



## **-- BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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### Commission Presents Abe Lincoln Awards

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Emory Bundy, director of public affairs for KING-TV, Seattle, and George Nicholaw, vice president and general manager of KNX-FM, Los Angeles, have received top honors in the 1981 Abe Lincoln Awards competition from the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

The Abe Lincoln Awards—one in television and one in radio—are given for outstanding community service programming and projects.

Robert E. Lee, acting chairman of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and keynote speaker for the awards ceremony, received the Distinguished Communications Medal from the commission. Lee, who has served on the FCC longer than any other person, was cited for his contributions to the development of broadcasting.

Fred M. Rogers, creator of Public Broadcasting's "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood," received the Distinguished Communications Recognition Award. Commission President Jimmy R. Allen cited Rogers "for creatively nurturing the emotional and ethical growth of millions of children who call him friend."

Bundy was presented the Abe Lincoln Award in television in recognition of his efforts in KING-TV's CityFair, a community education program involving more than 70 organizations and 1,500 volunteers.

Nicholaw was cited for KNX News Radio's daily and prime time editorial policy and for his "distinguished sense of personal commitment to both his community and his industry."

Bundy and Nicholaw, as well as the six other Abe Lincoln finalists, were selected by a committee of broadcasters, including previous Abe Lincoln winners.

The other Abe Lincoln nominees, who each received Abe Lincoln Merit Awards, were Jack Bowen, news anchorman, KOCO-TV, Oklahoma City; Walt Elder Jr., public affairs manager, WSB-TV, Atlanta; R. Kent Replogle, vice president/general manager, KMBC-TV, Kansas City; Frank J. Oxarart, vice president/general manager, KFWB-AM, Los Angeles; Ray Watson, general manager, KXL-AM, Portland, Ore.; and Fred Williams, director of public affairs, WAHT-AM, Lebanon, Pa.

Need Shouldn't Encourage  
Gambling, Baptist Says

By Larry Crisman

COLUMBIA, S.C.(BP)--Financial need does not warrant encouraging people to become gamblers, a South Carolina Baptist leader told state legislators.

E.C. Watson, assistant to the executive secretary-treasurer of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, made his comments during a hearing before the South Carolina House Judiciary Committee on a proposed constitutional amendment which would establish a state-operated lottery.

"I cannot believe that the financial situation in South Carolina is in such dire straits that it is necessary for the state to demean and debase all its people by encouraging them to become gamblers," Watson said.

The proposed amendment to the state constitution was introduced by Rep. John Snow, D-Williamsburg County, who says the lottery would bring about \$30 million annually into the state treasury.

"This seems to me to be the kind of effort designed to support the institution of government without due regard to its cost to individual citizens," Watson said. "I believe this bill could be opposed to the public interests in the state of South Carolina and urge you to give it an unfavorable report."

Watson also quoted from a report of a 1976 Commission on the Review of the National Policy Toward Gambling which found state-operated lotteries are relatively inefficient revenue sources compared with broadbased taxation.

According to Watson, he personally opposes the lottery because gambling "does something to the character of the person who engages in it." He added gambling encourages "getting something for nothing and destroys the home, destroys brotherhood, undermines respect for law and violates at least two of the Ten Commandments."

Despite the opposition, the subcommittee gave favorable recommendation to Snow's bill, which now goes to the full judiciary committee.

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Southeastern Receives  
Anonymous Pledge

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WAKE FOREST, N.C.(BP)--A \$500,000 pledge has been made to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary by a friend of the seminary who wishes to remain anonymous.

The pledge was made toward the school's \$3.5 million capital and endowment funds campaign. The Southern Baptist Convention seminary is in a long range program to "recycle" its entire 146-year-old campus, formerly the home of Wake Forest College, and to expand its financial base. The campaign continues through 1981.

Seminary President W. Randall Lolley said the pledge is the largest in the history of Southeastern Seminary, which is now celebrating its 30th year.

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Overseas Baptist Churches  
Baptize More Than 110,000

By Mary Jane Welch

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Baptisms in overseas churches related to Southern Baptist mission work numbered 110,032 in 1980, setting a new record and surpassing last year's total by 14 percent.

The baptisms brought overseas church membership to a new high of 1,297,912.

Charles W. Bryan, vice president for overseas operations for the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said special evangelistic crusades in several countries, coupled with a new fervor among Baptists overseas and new opportunities among groups previously difficult to reach, contributed to the growth.

Israel, where Baptists have worked for more than 50 years with few results, reported a doubling of baptisms in 1980, said J. D. Hughey, director for Europe and the Middle East.

Two west African nations showed a rapid rise in the baptism rate: Upper Volta with 607 percent and Togo with a 243 percent. In Upper Volta, 375 persons were baptized, up from the 81 reported in 1979.

Two countries where baptisms increased in spite of political turmoil were Liberia and El Salvador. In Liberia, Baptists put a strong emphasis on evangelism after William R. Tolbert Jr., president of the nation and of the Baptist convention, was killed in an April coup, said John E. Mills, director for west Africa.

Although the coup resulted in a loss of Baptist leadership, Mills said, "There is a new spirit of freedom and optimism there."

In El Salvador, the fact that baptisms have more than tripled follows a pattern common in countries in strife, said Donald R. Kammerdiener, director for middle America and the Caribbean.

Some people in such situations, he said, turn to religion. "All the churches in El Salvador are bursting at the seams."

Church membership increased by only 49,694, in spite of more than 110,000 baptisms, because overseas churches purge inactive members from their rolls, said Bryan. While a church with 200 members in the United States might be pleased with an attendance of half that, he said, an overseas church with 200 members might have an attendance of 400.

More than 1,000 churches, missions and preaching stations were started, significant because baptisms increase when new churches begin. Bryan expects significant increases in baptisms in countries such as Brazil and the Philippines which opened churches in new areas last year.

Giving overseas, which increased 24 percent—from \$41,689,642 in 1979 to \$51,544,613 in 1980—reflects real growth although it would be modified by inflation and currency devaluation, said Bryan.

A greater understanding of New Testament stewardship has led many national conventions and churches to place a greater emphasis on total stewardship, Bryan said, adding the national conventions are assuming more financial responsibility for work within their borders.

Fasting, Prayer Is Urged  
As Murder Rate Continues

By Marv Knox

ATLANTA (BP)—Atlanta pastors—black and white—are urging their parishioners to fast and pray every Wednesday afternoon for an end to the murders of black children in the city.

In the past 19 months, 15 black children have been murdered, and three more are missing and feared dead.

After the body of 14-year-old Lubie (Chuck) Geter was discovered on a wooded roadside Feb. 5, an interracial, interdenominational group of ministers met at First Baptist Church to determine what they could do to stop the murders and to bring the person or persons responsible to justice.

The discovery of Geter's half-nude body hit Southern Baptists with the full impact of the slayings. Geter frequently attended programs at Memorial Drive Baptist Center, a Christian social ministries operation of the Atlanta Baptist Association and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Freddie Mae Bason, center director, said Geter attended Bible study and played basketball at the facility, and had participated in summer camps and intercity camps sponsored by the association.

Since the youth was reported missing Jan. 3, Bason has ministered to the family. Between the time he was reported missing and the discovery of his body, Geter's father suffered a heart attack, necessitating financial and other aid from concerned Baptists.

After the discovery of the body, Charles Stanley, white pastor of First Baptist Church, helped form the Atlanta Interracial Prayer Committee, which in turn held a city-wide prayer meeting, and encouraged Christians to fast and pray until 3 p.m. every Wednesday until the murderer or murderers are caught.

Clergymen who joined the committee "discussed the need for the Christian community to take some initiatives in this respect," said Benjamin W. Bickers, black pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church.

"Our city has been plagued by this unfortunate and preposterous act of violence," he said. "We have tried all other methods (to bring the crisis to an end)."

Explaining why the clergymen decided to start the Wednesday prayer and fasting vigils, Stanley said, "In the Bible, every time God's people came together fasting and praying out of a sense of desperation and dependence on God, he answered their prayers. We're expecting him to do the same in this case."

At the prayer meeting, at Stanley's request, the 200 participants broke into groups of five to ask God to reveal the person or persons responsible for the murders, to meet the needs of families who have lost children, to comfort surviving children who live in fear of being the next victim and bring a sense of unity to the community.

Stanley encouraged Southern Baptists across the country to join them in Wednesday fasting and prayer "until these people are brought to justice." He also asked for prayer for the victim's families and the surviving children who are "scared stiff."

In addition to interdenominational prayer efforts, the executive committee of the Atlanta Baptist Association has passed a resolution exhorting the city's Baptists to "join in seasons of prayer" for the end of the tragedy.

They also agreed to offer the support of Atlanta Southern Baptists to city officials, said Gene Tyre, pastor of Rainbow Park Baptist Church and associational moderator.

Baptists planned a meeting with city leaders to decide what Baptists can do on a practical basis to help. Possibilities include providing manpower for searches for the missing bodies, and, more probably, ministering to the families who have lost children, Tyre said.

Despite the pall that shrouds the city, religious leaders are discovering one glimmer of light—new-found unity.

"God didn't cause this to happen, but he can use it to bring the people of Atlanta together," said Tyre. "This problem crosses racial, religious and economic barriers. It's something we're all concerned about."

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Reagan Names Wilson  
New Vatican Envoy

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WASHINGTON (BP)--President Reagan has named a real estate developer and cattleman as his personal representative to the Vatican.

William A. Wilson, a longtime friend of Reagan and head of his personnel advisory committee, will occasionally visit Vatican City to exchange views on international and humanitarian matters with Pope John Paul II and other high ranking Roman Catholic officials, according to a brief statement issued by the White House.

Baptist watchdogs in the church-state field vigorously protested Reagan's appointment. One, Gene Puckett, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, had told Reagan in a letter dated Dec. 23 that the president had a good opportunity to prove his support of church-state separation. "Do not appoint an envoy to the Vatican," Puckett said.

"Such an appointment flies in the face of the Constitution," said Foy Valentine, executive secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "It is an affront to those who are committed to religious liberty and those who, like the Baptists, deeply believe in separation of church and state. It is unnecessary, wasteful, ill-advised and divisive. The interests of all Americans would best be served by a withdrawal of the appointment."

James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, noted an "American Baptist Bill of Rights" passed by three national Baptist conventions in 1939. The statement said in part, "We oppose the establishing of diplomatic relations with any ecclesiastical body (and) the extension of special courtesies by our government to any ecclesiastical official." That statement passed unanimously at the Northern (now American), Southern and National Baptist Conventions, meeting separately.

"The Baptist Joint Committee was actually a stepchild of this joint commitment," Dunn said. "And has been, from its inception to this date, in consistent opposition to any such appointment. That's still our position."

Wilson was born in Los Angeles, graduated from Stanford University with a degree in mechanical engineering, and until 1960 was president of Web Wilson Oil Tools Inc. Since then he has been a real estate developer and has overseen cattle interests in the U.S. and Mexico.

The practice of naming a presidential representative to the Vatican began in 1939 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed Myron C. Taylor.

After Roosevelt's successor, Southern Baptist Harry S. Truman, became embroiled in public opposition to his nomination of Mark Clark to the position, no president until Richard Nixon in 1970 named an envoy to the Vatican and there has been one since.

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