

**(BP)**

**-- BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

**NATIONAL OFFICE**

SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(615) 244-2355  
Herb Hollinger, Vice President  
Fax (615) 742-8919  
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

**BUREAUS**

**ATLANTA** Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522  
**DALLAS** Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232  
**NASHVILLE** Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300  
**RICHMOND** Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151  
**WASHINGTON** Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

Historical Commission, SBC  
Nashville, Tennessee

March 4, 1993

93-40

NASHVILLE -- U.S. medicine needs return to morality, speaker says.  
NASHVILLE -- To maintain pro-life convictions, theology revival needed, prof says.  
NASHVILLE -- To stem God's wrath, church must proclaim truth, MacArthur says.  
DENVER -- Colorado designated gifts used for operating expense.  
VIRGINIA -- Newspaper refuses FMB trustees' request for another reporter.  
DALLAS -- Annuity Board announces no hike in mid-year health plan rates.

U.S. medicine needs return  
to morality, speaker says

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
3/4/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--"Medical costs are out of control because morality is out of control," a medical school professor said March 1 at a Southern Baptist ethics seminar in Nashville.

Health and morality are interrelated, making the spread of ravaging diseases such as AIDS inevitable without a transformation of public health policy in the United States, said Franklin Payne, associate professor in the family medicine department at the Medical College of Georgia in Augusta.

"Health without morality is impossible," Payne said. "An effective approach to medicine without morality is impossible.

"Modern medicine, for all its billions in funding, for all its technology and for all its experience and training is virtually powerless in the face of these diseases," he said.

"The American people have placed their hope in medicine instead of Jesus Christ. The god of medicine will as surely fail them as any other god."

Until American society and "its medical practitioners recognize that health and morality are linked, the debacle and devastation of disease will continue," Payne said.

Payne spoke in the opening session of a three-day seminar sponsored by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. The CLC's 26th annual seminar was titled "Life at Risk: Crises in Medical Ethics."

The public health approach to HIV/AIDS is an example of the flawed policy of ignoring the moral dimension, he said.

While admitting HIV/AIDS "may have occurred when it did whether homosexuality had been rampant or not," it is certain the "wildfire spread of HIV occurred because of homosexual behaviors," Payne said. It spread from homosexuals to drug abusers to the blood supply, heterosexual partners and unborn babies, he said.

In addition to the continued shift from a biblical basis in American culture, public health events in this century laid the foundation for the AIDS epidemic, Payne said. After penicillin began being used to treat syphilis, its use with all sexual partners of an infected person brought a 10-fold decrease of such cases between 1947 and 1955, he said, noting the same solutions were tried when syphilis broke out again in the early 1960s, but the reduction in cases was not as dramatic.

--more--

In retrospect, it appears the "sexual revolution was already beginning to overwhelm the public health and the medical system," Payne said.

The final step leading to the AIDS epidemic was the American Psychiatric Association's 1973 decision to remove homosexuality from the list of diseases, Payne said.

While homosexuality always was a sin problem, not a medical one, the APA decision was "essentially a religious blessing on homosexuality that fueled the growth of homosexuality to levels almost unimaginable," he said. "With this frenzy of homosexual activity, the stage was set for the AIDS epidemic."

Fuel for the spread of AIDS was provided by "our cultural and medical heritage," Payne said. "When it ignited, we could only watch it burn. Then, when we could have limited its spread, our officials actually poured more fuel on the flame."

At the outbreak of HIV/AIDS, public health officials instituted "strange measures" under pressure from homosexual activists, he said.

Physicians could not test for HIV without the patient's permission. Health-care providers had to wear protection for all patients to "protect the identity of the AIDS patient and, of course, within that the homosexual patients," Payne said. Screening for blood transfusions should have been introduced two years before it was, he said. Within a few years, government funding for AIDS surpassed the previous leading recipients, cancer and heart disease.

Those who fail to acknowledge God and his truth "have legislated and enforced the rules and laws for the AIDS epidemic. . . .," Payne said.

Health-care officials rarely call for abstinence but, with easy access to birth control and abortion available, "sexual license is actually encouraged, thereby increasing the spread of sexually transmitted diseases," he said.

During a question-and-answer session, Payne said education is not going to solve the AIDS problem.

"People know what causes AIDS. . . . stop doing it," he said.

With the exception of health-care workers, HIV is a disease "you have to go looking for," Payne said. "Chastity for the unmarried, fidelity for the married and avoidance of IV-drug abuse offers absolute protection against HIV infection outside medical clinics and hospitals."

Because of this, he does not believe universal testing is necessary nor quarantining HIV/AIDS patients, Payne said.

A ministry Christians can have in the midst of the AIDS epidemic is the care of 80,000 orphans expected by the year 2000 because one or both of their parents has died from the disease, Payne said. Less than 30 percent of these children become infected with HIV, he said.

--30--

To maintain pro-life convictions,  
theology revival needed, prof says

Baptist Press  
3/4/93

By Art Toalston

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention for years failed to make a "prophetic response to the holocaust of abortion on demand."

The reason, said Timothy George: "... the erosion of doctrinal substance" in the SBC and "the failure to think through theologically the great issues of our time."

George, who addressed the Christian Life Commission's conference on medical ethics crises March 3, is dean of Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala.

In recent years, the SBC has assumed a key role in the nation's abortion debate, with the convention's conservative leadership squarely taking a pro-life stance, George said.

--more--

"I, for one, regard the reversal of the denominational trends of the '60s and 70s as a providential moving of God in our midst," he noted. Otherwise, the SBC "undoubtedly would have become just another mainline denomination, bereft of our missionary and evangelistic zeal and tossed and turned by every new-wave ideology which comes down the pike."

But, George said, the SBC still needs "theological revival."

And he warned: "... the mere replacement of one set of bureaucrats with another doth not a Reformation make."

Without a return and commitment to "our evangelical Baptist and Christian heritage," today's Baptists "may well pass on to the rising generation the same kind of vacuous mind-set which produced our denominational paralysis at the beginning of the pro-life struggle some 30 years ago."

"Unless there is genuine spiritual and theological renewal in our churches, the very pro-life views we have come lately to espouse could well be eroded under the pressures of an increasingly hostile political environment" that includes:

- "the very real possibility," George said, "of the passage of the Freedom of Choice Act," proposed congressional legislation that could have the effect of repealing many states' restrictions on abortion.

- "militant abortion-rights lobbying within every level of society."
- a Supreme Court "which will likely back further and further away" from repeal of the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision legalizing abortion.

Recounting the "loss of theological vision" that kept the SBC on the abortion debate sidelines, George listed:

- a "loss of intentional Christian instruction and congregational discipline" from the early 1900s when, for example, the memorization of Baptist catechisms was widely required as a prerequisite for church membership.

- "a pervasive philosophy of pragmatism in church life which has produced quantitative success at the expense of theological identity."

- an article in Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's journal, "Review and Expositor," in the spring of 1971 in which Andrew Lester, a chaplaincy official at a North Carolina Baptist hospital, asserted the rights of unborn children, or "potential human life," are overridden by the rights of "actualized" humans. George said Lester contended abortion can be chosen not only for the mother's physical and/or psychological health but also the welfare of the family and/or society and the kind of physical, psychological and social existence the child might have after birth.

- the first resolution ever adopted on abortion by the Southern Baptist Convention which, in 1971, called for legalized abortion not only for rape, incest, fetal deformity and threat to the mother's life, but also "carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental, as well as physical health of the mother." The language used in the resolution, George said, "was nearly identical to that of a similar resolution passed by the Unitarian Universalist Association some eight years before. Thus two years prior to the Supreme Court decision of 1973, which opened the floodgates to abortion on demand in the United States, the Southern Baptist Convention was on record advocating the decriminalization of abortion and extending the discretion of this decision into the realm of personal, privatized choice."

- Southern Baptist leaders "were among the early supporters of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights," George said. Foy Valentine, then-executive secretary of the SBC Christian Life Commission, for example, was listed with his title in RCAR literature as a supporter.

- a 1980 SBC Christian Life Conference on "Ethical Issues for the Eighties" during which "not one single speaker addressed the issue of abortion, George said.

However, just three months later, he recounted, messengers from local SBC churches at the SBC annual meeting in St. Louis signaled a shift, passing a resolution condemning the use of taxpayer money for abortion on demand and calling for an amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibiting abortion except to save the life of the mother.

In resolutions in 1982 and 1984, the convention expanded its pro-life stance, George said; the CLC sponsored its first conference on abortion in 1987; the Home Mission Board began to train church members for ministry through crisis pregnancy centers; and Sanctity of Human Life Sunday was added to the denominational calendar in 1988.

Now, to maintain a pro-life its pro-life convictions, George said, the SBC now must recover a sound theology on such issues as the nature and character of God.

Beyond the debate over whether the Bible forbids or permits abortion, George said Baptists, in believing the Bible's statement that God made man in his image, thus should call for the protection of life "even, nay especially, in its embryonic development. The assault upon the unborn is nothing less than an attack upon the Creator of life itself."

In the realm of church history, George noted, the early Christian church "reflected the continuation of the pro-life norm inherited from Judaism" and early Christian writings beyond the New Testament spoke an "unequivocal no" to abortion.

Concerning religious liberty and a Christian's "soul competency" to interpret the Bible, George said such doctrines have never been "a pretext either for doctrinal indifference or moral laxity" and have never meant Baptists must "wink at theological heresy in the name of tolerable diversity or that they must be silent in the face of outrageous moral evil . . . ."

Christians opposing abortion also must heed "the mandate to stand beside those caught up in the trauma of such an act," George said, and to extend to them compassion, the love of Christ, forgiveness, restoration and healing.

"May God help us," George said, "so to live and so to act and so to speak."

--30--

To stem God's wrath, church must  
proclaim truth, MacArthur says

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
3/4/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--The United States of America has been abandoned by God and has no hope unless Christians live by his truth and proclaim it to their culture, Bible teacher John MacArthur said at a Southern Baptist bioethics seminar.

"God comes to a point where he lets a nation go the way of its own choices," MacArthur said. He said he believes "it is this kind of abandonment by God that we are experiencing in this country."

Though God has removed his "restraining grace," MacArthur said, he will restore it if Americans will obey his word.

"It has to start with the church," he said. "We've got to call the nation back to God, to the Creator who is the gracious redeemer."

Every Christian needs "to start proclaiming God's Word loud and clear," MacArthur said. "How can we tell the people of our culture where the truth is if we don't preach and teach the Word of God?"

MacArthur's comments were made during two addresses at the Christian Life Commission's annual seminar, "Life at Risk: Crises in Medical Ethics," March 1-3 in Nashville. The senior pastor of Grace Community Church in Sun Valley, Calif., MacArthur also is an author and radio preacher.

His evening messages, labeled "The War of the Worlds," focused on the condition of a culture opposed to Christianity and the Christian response to such a society.

"We are not on the brink of God's wrath in America," MacArthur said. "We are not anticipating God's wrath. We are not moving down a path to God's wrath."

"We are in it. We are experiencing it not in its ultimate sense, in terms of eternal punishment; not in its eschatological sense, in terms of those events that occur prior to the return of Christ. But in the sense of its temporal reality, we are now experiencing the wrath of God," he said.

"There is no surer token of a society under God's wrath than when it does not tolerate anger against sin."

--more--

Using Romans 1:24-32 because it is an "apt analysis of what we are experiencing," MacArthur said the people described by the apostle Paul are "deprived of restraining grace," which results in "more heinous sin." They are "propelled by a low view of everyone but themselves," he said. Their "degrading passions" mean "they get what they ask for," which results in their being "found useless" for the purpose for which they were created and doing things which are not right, he said.

"People ask me all the time, 'Is AIDS the judgment of God?' Of course it is," MacArthur said. "But it isn't as if God is up there going, 'Zap, you get AIDS. Zap, you get AIDS. Zap, you get AIDS.'"

"It is that AIDS is the product of perversion. It is built into the fabric of sin, just like any other venereal disease," he said.

The reason God has abandoned America is four-fold, according to Romans 1:18-23, MacArthur said.

The culture received the revelation of God through his creation but rejected him, he said. Having rejected God's revelation, people rationalized their choice and ended up establishing their own religion, he said.

"If there was ever a culture without excuse, it's ours," MacArthur said.

"The most devastating philosophy that ever entered this country is evolution, because it knocks the legs out from under evangelism. ... if you can explain the whole created universe without God, you don't need God," he said. Evolution "ends up with not needing a God, and that ends up with not needing a morality."

Americans, like the people described in Romans 1, have made a religion of creation, worshipping certain animal species and Mother Earth, MacArthur said.

"Men, having dispelled God, then create their own gods to accommodate their useless idea," he said. "Man does not ascend from the muck of paganism to the heights of religion. He falls from the truth of God to the muck of religion."

While MacArthur discussed God's general revelation in creation during his first address, he presented God's special revelation in the Bible during his second.

God's Word, though always under attack both blatantly and subtly, is adequate for every need, he said.

"Every cry of the human heart is satisfied in the sufficiency of Scripture," MacArthur said.

He used Psalm 19:7-9 to present the role of the Bible because the passage stands as the "most succinct and profound summary of Scripture in terms of its impact and effect on human life anywhere on the pages of Scripture," MacArthur said.

According to the passage, God's Word can "totally transform the inner person," make the naive person "skilled in all aspects of holy living," guide someone on the path to joy, give the light of eternal perspective in dark times, provide permanent relevance and produce "comprehensive righteousness," he said.

Christians must "bring to this generation this truth," MacArthur said.

--30--

Colorado designated gifts  
used for operating expense

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press  
3/4/93

DENVER (BP)--Colorado Baptist General Convention officials have acknowledged the continued use of Colorado Baptist churches' designated gifts to operate the convention but denied the recent resignation of the executive director was the result of dissatisfaction with his handling of the funds.

"We have been operating off (the churches') designated gifts for nearly 10 years," Tom Pratt, chairman of the convention's executive board and associate pastor of suburban Denver Northglenn Southern Baptist Church, told Baptist Press. "We've had to do this ever since the (Colorado Baptist) Foundation failed and left us \$1.5 million in debt."

--more--

Pratt said he has had at least one call, from an official of an SBC agency, asking if there had been an embezzlement at the state office of \$150,000. Baptist Press had also received a call about whether Charles Sharp, former executive director of the state convention, had resigned because of misappropriation of designated funds.

"Charles Sharp resigned for personal concerns," Pratt said. He was not fired, not forced to leave, said Pratt, who is also the board's finance chairman. "I even asked him if that was so and he told me he was not."

Sharp resigned last month and moved to Garden City, Kan., to become director of missions for Western Kansas Association. Sharp told Baptist Press Feb. 11 he was motivated by the desire to work more with people and less with paper.

"I have about 10 more years before retirement and I want to work more directly with people and churches," Sharp said.

Pratt said the Colorado convention established separate accounts last November for operating funds and designated funds from the churches. He said the funds are no longer commingled.

"We are trying to get it straightened out, work out of it. The difference is about \$150,000-\$160,000 and with average monthly gifts from the churches of about \$105,000 ... it is going to take some time," Pratt said. "We returned \$20,000 back (to the designated fund) in January and just this week another \$15,000."

But, Pratt said, the convention is still about \$150,000 "behind." About \$100,000 of it is designated (Lottie Moon, Annie Armstrong, etc.) while about \$50,000-\$60,000 is SBC Cooperative Program funds which have not been sent on to the SBC. The Colorado convention shares 29.5 percent of its undesignated gifts with the SBC.

Pratt has been an executive board member for five years and was vice chairman last year.

--30--

Newspaper refuses FMB trustees'  
request for another reporter

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press  
3/4/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--A Richmond newspaper has refused a request by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board trustees "to send us a responsible reporter to cover our meetings."

FMB trustees, after a Feb. 8 dialogue with Woman's Missionary Union leaders, were angered over reporting by Richmond Times-Dispatch religion writer Ed Briggs.

Alf Goodykoontz, the newspaper's senior vice president and executive editor, in a letter to an FMB official dated March 2, responded Briggs' reporting "was accurate and fair."

Of particularly concern to trustees were Briggs' characterization of the FMB-WMU dialogue as "angry" and of trustees having "summoned" WMU leaders to explain changes the auxiliary adopted in January broadening its ministry beyond Southern Baptist Convention entities.

In addition to voting Feb. 10 to formally ask the newspaper to send another reporter to cover their meetings, FMB trustees also voted to send a videotape of the dialogue to the newspaper's editors with the request to "evaluate the story done by Ed Briggs as to fairness."

Goodykoontz, in his letter, noted a deputy managing editor at the newspaper, Louise Seals, reviewed the videotape and supported Briggs' reporting.

The letter was addressed to Alan Compton, FMB vice president for communications. Although dated March 2, Compton had not received a copy of the letter as of the morning of March 4. The letter, however, was received at Baptist Press from an anonymous source and was sent by fax to the FMB March 4.

Goodykoontz, in his letter, wrote:

--more--

"A viewer relying solely on the videotape -- rather than being on the scene as Ed Briggs was, to hear comments made off camera and outside the meeting hall and to interview trustees -- might question the use of the word 'angry,' but the WMU leaders faced clearly hostile questions and comments, no matter how politely they were sometimes phrased. The WMU leaders were on the defensive from the beginning, and only the last speaker offered any support for the WMU changes. That person, Alma Hunt, apparently spoke only in response to the use of her name by a critic of the WMU changes.

"We don't often have the opportunity you provided to compare our coverage with a videotape of the whole event," Goodykoontz concluded. "Having done so, we see no reason to assign a different reporter to cover the Foreign Mission Board."

Goodykoontz did not address Briggs' use of the word, "summoned." Don Kammerdiener, interim vice president, noted in the Feb. 10 trustee session WMU leaders were "invited" to the dialogue, "not summoned." Addressing WMU leaders, he added, "As you graciously invited us to come to your meeting (in January), we invited you. You're always welcome here."

John Jackson, FMB trustee chairman and a pastor in California, told Baptist Press after hearing Goodykoontz's letter, "I don't really have much response to it. They've viewed (the videotape) and they've said what they want to say. That's their opinion . . . . It was not my decision to send it to them, so I'm not distressed one way or the other." Compton and Kammerdiener declined comment on the letter.

The trustees' votes to request another reporter and send the videotape to the newspaper came during a segment of their Feb. 10 meeting when they were discussing whether to send the videotape of the WMU dialogue to 125 regional organizations, or missions, of FMB personnel overseas.

Trustee John Simms of Virginia recommended making the videotape available to missionaries because, via fax, "the scurrilous article in the local paper is already in the possession of our mission stations around the world." The tape, he said, would permit missionaries to "see for themselves what happened" during the dialogue.

Kammerdiener voiced concern about how the tape might affect missionary morale, and Jackson asked trustees to refer the matter to him and Kammerdiener for further discussion. However, a motion to that effect was defeated by a one-vote margin.

The videotape has now been mailed to FMB overseas missions, according to FMB officials.

--30--

Erich Bridges contributed to this report.

**Annuity Board announces no hike  
in mid-year health plan rates**

**Baptist Press  
3/4/93**

DALLAS (BP)--Breaking with the national health-care trend, the Southern Baptist Annuity Board will have no mid-year rate increase in the Church and Seminarian Comprehensive Medical plans. There also was no rate increase in January.

"We are thrilled to share this good news with our participants," said Joel Mathis, an Annuity Board senior vice president and head of the insurance division.

"This is the first time since 1987 there has been no rate increase in the Church and Seminarian plans for an entire year," he said.

U.S. medical costs continue to increase about 20 percent annually, but the Annuity Board stabilized its health-care costs through several efforts.

"I believe a major factor in this turnaround has been the Annuity Board's and Prudential's creative and aggressive approach to managing health-care benefits," Mathis said.

Some of the successful changes in recent years include:

--more--

-- implementing and refining a ZIP code-based rating system linking rates to medical costs on a local basis.

-- adding PruNetwork, a modified preferred provider organization.

-- offering a Baptist hospital enhanced benefits program.

-- introducing the Institutes of Quality Network, an organ transplant program that provides 100 percent coverage when operations are performed at a Prudential-approved provider hospital.

In addition, two existing benefits for participants in the Church and Seminarian Comprehensive plans were enhanced effective Jan. 1, 1993.

-- the addition of a managed prescription drug program featuring PCS/MSP QUANTUM Alert, a computerized drug monitoring service.

-- an increase in maternity benefits to a new maximum of \$5,000 for normal delivery and \$7,500 for a Cesarean section.

Also on Jan. 1, the Annuity Board introduced two new catastrophic plans. These plans offer significantly lower costs combined with higher deductibles and limited benefits.

HOUSE MAIL

**(BP)**

**BAPTIST PRESS**

901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

HOUSE MAIL

So. Baptist Library & Archives  
901 Commerce  
Nashville, TN 37203