



BAPTIST PRESS

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Southern Baptists Join In
Latest 'New Right' Meeting

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Several Southern Baptists joined a large slate of speakers addressing new right political issues at a seminar for pastors and religious leaders.

The seminar, sponsored by The Roundtable, was held in conjunction with a joint convention of the National Religious Broadcasters and the National Association of Evangelicals.

Edward E. McAteer, president of The Roundtable and a member of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., hosted a double-barreled format which featured brief addresses by more than 20 religious leaders on political involvement and presentations on the "how to" aspect of political activity by new right leaders.

New right leaders addressing the seminar included Terry Dolan, chairman of the National Conservative Political Action Committee; Howard Phillips, national director of the Conservative Caucus; Richard Viguerie, publisher of Conservative Digest and Paul Weyrich, director of the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress.

The mood was displayed early when Paige Patterson, president of Criswell Center for Biblical Studies in Dallas, and a member of The Roundtable board, declared to an enthusiastic audience, "I'm tired of dancing to a liberal tune when there is a better option."

While participants celebrated conservative victories in November's elections, with several speakers describing the outcome as "a victory for God," their elation was tempered by warnings that much work remained to be done to secure conservative causes.

The Southern Baptists on the program shared the spotlight with prominent leaders of the religious right including Bobbie James, wife of Alabama Gov. Fob James; Jerry Falwell, television evangelist from Lynchburg, Va., and James Kennedy, president of Evangelism Explosion in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

Newly elected congressman Albert Lee Smith, R-Ala., told the religious leaders he decided to run against incumbent Southern Baptist minister John Buchanan in 1980 after losing a bid to unseat Buchanan two years earlier because "he (Buchanan) got worse."

"A Southern Baptist minister needed to be replaced," Smith said, citing Buchanan's votes in favor of the Equal Rights Amendment and abortion funding.

Smith, also a Southern Baptist, charged Buchanan "was going to Washington and voting one way and coming home and talking another way."

Karen Davis, director of the newly formed Christian Women's National Concerns and a member of First Baptist Church, Euless, Texas, explained her organization's opposition to humanism, ERA and sex education.

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"We're going to expose ERA for what it is—a homosexual movement," said Davis, whose organization is affiliated with the James Robison Evangelistic Association. Her husband, Cullen Davis, drew national news attention during a celebrated murder trial and for his conversion under Robison's influence.

Davis declared sex education in America "is nothing but pornographic filth," and that her organization is "showing humanism for what it is."

Larry Lewis, pastor of Tower Grove Baptist Church, St. Louis, told the group it was his "joy to report that the Southern Baptist Convention has endorsed the human life amendment."

Lewis, who sponsored a resolution adopted by the SBC last June at St. Louis which called for "appropriate legislation and/or a constitutional amendment prohibiting abortion except to save the life of the mother," labeled abortion "intolerable."

The St. Louis pastor insisted the Nov. 4 elections showed that Americans want "a strong economy, a strong defense and life."

Melvin Hodges, pastor of First Baptist Church of Glen Oaks, in Baton Rouge, La., leveled an attack against welfare which was warmly applauded by the seminar participants. "I'm tired of government give-aways," the black pastor said, explaining he favors welfare as "a form of relief," but opposes it as "a resting place."

Hodges said the country needs preachers who will say to their congregations, "Don't work—don't eat."

Falwell and Kennedy disagreed over whether the First Amendment to the Constitution mandates separation of church and state.

While Kennedy described separation of church and state as the "official doctrine of the Soviet Union," and a "perversion of the First Amendment," Falwell insisted during an earlier press conference at the NRB-NAE meeting that separation of church and state is essential.

Mrs. James called the November election a "sovereign act of God in history. It's Jesus who gave us this victory in November, and it's Jesus who must get the glory."

In addition to McAteer and Patterson, other Southern Baptist members of The Roundtable board of directors are James Robison, a Hurst, Texas evangelist; Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis; and Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta.

McAteer, who along with Robison, put together the National Affairs Briefing last August which attracted thousands of religious leaders to Dallas, announced another large gathering for religious leaders has been scheduled in the nation's capital next August.

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Baptist Principal
Gets Some Relief

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1/28/81

BUCKEYE, La. (BP)--Southern Baptist school principal Charles Waites has gotten some relief from his "between a rock and a hard place" position.

Waites, principal of Buckeye High School, was caught between conflicting court orders issued by a state judge and a federal judge in a controversy over the racial balance of Rapides Parish (county) schools.

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The principal, a member of Philadelphia Baptist Church in this central Louisiana community, got caught in the middle and became the center of national news attention because three girls who live near the school were ordered to attend a school 20 miles away in order to achieve racial balance in the schools.

When three girls wanted to attend Buckeye, Louisiana Judge Richard Lee had custody changed from their parents to other families and ordered them escorted to school by Louisiana state police.

U.S. District Judge Nauman Scott charged they were attempting to bypass his integration plan and ordered several persons, including Waites, held in contempt of court.

At that point, Waites was caught in the middle. Whichever way he went, he violated somebody's court order.

But in a hearing before Scott's Ninth District Court, the federal judge cancelled contempt orders and fines which ranged up to \$1,000 a day. The hearing drew reporters from across the United States, England and Australia.

In a telephone interview, Waites said, "Everything is quiet right now," but added if the girls try to return to Buckeye, the contempt charges could be reinstated.

But, for now at least, Southern Baptist Charles Waites is out of the harsh glare of national news attention.

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Cameron Byler Named
Alaska RA Director

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CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (BP)--Cameron Byler, manager of Zephyr Baptist Encampment near Corpus Christi, and former staffer with Texas Baptists, has been named the first executive director of Baptist Men and Royal Ambassadors for the Alaska Baptist Convention.

Byler, who has directed the camp for seven years, helped Texas Baptists build the first disaster relief mobile unit in the Southern Baptist Convention in 1971. Among his responsibilities with Alaska Baptists will be development of a disaster relief program.

He also will coordinate lay renewal and volunteer groups and will direct the building of a new Alaska Baptist encampment about 40 miles from Anchorage near Wasilla.

Byler is a graduate of Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas, and was director of activities and recreation at First Baptist Church of Lubbock, Texas, and dean of men and coach at Buckner Baptist Children's Home in Dallas prior to joining the Texas staff as RA director.

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Seminary Professor
Finds Wife Murdered

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1/28/81

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Ethyl Louise Robbins, wife of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary professor Ray Robbins, was beaten to death in her home on campus Jan. 27.

Robbins found her body when he returned home about 11 p.m. from a Bible teaching session in Baton Rouge. Robbins, a popular Bible teacher and professor of New Testament and Greek at New Orleans for 30 years, wrote this year's Southern Baptist January Bible study on Philipians.

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According to a New Orleans newspaper account of the police report, bloody footprints indicated Mrs. Robbins, 68, was beaten in her upstairs sewing room and dragged to a downstairs bathroom where Robbins found her.

There were no immediate signs of forced entry and the house was not ransacked.

Seminary officials had no comment on the incident until they conclude an investigation with the New Orleans police department.

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Inflation Uppermost
Concern for Americans

By Duann Kier

Baptist Press
1/28/81

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Inflation—which threatens the affluent and impoverishes the elderly—will continue to be the uppermost issue on the minds of most Americans in 1981, a Southern Baptist ethics professor says.

The effects of inflation will be pervasive throughout society, writes Thomas A. Bland, professor of Christian ethics and sociology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

"The consequences of inflation can be seen not only in its threats to affluent lifestyles, but especially in its cruel impoverishment of the elderly and others on fixed incomes and its untold hardship on the poor. Many such people in our society are helpless to deal with inflation," Bland wrote in a resource paper prepared for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, the moral concerns agency of the 13.6 million-member denomination.

The professor noted as the "pressures of our economy accelerate, the financial stewardship of individuals, churches and our denomination are subjected to many severe tests."

He called on individuals, churches and denominational agencies to examine levels of giving and spending, saying that "one of the most compelling challenges to the Christian community in the United States today is the adoption of a simpler lifestyle."

Bland said requirements on churches and denominational agencies call for careful spending. "Extravagance in mere institutional cosmetics is unworthy. Survival needs and service needs should be meticulously evaluated and interrelated."

In addition to an inflationary economy, Bland said other concerns facing Americans in the year ahead include human rights, religious liberty, hunger, energy, race relations, marriage and family and the change in national political leadership.

Each year the moral concerns agency of the SBC publishes a paper identifying the current critical issues and offers help in dealing with them, according to Foy Valentine, executive director of the CLC.

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(Kier is editorial assistant to the Christian Life Commission, SBC.)