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NBC

87-50

CLC Executive Testifies  
On Lottery Advertising

By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP)--The head of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission urged a House subcommittee to reject proposed legislation that would loosen federal restrictions on advertisement of various forms of gambling.

CLC Executive Director Larry Baker, testified April 2 before the House Subcommittee on Administrative Law and Governmental Relations on the proposed Lottery Advertising Clarification Act of 1987 (H.R. 1568). The bill -- sponsored by subcommittee chairman Barney Frank, D-Mass. -- would amend federal law to allow additional advertising of state-operated lotteries, casinos and charitable gambling.

"The most troublesome part of this legislation is its removal of interstate advertising prohibitions," Baker testified. "The argument that the federal government should not be concerned about regulation fails to acknowledge the possible entanglements which would result if gambling activities in one state could legally advertise their activities in other states which do not have legalized gambling."

Baker said present federal law provides the best assurance of neutrality since it strikes a balance between allowing states that want legalized gambling to have it and providing states that do not want it the opportunity to avoid the consequences associated with legalized gambling. Interstate advertising of legal gambling operations also could influence laws in other states, he added.

"Advertising for state-operated lotteries could become a powerful force for changing the laws of other states," he testified. "This advertising, conducted by an agency of one state, would become a form of government-subsidized propaganda in another state. The neutrality required by present law better serves the interest of state self-determination."

Baker described casino advertising as "even more troublesome." Noting state after state has refused to legalize such gambling, he said, "Some of the consequences of casino gambling can cut across state lines and contribute to problem concerns for other states."

He also mentioned problems with charitable gambling, which he described as "troublesome activity for states to regulate."

In concluding his testimony, Baker pointed to a resolution adopted during the 1986 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta. The resolution voiced opposition to legislation that would eliminate lottery advertising restrictions.

Baker -- who was accompanied by Larry Braidfoot, CLC general counsel -- was the only witness to testify in opposition to the legislation. Other witnesses included two members of Congress from Nevada, a Department of Justice staff member and representatives of the National Association of Broadcasters and the American Newspaper Publishers Association.

After the hearing, Baker said: "This legislation is a high priority for the gambling industry. It would open the doors for a tidal wave of lottery and casino advertising even in states where those activities are illegal."

"Immediate opposition by Southern Baptists and other concerned citizens is needed before the bill is acted upon by the subcommittee."

Baptist Hospital Sold  
To Jordanian Government

N-FMB

AJLOUN, Jordan (BP)--The hospital that inaugurated Baptist work in Jordan 35 years ago closed March 1 but is expected to reopen soon under the direction of the Jordanian government.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board completed the \$1.5 million sale of Baptist Hospital at Ajloun to the Jordanian government in March.

It was the only hospital capable of full emergency care in Ajloun, a city of 6,000 people. But government officials have said they intend to reopen the hospital as quickly as possible, probably sometime in April, said Isam Ballenger, the board's vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

Disappointment lingers among Jordanian Baptists over the sale, Ballenger said. But he believes they have "faced the realities which have made (it) reasonable and necessary."

The hospital had been suffering from a declining patient load. Its capacity was pared down from 50 to 30 beds in 1978. Even so, the average inpatient load was 15 to 20. Last year, the hospital treated nearly 2,500 inpatients and 9,750 outpatients.

Contributing to the drop in patients is the Jordanian government's policy of providing free health care, although the nearest government hospitals are more than an hour away. The government had announced plans to open a 24-hour diagnostic medical clinic in Ajloun.

Baptist Hospital is not the only private facility in Jordan to face difficult times. Two years ago, Queen Alia Hospital, a private 250-bed facility, opened in Amman but it closed in late February.

Baptist Hospital had 65 full-time employees, 15 with more than 20 years of service. "It appears they will continue working at the hospital," Ballenger said.

At least three veteran missionaries will remain involved with the hospital, John and Ruth Roper and Violet Popp. The Jordanian government has accepted the volunteer services of Roper, a surgeon, and Popp, supervisor of in-service training of nurses.

August Lovegren, a veteran missionary surgeon, and his wife, Alta Lee, are to retire later this year.

Missionaries Charles and Nancy Browning will remain in Jordan. He had been hospital maintenance supervisor and will assume similar duties for the Baptist mission in Jordan.

Three missionaries are considering other assignments: John Deal, who has been the hospital administrator, and his wife, Revonda, and Jana Caves, a medical technologist.

Baptist presence in Ajloun will continue through a Baptist church and elementary school with about 300 students.

Baptists still own a building that served as the hospital before the current facility was constructed in 1975. The old hospital and other property may be used by the Jordan Baptist Convention as a conference center, Ballenger said.

In a recent appreciation tea for hospital employees, several long tenures were noted: one, Jerius Ashkar, had 36 years of service; five had worked 30-35 years; nine, 20-29 years; and 19, 10-19 years.

Seminary Professor Calls  
For 'Divorce' Within SBC

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Southern Baptist seminary professor called for a "divorce" between the two factions within his denomination during a lecture at a Catholic university in the nation's capital.

E. Glenn Hinson, professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., said he sees no way to resolve the controversy in which the Southern Baptist Convention has been engaged for more than 25 years.

"Two groups are hopelessly polarized," Hinson said. "We have a marriage that is broken down irretrievably, and I'm now convinced it would be more Christian and serve Christ's kingdom better if we got a divorce. If we do not, we will merely continue to violate one another's conscience and to blaspheme Christ and darken whatever light shines within us."

Hinson made his remarks while delivering the Wattson Lecture at the Catholic University of America, where he has taught during the spring semester while on sabbatical from Southern Seminary. In addition to being selected for the annual lecture, Hinson was awarded the school's Johannes Quasten Medal for excellence in scholarship and leadership in religious studies.

In the lecture, Hinson discussed an assigned topic, the influence of fundamentalism on ecumenical dialogue. "The major division among Christians today is not between but within denominations -- between fundamentalists with their separatist and absolutist mentality and other persons who have a more inclusive and tolerant mentality," he said.

Hinson said one strategy is to "infiltrate denominations" and "by active political effort to assert control." He pointed to the Southern Baptist Convention as an example.

"The fundamentalists began their quest to control the Southern Baptist Convention the same year Moral Majority was born, in 1979," he said. "They spoke of parity and fairness in representation on boards and in agencies; they wanted a few professors who would teach fundamentalism, a few agency heads who represented their outlook, missionaries and other denominational workers who held their views. Now that they've established control, they have no inclination whatever to share their power."

During a question-and-answer session following the lecture, Hinson described "divorce" within the denomination as an "incredibly complex problem."

"Ideally, Christians might simply recognize that here are two different approaches to Christianity and in conscience there is no way for us to relate to one another," he said. "It would mean essentially agreeing in some way to divide up the control of property, the support of programs and all of the other things that we have."

Hinson said another possibility would be to take the dispute to court, citing three court precedents involving congregations. In each case, Hinson said, the "courts awarded everything to the minority who represented the Baptist tradition and denied the fundamentalists anything."

The Quasten Medal which Hinson received is named for Johannes Quasten, a leading historian of the early church who taught at Catholic University of America from 1938 to 1977. During the ceremony, Hinson was cited as "a man of many gifts, a man of excellence. His scholarship and theological interests are many: New Testament, patristics (the study of the early church), ecclesiology, spirituality, liturgy, Baptist history."

Florida Plan To Collect Tax  
From Churches Appears Dead

By Greg Warner

N- CO  
(FLA)

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (BP)--Florida's attempt to force churches to collect sales tax apparently has fizzled.

Following the lead set in Gov. Bob Martinez's proposed budget, the Florida House Finance and Taxation Committee is expected to propose that the state retain the law that exempts churches and other non-profit groups from charging sales tax on services they provide.

"There is no sentiment to tax the services rendered by churches," said Bill Townsend, general counsel for the Department of Revenue in Tallahassee. "They will have the same status they currently enjoy."

The sales-tax exemptions for churches and other non-profit groups were cancelled late last year when the Florida legislature voted to raise revenue by forcing accountants, dry cleaners and most other service-oriented professions to charge customers sales tax.

The new law, which will take effect July 1, reportedly would force churches to collect sales tax on certain activities, such as retreats, weddings and funerals, if those services are offered for fixed fees.

But a special study commission, which since December has been re-evaluating the exemptions, has recommended that churches not be included in the new law.

"What the commission did was pick up the governor's package," Townsend said.

Martinez's proposed budget does include sales tax on some professional services but not those performed by churches. In addition to bypassing non-profit organizations that qualify under section 01(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, the governor also exempted medical and social services, insurance and some other services.

If as expected the House Finance and Taxation Committee adopts the recommendations of the study commission, the committee likely will ask the state legislature to reinstate the exemption for churches.

Final word on the committee's intentions will have to wait until all its work on the sales tax bill is completed later in April. Both the House and Senate then will have to approve any amendment.

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High Court To Review  
Falwell-Flynt Case

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press  
4/3/87

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Supreme Court has agreed to review a case involving television evangelist Jerry Falwell and Hustler magazine publisher Larry Flynt.

The high court will determine if a lower court was correct in awarding \$200,000 to Falwell, who alleged an advertising parody in Flynt's magazine caused him "emotional distress." A key issue will be whether individuals who have not been libeled still can recover damages for published opinions or parodies that cause them emotional distress.

Falwell — founder of Moral Majority, which now is known as Liberty Federation — filed a \$45 million suit against Flynt and Hustler for libel, invasion of privacy and intentional infliction of emotional distress because of a parody, published in the magazine's November 1983 and March 1984 issues, that portrayed Falwell as an incestuous drunkard.

During a 1984 trial, Falwell testified he was very angry and "felt like weeping" when he saw the parody. Flynt, who testified on video tape, said one of his objectives in publishing the parody was to "assassinate" Falwell's reputation.

On the basis of the emotional distress charge, the jury awarded Falwell \$100,000 in compensatory damages and \$50,000 in punitive damages from both Flynt and Hustler.

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A three-judge panel of the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals last August refused to consider Flynt's argument that the parody was protected under the First Amendment as "opinion" or "rhetorical hyperbole." The panel said the only question was whether the ad was "sufficiently outrageous to constitute intentional infliction of emotional distress."

The full appeals court voted 6-5 against reviewing the panel's decision.

In an appeal to the nation's highest court, Flynt's attorneys contended the appeals court decision "fatally undermined" First Amendment protections and would have a "chilling effect" upon the exercise of those rights.

"Mere hurt feelings are constitutionally insufficient to justify the imposition of substantial damages upon one who chooses to speak his mind, however unkindly, about a public personage," Flynt's attorneys said.

But Falwell's attorney, Norman Roy Grutman, argued the case involved "no constitutional issue deserving review." Instead, Grutman said, it centered on "the aberrant behavior of Larry Flynt ... whose reckless and malicious conduct places him well outside the broad perimeters of constitutional protection."

Arguments in the case will be heard during the Supreme Court's 1987-88 term. (86-1278, Hustler Magazine v. Falwell)

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Needs of Deaf Explored  
In Caribbean, Mexico

By Erich Bridges

N-FMB  
Baptist Press  
4/3/87

POR" OF SPAIN, Trinidad and Tobago (BP)--A deaf student in Trinidad once asked his school principal, "Do you pray to God?"

"Yes, don't you?" the principal responded. The student admitted he did not. "Why not?" asked the principal.

"Because he doesn't like me," the student answered. "He made me deaf."

The student's perception of God probably reflects the way he's been treated by others. And it illustrates part of what a Southern Baptist survey team found while visiting deaf people in schools, churches and communities in Trinidad and Tobago, the Dominican Republic and Mexico.

The team, representing the denomination's Foreign Mission Board and the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf, spent two weeks in February surveying deaf communities and their needs in the three nations.

They encountered many deaf people who are loved and accepted by their families, involved in education or training programs and actively participating in Christian churches. But they also learned of many who live in the shadows of society -- sheltered to the point of helplessness by relatives, lacking communication skills, undereducated and underemployed, ignored by the church.

The latter group matches the profile painted by health experts of deaf people in the developing world. Most live in poverty. They are more likely to become deaf from infection and malnutrition than from noise pollution or genetic causes. In illiterate communities, hearing loss and the resulting communication handicap can be particularly devastating.

No one knows exactly how many deaf people there are worldwide. Conservative estimates of the profoundly deaf range from 5 million to 10 million. Tens of millions more suffer from serious hearing impairment.

The World Health Organization defines a deaf person as one whose hearing loss is so severe that sound amplification is useless. But millions of partially deaf people in the Third World who could benefit from hearing aids can not afford them.

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Led by mission board research specialist A. Clark Scanlon, the Southern Baptist survey team included Kevin Kreutzer, Ray Bearden and Donnie Wiltshire -- all ministers to the deaf. Kreutzer, deaf since birth, is president of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf, a national fellowship. Wiltshire is the conference's board chairman. Bearden leads its missions committee.

They went abroad with three objectives: to discover the size and nature of deaf communities in the three countries, determine what spiritual and social services already are available to the deaf and recommend ways Southern Baptists -- especially deaf Southern Baptists and others with sign language skills -- can minister to them.

In Trinidad and Tobago, estimates of the deaf population range from 3,000 to 10,000. Team members visited the two government-subsidized schools for deaf children. The schools provide a variety of services, including education, therapy and vocational training. But only 254 students are enrolled, with another 264 on the waiting list. Ninety deaf children were born in Trinidad and Tobago in 1983 alone.

"Most of the deaf in Trinidad are unemployed (or) underemployed and poor," Scanlon reported. Even deaf students who complete education programs "have difficulty in going on to schools that would prepare them for skilled jobs or professions." The two deaf schools provide the only specialized job training and placement available.

The team found a total of two worship opportunities available to the deaf: a Roman Catholic Mass for the deaf held once a month and a Church of Christ with services interpreted for the deaf.

In the Dominican Republic, by contrast, Baptists operate the nation's most extensive deaf ministry: missions in 12 cities involving 120 deaf believers. Central Baptist Temple in Santo Domingo offers separate worship services for the deaf as well as interpreted worship services, Bible studies and "extensive missionary outreach activities."

Several other evangelical groups work with the deaf, mainly in the capital of Santo Domingo. The Roman Catholic Church reportedly offers no services for them.

Evangelistic outreach to the deaf apparently remains limited to Baptists. "As far as the survey team could discover, there is no other organized evangelical work outside of these Baptist efforts -- signaling a strategic moment of opportunity," Scanlon said. Baptists also have significant influence in the schools and organizations forming the main support system for the deaf.

Mexico dwarfs the other two countries in size and population, and the number of deaf possibly reaches into the hundreds of thousands. The team said its survey was only "a sampling" of two major metropolitan areas -- Mexico City and Guadalajara -- including visits to government and private schools, churches, a clinic and a sports association. The government is actively involved in education and training for the deaf, and a relatively high rate of employment is reported among the deaf in the two cities.

But the team reported little religious activity. Roman Catholic Masses for the deaf are celebrated in both cities; Seventh-day Adventists have a single deaf congregation in Mexico City. Independent Baptists offer deaf ministries in four cities.

The team returned with a variety of short- and long-range recommendations for consideration by the mission board and deaf conference. Some suggestions were providing up-to-date materials on deaf ministry and education to missionaries, Baptists and deaf organizations in the three countries; examining the possibility of sending deaf Southern Baptist volunteers to start and strengthen deaf ministries; exploring the potential to train missionaries on the field and in the United States in sign language and deaf ministry skills; and sending survey teams to other countries to gather models of successful deaf ministry.

"I believe we have just begun to see the needs and the opportunities before us," said team member Bearden. "I believe God is going to raise up deaf men and women who will respond to the call of missions. I believe God is going to change us so we may change our world."