



## **BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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### Baptists Among Signers Of Abortion Rights Statement

WASHINGTON (BP)--Two professors at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and the executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs have endorsed a statement on abortion released in Washington by the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights at the start of the national observance of Abortion Rights Week.

G. Willis Bennett, director of advanced professional studies, Larry McSwain, associate professor of church and community, and James E. Wood Jr. of the Baptist Joint Committee joined about 200 religious leaders in endorsing "A Religious Statement on Abortion: A Call to Commitment." Approximately 20 religious organizations were represented among the signers.

The statement calls for a "strong educational effort" in churches and synagogues as well as better informed counseling for women considering abortion. It also affirms that "ecumenism is a two-way street" and refutes the argument that pro-choice advocates should mute their voices in the interests of continued interreligious cooperation.

In addition, the statement pledges ongoing political action and places the issue of abortion in the context of "other issues of equity and justice." Further, a constitutional amendment forbidding abortion is opposed "in order to preserve the separation of church and state."

"The position that a fetus is a human being with full human rights from the moment of conception is a particular theological position," the statement affirms. "Other theologies take other positions. If, therefore, those opposing abortion are successful in incorporating their particular religious doctrine into the supreme law of the land, our religious liberties will have been seriously eroded."

Sen. Bob Packwood, R-Ore., told the audience at a breakfast kicking off the week of abortion rights activities that the 1980 elections are important to anti-abortion forces because they "must show some clout." "They aren't going to get the constitutional amendment they want out of this congress," Packwood promised.

Wood Elected President  
Of Religion Studies Group

WASHINGTON (BP)--The head of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs has been elected president of the National Council on Religion and Public Education, an eight-year-old organization which seeks to prepare educators to teach about religion in the public schools.

James E. Wood Jr., executive director of the Baptist agency, was elected to a two-year term as president of NCRPE. The group's headquarters is in Lawrence, Kan., on the campus of the University of Kansas.

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Religious Journalists  
Asked to Support SALT

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--Sixteen Southern Baptists were among a group of religious journalists hearing appeals from Carter administration officials to support the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT II) now pending in the U.S. Senate.

The editors and writers were invited to the State Department meeting by presidential assistant for religious liaison Bob Maddox, who described the U.S.-Soviet treaty as a "crucial moral issue." He declared that the quality of life on the planet would be "irreversibly impaired" by a nuclear war. "We are talking about the lives of multiplied millions of people," said Maddox, formerly a Southern Baptist pastor in Calhoun, Ga.

Maddox told the group he had invited them to Washington to ask for their support for the treaty on political as well as moral grounds. The signing of the treaty "is politically important" to President Carter, he said, adding that Carter sees the treaty as potentially the most important single contribution of his administration.

To be ratified, the treaty must be approved by two-thirds of those U.S. senators present and voting when the agreement is called up for final action later this year.

William J. Dyess, deputy assistant secretary of state for public affairs and an expert in U.S.-Soviet relations, briefed the group on the provisions of the controversial pact currently being debated by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Dyess, Alabama native and a Southern Baptist, acknowledged that although the two superpowers remain "rivals" and "adversaries," they do enjoy cultural and trade ties beneficial to both sides.

But the "overriding common interest" of the two, he declared, is "to avoid a nuclear holocaust because neither side can be a winner in such a confrontation. Above all else, he said, "both sides want to survive."

Dyess countered arguments from opponents of the treaty. Some of them believe the U.S. has yielded too much but others insist the pact does not go far enough.

He reiterated the view now common to administration arguments for ratification that the treaty is not based on trust and insisted that the U.S. will be able to verify Soviet compliance with its provisions.

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While acknowledging that SALT II "is not nearly enough" in itself to bring about a reversal of the arms race, he warned that the prospect for future treaties to accomplish that goal will be "virtually nil" without the present agreement.

The group also heard State Department Mideast expert Wat T. Cluverius IV review the current peace process begun with last year's Camp David accord between Israel and Egypt.

He expressed the view that progress toward resolution of the Palestinian question will probably be delayed because of current unrest in Israel resulting from former foreign minister Moshe Dayan's unexpected resignation Oct. 21.

Because Dayan was a "key member" of Prime Minister Menachem Begin's government, Cluverius said, "The handwriting may be on the wall" for Begin to be forced to face new elections.

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Carol Franklin Joins Staff  
Of First Church, Washington

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Carol Franklin, assistant to the director of information services, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and a Washington correspondent for Baptist Press, has resigned to accept the position of minister of education at the First Baptist Church, Washington.

Ms. Franklin, who joined the staff of the Baptist Joint Committee three years ago, has had the primary assignment of covering Capitol Hill. She has also handled a wide variety of other reporting assignments in the nation's capital.

A native of Paris, Texas, she is a graduate of the University of Washington, Seattle, and holds the master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. She also attended the University of Hawaii and George Washington University.

Other professional experience prior to coming to Washington included teaching English and chairing the department of English at Hawaii Baptist Academy, 1969-71. She also served the school as administrative assistant. During seminary days, she was assistant youth minister at Crescent Hill Baptist Church, Louisville.

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Vietnamese Church  
Sponsors Refugees

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DALLAS (BP)--A small Vietnamese church of about five families, affiliated with Cliff Temple Baptist Church in Dallas, is sponsoring two Vietnamese families of its own, and hopes to sponsor a refugee family every two or three months.

Daniel Tran, pastor of the church, said most of its members arrived in the United States in 1975.

"All of us agreed that first we were helped by the American Christians. Now we have to help our own people," he said.

The first of the two families arrived Aug. 31, and the Vietnamese church collected enough money to feed the family and rent an apartment for a month. One member found a job for the husband, and Cliff Temple donated some furniture and clothes for the family.

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The first few days the family stayed with Pastor Tran, then moved to a motel until an apartment was found that would be rented "to someone who had no credit and no job."

Another family arrived in late September. Although Tran's group hopes to sponsor more refugees, he said they would have to be careful.

"The families that came from Vietnam in 1975 were mostly well-educated and skilled, more so than those coming now. We don't want to have to put them on welfare."

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#### Midwestern Students Reach Out to Belize

BELIZE (BP)--Thirteen foreign missions volunteers from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary got exposure to their chosen ministry in a unique educational test.

The students, with their professor Doran McCarty and his wife, went to Belize, a small Central American country formerly known as British Honduras, for a practical class in missions.

Midwestern officials say it was the first time a seminary offered classroom credit for a mission trip. Those who went say such an experience ought to be required of all missions volunteers.

Team members preached in churches and at evangelistic services, led Bible and doctrinal studies, conducted hospital visitation, sang and gave personal testimonies. They also taught music and music techniques, held Bible school for children, gave puppet presentations and shared their lives with teen-agers.

At first, the students were appalled at the desperate economic and physical conditions in the country. Outhouses lined canals in the city, carrying sewage openly to the sea. Food and water had to be purified before consumption. Malnourished dogs roamed the streets.

Jon Singleton, a student from Belzoni, Miss., said, "I felt as if I had stepped back into time about 60 years. There was a simplistic atmosphere. I have lived in poverty before, but never have seen it like that. People were existing in unlivable conditions."

The students worked with both Southern Baptist and Conservative Baptist missionaries, a cooperation termed vital to both groups' ministries.

"We were going to share the gospel," said Singleton, "but when we walked into the situation, we realized God was already there working. I had to go there, not as a great missionary, but as a servant of God, walking face to face with the people."

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#### S.C. Church Gives From the Overflow

Baptist Press  
10/23/79

GREER, S.C. (BP)--Overflow from a fund raising campaign by Washington Baptist Church, Greer, S.C., enabled the church to save the tiny Wasilla mission in Alaska from winter's icy grip.

The South Carolina congregation had conducted a "Together We Build" program to raise funds to construct a new \$550,000 two-story educational wing and family life center.

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"The program caused a great increase in our regular offering, above and beyond our building fund," Washington pastor Bill Cashion said of the Together We Build effort, a program designed by the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission to help churches finance new facilities.

"Since we started Together We Build in April, we've paid all our monthly bills, put \$1,300 a week in our building fund and still received an average of \$3,000 per month in surplus," Cashion said.

Cashion learned of the small mission's plight after reading of it in the Baptist Courier, South Carolina's state Baptist paper. "The Lord helped us through our Together We Build program and we decided we could help this church through our overflow," he said.

The Wasilla mission, located about 45 miles north of Anchorage in the shadow of the Talkeetna Mountains, was doomed to a frigid, depressing winter until the prospect of help arrived.

In mid-September Edward E. Wolfe, Chugach Baptist Association director of missions and interim pastor of the mission, issued an urgent plea for carpenters. "The foundation of our church building has been laid, and we've got a four-foot concrete block wall up," he said. "But the four or five families that attend here cannot finish framing, enclosing and roofing the building by the time cold weather will stop outdoor work for the winter.

"If we don't get help soon, we'll have to continue meeting in a single rented room that does not allow space for Sunday School," he said.

The South Carolina church paid transportation expenses for four of its men--Jimmy Sullivan, Paul Barton, Don Lamb and Eddie Lamb--to help the Alaska Baptists for a week. Richard Vaughn and Dan Bridges from First Baptist Church, Duncan, S. C., went with them.

Additionally, four Georgia men recruited by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board spent the same period working on the building. They are Jim Smith and John Garrison of Mt. Yonah Baptist Church in Cleveland, and Oscar Jones and Rufus Horton of Faith Baptist Church in Griffin.

"We're delighted with the positive response which has been extended to this call for help," said William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the board. "Selfless acts of service such as this are necessary if we are to reach our land for Christ through Bold Mission Thrust."

Wasilla's story is a happy one, but other Alaskan churches are not so fortunate, Wolfe reported. If churches in Nome, Fairbanks and Copper Center don't receive aid soon, they will succumb to the same icy winter that threatened Baptists in Wasilla.

The consultant for special mission ministries at the Home Mission Board, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga., 30309, has issued a call for persons or groups to help these churches.