



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

April 1, 1986

86-46

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN BAPTIST CAMPUS MINISTERS

June 8-9, 1986

Wieuca Road Baptist Church
Atlanta, Ga.

Theme: THE HOPE OF OUR CALL

Sunday Afternoon, June 8, 1986

- 2:00—"Professional Pilgrimage," Marie Bean, campus minister, Mars Hill College, Mars Hill, N.C.
2:15—Keynote Address, Bill Clemmons, professor of spiritual formation, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.
2:30—Cluster Groups: "What Is Our Call?" (Groups clustered by years of tenure in campus ministry)
3:30—Cluster Reports
Response: "So, What Is Our Call?"—Bill Clemmons
4:15—Worship, Roy Cotton, director of special campus ministries, Baptist General Association of Virginia, Richmond, and Pearl Duvall, faculty member, school of nursing, Georgia Baptist Hospital, Atlanta
5:15—Adjournment

Sunday Evening, June 8

- 7:00—"Professional Pilgrimage," Max Barnett, Baptist Student Union director, Oklahoma University, Norman, Okla.
7:10-9:00—Cluster Groups (grouped by practical ministry)
9:00—Plenary Summary
9:30—Reception

Monday Morning, June 9

- 9:00—"Professional Pilgrimages," Jack Greever, director, division of student work, Baptist General Convention of Texas, Dallas; and Jane Young Poster, campus minister, Columbia College, Columbia, S.C.
9:20—ASBCM Business, Frank Cofer, director, national student ministries, Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association, Chicago; ASBCM president
--Break
11:00—"The State of SBC Campus Ministry," Charles Johnson, director, national student ministries department, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.
12:30—Adjournment

Monday Evening, June 9

- 6:00—Banquet
--Forum Reflections
--ASBCM Awards, Woody Hammett, chairperson, campus minister, University of South Carolina at Columbia
--"The State of ASBCM," Frank Cofer
--Banquet Address, Peter Rhea Jones, pastor, First Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga.
--Special Music, Babbie Mason, soloist, Atlanta
--Adjournment

Campus Ministers To Focus
On Understanding God's Call

ATLANTA (BP)--"The Hope of Our Call" will be the theme for the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers June 8-9 at Wieuca Road Baptist Church in Atlanta.

Campus ministers from schools across the United States will focus on understanding God's direction in their lives, said Frank Cofer, president of the organization and director of Baptist student ministries for the Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association.

That examination of God's vocational calling will be facilitated by two "cluster group" sessions, Cofer explained. In the first, participants will be grouped by the length of their tenure in campus ministry to share how they have arrived at their calling. In the second, they will divide into small groups to study practical elements of campus ministry, ranging from administration to Bible study approaches.

Resource leaders primarily will be drawn from within the group, he added, noting contributions of colleagues are designed to enhance the spirit of collegiality within the group. In addition, information generated by the small groups that focus on practical elements of campus ministry will be published as resource material for members of the organization.

In addition, two speakers from outside the organization will address the meeting. Bill Clemmons, professor of spiritual formation at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., will help participants assess their call to campus ministry. Peter Rhea Jones, pastor of First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., will lead in "celebrating a call to ministry."

--30--

Earliest PGG Reports
Indicate New Vitality

By Marv Knox

Baptist Press
4/1/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Renewed spiritual and financial vitality highlight earliest reports from churches participating in Southern Baptists' Planned Growth in Giving emphasis.

"First messages from churches always tell what Planned Growth in Giving does for their people--the excitement of spiritual growth, fellowship and ongoing church visitation," says Cecil Ray, national director of the emphasis. "A few weeks later they begin to talk about how much it affects the income of the church."

Planned Growth in Giving is a 15-year stewardship enrichment emphasis initiated throughout the Southern Baptist Convention last fall. From a financial standpoint, it is designed to raise annual receipts of Southern Baptist churches from \$3 billion to \$20 billion by the end of the century.

Specifically, Southern Baptists are challenged to increase the percentage of their contributions to worldwide mission causes every year of the time period.

The system begins with individuals giving to their churches, which pass a portion of their receipts to state Baptist conventions. The states then channel funds to the national SBC Cooperative Program budget, through which money is distributed to worldwide mission and ministry endeavors.

But Ray describes Planned Growth in Giving as more than a financial development campaign. "It's a spiritual journey," he says, explaining Southern Baptists who seriously consider whether they should increase their church gifts find they examine their entire spiritual commitment in the process.

Church reports sent to state Baptist stewardship leaders support Ray's assertion.

"Planned Growth in Giving is one of the best things that ever happened to our church," says Gary W. Flynt, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Guymon, Okla. "Almost everyone in our congregation grew in the area of personal worship.... I could share many testimonies of good things that came from Planned Growth in Giving."

--more--

R.D. Baker, pastor of Larkin Avenue Baptist Church in Elgin, Ill., believes Planned Growth in Giving's "long-term effect will be to help Baptists come to appreciate more fully our heritage and mission." He also praises the program's emphasis on stewardship visitation in church members' homes, noting members who conducted the visits grew spiritually and were the "prime beneficiaries" of the emphasis.

"The greatest impact of the program was not the 28.31 percent (increase) that was pledged," insists Doug Boucher, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Buena Park, Calif. "Rather, it was the spiritual commitment that was made by several in the congregation."

Planned Growth in Giving has provided a variety of benefits to First Baptist Church of Okmulgee, Okla., reports Pastor Alton Fannin. "A new spirit of unity and vision has become very evident," he says. "A new sense of healthy pride has returned for what Southern Baptists are doing. People look more at the Lord's will as opposed to the dollar weight.... We have entered a new era of progress in all directions."

Those are the kinds of positive, spiritually-oriented responses for which convention leaders hoped, says Harold C. Bennett, president and treasurer of the SBC Executive Committee.

"Speaking as a church member, Planned Growth in Giving was well-received in my own church," Bennett notes of First Baptist Church of Nashville, Tenn. "People responded to the program and the commitment to growth opportunities in excellent fashion. The greatest impact spiritually related to the new realization that stewardship should be a growth experience--growing each year, month and week."

That realization also has brought financial growth in churches.

Okmulgee's First church has enjoyed a \$25,000 checkbook balance, compared to recent annual deficits of up to \$30,000. First Baptist Church of Damascus, Md., has had offerings averaging 15 percent above the same time a year ago. Mt. Olive Baptist Church in Live Oak, Fla., had a 22.8 percent offering increase for five months following its Planned Growth in Giving emphasis.

Such responses seem to support leaders who contend Southern Baptists gain by giving.

Says Rodney W. McGlothlin, pastor of First Baptist Church West in Lawton, Okla.: "We live in a day when Baptists are debating what the minimum requirements are for being a Baptist. Our only avenue out of this deadly tendency is to focus on maximum sacrifice to meet the needs of a lost world."

--30--

New Orleans Seminary Trustees
Adopt Record Budget

Baptist Press
4/1/86

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Trustees of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary recently adopted a record \$6.2 million budget for the fiscal year beginning Aug. 1.

The new budget reflects a 3.62 percent increase over the current budget. It includes 4 percent salary increases for faculty members and permanent staff employees.

Increases in various fees and rental charges were approved. Included was a \$25 hike in the matriculation fees for all degree programs, which has been adopted by all six Southern Baptist seminaries. The new fee for full-time associate and master's degree students will be \$325 per semester.

Also during the annual board meeting, trustees approved a total cost of \$2.57 million for renovation of the first floor of the student center building. The renovated portion of the 119,000-square-foot building will house a student lounge, post office, Baptist Book Store and various administrative offices.

--more--

In other business, trustees elected three new faculty members, all of whom have been teaching on contract at the seminary. Their faculty status will become effective Aug. 1. Jeanine C. Bozeman was elected assistant professor of social work. R. Dennis Cole was named assistant professor of biblical archaeology. Stephen A. Skinner was elected assistant professor of voice in the church music ministries division.

Trustees also promoted two faculty members--David W. Perkins to associate professor of New Testament and Greek and Carlton L. Winbery to professor of New Testament and Greek.

In other action full approval was given to four professors for sabbatical leaves during the 1986-87 academic session. Those taking leaves will be--Harold T. Bryson, Harry L. Eskew, Macklyn W. Hubbell and C. Ferris Jordan.

Ten new members were elected to the seminary's Foundation Board. They are H.D. Graham Jr. of Metairie, La.; William M. Hamm Jr. of Shreveport, La.; Joe C. Hillman Jr. of Brookhaven, Miss.; K.D. Lankford Jr. of Shreveport; R.S. Mann Jr. of Newman, Ga.; E.M. Pincomb of Metairie; Jack L. Ray of Gadsen, Ala.; J. Gordon Reische of Metairie; John L. Swanner of Wichita Falls, Texas; and John E. McPherson of Metairie.

--30--

Missionary Child
Ill With Meningitis

Baptist Press
4/1/86

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The 21-month-old son of Southern Baptist missionaries Randy and Jan Newberry has been hospitalized in Richmond, Va., with meningitis.

As of March 31, the boy's condition was listed as critical, with doctors giving him less than a 50 percent chance of survival.

The Newberrys, from Gordon, Texas, were attending a furloughing missionary conference at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Missionary Learning Center, just outside of Richmond, when their son Philip became ill March 27.

He was admitted to the pediatric intensive care unit of Medical College of Virginia Hospital that night after running fever, vomiting and being listless during the day, said Barbara Lawson, a nurse at the learning center.

The furloughing conference, which began March 23, had drawn 67 missionaries and 31 missionary children. William Gaventa, a physician and director of the board's medical services department, talked with the group before they left the conference March 28 and advised parents to contact their pediatricians when they returned home. There were nine children 4 years old and under, the group most susceptible to the illness.

The type of meningitis Philip has, hemophilus influenzae, "is a sporadic disease and the most common form of meningitis in children," said Gaventa. Although there is a chance of contagion, it is not likely. It is not the epidemic variety that has closed schools in Texas and Virginia.

The Newberrys were appointed missionaries to Brazil in 1982. They have two other children, Amy, 15, and Joel, 12. The family had returned to Texas on furlough in December.

--30--

Southern Seminary Receives
\$1 Million In Estate Gifts

Baptist Press
4/1/86

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Two donors who died recently in Florida and Missouri have provided more than \$1 million for the work of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Irene Hale Skinner of Tampa, Fla., made a bequest of \$821,677 to Southern seminary, along with gifts to four other Baptist institutions--Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas; Baptist Bible Institute in Graceville, Fla.; Clear Creek Baptist School, Pineville, Ky., and South Florida Baptist Hospital, Plant City.

--more--

A.P. Stone Jr. of Springfield, Mo., created a testamentary trust which will provide more than \$250,000 to enlarge a \$500,000 endowment he previously established. The trust is named in memory of his father, an 1895 graduate of Southern seminary. The A.P. Stone Fund is used for student aid, with a preference for those preparing for foreign missions.

--30--

CORRECTION :

In (BP) story, "Bookkeeper Kelly Ready For New Set Of Figures" mailed 3/31/86, please make the following correction in paragraph 23. It should read: ...adds Porter Routh, Bennett's predecessor ... not successor as stated.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Peter Kung Named
Language Supervisor

Baptist Press
4/1/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Peter Chung-Hong Kung, a national consultant on language/ethnic missions for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, has been named supervisor of the special ministries department's language section at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Kung's diverse experience in various cultural and ethnic groups is an asset to help guide the work of the language section, said Bill Banks, director of the special ministries department.

"We needed a person with balanced judgment and a long-range approach to all language groups," Banks said. Kung, 40, was selected from a field of 43 candidates, he added.

Oscar I. Romo, director of the Home Mission Board language missions division, said Kung is the first Asian named to a leadership position in an Southern Baptist Convention agency.

Kung hopes to help churches reach more ethnic persons and to help ethnic leadership develop religious education work, he said, adding, Southern Baptists work with 84 ethnic and language groups, but the language section has identified eight for priority attention.

There are Spanish, Korean, Chinese, basic English including deaf, international ethnic, American Indian, French, Hmong/Cambodian/Laotian and Arabic.

Kung has been a missionary of the Home Mission Board's language missions division since 1975. Since 1979, he has been a consultant for the Home Mission Board working with the Sunday School Board.

Previously, he was a catalytic missionary associate to Chinese in Illinois, pastor of the First Chinese Southern Baptist Church in San Diego, and pastor of the Chinese mission at First Baptist Church of Dallas.

A native of China, he was a high school teacher in Hong Kong before moving to the United States in 1973.

Kung holds bachelor of divinity and master of divinity degrees from Hong Kong Baptist Seminary and a bachelor of arts degree from Hong Kong Baptist College. He attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, and currently is enrolled in the doctor of ministry program at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

He recently has helped organize the National Vietnamese Southern Baptist Pastors Fellowship and Midwest Chinese Pastors Planning Conference.

--30--

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by BSSB bureau of Baptist Press

Southeastern Seminary Professor
John Edward Steely Dies At 63

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—John Edward Steely, professor of historical theology at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1956, died March 28 of heart failure.

Steely, 63, a native of Almyra, Ark., was a son of the late D.E. Steely, Arkansas Baptist pastor, and the late Alva Bledsoe Steely.

He received an undergraduate degree in 1944 and an honorary doctorate in 1982 from Ouachita Baptist University. He then went on to earn graduate degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Steely also was pastor of five churches in Arkansas and Illinois. From 1948 to 1956, he was head of the department of Bible and religious education at Southern Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark. In 1956 he began a 30 year tenure on the faculty of Southeastern seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Steely translated 18 theological books from German and Dutch and was the author of numerous articles and pamphlets.

He is survived by his wife, Donna, and two children, Deborah of Raleigh, N.C., and John Allen of Winston-Salem, N.C.

—30—

'Time' Picks Furman Student
Among Nation's Top 20 Juniors

Baptist Press
4/1/86

GREENVILLE, S.C. (BP)—Marylee James, a Furman University student who did not start her college career until nearly 25 years after she graduated from high school, has been selected as one of the country's 20 most outstanding college students by Time magazine.

James, a member of Pendleton Street Baptist Church in Greenville, S.C., was selected as one of the magazine's College Achievement Award winners.

The competition was open to students from any accredited four-year college and James was selected from 100 finalists.

James, is a political science/sociology major at Furman who works full time as a nurse at Piedmont Dialysis Center. Last year, she was one of 105 college sophomores from across the country to receive a four-year Truman Scholarship.

She is a Charles A. Dana Teaching Fellow at Furman, a Baptist school in Greenville. After receiving a B.H. Peace Fellowship for foreign study, she was an assistant during a study tour of the Mid-East and Africa earlier this year.

Her father, the late John C. Massey, was an ordained Southern Baptist minister.

—30—

C.K. Chang Has Vision
Of 'Christian' China

By Craig Bird

Baptist Press
4/1/86

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—China will be sending Christian missionaries to Europe and the United States within 15 years, declared C.K. Chang.

That is both a prediction and a vision for Chang, a 77-year-old third-generation Baptist.

"The Bible says the time will come when 'your old men shall dream dreams and your young men shall dream visions,'" he explained. "I want to be the youngest old man in China. I have a vision of China being won for Christ."

—more—

Chang is a professor of English at An Hui Normal University. During the Cultural Revolution, he twice was imprisoned and was separated from his family for 15 years because of his Christian beliefs.

As a visiting professor at Baylor University, he visited Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he told a missions class that at China's current rate the world's most populous country will be evangelized by the end of the century. Chinese then will "be sending missionaries not only to our own people but all around the world," he said.

News of Christian activity was limited during the 35 years of Communist suppression of Christian missionaries and other foreign influences. But the nation's door has swung open slowly in recent years. Outsiders expected to find a struggling church—if one had survived at all.

Instead, Chang estimates there are three million to five million Christians worshipping each week in 3,500 re-opened churches. Another 1,000 churches soon will re-open, he said.

"And God only knows how many house churches there are," Chang said. "But there are likely another 10 million to 15 million Christians worshipping in them."

Yet these impressive numbers constitute a minority of more than one billion people in the nation. But Chang's vision isn't fazed by the numbers.

He gave two examples of what fuels this vision.

One is the dedication with which Chinese Christians work to spread the Christian message. Thousands of Chinese--the majority highly educated and holding technical jobs--work double shifts and on state holidays to build up two to three months of consecutive off days, he said.

"Instead of using their vacation to sight-see like most Americans," they move to wherever they can get intensive training in Bible, Chang said. These lay people then return to act as assistant pastors in churches.

The second example is of Chang's next-door neighbor, the retired president of An Hui Normal University and "a member of the Communist Party, an avowed atheist."

He came one day to ask Chang for a favor. "All my life I have hoped to have time to read the Holy Bible I have heard so much about," the neighbor said. "Now I have time. Could you get me a Bible?"

It took two weeks for Chang to get a Chinese Bible printed on newsprint. The retired university president paid \$6.75 for the 10-inch-thick book and asked Chang's help on parts he did not understand.

China will not allow foreign missionaries but is anxious for "foreign experts" to come and teach, Chang said. "They prefer Christians because Christians have proven to be good teachers."

He hopes Baptist lay people will contact Southern Baptist's Cooperative Services International, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230, for information on applying to teach in China.

"You can share your faith while you are there--our constitution has been changed so there is no discrimination against Christians," Chang stressed.

He also hopes some of those volunteers will come to his university so he can retire. "Sixty-five is the normal retirement time but the president won't let me quit yet," Chang said. "He told me to bring back lots of volunteers to teach. Then maybe I could retire."

Naturally, Chang's retirement plans relate to his vision for China. He wants to get out of the classroom so he can preach full time.

Dallas Psychologist Rhodes
Donates Self To Help Missions

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (BP)--About 50 weeks out of every year, industrial psychologist Roy Rhodes' calendar is filled with management workshops and sales seminars for major financial institutions and Fortune 500 corporations. At least two weeks each year, he donates his time and professional services to mission causes.

"The good Lord has been really good to me," says Rhodes, a deacon at Shiloh Terrace Baptist Church in Dallas. "I have a responsibility to give back something in return."

For the last three years, he has conducted seminars for summer missionaries involved with Rio Grande River Ministry. The orientation sessions are designed to help the college students improve their self-concepts and deal with emotions.

During sessions spiced with colorful colloquialisms and humorous anecdotes, Rhodes leads the summer missionaries to examine their fears and clarify their misconceptions. One area of discussion is how to work with missionaries.

"A lot of these folks have to realize for the first time that preachers and missionaries are human beings too," says Rhodes. "They have hang-ups like everybody else."

A major purpose of the sessions is to help the predominantly Anglo, middle-class college students prepare for ministry with poor Hispanics along the Texas-Mexico border.

"I think the presentations are fairly hard-hitting," says Rhodes. "I try to be very honest, very direct and reality-oriented."

"With the tremendous pressure our students are under, particularly if they are called to God's service, they need an experienced voice to train them and set their minds in the right direction," says Elmin K. Howell Jr., coordinator of River Ministry for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. "It takes a man of Roy's caliber to offer them direction in an open way."

In addition to the seminars, Rhodes also conducts psychological testing of the summer missionaries. He has found about 60 percent have shyness that needs to be overcome.

"I want them to learn the more risks we take witnessing and reaching out, the easier we find it is," he says, "and the more excited we become."

In addition to working with summer missionaries, Rhodes has led workshops during missionary orientation for both the Southern Baptist Home and Foreign Mission Boards, has participated in pastors' conferences in Alaska and has conducted the fall faculty retreats for Golden Gate and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminaries.

"I grew up in a Christian home and was taught tithing and participation in church early on," Rhodes says, explaining his reason for contributing his time and talents to missions.

Although his management firm's clients include such major institutions as InterFirst Bank, Allied Bankshares, Mobile Oil, Sun Oil and the American Institute of Banking, gratitude leads Rhodes to find time to donate his services to Baptist mission causes.

"Where I am now is not an accident. Doors have opened for me, and God has guided," he says. "I have a responsibility now to do something in return. I know you don't outgive God."

--30--

'It Is Well' Remains
Favorite Of Seminary Students

Baptist Press
4/1/86

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--"It is Well with My Soul" remains the favorite hymn of students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

William J. Reynolds, associate professor of church music, polled students for the annual favorite hymn day in chapel March 26.

--more--

Seminary students, many of whom have made financial and career sacrifices to prepare for ministry, have chosen this hymn of commitment "for the past several years," Reynolds said. The hymn's words were written by Horatio Spafford in 1873 after his family drowned at sea.

Reynolds, editor of the 1975 Baptist Hymnal, leads the hymn day each spring. Students vote for their favorite hymns and then sing them in a special chapel service.

Students' second through sixth choices this year were "Victory in Jesus," "Amazing Grace," "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross" and "How Great Thou Art."

--30--

Preachers Must Use Tools
Of Persuasion, Bailey Says

Baptist Press
4/1/86

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Preachers must utilize "conscious tools of persuasion" if they wish to "counter evil and proclaim good news in our time," Raymond Bailey, professor of Christian preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said in a faculty address at the Louisville, Ky., school.

Despite the emphasis on alternative sermon forms, he insisted the traditional vehicle of rhetoric still can be used effectively to communicate truth.

"The preacher finds in rhetoric tools to achieve his communication of God's revelation," Bailey asserted. He explained Aristotle's three forms of proof—ethos, pathos and logos—are vital to successful preaching.

Identifying ethos as "character," Bailey stressed the importance of the preacher's personal preparation, including integrity and diligent study. "No sermon ever entered the heart of a listener unless and until it entered the heart of the preacher," he said.

The task of the preacher in using pathos—or emotion—is "how to use and channel the emotion that exists in every audience," Bailey explained. That involves becoming immersed in the life of the congregation and learning its needs.

"Our sermons often apply salve where there is no hurt and allow our people to go home with great, gaping wounds unhealed," Bailey said.

Defining logos as content, he insisted preaching must be rooted in the word of God. "Communication skills and knowledge of the situation are of little value if one has nothing to say," Bailey asserted.

--30--

Project To Monitor Religious
Intolerance In Campaigning

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
4/1/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—Use of religious intolerance in political campaigns is the target of a new national project sponsored by People for the American Way, a 200,000-member nonpartisan citizens organization.

The effort, Election Project, is designed to monitor and publicly report campaign practices ranging from appeals to religious bigotry to claims of God's endorsement of certain political candidates or positions.

Former U.S. Rep. Barbara Jordan, a Southern Baptist from Texas, said a "disturbing new form of religious bigotry" has entered American politics.

--more--

"There are those who claim God's endorsement to seek public office," said Jordan, one of five co-chairs for the project. "They question—or disparage—the religious faith and personal morality of their opponents. They claim that their own political platforms are mandated by the Bible and contend their opponents' views and voting records defy biblical commandments. Sometimes they even go so far as to suggest that their own candidacies represent God—and their opponents represent Satan."

In her video-taped appearance at the Election Project news conference, Jordan contended while people should be able to bring their personal beliefs into public life, they should "never claim to speak for God." She added, "It's a fine American tradition to give your opponents hell. But it's something else entirely to say they belong in hell."

John Buchanan, also a Southern Baptist, former U.S. congressman and project co-chair, said religious people and religious values belong in the public arena. He added, however, religious people have a "special responsibility to guard against religious intolerance."

Buchanan argued a person's legislative and political stances should not be turned into "tests of religious faith."

In addition to plans for monitoring and reporting intolerant campaign practices, People for the American Way also has developed a set of suggested guidelines for the discussion of religious issues in political campaigns:

- Candidates should not claim to be best qualified because of their religious affiliation.
- Candidates should not claim God endorses their views on political or legislative issues.
- Candidates should not question their opponents' religious faith or personal morality on the basis of their stands on political or legislative issues.
- Candidates should not claim God endorses their aspirations for public office.
- Candidates should disavow support that violates these guidelines.

In addition to Jordan and Buchanan, other project co-chairs are David Saperstein, co-director of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' Religious Action Center; Robert Drinan, a Jesuit priest and former U.S. congressman; and Madonna Koblenschlag, a staff member at Georgetown University's Woodstock Theological Center.

Emphasizing the importance of informing the American public about political uses of religious intolerance, Saperstein said, "Extremists must never be ignored. They must be challenged. The American people should know when a candidate says only one brand of politics is acceptable to God."

Saperstein also spoke of "shattering the myth" that people who support separation of church and state are anti-religion or anti-God. He said he supports the religious rights of every person, but "just because someone has the right to do something doesn't mean it is right." He argued "overstepping the line" to say there is only one right answer to a political question "closes down democratic debate."