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78-29

**Theologians Say America
Suffers in Values Crisis**

By Orville Scott

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Theologians, sociologists and television personalities concluded at the annual Texas Baptist Christian Life Workshop that America is suffocating in a values crisis.

Their solution, pinpointed by Marquette University Sociology Professor David Moberg, is to make Christian values clearly transcend all others in deeds and not merely words.

Moberg called on Christians to recognize the spiritual gifts of every Christian, to overcome the theological gulf separating evangelism from social concern.

Author Elton Trueblood, who spoke several times during the workshop, said Christians must be realists. They must recognize that there is a moral element in all the signs of decay in society and "only by terrific moral recovery are we going to keep the world from becoming a dark age."

The good and bad sides of television were dramatized at the meeting by Loretta Long, a former school teacher who plays Susan the nurse in the popular children's program, "Sesame Street," and by Harry N. Hollis Jr., director of family and special moral concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"Sesame Street" is transmitting positive values to children because its characters teach by example, Miss Long said. "Children are too bright to just do as we say do and not as we do."

Miss Long, who has a doctorate in education, said the family should be the main channel of transmitting values to children. "Children are going to do what they see their parents do," she said. "My parents took us to church, they didn't send us."

Among "Sesame Street's" greatest successes, she said, are its demonstration of education for its intrinsic value, (the joy of learning,) and its attempts to transmit racial tolerance and love.

On the other side of the TV picture, Hollis listed the industry's faults.

He said television contributes to family disintegration because it doesn't show family solidarity; fosters grasping materialism and drug abuse; distorts sexual values; presents humor that fosters hostility and cynicism in viewers.

Also, said Hollis, television stereotypes people, making minorities look ridiculous and people with problems laughed at; anesthetizes and hypnotizes viewers; glamorizes violence and presents a stream of good guys and bad guys breaking rules.

"Studies show that children who see rules broken break rules themselves," said Hollis. To combat the problem, he urged people to "accept that TV is shaping us," examine our viewing habits and carefully select specific programs.

Sarah Frances Anders, head of the sociology department at Louisiana College, Pineville, La., made several predictions, based on her studies, concerning the future of family life.

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SARAH-FRANCES ANDERS
S. B. C. HISTORICAL COMMISSION
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Although marriage will remain most people's choice, the Christian community is going to grant singles a more favorable status than before, she said. Barriers between married and unmarried people will fall as single adults are fully integrated into the fabric of church and society.

Dating will include more equality for both men and women and less game playing, she said, with less emphasis on passive/aggressive roles.

More openness in boy-girl relationships will reduce too-early steady dating and will result in more mature marriages, she added. That will result in a more Christian perspective of roles in the family which will mean more options for women, less pressure for men and better balanced children.

"We have already begun to speak of parenting, not mothering and fathering--a healthy start," said Miss Anders, who has a doctor's degree. "We are becoming comfortable with the concept of shared hardship rather than the label breadwinner."

American business and the so called Protestant work ethic drew the fire of Baylor University Ethics Professor Daniel McGee.

"The American way of economic life, like Marxism, denies the existence of God, and it refuses to recognize any moral obligation," he said. "The Western World has been led to believe that the only economic choices are between communism and capitalism."

When the "work ethic" leaves out God, and a person can only achieve meaning through his competitive struggle for materialistic gain, he may become a workaholic, said McGee. "He is reduced to being nothing but a worker, and as such, he becomes a commodity, not a full person."

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God Also Cares About
'Th Here and Now'

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CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (BP)--Too many Christians think all God cares about is "plucking sinners from...Earth like you'd save survivors from a sinking ship," Douglas Watterson Jr. told a conference on "Applying the Gospel."

"God is concerned about the here and now, and although it's important to prepare people for eternity, it's also important to deal with their problems here on earth," Watterson, pastor of Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas, said in stressing the need for increased church involvement in social issues.

"Too many Southern Baptists are perfectly willing to accept Jesus as their personal Saviour," Watterson told the regional seminar sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "Yet I say no one is a Christian until he also makes Christ his Lord and follows him as 'the way, the truth and the life.'"

John A. Wood, the Christian Life Commission's director of program development and director of the conference, said that Southern Baptists have a well-known reputation for opposing smoking, drinking, gambling, and pornography.

"But what are we for?" Wood asked. "We should be for some good things, as well as against evil things. Unfortunately, blind spots and prejudice don't always go away with the new birth. Some of the most devout Bible reading and praying church members were at one time active members of the Ku Klux Klan."

Both conference leaders noted progress among Southern Baptists in applying the gospel to moral issues, particularly in the area of race relations.

"The progress in race relations in the deep South in the past 20 years is unbelievable," Watterson said. Recalling his boyhood days in Birmingham, Ala., he related, "Back in the thirties, we'd give those little pledges in Vacation Bible School about everyone being equal, but it never dawned on us that you really practiced it."

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"Now, when I go back to Birmingham to preach, I get amens to sermons that might have caused my tires to be slashed 20 years ago."

Watterson emphasized, however, that the fight for racial reconciliation is far from over, even in Southern Baptist congregations.

Commenting on the growth of graded and high schools operated by churches, Watterson said he has serious doubts about the motives of some of these churches--whether they are really efforts to provide quality education or efforts to run from the real problems of busing, integration, teacher morale, discipline and violence.

Too many church-supported schools, he said, are actually "segregated academies."

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N. Y. Publisher Refuses
Obscene Novel on Jesus

By Stan L. Hastey

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Grove Press of New York City will not publish a book which portrays the alleged sex life of Jesus, Baptist Press has learned.

An aide to U. S. Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R.-Ore., told Baptist Press that Barney Rosset, publisher of Grove Press has denied the request of a Danish film-maker to print the obscene work.

Tom Getman, a legislative assistant to the Oregon senator, said Rosset notified him in a phone call that the company has denied the request.

Getman praised the action, saying that Grove Press, located at 196 West Houston St., New York, NY 10014, "made a responsible decision." He reported that Rosset told him the decision was made on "esthetic grounds."

Rosset also told Getman that the publishing firm has received thousands of letters in recent days urging denial of the request. The exact time of the denial could not be pinpointed, but Getman said it was made "sometime ago."

The controversial book would have been an adaption of a screenplay for a film, "The Many Faces of Jesus," which portrays Jesus as having had both heterosexual and homosexual relationships. The Danish film-maker, Jens Thorsen, has tried unsuccessfully to have the film made in a number of countries, including the United States.

Rosset told Getman that he does not know who Thorsen has turned to now that Grove Press has denied his request.

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Indians Ask Congress
For Religious Freedom

Baptist Press
2/28/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--U. S. Sen. James Abourezk, D.-S. D., charged that administration proposals to amend his Indian religious freedom resolution would "gut" the measure.

During hearings of the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs, which Abourezk chairs, a representative of the Department of Justice recommended that S. J. Res. 102 be amended so that no present state or federal laws would be affected.

The proposed resolution would protect the right of all native Americans, including Eskimos and native Hawaiians, to exercise their religious beliefs. It would give them access to sacred sites that are now restricted because they are on government-owned land. It would also grant the right to use objects such as eagle feathers and animal pelts which are considered sacred but are protected by the endangered species act.

The resolution also calls for the president to direct federal agencies to evaluate the policies which affect traditional native religious practices and to make changes where necessary to protect religious practices.

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U. S. Sen. Spark Natsunaga, D.-Hawaii, a co-sponsor of the resolution, stressed that past governmental abuses have occurred because of insensitivity or ignorance of customs rather than through malice.

Dale Old Horn, representative of the Crow Tribe in Montana, told the committee that customs officials had confiscated evergreen branches which his brother was carrying because they thought they might be marijuana. The branches are burned during prayer in a traditional Crow ceremony.

Witnesses stressed the idea that they favor laws designed to protect the environment. Many noted that the Indians fought for the environment long before it became a popular issue. However, the emphasis at the hearings was on the spiritual needs of the native Americans.

Joe Little Coyote, chief of the Northern Band of Cheyenne, said, "Since the creation of our reservation, many of our people have been made to forget and abandon our traditional life direction through a process of western education and Christianization. Our traditional religious expressions were prohibited, resulting in the starvation of the Cheyenne spirit. As a consequence, the Cheyenne spirit has become frustrated to the point of collective disorientation as a Cheyenne people."

Kirk Blue Dog, counsel for the Native American Rights Fund, testified that the religious rights of Indian prisoners are consistently denied. The Indian inmates at the Federal Correctional Center at Lompoc, Calif., requested a "Sweatlodge" for ceremonies. Norman Carlson, director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, said it would cost too much to build the sweatlodge and that it would increase the potential for violence in the prison.

According to Blue Dog, the sweatlodge would cost about \$25. He also told the committee that in Nebraska and South Dakota, where sweatlodges have been permitted in the prisons, disciplinary reports have decreased.

Johnson Meninick, vice chairman of the Yakima Tribal Council in Washington State, said that traditional Indian burial practices are often denied. According to his beliefs, all body parts must be present at burial so that rebirth can take place. When an autopsy is performed some body parts are removed, which the Indians believe, prevents that individual from achieving rebirth.

The U. S. Department of the Interior, the U. S. Customs Service and the U. S. Department of Justice all support the proposed resolution with the amendment recommended by Justice Abourezk indicated that he would oppose such an amendment.

Similar legislation has been introduced in the U. S. House of Representatives by Rep. Morris K. Udall, D.-Ariz.

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Former Missionary Heads
Baptist Medical Center

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (BP)--William C. Mason, former Southern Baptist missionary administrator of the Baptist Hospital in Bangalore, India, has become administrator of Baptist Medical Center in Jacksonville, Fla.

Mason, 39, a native of Montgomery, Ala., has worked in health care administration for both the U. S. Department of State in Vietnam and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Tanzania and India. In Bangalore, he led the development of a comprehensive community health program, encompassing eight villages and 40,000 people.

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