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N-BJC

Christian Life Commission Seeks
Legal Ban Of 'Dial A-Porn'

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has joined other groups urging Congress to pass legislation that would ban "dial-a-porn" telephone numbers.

During Sept. 30 testimony before the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and Finance, a 1987 Southern Baptist Convention resolution denouncing dial-a-porn was entered into the record at the request of the CLC.

In Nashville, CLC Executive Director N. Larry Baker said his agency was "encouraged that no support was offered for the current state of dial-a-porn." He noted every witness who offered testimony during the one-day hearing, including the chief lobbyist of the American Civil Liberties Union, "shares the opinion that something must be done to keep dial-a-porn out of the hands of America's youth."

Besides introducing the SBC resolution into the record of proceedings, the CLC joined itself to testimony offered by William D. Swindell, president and national director of Citizens for Decency Through Law, a Scottsdale, Ariz.-based group.

Swindell said since dial-a-porn was introduced in New York City four years ago, the industry has grown from a single service operating nationally from New York headquarters to many such services "operating in every major city." The motive, he testified, is profit.

"Defense attorneys for this illicit industry readily admit that dial-a-porn numbers cannot be kept from children," he said. "They argue that is it the price we must pay to assure freedom of speech. But are they really concerned about the First Amendment? What is their real motivation? Money."

Swindell urged passage of the proposed law, H.R. 1786, that would amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ban such services. Current law, enacted in 1983, permits access to dial-a-porn numbers for adults. The new law, if passed, would prohibit the numbers altogether, according to a staff member for Rep. Thomas J. Bliley Jr., R-Va., the measure's primary sponsor. The aide explained further the new law would benefit U.S. attorneys--the federal government's prosecuting attorneys--in seeking criminal and civil penalties against the dial-a-porn industry.

Swindell testified the legislation would pass constitutional review, because the Supreme Court "has repeatedly held that where the interests of children are at stake the government is fully justified in regulating (even) non-obscene material."

(Among Swindell's associates at Citizens for Decency Through Law is Southern Baptist layman Alan Sears, a staff attorney. Sears is a former member of the SBC Executive Committee and was the executive director of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography.)

Another witness, the U.S. attorney for Utah, Brent Ward, told of a case he had prosecuted against a dial-a-porn company that provided recordings describing sodomy, rape, incest, bestiality, sadomasochism and excretion. Noting that one boy who testified in the case had made more than 700 calls to the company, Ward said he had engaged a psychologist to evaluate the effect on youngsters of such cumulative exposure to the obscene calls.

Ward said the psychologist, Victor Cline, concluded the recorded messages "had a powerful addictive effect that influenced the behavior of the children in varying degrees depending upon the number and frequency of calls. These listening experiences became vivid memories which the mind continually replayed, thus stimulating the child again and again and suggesting the need to make more calls."

Cline found further, Ward said, "that exposure to these messages tended to condition the children to associate sexual arousal with the abuse and degradation of women and with violence and pain." Ward said Cline's conclusion was that continued exposure to the messages "could become a sort of time bomb in the life of a child."

Robert Helgesen, an executive with the New York Telephone Co., told the panel that in New York City alone 50 million to 60 million calls are made annually to dial-a-porn numbers. His company's net profit from the calls is \$7 million annually, he said. Asked by Rep. Dan Coats, R-Ind., if his company is comfortable with such profits, Helgesen answered, "No, we are not." Noting the \$7 million represents but a tiny fraction of the company's estimated \$700 million annual profit, he said he welcomes the proposed legislation.

Coats said Congress and private companies must together decide, "We are not going to allow this junk ... to go out to our kids."

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Graham Delays China Trip,
To Spend 3 Months Resting

Baptist Press
10/1/87

MINNEAPOLIS (BP)--Evangelist Billy Graham will take his doctors' advice and rest for three months while his broken rib mends.

Graham fractured the rib and re-injured several others Sept. 5 when he tripped over a briefcase in his Tokyo hotel room. He was forced to cancel his first trip to the People's Republic of China and spent 10 days as an outpatient at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn.

Graham had just completed a six-day crusade in Helsinki, Finland, when the accident occurred. He was in Japan for a brief rest and to prepare for the crusade in China, where his wife, Ruth, was born to and raised by American missionaries.

"His trip had to be postponed," said Larry Ross, director of media publications for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in Minneapolis. "While this was a great disappointment to him, we know that it is in God's hands."

"Mr. Graham's doctors have told him he should have three months of rest. During the next three months, he will have a greatly reduced schedule."

Graham hopes to reschedule the China crusade next spring, Ross said. No other crusades needed to be cancelled or postponed because of the injury, he added.

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Seeds Co-founder
Gunderson Resigns

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10/1/87

ATLANTA (BP)--Gary Gunderson, executive director and co-founder of Seeds, has announced his resignation from the 10-year-old organization.

Gunderson will leave Seeds, an organization that helps Christians fight world hunger, effective Jan. 15. He will pursue doctoral studies, especially in Third World nutrition.

Gunderson and Andy Loving launched Seeds from the basement of Oakhurst Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga., with the aim of educating their church and Southern Baptists about hunger issues. Neither of them received salary for the first two years of their ministry.

Gunderson was the first editor of the organization's magazine, Seeds. He succeeded Loving as executive director three years ago.

The organization pushed to have World Hunger Day set on the Southern Baptist Convention calendar. The Seeds ministry assists Christians with resources, strategies and encouragement to respond to hunger issues. The magazine twice has won the best periodical category in the annual World Hunger Media Awards, sponsored by entertainer Kenny Rogers and his wife, Marianne.

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Gunderson said he has no plan to leave hunger concerns, even though he is leaving Seeds. He said he wants to teach and will concentrate on economic, agricultural and human development in Third World countries. He also plans to contribute to the Seeds ministry through writing and speaking.

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Mission, Ministry Said Vital
To Good Church Architecture

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
10/1/87

F-SSB

NASHVILLE (BP)--The most effective architectural work done for a church is supported by a purpose statement written by a congregation aware of its mission and ministry, a Southern Baptist leader told participants in a national workshop for architects in Nashville.

Jimmy Edwards, vice president for church programs and services at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, urged 60 architects from across the United States to keep the church's purpose central in the planning and design process.

The architect's mission grows directly out of the mission of the church, Edwards insisted. The architect cannot be true to his mission until the church's mission is thoroughly understood and facilities are designed to support that mission, he said.

"The first responsibility of the architect is not to make a statement architecturally through the building but to enable the church to make its own statement of faith, purpose and mission through its buildings," Edwards said.

To meet ministry needs, buildings need utility and flexibility, he said. Multipurpose space with the capacity to adapt for varied uses with a minimum of effort is becoming more popular.

"Aside from the question of economics," Edwards said, "the issue of the wise use of the church's resources argues strongly for extensive use of buildings."

"As you listen to the building committee and study the church's program statement, you can begin to translate ministry dreams into three-dimensional reality. Beauty ought not be a primary concern but a by-product of good architecture. Architecture is a significant art form, but it is significant only as it relates properly to its purpose."

The workshop for architects was sponsored by the Sunday School Board's church architecture department.

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Churches Want Africans
To Hear The Good News

By Eric Miller

Baptist Press
10/1/87

N-FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Churches in Virginia and North Carolina have donated \$170,000 above their regular Southern Baptist Cooperative Program unified budget gifts to help Africans hear the good news about Jesus Christ.

Mt. Hermon Baptist Church in Danville, Va., had been raising money to build a fellowship hall for itself. Almost \$70,000 had been collected when a Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board staff member preached on missions at the church.

"Just like missionaries risk their lives, churches have got to be willing to do the out-of-the-ordinary thing," John Mills, special assistant to FMB President R. Keith Parks, told the congregation. Churches must assume that local needs will be met and not wait until after they are met to support wholeheartedly Bold Mission Thrust, the denomination's plan to present the gospel to the whole world by the year 2000, he told them.

The congregation thought about it and voted to give half of its building fund to provide furnishings for a conference center now under construction in Lome, Togo, in West Africa, said David Barrett, pastor of the church.

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Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., earlier had donated \$135,000 for construction of the conference center, where Southern Baptist missionaries in West Africa will study language, Baptists of the region will get evangelistic training and both will hold retreats.

FMB trustee Mark Corts, pastor of Calvary Baptist, said Mills challenged him about two years ago. Mills told Corts the conference center was a dream of his but added that with the shortage of capital funds, "We'd be hard pressed to get it."

Calvary got enthused about Mills' dream and began to make it a reality, Corts recalled. "They thought this would be a good challenge -- to raise some extra funds and to be involved in the North Carolina/Togo partnership project above and beyond the call of duty," he said.

In addition to the monetary support, Calvary is sending several work teams to help with the construction and has sent architect Bobby Patterson and his wife, Christie, to help missionaries oversee the work for six months.

Apparently Mills was able to impress members of Mt. Hermon with his dream, too. He told them how missions work in West Africa was "booming and how the people were eager to hear the gospel," Barrett said. "We felt that anything we could do to enable those people to hear the 'good news' we've known all our lives would be a tremendous thing to do.

"We have come to believe that if we will think of the needs of others first, our own needs will be met later on. We wanted to do this for the people of Africa because their need was so great and our need was much less.

"We want the church to grow, and we realize the church is more than Mt. Hermon Baptist Church."

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N-FMB

Ethnic Fellowships Target
Locations For New Growth

By Joe Westbury

Baptist Press
10/1/87

ATLANTA (BP)--Leaders of 16 ethnic fellowships meeting at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board have targeted 4,607 locations nationwide where churches and missions will be started in the coming months.

Identification of the new work areas highlighted the three-day workshop, where language leaders studied ways to develop new churches and strengthen existing congregations. The meeting was sponsored by the board's language missions division.

The meeting reflects a growing interest among ethnics to meet Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust goals of reaching the nation for Christ, noted division Director Oscar Romo. The strategy dovetails with HMB goals for evangelism and church starting.

HMB President Larry Lewis praised the group for its efforts and said he would like half of the denomination's future church starts to come from language-culture congregations.

The identification of communities needing churches followed on the heels of a three-day think-tank session held in January, when language leaders voted to establish 18,000 new works by the end of the century.

In addition to targeting new-work areas, the ethnic leaders reported numerous missions have already been launched since the January meeting and are growing into self-supporting churches.

Alexa Popovici, pastor of Romanian Baptist Church in Chicago, said the fellowship of 20 Romanian churches nationwide had added four new churches and five missions since the first of the year.

The growth is in keeping with the 2,000-member fellowship's decision in January to increase its ranks by 50 congregations by the year 2000.

In addition to evangelizing growing numbers of Romanians, Popovici noted Hungarian members of his Chicago congregation also have begun a new mission among their language group.

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Valentine Popovici, co-pastor of the Chicago church with his father, also reported the fellowship has pledged to launch 15 new congregations in the next two years. He said the group's goals are on target, with a net increase of nine new works in the first nine months of this year.

Dan Moon, HMB Korean ministries consultant, reported 65 new works have been launched by the fellowship since January. Moon, from Memphis, Tenn., projected Korean congregations will mushroom from the current 600 to 4,035 by the turn of the century.

"Every year the Korean population in the United States increases by 20 percent due to births and immigration. We will need these new congregations just to keep pace with the population growth," he explained.

Russell Begaye, consultant among American Indians, noted Southern Baptist work among Native Americans will increase by 190 percent by the turn of the century.

"Two years ago, 85 American Indian leaders envisioned 847 congregations among our people by the year 2000. This will more than double the 480 churches and missions which have been established since the Southern Baptist Convention was founded 140 years ago," he said.

Begaye noted the denomination currently is reaching only 2 percent of the Native American population, and the new goals will reach about 10 percent. More than 70 percent of the states still have no ministry among the ethnic group, he said.

The Arlington, Texas, resident said American Indians have begun sending ministry teams to other tribes across the nation: "We have realized it will take American Indians sharing the gospel with other American Indians before we ever reach our people. We are no longer waiting for the Home Mission Board to send us missionaries, so we are going ourselves. That's simply a New Testament principle of church growth."

Bobby Sunderland, director of the HMB direct evangelism division, said the division has increased its evangelism assistance with the group.

The board recently has assigned two staff members, Ron Proctor from the personal evangelism department and Thad Hamilton from the mass evangelism department, to work with ethnics in planning their evangelistic thrusts.

Proctor and Hamilton will oversee the translation of existing material and development of new material for personal witness training and mass evangelism, Sunderland said.

The announcement signaled the developing relationship between the language groups and the evangelism section of the board. The ethnic groups have shown an interest in evangelism and are the first group to pledge support to the national simultaneous revivals to be sponsored by the board in 1990.