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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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82-22

## Colson Asks Changes In Criminal Justice System

WB  
By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP)--Making his first appearance before a congressional panel since testifying eight years ago on Watergate crimes, Charles W. Colson called on Congress to make sweeping changes in the way the federal criminal system is run.

The Southern Baptist layman, founder and president of Prison Fellowship, told a House subcommittee considering an overhaul of the federal criminal code, that incarceration of non-violent criminals is counterproductive in that it often hardens prisoners into permanent criminals while costing taxpayers millions.

He told the panel, headed by Rep. John Conyers Jr., D-Mich., that the politically popular view that imprisoning people solves crime is "one of the myths that needs to be exploded."

Colson, who has become increasingly outspoken in his criticism of the criminal justice system since founding his interdenominational fellowship in 1976, declared that instead of rehabilitating criminals, "prisons are more a part of the problem than they are of the solution."

As an example, he cited the care of a fellow inmate he met during the seven months he served in federal prison for his role in the Watergate crimes. The inmate, although he was a medical doctor who had once been president of the American Medical Association, was not allowed under federal law to practice his profession inside the prison.

Such attitudes toward prisoners, Colson said, are "100 years behind time" and unlike those in any other modern nation.

He warned that unless attitudes toward prisoners change, "we will bankrupt this country by turning it into one gigantic prison."

Asked by Conyers to describe the ministry of his organization, Colson noted it got its start when he and U. S. Sen. Harold Hughes began talking about Colson's life after he was released. Noting that during his years as White House counsel he and Hughes had been political enemies, he credited the former Iowa senator, himself a recovering alcoholic, with helping win him to Christ and change the direction of his life.

Furthermore, Colson explained, he "couldn't forget the hurts and needs" he had seen in prison.

Colson and Hughes sought and obtained permission from Federal Prison Administrator Norman Carlson to take 10 Christian inmates out of prison for a brief seminar to train them how to minister to fellow prisoners. When the experiment proved fruitful, Colson explained, the program was repeated.

Colson, who has visited 225 prisons offering his personal testimony of a changed life through Jesus Christ, told the House panel 150 prisons now have Prison Fellowship chapters. The organization he heads has grown from a 1976 budget of \$80,000 to this year's \$5 million, with a staff of 140, many of whom are ex-offenders.

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He urged that the proposed new criminal code, under attack from both liberals and conservatives despite its support for such widely polarized politicians as Sen. Strom Thurmond and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, recognize that "stuffing more and more people into prisons" will make the problem of crime worse.

Instead, Colson urged implementation of the biblical principle of restitution, the view that criminals be required to restore to their victims what was taken from them when the crime was committed. He said that nearly 40 percent of present prisoners in the U.S. are serving time for property offenses and other non-violent crimes.

He cited the recent example of six federal inmates in a Georgia prison who were released in order to winterize the home of an 82-year-old Atlanta woman, blind since birth. At first, he noted, the woman was terrified at the idea.

But, Colson went on, "We saw a reconciliation and a healing" during the days the work proceeded, so much that by the final day the woman had invited the inmates into her living room, where they sang "Amazing Grace" as she played the organ.

Colson told the panel such scenes are commonplace wherever the principle of restitution is being practiced.

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Catholics Best Friends  
Of Greece, N.Y. Baptists

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Baptist Press  
2/8/82

GREECE, N.Y. (BP)--St. Mark's Catholic Church and its priest are about the best friends Southern Baptists have in the Rochester suburb of Greece, N.Y.

When the Baptist congregation, a struggling group trying to establish an identity, had no place to meet, St. Mark's offered their building. Now that the Community Baptist Church is trying to raise \$140,000 to move a landmark Methodist church to their building site, the largest single gift has come from St. Mark's.

Members of Community Baptist, the only Southern Baptist congregation between there and Buffalo, 75 miles away, have had an identity crisis, shuffling between temporary meeting places. The 30 to 35 members that attend regularly often had to depend on telephone communication to find out where the church was meeting next. That has limited growth, says pastor William A. Barclay Jr.

Sunday mornings they meet in the town hall, but that is off limits at other times. So Sunday nights and Thursday nights, they meet in the Catholic church. The traditional Wednesday night prayer meeting is scheduled for Thursday to avoid conflict with the Catholics' Wednesday night Bingo.

The rare relationship between the two churches has drawn a lot of media attention in the area. Barclay says the resultant publicity from the television and newspaper stories has helped establish his church as a viable community fixture. Also helpful in garnering publicity is the fact the building they plan to move to a 4.6 acre site they own is a 106-year-old historical landmark.

They have only until the end of the summer to raise the necessary funds to move the building or it will be torn down, Barclay says. They have only \$20,000 in hand. The largest single gift in that amount is the \$800 St. Mark's raised in a special offering.

Joseph Donovan, St. Mark's priest, participates in many of the Baptist church functions and a pulpit exchange between the two is planned sometime next year.

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Salvadoran Troops In N. C.  
Lashed By Raleigh Pastor

WB

WASHINGTON (BP)--A North Carolina Baptist pastor joined other Tar Heel citizens at a press conference to denounce the use of a military installation at Fort Bragg, N.C., to train Salvadoran troops.

W. W. Finlator, pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C., expressed outrage that "the soil of North Carolina is the area where Salvadoran soldiers are being trained to commit further atrocities upon Salvadoran people."

Finlator criticized what he described as the "militaristic posture and saber-rattling" of the two North Carolina senators, Jesse Helms and John P. East, warning that their views "bring us closer to the final holocaust and omnicide."

Finlator further questioned the consistency of U.S. support for the people of Poland in their resistance to an oppressive government while simultaneously sending "money and munitions to a country hundreds of miles away to keep in power a tyrannical and oligarchic government the brave people of El Salvador are resisting to the death."

The Baptist pastor--long outspoken in human rights and other public issues--warned that another Vietnam "is, and has been, in the making" in El Salvador.

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Sisk To Direct Programs  
Of Peace, Alcohol For CLC

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Baptist Press  
2/8/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Ronald D. Sisk, 32, has been elected director of program development for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, the moral concerns agency of the 13.7 million-member denomination.

Sisk, who joined the staff Feb. 1, will have assignments in the areas of peace with justice, alcohol education and action and the development of new programs related to Christian social concern and action, according to Foy Valentine, Christian Lif Commission executive director.

Sisk has been pastor of the Forks of Elkhorn Baptist Church in Midway, Ky., for the past two years and is to be a May 1982 candidate for the doctor of philosophy degree in Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He is a native of Texas who grew up in Arkansas. Sisk was a professor's assistant at Southern seminary from 1978-80 and before that was an instructor in history and political science at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff.

He earned a master of arts degree from New York University and the bachelor of arts degree from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville.

Sisk was a summer missionary to New York City and then served as a US2 home missionary in New York University in 1971-72.

He is married to the former Sheryl Sims of Denver, Col., and is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ray V. Sisk of Pine Bluff, Ark.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Christian Life Commission.

Annuity Board Adds Programs,  
Approaches \$1 Billion in Assets

DB  
By Ray Furr

DALLAS (BP)--The addition of several programs and the approach to \$1 billion in assets highlighted the Southern Baptist Annuity Board report to its trustees.

In 1981 the board added a Foreign Mission Board missionary pension plan, developed a voluntary annuity plan, inaugurated a church insurance program and a new short-term pension investment opportunity and appointed a church pension study committee.

Assets increased nearly \$90 million to \$896,535,999. Board officials anticipate passing \$1 billion in assets this year.

In the 64th annual report to the trustees in Dallas, Annuity Board President Darold H. Morgan called the addition of the Foreign Mission Board missionary pension plan a major step for the two boards. The Foreign Mission Board decided last December to upgrade retirement benefits for its missionaries and administer the plans through the Annuity Board.

"Beginning at the end of January we began sending pension checks to 350 new missionary annuitants and added 2,880 new missionary retirement accounts," said Morgan.

Despite the difficult challenges of 1981, the Annuity Board paid a record \$24,298,521 in retirement benefits. "In one month (January 1982) we paid \$2,480,798 in retirement benefits. It is exciting to see so many more people getting the help they so richly deserve," Morgan said.

Passage of the Economic Recovery Tax Act made it possible for the Annuity Board to offer the Voluntary Annuity Plan effective Jan. 1, 1982. Employees of all state or national Southern Baptist agencies or churches may contribute tax deductible contributions up to \$2,000 annually to their retirement accounts of the Voluntary Annuity Plan, even if they already participate in an employer-sponsored pension plan.

The Voluntary Annuity Plan is the board's response to the expanded Individual Retirement Account (IRA), approved by Congress last August.

A new church insurance program to meet the needs of Southern Baptist church personnel was launched Jan. 1, 1982. The program consists of a term life plan, a comprehensive medical plan and a long-term disability plan.

Development of the new insurance program included a new technical system to administer it. The Annuity Board now has the capability of billing members for the exact balance due and gives the member a part of the bill to keep for his records. Premiums for the insurance program are returned directly to the Annuity Board and processed by new optical character recognition equipment which reads the bill, credits the member's account, microencodes, endorses and microfilms the check.

Another retirement investment fund, the Short-Term Fund, was added in January. The new fund enables members in the Southern Baptist retirement plans to take advantage of high short-term interest rates. "Money in this fund will be invested in short-term money market instruments with maturities of 12 months or less," said Morgan. The Short-Term Fund is one of four investment opportunities that the board offers its members.

A Church Pension Study Committee was appointed last July to study and recommend a new church pension plan for church personnel. The committee is expected to make an announcement on its recommendations to the trustees early in 1983.

Cooperative Program funds for relief, the only Cooperative Program funds received by the board, totaled \$357,200.

A 13th check was sent to annuitants who retired before 1980. Those annuitants who retired in 1980 and 1981 received their 13th check bonus in their 12th check.

Membership in the Church Annuity Plan increased to 58,930 in Plan B and 4,193 in Plan C. The old Plan A is phasing out in favor of more current investment opportunities. It dropped from 20,527 participants to 19,299.

Member contributions to the retirement program and insurance premium payments totaled \$78.8 million.

Gene P. Daniel was promoted to senior vice president of marketing from vice president and director of development agencies, and Bobbie Burkett was promoted from acting director of public relations to director of public relations.

Trustee Chairman Charles L. Holland Jr., and Vice Chairman Luther N. Davis were re-elected for a second term.