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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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82-119

### Congressional Calendar Crowding School Prayer Amendment Hearing

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--With time running short in the 97th Congress, the Senate Judiciary Committee resumed hearings Aug. 19 on President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment on school prayer.

In the second of what now appears will be three hearings, Deputy Attorney Edward G. Schmults and television evangelist M.G. "Pat" Robertson voiced strong support for the controversial measure while Southern Baptist minister John Buchanan joined other educational and religious leaders in denouncing it.

A third hearing scheduled for mid-September, coupled with an expected early October adjournment of Congress, leaves the amendment's backers with a tight schedule to bring the measure to the Senate floor for a vote.

The prayer amendment's chances in the House of Representatives are even slimmer. There, Judiciary Committee leaders have made no secret of their intention of letting the measure die in committee and effort to bypass the committee appears to have run out of time for this session. House backers mustered less than 50 of the necessary 218 signatures by the deadline for using a discharge petition before the targeted adjournment date.

If Congress adjourns in early October, "we will not have a floor vote this year," said an aid to Rep. Thomas N. Kindness, R-Ohio, the primary House sponsor.

The inability of the House to get a discharge petition out in time "was anticipated," a Senate Judiciary Committee spokesman told Baptist Press. He added, however, that chairman J. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., still hopes to move the measure out of committee for a floor vote before November's congressional elections.

Meanwhile, it remained uncertain whether the Senate would vote on a different school prayer proposal offered by Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., as a rider to the debt ceiling bill pending on the Senate floor. The Helms proposal to strip the Supreme Court and lower federal courts of jurisdiction in school prayer cases ran into a strong bipartisan filibuster which threatened its chances of passage.

In the hearing on the Reagan proposal, Schmults testified that the amendment is intended to restore the law governing school prayer to what it had been before the controversial 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions banning state-sponsored prayer and Bible reading in public school classrooms. Before those rulings such activities "were thought not to be unconstitutional," Schmults said.

Under the amendment, Schmults said the selection of the "particular prayer" used in a classroom "would be left to the judgment of local communities based on a consideration of such factors as the desires of parents, students, teachers and other community interests consistent with applicable with state law."

Robertson pointed to polls supporting a prayer amendment and challenged the testimony of religious leaders who opposed the amendment at an earlier hearing. "I am convinced these church officials do not speak for the rank and file of the American people," he said.

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Buchanan, appearing on behalf of People for the American Way, told the panel the amendment is unnecessary. "Many people mistakenly believe the Supreme Court has outlawed prayer in public schools," he said. "It has not."

Buchanan, who serves as a consultant to the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, listed several negative results he sees if the amendment is enacted and ratified.

"It will amend the Bill of Rights, which has served us well for almost 200 years," he said. "It will strip children of the religious freedom they now enjoy. Mormon children in New York City, Protestant children in Baltimore, Jewish children in Dallas and non-Mormon children in Salt Lake City will have their personal religious beliefs contradicted at worst and trivialized at best.

"It will provoke endless legal turmoil as lawsuits and countersuits are filed over the definitions of 'prayer' and 'voluntary.' Scarce school funds will be wasted on legal fees."

Also opposing the Reagan amendment were representatives of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, National Education Association, National Coalition for Public Education and Religious Liberty, the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church and the General Board of Church and Society, United Methodist Church.

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Self, Cothen Decry Tactics  
To Divert SBC From Missions

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists are in danger of being stampeded from their goals of missions and evangelism into a swamp of creedalism, a Southern Baptist pastor told approximately 2,200 women attending a Woman's Missionary Union leadership conference.

"There are those within the convention who are trying to substitute a creed for the Lordship of Jesus Christ," said William L. Self, pastor of Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta, warning that creedalism would destroy the mission God has for Southern Baptists.

"We need some leadership across the convention that says we are going on with the goals of Bold Mission Thrust," Self said, referring to the Southern Baptist plan to give every person in the world an opportunity to hear the gospel and respond to it by the year 2000.

Self praised the WMU women saying they have an "internal compass that keeps Southern Baptists focused on Bold Mission. You have refused to listen to the siren call of those who would take that which God has called us to do and put us on another road."

He also shared his concern over the influence of para-church groups among Southern Baptists. "You're not going to learn what a church is from a para-church organization that is trying to fleece the sheep," Self charged. "Christ died for the church--not for a para-church organization."

Self warned that unless Southern Baptists are educated in doctrine they will be diverted from their main task of missions. "We have a generation that doesn't know doctrine," Self said, "and it will be this generation that will decide if we will enter the promised land God has called us to or if we will go back into the wilderness to wander."

He also expressed distress over the mood of this year's Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans saying there are factions within the convention that would substitute Southern Baptists' spiritual mission with a political agenda.

"There are some who, in the name of freedom and priority, have substituted the destruction of the Cooperative Program (the Southern Baptist unified giving plan) so they can have the freedom to do with their monies as they wish," he said.

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Earlier during the conference Grady Cothen, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, also expressed concern about the Cooperative Program. He charged there is currently talk among some Southern Baptists "saying 'give just enough (to the Cooperative Program) to elect the maximum number of messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention'."

"But," he added, "there is no such thing as 'giving enough' to the Cooperative Program until every last, lost person on earth has heard the name of Jesus Christ."

Cothen condemned the use of the Cooperative Program for personal gain or for private manipulation among some factions in the SBC. "When we talk about the Cooperative Program we'r talking about the witness of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth," he said.

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Uncontrolled Desire Launched  
Nairobi Violence, Tope Feels

By Robert O'Brien

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8/19/82

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--"Desire out of control" ripped back the "thin veneer of civilization" and launched mobs on a mindless pillage of Nairobi a Southern Baptist missionary told a Voice of Kenya radio audience, Sunday morning Aug. 15.

Charles Tope's sermon on the commandment against covetousness was broadcast as citizens of Nairobi still reeled from the impact of massive looting--said to exceed \$50 million in unrecoverable damages--accompanying an abortive coup attempt Aug. 1-2.

It also followed the week-long annual meeting of Southern Baptist missionaries in Kenya in which mission leaders said the coup attempt did not disrupt any mission work except student ministries at the University of Nairobi.

Kenya government leaders closed the university for an undetermined period because of reported student sympathy with the coup attempt and their involvement with looting. They ordered students to report to their home districts throughout the country.

Tope referred repeatedly to the looting during the 45-minute program produced by the Baptist communications service of the Baptist Mission of Kenya. "During those few terrible hours when restraint and law and order broke down, it occurred to me that we were seeing human nature at its worst," he said. Repeated incidents of rape, murder, brutality and destruction of property accompanied the looting.

"I could not help but wonder as I watched that spectacle how many of those looting and plundering would have said if asked, 'Oh yes, I am a Christian'," Tope commented sadly.

Many citizens, particularly those in the middle-class Asian business community, suffered severely through the violence. More than 400 businesses in the downtown area alone wer reported destroyed while homes were looted and moments of terror reported throughout the city.

A broadcast on the Tenth Commandment--which proclaims a person should not covet what belongs to another--was already scheduled as the last of a series on the Biblical Ten Commandments provided to Voice of Kenya by various Nairobi religious organizations.

"The Tenth Commandment is a unique word given by Moses from God," declared Tope, a former Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board member from Oklahoma who is pastor of Nairobi's Parklands Baptist Church. "It is a law which no policeman can ever enforce."

Defining covetousness as "desire out of control," Tope challenged his listeners to look inward to examine their own motivation and warned them to avoid the delusion that the acquisition of things will lead to happiness.

In the days following the outbreak Tope has visited in decimated shops to tell proprietors, most not Christian, that he's sorry for what happened to them, he's praying for them and he hopes people will realize they can't put all their confidence in material things.

One old shop owner, responding appreciatively to Tope's concern, pointed skyward and responded in Swahili, "It's okay. God is there."

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Sunday School Board Announces  
 Nationwide Satellite Seminar

By Linda Lawson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A nationwide satellite seminar to introduce the Adult Sunday School Growth Emphasis to 9,000 persons in approximately 90 cities will be telecast at noon (EST) Oct. 26, according to officials at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Using the Holiday Inn Satellite Network (Hi-Net), a one-hour program will be beamed to sessions in major cities in 24 states. In a few locations where Holiday Inn facilities are not available the seminar will be held in churches.

A local pastor, minister of education or associational or state Sunday School leader will serve as host and seminar director at each location.

Larry Shotwell, supervisor of the adult program section in the board's Sunday School department, said the live portions of the program will be presented from a Nashville studio.

The program will feature Sunday School department director Harry Piland, Shotwell, other adult Sunday School consultants and videotaped interviews with church leaders.

"The purpose of the seminar is to make churches aware of the tremendous need for giving priority to adult growth in the 8.5 by '85 emphasis (an effort to increase SBC Sunday School enrollment to 8.5 million by Sept. 30, 1985)," said Shotwell.

"The use of satellite technology for this seminar also will serve as a pilot test for some of the kinds of programs we plan to make available through Baptist TelNet (a satellite network to churches to be launched by the board in 1984)," said Ralph McIntyre, director of the Bible teaching division.

The seminar program will include the introduction of "Powerpacket for an Adult Class," a concept and materials "to cause adults to witness to unsaved adults across our nation." The Powerpacket will be used in the television program and copies will be distributed to participants at each location.

Shotwell said selected locations will have two-way communication capability to enable participants to ask questions during the program. Following the satellite transmission local directors will answer questions from participants at each location.

Local directors, who also will be responsible for promoting attendance among key leaders from a wide representation of churches at each location, are being enlisted and trained. The \$10 seminar cost will include a meal (lunch in the Eastern, Central and Mountain time zones and breakfast in the Pacific zone).

Shotwell said locations and local directors will be announced in September.

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Two Baptists Ask Continued Ban  
 On Liquor Broadcast Advertising

By Duann Kier

Baptist Press  
 8/19/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A Tennessee battle over advertising hard liquor on radio and television could provide a preview of future struggles in other states.

Jerry M. Self, public affairs and Christian life consultant with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and Ronald D. Sisk, director of program development for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, are opposing a move by the Tennessee Association of Broadcasters (TAB) to win permission for such advertising.

The Baptists have asked the Alcohol Beverage Commission of Tennessee (ABC) to let stand a ruling prohibiting the holders of liquor-by-the-drink permits from advertising alcoholic beverages on radio and television.

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The statement directly opposes one submitted by the broadcasters which claims the present rule discriminates since no other media are as "fettered" by the ABC as broadcasters and this amounts to censorship and the violation of their First Amendment rights.

Self and Sisk pointed out discrimination occurs only when similar cases are treated dissimilarly and that alcohol advertising is similar to tobacco advertising (which is prohibited in the broadcast media but allowed in newspapers and magazines). This is due, they said, because of the dangers of the product and the greater influence of the broadcast media on the public.

"No group in the nation has a greater history of defense of First Amendment rights than Southern Baptists," the statement said. "In this instance, however, we believe restriction of broadcast advertising is justified by virtue of the statistically greater influence of the broadcast media on public perceptions and the dangers associated with alcohol consumption.

The Southern Baptists based their argument on a Michigan State University study commissioned by the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. The study indicated: (1) people pay more attention to alcohol advertising on television than in magazines (2) both youth and adults who are highly exposed to alcohol advertising approve higher levels of alcohol consumption before driving than those not highly exposed and (3) young people are already more highly exposed to alcohol advertising than any other age group.

"We oppose any action which might increase the exposure of this highly vulnerable age group (youth) to liquor advertising," Self and Sisk said.

Since the proposed rule change applies to advertising for restaurants, they said, it might reasonably be expected that the ads would increase the number of people driving to those establishments for the purpose of consuming alcoholic beverages and "increase the number of drunk and drinking drivers on the highways."

According to Self and Sisk, the prohibition is consistent with the National Association of Broadcasters Code of Good Practice which forbids the advertising of distilled spirits by member stations. Enforcement problems, stated by the TAB, concerning technological advances such as super satellite stations feeding cable systems and individual receivers should not be used as excuses for lowering advertising standards, they said.

"While the legal status of that code (Good Practice) is currently a matter of dispute, we do not believe at this time the argument that Tennessee is out of step with national practices is valid. Nor should Tennessee base its policies on what may or may not be happening elsewhere," the Southern Baptists said. "The question before the Commission (ABC) should not be decided on the basis of alleged revenue claims by broadcasters or restaurateurs but on the basis of the welfare of the people," they concluded.

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Glorieta Fire Causes  
Minor Smoke Damage

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8/19/82

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Burning insulation in Texas Main Hall at Glorieta Baptist Conference Center forced the evacuation of the housing unit for seven hours Aug. 18 but there were no injuries reported and only minor smoke damage.

Smoke detectors and fire alarms which had been installed in 1981 alerted the Glorieta Fire Department when insulation surrounding a basement water heater began to smolder. The Pecos Fire Department was called as a back-up unit but was not needed.

According to conference center manager Larry Haslam, Texas Main was quickly evacuated and secured and conference center personnel removed guests' clothing from the building to minimize smoke damage. The laundromat was opened to anyone whose clothing was affected by the smoke and arrangements made to have other clothing dry cleaned.

Repair and clean-up crews had the hall ready for guests to return to their rooms by 4 p.m. Approximately 3,200 college students were attending Student Week at Glorieta.

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