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89-1

FCC bans sexually explicit broadcasts

NASHVILLE (BP)--Opponents of pornography received a long-overdue Christmas present when the Federal Communications Commission Dec. 21 extended its ban on indecent communications over radio and commercial television airwaves to 24 hours a day.

Larry Braidfoot, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission watchdog on pornography issues, said the FCC previously had not banned sexually explicit broadcasting on late night broadcasts.

"The FCC's decision on the eve of the Christmas holidays caps a struggle which has been going on throughout most of the 1980s," Braidfoot said. Anti-porn groups have long sought the FCC's cooperation in keeping indecent communications off these airwaves, he said.

Congress had instructed the FCC to take such action against pornographic broadcasts. The FCC's annual appropriations package contained that congressional mandate.

The ban highlights a year of increased federal legislative tightening of restrictions on the pornography industry, said Braidfoot, of Nashville. "Early in 1988, Congress overwhelmingly passed a bill aimed at the nation's burgeoning 'dial-a-porn' industry."

Dial-a-porn refers to services in which a member of the public calls a published number and either hears a pornographic recording or engages in explicit sex talk with whoever answers the call.

"As Congress faced adjournment in October, it added a major obscenity and child pornography amendment to the omnibus drug bill," Braidfoot said. "Both bills set forth new sanctions and gave new powers of enforcement to federal law enforcement officials to use in the war on obscenity and pornography affecting children."

In mid-year, the FCC also embarked on a series of indecency enforcement actions, Braidfoot said. He said these were the first such FCC actions in recent years.

"The FCC initiated investigations to restrain the proliferation of 'shock radio' programs in which decency standards involving sexual and bodily functions have been disregarded," he said.

Obscene broadcasts generally are regarded as those that appeal to the prurient interest and lack serious artistic, literary, political or scientific value.

With the new federal legislation in place and the FCC's pre-Christmas action, the federal government may have reached the limit of what it can do with the program of pornography, Braidfoot said.

"Now, as never before, pornography will be an evil to be contested at the state and local level," he said.

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Lanny Hall elected president of Wayland Baptist University

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PLAINVIEW, Texas (BP)--Lanny Hall, executive vice president of Howard Payne University, was named president of Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas, Dec. 15 by the school's board of trustees.

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A former Texas legislator, Hall, 39, succeeds David Jester, who resigned in May 1987. Glenn Barnett has been interim chief executive officer of the school for the past 18 months.

Hall holds the bachelor of science and master of education degrees in secondary education from the University of North Texas in Denton and received the doctor of philosophy degree in education administration from the University of Texas at Austin in 1985.

He is former deputy executive secretary for special programs for the Teacher Retirement System in Austin, spent three terms as a member of the Texas House of Representatives and served on the staff of United States House Majority Leader Jim Wright from 1975 to 1978. He also has been a classroom teacher in Texas public schools.

Hall and his wife, Carol, have two children.

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5 Baptist schools listed  
among country's 'choosiest'

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NASHVILLE (BP)--Five Baptist colleges and universities were listed among 182 of America's "choosiest" schools in the annual survey of selective colleges conducted by USA Today, the national daily newspaper.

The report in the newspaper's Dec. 12 issue contained a list of 50 "most selective" schools in the nation and a state-by-state index of 132 schools that are the choosiest in their states, based on the percentage of applicants accepted and the average entrance exam scores of the students in each school.

No Baptist schools made the top 50, but five were in the state-by-state rankings. They were: Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.; University of Richmond, Richmond, Va.; Furman University, Greenville, S.C.; Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.; and Grand Canyon College, Phoenix, Ariz.

According to the report, the nation's three "most selective" schools were the U.S. military academies, which accepted fewer than 13 percent of their applicants. These were followed by Harvard/Radcliff, Stanford, Princeton and Yale universities, and Copper Union, Amherst and Dartmouth colleges, completing the top 10.

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Hobbs reminisces  
about seminary days

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--When Hershel Hobbs returned to the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to address December graduates, his visit brought back memories of 50 years ago.

In May 1938, Hobbs -- later to become one of Southern Baptists' most influential leaders in this century -- graduated from the Louisville, Ky., school with a doctorate in New Testament. Despite his achievements as a writer, pastor and denominational statesman, the 81-year-old Alabama native still sounded almost awe-struck when he talked about his theological mentors at Southern.

"I was among the last generation of students to be taught by who we used to call the old giants," said Hobbs, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City. "I was taught by men like A.T. Robertson, W. Hersey Davis, John R. Sampey, Kyle Yates, J.B. Weatherspoon, J. McKee Adams, W.O. Carver, Gaines S. Dobbins. That's a roll-call of giants."

Many Southern Baptists would call Hobbs a giant in his own right. In addition to being president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1961 to 1963, he also has been Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference president, preacher for the "International Baptist Hour" radio program and chairman of the committee that in 1963 revised Southern Baptists' statement of faith, The Baptist Faith and Message. He also has written scores of books, Sunday school lessons and articles and was vice president of the Baptist World Alliance.

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In much of his writing and speaking, Hobbs harkens back to the Greek New Testament he learned to love under the tutelage of Robertson and Davis. All Southern Baptists, he said, can benefit from their scholarship. "One reason I quote Dr. Robertson and Dr. Davis in my writings is to keep them alive in Southern Baptist heritage," he explained.

Hobbs was sitting on the front row in Robertson's senior Greek class when the renowned Greek scholar was struck with a fatal stroke in 1934. After Robertson's death, Hobbs picked up his Greek studies with Davis.

He remembered Davis motivating his students to "plow deep into the text and turn up some fresh dirt." Hobbs said he has tried to do that, and "if I have succeeded in any way, I attribute it to Dr. Davis."

Partly because of his role in the revision of the Baptist Faith and Message, Hobbs often gets inquiries about doctrine and biblical interpretation. His response usually includes an analysis of the Greek text.

For instance, several people had asked Hobbs his opinion on pastoral authority after the 1988 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. The convention passed a resolution on the priesthood of the believers that cautioned that the doctrine should not be used to "undermine pastoral authority" and urged church members to "obey your leaders" in accordance with Hebrews 13:17.

Hobbs researched the Greek word translated "obey" and found it actually exhorts Christians to "follow their leaders. "I think anybody would agree if a church calls a man as a pastor then the church ought to follow (his leadership)," said Hobbs. "If he's wrong, our belief in the priesthood of the believer and our democratic form of church government can take care of it by the church and the pastor finding a meeting of the minds."

Hobbs said he is concerned that many Southern Baptist pastors give more attention to maintaining pastoral authority than providing leadership. "I don't find that (authoritative pastoral style) in the New Testament," he said.

During his commencement address, he urged the 232 graduates to "follow the model of Jesus" in developing their ministerial style. "We need not worry about any rewards," he said. "We should just render the service."

Even though he's an octogenarian, Hobbs still speaks frequently in churches throughout the nation and produces a voluminous amount of written material. His popularity as a doctrinal speaker keeps his datebook filled with preaching and teaching engagements. He wrote Southern Baptists' January Bible study book on the Gospel of John, and he writes a quarterly commentary for Southern Baptists' Life and Work series of Sunday school lessons.

As a veteran observer of theological trends, Hobbs said he believes the intense political aspect of the present convention controversy has moved Southern Baptists "a little to the right of center."

"But we aren't going to stay there long," he predicted. "We are coming back to the center."

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New seminary degree  
combines arts, religion

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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has launched a doctoral program that combines theological inquiry with artistic creativity.

The Louisville, Ky., school next fall will offer a doctor of philosophy degree with a concentration in religion and the arts.

"This is a historic first for Southern Baptists," said William L. Hendricks, Southern's director of graduate studies. Only one other school, Graduate Theological Union in Berkley, Calif., offers a similar degree, he said.

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Hendricks noted the program will seek to "transcend doctrinal concerns" and provide a "new way of approaching ministry."

"The degree hopes to move beyond strictly doctrinal particularities to focus on creative ways in which all doctrinal perspectives can communicate their particular understanding of the faith," he explained.

Graduates of the program, he said, will be able to teach in a variety of fields, serve as ministers in churches that utilize the arts and provide consultation to congregations seeking to minister through the arts.

Admission requirements to the program include a master of divinity degree and either a master of arts degree or 30 semester hours in some fine art or literary studies. Students also must be proficient in biblical Greek and Hebrew plus two other foreign languages.

Seven people who meet the admission requirements have applied for the program, he said.

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Role of guiding children said  
to need caring men, women

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press  
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NASHVILLE (BP)--Working with preschoolers and children at church is not a masculine or feminine role but a Christian responsibility that requires love and dedication, according to three leaders of preschool and children's work at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Cos Davis, manager of the Sunday school preschool program section; Sybil Waldrop, manager of the Sunday school preschool curriculum section; and Bill Young, manager of the church training preschool-children's section, discussed their concerns about the lack of male involvement in work with preschoolers and children.

People who work with children -- male or female -- need to show love for children and focus on meeting their needs, Davis explained.

The greatest influence on a child's life is during the first five years, and a child needs to see men as well as women involved in church activities that affect the child, Young said.

Waldrop pointed out that because of the importance of the first five years of life, men and women working in preschool have the most important jobs in the church.

Too often, preschool responsibilities are assigned to women based on a stereotype that it is woman's work, said Waldrop. These responsibilities are belittled as babysitting and keeping the children busy while the parents are in church when, actually, life-long foundations and attitudes about church and God are being developed in the preschool years, she said.

A balance of men and women who see their Christian service role in the preschool area is necessary for the development of the children, the three agreed.

When children see men involved with them in church, they develop a healthier attitude about church, Waldrop said, noting, "They learn that church is important to men, too."

Children need to have men involved in their lives who display God-like, unconditional love, Davis said. An increase in the number of single-parent families makes children's association with a loving, caring male image that they may not see anywhere else even more crucial, he added.

Waldrop believes Southern Baptists are ahead of secular education and child development programs regarding involvement of men, although barriers are crumbling in all segments of society.

"Men are in childbirth and parenting classes with mothers. They get more involved in bathing, feeding and other child-care responsibilities," she pointed out.

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Despite the openness, Young said, salary levels in both secular and Southern Baptist areas involving full-time work with children continue to be barriers for men. Men may begin working with children but move to more lucrative administrative roles as soon as possible.

Volunteer roles in Sunday school, church training, mission organizations and extended session offer opportunities for men. They also provide chances for husband-and-wife teams to model good Christian relationships for children, Waldrop said.

An added benefit of volunteering in preschool areas, Davis said, is the experience gained in parenting skills.

To work with children, men need to be comfortable with children. "They need to know how to love a child appropriately -- to hug a child when the child needs it. The adult is there to meet the child's need," Davis said.

Davis offered several guidelines for people in preschool work.

Workers should be comfortable with children. Men, more often than women, were not allowed to be a child and therefore have difficulty relating to children, he said.

Children need to know that they are important to the adults who are with them. That requires focusing attention and listening to them, he said.

Young pointed out that the pastor can be a key to a good image of preschool work in the church. "When the pastor refers to preschoolers as 'rug rats' or other derogatory terms, it not only degrades the children but alienates people who have given their lives to working with them," he said.

By planning some activities in the worship service for younger children who are present and highlighting the role of preschool ministry, the pastor can elevate the image of the work, Young said.

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

Haitian pastor urges  
changes in lifestyle

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

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NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Celillon Alteme believes a profession of faith in Christ means a new lifestyle.

The pastor of a Haitian Baptist mission in New Orleans illustrated that belief when he delayed baptizing a young couple who made a profession of faith in the new mission.

"Two are awaiting baptism until they become married," he explained. "They were living together before making professions of faith and have continued in that lifestyle. I have explained they must show a change as a result of their profession."

In the meantime, Alteme is nurturing them and helping them to understand the Christian life.

The mission pastor is a native of Haiti and grew up in a Christian family. He is in New Orleans to earn a degree in biblical studies with a goal of completing a doctorate in theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

While working with a Haitian mission group at New Orleans' Central Baptist Church, Alteme became aware of other Haitians living across the city who were not attending worship.

He started home Bible studies in various houses in eastern New Orleans and discovered a few Christians.

"The director of the YMCA was a member of the Haitian association and provided me a list of names and addresses. However, we really do not know how many Haitians live in New Orleans because many are not identified that way," he said.

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The ministry has expanded to include worship services at Lake Forest Baptist Church, in addition to home Bible studies.

Each Sunday Haitian and American children attend Sunday school together because they have a common language. French-speaking Haitian adults meet separately with Alteme for Bible study. Haitian worship includes the entire family meeting in the church's fellowship hall, while the English congregation worships in the sanctuary.

The 33-year-old single Haitian made a profession of faith when he was 11 years old. He is one of nine children, with three brothers and five sisters. His father is a farmer who sent his children to a private school because of the superior education.

Since coming to the United States, Alteme has earned the bachelor of arts degree from Warner Southern College in Lake Wales, Fla. He came to New Orleans Seminary because Mike Perry, pastor of First Baptist Church in Frostproof, Fla., recommended the school.

Elie Woerner, associate director of the Louisiana Baptist language missions department, said Alteme was enlisted as pastor of New Orleans' second Haitian mission because Haitians were living too far apart in the city to be included in one mission program.

Alteme would like to return to Haiti to minister after he receives his education: "The more education I receive, the more I feel I'm in God's will. Although many in Haiti do not know how to read and write, I can minister to anyone. One of the ministries can be to raise the level of education and understanding."

Baptists are the second-largest religious group in his native country. "Southern Baptists provide the best leadership in Haiti, which makes churches effective. Congregations range in size from 100 to more than 1,000," he noted.

The Haitian mission he serves has an average attendance of nearly 30 people in worship and about 20 in church training. Sunday school attendance averages about 13.

Until Alteme returns to his native country he plans to continue preaching the gospel and ministering to the French-speaking Haitians in New Orleans.

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