

**(BP)****BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee  
460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
(615) 244-2355W. C. Fields, Director  
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor  
Norman Jameson, Feature Editor

## BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
 DALLAS Richard T. McCartney, 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) L. Bracey Campbell III, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2798  
 RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, 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

MAY 22 1978

April 26, 1978

78-63

Third In a SeriesLegalized Gambling: Texas  
Baptists in the Crossfire

By Robert O'Brien

DALLAS (BP)--Advocates of legalized pari-mutuel gambling in Texas have raised the dander of Baptists--and leaders of other denominations--by characterizing the issue as Baptists-against-the-rest-of-us.

Pro-gambling forces in Texas seem to feel that if they make the opposition to legalized gambling appear to be a Baptists-only type of "narrow moralism" that they can finally win the legalization battle.

On more than one occasion, the pro forces, defeated eight times in the past 25 years, have had their ears pinned back by Baptist-spearheaded efforts. And Baptists in the state have fought for as many things as they have opposed.

"Led by their Christian Life Commission, . . .," the Dallas Morning News once commented, "Baptists have earned the reputation in Texas for influencing the outcome of legislation that directly affects people."

As pro-gambling and anti-gambling forces squared off in the final days before a May 6 referendum in which voters would register their opinion for or against legalization of local option pari-mutuels, the Baptist issue heated up.

One publication characterized the battle as "the Baptists last stand," casting W. A. Criswell, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, in the image of a prototype, Bible-thumping Baptist who decried gambling as immoral.

That irritated United Methodist Bishop W. McFerrin Stowe of Dallas. "Pro gambling forces have tried to popularize the ridiculous myth that only Baptists oppose pari-mutuel gambling," Stowe declared. "Actually, all Texans who have examined the issues and studied the history of legalized gambling would oppose it because it victimizes many persons who cannot resist the temptation, attracts professional gamblers and organized criminal syndicate operations, and devalues persons and society."

Roman Catholic Bishop Patrick Flores of El Paso joined a host of other religious leaders--Anglo, black and Mexican-American--urging Texans to defeat legalization of pari-mutuel gambling.

Bishop Flores, long known as a champion of the poor, and Rabbi Jack Bemporad of Temple Emmanuel in Dallas both emphasized how gambling afflicts the poor. "In my opinion," Bishop Flores said, "I don't believe that pari-mutuel betting would help the poor. They are the ones who really need help. In fact, I think that it would entice them to lose the little they have."

Bemporad and Flores merged their influence with others representing a dozen religious groups across Texas, including United Methodists, (four bishops), Presbyterians, Church of Christ, African Methodist Episcopal, Christian Methodist Episcopal, Christian Scientists, Nazarenes, Seventh-Day Adventists, Baptists and Assemblies of God.

-more-

DARGAN-CARVER LIBRARY  
S. B. C. HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

Seven major black denominations in Texas have also issued statements against the issue.

"I don't need to tell you that behind the innocent sounding words, ' pari-mutuel betting', lurk all the evil and corruption of organized gambling," said presiding Bishop C. D. Coleman in a letter to pastors of the 8th Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church. "We do not need the additional problems brought on by legalized gambling. Nor do black families need the added woes and stresses that accompany racetrack betting."

Besides churchmen, business men and law enforcement officers, including a number of district attorneys and the state director of public safety, have lined up against pari-mutuels because they oppose crime and economic drain on individual and community resources.

Historic evidence of their concern comes out of the 1930's in Texas, when the state repealed a law allowing legalized pari-mutuels. In the heat of the campaign of 1978, the widow of former Texas Gov. Jimmy Allred, remembering how it was when repeal took place in 1937, appealed to Texas voters not to turn back the clock to the problems which caused her husband and other leaders to urge its repeal. She recalled the crime and economic problems and cited her husband's executive message to the state legislature in 1935 which urged pari-mutuel repeal.

One organization in the modern fight against legalization of pari-mutuels--the Anti-Crime Council of Texas--has come in for its share of publicity during the battle in Texas. Officials of the Texas Thoroughbred Breeders Association claim it's a front for the Baptists and that Baptists illegally purchase anti-gambling literature from it.

James M. Dunn, who heads the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission and serves on the Anti-Crime Council board, has one answer for that--"bald-faced lie." He describes it as a "scurrilous attempt to arouse anti-Baptist bigotry and to silence the church."

Dunn and others close to the situation say that certainly Baptists are heavily active in the Anti-Crime Council, which Abner V. McCall, president of Baptist-owned Baylor University, serves as co-chairman. But Dunn points out that State Rep. Frank Tejada of San Antonio, a Roman Catholic Mexican-American, serves as the other co-chairman and that a Methodist layman, Robert L. Dillard Jr., vice president of Southland Life Insurance Co., Dallas, is treasurer.

Whatever the point of view, advocates of both sides have set out to win. It's a drama that repeats itself to varying degrees in state after state, as gambling forces push for legalization--and usually win.

Thus far, they haven't had any luck in Texas--one of only six states that have not legalized some form of gambling since New Hampshire approved a state lottery in 1963.

Whatever the outcome, Dunn and his associate, Phil Strickland, an attorney, who have battled the issue long and hard over the years, don't plan to go soft or play it safe.

"We should not be embarrassed by our opposition to gambling," says Strickland. "They can call it narrow-based moralism if they want to. But it's not narrow-based moralism to oppose gambling. It's responsible opposition to bad social policy and public policy which will adversely affect human beings, corrupting and dehumanizing them."

NOTE TO EDITORS: This is the third in a series on the dilemma of legalized gambling. A complete analysis of legalized gambling will be in the May, 1978, issue of "Home Missions" magazine and the August, 1978, issue of "World Mission Journal."

Chairman Urges Care  
In Baptizing Children

By Jim Young

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Baptist churches today are facing a growing problem of "unregenerate church members" by raising a generation of children who have been immersed but are not Christians, the chairman of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission told a joint meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and Historical Society.

Citing what he called an apparent "laxity in Southern Baptist churches in terms of maintaining a regenerate church membership," Richard D. Patton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Portland, Tenn., focused mainly on baptism of preschool age children, which he said is an increasing problem among churches in the 13 million member convention.

"I discovered a growing trend toward the baptism of preschool age children," Patton said. "In 1972, 2,323 were baptized. The next year, there was a decline. However, from 1973-76, the number had once again reached 2,061 (annual average).

"The total number of children baptized under eight years of age in 1976 was 35,562, or almost 10 percent of the total number of baptisms reported," Patton said.

He quoted Kenneth L. Chafin, pastor of South Main Baptist Church, Houston, and former evangelism director for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, who expressed concern that many children in what used to be considered the "primary" department were being baptized.

"If this trend continues," Chafin said some years ago, "it will not be an unusual thing for preschool children to be joining churches on transfer of letter."

To continue baptizing preschool children, Patton said, appears to "put us precariously close to the practice of infant baptism."

He said that according to traditional Baptist interpretation of scripture, to be regenerated one must make a responsible, conscious, deliberate act of faith in accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

"Baptists have rejected infant baptism through the years because infants lack the facilities for making such a decision," he said.

Patton then asked, "At what tender age is the child ready for decision making?...Certainly Baptists cannot look into a heart or mind to determine when a person has been genuinely regenerated." But, he urged, "Baptists should exercise extreme caution in the adoption of practices which could undermine basic scriptural teachings and Baptist practices.

Patton said he believes three things will happen if Baptists continue to baptize preschool-age children:

--It will erode the basic Baptist doctrine of believer's baptism.

--It will mean a drastic change in the understanding of the meaning of "regenerate" and will make church membership accessible to any child as "it is already in those communions practicing the baptism of infants."

--More non-resident members or church dropouts will be added to "an already too-large number." In 1976, Patton said, the non-resident members total was 3.56 million, an increase of almost 1 million since 1960.

He asked, "Are we Southern Baptists more concerned with continually adding to or multiplying church rolls...or with attempting to maintain a regenerate membership?"

"None of the things we value as Baptists will remain strong if the membership of our churches and denomination becomes unregenerate," he concluded.

Radio, Television Essential  
Outreach Tools Pinson Says

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Baptist churches should use radio and television as a method of missions, says the president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, William M. Pinson, but he warned against the pitfalls of poor programming that presents a "too easy" gospel of entertainment.

"Churches airing religious programs must provide opportunities for response so listeners can get in touch with other Christians and be taught to follow Christ," Pinson said. "Media outreach without this concept is heresy. It's a major problem in religious broadcasting for churches to give the wrong message about religion."

Pinson addressed pastors and laymen attending the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission's fifth annual radio, television, and cable consultation to learn how to present the gospel more effectively on radio and television. He told them "The local church should be involved in radio and television but the greatest pitfall is not poor programming but bad theology that says all a person has to do is listen, be entertained, feel good and forget about taking up the cross."

Pinson said some religious programs he's heard seem to be saying, "Listen to us. Then do your thing through us by sending us money."

Pinson said churches considering using radio and television as methods of selling the gospel should recognize that these are primarily selling tools. "Translate that into religion and it means that we should be selling our product, the gospel, telling people how to have a better life, how to become involved with the church," he said.

"Christians today don't have any new techniques for furthering the gospel," Pinson declared. "They only have new technology. This new technology is the use of radio and television which enables Christians to throw the message out further and faster than ever before."

Pinson said people who criticize using radio and television to spread the gospel forget that Jesus also used a mass approach, speaking to 5,000 at one time. He said Baptists have to utilize radio and television if they hope to approach the Bold Mission Thrust goal of presenting the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000.

Professionalism is demanded of churches using radio and television for religious broadcasting, Pinson told participants.

"These churches should note that amateur hour will not work on radio or television," he declared. "We already have too many religious versions of 'The Gong Show' on television. Some of it is caused by faulty equipment, some of it by lack of expertise. But no matter what causes it, nothing will take the place of quality programming. Without quality you will not last long in this demanding marketplace."

Quality equipment is imperative and Pinson said the skills to use it can be learned through cooperation with the Radio and Television Commission. He said he is "looking forward to the day" when the commission will work with Baptist seminaries to train graduates in the use of radio and television as an outreach tool.

-30-

Prominent Personalities  
Head Vocational Breakfasts

Baptist Press  
4/26/78

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Country comedian Jerry Clower, physical fitness specialist Kenneth H. Cooper and seminarian Gaines S. Dobbins head the first wave of program personalities enlisted for the 19 vocational breakfasts at the National Conference of Baptist Men on June 16 in Atlanta following the annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting.

Clower, Grand Ole Opry star and active member of First Baptist Church, Yazoo City, Miss., will keynote a breakfast for Baptists in sales, expected to attract 650 to the Mediterranean Room of the Atlanta Stadium Hotel.

-more-

Before going into show business, Clower directed sales at Mississippi Chemical Corporation, an agricultural fertilizer manufacturer.

Cooper, developer of aerobics, a physical fitness plan used by the United States Navy and Air Force and Royal Canadian Air Force, will address 1,000 at a breakfast for Baptists in health services in the Lancaster-Essex Room of the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Author of the book, "Aerobics," Cooper is a member of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas.

Dobbins, of Birmingham, Ala., 91-year-old emeritus professor of religious education and administration at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, will deliver a challenge to 1,100 Baptists facing retirement at a breakfast in the International Ballroom of the Omni International Hotel.

Rounding out the program for retired Baptists are presentations by Lloyd Wright, director of public relations for the American Association of Retired Persons, Washington; Representative Claude Pepper (D.-Fla.); Olen S. Miles of Driftwood, retired builder and president of Texas Baptist Men; Mrs. Doris Wood of Parkin, Arkansas, longtime literacy and Vacation Bible School worker, and the Senior Adult Choir of First Baptist Church, Rome, Ga.

Programs at each of the breakfasts will feature Baptists who are nationally known in their vocations.

Other vocational breakfasts are scheduled for Baptists in agriculture, arts, business and professional positions, church-related vocations, communications, education, engineering, government, law enforcement, legal professions, management, military, technical skills, sports, transportation, and young adults in search of a vocation.

The two-hour breakfasts, which start at 7 a.m., make up the first part of a double feature at the national men's conference.

The second feature is a 90-minute rally at the Omni Coliseum, with President Jimmy Carter scheduled as the principal speaker. It starts at 11 a.m.

Registration for the conference, including the breakfast and rally, is \$12.50. The conference is open to families. Persons wanting tickets should write the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar, Memphis, Tenn. 38104. Indicate the breakfast preferred and enclose a check.

-30-

Hobbs: 'Faith and Message...  
Belongs To Southern Baptists'

Baptist Press  
4/26/78

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The Baptist Faith and Message statement (guideline of beliefs adopted in 1963) belongs to Southern Baptists, and a group organized in 1973 "has no moral right to that name," says the chairman of the committee that wrote the revised statement.

"And if it ever comes up at the Southern Baptist Convention, I'm going to remind them of it," said Herschel H. Hobbs, former SBC president and pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Oklahoma City.

Hobbs was referring to the group of Southern Baptists who have formed a national organization called "The Baptist Faith and Message Fellowship," which sees itself as combating liberalism in Southern Baptist life.

In an address to a joint meeting of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission and the Historical Society, at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Hobbs stressed: "We're responsible only to God" and must "respect each other's competency before God."

Hobbs said the Baptist Faith and Message is a guideline for Baptist beliefs--"not a creed"--and has been and can be "a force for harmony and to keep us anchored and free."

-more-

In a question and dialogue session following his address--for which he was given a standing ovation--Hobbs said he believed the statement should be a guide for all Southern Baptists and their institutions. But, he noted, "it should not be imposed from above or without--but from within, voluntarily." He added that the statement's preamble is the "key," without which the statement becomes a creed.

The Baptist statement was the first confession of faith adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925. The 1925 version, written largely by E. Y. Mullins, took the form of a statement of faith designed to restore communication with Baptists of the world, following World War I.

In 1961, a doctrinal crisis involving the book "Message of Genesis," and a growing feeling that the convention might be drifting into liberalism occurred about the same time, and a re-examination was begun of the 1925 statement.

Hobbs decided, however, that the Genesis controversy did not cause the reexamination but merely occurred at that point in Baptist history. The committee Hobbs led studied the 1925 statement "word by word," he said, and "was conscious that its responsibility was to present a statement of faith for Southern Baptists--not to any regional groups of them."

The committee kept the five preliminary statements of the 1925 committee and made them a preamble to the 1963 statement. By combining similar articles, they gave the 1963 report a total of 17, where the original had 25.

However, Hobbs said, "none of the basic substance of the 1925 statement was deleted." The conventions of 1969 and 1970 reaffirmed the statement in its entirety, he said.

-30-

NBC Must Stand Trial  
For Violent TV Program

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press  
4/26/78

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Supreme Court has announced that the National Broadcasting Company must stand trial on charges it was "negligent" and "reckless" in televising a film which included a violent rape scene.

Four days after NBC ran the television drama "Born Innocent" in 1974, 8-year-old Olivia Niemi was raped by four other girls using a soft drink bottle to simulate intercourse in a California home for juveniles. Legal guardians for the girl sued NBC for \$1 million in compensatory and \$10 million in punitive damages.

The California Court of Appeal ruled last October that NBC may be tried on the charges of negligence and recklessness in spite of the First Amendment's guarantee of freedom of speech and press. The network argued unsuccessfully in written briefs to both the California Supreme Court and the U. S. Supreme Court that it should not be forced to stand trial.

In its appeal to the nation's high court, NBC argued that the networks cannot be held legally responsible for crimes committed by persons who have seen violent crimes enacted on television. "Such a theory," network attorneys argued, "would not simply chill free expression; it would ..... 'freeze the creative arts.'"

Attorneys for the girl and her legal guardians argued that NBC ought to be held liable for broadcasting the program during the early evening hours. Their legal brief pointed out that television's "family hour" concept came as a direct result of concern by the Federal Communications Commission and other groups over the showing of "Born Innocent."

The brief also noted that 15 potential commercial sponsors refused to advertise during the telecast after seeing a preview. NBC was also guilty of irresponsible advertising of the program itself, the brief went on, by seeking to build up the youth audience by featuring Linda Blair, the 15-year-old star of "The Exorcist," a particularly violent motion picture.

-more-

In addition, NBC advertised the telecast of "Born Innocent" in the same "TV Guide" layout with the film "Born Free," a children's program shown the night before dealing with the lives of lion cubs. This left the impression that the two films were related or even one and the same, the argument continued.

Attorneys for the girl accused NBC officials of "a breach of their legal duty to the public in using the public airwaves" and said the network was guilty of "willfulness and negligence." They also maintained that films and television "are not entitled to the same constitutional protections afforded newspapers or other written publications."

Because of the sweeping implications eventual disposition of the case may have, it has drawn the interest of numerous groups related to the television industry. Organizations filing friend-of-the-court briefs on behalf of the NBC appeal were the Writers Guild of America, West; the Directors Guild of America; the Motion Picture Association of America; and the American Library Association. Filing on behalf of the girl was the California Medical Association.

Because of the high court's refusal to hear arguments in the case, it will now go to trial in San Francisco, although no date has yet been set.

-30-

Leaders Urge Satellite Use  
For New Communications Era

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press  
4/27/78

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--An historic satellite transmission from the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission outlined to Southern Baptists how their convention can move into a new era of communication.

More than 200 Southern Baptist leaders, assembled at the commission's new Fort Worth studio and at First Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., heard Jimmy Allen, Paul Stevens and John P. Witherspoon describe how Baptists may realistically convert "exotic space communications technology" into practical use in the SBC Bold Mission Thrust within five years.

The two-hour transmission, interspersed with an array of visuals and including a two-way question and answer period at the end, originated in an agency which used a satellite signal in 1965 to detonate dynamite to break ground for its modern facilities at 6350 West Freeway, Fort Worth.

"That was thought of then as a gimmick," declared Stevens, Radio and Television Commission president. "But it was not. It was a signal to ourselves to begin thinking in terms of satellite broadcasting."

"We cannot allow a new age to arrive with us riding in a buggy or a Model T," Stevens declared, emphasizing a note sounded also by Allen, SBC president and pastor of First Baptist Church, San Antonio, Texas.

"We must make our leadership honest when they say they want to reach everyone in the world (with the gospel of Jesus Christ) by the year 2000" as part of the SBC's Bold Mission Thrust, Stevens said. "If they don't use the satellite, that's rhetoric we can't accept."

Witherspoon, president of the Public Service Satellite Consortium, San Diego, Calif., explained that the launching of the space shuttle program will eventually sharply reduce satellite transmission costs and bring them into the range of a wide number of service organizations in the private sector.

"With the shuttle becoming an operating reality in 1980, lots of things will begin to happen," Witherspoon said. "It will not cost \$13 million (current cost) to launch a satellite the size of CTS (the Communications Technology Satellite used in the transmission)...we'll see costs come down (half of the \$26 million cost of current Western Union or RCA satellites is now spent on launch alone)...we can talk about bigger, more powerful satellites...earth stations can be smaller, simpler and less expensive, which in turn means that satellite systems become even more simple from the standpoint of the user, even more flexible and even less costly."

-more-

But Witherspoon, Stevens and Allen indicated that technology is available now for Southern Baptists to begin using satellites for multiple purposes while stretching their imagination for the future.

"The bottom line of communication is not the flinging of words into space but is the fashioning of a transformed life touching others in love and power while pointing them to the source-- Christ Jesus," Allen said. "All technologies, first century or 21st century, become merely means for expediting the basic impact of life upon life" through missions.

Allen constructed scenarios for satellite use. They range from stateside transmission of programming to remote overseas villages to use in the states to provide inspiration and impetus to the Bold Mission Thrust and Mission Service Corps, the plan to send 5,000 volunteer missionaries around the world by 1982.

He challenged Southern Baptists to gather 100,000 strong to commission 1,000 missionaries in a single service, using satellite transmission to handle logistics.

"The Astrodome in Houston seats 50,000 people," Allen said. "It can be filled for such a Bold Mission Commissioning Service." Satellite transmission to 10 key cities across America to rallies of 5,000 more persons could account for the other 50,000.

"Nothing like it has ever happened in the history of Christianity," Allen said. "It's not only a dream. It's do-able. The combined forces of Southern Baptists praying for God to call out the called (missionaries) could mean 1,000 persons."

Allen and Stevens brainstormed some ways satellites could be used by Southern Baptists as their voices and images traveled 22,300 miles to the Communications Technology Satellite (in a fixed location over the Equator near the Galapagos Islands) and then an equal distance to a NASA van outside First Baptist Church, Nashville.

The transmission was a joint effort of NASA and the Radio and Television Commission. NASA and the Public Service Satellite Consortium bore the cost and the Radio-TV Commission paid only out-of-pocket expense, Stevens said.

Possible uses, the SBC leaders said, include broadcasting training sessions such as the Radio and Television Commission's fifth annual television and cable consultation which included the satellite transmission demonstration.

Other uses include transmission of the commission's 3,406 programs to 2,836 radio and TV stations in the U. S. and around the world, beaming of remote television productions to the commission for later use, beaming the annual SBC meeting to key cities to save travel time, money and energy resources, transmission of intra-denominational mail and news to bypass inconsistencies of U. S. mail, linking of college and seminary libraries, linking of state executive secretaries with associational missionaries and pastors for conferences, transmission of resource materials to remote areas barely accessible by current methods (a satellite is equidistant from all points), training materials for bi-vocational pastors, and distribution of audio-visual materials to churches.

"The possibilities and opportunities that lie before us seem to give new meaning to those familiar words from the 19th Psalm--'The heavens are telling the glory of God,'" Stevens said.

The Radio and Television Commission used the transmission as an opportunity to premier "At Home with the Bible," the first in a 39-part series of 30-minute television Bible study programs, a joint effort of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and the commission. Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss., hosts the series.



**BAPTIST PRESS**

**460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219**

CD

RECEIVED  
MAY 1978

LYNN MAY HO  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
127 9TH AVE NO  
NASHVILLE TN 37203