

(BP)

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July 5, 1991

91-101

James Dunn says BJCPA does
not support abortion right

By Herb Hollinger

N-CO

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs does not support abortion as a free exercise right, or addresses the issue of abortion in any fashion.

That is the response of James Dunn, executive director of the BJCPA, to the request by the SBC Christian Life Commission to clarify the committee's position on abortion as a religious liberty.

A July 1 Baptist Press story said the CLC had asked the BJCPA to clarify its position and made reference to past statements by Dunn and James E. Wood, Dunn's predecessor at the BJCPA. The story, written by Tom Strode of the CLC's Washington office and Baptist Press bureau chief, said the statements "indicated abortion should be protected by the Free Exercise Clause and anti-abortion legislation is a form of government interference in religion."

The BJCPA decried that statement.

"James (Dunn) did not come close to saying abortion should be protected by the Free Exercise Clause or that anti-abortion legislation amounts to government interference in religion," said Larry Chesser, BJCPA spokesman.

Chesser provided Baptist Press with "James' full quote," made in 1983.

"The complex issue of abortion is reduced to the simple cry of 'infanticide' by Mr. (President) Reagan, who would redress 'a great national wrong' in the name of civil religion, making it virtually impossible for mothers to make their own decisions in this very private, very religious matter."

Dunn seemed to put the question of his support for abortion as a free exercise right to rest with the following response to Strode's story.

"As everyone knows, or should know, quite well, the Baptist Joint Committee since I have been here has never supported abortion as a free exercise right, nor have we addressed the issue of abortion in any fashion. Mr. Strode's story makes a leap of generalization that completely misses the truth. My 1983 quote simply acknowledges that abortion, like all serious moral and ethical decisions, has religious dimensions. Who can deny that?"

The clash between the two agencies began when Richard Land, CLC executive director, asked the BJCPA, in a June 28 letter, to clarify its position on the abortion as a religious liberty issue.

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Dunn's office said he had written a letter to Land and mailed it July 1. However, Land said he had not received it as of July 3. BJCPA officials said they would not disclose the contents of Dunn's reply to Land until Land has had time to see the letter.

But when Strode's July 1 story was carried by Baptist Press, officials of the BJCPA decided to respond to the allegations.

The original request by Land was said to be part of the commission's effort to decide whether it will support the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1991, H.R. 2797, which was reintroduced in Congress June 26. The purpose of the bill, first introduced in 1990, is to provide a remedy to the Supreme Court's decision last year in Oregon Employment Division vs. Smith. The Baptist Joint Committee is one of the leaders in a coalition supporting the bill.

Land seemed "delighted" that his inquiry objective apparently had been "validated and fulfilled."

"If James Dunn now is willing to make such a renunciation (abortion as protected by the Free Exercise Clause) to the Congress of the United States, we are delighted and relieved," said Land in a statement to Baptist Press.

"I'm sorry that (Dunn) feels his statements have been misconstrued. I can assure him that many Southern Baptist don't. His protests lose much of their force when it is remembered that he refused to discuss our letter to him with Baptist Press and chose to mail a response to the CLC in Nashville, rather than FAX it as we FAXed ours to him. As of now, we have yet to receive that response in the Nashville office," said Land.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) dated 7/3/91, in story titled "Southeastern trustees hear financial, theological reports," please correct the 25th paragraph to read:

"The institution no longer has the reputation of being a center of calm, high quality (theological) education; it has the image of controversy," Bush said.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Grace, truth characterize
reconciliation, chaplains told

By Sarah Zimmerman

F - idmrs

Baptist Press
7/5/91

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--To have a reconciling ministry, Southern Baptist chaplains were told they must model both grace and truth.

"The truth is impossible to bear without grace," William Oglesby told 215 people attending a seminar for chaplains and their spouses at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

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Oglesby, professor emeritus of pastoral counseling at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va., said telling people the truth about their physical, mental or spiritual condition is heartless unless the truth is accompanied by grace.

On the other hand, he said the message of grace is irrelevant without truth.

Oglesby cited the example of the woman about to be stoned because she was caught in adultery as an instance of Jesus demonstrating both grace and truth.

The first step in the reconciliation process is to "see beyond the problem to the person. Get beyond the obvious to the significant," Oglesby said.

Socially unacceptable behaviors, he said, are usually "the expression of something going on inside." He challenged chaplains to be willing to cross social barriers to become ministers of reconciliation.

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NOTICE: Aug. 31, 1991 will be the last day for use of the Jacquard computer in the Baptist Press office. After that date, Baptist Press will be available electronically only on the CompuServe system. We will, of course, continue to mail Baptist Press to all our subscribers. Contact David Haywood at the Sunday School Board for more information.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

Bible knowledge intimidates
unchurched, missionary claims

By Sarah Zimmerman

F-AM3

Baptist Press
7/5/91

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Non-Christians stay away from churches because church members know too much, said home missionary Ken Holland.

Holland, church extension consultant for east central Florida, explained his claim during a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board meeting at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

He said he learned this lesson while visiting a congregation that meets in homes in a modular home community. In two years, the congregation has baptized 95 people. Many of the new converts have little Bible knowledge.

That night the pastor taught from First Peter. As Holland quickly looked up the passage in his Bible, he realized no one in the group knew how to find the New Testament book. He was embarrassed because he wasn't sensitive to their need.

"That's why lost people don't beat down the doors of your church -- you know too much. You know where First Peter is."

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On his next visit to the congregation, he took identical New Testaments for all the members so they could find the passage by looking up the page number.

Another factor keeps churches from fulfilling their mission, Holland said.

"The number of churches which have lost their vision is disturbing. They are as busy as bees in beehives, but all their activity is taking place inside the church, propping up their worship."

Holland's job thrusts him into the unchurched community, where he said he sees God at work almost daily.

He has helped churches begin in schools and even a mortuary. The mortuary, he said, "is a pretty exciting place to talk about life."

One congregation meets in a motel. When the pastor baptizes someone, the service is held at the motel's pool. By the time of the service, Holland said the pool area is crowded with sun bathers. The pastor explains the brief service to the curious onlookers and performs the baptism.

"You can't buy that kind of witness," Holland said.

Holland said seeing people become Christians and yearn to learn Bible truths keeps him excited about his job. "See what fun I have as your missionary? And you give me a salary to boot."

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Angell receives Southern Baptist
outstanding educator award

Baptist Press
7/5/91

Al-CO
OK/la.

SHAWNEE, Okla. (BP)--Warren M. Angell, dean emeritus of fine arts at Oklahoma Baptist University and a recognized authority on church music, received the Charles D. Johnson Outstanding Educator Award June 24.

The award, established by the Southern Baptist Education Commission, is given annually to a person who has made a significant contribution to Southern Baptist higher education.

From 1936 to 1973 Angell was dean of OBU's College of Fine Arts. In recognition of his contribution in building the College of Fine Arts and bringing high standards of scholarship and musicianship at OBU, the university's board of trustees named the college the "Warren M. Angell College of Fine Arts" in 1956. Upon his retirement in 1973, Angell continued to be a spokesman and clinician in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Charles D. Johnson Outstanding Educator Award is named after a contemporary of Angell's. Johnson, who wrote Higher Education of Southern Baptists, was chairman of the Education Commission from 1932 to 1953. An Education Commission spokesman said the Charles D. Johnson award "is a means of publicly recognizing individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to Christian higher education through Southern Baptist institutions."

Angell was selected for the award by the Education Commission's administrative committee. The honor was presented during the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools in Wingate, N.C.

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Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., Angell graduated from Ilion (N.Y.) High School and received both bachelor and master of music degrees in piano and composition from Syracuse University. He earned a doctor of education degree from Columbia University Teachers College in 1944. He spent four summers studying in Europe and also studied at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y.

Angell won acclaim as a choral director while teaching at OBU. From 1942-1944 Angell sang top tenor in Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians, and the Robert Shaw Chorale while working on his doctorate at Columbia. He has written five books on vocal and choral techniques published by Convention Press. He has over 50 published compositions in the choral field and four published piano numbers.

Angell's honors include Who's Who in America, Who's Who Among Deans and Presidents of American Colleges, Who's Who in Music, Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities, International Director of Music and Musicians, Director of American Scholars, and Directory of Outstanding Americans. He is a Fellow of National Association of Teachers of Singing, former trustee of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and recipient of the 1967, 1968, and 1969 awards of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers.

Angell holds membership in Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Lions International, Elks Lodge, Music Educators National Conference, National Association of Teachers of Singing, and ASCAP. He is a charter member of American Choral Directors Association, and is on the advisory board of Who's Who in America. He was on the Southern Baptist Hymnal Committee for the 1956 Baptist Hymnal.

In recognition of this contributions to OBU and the community, the city of Shawnee, Okla., proclaimed Warren Angell Day in his honor when he retired. He also has been honored by Lions International and has received OBU's Distinguished Service Citation.