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Anti-Pornography Drive Gets Presidential Boost

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--President Reagan pledged more vigorous enforcement of federal anti-pornography laws at a meeting with two dozen religious leaders who are crusading against pornography and obscenity.

The group, including Southern Baptists Adrian Rogers and Edward E. McAteer, was brought to the White House at the President's invitation by Morality in Media, a New York-based ecumenical anti-pornography organization. The group's president, Jesuit priest Morton Hill, said the meeting's main purpose of getting Reagan to declare war on the pornography industry was achieved.

In addition to spending 20 minutes with the group personally, Reagan and his staff arranged for leading officials of the four federal departments and agencies charged with enforcing the laws to spend two hours with the religious leaders discussing ways of fighting the traffic of pornographic materials. According to Morality in Media, the pornography industry grosses more than \$6 billion annually and is controlled in large measure by organized crime.

Hill said another objective of the meeting, to have Reagan appoint a special coordinator to encourage the fight by officials of the Justice Department, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Postal Service and U.S. Customs, was not immediately achieved, but the president is considering the option.

During the meeting, the religious spokesmen complained federal enforcement of anti-pornography statutes has become lax, particularly in recent years. Hill said whereas in 1975 federal authorities prosecuted 15,000 pornography cases, by 1980 the total had dropped by 90 percent to 1,500 prosecutions. Particularly criticized was U.S. Customs for going easy on the importation of pornographic materials from abroad. According to McAteer, 90 percent of such products come through the port of New York.

Rogers, who participated in a National Press Club news conference with Hill and others following the White House meeting, said he was "very gratified by the tone" of the meeting and predicted some "back burner" issues of concern to church leaders are about to be put on the front burner.

Rogers, president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1979-80, told Baptist Press he feels the fight against pornography is one of the issues around which Southern Baptists can rally in spite of theological differences. "This is one thing nearly all Southern Baptists are united on," he said.

Although he emphasized he participated in the meeting as an individual and not on behalf of Southern Baptists, Rogers said he told Reagan Baptists would stand behind him if he would take the lead in a new effort to banish pornography.

Asked what he would advise individual Southern Baptists to do in joining the battle, the Memphis, Tenn., pastor said they should write President Reagan to let him know of their encouragement in the new effort and become involved at the local level by initiating "a new birth of moral outcry" about the problems associated with pornography.

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The meeting with Reagan has given opponents of pornography new hope and "a flicker of momentum," he said.

McAteer, who along with Hill has organized a series of rallies across the country aimed at stirring up citizen activity against pornography, said he had volunteered to team up with the Jesuit priest, whose Morality in Media McAteer described as the "Cadillac" of the obscenity fighting organizations.

Referring to sexually graphic magazines at children's eye level in his own city of Memphis, McAteer exclaimed: "Boy, that would make you mad!"

Rogers concurred, saying some of the material on the group's hit list "is so vile it beleaguers description." Much more than "girlie" magazines are part of the traffic, he said, including sado-masochism, bestiality and "kiddie porn."

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Southeastern Trustees
Set \$5.2 Million Budget

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--In their spring meeting, trustees of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary elected Thomas R. McKibbens Jr., as associate professor of preaching; adopted a 1983-84 budget of \$5,201,276 and gave the go-ahead for final planning and bids on a new student center.

McKibbens, 35, a native of Alabama, is a graduate of the University of Mississippi and holds M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He has done further study at Regent's Park College, Oxford, and the University of St. Andrews.

The pastor of First Baptist Church, Bristol, Va., until early this year, McKibbens presently is on a study-leave and will join the Southeastern faculty in the summer of 1984. He will occupy the teaching post held since 1955 by J. Carroll Trotter who is retiring this July.

The new budget, a record, is slated to receive \$3,558,728 from the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention through the Cooperative Program. Representing 69 percent of the budget, the Cooperative Program makes it possible for the seminary to provide theological education without tuition. Students in 1983-84 will pay a \$250 matriculation fee each semester for educational expenses.

Construction of the student center concludes a long and detailed study into student activity needs. The new facility, to be funded with \$1 million from the Cooperative Program capital needs budget and the remainder from gifts, will provide the seminary with a center equipped with lounge and dining areas, post office, book store, meeting rooms, areas for sports and physical fitness and a center for commuting students. Total construction costs are estimated to be \$2,746,000.

The new student center will occupy Gore Gymnasium, long the scene of basketball and other athletic events for Wake Forest College prior to that school's move to Winston-Salem, N.C., in 1956.

Used by the seminary for student recreation since 1956, the facility will be completely modernized. A two-story wrap-around addition will add a lobby, offices, meeting rooms, handball courts, an elevator and stairs, as well as add a new entrance and provide a new, though complementary, appearance to the building. It is expected that contracts will be negotiated by fall with construction taking about a year.

The center will be named for Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Ledford of Raleigh, N.C., seminary benefactors. They are members of Raleigh's Hayes-Barton Baptist Church and he was co-chairman of the Board of Directors of Durham Life Insurance Co. prior to his retirement.

Other action by the trustees:

--granted tenure to William P. Clemmons, professor of Christian education;

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--approved sabbatical leaves during the 1983-84 year to Bruce P. Powers, professor of Christian education; John I. Durham, professor of Hebrew and Old Testament; Robert D. Dale, professor of pastoral leadership and church ministries, and B n S. Johnson, professor of music;

--adopted a new seminary logo developed by the Public Relations Council and

--established the following endowment funds: the Claud B. Bowen Fund for unrestricted endowment, in honor of the pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C., who for 19 years was a trustee of the seminary and for nine years its trustee chairman; the Charles Ray Rackley II Memorial Fund for student aid and the George T. Noel III Memorial Fund for scholarship purposes. (This action formally establishes a fund which has been in existence since 1962.)

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10,000 Tanzanian Children
Inoculated Against Measles

By Evelyn Knapp

Baptist Press
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BUKOKA, Tanzania (BP)--Ten thousand children have been inoculated against measles in a campaign to halt the spread of the killer disease in the Kagera Region of Tanzania. Another 5,000 will be inoculated during the next two months.

Southern Baptist missionaries David and Betty Whitson of Bukoba, Tanzania, have been the driving force behind the massive project. Government nurses and medical assistants injected the vaccine while local pastors, the Whitsons' grown sons and visitors from the United States helped prepare syringes during clinics in which 300-500 children were vaccinated each day.

Because of malnutrition and consequent lowered resistance, the children in developing countries are particularly susceptible to measles. The Tanzanian English-language newspaper, The Daily News, reported March 14 that the disease is responsible for 30 percent of all hospital deaths in the country.

International Lifeline, a United States medical relief agency, handled refrigerated shipping for the vaccine, donated by Merck, Sharp and Dohme, an American pharmaceutical company. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board paid for international shipping and all expenses related to the clinics.

The need for measles vaccinations was brought home to the Whitsons last year when one of the Baptist pastors attended a conference and reported all four of his children had died from measles. His wife, blaming him for the deaths, had left him. He felt his life was ruined. Most of the conference was spent trying to help the pastor and discussing what might be done to protect other children from measles.

The Whitsons determined to secure vaccine and inoculate all 40,000 children in the Kagera region where they live and work. As they began, others offered to help. John and Jonnie Scott, who were visiting the Whitsons from Dallas, got involved when they saw the needs firsthand. The Whitsons' sons, Drew and Scott, home from university for the summer, spent weeks driving the mission Land-Rover and filling syringes.

The missionary couple found it takes five volunteers working constantly to keep up with one person injecting vaccine. They hope to get an immunization "gun" in the future so medical personnel can move more quickly through the long lines of waiting children.

Help came too late for one woman and her sick child. David and Scott Whitson were driving to a clinic when the frantic woman waved them down. She had walked eight miles to get her sick child to the clinic. She had heard about the medicine missionaries had brought. Whitson explained that the medicine was to prevent measles, not to cure the disease. They drove on to a hospital, but the child was pronounced dead on arrival.

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(Evelyn Knapp is a HMB press representative in Tanzania.)

Daughter's Death Tests
Missionary Family's Faith

By Robert O'Brien

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)--Jim Richardson had always prayed God would not test the depth of his Christian faith--through family crisis.

But as his car careened at more than 60 miles an hour through congested traffic toward the Nairobi Hospital emergency room, another prayer dominated his thoughts. "Please, God, let her live, let her live, let her live," prayed the Southern Baptist missionary from Roanoke, Va., as he cradled his 9-year-old daughter's bleeding head on his lap.

A jolt still courses through his body whenever his mind replays the scene he watched helplessly in Nairobi, Kenya, on June 15, 1982--the last day of the school term for Sheri and the last day of her life. He can still see Sheri, dress caught in the door, dragged long the pavement by the Rosslyn Academy school bus.

Jim and Marcia Richardson haven't spent much time analyzing why God didn't answer the prayers. Instead, they have spent a lot of time exploring the resources of their Christian faith, learning how to let it grow enough to deal with their sorrow.

The Richardsons have fought off depression which led to lethargy and a "constant ache--almost physical ache" as they and 7-year-old Amy and 4-year-old Jay struggled to understand. They have not had to do it alone.

They credit a number of things with helping them cope--the love and ministry of both their missionary and Kenyan Baptist church "families," hundreds of letters from people in the United States who read of Sheri's death, mind-occupying work, Bible study, prayer and each other.

"But there comes a point at which friends or work or husband or wife can't help," says Marcia. "That's when you have to go it alone with the Lord. This has taught us to have faith that God will bring us through even when we can't feel it."

Shortly after Sheri's death, Richardson addressed the student body at Nairobi Baptist Centre which he directs in the city's needy Shauri Moyo area to "let them know where we were in our faith at that time."

A few days later, a Kenyan girl who had attended the assembly came to the Richardsons' house to talk and pray. Grieved by Sheri's death and aware of her own need, she accepted Christ as her Savior, as Sheri had done about six months before her death.

The Richardsons have sensed a deepened rapport with Kenyans in their community--especially the young people--who surrounded them with love as they grieved. "Before, they were a little standoffish with the 'Mzungu lama' (white mother)," Marcia explained of the young people in Shauri Moyo Baptist Church and the Nairobi Baptist Centre.

"When Sheri died, they hurt and they knew we were hurting, too," Richardson said. "They would come to our house and sit. In a sense, just sitting said, 'Pole' (poh-leh), the Swahili term which expresses heartfelt sorrow."

Throughout their ordeal, the Richardsons have impressed their friends with their openness and willingness to vent their grief rather than allow it to become impacted.

A visible sign of that openness came on a recent evening when the family sat down to watch a videotape and some slides taken of Sheri before her death. Jim's mother, Mrs. Hazel Richardson, and Marcia's parents, Dwight and Elizabeth Jones, watched with them. Mrs. Richardson was visiting from Roanoke, Va. Mr. and Mrs. Jones of Eldon, Mo., are in Nairobi on a one-year mission volunteer assignment.

Watching the videotape Richardson had taken of Sheri in a school play wasn't easy. "It ripped us apart," Marcia said. But it, too, played its part in venting their grief and allowing the entire family to share in the healing process.

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By mid-August 1982, about two months after Sheri's death, the Richardsons began to feel like they had really come through.

Then came early September and the first week of school. Amy, now a first grader, would attend Rosslyn Academy for the first time and ride the bus involved in Sheri's death.

"The experience set us back emotionally," Marcia said. "But we realize there'll be times we feel good and then other times when something will happen to set us back."

Richardson rode the bus the first two days with Amy to check out new safety measures. He did pretty well until he overheard someone asking for a list of fourth graders in the class Sheri would have attended.

He stifled the tears and turned and walked away. But even though the pain lingered--and lingers still--he walked toward hope rather than despair.

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Adapted from The Commission, magazine of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (BP) photos to be mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press

Friends Help Southwestern
Observe Diamond Anniversary

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)-- From throughout Texas and across the nation educators, pastors, denominational leaders and other friends and supporters of Southwestern Theological Seminary helped celebrate its 75th anniversary.

Normally, the March 14 observance when the state of Texas granted Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary a charter, is a single day. This year, because of the diamond anniversary, Founders Day became a special Founders Week.

Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr., whose grandfather was in the 20-member 1914 graduating class and whose father graduated in 1940, said Southwestern Seminary and Southern Baptists cannot be separated. "Southwestern is at the heart of where they (Southern Baptists) have been and, I pray, at the head of where they're going."

Harold C. Bennett, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, called the seminary "a theological diamond that Southern Baptists have set in history" for training people in God's service. "This seminary stands as a force against the secular trends of today," Bennett said.

Robert E. Naylor, Southwestern's president emeritus, enchanted hundreds of pastors with a personal, poignant recollection of his 55 years' association with the seminary.

Naylor was trustee chairman when J. Howard Williams was president. One morning a caller told him Williams was sick. When he called Mrs. Williams he learned Williams was dying. "Suddenly, I knew it was mine to do," Naylor said. He was to be president for 20 years.

Robert A. Baker, professor of history emeritus, delivered the Founder's Day Convocation address. His history of Southwestern, "Tell the Generations Following," has just been published.

Baker took his listeners back beyond the founding fathers to the "founding forefathers." He said Southwestern's roots can be found as deep in American history as the First and Second Great Awakenings of the early 18th and early 19th centuries.

A denominational luncheon featured representatives of Baylor University, which originally housed the seminary, the Baptist General Convention of Texas, which owned the seminary until 1925, and the Southern Baptist Convention, which currently operates the seminary.

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William M. Pinson, former Southwestern ethics teacher and now executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, described the relationship of the state convention, Baylor, and Southeastern as a single chord with three strands, each of which would be strong on its own, but which are far stronger together.

"If the three become unraveled, the future is not bright," Pinson said. "If we remain entwined in God's purpose, there is no telling what the future is for us."

A special student chapel featured an original play "The Imperishable Vision" written by 1982 graduate Karen Oakerson and directed by student Rick Mitchem. Oklahoma student Carl Barrington read letters from two alumni, Jimmy Draper and Bailey Smith, the current and immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Smith recalled traveling through Dallas as a student on the way to a weekend pastorate and encountering a crowd of people gathered around a book depository--President Kennedy was dead and congregations would expect their young preacher to help them through their grief.

He couldn't hurry to class notes to look for ways to deal with this tragedy, Smith said but he could rely on the encouragement he had received from the men who taught him to trust in God and in the sense of confidence instilled by these same men that his divine call could carry them through this or any other almost overwhelming problem.

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(BP) photos to be mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary

Baylor Speakers Urge Return
Of Religion To Classrooms

By Nancy Barcus

Baptist Press
3/29/83

WACO, Texas (BP)--A battery of speakers at a Baylor University conference agreed there is no way to turn back the clock on the present standoff between religion and education in the public schools, wishful thinking to the contrary.

The speakers at the conference on "Religion, the State and Education," however, proposed several measures they hope will check the erosion of religious education in America's public schools while remaining true to the First Amendment.

This country has become increasingly pluralistic in religious beliefs and secular attitudes, so that no single religious viewpoint should be imposed within a classroom, conferees agreed.

The thought of a state-sponsored prayer so neutral that it says very little and offends no one is probably worse than no prayer at all, suggested Will D. Davis, an Austin, Texas, attorney who is a member of the Texas State Board of Education.

James E. Wood Jr. said the Supreme Court has not outlawed the teaching "about" religion in the public schools. Wood, director of Baylor's church-state studies program and former director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, D.C., said the court has "explicitly disclaimed that it has ruled out the study of the Bible or religion from the curriculum of the public schools, so long as the Bible or religion is made the object of academic inquiry and not an object of faith or worship."

The problem with implementing this approach is that teachers and administrators are fearful of religious controversy, said Bill D. Lamkin, dean of Baylor's School of Education.

Dealing with religious controversies consumes a majority of his time said the superintendent of Dallas public schools, Linus D. Wright. The sensitivity of religious issues is equalled only by issues of ethnic and racial balance, he said.

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Nevertheless, Wright has worked out an agreement with a few area churches to offer two semesters of the "Bible as History," taught on church property. Teachers, supplied by the churches, must be state certified, and examinations for the courses are supplied by the school district, Wright said.

Other efforts to return religion to the schools include those of Wes Bodin, co-director of the World Religions Curriculum Development Center in Minneapolis, who trains teachers to deal with religion from an academic standpoint.

Similar measures are under way in several locations in the country, said Robert R. Spivey, president of Randolph-Macon Woman's College in Virginia, who was a participant in the "Florida Project" to help teachers introduce the academic study of religion into public schools.

"Advocates of a fourth 'R' in the public schools (religion study) are asking not that religion be given a special, favored place in the curriculum, but that religion should be uncovered for the role that it has already played and is playing in our culture," Spivey said.

"If Johnny and Mary can't read, then they are illiterate. If Johnny and Mary can't think, reason, understand and even feel from religion, then they are illiterate about the sources of values for our culture," he added.

Support for this view came also from Niels C. Nielsen Jr. of Rice University who said, "What is needed most of all is to affirm that religion can be studied objectively, historically, without destruction to faith." He added, "The vacuum in teaching about religion needs to be filled positively--a difficult matter indeed in the face of sectarianism and fundamentalism on the edge of culture, as well as secularism."

Encouragement came from James R. Kirkpatrick, director of the American Association of School Administrators, who said church-state separation issues are now "slightly past the flood tide," so that more interest in "religion as a positive factor" will begin to be felt in public schools.

He warned, however, that it is difficult to get religion into school curriculums because of competition to introduce computer technology and other "new" subjects instead.

Keynote speaker Edwin Scott Gaustad warned that unless the public schools become responsive to the desires of the public and avoid "strictest" separation of church, state and public education, the public will "increasingly turn to alternate modes of education."

"To those who say, 'Education has nothing to do with religion,' I reply, 'Really? What world do you live in,'" he said. "If our concern is with separation at the public level, it is useful to know that we swim against a powerful historical current."

Gaustad, who teaches at the University of California at Riverside and has also taught at the church-related University of Redlands, said religion has only become divorced from education in this generation. "I believe this nation was infused by Christianity and made whole by Christianity," he said.

While the course of history cannot be reversed, Gaustad said he believes that church-related higher education is closer today than public schools to the mainstream of western history. Church schools still maintain a "unity of heart and mind," he said.

Thus, church-related colleges and universities are in a stronger position than public schools to resist the "splintering" of values which has occurred in society today, he said.

"Admittedly, there are still serious problems facing religion studies in public schools, Wood said. These include widespread public indifference, fears of controversy, an overcrowded curriculum and lack of trained teachers.

"Nonetheless, the times increasingly require that full recognition be given to the academic study of religion in the public schools, as essential to the integrity of public education."

Theologian Offers Suggestions
For Improving Biblical Preaching

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptists got some good news and some bad news on the status of their preaching from an expert on homiletics.

Among the good news from theologian Elizabeth Achtemeier is that biblical proclamation remains central to the church's mission, despite pessimistic forecasts of the demise of preaching. The bad news, evident in Achtemeier's series of lectures at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, is that much preaching today lacks depth, power and substance.

Achtemeier, visiting professor of homiletics at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va., was the seminary's 1983 E.Y. Mullins lecturer. An ordained minister of the United Church of Christ, she is the author of six books, including "The Old Testament and the Proclamation of the Gospel" and commentaries on Deuteronomy and Jeremiah.

"God is on the side of our preaching," she said in an opening sermon. "His desire is that people be saved through preaching. God has always won his victories through his word."

Achtemeier warned, however, such affirmations should not "lull us into thinking it doesn't matter what or how we preach. We have an incomparable God, and that demands an incomparable message. Though we'll never live up to (that ideal), we should always strive for it."

In subsequent lectures, Achtemeier offered suggestions for preaching from the prophets and Psalms of the Old Testament and urged more preaching based on the narratives of the Bible. Preachers, she said, need to go beyond "propositional preaching," where "the Good News is set forth in a series of propositions to be believed and intellectually accepted."

Though she "would not condemn such preaching," she wondered "why we take the Bible, which is full of stories, and turn it into a set of propositions." Even when propositions are set forth in scripture, she added, they are always "brought to life" by narratives.

"It's better to preach the story than to distill truths and principles" which are then used "to try to talk people into being good," she said.

Because the overarching biblical story has been neglected in many sermons, "we have lost great portions of the story," Achtemeier claimed. As a result, Christians also have lost much of the "vividness and power" of the biblical language as well as "knowledge of our history and identity."

"It's important," she said, "for an age such as ours to hear the real story, to become part of the great cosmic drama in which God is working out his purpose."

"We (preachers) are the stewards of that story," she concluded. "And it's required of stewards that we be faithful."

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Westbury Named
Associate Editor

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MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--Joseph L. Westbury Jr. has been named associate editor of the Brotherhood Commission's World Mission Journal.

Westbury, currently director of public relations for Union University in Jackson, Tenn., will begin his duties April 1. He replaces Bill Bangham, recently named director of curriculum and training for the Brotherhood Commission's Baptist Men's department.

Westbury, a native of Orlando, Fla., graduated from Union with a degree in psychology and a minor in journalism. He was religion editor and a news reporter for the Jackson (Tenn.) Sun before becoming director of public relations at Union. He is married to the former Wanita Lynn Perkins of Dresden, Tenn.

World Mission Journal is the Brotherhood Commission's mission publication for Baptist Men.

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