



BAPTIST PRESS

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Churches 'Silent' About
Economy Woes, Sapp Says

By David Wilkinson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Americans, according to national public opinion polls, may be more concerned about the economy than any other issue, but they are not getting much help from the church.

That's the opinion of W. David Sapp of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission who believes that the church, for the most part, has been "captured by silence."

"We who have spoken so often about so much have said nearly nothing about the economy," Sapp declared.

Furthermore, "when on rare occasions the churches do say something which relates to economics, it is too often self-serving and unbiblical," Sapp added. He singled out "religious demagogues (who) preach that God will reward the faithful with wealth" and people who become involved in such endeavors as the Christian Yellow Pages, an index which lists businesses owned by those who claim to be born-again Christians.

"The idea behind this particular scheme seems to be that we can best bear our Christian witness in the workaday world by refusing to do business with non-Christians," he said.

Sapp, who coordinates the national social action agency's work in the areas of hunger, energy and economics, believes some tough words are needed to jolt the church out of its silence on economic issues. "Such silence," he explained, "is strange for an institution built on commitment to Jesus Christ, whose most frequent topic for discourse was the relationship of human beings to money and the things it will buy."

One of the reasons America is hearing little from its pulpits on the subject of economics, he claimed, is that "the Word of God on economics" threatens materialistic lifestyles and often elicits hostile responses. "A courageous word about money hits most people where they live and their wrath frightens us into silence--especially if they tithe," he said.

Lack of expertise is no reason for the church to avoid economic issues, Sapp said, because "it is not the church's task to offer technical solutions to economic problems. Rather, it is the church's task to help the larger society identify the values which are governing our economic behavior and then to critique those values in the light of the Word of God."

Another factor in the church's silence, Sapp pointed out, is greed, which he identified as "the underlying cause of all our economic woes."

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"That sounds like an oversimplification," he added, "but it...is a perfectly accurate generalization which was understood long ago by the biblical writer who said, 'The love of money is the root of all evils.'"

"Inflation," he continued, "is really nothing more than the pernicious product of greed competing with greed. All the traditional causes of inflation, money supply and wage-price pressures may be reduced to an ethical cause: When the greed of workers, the greed of business and the greed of government compete with one another, the result is inflation."

Most Christians, Sapp asserted, are concerned about inflation "not because it threatens the poor and the elderly, but because it threatens our claim on affluence. And so we are caught in an irony--greed, the basic cause of inflation, is also the root of our desire to end inflation."

"Only when the word of God's judgment is brought to bear on greed will we ever be able to cope with inflation on a long-term basis," he said.

But, he added, there should be more to the Christian view of economics than judgment. "The good news of the gospel for the world of economics," he said, "is not that people are greedy sinners and economic systems tempt them to idolatry. The good news is that there is hope for those caught on the economic treadmill. In Jesus Christ persons can be set free from the tyranny of the material and empowered to live for a higher good."

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Court Accepts Free Press,
Capital Punishment Cases

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The Supreme Court has agreed to decide if criminal trials may be closed to the public and press and to consider the appeals of two death row inmates in Georgia and Alabama.

In deciding to hear the open vs. closed trial case, the justices have acted with unusual speed in an apparent attempt to clear up confusion resulting from its decision last July 2 that pre-trial hearings in criminal cases may be held behind closed doors.

The justices have indicated disagreement among themselves over the application of their narrow 5-4 decision in *Gannett v. DePasquale* to entire trials. Four of the justices have chosen to speak publicly to the much-publicized negative reaction from the nation's press to the July 2 ruling.

At the time the decision was announced, Chief Justice Warren E. Burger emphasized that the decision applied only to pre-trial hearings. But Associate Justice Harry A. Blackmun, speaking for the four dissenting justices, argued that the majority opinion covers both pre-trial hearings and entire criminal trials.

The new case presents a challenge by Richmond (Va.) Newspapers, Inc., publishers of the *Times-Dispatch* and the *News-Leader*, to a Virginia law authorizing judges to "exclude from the trial any persons whose presence would impair the conduct of a free trial."

In a murder case in Richmond, both public and press were barred by the trial judge in the interest of the accused's Sixth Amendment right to a fair trial.

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The Richmond Newspapers argue that "the right of the individual to attend and observe any criminal trial...is confirmed by our shared experience and common understanding, an experience and understanding informed but not wholly defined by the First and Sixth Amendments." A free press is among the guarantees of the First Amendment.

In the capital punishment cases, the justices agreed to decide if Georgia's death penalty law is so vague as to violate the constitutional rights of the accused and to determine if Alabama juries in capital cases may be forbidden by judges from considering lesser crimes committed in the process of committing murder.

Neither of the cases suggests the prospect of a thoroughgoing review by the high court of its 1976 landmark decisions upholding the constitutionality of the death penalty itself. Instead, it will determine if specific provisions in Georgia and Alabama meet the conditions set out in the 1976 rulings.

In a First Amendment religion action, the justices unanimously declined to schedule for review a dispute over church property in Boston, Mass. The Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled last May that a group of Roman Catholic parishioners may not seek judicial relief in state courts. They had contributed funds to the Boston Archdiocese to be used for a cemetery but which they said were used **instead for a low and moderate** income housing program.

The Massachusetts high court ruled that because the Roman Catholic Church is hierarchical and provides ecclesiastical tribunals for resolving internal disputes, civil courts must accept as binding the rulings of such bodies.

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Foreign Missions Budget Sets
Record, But Some Needs Unmet

Baptist Press
10/11/79

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has voted a record \$76,760,167 budget for 1980, but even this amount falls short of meeting some capital needs overseas, board members were warned.

Executive Director Baker J. Cauthen expressed hope that strong giving in the 1979 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions may make it possible to finance many of these capital projects.

The new budget represents an increase of 7.84 percent over the current budget, but the rate of increase is below the 12.24 percent increase reflected in the 1979 budget and the 14.59 percent hike voted for 1978.

The board designated \$5 million for capital needs, compared with \$8 million in this year's budget. Capital funds cover such items as purchase of missionary homes, grants and loans for construction of new churches, and building needs of various mission-sponsored institutions overseas.

One of the major pressures in the new budget, in addition to meeting higher operating costs brought on by inflation and an increased number of missionaries, is an estimated \$1 million required to help missionaries pay U.S. income taxes.

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Until this year missionaries and other Americans living overseas have been exempt from paying this tax unless their income exceeded \$20,000 a year. Missionaries are subject to taxes imposed by the countries where they serve.

Bills have been introduced in the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives to restore the exemption to religious and charitable workers overseas, and the board authorized two of its members to go to Washington, D.C., to confer with key congressmen on the legislation.

Joe N. McKeever of Mississippi, chairman of a special subcommittee which has been studying the income tax situation, and John G. Alley of Louisiana were designated to make the trip accompanied by others they feel could be of help.

The board, meeting Oct. 8-10 amid reports of growing U.S. economic problems, heard a strong statement from Cauthen that Southern Baptists will not allow such current problems as inflation, economic woes or energy crises to keep them from "entering whatever doors the Lord may open in overseas missions."

Cauthen, responding to the tribute of more than 400 persons who gathered in Richmond to honor his 26-year leadership of the Foreign Mission Board, said the denomination's Bold Mission Thrust momentum will continue because it is "commanded by our sovereign Lord, energized by the Holy Spirit, and rests upon the intercessory prayers and united efforts of our people."

Southern Baptists now have almost 3,000 missionaries working in 95 countries, with the Sudan scheduled to become the 96th in January. Bold Mission Thrust goals adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention call for 5,000 missionaries serving in 125 countries by the end of this century.

The board also appointed 19 new career missionaries, honored 10 retiring missionaries, and heard reports on medical and relief response to Caribbean hurricane victims. Harold E. Hurst, associate to the board's medical consultant, described how a 12-member Southern Baptist medical disaster team provided medical treatment for more than 26,000 persons in the Dominican Republic following Hurricane David.

The team, one of four which has been on standby since the medical disaster response plan was started two years ago, also helped to provide food to more than 25,000 persons during its 12-day stay in the Caribbean.

Hurst said one team member, an orthopedic surgeon from Florida, called the trip "the greatest thing that ever happened to me." The team's efforts, coordinated with those of Southern Baptist missionaries in the country, effectively conveyed the message that Southern Baptists are a caring people, Hurst added.

Several of more than 50 Dominican university students who volunteered to help the team accepted Christ at two open-air services held on Sunday afternoon after working with team members all week.

In an appointment service at First Baptist Church, Richmond, the board named its first new missionaries to Uganda since former President Idi Amin was deposed and religious freedom was restored to the country.

Mr. and Mrs. Carroll H. Camp of Mississippi and South Carolina will join Mr. and Mrs. G. Webster Carroll and Mr. and Mrs. James L. Rice, who continued work in the country even after Amin banned Baptist churches there, and Mr. and Mrs. Billy L. Oliver, who transferred to Uganda from Yemen, Oct. 1.

Other missionaries appointed in the service were Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus W. Bush of Tennessee and Louisiana, respectively, to Korea; Mr. and Mrs. Bernard L. Fairchild, Montana, to Jordan; Mr. and Mrs. Veldee A. Hightower, South Carolina and Georgia, to Zambia; Mr. and Mrs. Ernest H. Martzen, California, to the Philippines; and Pennie Lynn Olmstead, Kansas, to North Brazil.

Also appointed were Mr. and Mrs. Timothy L. Owings, Florida and West Virginia, to Equatorial Brazil; Mr. and Mrs. Roger W. Rucker, Texas and Kentucky, to Lebanon; Mr. and Mrs. David J. Spiegel, Illinois and Brazil, to South Brazil; and Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Stallworth, Florida, to Austria.

The October appointment service brought the total number of missionaries appointed this year to 277, down from the 294 appointed by the end of October in 1978. With two more appointment services scheduled this year, personnel secretary Louis R. Cobbs said he expects the year's total to be between 320 and 330, slightly below the record 350 approved last year.

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Retirement Won't Put
Cauthen On the Sidelines

Baptist Press
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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--When Baker J. Cauthen retires Dec. 31 after 26 years as top executive at the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board, he won't sit on the sidelines.

That message came through clearly at a luncheon in Richmond where more than 400 top Southern Baptist leaders and co-workers honored Cauthen and his wife for some 40 years of service to foreign missions, which began in 1939 when they went to China as missionaries.

Cauthen said he and Mrs. Cauthen were going to change their pace a little bit, but added, "I'm still going to preach every chance I get."

In August, he will begin a year of teaching at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif. Then the Cauthens will move back to Richmond and "be at the call of our Lord." He said they will still be available for anything God and Southern Baptists want them to do because that is something "that has filled our hearts through the way."

Participants at the retirement luncheon overwhelmingly portrayed Cauthen as a man guided by a desire to do God's will and a philosophy that there's nothing we can't do better.

Present and former colleagues testified that this commitment to the will of God, coupled with a love for God's world and a strong positive attitude, have characterized Cauthen throughout his years of ministry. Even when he served as a missionary in China and the Japanese invasion was imminent, Cauthen told fellow missionaries, "The Lord called us here and he hasn't called us home."

M. Hunter Riggins, a layman from Poquoson, Va., and a board member for 15 years, quoted Cauthen as saying 15 years ago that no man can love God without his heart becoming big enough to contain the world.

"In the movings of God in Bold Mission Thrust, God called a man (Cauthen) to the task of keeping our vision alive about missions while others were in retrenchment," said Jimmy Allen, immediate past SBC president. "This man's singleminded vision reminded us of the priorities of the gospel and caused a climate in which Bold Mission Thrust could be born."

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In the 26 years of Cauthen's tenure, the foreign missionary force has grown from 908 to almost 3,000, the budget has escalated from \$7 million to \$76 million, and the number of mission fields has expanded from 32 to 95 countries.

In response to the speeches and gifts in his behalf, Cauthen said he was deeply aware that Southern Baptists were saying through them that they love the Lord Jesus Christ and they wanted to say to one of his servants to keep trying to serve him. Cauthen, obviously proud of his denomination, said this desire to do the will of God has been the force that has kept Southern Baptists together.

Cauthen said in his years as leader of the Foreign Mission Board he has gone home singing many times because of the spirit of the board members. He reminded the group of the August board meeting at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center where R. Keith Parks was named executive director-elect. Cauthen said board members, missionaries and staff came out of that meeting like they had been in a revival.

At the luncheon, the board presented Cauthen a book of letters from people throughout Southern Baptist life, a monetary love gift and the keys to a new Ford LTD. The car and love gift were financed through individual contributions from board members and others. They gave Mrs. Cauthen a gold medallion with the Foreign Mission Board emblem on it.

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(BP) photo to be mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press.

Golden Gate Staffer
Called to Pastorate

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MARYVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Nobel Brown, vice president for student relations at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., will become pastor of First Baptist Church in Maryville,

Brown has been at Golden Gate since 1974, filling the posts of director of admissions and student concerns, dean of students, and adjunct professor of Greek and New Testament.

Prior to that, Brown, a Kentuckian, was an editor in the young adult section of the Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday School department. For 10 years he was a Southern Baptist missionary to Nigeria, serving as head of the New Testament and Greek department at Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary in Ogbomosho. His pastorates have included churches in Kentucky and California, as well as several interim positions.

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