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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 29, 1983

83-67

Integrity Not Inerrancy**SBC's Biggest Problem: Pollard** By Robbie N. Watson

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Frank Pollard, president of the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Mill Valley, Calif., says one of the biggest problems for Southern Baptists today is not inerrancy, but integrity.

Speaking to a chapel audience at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Pollard said Southern Baptists are in danger of being permanently divided. "Sadly it cannot be said of us what the Word declares about the church in Acts: 'And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul....'"

Calling himself a fundamentalist, "if you don't capitalize the word and put the acc nt on the second syllable," Pollard said he had no problem declaring the Bible inerrant, infallible, and inspired. "When any Baptist institution causes young minds to doubt the Word of God, I believe it to be a tragedy which must be corrected," Pollard said.

He added: "Like many of you I cannot side with the few who do not share those convictions about the Bible. Another great agony is that we cannot side with many who are calling themselves 'inerrantists'. In fact I do not believe inerrancy is all of the issue in our current division. A large part of the issue is integrity."

Implying the integrity problem involves the spread of innuendo and false information, Pollard told of a Southern Baptist church that was providing extensive support for a non-Southern Baptist Convention seminary. The reason given was, "The Bible is not being taught in any of our seminaries."

On the basis of accusations made by one of the members of that church Pollard scheduled conferences with two of his former professors who were named as teaching specific heresies. The member leveling the charges would not accompany Pollard to confer with the professors in question.

Pollard learned that "the charges were untrue. What's more, no one had talked to them about these things." He continued, "When I told that New Testament professor someone had said he (the professor) didn't believe in the virgin birth, he shook his head and cried."

Pollard added, "I fear there has been too much of this kind of slander. Broad, general statements may sometimes contain a half truth, but if they are half true they are also half false." He said there are several steps a Christian must take before he is biblically free to go public with a complaint. "If you really believe the Bible to be God's word, you need to know it forbids you to slander anyone," Pollard said.

He added, "Calling a Southern Baptist seminary professor 'liberal' is akin to calling a U.S. senator a 'communist'. His life's calling and ministry is at stake."

Reciting another break with integrity Pollard explained why he was raised in what he considered a non-Christian home. "The pastor of my father's church had been an able, powerful, and charismatic preacher, but he built his 10,000 member church and the largest seminary in the world at that time, at least partially on a foundation of slandering everyone who didn't agree with him.

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"Especially did he aim his barbs at struggling Southwestern Seminary. My father reacted to that spirit and denied his faith. For more than 30 years he was out of fellowship with God," Pollard said, adding that the seminary mentioned no longer exists in that city and the church in question is extremely weak at best.

Pollard concluded, "Liberalism can kill a church or a denomination, but, an even greater warning for us is that a judgmental, negative spirit can kill a church or denomination, also."

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Prayer Protects Missionaries
From Beirut Embassy Blast

Baptist Press
4/29/83

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--Three members of the Southern Baptist mission family in Lebanon had figured to be at the American Embassy in Beirut April 18. None of them made it and they believe prayer had something to do with saving their lives.

All three would have been at the embassy about 1:05 p.m. when a powerful car bomb shattered the building, killing at least 60 persons and injuring more than 100.

Missionary Linda Sacco had agreed to drop by there with her American friend Becky, a new Christian married to a Lebanese, after Becky picked up her child at school at 12:15 p.m. Missionary Frances Fuller had planned several errands, the last at 1 p.m. to take care of passport business at the embassy. She had been told early afternoon was the best time.

At Becky's house, everything went wrong all morning. At noon, her housework was unfinished and, frustrated, she decided not to go by the embassy. Fuller got tied up in a meeting. Before leaving for Beirut, she decided to phone to make sure she could still see someone on her list. He was unavailable so she put off her errands until the next day.

The Saccos' 14-year-old son, Paul, had an even closer call with the bombing. He and a friend at the American Community School found themselves with a free hour after lunch and slipped into their jogging clothes. They planned to run up the wide sidewalk by the sea, past the embassy and back. But as they neared the embassy--just before 1 p.m.--a sudden cold shower began to fall and they turned back.

Two days before the blast, missionaries to Lebanon concluded a mission meeting by drawing names and promising to pray for each other.

"By (Monday) evening the entire city was in sorrow but some of the day's frustrations had started to make sense," Fuller, the mission's press representative, reported. "And some who had prayed for their fellow missionaries were humbly thankful for answers."

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Helms Agrees To Withhold
Court Jurisdiction Riders

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
4/29/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--Citing certain "assurances from the White House," Sen. Jesse Helms backed away from offering a series of federal court jurisdiction amendments to bankruptcy legislation passed by the Senate April 27.

The North Carolina Republican had announced earlier he would offer amendments limiting federal court jurisdiction and providing for congressional review of federal judges. Among them were amendments to remove Supreme Court and lower federal court jurisdiction in school prayer cases and to limit federal court authority to enforce school busing actions. Another would have established a congressional committee with authority to review the conduct and decisions of federal judges and recommend impeachment when a federal judge's conduct failed to meet a standard of good behavior defined in the amendment.

Other than a letter from President Reagan expressing administration concerns about reducing federal court jurisdiction, Helms did not spell out what specific White House assurances led to his decision not to call up the amendments. He advised his colleagues, however, they "undoubtedly will come before the Senate another day."

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While the Reagan letter expressed agreement with some of Helms' proposals, it maintained administration support for a constitutional amendment on school prayer rather than Helms' proposal to remove, by statute, Supreme Court and lower federal court jurisdiction in school prayer cases.

Last March, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs adopted a statement opposing all court-stripping efforts in "the interests of safeguarding the traditional Baptist understanding of the biblical emphasis on individual liberty and the American constitutional tradition of separation of church and state." The Washington, D.C.-based agency's statement said limiting the jurisdiction of federal courts in First Amendment religion cases "would jeopardize their ability to defend other rights guaranteed under the Constitution."

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Equal Access Legislation
Debated At Senate Hearing

By Gerri Ratliff

Baptist Press
4/29/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--Proposed equal access laws permitting public school students to gather before or after school for religious meetings are unconstitutional and should be defeated in the name of Baptist principles, according to W.W. Finlator, Southern Baptist minister and a vice president of the American Civil Liberties Union.

Testifying before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Finlator said "religion has flourished and grown under our Constitution. I don't want the government diluting or compromising my religion." Finlator was pastor of Pullen Memorial Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., for over 25 years before his retirement in 1982.

The bills, S.425 and S.1059, introduced by Sen. Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala., and S.815, introduced by Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., are designed to prevent public school districts from discriminating against voluntary, student-initiated religious meetings by students.

Secretary of Education Terrel H. Bell, speaking for the Reagan administration, said the legislation would "merely put voluntary religious activity on an equal footing with other extracurricular activities." By not allowing religious groups to meet, Bell said, "society singles religion out and undermines it."

Students from six states testified religious groups in their high schools were denied the right to meet. Urging passage, they cited an "erosion of student religious freedom."

Jack D. Novik, assistant ACLU director, testified against the legislation but said the organization does not oppose the concept of equal access. The constitutionality of an extra-curricular school-use policy depends on the factual circumstances of each instance, he said. A bill is not necessary, he added, because lower courts have been properly interpreting the Constitution and Supreme Court precedent and because sufficient legal remedies are available.

"If the forum is truly open and the circumstances of the use policy do not suggest government involvement or sponsorship, then the Establishment clause is not offended," he said. "However, if the school policy is neutral only in appearance, then it would be constitutionally objectionable." Finlator said the ACLU is "pro constitution, not anti-religion."

Lynn Robert Buzzard, executive director of the Christian Legal Society, testified in support of the legislation that "we should not confine religion to a piece of geography under the church steeple."

A constitutional lawyer from Virginia, Herbert W. Titus, testified that "Congress has a responsibility, independent of the judiciary, to determine the constitutionality of its action." If past court decisions are wrong in the judgment of Congress, they should not be followed, he said.

At least two recent court decisions have dealt with student-initiated religious activity. In Brandon v. Board of Education, a federal district court and a U.S. appeals court upheld the school board's refusal to allow a religious group to meet. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals struck down a school policy allowing religious groups to meet in Lubbock Civil Liberties Union v. Lubbock Independent School District.

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Even though 15 witnesses spoke in favor of the legislation, the ACLU was the only group present in opposition. Denton promised more equal representation of views at later hearings and said he will be surprised if one of his equal access bills does not pass the Senate.

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RTVC's Allen Appeals For
Children's TV Guidelines

By Greg Warner

Baptist Press
4/29/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--Television programs for children should be governed by federal guidelines and not by the law of supply and demand, Jimmy R. Allen told the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) April 28.

Allen, president of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission, spoke at a public hearing of the FCC, which is once again considering regulating children's television programming and advertising practices.

The FCC first took up the matter in 1971, issuing a strongly worded policy statement three years later that said broadcasters have a special obligation to serve children. An FCC task force reported in 1979 broadcasters had not complied and recommended further action.

But recent decisions have favored less government regulation of television and radio content and more dependence on the marketplace. FCC chairman Mark Fowler has stated TV ratings better represent the public interest and should replace the FCC as a judge of program content.

Allen and others argued children are a special audience that has little voice in the economic marketplace or in the ratings and should be treated separately. "There is a burden on children's programming in the marketplace on the individual programmer who has to be competitive in a place where this kind of program really won't make money," Allen said.

"Rules need to be set so children's programming is exempt from the marketplace philosophy," he said, "or we will continue to have these hearings, like we've had the last 20 years, complaining every time that we are not doing very well." Allen said broadcasters who have wanted to do more and better children's television have been handicapped, since they are not operating on equal ground with others interested only in profits.

"There are very good people in the television business who as fathers, mothers and citizens want to do well," he said. "I would very much like to see you move those borders of the marketplace philosophy so the one who wants to do children's programming can be free to do a better job."

All three television networks defended their performance at the hearings. CBS representative Roger Coloff said his company had made a "meaningful and sincere effort" to supply quality programs for children.

Fowler asked each network representative if he felt a personal obligation to children which affected his programming decisions. Although conceding broadcasters have a special obligation to serve children, the network representatives were reluctant to describe the role their personal morality played in programming decisions.

Fowler said while he was personally concerned about children's programs, he would not support FCC action to mandate a certain amount of children's programming on TV stations, since that could force other needed programs off the air.

CBS' Coloff said enough children's shows are already available, citing a study of the Houston TV market which showed three children's offerings every half hour during non-school hours. Susan Greene, a former FCC staff member who served on the 1979 task force, said none of the networks airs a daily program for children. Others noted none of the stations owned and operated by the networks in the top 15 TV markets airs even a weekly children's program.

In defense, CBS and NBC said increased availability of children's programs on public television and cable TV should be considered before more is required of commercial broadcasters.

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Sharon Rockefeller, president of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, questioned that reasoning. "The fact we are doing a responsible job does not mean others are not responsible," she said. She pointed out while the FCC is looking to public broadcasting to fill the gap in children's television, the government is also reducing public TV funding.

Robert Keeshan, television's "Captain Kangaroo," said the FCC should not depend on cable TV either, since families who can't afford cable still have a right to children's programs.

In all, 20 people testified at the hearings, including educators, psychologists, advertisers, producers and station owners. The FCC has not set a date for final action.

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(Photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Radio and Television Commission)

Tuition Tax Credit Foes
Pledge Battle In Senate

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press
4/29/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--Senate opponents of President Reagan's tuition tax credit proposal served notice the measure will face more than token opposition in committee and on the senate floor, should it get that far.

During a Senate Finance Committee hearing on the bill (S. 528), panel members David L. Boren, D-Okla., and John H. Chafee, R-R.I., repeatedly voiced their opposition and signaled their intention to offer numerous amendments and mount a filibuster against the measure if it reaches the Senate floor.

"Frankly, I had hoped with the demise of this legislation in the 97th Congress we had seen the last of it," said Boren, calling Reagan's decision to pursue it again "unfortunate."

Finance Committee Chairman Robert J. Dole, R-Kan., who pieced together a fragile coalition of tuition tax credit supporters late in the last congress to move a modified version of the Reagan plan out of committee, recognized the controversial nature of the proposal in his opening statement. "Both proponents and opponents of tuition tax credit legislation have strongly-felt views on all of the critical issues this proposed legislation raises," Dole said.

Long-time tuition tax credit advocate Bob Packwood, R-Ore., said opposition to the proposal is strong enough it will take more support from President Reagan than plugging it in speeches and news conferences. Citing a certain Senate filibuster, Packwood said Reagan will have to expend the kind of political capital he used to push through his 1981 tax cut to get Senate passage.

Administration witnesses at the hearing defended Reagan's plan to allow parents a deduction of up to \$300 for each elementary and secondary student in private schools when fully operative. Under the proposal, parents with incomes up to \$40,000 would receive the full credit. It would be phased out for parents with incomes above \$60,000.

Secretary of Education T.H. Bell told the panel the plan would promote educational choice and competition to the benefit of public as well as private schools.

That view was strongly challenged by Chafee who asked for evidence that such competition would improve public education.

James M. Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, charged the proposals greatest fault is its failure to meet the public policy test of spending "public money for public purposes."

Citing the recent report by the National Commission on Excellence in Education which underscored shortcomings in the nation's public education system, Dunn warned, "we dare not divert public education dollars, dollars which come from the public for which the public at large has a responsibility. With the education of all children in crisis, we cannot afford the luxury of allowing tax dollars to be misappropriated for private and parochial education."

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Beyond their basic opposition to the measure, Boren and Chafee repeatedly contended if Congress elects to establish tuition tax credits, benefiting private schools should be subject to the same federal restrictions and requirements that apply to public schools.

The Reagan proposal requires only that qualifying non-profit schools not discriminate on the basis of race. Boren contended Congress could and should impose other federal requirements on private schools receiving federal funds.

While refusing to give a blanket endorsement of such requirements on private schools, assistant attorney general William Bradford Reynolds told Boren Congress has the authority generally to set other requirements on such schools.

Boren said he plans to offer other anti-discrimination language to the tuition tax credit bill to prohibit qualified schools from discriminating on the basis of religion, handicap, sex, or prior discipline problems.

Chafee also said private schools receiving public funding through tax credits should be subject to the same requirements as public schools. "Then we would have competition," he said.

In addition to these changes, some opponents and proponents of the measure want to make it refundable for parents whose tax liability is less than the tax credit for which they might qualify. Administration witnesses opposed the change.

The committee has not yet scheduled any further hearings or markup on the bill.

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Former Attorney General
Named Professor At Mercer

Baptist Press
4/29/83

MACON, Ga. (BP)--Former United States Attorney General Griffin B. Bell has been appointed distinguished university professor at Mercer University, according to President R. Kirby Godsey.

Bell is the first person in the history of the University to hold this newly created position, Godsey said. The former attorney general will lecture periodically in all of the university's schools in both Macon and Atlanta: College of Liberal Arts, the Walter F. George School of Law and the School of Medicine in Macon, and the School of Pharmacy and the College of Arts and Sciences in Atlanta.

Bell, a cum laude graduate of Mercer's Walter F. George School of Law, was appointed United States Attorney General in 1977 by then President Jimmy Carter and served until August 1979 when he returned to his private law firm in Atlanta.

He has served several terms on Mercer's Board of Trustees and now serves on the president's Council. In 1967 Mercer conferred upon him the honorary Doctor of Laws degree, and he received the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1978. He was one of the leaders in the founding of Atlanta Baptist College which was merged into Mercer to become the present College of Arts and Sciences in Atlanta.

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Prayer The Key To Bold
Missions, Says Draper

By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press
4/29/83

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptists must become a praying and a fasting people if they expect to accomplish the goals of Bold Mission Thrust, according to Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr.

Southern Baptists have depended on programs more than God to spread the good news, he told more than 700 people at the Third National Conference on Prayer for Spiritual Awakening.

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"We're a proud people," said Draper. "But I don't think God is impressed at all we have 14 million people because he knows we can't find half of them, that only 25 percent of them ever show up for church services and most of those don't ever get around to serving."

Draper said the key to making Bold Mission Thrust a reality is prayer. "The condition for a mighty (spiritual) movement is prayer," he explained. "Prayer is our acknowledging dependance upon God, acknowledging our willingness to do what God wants."

"But we don't pray because we don't think we need to pray," he added. "We think we can do it without God. But theology, religion and denominations can't change the world. Only Jesus Christ can do that."

Draper warned Southern Baptists would fail miserably in their efforts to reach the world by the year 2000 unless they chose to "come to God in a fresh way." He said Southern Baptists netted less than 250 new churches in 1982 and added it appears bold missions is only a "great slogan that looks good and reads easy."

"All the power of an omnipotent God is before us and we live as if we were spiritual parapelegics," said Draper. "In a land where the church has had the greatest freedom, we're the most impotent. We're going to have to get back to being God's people, seeking God's face."

Draper read from II Chronicles 7:12-14 and said God had promised to hear the prayers of Christians if they would repent. The condition, said Draper, is that they must seek God's "face" in prayer.

"It's been inbred in us that if we get close to God we'll all be rich and healthy and we'll get all the things we want," said Draper. But Baptists need to seek the face of God and not the hand of God, because, prayer is "not looking for what God can do for us."

Draper warned the people of God were facing critical days and must begin to speak to the needs of people: "I don't know how long we can keep playing church."

Though the United States has not been plagued by locusts, drought and pestilence as depicted in the Chronicles passage, said Draper, the country does reel from the blows of inflation, crime, poverty, unemployment, violence and hatred. The world is hurting, said Draper, while the SBC spends its time embroiled in theological controversy.

"Instead of meeting to plan our next political move, wouldn't it be something if we'd meet and pray?" said Draper.

For God to hear the prayers for spiritual renewal will require Baptists confess their sins and turn from their wicked ways, said Draper. He lamented he had heard some of the most profane talk and suggestive jokes come from church leaders. "We're not the exception to the rule," maintained Draper. "God says to turn from our wicked ways. Revival will come when there is a great outbreak of confession and we admit who and what we are."

Southern Baptists must begin to take responsibility for their relationship to God, said Draper. "I believe God would have us practice the same kind of seeking his face that prayer and fasting indicate in the scripture," he said. "Maybe God could do something with us if we could just hear him say, 'If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I'll hear, I'll forgive, I'll heal.'"

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CORRECTION--In (BP) story "Eura Lannom Retires From Tennessee Paper" mailed 4/28/83 please change date in second paragraph from 1949 to 1940.

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