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Uncle Sam wants more proof
of church contributions

By Shari Schubert

Baptist Press
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JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Between now and April 15, most people will be concentrating on wrapping up 1993 tax matters. But churches, charitable organizations and taxpayers who contribute to these need to be aware of new tax laws that will affect gifts given in 1994.

The Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993, passed by Congress and signed into law last August, contains several provisions designed to prevent abuse of deductions for charitable donations.

Compliance with the new laws should be relatively simple if donations are just that, and no goods or services are exchanged for the contribution. But if "quid pro quo" gifts -- those in which the donor receives something of value in exchange for the donation -- are involved, the churches or charities receiving the gifts may be in for some major paperwork headaches.

The new tax rules include the following requirements:

-- Any single donation of \$250 or more made after Dec. 31, 1993, may not be deducted on income tax returns without "substantiation" -- a written acknowledgement from the recipient. Canceled checks no longer will be acceptable as proof of the donation.

The receipt must identify the donor by name and must state whether the church or charity provided any goods or services in exchange for the gift. There is no prescribed format -- letters, postcards or computer-generated forms may be acceptable, noted information provided by the Internal Revenue Service.

The substantiation must be "contemporaneous." In other words, it must be received by the donor no later than the date he files his tax return or the date when the return is due, whichever comes first.

Technically, the responsibility for obtaining the substantiation rests with the donor, who must request it from the church or charity. The church or charity is not directly required by the IRS to record or report this information.

However, "churches are going to have to respond to this or else some of their people are going to lose some deductions on their 1994 tax returns," warned Gene Foster, director of the Missouri Baptist Convention's annuity and insurance department.

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-- A similar requirement applies to non-cash gifts valued at \$250 or more. The substantiation from the church or charity must contain a description of the property received, for instance -- "a used Baldwin piano" -- but it need not include a valuation of such property. Valuation of the donated property is the responsibility of the donor.

-- Substantiation is required for quid pro quo contributions in excess of \$75. In this case, the church or charity is required by law to furnish the disclosure statement to the donor.

The substantiating document must include a statement of the value of the goods or services received and should inform the donor that this amount may not be deducted.

For instance: A taxpayer writes a check to a Baptist children's home for \$100, the fund-raising auction price of a craft item valued at \$40. He may not deduct the \$40, but he may deduct the difference of \$60 as a charitable donation.

A statement is not required if the goods or services provided by the organization are "de minimis" -- token goods or services (such as keychains or bookmarks) or "intangible religious benefits."

A penalty of \$10 per contribution may be imposed on a charity for each failure to provide the required statement, according to IRS documents. A charity that knowingly provides false written substantiation may be subject to penalties for aiding and abetting an understatement of tax liability.

Churches that already provide contributors with a year-end statement itemizing tithes and offerings may be able to comply with the new provisions simply by adding to that statement a declaration to the effect that no goods or services other than intangible religious benefits were received in exchange for the donations, Foster noted.

Churches that do not already provide such a statement probably should begin doing so, he added.

But churches or church-related organizations that deal with non-cash or quid pro quo contributions may see a significant increase in paperwork.

"It's a nightmare waiting to happen," said Bob Kenison, president of Missouri Baptist Children's Home. "They're asking us to do what we've never had to do, which is place a value on donated property.

"If we undervalue the gift, we'll offend the donor," he said. "If we overvalue it, we'll offend the IRS and lose our tax-exempt status."

Kenison said the children's home's auditor is advising changes in its bookkeeping procedures as a result of the new rules, which may make it necessary to hire an additional staff member to keep up with the paperwork. He noted it costs about \$10,000 a year to care for a child and about \$20,000 a year to employ a staff member. "That means two more kids that will die on the streets," he said.

To assist churches and charitable organizations in complying with the new rules, the IRS has produced a new "Publication 1771, Charitable Contributions -- Substantiation and Disclosure Requirements." The publication was mailed to many charities in December and is available by calling 1-800-TAX-FORM.

Nova L. Felton, public affairs officer in the IRS St. Louis district office, responded to some hypothetical questions posed by the Missouri Baptist newsjournal Word & Way:

-- Case No. 1: The IRS is authorized to establish anti-abuse rules to prevent circumvention of the substantiation requirement by writing separate smaller checks. If a person puts two checks, both payable to the church, in the offering plate on the same Sunday morning -- a \$150 check for his regular tithe and offering, and a \$150 check for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering -- will the IRS treat it as a gift of more than \$250 at one time?

Yes. Substantiation would be required, Felton said.

-- Case No. 2: A \$250 check written to the church for day-care tuition or youth camp fees is not deductible. But what about the cost of sending a youth on a mission trip where his participation is, in effect, a gift of labor to a charitable or mission cause?

The latter could be deducted, Felton said. Taxpayers would need to be sure any travel mileage involved was deducted at the rate allowed for charitable mileage, not the rate for business mileage.

Forthcoming written guidelines from the IRS should help answer many of churches' and taxpayers' questions, noted J. Brent Walker, general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Other questions ultimately may have to be settled in litigation.

Despite concerns about the additional paperwork that may be created for some organizations, Walker said BJC personnel are more satisfied with the measure passed in 1993 than they would have been with an earlier version, proposed under the Bush administration in 1992. That version would have required churches to report directly to the IRS the names, Social Security numbers and amounts of tithes and offerings of those who gave the church more than \$500 a year.

Such a requirement "would have been intolerably burdensome and invasive and probably unconstitutional," Walker wrote in the November-December 1993 issue of BJC's Report from the Capital. "As little as \$10 a week in the collection plate by year's end would have put you over the \$500 floor. ... Here, as long as each contribution is less than \$250, there is no reporting at all. And, most importantly, the church never deals directly with the IRS. Only the taxpayer does that, if he or she is audited."

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'Rationally, empirically,'
Bible is best truth source

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--So many different truth claims abound today it is difficult to discern what is genuine, said L. Russ Bush III, vice president for academic affairs and the dean of faculty at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, as he delivered the seminary's semiannual faculty lecture.

However, Bush said: "The biblical story is the story that best hangs together rationally and empirically.

"The biblical explanation is also the most powerful explanation of the historical facts, and beyond question, the biblical explanation carries the greatest moral force."

Few people understand the primacy of biblical truth because they hear so many alternatives to it, Bush said. In addition, he cited statistics indicating there are more than 200 mega-people groups who have never heard the name of Jesus from a Christian witness.

"Where is William Carey when we need him?" Bush said.

He added: "Americans today spell God, C-N-N: the source of all truth and knowledge!"

Bush said CNN has not reported the new openness to the gospel in the Islamic bloc or the overwhelming worldwide growth rate among evangelical Christians. He noted 70 percent of evangelicals today live in the non-Western world.

"Unfortunately, American Christianity is in decline, but this is a day of an amazing international harvest," Bush said.

Bush pointed to Pilate's struggles with alternatives when he questioned Jesus Christ. He heard two different versions of who Christ was and was forced to make a decision about who was telling the truth.

When people are faced with that same decision today, Bush said, they do not have to make a leap of faith. The nature of biblical truth is both reasonable and essential, he said. Bush argued life comes only from life, and therefore, a "conscious and intelligent life-source is a necessary existing condition for what now exists.

"In other words, God is the essential reality," Bush said. "The life of a human being ... is of such a character that it inherently testifies to the necessary existence of God. This makes the historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus more compelling.

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"With rational support, sufficient empirical data, explanatory power and moral relevance, all pointing to biblical theism and Christian faith, are we not justified in saying to the lost world, 'This is the truth!'"

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Freemasonry enters 3rd year
of controversy among Baptists

By Art Toalston

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE (BP)--The Freemasonry controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention is heading into its third year, now fueled by:

-- the misgivings of a member of the Home Mission Board, D. Walter Collett, expressed to the 88 other board of directors members in a Jan. 7 letter concerning the HMB-recommended stance on Freemasonry adopted at the SBC annual meeting in Houston last June. The letter has resulted in an invitation to Collett from HMB directors chairman Brad Allen to speak with the directors' administrative committee during their Feb. 7 meeting in Atlanta. Collett is pastor of Covenant Baptist Church in Columbia, Md.; Allen is pastor of First Baptist Church in Duncan, Okla.

-- a third book by Texas physician Larry Holly who initiated the challenge of Freemasonry in SBC life in the spring of 1992. Holly said his upcoming book will be an in-depth critique to challenge the HMB's Freemasonry report and recommendation to the SBC and the HMB interfaith witness department 110-page study of Freemasonry and Christianity.

-- a book being written by Gary Leazer, former interfaith witness department director who led the HMB study. Last October, Leazer was asked to resign from the HMB staff after delivering a speech sympathetic to Masons and critical of the HMB to a regional Masonic convention in Atlanta.

Leazer initially became a point of controversy in early 1993 over a sympathetic letter he had written to a Mason. He was removed from further involvement in the development of the HMB report and recommendation to the SBC and, in March, removed as department director.

Leazer said his firsthand experiences with the Freemasonry issue will be part of his book on the conservative movement in the SBC.

Collett, in his letter to fellow directors, wrote that those wanting a stronger stand against Freemasonry than taken by HMB and SBC last year should meet to discuss the possibility of a minority report. Collett suggested the meeting take place before or during the HMB directors' spring meeting, April 12-14 in Atlanta.

Baptist Press learned of Collett's letter, which was not mailed to news media, and requested a faxed copy.

Collett, in his three-page letter, also called for the HMB:

-- to "cease publication and distribution" of the board's 110-page interfaith witness department study of Freemasonry.

-- to issue "a public statement of clarification ... that we do not believe that the teachings of Freemasonry are compatible with historic Christian and Baptist doctrine and that membership in the Masonic Lodge is an issue of scriptural authority and that individual personal conscience is not the final arbiter of truth."

HMB President Larry Lewis told Baptist Press, "I would emphasize again that I believe the vast majority of Southern Baptists are well satisfied with the Home Mission Board's performance on this issue and simply desire that we spend no further time on it. In fact, at the last meeting of the board's administrative committee, members unanimously agreed to not revisit the issue."

The 11-member administrative committee, which met Dec. 7, consists of the HMB's elected officers and various committee chairmen.

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"Although I believe Dr. Collett is doing what he feels is right," Lewis said, "there are a number of misunderstandings and misstatements in his letter which I will need to clarify in correspondence with our directors." Lewis said the letter currently is being drafted.

Collett, in an interview, said he had received a half-dozen favorable responses to his letter and one negative response.

He said he is uncertain whether there is sufficient support for a minority report or if an overwhelming majority of the directors is satisfied with the HMB's handling of the issue. For now, he said, "I've laid my witness out there"

In his letter's last paragraph, Collett told of being diagnosed with stomach cancer last summer and beginning to "contemplate this issue from an eternal perspective. ... The prospect of standing before the Lord and being responsible for the action the HMB has taken on Freemasonry is not something I want to take to the Judgment Seat of Christ."

Among specific concerns cited by Collett is an alleged "increase of attacks and pressure being placed on some of our fellow pastors and churches by Masons demanding acceptance and control of church leadership positions and directors."

And, Collett wrote, Masons are interpreting the SBC position "as a major victory for their organization."

Collett cited an article by Masonic leader C. Fred Kleinkhecht in the January 1994 issue of The Scottish Rite Journal, titled "Masonry's Winning Moments -- 1993," in which Kleinkhecht, grand commander of the rite's Southern Jurisdiction, wrote, "... the delegates/messengers attending the Southern Baptist Convention ... voted 9-1 to support a resolution declaring membership in any Masonic organization to be a matter of personal conscience -- just what Freemasonry has always said it was! This vote quashed a vocal extremist splinter group within the SBC which claimed Freemasonry was 'incompatible' with Baptist doctrine."

Collett responded: "Almost everything in this statement troubles my spirit. I do not believe the vote was 9-1. I do not believe that membership in Freemasonry is a matter of personal conscience over scriptural authority. I do not believe I am a vocal extremist. ... However, I do believe (along with every other denomination that has studied the issue) that Freemasonry is incompatible with historic Christian doctrine and in particular with Baptist doctrine."

The HMB recommendation adopted by the SBC states: "In light of the fact that many tenets and teachings of Freemasonry are not compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine, while others are compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine, we therefore recommend that consistent with our denomination's deep convictions regarding the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church, membership in a Masonic Order be a matter of personal conscience. Therefore, we exhort Southern Baptists to prayerfully and carefully evaluate Freemasonry in light of the Lordship of Christ, the teachings of the Scripture, and the findings of this report, as led by the Holy Spirit of God."

Collett also raised concerns about HMB directors not being given an adequate chance to study and debate the interfaith witness department study and the proposed six-page report and recommendation to the SBC prior to their vote on March 17, 1993.

Collett complained, for example:

-- HMB directors did not receive their copies of the study until five days -- in his case, three days -- before their March 17 meeting.

-- No changes to the study or recommendation were allowed during an unofficial meeting for HMB directors to discuss the documents the night before the vote.

-- When the matter was brought up at the directors' March 17 meeting, a motion was made and passed for a vote before debate was ever opened.

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Lewis replied, "I feel the implication that somehow this whole issue was railroaded through without ample opportunity for input or action from the board is totally erroneous." He noted, for example, the administrative committee met into the night to make "a number of revisions in line with the input from the directors" following the unofficial meeting in which "every director was given opportunity to speak and most did so."

The motion that precluded debate was made by the one individual without any prompting from any HMB leader, Lewis said. "All but a very few voted (for it)," he said. "Obviously most of the directors felt they had ample opportunity to discuss it at length the previous evening and didn't want to drag the issue on any further."

Larry Holly, the physician and Bible conference leader from Beaumont, Texas, who initiated the Freemasonry challenge in 1992, told Baptist Press his third volume on the issue -- with 339 pages of text critiquing the HMB study and report and more than 30 pages of indexing -- has been typeset and will go to the printer Feb. 4 for 5,000 copies to be ready by March 4 for mailing to approximately 2,000 SBC leaders, such as members of all SBC boards, commissions and committees and state Baptist officials.

In addition to specifically stating concern about Masons claiming the SBC stance is a victory for personal conscience and allegations of Masons attacking various pastors, Holly said he also has undertaken his latest volume to challenge a statement written to him by HMB President Lewis and circulated in the news media that, "To date, no one, including yourself, has identified significant error" in either the HMB study or report to the SBC.

In the preface to his book, Holly wrote, "The SBC will have to determine if Dr. Lewis, Dr. Leazer and the trustees of the HMB did their job such that their decision should stand. The purpose of this volume is to facilitate that decision. The Convention will have to decide whether 'to send the case back' to the HMB or not."

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Baptists feed refugees
displaced by Mexico revolt

By Mary E. Speidel

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TUXTLA GUTIERREZ, Mexico (BP)--Mexican Baptists and Southern Baptist representatives are feeding refugees who fled their homes after Indian rebels began an armed uprising in Mexico's Chiapas state Jan. 1.

Baptists began operating a feeding station Jan. 27 near Las Margaritas, one of several towns seized by guerrillas of the self-proclaimed Zapatista National Liberation Army.

In areas where the uprising occurred, many of the region's indigenous people have left their homes because of fear, said Southern Baptist representative Charles Collins.

"There were needs there before (the uprising), but these have been intensified by the fact that people have been dislocated," Collins said in a telephone interview.

Collins and his wife, Jan, live in the state capital, Tuxtla Gutierrez, about 50 miles from the area of unrest. They are from Jackson and Yuma, Tenn., respectively.

Collins and seven Mexican Baptist volunteers serve two hot meals a day for some of the 850 refugees living in camps set up by the Mexican government and Red Cross. Baptists supply labor, cooking equipment and utensils and offer spiritual counseling to refugees. The Mexican government provides food.

The government has authorized Baptists to set up four feeding kitchens funded by Southern Baptist disaster relief aid sent by the Foreign Mission Board. When all these are functioning, Baptists will be able to feed up to 5,000 people twice daily, Collins said.

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More Mexican Baptist volunteers will participate when project leaders determine where other feeding stations are needed most. One possible site is near Ocosingo, another town where heavy fighting occurred.

The Zapatista insurgency started shortly after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) became official in Mexico on New Year's Day. The rebels protested the agreement, denounced the disparity between Chiapas' rich and poor, and alleged human rights abuses against the region's poverty-stricken Indian peasants. More than 100 people died in the four-day conflict in Chiapas, Mexico's poorest and southernmost state.

Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari traveled to Chiapas Jan. 25 to hear concerns of some of the area's indigenous and agrarian leaders who didn't participate in the uprising. Salinas got an angry reception, press reports said.

Collins and some Mexican Baptist pastors in Chiapas traveled to the uprising area several times in January to work out project details with government officials. During the trips Collins heard mixed reviews about the political climate in the region.

"Some people say it's getting better. Some say it's getting worse," he said.

Near San Cristobal de Las Casas, the largest town captured by guerrillas, Collins met evangelicals who said they refused invitations from Zapatista leaders to take part in the rebellion. The evangelicals have been living in a government refugee camp since fleeing their homes because of religious persecution.

"You come be a part of us and we'll help you, too," a guerrilla leader reportedly told them.

The evangelicals declined because they believe Christians should obey their country's laws, Collins said. Some news accounts reported persecuted evangelicals were among the rebel ranks. Based on his conversations with evangelicals in the area, Collins said he doesn't think that is true.

About 600 evangelicals live at the camp, where the government provides food, cooking fuel, electricity and shelter. No Baptists are part of the group, according to Collins. About 15 Baptist mission congregations of indigenous people meet for worship in the uprising area.

One young man living at the camp said evangelicals in his town were persecuted because they wouldn't drink alcoholic beverages. Their refusal to buy alcohol hurt sales at local stores, so community leaders ran them out of town. Townspeople burned his house, crops and almost all his possessions, the man claimed.

"We just barely made it out alive," he said.

During the visit to San Cristobal, an evangelical pastor told Collins "many hours have gone into prayer that God would intervene" in the lives of indigenous evangelicals in the area. With recent international attention and assistance focused on Chiapas, "God is doing something by drawing attention to their plight," the pastor said.

Added Collins: "If this is seen from the long point of view, even the uprising could be part of God's eternal plan to draw attention to this area, to say, 'Hey, here are people who need help. Let's go in and help them.'"

Before the insurgency, the region already was one of the most responsive to the gospel in Mexico, according to Collins. He said he senses a "real movement among Mexican Baptists" to minister to indigenous people in the area's rugged highlands.

"They have put a lot of prayer into this," he said.

Many Spanish-speaking Baptist churches in Chiapas have a missionary from their congregation who travels to the region to work with the indigenous people. Baptists are considering starting a Bible institute there.

W.A. Criswell, Herschel Hobbs
seminary classmates, old friends By Lonnie Wilkey

NASHVILLE (BP)--W.A. Criswell. Herschel Hobbs. When historians look back 100 years from now at this era in Southern Baptist life, those two names will be prominently mentioned. Many Southern Baptists today, however, probably do not know how close the two men are.

For almost 50 years, Criswell, 84, has been at First Baptist Church in Dallas, first as pastor, now as senior pastor. Under his leadership, the church has been known as the largest Southern Baptist church in the world.

Hobbs, 86, also is one of the most recognizable names in Southern Baptist life. The pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, has written Sunday school commentaries used among Southern Baptists for 25 years and is a widely cited Baptist theologian. Both men have written numerous books.

The two Southern Baptist "giants," were in Nashville in January for Tennessee Baptists' evangelism conference, which ultimately was canceled because of a snow and ice storm.

Following a "mini" session in which they each preached for approximately 30 people who had not learned the conference was canceled, the two were interviewed by the Tennessee Baptist newsjournal Baptist and Reflector.

Criswell is well-known for his stance in the "conservative" movement within the Southern Baptist Convention. Hobbs disdains labels and says he tries to stay "down the middle."

Hobbs emphasized he and Criswell believe the same thing. "There's not a bit of difference in our faith," he said. "We are both conservative in theology. We're where Southern Baptists have always stood down the middle."

That aside, there is no doubt of the mutual admiration and respect each holds for the other.

"I don't have a better friend among preachers than W.A. Criswell," Hobbs said.

"I love Herschel Hobbs as much as if he were my own brother," Criswell responded.

The two met in 1931 when both were students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Despite being two years older, Hobbs was a year behind Criswell at seminary.

Their friendship developed then and grew through the years. Both have held revivals at each other's churches.

Hobbs recalled a time he led a January Bible Study on the Old Testament Book of Amos at First Baptist in Dallas one Sunday night. That night the church had 19 additions, more than they had that morning when another well-known Southern Baptist preached, evangelist Billy Graham.

Asked how they are alike, Criswell said, "Both of us have given our lives to the pastoral ministry."

He noted both of them had opportunities to move to other areas of work, including serving as president of a seminary.

"God called Herschel Hobbs to be a pastor, preacher, pulpiter and expositor. The same thing has characterized my life," Criswell said.

Both men said they never had any doubts God wanted them in pastoral ministry. In his autobiography, Hobbs wrote: "If I had 10,000 lives to live, I would want to be a pastor in every one of them." As Criswell put it: "God called me to be a pastor when I was a little boy."

Each has a favorite story about the other.

Criswell related Hobbs drove the "get-a-way" car when he and his wife were married in Louisville. He said two of their friends were going to stop the car. One of them tried to grab the keys and Hobbs wrestled him to the ground. "When I came out to the car there was Hobbs rolling on the ground, fighting," Criswell laughed, noting Hobbs "won" the battle.

Hobbs recalled he and Criswell wrote frequently during their early ministry. "In our early days we moved around a bit," he said.

During those times Criswell would get offers from other churches and would write to Hobbs for advice. He usually responded, "Leave it alone, God has something bigger." Hobbs said Criswell would turn it down and pass Hobbs' name along to the church.

At that time George W. Truett was approaching retirement as pastor of First Baptist in Dallas. Hobbs said he and another friend had decided Criswell was the man "to fill the bill" at the church and Criswell indeed was invited to preach there and was called as pastor.

"I got a penny postcard the next day (after he was called)," Hobbs recounted. "All it said was, 'Dallas First called last night. Pray that I have the strength to do the work.'"

Hobbs was at the Dallas church later and related that story. "I told them every other time he turned down the job and gave me a shot. This time the rascal didn't," he laughed.

The two veterans have some advice for young pastors today.

Young ministers should give themselves to two things, Criswell said. First, pray and study to be the best expositor of God's Word possible. Second, he said, commit yourself and then lead your people to minister to people who are hurting and lost.

"We need that preacher to be God's messenger and we need him to minister to people," Criswell said.

"Amen," Hobbs echoed. He added one thing: "Don't stop studying." He and Criswell agreed one of the major reasons the average tenure of a Southern Baptist pastor at a church is a little over two years is because they quit studying and become "dry and empty."

And since both are still going strong in their 80s, it's safe to assume their wells are far from dry.

Though they're 100 miles apart, Hobbs underscored their close ties, saying with a straight face that on a clear day when the window is open and the wind is blowing from the south, he "can still hear W.A. preach."

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CLC leader warns of plunge
toward 'primitive' society

By Susan Simko

Baptist Press
1/27/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptists must rescue the United States from declining morals, Richard Land, director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said during a chapel service Jan. 26 at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"I believe that we as Southern Baptists may indeed have been called to the kingdom for just such a time as this," Land said.

Land said Americans in the 1990s will decide to reassert Judeo-Christian values or they will decide to allow secularism to engulf the country.

If secularism takes over, the country will plunge "into a dark and barbarous abyss of secularism -- of paganism -- to be a society which will be the moral equivalent of those primitive societies that dragged their aged and their infirmed out on ice flows to die of exposure or abandoned them in the jungles to be torn apart by wild animals," Land said. "Only, we'll do it in a little more sophisticated manner with lethal injections and denial of health care."

Christians must fight those social ills if they are going to follow Christ's command to be salt and light, he said.

"Salt is a preservative. Salt is a disinfectant. Salt is a purifying agent," Land said. "But salt must touch that which it would disinfect. There is no room for obedience to being salt and light if we withdraw from the world to be uninvolved with society."

Christians cannot separate social problems and the gospel of Jesus, Land said.

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"There is only one gospel. It is blasphemous to seek to feed the hungry and not tell them about the bread of life," he said. "But it is also a denial of the incarnation to seek to preach to the spiritual needs of people and to ignore their physical and emotional hurts."

Addressing physical problems like abortion, homelessness or euthanasia will force Christians into a battle that must be fought, Land said.

"I do not think the battle can be won without the active participation of the largest non-Catholic denomination in America, namely the Southern Baptist Convention," he said. "I'm not convinced that there is not one more reformation left in God's plan."

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CLC again asks court
to discard Lemon test

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
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WASHINGTON (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission again has called on the Supreme Court to discard its two-decade-old standard in cases involving the separation of church and state, urging the justices instead to adopt a new test which "will promote religious liberty rather than obliterate it."

In a friend-of-the-court brief, the Christian Life Commission contends the 1971 Lemon test has fostered secularism and hostility, not neutrality, toward religion. The CLC urges the court to establish a test based on the principle of accommodation of religion, thereby promoting "benevolent neutrality" by the government toward the church without establishing religion.

The case, Kiryas Joel Village School District v. Grumet, concerns the New York legislature's creation of a school district for disabled children in the incorporated community of an orthodox Jewish sect. The lower courts ruled the action violates the First Amendment's establishment clause.

The New York Court of Appeals decided the legislature's action primarily advanced religion, thereby violating the second part of the Lemon test, the Supreme Court's standard in establishment cases.

The Lemon test, which was instituted in the 1971 Lemon v. Kurtzman opinion, requires a government activity to pass a three-part standard. To avoid being a violation of church-state separation, Lemon says an activity must: 1) Have a secular purpose; 2) not primarily advance or inhibit religion and 3) not foster excessive entanglement with religion.

In its brief asking the court to review the case, the school's board of education not only said the lower court decisions misapplied previous court opinions but asked the justices to overturn the Lemon test.

In its brief, the CLC argues the First Amendment establishment and free-exercise clauses seek the protection of religious liberty as a common goal, while the "very formulation of the Lemon test seems to obscure the value of religious liberty."

"By asking the threshold question whether a religious accommodation has a secular purpose and secular effects, the Lemon test has virtually predetermined the outcome against religion," says the brief, which was written by CLC General Counsel Michael Whitehead. "Thus, the test promotes secularism, not religious liberty."

"This court is now presented with a compelling opportunity to root out the malevolent secularism which has poisoned the Lemon progeny, to replace it with benevolent neutrality and thereby to restore an establishment clause doctrine which will promote religious liberty rather than obliterate it."

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the Southern Baptist Convention's former church-state representative in Washington, will sign onto a brief on the opposite side of the CLC, said BJC General Counsel Brent Walker. While the BJC's brief will agree with the lower court ruling, it will focus on defending the "neutrality principle" in the Lemon test, Walker said.

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As it first did in its 1991 brief in the Lee v. Weisman case, the CLC recommends a test based on a legal article by University of Chicago Law School professor Michael McConnell. The suggested test includes the following guidelines:

- Does the state action allow or accommodate independent religious choice?
- Does the state action interfere with the religious liberty of non-adherents by inducing or coercing them to alter their religious practices?
- Does the state action go beyond accommodation and show favoritism toward one religious choice which would not be shown to other religious or non-religious choices?
- Does the state action use the taxing and spending power of government to provide some financial incentive, benefit or penalty to a particular religious activity which is not given to other religious or non-religious alternatives?

A new establishment clause test should include the "protection of both individual choice and institutional autonomy from government coercion and interference," the brief says.

"The state must accommodate religious liberty, so that private religious choices may flourish," said Richard Land, the CLC's executive director. "The court can advance this value by refocusing upon freedom of religious choice as the touchstone of the religion clauses, by upholding accommodations of religion which demonstrate benevolent neutrality, so long as taxing and spending powers are not used to coerce, induce or distort individual choice or interfere with the autonomy of religious organizations."

The New York legislature's establishment of the Kiryas Joel Village school district "accommodates the independently derived religious practices of the community and its student population" and is not a violation of the establishment clause, the brief says.

The village of Kiryas Joel in Orange County, New York, consists of about 10,000 Satmar Hasidic Jews who practice cultural separation from the rest of society. It became a municipality in 1977. It has separate private schools for non-disabled boys and girls. Federal and state laws, however, require public schools to provide an education for disabled children.

The public school's students are all Hasidic Jews with impairments, but the superintendent is not Hasidic. The seven-member school board contains all Hasidic Jews, but the teachers are from outside the Hasidic village, are from diverse religions and teach only secular subjects. There are no religious symbols in the school building.

"The special education school which was permitted by the law is a secular school, teaching secular subjects, with secular faculty, in a secular building," the CLC's Whitehead said. "The only thing religious about the school is the students and their parents."

"The government is not establishing religion when it accommodates these religious citizens," Whitehead said. "As the court said in the Zorach case (1952), 'When the state ... (adjusts) the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows the best of our traditions. For it then respects the religious nature of our people and accommodates the public service to their spiritual needs.'"

A date for oral arguments in the case has not been set.

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Christian educator
Donald Ackland dies

Baptist Press
1/27/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Donald F. Ackland, 90, widely known Southern Baptist Christian educator and writer, died Jan. 18 at a Nashville health care facility following a lengthy illness.

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Ackland was known for many years as the editor of "Open Windows," a high-circulation devotional guide published by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

He retired from the Baptist Sunday School Board as supervisor of adult Sunday school curriculum in the Sunday school department in 1968 after a 20-year career.

He continued to write Bible study materials until late 1992, when he was hospitalized following a stroke. He was the author of "Broadman Comments," a widely used Bible study book issued annually by the board. He is the author of volumes from 1970 through the 1994-95 volume, for which he had completed some materials before his illness.

A native of London, England, Ackland entered religious journalism in 1922 as assistant editor of a London evangelical weekly, "The Christian." Six years later, he joined the staff of the London City Mission and became its editorial secretary.

He and his wife, Olive, and their three children moved to the United States in the late 1940s, settling first in Longview, Texas, and then moving to Nashville for Ackland to assume editorial work with the Sunday School Board in 1949. They became United States citizens in 1953.

In a 1983 interview at his 80th birthday, Ackland told a Sunday School Board writer, "My mission is to write. I cannot see abandoning it with the unlimited audience that writing affords. I'll write as long as I can and am given opportunity. I cannot imagine reaching a point where I cannot write, unless I am paralyzed. I have so many things in my mind that I couldn't write them all if the Lord extended my life to 100."

Ackland graduated from Latymer Upper School in Hammersmith, London, and did additional studies at London University. He and his wife, the former Olive Harris of England, were married in 1928. He was a Civil Defense air raid warden in London from 1939-45. In 1948, he was ordained to the ministry at Kingsgate Baptist Chapel in London.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by a daughter, Hazel Eggers of Fairfield Glade, Tenn.; two sons, Bryan of Okeechobee, Fla., and Roy of Denton, N.C.; a sister, Vera Stevens of England; eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were Jan. 20 in Nashville.

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

WMU awards \$69,300 in grants
for women's missions work

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
1/27/94

TALLADEGA, Ala. (BP)--Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union has awarded \$69,300 in Second Century Fund grants to finance 28 women's foreign and home missions projects.

The grants -- 13 foreign and 15 domestic -- were announced during the WMU executive board meeting Jan. 8-13 at Shocco Springs Baptist Assembly in Talladega, Ala.

The board's Second Century Fund committee considered more than 50 requests totaling more than \$300,000.

The fund is a permanent endowment created by WMU during its 1988 centennial year as a gift to future generations of women in missions. All contributions are invested permanently.

Only interest earned on the principal is given each year in grants to develop women's missions organizations abroad, enhance WMU leadership development in the United States and foster education about missions and WMU among Southern Baptist seminary students and faculty.

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Foreign grants awarded this year will fund construction of a WMU headquarters building in Nigeria, educational and promotional materials in Indonesia, leadership development for women in Estonia and Romania, missions books in Bolivia and WMU leadership training at a seminary in Brazil.

Other foreign grants will fund a WMU handbook in Panama; a WMU writer's workshop in Paraguay; scholarships to attend camps and meetings in Venezuela; equipment for Jibla Baptist Hospital in Yemen; a scholarship for a student at Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Cyprus; WMU leadership training in Canada; and an evangelistic publication of the women's department of the Baptist World Alliance.

Two of the 15 grants for work in the United States will allow the national WMU office to provide literature for new work areas and expenses for a consultant to promote missions education on college campuses.

Others grants will help fund a missions education information campaign for WMU directors in California; fund two needs in Colorado, leadership training and National Acteens Convention (NAC) scholarships; provide two weeks of state Girls in Action and Acteen camps with Acteen Activator training projects in Indiana; help WMU volunteer consultants from the Kansas-Nebraska convention provide assistance to other new work areas; assist Greater Detroit Baptist Association with equipment; and fund NAC scholarships for inner-city Acteens in Michigan.

Grants also will fund leadership development in New York and Ohio; assist the Wyoming WMU with a state WMU Houseparty and expenses for state volunteer age-level specialists; and provide scholarships for one student at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., and two students at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

This is the seventh year Second Century Fund grants have been awarded. The first awards were announced during WMU's "Centennial Celebration" in Richmond, Va., in May 1988.

For information on how to make gifts to the Second Century Fund or to get grant applications, write Second Century Fund, WMU, P.O. Box 830010, Birmingham, AL 35283-0010.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by WMU. Cutline available on SBC Newsroom.

EDITORS' NOTE: Photos will be available for two (BP) stories dated 1/26/94, "Radio 'shock jock' tells story of regeneration" and "Mississippi River Ministry church reaches needy kids." Photo requests should be directed to the central office of Baptist Press in Nashville.

Thanks,
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