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Awareness, Not Fads
Makes Good Parents

By Duann Klier

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The secret of parenting is not in good techniques, best sellers, or fads, but is first of all an awareness of self as revealed by God, says a Southern Baptist family specialist.

"The more we know about ourselves, the better we will be able to parent," Harry Hollis, director of family and special moral concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, told participants at a Missouri Christian Life Commission conference on Christian lifestyle.

"Understanding ourselves as persons means that parents must know that we are God's," he said. "As parents we are created creators. Our primary relationship is to God."

Parents must know what time it is in their lives, he said. "We must be aware of the adult life cycle, of the stages of life, of our passages."

Hollis said parents will communicate to their children their own acceptance or rejection of sexuality. "The fact that God has made us as sexual beings, as male or female, must be accepted and indeed celebrated."

To handle anger, Hollis said parents must neither vent nor suppress it. Instead, they must acknowledge it exists and deal with it rationally. He said parents need to focus on the cause of their anger.

"Parents can accept the gifts of God's Holy Spirit which will help them both as persons and as parents, and these are the very gifts that our children need from us," Hollis said.

He said he asked the experts on parents--children--what kind of persons they long for their parents to be. "Children told me they want their parents to listen, be fair, be like Jesus, use reason, communicate, be trusting, supportive, and sensitive, take time to be with them, and allow them some freedom."

Hollis said problems children surfaced about their parents were that they didn't care, argued, nagged, criticized their child's choice of friends, and gave the impression that their child couldn't do anything right.

"Parenting is best when it grows out of a loving, intimate marriage," Hollis said. "It is true intimacy that teaches children to feel positively about marriage."

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He encouraged parents to give themselves space for solitude and growth and said, "Privacy in the midst of family is important for everyone. Separateness from parenting is necessary."

Parents should live in an attitude of hope, he told them. "Communicate your feelings to others--with your children and your mate. The sharing of feelings is the missing ingredient in too many families today."

Hollis suggested that parents and children can be drawn closer together by ministry to others as a family.

"Work to point yourself and your family beyond selves to service and ministry to others. It is in this way that we find true joy and fulfillment in family life."

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Duann Kier is a newswriter for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

No Baptists In Cairo
During Assassination

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CAIRO, Egypt (BP)--All Southern Baptist personnel in Egypt were out of Cairo when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was assassinated Oct. 6.

Roger and Linda Rucker, of Texas and Kentucky, were visiting churches in Fikriya and Minya in central Egypt and Michael and Madeline Edens, of Oklahoma and Louisiana, were in Jordan for a week's vacation. Both couples are studying Arabic in Cairo.

Rucker, reached by telephone Oct. 7, said he and his wife learned of Sadat's death during an evening church service Oct. 6. They returned to Cairo the next day. Rucker said they had not heard from the Edenses. They were planning to stay in Jordan until Oct. 11.

Rucker reported that all was calm in Cairo with shops opening as usual. Contacts at the American Embassy told him that there had been no reports of anti-American incidents since Sadat's death.

Rucker said they, as well as the rest of Egypt, were going to have to wait to see the outcome of the assassination. The granting of their application for permanent residence and work permit is expected soon.

The Ruckers and Edenses are the first couples to be officially assigned to Egypt although Southern Baptist representatives have been involved in Egyptian Baptist work for about 25 years. A third couple, Randall and Nancy Parks of Texas, are candidates for appointment to Egypt this month. Parks is the son of Foreign Mission Board President R. Keith Parks.

Upon hearing reports of Sadat's death, the board's president requested prayer not only for Egypt but for all of the Middle East.

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Wrapup

Religious Liberty, Evangelism
Both Critical, Baptists Told

By Dan Martin

WASHINGTON (BP)--For Baptists, religious liberty and evangelism are "like breathing out and breathing in," James M. Dunn told a conference on faith and freedom.

"We must pay attention to both or we cannot live," said Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. He told participants in a conference on evangelism rooted in religious liberty that proclamation of the gospel must be coupled with a voluntary response if it is to be valid.

During the conference, Leon McBeth, professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said there is a new and unprecedented move by conservative churchmen--many a part of the new Christian Right--to join "the hue and cry to limit, adjust and redefine the nature and basis of religious liberty."

"Most of these people call themselves conservatives," McBeth said. "I challenge that designation. They are not conservative, but radical innovators who have departed from the teachings and practices of our Baptist forefathers."

McBeth, who warned that if the "government can regulate unpopular groups, it can regulate popular groups," charged that "comfortable people" may not be able to maintain the pressure necessary to retain religious liberty.

"We're not suffering any more," he said. "When we were having a rough time, we spoke out strongly for religious liberty. Historically, people under pressure have been the most ardent for religious liberty. We have yet to see whether a comfortable people can maintain religious liberty."

Two Baptist members of the United States Congress also told participants about challenges to religious liberty facing the nation.

Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., reminded participants that it was "the moral majority of the Puritans which ran Roger Williams out of the Massachusetts Bay Colony," and urged Baptists to be in the vanguard of protecting the right to dissent.

"Madalyn Murray O'Hair has the same constitutional right to a platform as does Billy Graham," he said.

Walter E. Fauntroy, pastor of New Bethel Baptist Church of Washington, and the District of Columbia delegate to the House of Representatives, said the growing influence of Moral Majority is "declaring bad news" to the nation.

"They are trying to apply Christian principles to a narrow range of secondary issues, but refusing to apply Christian principles to a broad range of primary issues."

He said he opposes abortion, but also is concerned with "the child after it is born," as he decried reductions in the school lunch and other federal plans designed to aid the "poor and naked and imprisoned."

Fauntroy also charged that the Reagan administration has "launched the most extraordinary attempt to redistribute the wealth of this country from the poor to the very rich."

Jim Wallis, editor of Sojourners Magazine, told participants "There is no safety net. That is a lie. I want to testify to the falsehood of that public policy."

Wallis, who currently is serving a 30-day jail sentence on weekends for protesting an arms exhibit, said, "God's passion for poor people" has been cut out of too much of American evangelism.

"Evangelism in the D.C. jail and in the city," he said, "must have centrally to do with the fact that the gospel is good news to the poor people. If it is not good news to the poor people, it is not good news to most of the people in this city."

Two long-time friends, Marc Tanenbaum, interreligious affairs director for the American Jewish Committee, and Jimmy R. Allen, a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, discussed the limits of evangelism, agreeing there is a difference between evangelism and proselytization.

Allen, now president of the SBC Radio and Television Commission, said Baptists are committed to "true evangelism" which involves the freedom to accept or reject God's offer of grace in Jesus Christ.

Emmett V. Johnson, director of evangelism for the American Baptist Churches, said the "magnetism of the gospel" attracts persons to Christ, not government support. "Authentic evangelism cannot stoop to illegitimate ways," he declared.

In a summary of the conference, William F. Keucher, president of the American Baptist Churches, U.S.A., and pastor of Covenant Baptist Church in Detroit, said "A faith that is free requires religious freedom."

He contrasted such freedom with the "inflexible rigidity" of the new Religious Right.

To follow their agenda, he said, "would be to return to the colonial experience when all life was under the auspices of the church," to repeal the Bill of Rights, to make conformity the law of the land, to cloud the competency of the individual soul, to limit religious freedom for nonconformists, to cripple the meaning of faith by requiring religious rituals in schools, and to "stitch up the veil of the temple" by putting women into enforced submission.

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Constitutional Issues
Dissected at Conference

By Larry Chesser

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10/7/81

WASHINGTON (BP)--Proposals to require the teaching of scientific creationism and state mandated prayer in public schools and to provide tuition tax credits for parents of parochial school children were assailed by representatives of organizations dedicated to preserving First Amendment freedoms.

Leaders from the American Civil Liberties Union, People for the American Way and Americans United for Separation of Church and State warned participants at the biennial Religious Liberty Conference sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs that such proposals constitute a serious threat to religious liberty.

John M. Swomley, chairman of the ACLU's church-state committee, charged that legislation requiring the teaching of scientific creationism in public schools--such as a law recently enacted in Arkansas--amounts to the establishment of a sectarian belief as law.

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"Scientific creationism is sectarian because Jewish, Roman Catholic and most major Protestant groups do not teach it or accept it," said Swomley, who teaches Christian ethics at St. Paul School of Theology, Kansas City, Mo.

Noting the plurality of religious beliefs about creation, Swomley said "When religious groups differ, it is not the function of the state to be the referee and to choose one religious interpretation by making it orthodox or prescribing it for science courses in public schools."

He contended the First Amendment prevents "any and all sectarian groups from making their doctrines the law of the state."

The ACLU, joined by numerous religious leaders including Nathan Porter, domestic hunger consultant for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, is challenging the Arkansas law in the courts.

Representing People for the American Way, Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James M. Dunn, challenged the claim that pending school prayer proposals would restore "voluntary" prayer.

The issue is not to put prayer back in schools, Dunn said. It is to put in "state sanctioned prayer."

"Much of the effort is ignorant," Dunn added. "You hear it called 'putting God in schools.' It is as if the Divine could be dumped into a wheelbarrow and carted out."

The Baptist church-state specialist further challenged the notion that the moral decay of the nation can be attributed to the absence of school prayer.

"The charge that everything went wrong because they threw prayer out of schools is patent poppycock," Dunn said, noting that mandated prayer in schools "hasn't returned purity to Sweden or peace to Northern Ireland."

R.G. Puckett, executive director of Americans United, criticized a growing list of tuition tax credit proposals before Congress which would allow parents of parochial school children to deduct various portions of their educational expenses from their tax bills.

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Jennings To Hospital
Communications Post

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Roy Jennings, communications executive at the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission for 22 years, has resigned to direct a new office of communications for Baptist Memorial Hospital, Memphis, effective Nov. 1.

Joseph H. Powell, hospital president, said the new office will handle public relations, news, art, photographic and field services, advertising and printing for the three units of Baptist Hospital, and will serve as a consultant to regional affiliated hospitals. Baptist Hospital is owned by the Baptist state conventions of Arkansas, Mississippi and Tennessee.

Jennings, 57, director of communications at the commission, was on the editorial staff of the Commercial Appeal, Memphis, for 10 years before joining the commission. He will continue his 21-year string as copy chief at the SBC news room.

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