



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Captian Kangaroo Unhappy  
With Broadcasters' Values

Co  
By Greg Warner

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Bob Keeshan, better known to millions as TV's "Captain Kangaroo," says broadcasters are shirking their responsibilities for teaching values to America's youth.

"There is no way to defend the exploitative programming we see on Saturday morning," Keeshan challenged. "It is not really designed to enhance the child's well-being in any way but to exploit children and sell products."

Keeshan made the remarks when interviewed for programs produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission. He also met with commission officials to lend insight and counsel on producing programs for children.

The 55-year-old Keeshan, who created the Captain in 1955, still has the warm, soft-spoken personality that has endeared him to two generations of preschoolers. But when the subject turns to parenting, values or the status of children's television, he speaks with a frankness and intensity not known to his fans.

Keeshan said broadcasters rely too heavily on audience ratings and advertising dollars to determine what programs to air. Children (and other minority groups) suffer because they do not constitute a large audience or spend a lot of money.

But Keeshan also criticized the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for reducing requirements on broadcasters to carry specific types of programs.

"I spent the last 15 years as a broadcaster talking against regulation, saying broadcasters are responsible human beings who don't need to be told by the FCC to do this or that," he said. "Now that the threat of regulation has been removed, I've seen a lot of broadcasters make a liar of me. They have not acted responsibly."

"Captain Kangaroo," the only daily children's program on commercial network television, will lose that distinction soon when CBS shifts the show from its weekday spot to weekends.

For 26 years, the hour-long "Captain Kangaroo" was a mainstay of CBS's morning lineup. But the network cut the program down to a half hour in September 1981, and moved it to 6:30 a.m. in January to make room for a news program. The latest move will put the Captain on one hour Saturday and Sunday morning.

Keeshan sees those changes as a blow to children's programming. Under the new 'marketplace' approach to regulation, he said, "the Captain went by the wayside." Other children's programs will also disappear, he predicted, or be relegated to cable TV or other paid-subscription services.

"But only about 30 percent of the nation is wired for cable and they tend to be more affluent," he continued. "Very often the disadvantaged family, which uses and needs television more than the average family, cannot afford it. We would hate to see this nation with only two systems of television--pay TV and 'poor TV'."

What hasn't changed since 1955 is the purpose of Keeshan's work.

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"I am dealing with children between two and five years of age, a very formative period of their lives," he explained. "My main concern is to make the child feel valuable--that he has a future, a reason for being on earth."

The Captain credits his Christian upbringing and education with molding his values and those on his show. Born in Lynbrook, N.Y., Keeshan attended Fordham University, a Jesuit school in New York City.

He intended to be a lawyer but while working as a page for NBC in 1947 he was dubbed by the creator of "Howdy Doody" to play several small roles on the new show. Keeshan went on to create several children's programs of his own.

By the time Keeshan started "Captain Kangaroo" in 1955, he and his wife, Jeanne, had three children, which affected the way he viewed his job.

"The values in my program are very much my personal values," he said. "There is very little line to be drawn between the Captain and Bob Keeshan. But I don't have the right to usurp the privilege and prerogative of parents (in order) to preach a specific philosophy," he warned. Instead he substitutes "universal" values for uniquely Christian ones.

"I was quite serious in my thinking about television and its potential, particularly in giving young people values," he remembered. "I look back 35 years later and see, particularly in commercial television, we have failed to meet all those expectations. At least I have."

"When we watch a game show we may laugh and think that's funny or just entertaining. But a child, with a limited frame of reference, sees these silly people with their silly costumes competing for dollars. Values are being given there. Greed and avarice are being rewarded and applauded."

Keeshan also scores parents who use the TV as a babysitter, a practice he calls one of the 'misdemeanors' of child abuse.

"Here is a three-year-old with a sandbox experience to relate which may not be very important to the parent but is extremely important to the child. We say, 'Later. Go watch television.' But we don't talk later, or tomorrow or the next day. And all of a sudden the child is 12, 13 or 14 years of age and in some kind of difficulty. But it's too late."

Rather than concentrating on remedies for teen-age problems, Keeshan contended, a society would be wiser to teach parenting skills and invest in good children's programs. "We would end up with a richer, more stable society where people care about each other," he concluded.

"Every adult must take responsibility for the way our children are raised," he said. "If we don't fulfill that responsibility our nation is in trouble. And the Lord help the nation if the marketplace is going to take care of the children. That implies only one thing."

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Grady Cothen Hospitalized  
For Tests, Minor Surgery

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9/30/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Baptist Sunday School Board president Grady C. Cothen entered a Nashville hospital Sept. 26 for a series of exhaustive tests and minor corrective surgery.

Cothen, 62, entered St. Thomas hospital after experiencing continuing health problems. No evidence of any problem related to Cothen's 1980 stomach surgery for cancer was indicated.

He was expected to be released after a stay of three to five days.

Because of continuing medical problems, Cothen asked Board trustees in August for medical retirement, effective March 1, 1984. The trustees elected a seven-member presidential search committee and adopted guidelines for selecting Cothen's successor by February 1983 or as soon thereafter as possible.

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Baylor Archaeologists  
Discover Rare Writings

By Nancy Barcus

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WACO, Texas (BP)--A team of Baylor University archaeologists has discovered in modern Israel a rare message from 26 centuries ago.

Scrawled on fragments of broken pottery, the message is one of few ever recovered from the Iron Age--700 years before the birth of Christ.

Five pottery fragments unearthed in recent weeks during the first stages of an Iron Age fort excavation shed light on the days of the prophet Jeremiah, according to Bruce Cresson, director of Baylor's Institute of Archaeological Studies.

The Baylor group, assisted by an archaeologist from Tel Aviv University, performed the excavation under an agreement with the Israeli government.

"Herbrew scholars' eyes light up when we tell them of our find," Cresson said. The "ostraca," as the pottery fragments are called, are being studied closely to add to the little that is known about ancient Hebrew language and handwriting. They also confirm details of Old Testament culture, including such daily matters as food, supplies and family names.

The first translation of the Hebrew inscription released to the public is of three Hebrew names ending with the word for "Yahweh," or God: Adonaiyahu, Zedekyahu and Shemaryahu.

Some of the ostraca probably contain warnings of the eventual destruction of these people, Cresson speculated. At the time the writings were made, people living in the fortress--today called Horvat Uza--were under threat of invasion from the Babylonians. They also feared their neighbors, the Edomites.

A similar fort just five miles away recently yielded the only other substantial messages from this period. Several ostraca found there contained warnings about such an invasion--perhaps the same one that destroyed Horvat Uza, Cresson said.

"So little is known about this period of Hebrew culture," he said. Although early Egyptian and Mesopotamian peoples left written records, fewer than 250 inscribed pottery fragments from the Hebrew Iron Age have ever been discovered--most of them in this area.

Writing on pottery fragments was the chief means of record keeping, for the flint-like desert stone was difficult to inscribe.

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(Barcus is a newswriter in the Baylor office of public relations)

(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Baylor University

Reagan Prayer Amendment  
Stalled In 97th Congress

WB  
By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press  
9/30/82

WASHINGTON (BP)--The fate of President Reagan's campaign for a constitutional amendment on prayer in public schools apparently will be passed on to the 98th Congress to convene in January.

Senate Judiciary Committee chairman J. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., has told President Reagan he will push for the amendment in the next Congress, sending another strong signal that the proposal is going nowhere in the remaining days of the 97th Congress.

Thurmond's committee has held three days of hearings on the amendment, but no further action is scheduled.

Reagan's proposal made even less progress in the House of Representatives where it has been bottled up in Judiciary Committee. An effort to force a floor vote by bypassing the committee--called a discharge petition--has produced less than 60 of the necessary 218 signatures.

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How fast and how far the amendment will move in the next Congress is open to speculation. However, Thurmond's press aide told Baptist Press getting the measure to the Senate floor in the next Congress "could take a very long time."

"I don't think it will breeze through committee," he said, adding quickly that his prediction doesn't mean there isn't support within the committee for the measure.

The current sponsor in the House, Rep. Thomas N. Kindness, R-Ohio, is expected to reintroduce the amendment next year according to an aide who also predicted it will take a discharge petition to get a floor vote on the House side.

"There isn't much prospect of Peter Rodino being defeated," she said, indicating the likely re-election of the House Judiciary Chairman from New Jersey as well as his continued opposition to the Reagan amendment.

The discharge petition "is a very difficult way to legislate," she said. "It is rarely successful."

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Run Of Century Attracts  
About 20,000 Participants

RB

Baptist Press  
9/30/82

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)—The Baptist-sponsored Run of the Century in Rio De Janeiro drew about 20,000 participants in one of the largest events of its kind.

Missionaries said the event drew headlines and accomplished its purpose to make Brazilians aware of the Baptist missions work.

The race was named Run of the Century by Brazil's national newspaper, O Globo, in recognition of Brazilian Baptists' 100th anniversary.

Heading the 6.2-mile run along with Julio Coutinho, mayor of Rio, was internationally known aerobics specialist Kenneth Cooper of Dallas, Texas. Cooper, a member of First Baptist Church, Dallas, is a national hero in Brazil. His name became synonymous with physical fitness there after he designed the training program which Brazilians believe helped their soccer team win the World Cup in 1970.

Before the event there were simultaneous "fun runs" several mornings in Rio. Cooper, his wife and others from the United States went to each of these to talk about running, physical fitness and spiritual fitness, including testimonies and witnessing. Cooper also spoke at a big military base, the Navy's physical education school and the top military school in the country.

Cooper and several well-known distance runners, including Jeff Wells, associate pastor of Calvary Baptist Church of Eugene, Ore., gave their testimonies at exercise classes on Copacabana beach and other places. Wells, who is a world class marathoner, won the race.

About 100 volunteers, mostly from Texas (as part of the Baptist General Convention of Texas' mission to Brazil), did evangelistic work during and immediately after the Run of the Century and reported hundreds of professions of faith. They distributed 9,000 tracts.

Extensive press coverage included TV interviews with Cooper and newspaper and national magazine articles.

"We think it gave us a very good image," said Edgar Hallock, Southern Baptist missionary and jogging enthusiast, who coordinated the event in Rio. "The name 'Cooper' is magic in Brazil and just the fact Baptists are interested in the physical well-being of people will also give us some favorable ground for good response. People know now about our centennial."

Cooper was also featured speaker at businessmen's luncheons involving top business and professional leaders of Rio.

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After one of the luncheons a man told the aerobics specialist, "You and I are probably two of the most famous runners in the world. I'm Ronald Biggs." Cooper recalled Biggs was a participant in the "Great Train Robbery" in England several years ago and fled to Brazil.

The British have never been able to convict and imprison Biggs but Cooper wondered if Biggs might be undergoing conviction by God.

Along with Baptists, sponsors for the Run of the Century were the large Bradesco Bank of Brazil and the Atlantica Vorvista Insurance Company.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

News Report In Error  
Leaders Of SBC Say

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Baptist Press  
9/30/82

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—A nationally-circulated news article, reporting the Southern Baptist Convention would co-sponsor a rally for Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin, is in error, SBC leaders say.

The report, circulated by United Press International, quoted Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell as saying he had agreed to co-sponsor a rally Nov. 16, in Dallas, with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary-treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee, said the Convention is not involved in the rally, although individual Southern Baptist pastors or churches might be.

SBC President James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, said he had been asked "months ago" to participate in a rally of support for Israel, but will not be in town on the scheduled date, so will not participate.

Draper said also he has some difficulties with a "rally," which he says "implies support ... almost like support for him (Begin) personally. While I wish to extend friendship and prayers, I do not wish to indicate political support in any way.

"I would not object to a private meeting with him. A private meeting would imply concern, not support. A rally implies support and I can't do that," Draper added.

Draper said that "neither the president, nor the convention issued any invitation. Any rally would be on a personal, individual basis."

Nelson Keener, administrative assistant to Falwell, said the Virginia pastor "never implied to UPI that the SBC would co-sponsor the rally. He never assumed the SBC would be involved in the sponsorship as a convention."

He added Falwell was aware that the persons involved in the rally were "just a group of interested and concerned pastors...."

Paige Patterson, a spokesman for First Baptist Church of Dallas, said: "We are willing to have a rally at First Baptist Church, and to have Mr. Begin come if he wishes to accept the invitation to speak."

He said, however, that such a rally is "anything but absolutely certain at this point."

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