



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355

W. C. Fields, Director
Robert J. O'Brien, News Editor
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

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Baptist Pastor Walks Away From Kidnappers

By Bill Keith and Lynn Clayton

SHREVEPORT, La. (BP)--Two teenage boys, who kidnapped Shreveport pastor James W. Taylor at gun point, threatened his life, demanded his money and car--and asked for his prayers.

The bizarre incident concluded more quickly than usual, when the 65-year-old pastor walked away from the two escapees from a Logansport, La., home for boys, saying, "I was tired of fooling with them."

Taylor's dilemma began when two "large, gangly teenagers asked him for a ride as he left Highland Baptist Church, where he has served as pastor for 22 years, to make hospital visits.

"I had gone less than a block," Taylor said, "when one of them said 'We're going to Mexico.' I said he must be kidding, but I looked around and he had a large caliber pistol pointing at me."

When the boys asked for Taylor's money, he pulled out his wallet and gave them some of what he had, "They didn't even check to see if there was anymore money and didn't take my wallet or credit cards," Taylor said.

Taylor, who will retire in October, soon began to talk to the boys about the Lord, and asked them to reconsider what they were doing. "I tried to reason with them on the way to Texas. They told me their folks didn't love them and that they had been kicked around all their lives. They said they weren't going back to the home in Logansport. They said they would shoot anyone who tried to stop them. I said, 'You couldn't mean that.' I told them their parents might not love them, but God sure did."

"I'm not afraid of you," Taylor finally told them. "I'm going to take you to the Texas line but that's as far as I am going. You can shoot me if you want to, but I'm getting out of the car."

"Then one of the boys--one without the gun--said he was religious and read the Bible every night," Taylor said. It was then he recognized a dimly familiar boy who had come to Highland Baptist "a long, long time ago," with his sister on the church bus.

Later Taylor told the boys he was going to stop the car and walk away, that he wasn't going any further than Waskom, a small town on the Texas-Louisiana border about 15 miles west of Shreveport.

"I told them they could shoot me or do anything else they wanted, but I was getting out," Taylor said. When he came to a rest area, he pulled the car off and started getting out.

"I started walking away," Taylor said. "They asked me if I would do something for them. They asked me if I would pray for them. I said I certainly had nothing against them and would pray for them, but if they were sincere they would bow their heads and close their eyes. I prayed for them, I really did, I asked God to show them that he loved them and that they would know his salvation."

"After the prayer, the boy with the gun asked me how I was going to get back to Shreveport," Taylor said. "The very fact that they had compassion showed that they weren't all bad. One

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of them even wanted to know if I had enough money to get back to Shreveport." Taylor walked to a phone and called his church for someone to pick him up.

Taylor said that he was never afraid. "I guess I felt with Paul, 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'" (reference to Apostle Paul's statement in Philippians 1:21)

Later, Taylor, who has announced his retirement effective October 2, mused, "I've been preaching 42 years and never had my picture on the front page before. What a thing to have happen during my retirement year."

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Bill Keith is city editor of the "Shreveport (La.) Journal" and Lynn Clayton is editor of the "Baptist Message," Alexandria, La.

Southern Baptists and Hunger:
Working Toward Long-Range Help

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RICHMOND (BP)--Southern Baptists bring a unique contribution to the problem of world hunger. They offer help as a witness to Christ.

"A comprehensive approach to missions speaks to man's total spiritual, intellectual, social and physical needs," says W. Eugene Grubbs, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's coordinator of hunger relief and disaster response.

Southern Baptists alone cannot bring an end to the "human misery associated with grinding poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and disease," Grubbs said. But they offer many different kinds of solutions, working through missionaries stationed in poverty-plagued areas overseas.

Agricultural missionaries are increasing food production with technology and tools available in the culture. "If only short-handled hoes are available, men must be taught to use those hoes to prepare ground, to plant crops in rows, to weed the crops and to harvest efficiently," Grubbs said.

Preservation of food supplies is also vitally important. A silo project in West Africa, which keeps out rodents and insects, can increase usable food by 25 percent.

Teaching hygiene and providing clean water becomes a part of alleviating world hunger, as food goes toward building the individual and not to feeding parasites.

"The number of persons waiting to consume the inadequate food supply often forms a major part of the problem," Grubbs says. "So instruction concerning family planning must also be a part of the total health package."

Grubbs says dealing with these problems without considering political, economic and social structures is "simplistic."

"Often the food supply in part of one country may be more than adequate, while people starve in another region of that same country," he says. "Marketing practices, political pressures, and social structures affect distribution."

Too, tradition and religion often resist potentially helpful ideas, techniques, and practices but Grubbs says "the complexity of these issues should not discourage those who care. Southern Baptists cannot do everything, but they can and are doing something. We should be doing much more."

As individuals Grubbs urges Southern Baptists to keep informed, to pray and to support Southern Baptist missionaries. "And ask questions about Southern Baptist responses to world needs," he says. "Observe World Hunger Day and become politically involved."

Grubbs also recommends that Southern Baptists pray for their missionaries and others directly involved in poverty-related problems. "Pray also that God will call missionaries to carry the message of God's love and demonstrate the fullness of life in all areas which God offers in Jesus Christ."

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"Finally," he says "support the efforts of Southern Baptist missionaries through Cooperative Program giving, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and special gifts designated for world relief."

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Adapted from the July issue of The Commission magazine. Editors: World Hunger Day is August 2.

Scientist Says Christians
Should Consider 'Other Life'

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A scientist in the field of radio astronomy challenged members of the First Baptist Church in Nashville to consider what the discovery of life elsewhere in the universe would do to their faith.

Wayne Brown, executive director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, said the largest radio telescopes ever constructed are being built near the Glorieta Baptist Conference Center in New Mexico.

"Just what if that complex equipment is able to pick up sounds that slipped out from another galaxy that shows there is other life? What is it going to do to your faith?" asked Brown, a Sunday School teacher at First Baptist where he spoke.

He said the response to such a discovery should be to praise the Creator for his wisdom and greatness. Brown said the reaction should be the same if no sounds are heard.

Brown said he did not know if life exists elsewhere. "I wish I did. I do know that I prefer to take the stance of not telling the Creator what he has done. I don't want to draw the line on his power and authority," said Brown, former dean of Union University in Jackson, Tenn.

"I as a Christian and a scientist think that it is important to think about the possibility of life beyond the earth," he said. "I will not put the line on God. I will never say that I know exactly how much God has created."

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N. C. Baptists Review
Retirements, Doctrine

By Charles Richardson

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ASHEBORO, N. C. (BP)--The executive committee of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has authorized a special study committee to make recommendations for extending mandatory retirements for convention staffers from 65 to 70, effective Jan. 1.

General Secretary-Treasurer Cecil A. Ray, in discussing the matter with executive committee members, asked that several committee members come from that group as well as knowledgeable people from outside their ranks. "All of our insurance programs are predicated on persons retiring at age 65," he said. Other state conventions are in the process of rewriting their policies too, Ray said.

In other action, the committee, at the suggestion of C. Mark Corts, Winston-Salem, N.C., pastor and president of the state convention, agreed to request doctrinal viewpoints from prospective staffers of the convention. They will be asked to write no more than a one page statement of the doctrines they feel are important for the position for which they are being considered.

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The committee agreed also to poll messengers at the November convention in Raleigh for their feelings for a weekend meeting of the annual state convention. The Wake Forest University Baptist Student Union has suggested the possible weekend convention to attract more lay persons and to allow collegians opportunities to fill in for pastors at their churches while at the convention.

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SBC Churches Abuse
Copyright Law: Reynolds

By Jim Lowry

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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"Church musicians have been grossly, willfully wrong for many years in the practice of photocopying copyrighted music without permission," according to William J. Reynolds, secretary of the church music department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"Churches of all sizes have been involved in this transgression of the copyright law," Reynolds said. "The law says it is wrong to duplicate or photocopy either the words or music of copyrighted material without first obtaining permission from the copyright owner."

Copyright owners are given the right under the law, effective Jan. 1, 1978, to publish their work in any form, including sheet music, phonograph record or tape recording. The copyright owner also is granted rights to sell, perform and display his work publicly.

"Duplication of copyrighted music is the major problem with the copyright law as far as Southern Baptist churches are concerned," Reynolds said. "Flagrantly photocopying music in this manner is just as illegal as taking money out of a man's pocket."

"You cannot honestly sing the gospel and tell the Good News of Jesus while you are singing from illegally duplicated music. If churches have duplicated music in their libraries, they should destroy it. It is evidence of copyright infringement and it is illegal."

Reynolds cited his choice of music at the recent Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta as an example of securing permission from copyright owners to reproduce words of copyrighted hymns. The words were flashed on giant magnification screens for congregational singing. Prior to use, Reynolds contacted owners of each copyrighted song and received permission to reproduce the words on the screens.

Music leaders planning to duplicate wordsheets for congregational use during revivals or in special services should be aware of copyright requirements, Reynolds said.

"When copying from a hymnal, songs must be taken on an individual basis," he explained. "All copyrighted songs in a hymnal will have a credit line at the bottom of the song."

"The publisher of a hymnal may not hold copyrights to all songs in a hymnal," Reynolds said. "Copyright owners must be contacted individually before reproducing words and/or music."

A notable exception listed in the new law is the exemption of churches for performance of music by a choir or soloist in worship services or other religious assembly.

Churches making records and tapes for resale must first check with copyright owners of all numbers to secure recording permission if the song has never been recorded, according to the law.

If the song has been previously recorded, no permission is necessary to record. However, churches must pay the mechanical reproduction fee of 2 and 3/4 cents per copy to the copyright owner, or 1/2 cent per minute of the song, whichever is greater.

"There is a matter of Christian ethics involved," Reynolds added. "Even if everybody is doing it, that doesn't make it right. It is illegal to duplicate in any form copyrighted materials without proper permission."

"Southern Baptist churches can give a great witness for Christian ethics and morality," he concluded, "by careful observance of the copyright law."

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