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October 10, 1986

86-148

## Laity Challenged To Continue Evangelizing

TOCCOA, Ga. (BP)—While acknowledging the success of Southern Baptists' Good News America simultaneous revivals this spring, a denominational leader challenged laypeople to continue the momentum of evangelizing the nation's non-Christians.

"The 1986 simultaneous revivals were the best shot Southern Baptists have made in a long time. We fired our big guns," said Reid Hardin, director of evangelism support for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"But no victory can be won with artillery only: The troops must move in or you can shoot your big guns all night long and never reach the people," Hardin told participants at the 13th National Renewal Evangelism Conference in Toccoa, Ga.

Hardin also called for a release of the laity into the front lines of world missions and announced plans to help churches do so through the Year of the Laity in Evangelism and Discipleship. The 1988-89 church year emphasis is a combined effort of the Home Mission Board, Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission and Southern Baptist Sunday School Board to involve laypeople in missions through evangelism and discipleship.

"It's a tragedy that pastors can't lead laypeople to realize they're called by God," Hardin said. "If you don't sing in the choir or you're not a preacher-boy, they think you're not called by God. But there are no unblessed people.

"Look around you," he continued. "People are out there in the pews waiting on orders."

Hardin called for new ways of involving the laity in ministry and missions. "Sunday morning should be a celebration of missionaries as they come in from the mission fields," he said.

Responding to Hardin's challenge, four Southern Baptist laymen and a pastor drafted a prayer covenant for intercessory prayer to support the Year of the Laity. More than 200 conference participants signed the document.

The covenant noted the world cannot be reached by professional religious workers alone and too few people have been enlisted, equipped and commissioned to ministry and witness in the world.

In another session, Robert Hamblin, Home Mission Board evangelism vice president, said, "If we win America to Christ, we must do it through the church. Our agencies will not do it."

Hamblin encouraged participants to concern themselves "with 160 million people in America who are going to hell. I'm more concerned about that than theological correctness, training or programming."

James Smith, president of the Brotherhood Commission, noted, "We're living in times of testing and trial and criticism, yet we're still moving on God's work. It's a time when laypeople can make a difference. Pastors have to learn they're not called to do ministry, they're called to equip the saints to ministry."

More than 400 people attended the annual conference.

(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Brotherhood Commission

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Historical Commission, SBC  
Nashville, Tennessee

Texas Pastor Admonishes  
Activists To Be Christian

By Linda Lawson

WASHINGTON (BP)--Christians should exercise their freedom and be involved in politics and government, but their actions should be characterized by integrity, compassion and humility, a Texas pastor told participants at the 20th National Religious Liberty Conference.

The theme of the three-day meeting, sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, was "Intersecting Values."

Daniel Vestal, pastor of First Baptist Church of Midland, Texas, spoke on the role of churches and Christians at the intersection of a free state and a free church. He listed three "pastoral admonitions" for Christian involvement in politics, saying persons "must be careful not to engage in politics with the attitude that the end justifies the means."

He noted he has observed Christians on all sides of the political spectrum whose actions did not match their statements about their faith: "Our goal is redemption and reconciliation, not winning at any price. In our zeal to influence government, let us be careful that we never sacrifice character."

In the second place, Vestal urged, Christians must "be careful not to reduce or identify Christianity with any political program, not to equate social/political causes with the eternal kingdom of God." Many Christians have been guilty of taking stands on issues and then implying or stating outright that those who disagree with them "are less than Christian," he explained.

"In our zeal to influence government, let us be very careful to avoid equating our own social/political agendas with the gospel and be very careful not to label those who disagree with us as less than Christian," he urged. "As we practice zeal, let us practice charity."

In a third admonition, Vestal said Christians involved in politics "must be very careful not to assume God is on your side." Christians must be honest with themselves and with others in acknowledging their search for truth is inevitably influenced by their prejudices and presuppositions, he noted.

"We must be careful in making God the champion of our cause, of acting as though we alone have discovered divine providence. As we practice zeal, let us practice Christian humility," he insisted. "Integrity, compassion and humility--these are the essence of biblical faith. And in this intersection of liberty and citizenship, we would do well to believe these truths deeply, articulate them lovingly and practice them consistently."

Vestal praised the Baptist heritage of championing a free church in a free state, even when the cause was unpopular.

He said a free church is characterized by five tenets: each person makes a free choice to enter into a relationship with God, each is free to respond individually to the Holy Spirit, members of the church determine its life and ministry, they reject a state church and they see the church's mission fulfilled under the premise of freedom.

At the same time, a free state "is one that recognizes a pluralistic society and then attempts to protect that pluralism. The rights and privileges of each are guaranteed," he said.

In championing a free church and a free state, Baptists have advocated involvement in government while practicing the tenets of the gospel, he noted, explaining, "We have never believed that separation of church and state should separate church from government, Christ from culture or faith from life."

The Religious Liberty Conference was held in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, an organization of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada. At 50 years old, the BJCPA is the nation's oldest religious liberty watchdog group.

Africa Well Drilling  
Endless, But Effective

By Eric Miller

MORETAN, Togo (BP)—With half of Africa's physical problems related to water, it looks like Southern Baptists will never run out of wells to drill there, a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board official reports.

Along with the health benefit, well drilling has proven to be one of the most effective methods of starting churches, says John Mills, Foreign Mission Board director for West Africa.

"We've seen women, who, every day in the dry season since they were 6 years old, have been walking six miles one way to carry water," he says.

However, "to keep from walking six miles, here's a pool of water that has collected and so they'll use it until they can't squeeze any more out of it. They've walked in it, washed their clothes in it, and then they turn around and drink from it."

Africans in small villages "don't have enough scientific knowledge to realize how bad it is to drink polluted water," he says. "They don't have any ideas of germs. You can't see a germ."

When they get sick, they do not associate it with polluted water. The traditional religions would tell them they have an evil spirit—they have displeased some god and he has sent the illness on them, Mills explains.

Rural Africans get hepatitis, typhoid and a variety of parasites, including flukes that infect the liver, and a guinea worm contracted by stepping in polluted water.

"You do away with half of their health problems if you get them pure water," Mills says.

Missionaries in Togo, for example, are building ponds and teaching nationals through public health programs to get their drinking water from wells and to use pond water for irrigation and for chickens, goats and sheep.

About 60 wells have been drilled in a year and a half in Togo. This resulted in development of 30 churches during the same time.

"You improve their life 100 percent and they say, 'Hey, why are you doing this? You don't get anything,'" Mills says.

"You say, 'Well, we do it because we're concerned about you. God wants us to help you. He wants you to have a better life. He led us to come here.'"

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Singapore's Briefcase Seminary  
Is A Key To Missions In Asia

By Celeste Pennington

Baptist Press  
10/10/86

SINGAPORE (BP)—Asia needs theologians.

Fortunately, a dedicated missionary is training 21 daytime students and 35 night extension students who are enrolled in Singapore's "one-room" Baptist theological seminary.

Roger Capps' students are part of a Christian minority in the metropolitan island-state of 2.3 million people where 40 percent of the population is Buddhist, 30 percent "secular," 15 percent Islamic and 7 percent Hindu. Their commitment to Christ can result in community rejection and psychological persecution at home.

The seminary commitment demands even more. To receive a master of divinity degree requires 108 semester hours plus a substantial thesis. Students receive no financial support. And the curriculum is tough. So is Capps' seminary's top administrator.

"Dr. Capps," says a student, "stresses the pursuit of excellence in all we do."

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A door at the back of the classroom leads to a cramped office with bookshelves, a personal computer and a desk stacked with papers. Above it hangs a sign: "A clean desk is the sign of a sick mind."

Capps is there, ordering texts, lining up visiting professors for 1987 and 1988, considering books for the seminary library. He is director, professor and the seminary's only full-time employee.

"We're a briefcase set-up," Capps says, unblinking. The seminary is not so much small as compact.

Capps is assisted by a part-time missionary librarian and a part-time national secretary. Local pastors and missionaries and volunteers from the United States round out the teaching staff.

And while students kid about their "4 by 5 library," it's stocked with 6,500 volumes carefully gleaned from other seminaries, churches and individuals or purchased with funds from Singapore Baptists and matching funds by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Capps is adamant that the seminary develop as a locally-supported, indigenous school.

"We receive no operating funds from the Foreign Mission Board," he says. "They help us with capital needs, on a matching basis. We (the seminary) would never ask the Foreign Mission Board to put in \$100,000 if we put in only \$50,000."

Capps is a man of calculated words and little wasted motion. He jogs. He's in the seminary office by 7 a.m. He spends the next 40 to 50 minutes pouring over the Old Testament: "I have just had a terrifying experience, going through the Psalms," he says with a wry smile. After handling immediate matters of correspondence and curriculum, he prepares for class.

"I believe the key to missions is training leaders," Capps insists.

His expertise is the New Testament. His doctorate work was done at the University of Glasgow under William Barclay. Capps studies three to five hours for every hour in class. Since classes are small, he intensifies lectures with dialogue.

"He encourages us to probe into questions, to rely on ourselves and not the teacher," says student George Kaan. "He allows us to disagree with him. Of course, we must support our argument."

Because it runs counter to the Asian culture, the art of criticism must be nurtured. "Just because a teacher espouses a theory, it may not be the truth or contain even a particle of truth. I encourage students to be independent thinkers, to evaluate, to analyze and to criticize everything they receive," says Capps. "Frequently I play the devil's advocate."

Insists Khan Hui Neon, "He requires the very best from us."

Neon, a student when Capps was dean and teaching at the Seminari Theologia Baptis in Penang, Malaysia, now pastors Calvary Baptist Church, home of the Singapore seminary. Neon once dashed off a term paper, copied a few references and submitted it to Capps. Neon remembers fondly: "Dr. Capps had looked at each book. He brought me into his office. 'I really don't know what to do with your paper,' he told me, 'throw it in the trash or burn it away.'" Capps also is a mentor. Ilian Lim grins: "His office is open. We can pounce in, any time."

Third-year student Nancy Koh remembers the exhilaration of being accepted into the seminary, and the subsequent distress. "The more you study, the more you realize you are so inadequate. The last time I had this crisis I told Dr. Capps I would like to take one semester off. He said it is healthy, it is normal for seminary students to go through this. He said you have to work at it," Koh reports. "He is a very disciplined man. Through his Christian life, he has been an example. That is why I am not giving up yet."

"He manages both authority and friendship. He is a teacher, a friend, a counselor," says Koh. "He is someone I would be like, one day."

Neon still drops in for pastoral advice. "If I run into a problem, I just unload it on him," he says. When a group of church members falsely accused Neon and threatened to vote him out of the church, "I wanted to hit back. But Dr. Capps said you should let the love of Christ flow through your life."

If Capps' office is open, so is his home. On Fourth of July students mixed with missionaries gathered in the back yard for a cookout. Capps grilled; his wife, Janice, and teenagers Thomasin and Paul Leon entertained guests.

Capps encourages this kind of interaction as well as relationships developing among students and church members before seminary graduation. It's part of his emphasis on spiritual formation. "He puts equal importance on our academic work and our character," says Kaan.

Charles Carroll, a member of the seminary advisory board and a missionary, says, "We are on the frontier." The challenge is to blend theological education with practical ministry. And Roger Capps, he believes, has the vision.

"The structure he is building at the seminary is the ground level of what can be one of our most enduring and exciting mission enterprises," agrees William Hendricks, a friend and professor of theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. "He has a vision for the importance of Singapore in the future of Southeast Asia."

Part of that vision includes working himself out of a job. Capps is preparing for the time when the seminary will be more than a handful of students meeting in one classroom, for a day when a Singaporean will be director. "The stamp of my profile, I don't think will be healthy for the seminary," he says.

A few might beg to differ. One is Carroll: "Roger Capps is brilliant. He's a biblical scholar. He could be teaching at any seminary in the States. He's fun to be around. He's organized. He's trim. He's a family man. In all areas of his life he exercises self-control.

"He doesn't offend. He doesn't gossip. He's taught me how to disagree without a personal axe to grind. He preaches without notes."

Carroll stops: "This makes Roger Capps sound wonderful. He is."

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Celeste Pennington is book editor for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The story first appeared in World Mission Journal, November 1986.

Every Christian Called To  
Do Missions, FMB Rep Says

By Susan Shaw

Baptist Press  
10/10/86

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—While not everyone is called to be a missionary, all Christians are called to be part of the world missionary enterprise, Don Kammerdiener, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board director of Middle America and the Carribean, told students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Kammerdiener spoke at Southern Seminary during the school's recent World Mission Week emphasis.

Kammerdiener noted five ways people in the United States can further the cause of world missions:

-- Christians must know and teach in the churches what the Bible says about the people of God and their reason for being.

-- They must learn and teach what the Bible says about how to do missions.

-- They must know and be knowledgeable about organizations of the denomination in missions.

-- They must learn to pray and lead churches to pray effectively for world missions.

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— They must teach that the Christian calling in the world is to a cross and not a crown.

Cautioning against neglecting the missions enterprise, Kammerdiener asserted that a "poverty of biblical understanding lets people turn inward." He warned churches can do likewise, seeing themselves as the center of the kingdom of God.

He also raised the issue of appropriate models for missions, advocating an "incarnational" approach as exemplified in Scripture.

Kammerdiener noted that in a time when persons in the denomination are talking about heresy, he has noticed one particular heresy that has become common. "We can ignore the call of Christ to take up the cross and substitute it with an appeal to take up the crown now because we deserve it," he warned.

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Church-State Tensions  
Discussed At Conference

Baptist Press  
10/10/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs celebrated its 50th anniversary with a conference exploring the tensions that occur when Christian values intersect with issues in the public arena.

The meeting, the 20th National Religious Liberty Conference, drew more than 500 participants, the largest such gathering since the Baptist Joint Committee began in 1936.

"We have focused both on the past and the future as we come to this terribly difficult intersection" of church and state, said James M. Dunn, executive director of the Washington-based organization of nine Baptist bodies in the United States and Canada.

The conference speakers spanned from spokesmen for food and economic justice to a college president to eminent church historians. Dunn, in his closing remarks, referred to the range of the conference as "an exciting cafeteria line of challenges which reflect deep, abiding Christian values and a resolute, dogged determination to protect our heritage."

Former Alabama congressman John Buchanan told participants how his father had been chairman of the Southern Baptist Convention's Committee on Committees that appointed the first members of the SBC forerunner of the BJCPA in 1936.

The Northern Baptist Convention—now American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A.—joined the effort in 1937. A year later, the National Baptist Convention joined what became, in 1941, the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

During the conference, the scope of the tensions was spelled out by Robert L. Maddox, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, who told participants the nation "is gripped in a battle for religious liberty."

"On all sides," he said, "forces are arrayed that would undercut the hard-won battles of the past. Through overt and covert means, political and religious leaders want to control our religious impulses, reshape our spiritual sensibilities for parochial, partisan or nationalistic purposes. Government agencies want to tell us what is church. Politicians want to tell us when and how to pray. Preachers want to tell us how to worship and to set up their own standards as norms for true believers."

A former member of Congress from Texas, Barbara Jordan, said the "wall of separation between church and state" has never been a solid one. "There have been holes," she said. "It is penetrable. It should be penetrable."

Jordan, now professor of public service at the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas, Austin, added: "The worst thing for us to assume as a posture would be to view the wall as solid, impenetrable, imprisoning."

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She said separation of church and state should be maintained, but the two institutions also must recognize the potential for working cooperatively on issues such as sexuality, marriage and divorce, child care, child abuse, health care, liberty and justice. "There is much work left for us to do," she said. "We will do well if we cooperate instead of fight."

Church historian Martin Marty told participants there always have been tensions between church and state. "There have been no serene times," he said. "The church is always in tension. There were no good old days."

Marty, distinguished service professor of the history of modern Christianity at the University of Chicago School of Divinity, urged continuing support among Christians for the principles of equal separation that allow "no coercion of religion, no privileging of any particular religion and no disability against individuals or groups who act on religious impulses."

"Trust in the voluntary system implies a tense, conflictual, ever-changing scene—but in the end a most creative one," Marty said.

Another historian, Edwin S. Gaustad, said now, as throughout history, many people "love liberty better than they understand it."

Gaustad, professor of history at the University of California, Riverside, emphasized the importance of searching for historical distinctives to develop more precise, discriminating assertions about religious liberty. "What we have before us is not always a case of good guys vs. bad guys, but chiefly a case of trying to see a bit more clearly why we do not always end up on the same side," he said.

After tracing historical events and personalities from the third century to today, Gaustad concluded: "The church is a powerful institution; the state is a powerful institution. The values of each may intersect; the power of each must not."

"In maintaining a separation and balance between those two centers of power, democracy is served. In joining two such mighty forces together, power is on its way to becoming absolute. And absolute power is only another name for tyranny."

Charles G. Adams, pastor of Detroit's Hartford Avenue Baptist Church, called Jesus' instructions to "render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" one of the "most misunderstood and misinterpreted passages" in the Bible.

The passage does not demand blind allegiance to political authority, said Adams, who added, "To give blind obedience to Caesar is to give to Caesar that which belongs to God."

Adams said he believes the correct interpretation is that the coin—which bears Caesar's image—belongs to Caesar, but man—who bears God's image—belongs to God.

Patricia Ayres, president of Bread for the World, said, "Too many Christians have not understood that discipleship also demands careful stewardship of their citizenship."

Ayres, also a former chairman of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said culture's deeply rooted animosity toward the poor and faulty motives such as guilt are two possible reasons Christians are not more effective in responding to the call for justice in the causes of hunger. "We must go beyond charity," she said. "Charity that does not flower into a cry for justice will wither on the vine."

A call to rise up to the "challenge of non-violence and the imperative of peace with justice" was sounded by Coretta Scott King, widow of slain civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr.

"May we rise up and meet the challenge and face new opportunities to make this nation the just and democratic nation I believe it was intended to be," said King, president of the Martin Luther King Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in Atlanta. "If we do this, I believe our children will rise up and call us blessed."

Harold Stassen, the only living member of the eight-person American delegation that drafted and signed the original United Nations charter in 1945, called for Christian involvement in efforts to achieve world peace.

Acknowledging some Christians oppose peace talks among the super powers, Stassen said, "To go to world war in this nuclear space age inevitably means devastation and death beyond description and the virtual end of human civilization on this earth."

A college president told participants they must not depend on schools to teach values in society, saying instead "we must do it ourselves."

Olin Robison, president of Vermont's Middlebury College, said, "It is wishful thinking in the extreme to assume that the educational system can play that role; assume the responsibility of passing to the next generation the central and binding values, the moral and ethical concepts that set us free to be who we can be."

Also speaking to the gathering was actor David Soul, who showed the documentary film "The Fighting Ministers," focusing on the economic plight of steelworkers in the Pittsburgh area.

"The issue is not about economics," Soul said. "It is about dignity." He added, for him, the basic question of the Christian faith is "what does it mean to me and what will I do about it. Not just believe, but do."

Doug Marlette, a syndicated cartoonist with the Charlotte (N.C.) Observer., spoke about satire, emphasizing the need for people to be able to laugh at themselves and the things they hold dear. "I think a sense of humor is the earmark of maturity," said the creator of the comic strip "Kudzu."

Participants also heard a discussion of issues facing churches regarding taxation presented by Samuel Ericsson, executive director of the Christian Legal Society, and Dean M. Kelley, religious and civil liberty director for the National Council of Churches of Christ.

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Reporters contributing to this article were Dan Martin, Linda Lawson and Kathy Palen.

Court Rejects Procedural Move  
In Key Church-State Case

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press  
10/10/86

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected without comment a procedural move by attorneys for the Roman Catholic Church in a key case involving a challenge to the tax-exempt status of the nation's largest religious body over its anti-abortion activities.

In a one-line order issued Oct. 6, the court declined to grant the church's request that a federal district court be ordered to dismiss a suit against the church by the pro-abortion group, Abortion Rights Mobilization Inc. That group, church attorneys argued unsuccessfully, did not have legal standing to bring the suit challenging the church's federal tax exemption.

Because the heart of the case involves an effort to keep a church out of the public arena on a key moral issue, other religious bodies—including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs—have joined the case as friends of the court on the side of the Catholic Church.

A brief filed this summer by the Christian Legal Society, the Baptist Joint Committee and other religious groups argued the Catholic Church has a constitutionally protected right under the free speech and free exercise of religion clauses of the First Amendment to engage in political speech and activities against abortion.

Baptist Joint Committee Executive Director James M. Dunn said his agency entered the case because challenges to a religious body's ability to exercise its influence in the public arena "pose a direct threat to all churches' First Amendment rights." Dunn emphasized while the Baptist Joint Committee is not active in the debate over anti-abortion legislation—leaving such activity to other denominational agencies—"this case has clear and critically important church-state principles at its core."

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"We must say loudly and clearly that groups opposing a church's stated position on a public issue may not intervene so as to silence that church," Dunn said.

Besides contending for the Catholic Church's right to engage in anti-abortion lobbying, the brief challenged the standing of Abortion Rights Mobilization Inc. to bring the legal action against the church absent a "particularized injury" suffered as a consequence of church activity.

Oliver S. Thomas, Baptist Joint Committee general counsel, said further the brief was filed to argue the Roman Catholic Church should not "be subject to the extremely intrusive and expensive discovery process without having a full and fair adjudication" of the standing issue before the 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals, where the case awaits further action.

That panel refused earlier this year to order the federal district court that first took up the case to dismiss the action against the church prior to the normal appeals process. That ruling then was appealed to the Supreme Court.

Despite the high court's action not to disturb the lower ruling on this procedural question, the court of appeals now will decide whether the church should be held in contempt for refusing to comply with the district court's "discovery" order to produce documents the abortion rights group contends are needed in making its case against the church. The appeals court also may address the question of standing.

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Supreme Court Accepts  
New Religious Disputes

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press  
10/10/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—On a day when new Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist assumed his place in the center chair at the nation's highest court, he and his eight colleagues announced they will decide separate disputes involving the group Jews for Jesus and a Jewish synagogue in Silver Spring, Md.

Among some 1,000 cases disposed of in the new term's first list of orders—all but two dozen of which were rejected outright or otherwise disposed of—the court said it will hear oral arguments in a lengthy dispute between the evangelically oriented Jews for Jesus and authorities at publicly owned Los Angeles area airports over access to the airport terminals for purposes of witnessing and proselytizing.

Airport authorities appealed to the high court after a decision by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the group's right to use the airport terminals for evangelistic outreach on grounds the terminals are public forums in which speech is protected by the First Amendment. That free speech right is subject only to "reasonable time, place and manner" restrictions, the court of appeals ruled.

Attorneys for the airports have asked the justices to consider the principal argument that their clients should be permitted to limit use of the terminals "to their dedicated and intended airport-related purposes." (86-104, Board of Airport Commissioners of City of Los Angeles v. Jews for Jesus Inc.)

In a separate action, the justices also announced they will decide if a Silver Spring, Md., Jewish synagogue may bring a civil suit against persons convicted of spray-painting anti-Jewish and pro-Nazi slogans on its building.

Although the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled earlier the congregation could not bring the suit on the basis of a federal race discrimination law, attorneys for the synagogue succeeded in persuading the high court to review their contention that Jews be allowed to pursue civil suits on the same basis provided blacks, Hispanics and other racial minorities. (85-2156, Shaare Tefila Congregation v. Cobb)

In addition, the court also decided not to hear two other religion-related cases. In one, the justices were unpersuaded to take up the appeal of a military defendant who claimed he confessed to a crime after he and an interrogator prayed together. According to a decision by the Court of Military Appeals, the defendant was not induced improperly into confessing. Instead, that panel ruled, the defendant himself injected the topic of his religious beliefs into the interrogation process. (85-2120, Wheeler v. U.S.)

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In the other rejected case, the court in effect reasserted its long-held position that in church property battles in the hierarchical Episcopal Church, disputed property reverts to the mother church even if a majority of a given congregation votes to withdraw from the denomination. (85-2093, Mote v. Bishop and Diocese of Colorado)

Besides the pair of new cases accepted for review, the high court decided earlier to hear two other religion disputes this term. They involve a challenge to Louisiana's "creation science" law and the claim of a Florida woman that the state was obligated to give her unemployment compensation after she was fired for refusing to work on her sabbath.

All four—and any other such disputes accepted between now and Thanksgiving—are expected to be decided by next spring.

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Interdenominational Texas Group  
Discusses Anti-gambling Fight

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press  
10/10/86

DALLAS (BP)—About 100 religious leaders representing 15 denominations discussed the theological, political, economic and organizational issues related to fighting legalized gambling in Texas during a convocation on state-sponsored gambling at First United Methodist Church of Dallas Oct. 9.

The meeting, which drew participants from 30 cities, was co-sponsored by the Texas Conference of Churches, the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, the Anti-Crime Council of Texas, Texas IMPACT and the Greater Dallas Community of Churches.

Weston Ware, associate director of the Christian Life Commission, noted the convocation attracted not only members of ecumenical organizations who traditionally have stood alongside Baptists in the fight against legalized gambling, but it also brought together members of independent, congregational-type churches that have not been involved at the legislative level in the recent past.

Ira Peak, ethics professor at Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, examined the theological foundations for Christian involvement in the anti-gambling fight, based on the biblical command to believers to "love thy neighbor as thyself."

"Love involves more than justice, but it never involves less than justice," Peak said. He observed legalized gambling allows the state to use its citizens "as means in a scheme to further government," and by abandoning its obligation to protect citizens from gambling it "turns consumer protection upside down."

He noted Scripture declares the neighbor who is poor deserves special care, and he said state-sponsored gambling "preys on the poor like a parasite." In support of his claim, Peak cited a 1979 study conducted in New Castle County, Del., which showed lottery outlets there were located in disproportionate numbers in the poorest neighborhoods.

Gary McNeil, legislative assistant with the Christian Life Commission, predicted Texans will defeat legalized pari-mutuel gambling at what he termed "the altar of democracy" Nov. 3, 1987, but he said defeat will require a concerted effort by gambling opponents to warn the public against the misinformation produced by gambling industries.

Far from being the grand solution its supporters claim, McNeil said, gambling will not produce proportionately significant revenue even after five years, and it offers no immediate relief. Furthermore, he disputed claims that pari-mutuel gambling is a solid industry that will help diversify the state economy.

"Pari-mutuel is a dying industry with declining revenues and attendance," he said. "In some situations, states must float bonds to bail out the ailing tracks."

Brushing aside polls claiming a majority of Texans favor legalized gambling, McNeil said, "There is only one poll that is going to matter. It's the one voters will go to on Nov. 3, 1987."

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