to identify with it. Local stations ought to reject it. TV viewers ought to refuse it."

Valentine also declared that a one-hour delay "proposed for the so-called Bible Belt (Central time zone) is not satisfactory at all."

"By scheduling this four-letter show, 'Soap,' in prime time, ABC reveals it is willing to pollute the minds of children in order to make a profit," said Hollis. He said one study reveals that the number of children watching TV does not fall below one million before 1 a.m.

"When will these writers, these producers, the networks and the local stations learn that the American people are tired of contempt for family, perversion of sex and glorification of violence?" Hollis asked. "We are asking for a portrayal of genuine fellowship between human beings, for healthy laughter and for responsible drama."

According to reviews of "Soap" in news media across the country, the series has raised concern of some affiliates that it may cause them problems and reports indicate that the British Broadcasting Company, which bids for promising American TV shows, declined it without comment.

The soap opera involves two sisters. One is married to a wealthy executive who has several affairs going on the side; the other to a man who secretly killed her first husband.

The rich sister has two daughters. One is described as 'latent nun' by her pornographic magazine-oriented younger brother; the other is a liberated young woman who usually returns home in time for breakfast. She and her mother are having an affair with the same young tennis pro.

The other sister's husband is impotent (related to his murder of her first husband, whom she thinks committed suicide). One of her sons, in the mafia, is being given a contract to kill his father's murderer (his step father) and the other son is a homosexual transvestite who wants a sex-change operation.

The family has a black servant who exchanges racial epithets with a senile grandfather, who wears a Gen. Patton suit and thinks World War II is still going on.

"'Soap' is dirty," Hollis says. "It does not cleanse through healthy humor; it dirties through the use of base relationships and crude and lewd expressions. 'Soap' is the epitome of sex miseducation."

"'Soap' is prime time pollution," declared Valentine.

Scholarship Fund Set Up To
Honor Seminary President

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Baptist Press
7/8/77

MILL VALLEY, Calif. (BP)--The Harold K. Graves Scholarship Fund was established here as a tribute to Harold K. Graves, who retires as president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary on July 31 after 25 years service.

The Community Advisory Council and other friends of President Graves met on the seminary campus to make the announcement.

The Scholarship Fund, a permanent, open-end fund, will provide funds annually for the Harold K. Graves Scholars, who will be selected for their academic excellence, dedication to ministry and potential for service.

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An initial fund of \$7,350 contributed by 90 friends of Graves, including many fellow Rotarians he served as district governor in 1969, was announced. Additional contributions are expected from pledges. Graves received a calligraphed scroll containing names of initial donors.

Jack Craemer, editor and co-publisher of the Independent-Journal, largest daily in Marin County, served as master of ceremonies for the occasion honoring Graves. Kent Seymour, a Marin County realtor, was chairman of the Scholarship Fund campaign.

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Joe Odle Honored By
Associated Church Press

Baptist Press
7/8/77

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Joe T. Odle, who retired last year as editor of the Baptist Record, newspaper of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, has been awarded honorary life membership by the Associated Church Press (ACP).

The ACP called Odle "one of those leaders in the field of Christian journalism who has brought honor to the profession through the quality of his work."

Citing his work with the Record, whose circulation is "the largest of any Mississippi newspaper, secular or religious," the ACP said: "Joe Odle is a Christian leader who, in his ministry, has served not only one publication or one denomination, but the worldwide body of Christ. He has vigorously promoted evangelization at home and abroad. He has taken time to keep in touch with developments of the Christian world far beyond the boundaries of the church organization that was his employer. His activity and leadership in ACP (including membership on its board) was beneficial to fellow journalists from many denominations."

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Cora Sparrowk: ABC Must
'Uplift Lordship of Christ'

Baptist Press
7/8/77

By Laura Deni

SAN DIEGO, Calif. (BP)--Cora Sparrowk, 60-year-old grandmother and sixth woman to become president of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A., says here first obligation is to "lift up the Lordship of Christ wherever and whenever I have the opportunity.

"This means being concerned about people's well-being as well as their personal salvation," she said after election to the presidency of the 1.6-million member, 6,000 congregation denomination during the 70-year-old body's national convention in late June.

Mrs. Sparrowk singled out several areas of concern. As leader of her denomination she stated her overall goals would be global responsibility for human rights, pluralism in the denomination, strengthening the ecumenical movement, involving more church youths in decision-making, and stemming erosion of moral values.

"Our global responsibility as American Baptists is not only sharing the good news (of Jesus Christ) but being concerned about issues of human rights," she stated, emphasizing repression and poverty in South Korea and Third World countries.

Mrs. Sparrowk said that she affirms civil rights and due process for all people, but she added that decision about whether to receive gays into membership and to ordain them as clergy of the American Baptist Churches is made on the local regional levels.

She cited the statement issued by the Ministers Council last year: "We believe the practice and advocacy of homosexual sexual activity to be incompatible with Christian principles and grounds for denial of ordination. We also affirm that past homosexual practices, when disavowed, should not be a barrier to ordination."

Mrs. Sparrowk said she objects to being called "Ms." but said she supports the women's movement for equal pay and opportunities. "I'm not as radical as some of those women's libbers," she added. She lives with her husband John in Danville, Calif.

Church members said that she exemplified the dominate view of the church toward the individual and social dimensions of the Christian faith. "We have an evangelistic faith and we also feel a responsibility to speak to social issues," she commented stressing: "It's not either-or, it's both."

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77-121

Professionalism, Ethics
A Must, Say Evangelists

By Jennifer Bryon

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--A local hotel ballroom filled with people each night following the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) sessions. The lights were low; spotlights hit a stage covered with a variety of musical instruments and the latest in sound equipment. The air was filled with music--some of it blasting--and a hum of voices.

This was not a nightclub. It was a Christian concert sponsored by Ed and Bette Stalnecker, Southern Baptist music evangelists.

"Really, these concerts are an audition for a lot of our Baptist music evangelists," explained Bette. "Pastors are reluctant to have people in their church unless they know them. Many of these evangelists book enough meetings after singing here to last them most of next year."

Bette pointed out that she had a difficult time letting churches know she was available when she first began her ministry. But, after R. G. Lee, then her pastor and SBC president, asked her to sing at the SBC, she had all the meetings she could schedule.

"Our concerts are like a pebble in the ocean," she continued. "If this will help others get started, it's worth it. These people will get revivals, they'll win people to the Lord, and those may go on to win others."

The Stalneckers are aware that some people believe their style too closely resembles entertainment. It doesn't bother them. They've been accused of being too professional, but they say they want to be professional.

"Why is amateurism considered spiritual?" Ed countered. "We are consistently aware that our talent comes from God. But we shouldn't give him back an unpolished talent. If you become polished, you become professional. And we must, because we care enough to do the best."

Bette says she loves the Lord with all her heart and that's the most important thing to her.

"My public deserves my best," said Bette, who holds a master's degree in music. "I like loud clothes; people can tell I sometimes wear false eyelashes and wigs. But, these things are not the important things. It's what's inside that matters."

Are evangelists ethical? The Stalneckers and other members of the Southern Baptist Evangelists Association are aware of the poor reputation some evangelists have given them.

"Personally, I don't mind being checked up on," Ed commented. "A lot of rumors get started when people don't know both sides of a story."

He believes a person's reputation is the thing that should determine whether or not he gets invited to a church.

"And people don't get invited back to the same churches year after year if they don't pay their bills," said Ed. "And you don't get \$280,000 worth of equipment financed and on the road if you don't pay your bills."

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The Stalneckers hold revival services in Southern Baptist churches only.

"We go to a church under their guidelines," pointed out Bette. "We are open with them in sharing how we live and how we make our salaries. We want these people to know us."

"Ninety percent of the evangelists are some of the most noble people I know," said Ed. "There are some people in our conference who are on the fringe. But we are very concerned over the integrity of the group of people in evangelism."

He went on to say they have "weathered some personal problems" of some of the people in the Southern Baptist Evangelists Association, a group of about 500 members, all Southern Baptist vocational evangelists.

The association's board of directors once asked a president to resign because of some personal problems he was having during his term of office, Ed recalled.

Evangelist Don Womack, executive director of the association, concurred: "We have been known to go to a straying member and tell him he is giving us a bad name and to either straighten up or get out."

Stalnecker stressed that the Evangelists Association definitely is Southern Baptist and supports the convention. Each year a pastor-advisor is elected as an officer in the association. Adrian Rogers, pastor of Memphis' Bellevue Baptist Church, was elected this year.

"A rule of our association is that we have only Southern Baptist speakers on our program which meets during the convention," Ed pointed out. "Also, I try not to let people sing at the after-session concerts if I know their lives show they're not being faithful to the Lord. And generally, only Southern Baptists or people whose ministry is primarily to Southern Baptist churches, can sing there."

Evangelists Association members interviewed agreed that one person who makes a mistake gives all of them a bad name.

"Anytime there's one situation that's bad, it affects all of us," said Jack Price, music evangelist formerly with the Chaplain of Bourbon Street. "But the guys who are real have to overcome this."

Evangelist Ed Bryon of Mississippi says any group of people has its good and its bad.

"Sure, there are some phonies in evangelism, but for each one of those you can find at least 100 who are straight with Jesus."

"The best way to counteract a bad reputation by some is to be genuine yourself," said D'Arcy and Sharon Hodges, music evangelists from Oklahoma. "The Lord called us into 'gospel' music and we try to focus our music on the saving content of the gospel."

Many evangelists agree with the Hodges' who say their role in the local church is to help the pastor.

The Stalneckers see themselves as part of a new movement that projects the evangelist as one who serves rather than one who is served.

"The pastor of the local church is our boss for the week we're in his church," said Bette.

"There's the old joke about the evangelist who came into town with eight suits, eight sermons and ate all he could," laughed Bette. "We believe we should serve the people."