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KENTUCKY -- Demjanjuk verdict will prompt Holocaust denial, prof warns.  
ILLINOIS -- Flooded pastor, church members buoyed by others' help, prayers.  
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Land: U.S., others practice  
'passive racism' in Bosnia

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
8/9/93

WASHINGTON (BP)--The United States and Western European governments have practiced "passive racism" by not intervening on behalf of Muslims in Bosnia, said Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission recently an interfaith workshop on peace issues.

While nonviolence is preferable, Land said, "When faced with a situation where people are being victimized" there is a biblical responsibility to use force to stop such aggression.

Land, the CLC's executive director, spoke at a day-long workshop on religious perspectives on pacifism and nonviolence sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace. About 30 representatives from the Christian, Jewish and Islamic communities participated.

Land said he continues to believe there should be "multinational, armed intervention" in Bosnia.

"It seems to me that what's going on in Bosnia is the most horrible thing that has happened" since World War II, Land said.

If it were not an ethnic group such as Muslims being slaughtered and raped in Bosnia, the United States and Western European countries "would be swifter to respond than they have," Land said.

Such a failure to act should be condemned as "passive racism as opposed to the active racism of ethnic cleansing," he said.

"If we allow this to take place with as abject an acquiescence as we have (in Bosnia), it's not going to stop there," Land said.

There are "potential Bosnias on every horizon" in some of the republics of the former Soviet Union, Land said. He received a letter from a missionary in such a republic who said, "Ethnic cleansing is well under way here," Land said.

David Novak, a professor of Judaic studies at the University of Virginia, disagreed on the reason for the lack of intervention in Bosnia.

Americans "have not developed a sense of where we are obligated to intervene when someone else is a victim," Novak said.

Land's comments were made in response to a presentation calling for an approach beyond both pacifism and just-war theory. In his paper and address, Walter Wink, professor at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York City, called for a commitment to nonviolence and a renaming of just-war criteria as "violence-reduction criteria."

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"It takes from the peace church tradition its deep commitment to a principle of nonviolence," Wink said in his address, "and it takes from the just-war position its desire to talk morally about warfare, even during hostilities.

"And by moving to a position of commitment to nonviolence, it seems to me Christian churches could redeem some of the horror and evil that they have perpetuated through time, or at least stop doing it ...," Wink said.

Unlike the common interpretation, Jesus called for aggressive nonviolence, not pacifism, in his illustrations of turning the other cheek, giving away a cloak and going the second mile from Matthew 5:39-41, Wink said.

"Jesus is talking about a form of resistance using what you've got, taking the law and pushing it to absurdity, making it turn against itself," Wink said.

Land, an advocate of just-war theory, said he disagrees "that in resisting evil, violence must be categorically excluded." According to Psalm 82:4, Land said, "our responsibility" is clear: "Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked."

It must be recognized, Land said, force may have to be used if nonviolent conflict resolution has not been practiced when it was still possible in the past.

It must be understood "there can be a lot of common cause with those who are committed to nonviolence but that we have to understand that there comes a point at which there will be a legitimate disagreement, we'll just have to agree to disagree," Land said.

Land agreed "almost all wars in our common memory would have trouble meeting" just-war criteria.

Just-war criteria, Land said, consists of: A just cause; just intent (to secure justice); last resort; legitimate authority (government); limited goals; proportionality (human cost must be proportionate to goals); and noncombatant immunity.

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Demjanjuk verdict will prompt  
Holocaust denial, prof warns

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
8/9/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--A Southern Baptist expert on Holocaust studies has warned "historical revisionists and anti-Semites" will likely try to use the acquittal of John Demjanjuk to cast doubts on the reality of the Holocaust.

David P. Gushee, assistant professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., predicted the reversal of Demjanjuk's conviction by the Israeli Supreme Court will intensify efforts by racially motivated groups to deny 6 million Jewish people were murdered in Europe by Nazis during World War II.

Demjanjuk had been convicted by a lower court of being the infamous Nazi death camp guard "Ivan the Terrible" who worked at the Treblinka death camp in occupied Poland. The Israeli Supreme Court ruled Demjanjuk's identity as Ivan the Terrible had not been proven beyond a reasonable doubt. However, the high court cited strong evidence he had been a guard at other Nazi concentration camps.

An attempt to use the Demjanjuk decision as evidence the Holocaust didn't happen is perhaps the most dangerous implication of the verdict, said Gushee, who nevertheless praised the Israeli court for its willingness to render an unpopular decision.

"The evidence of the reality of the Holocaust and the truthfulness of the testimony of the survivors in general is undisputed by serious people," he said. "Yet, no doubt there will be fund-raising letters by revisionist groups trying to make hay out of this, and that should be resolutely rejected."

Gushee's concern that the Holocaust might be forgotten is supported by a recent Roper poll conducted for the American Jewish Committee. That survey showed 22 percent of adults and 20 percent of high school students think it is possible the Holocaust never happened. The same poll also revealed 21 percent of adults and 26 percent of high school students do not believe the Holocaust is relevant today.

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The Holocaust, Gushee said, is important for Christians to remember because Christians should care about the oppression of people both past and present.

Gushee wrote his doctoral dissertation at Union Theological Seminary in New York on European Christians who risked their lives to help Jewish people escape the Nazi death camps. However, these Christian heroes were far outnumbered by other people who identified themselves as Christians but still collaborated with the Nazis or took an attitude of indifference, he stressed.

"(Adolf) Hitler and (Heinrich) Himmler were the furthest things from Christians that there could be, but often the people who were the cogs in the machine that carried out this calamity would call themselves Christians, were churchgoers and didn't see any particular conflict between what they were doing and their Christian faith -- or if they did they just went ahead and did it anyway," said Gushee.

Gushee noted that scenario was repeated all over Europe as Nazis sought people to cooperate with their plan to exterminate the Jewish population.

Nazi leaders possessed a "modern, secularized, racialized, hatred" of Jewish people, said Gushee, who is under contract to write two books about the Holocaust. Unfortunately, Nazi leaders found fertile ground to spread their malice since Europe had a history of anti-Semitism by Christians that was hundreds of years old, said Gushee. "I'm embarrassed to say that there are numerous documents from church leaders, including Martin Luther, which are just venomous with the hatred of Jews."

It's difficult for today's Christians to repent for something somebody else did 50 years ago, Gushee said. Still, Christians can have an "attitude of sorrow" for Christian participation in the Holocaust, he said. They also can be committed to ridding themselves and churches of contempt for any people, he added.

Christians should remember their own heritage is strongly linked with Judaism, Gushee said. "We share the Old Testament and a belief in the same God. We differ over Jesus. That's fundamental and there is no getting around it, but the God who speaks throughout the Hebrew scriptures is the same God we believe in. We cannot forget that Jesus and all the apostles were Jews and the early church was born in Israel."

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Flooded pastor, church members  
buoyed by others' help, prayers

By Bill Webb

Baptist Press  
8/9/93

HILLVIEW, Ill. (BP)--Pastor Bill Smith at first thought the Air National Guard unit had arrived to interrupt members' efforts to remove materials from Hillview Baptist Church before Illinois River floodwater made their way into the building.

It was Ron Bracy who introduced himself on behalf of about 75 troops. "I'm with the Air National Guard, and I'm also a Southern Baptist pastor from Centralia," he said. "We're here to move you out."

News had come hours earlier on Sunday, Aug. 1, that the levee protecting the small town -- located about 30 miles southwest of Jacksonville, Ill. -- had broken and floodwater were making their way across eight miles of lowland.

But Bracy, pastor of First Baptist Church in Central City, Ill., and nicknamed "Major Moses" by the guardsmen, was offering his unit to help the pastor rescue his library and other materials from the church and remove remaining appliances from the parsonage next door.

"He was real insistent that those things had to get out," Smith recalled. "He was especially persistent about my library. He kept coming back and said, 'Pastor, you've got to get it all. You don't want to lose your library.'"

"At one time during all the stress, he (Bracy) came up to me and said, 'I want you to know my church is praying for you right at this moment,'" Smith remembered, his eyes moistening.

Members had been aware the levee might break two weeks before it happened. The pastor and his wife, Donna, had almost completely emptied the parsonage. Appliances had been removed from the church kitchen and the pulpit furniture, a piano and two organs had been taken from the sanctuary.

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Church records also had been removed.

Floodwater actually breached two levees to reach the church property. A week earlier, members and community volunteers began constructing a levee around the church and parsonage, leaving only an opening for the driveway until the time came to seal off the property completely.

"I had thought all along that if the main levee broke and the river reached into our town, our levee would hold for several days," Smith said. That would allow a few days to remove office supplies and books, he thought.

Dan Ford, a member of the church, said volunteers came from as far away as Chapin, Jacksonville and Waverly, Ill., to construct a levee to protect the church.

But the efforts were in vain.

"When we went in Monday morning, (water) was two-thirds up on the levee around the church," Mrs. Smith said. "It really came in fast after that" and broke the church levee before noon.

An estimated two-thirds of homes and public buildings in the town were flooded, some with water near the first-floor ceiling. Water rose to five or six feet on the first floor of the sanctuary.

The pastor, who has served the church 33 years, said he believes at least half of his members' homes were affected; some saw their farmland covered with water and their crops ruined.

"We look at our homes gone, and many people their income gone, and it hurts real bad," Smith said.

"Right now, the prayers of people are sustaining us," Mrs. Smith said. "God's grace is sufficient."

Until the levee broke, Hillview church operated as a food distribution center for sandbaggers and other volunteers. Members received 500-600 meals a day prepared by Illinois and Kentucky disaster relief units and delivered them to workers.

Until they can return to their own building, Hillview's members will meet in the facilities of Oak Grove Baptist Church. Down to three families, Oak Grove members voted Aug. 3 -- two days after the levee broke -- to discontinue meeting and to invite Hillview's members to use the facility.

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CLear-TV lifts boycott against  
S.C. Johnson and Son, Inc.

By Louis Moore

Baptist Press  
8/9/93

NASHVILLE (BP)--Christian Leaders for Responsible Television (CLear-TV) has announced it is lifting a nationwide boycott of S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc., a Racine, Wis.,-based corporation that markets a variety of waxes, polishes, household and personal products.

The decision to lift the boycott was made following a meeting with officials of the S.C. Johnson Company June 18, which resulted in a revision of the company's advertising policy and the addition of specific steps to bring more direct supervision to TV program screening procedures.

The Johnson Company advised CLear-TV in a letter July 9, "We feel your suggestions regarding our advertising policy have improved it. We have clarified it and incorporated more direct language. In addition, we have investigated our screening process. We have found some areas in our process that deserve more direct supervision."

The boycott began March 15, 1993, after the company failed to respond to the concerns of CLear-TV regarding the company's sponsorship of TV programs the coalition found to contain excessive and gratuitous sex, violence and profanity during its 1992 fall monitoring period.

"We feel this action reaffirms the fact that S.C. Johnson & Sons, Inc., is a socially responsible corporation," said Billy A. Melvin, chairman of CLear-TV. "We believe the steps taken by the company leadership at this time will result in their support of family-friendly television programming in the future."

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Richard D. Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and a member of CLear-TV's executive committee, said, "I'm delighted we were able to lift the boycott and that S.C. Johnson & Son Inc. has revised and amended its policies for advertising. The successful conclusion of this episode shows that people can make a difference and should also illustrate to other companies that such situations can be resolved to mutual satisfaction."

CLear-TV seeks to encourage corporate America to be responsible in its placement of television advertising during prime-time hours. The organization was founded in 1984 and is a coalition of 1,600 Christian leaders representing a combined constituency of 60 million U.S. Christians.

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#### ANALYSIS

SBC stances stir discussion  
of belief, practice perimeters

By Mark Baggett

Baptist Press  
8/9/93

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Joining a Southern Baptist church, as Tennessee pastor Bob Pitman once said, is "about the easiest thing in the world to do."

"If we could train a chimpanzee to walk down the aisle and fill in one of those blessed cards, most churches would vote to receive him," Pitman told an Alabama pastors' conference to waves of laughter.

But lately, there has been no lighter side to church membership, which is the basis for becoming part of the Southern Baptist Convention. Last year at Indianapolis, SBC messengers in effect kicked out two North Carolina churches for sanctioning homosexuality, and this year a motion was made to "unseat" the messengers from Bill Clinton's home church, Immanuel Baptist in Little Rock, Ark., because of Clinton's stands on homosexuality and abortion.

Another motion, which was referred to the SBC's Executive Committee, called for withdrawing convention fellowship from "churches which have ordained women."

These developments have led to charges of creedalism in some quarters, charges which SBC leaders deny.

"Where do we stop?" asked a messenger from Florida about the motion on the Little Rock church, which was eventually resolved in the church's favor. "We're not going to be having a convention, because we aren't going to be able to seat anybody."

A letter writer to The Alabama Baptist cited a theological study committee report commissioned by SBC President Ed Young as "a rigid step toward creedalism by our new Baptist hierarchy."

But Beeson School of Divinity Dean Timothy George, co-chairman of the committee, said the committee specifically rejected the notion of drawing up a new confession of faith.

"We're not calling for a new confession of faith," George said. "The (1963) Baptist Faith and Message is perfectly good. But we felt that the issues on the horizon for 1993 were not necessarily present in 1963 and our report illuminates those issues and reaffirms our commitment to the Baptist Faith and Message."

George said Southern Baptists are not creedal; instead, he said, they believe the Bible is the only norm for faith and practice, and they believe their statements of faith are revisable. "However," he added, "I do think it is appropriate and urgently necessary to make voluntary and conscientious confessions of faith for the sake of undergirding the church."

According to the SBC's constitution, the convention consists of messengers from churches "in friendly cooperation with this Convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work and has during the fiscal year preceding been a bona fide contributor to the Convention's work." But last year in Indianapolis the convention voted on a measure to refuse to seat messengers from the two North Carolina churches, and this year's convention broadened that action by changing the SBC constitution to ban any church that acts to approve homosexuality.

How "friendly" and "sympathetic" must individual Southern Baptists be? Morris Chapman, president of the SBC's Executive Committee, said he supports the recent actions but urges caution.

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"While I fully support the constitutional amendment with regard to homosexuality, we must be very careful about transforming the constitution of the SBC into a statement of faith and practice. We have the Baptist Faith and Message and other avenues to express our convictions on moral and social issues," he said.

Aside from homosexuality, SBC resolutions through the years provide a glimpse of the potential tests for fellowship -- opposition to alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography. But newer issues are more likely to prompt discussion:

-- Abortion. Can a Southern Baptist be "pro-choice"? Yes, but as the Little Rock motion indicates, a person who supports abortion rights risks disfavor in the convention and would be highly unlikely to be selected for a leadership post. The national convention has voted repeatedly to condemn abortion.

"I think an individual Southern Baptists can be pro-choice, but I think they are radically out of step with the Southern Baptist Convention," said Chapman. "Whether or not they can be a member of a Southern Baptist church is not an issue for the Southern Baptist Convention. I don't believe Southern Baptists will want to list those kinds of issues as a matter of faith."

-- Ordination of women. The SBC Executive Committee faces a decision on how to handle the motion referred to it to expel churches that ordain women, which would include at least 131 churches in 25 states that have ordained women as pastors, according to a recent survey. A 1984 resolution, passed by the convention, denounces the ordination of women and says women pastors are outside "God's delegated order of authority," which makes "man the head of woman." The resolution says the Bible "excludes women from pastoral leadership to preserve a submission God requires because the man was first in creation and woman was first in the Edenic fall."

Nevertheless, Fred Wolfe, the new chairman of the Executive Committee, has said he does not expect the committee to vote to recommend the women's ordination motion to the SBC.

"I don't think there is any inclination on the committee to do that," said Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala. "I don't think they will want to remove a church for that reason."

Unlike homosexuality, women's ordination "is not a moral issue," Wolfe said. "It's a matter of interpretation and conviction."

-- Masonry. Southern Baptists appear to have put the issue of Freemasonry behind them by approving a Home Mission Board report that condemned many Masonic practices but left membership in Masonic organizations to the individual conscience of every Southern Baptist.

-- Support for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Some observers wondered whether the convention this year would consider banning churches and/or individuals who give money to the emerging organization of Baptist moderates, which features several alternative giving plans that re-route gifts away from certain SBC agencies. But the issue did not surface at the convention, and a number of SBC leaders say they would not favor taking such a drastic step.

William Powell, a Birmingham, Ala., dentist who is a member of the SBC's Executive Committee, for example, is troubled by what he sees as the "divisiveness" of the CBF but says it is not his goal "to purge CBF churches out of the SBC."

-- Endorsing Bill Clinton. SBC messengers had heard former President George Bush and former Vice President Dan Quayle approvingly in 1991 and 1992, but Democratic President Bill Clinton fared badly at the 1993 convention, which approved a resolution separating itself from the president's views and urging him "to affirm biblical morality in exercising his public office." About half of the 41 resolutions considered by the resolutions committee dealt specifically with Clinton and/or Vice President Al Gore and their policies.

-- Inerrancy of Scripture. What would have been the most likely test for fellowship a decade ago has been complicated by varying terminology: "inspired," "infallible," "perfect" Bible. Although the Baptist Faith and Message does not use the word "inerrant," the theological study committee's report does endorse the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy and other statements that use the word. As a matter of practice, however, a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible remains among the criteria for selection to SBC leadership positions.

Foreign markets opening  
to RTVC radio programs

By C.C. Risenhoover

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8/9/93

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--An increasing number of foreign markets are opening for radio programs produced by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

"We've cooperated with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in providing programming for mission stations around the world," said Ed Malone, vice president for radio at the RTVC, "and we expect even more new opportunities to be opened internationally in 1994."

Malone said a station in Bratislovia, Slovakia, recently had contacted the RTVC and is now carrying its weekly programs, "Streams in the Desert" and "Country Crossroads."

He said the programs reach as many as 1.8 million people in Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

"The station in Bratislovia is doing its own translation," said Malone, "and in the near future we anticipate placement of programming in the Ukraine and St. Petersburg."

The breakup of the Eastern Bloc and Soviet Union opened up the area to foreign broadcasters as never before, he said.

"I think the door is opening to do just about anything internationally," Malone said. "We're looking into going strong internationally, with the blessing of the Foreign Mission Board."

Malone said the RTVC programs will be translated into the appropriate languages but currently most programs are provided only in English. He said since English has become the universal language, most countries have no problem with English-language programming.

"We're looking at shortwave, government stations and satellite systems in order to transmit around the world," Malone said. "At one time the government in various countries operated all the radio stations, but that's changed. Now there's a lot of private ownership and that's giving us greater opportunity."

Malone said radio in Asia, after decades of slow or no growth, is undergoing a startling transformation. He said the same thing also is happening in Europe.

"The broadcasting industry in foreign countries is looking at global radio trends," Malone said. "With privatization many foreign countries are looking at opening the radio waves to more competition and challenging formats. They're also looking at the effects of new technology, and the international media investment climate.

"And they're looking to U.S. program producers to assist them in their growth."

The RTVC's radio ministry, Malone said, is poised and prepared to provide programs with a variety of formats to have spiritual impact on foreign listeners.

Malone said David Clark, a missionary to South Africa, recently had asked for "Powerline" scripts so he could prepare his own version of the program. He got the program aired weekly on a station in South Africa and has received great response.

"I'd like to see this happening all over the world," Malone said. "Our purpose is to get the gospel out. Whatever it takes, we'll do it."

Other foreign countries or areas with stations carrying RTVC programs include the Philippines, "The Baptist Hour;" South Africa, London, West Indies, the Carribean, Singapore, Swaziland and Canada, "Country Crossroads;" Colombia, Cayman Islands, Philippines and Canada, "MasterControl;" West Indies, Cayman Islands, Italy, Swaziland, Philippines and Canada, "On Track;" West Indies, the Carribean, Cayman Islands, Philippines and Singapore, "PowerLine;" and the Carribean, Cayman Islands, West Indies, Philippines and Leeward Islands, "Streams in the Desert".

"We have strong stations that reach large numbers of people in many countries," Malone said.

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