

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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June 4, 1984

84-83

CLC Meeting Examines Ways
To Combat Pornography

By David Wilkinson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—If Southern Baptists and other Christians hope to challenge the expanding influence of pornography in American society, they must pressure local prosecutors to enforce existing anti-obscenity statutes, advised a national expert on pornography.

In the last decade pornography "has moved from the so-called adult theaters and bookstores to the corner grocery and the family living room," noted retired attorney Hinson McAuliffe. Yet, he added, public apathy has frequently allowed the pornography movement to go legally unchallenged.

"There are laws on the books that can handle the patently obscene material, if you can get the prosecutors to act," he explained. "But politicians operate according to the will of the people, so don't expect your local D.A. (district attorney) to get fired up about violations of obscenity statutes if no one is complaining about the problem."

McAuliffe, who earned a national reputation for his aggressive enforcement of anti-obscenity laws during 13 years as solicitor general for Atlanta's Fulton County, was a participant in a Consultation on Combatting Pornography sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The one-day meeting brought together two Southern Baptist attorneys and a group of church and denominational leaders to discuss ways to help families, churches and agencies cope more effectively with pornography.

Harry N. Hollis Jr., a Christian Life Commission staff member and coordinator of the consultation, noted pornography is "a social cancer which threatens healthy family life and stands as a major road block to Southern Baptists' efforts to strengthen families. This persistent and pervasive problem demeans the value and dignity of males and females created in God's image and distorts God's good gift of sex."

Nashville attorney Osta Underwood emphasized pornography's abuse of the rights of women. "Pornography," she declared, "is not manly, masculine or macho. Furthermore, it often contributes to the psychological motivation for rape, child abuse and other acts of violence."

Members of the consultation identified a variety of fronts in the current expansion of pornography, including cable TV, video cassetts and telephone obscenity. Also, television was frequently criticized for its "desensitizing" of viewers about moral issues such as pornography.

In discussion of possible strategies, including grassroots education and legislative action, the local church was repeatedly upheld as the key to combatting pornography.

"If you're going to successfully attack this problem, then you must begin with the churches," stressed McAuliffe. "We need to educate our people."

McAuliffe laid much of the blame for apathy at the feet of the clergy. "I think this is one place where the ministry has failed us," he claimed. "Our ministers preach the Bible but too many of them are not applying the Bible to issues of today."

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"I hear preachers say they don't want to offend or alienate any of their church members. Well, if talking about evil alienates people, then we need to start alienating people."

Other participants in the consultation included Paul Jones, director of the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention; Suzanne Matheny, Baptist student minister at Nashville's Belmont College; Coy Previtte, executive director of the Christian Action League of North Carolina; Jerry Self, public affairs consultant for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, and Foy Valentine, executive director of the Christian Life Commission.

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ACTS Continues
Low Power Success

Baptist Press
6/4/84

ACTS
(C)-N

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—The American Christian Television System (ACTS) continues to thrive in the Federal Communications Commission's low-power television lottery with the May 30 awarding of channel 22 in Flagstaff, Ariz., to the network.

ACTS' success in the most recent FCC computer assisted random selection process allows the network to receive a construction permit for the Flagstaff station.

The permit goes into effect immediately, after a mandatory 15-day waiting period in which anyone who objects to the lottery decision may appeal to the FCC. Once the permit is granted, ACTS has one year to build the station.

ACTS has been awarded low-power TV construction permits in Anchorage, Alaska; Brownwood, Texas, and Honolulu in previous FCC lotteries, and has received through other means permits to build low-power stations in Paragould, Ark., and Tyler, Texas, as well.

Charles Roden, Radio and Television Commission vice-president for support services, said ACTS has "done very well" in its acquisition of low-power station permits, and he hoped the network's pending applications for nearly 100 stations in 29 states would go as smoothly.

ACTS begins its 18-hour-a-day family Christian programming June 12. The Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission operates the network.

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Holman To Publish
Five Million Testaments

Baptist Press
6/4/84

B558-N

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—More than five million New Testaments will be published by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Holman Bible division as part of the Southern Baptist Convention's 1985-86 Good News America, God Loves You project.

Johnnie Godwin, director of the Holman division, said the board is pleased to make a contribution to this denominational Bold Mission Thrust emphasis by providing New Testaments at cost to churches.

Good News America, God Loves You includes a people search and Scripture distribution in 1985 and nationwide, simultaneous revivals in the spring of 1986. The emphasis is sponsored by the Home Mission Board, state Baptist conventions, the Mass Scripture Distribution Committee and the Sunday school and church training departments of the Sunday School Board.

Good News America New Testament will be available April 1985 on the undated literaturer order form from the Sunday School Board to allow churches to use them in the Evangelistic people Search Oct. 20-26, 1985. The New Testaments will be available in King James, New American Standard and Spanish versions. Helps and marked passages will be included in each version to show the reader how to become a Christian.

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The Good News America New Testaments will cost 32 cents each when ordered and billed to the church, plus the cost of shipping. Cash orders will receive a five percent discount, making the New Testaments cost approximately 30.5 cents, plus freight charges. Storage, billing and shipping will be handled by the Sunday School Board.

Because of numerous requests from churches needing inexpensive New Testaments for use in ongoing outreach projects, Godwin also announced one million Great Commission New Testaments are now available in Baptist Book Stores and other book stores.

Great Commission New Testaments may be ordered from Baptist Book Stores or mail order centers for as little as 37.5 cents per copy, plus freight charges, for more than 2,500 copies. The New Testaments may be picked up in quantities of less than 1,000 in Baptist Book Stores for prices ranging from 60 cents for a single copy to 45 cents for 500-999 copies.

The Good News and Great Commission New Testaments, combined with New Testaments ordered this spring by the Texas and Missouri state Baptist conventions bring to almost 10 million the number of Holman New Testaments published in a one-year period.

Approximately one million copies of Scripture portions of Romans and John also are being published by Holman for use in the outreach projects leading up to the simultaneous revivals.

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B558-N

Argentine Baptists
Prepare For Youth

Baptist Press
6/4/84

WASHINGTON (BP)—Several thousand Baptist youth will gather in Buenos Aires, Argentina, July 11-15, 1984, for the Tenth Baptist Youth World Conference.

Some 80 nations are expected to send representatives for the first completely bilingual conference, with all presentations and publications in Spanish and English.

Youth at the conference will participate in a Scripture distribution to help Argentine Baptists witness to local residents and be exposed to cultures from throughout the world.

Baptist World Alliance President Duke K. McCall and Gerhard Claas, general secretary, assure parents of youth planning to attend the conference that Buenos Aires is a very safe city for visitors. They agree it is much safer than many U.S. cities, particularly at night.

As part of welcoming Baptist Youth World Conference participants, officials in Argentina have agreed to permit an International Music Festival in the Colon Theater, one of the most prestigious opera houses in the world.

On Saturday afternoon, choirs from around the world will sing songs common to their homeland while dressed in native clothes. This is the first time a religious group has been permitted to use the Colon Theater for a music festival.

Youth attending the conference should be aware that the season in South America will be winter, so they should take warm clothes. Winter in Buenos Aires is rather mild, with temperatures generally in the low 30's at night and in the 50's in the daytime.

"The Tenth Baptist Youth World Conference is more than just an opportunity for fellowship," according to Denton Lotz, associate secretary of the youth department of the BWA. "It is an opportunity to witness for the saving power of Jesus Christ. It will be a tremendous act of witness for youth from 80 countries to show the unity in faith we have in Christ. By sharing their faith, we feel young Baptists will also grow in their faith."

Lotz added the youth conference would give a visibility to Argentine Baptists they previously have not had. Through the distribution of tracts and Scripture portions, evangelism will be a high priority at the conference in a country where Baptists number 28,000 out of a population of 30 million.

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A special tradition of past youth world conferences will be continued this year with the exchanging of inexpensive or no-cost gifts from the youth's native country. Times will be set aside for this exchange to give participants a remembrance from another culture.

As the time draws closer for the conference, Baptist World Alliance officials have learned some tour groups planning to go to Buenos Aires are lacking one or two members to make a complete group for international travel.

To register for the Tenth Baptist Youth World Conference, or to obtain information about other tour groups, call Denton Lotz, Baptist World Alliance Youth Department, Washington, DC (202) 265-5027.

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B54B-F

Exercise Can
Strengthen Ministry

By David Haywood

Baptist Press
6/4/84

TEXARKANA, Texas (BP)—When John Keller came to First Baptist Church he told the deacons they would not have a fat pastor, and he has stayed true to his word.

Keller, former University of Tennessee football player who weighed 235 pounds, started running while he served a church in Florida. Two and one-half years later, he weighs 185 pounds and has run in numerous races and marathons.

"You only have one body," quipped Keller, "and it is difficult to get new parts. The Lord has called us to take care of it."

According to Keller, exercise has really made a difference in his ministry. "My schedule is so physically demanding that if I didn't take care of myself, I would not be able to handle the pressure," he said.

The 104-year-old Texarkana church is currently building a new facility on the edge of town where they now have a Christian life center. Because the church is ministering in both locations, Keller preaches four services each Sunday, leads a weekly Bible study for men and a Wednesday night prayer meeting, in addition to working with a staff of 11 ministers.

"It is alarming to me to see so many young ministers having heart attacks that are short-circuiting their ministries," he said.

According to Keller the Christian life is a life of discipline which includes Bible study, prayer and witnessing. "If persons can be disciplined with their bodies and appetites, then they can be disciplined in their walk with the Lord."

"I feel that it is hard to preach discipline when a minister is not disciplined himself," explained Keller. Proper diet and exercise go a long way in the prevention of heart disease, he noted. "The problem for Baptists is that we like to fellowship and eat."

Keller believes that ministers should work out a diet and exercise plan and stick to it without making a big deal about it. "When I am offered something to eat at someone's home I just say that I am trying to cut back," he said.

To begin an exercise program, Keller advised, start out by walking slowly and build up to walking 30 minutes rather briskly. Running may be the next step for those who prefer.

In addition to the physical benefits, exercise provides time for the minister to be by himself, away from the telephone. "Running makes me feel alive and helps me resolve inner problems," said Keller. "It also helps me handle stress and problems much easier and makes me feel more positive about myself and about others."

"Exercise will make ministers better leaders because they will feel better about themselves," Keller said.

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AMBON

Episcopal Layman Offers Baptists
Suggestions For Urban Evangelism

By Michael Tutterow

ATLANTA (BP)—An Episcopal layman and communications professor has offered Southern Baptists suggestions for communicating the gospel in an urban setting.

James F. Engel, professor of communication at Wheaton College, said traditional methods of communicating the gospel will alienate more people than it will reach in the urban setting.

Engel addressed a group of Southern Baptist pastors, laypersons and denominational workers attending the Spring Forum on Urban Evangelism, a conference sponsored by the metropolitan evangelism department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Engel charged denominational agencies, including Southern Baptists', have emphasized an approach to evangelism which allows little flexibility and prevents people from being effective in the pluralism of the urban setting.

"Headquarters should be helping us think and not giving us methods," he said. Engel added method-centered approaches to evangelism have been overly emphasized to the point that using the right method has been seen as the key to effective evangelism. "The emphasis has been if you strategize then everything will fall in place," he explained, but "nothing will happen apart from the movement of God."

In evaluating evangelism, the number of people who make decisions to accept Christ are inaccurate because those who profess don't always follow through, Engel said. He urged Christians to measure successful evangelism by the amount people move closer to understanding God, which he claimed is the foundation for people to respond to God.

Current approaches to witnessing assume people have the background and understanding of the Bible and the positive motivation to act on it, he explained. But Christians are failing to make the gospel relevant to daily life, he claimed. "When people reject the gospel, they are saying 'I haven't seen anything better,'" he charged.

A survey of "yuppies" (young upwardly mobile professionals) in Chicago revealed the majority believe church to be important for them, see the church as relevant to society, believe in a personal God and Jesus as the Son of God, noted Engel. He also said the survey showed most of those interviewed felt close to God and considered themselves to be Christians.

Yet out of the same group, half said all religions are equal, and 60 percent saw no difference in Protestant religions, he said. While 63 percent said the Bible is important for living, a recent Gallup Poll revealed only one-third read their Bibles once a month. Though they say they accept the Bible, less than half claim there are absolutes of morality, he added.

Christians must move beyond giving "head knowledge" and help people understand and follow through with the implications of the gospel, he said.

The survey revealed ways Southern Baptists could make the gospel relevant to people in the community, Engel said. Those surveyed said they wanted help in budgeting time, developing their relationship to God, coping with stress and controlling tempers.

In the area where the survey was conducted, three religious groups, including Southern Baptists, are seeking to begin churches. Engel said two of the three are buying land and beginning traditional church programs rather than focus on the felt needs of the community.

"If a church hasn't got much to say to its community, it isn't going to do much," he warned. He called for increased sensitivity in evangelism, adding churches must get to know community needs and gear programs toward addressing those needs.

He advocated abandoning the "indiscriminate evangelism," or shotgun approach to witnessing in favor of friendship evangelism—church members becoming personally involved with people in their community or workplace. Christians, he concluded, should move away from evangelism that calls for decision without providing an atmosphere where seeds of the gospel can be sown and cultivated before being reaped.