

(BP)

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
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 *Martin King, 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 *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 Strade, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223*

July 21, 1994

94-122

VIRGINIA--Baptist medical teams, water units to aid Rwandan refugees in Zaire.
ARGENTINA--Volunteer in critical condition after fall in Buenos Aires.
MISSISSIPPI--Battle lines drawn in fight over student-led prayer.
MISSOURI--Sizemore elected president of William Jewell College.
FLORIDA--Every day is Father's Day when you have 18 children; photo.
KENTUCKY--Hal Poe returns to Southern Seminary.
CALIFORNIA--'Be informed about movies,' says Christian reviewer.
CALIFORNIA--Analysis: Combatting the media's influence.
TENNESSEE--Analysis: The CBF/denomination question pits Baptist tradition vs. trend.
ATLANTA--Pastors urge participation in Here's Hope emphasis.
TENNESSEE--Correction.

Baptist medical teams, water units
to aid Rwandan refugees in Zaire By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press
7/21/94

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists will send medical teams and water purification units to aid thousands of Rwandan refugees now inundating Goma, Zaire -- a place rapidly becoming a waking nightmare of disease and death.

The Southern Baptist Convention's Brotherhood Commission, based in Memphis, Tenn., will recruit doctors, nurses, water technicians and support staff for the teams. The SBC Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., will use world hunger funds to purchase water purification units, water containers and other equipment for the aid effort.

They hope to begin operation Aug. 7 in Zaire, a nation where no Southern Baptist missionaries are now assigned. Missionaries who evacuated Rwanda previously set up operations in Tanzania to work with the overwhelming refugee problem there. They're working in cooperation with Florida Baptists, Tanzania missionaries and local Baptists.

Tragically, many Rwandan refugees in and around Goma will die before Southern Baptists and other organizations can get relief efforts under way in Zaire.

More than 1 million primarily Hutu ethnics have streamed into the border town area because they fear being slaughtered in revenge attacks by forces of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the Tutsi-dominated rebel army that has declared victory in the Rwandan civil war. Hundreds of thousands of Tutsis have been murdered in the past four months by the just-ousted Hutu government's troops or roving Hutu militia bands.

Whether or not their fears of retaliation are well-founded, the refugees continue to flee into Goma and other Zairian border towns. The number could easily top 2 million or more, according to reports.

Some hover near death when they arrive. Hundreds are now falling victim to cholera spreading through the refugee camps, caused by bad water and sanitation. Relief officials warn of death on a huge scale if governments don't respond immediately with massive relief.

The Southern Baptist response will be "a drop in the bucket for now, but at least a meaningful, high-impact drop in the bucket," said Jim Foster, the Foreign Mission Board's director of human needs ministries, who is working with Brotherhood Commission officials to coordinate the effort.

--more--

Brotherhood will recruit teams -- each consisting of three to five doctors, up to 10 nurses, and two technicians for each water purification unit -- to leave for Zaire the first week of August. A second wave of volunteers will relieve them about two weeks later. The volunteers will pay their own expenses, about \$2,800.

"We're not projecting anything at this point beyond August, but obviously as we assess the situation, it could be extended depending upon need and availability of funds," said Foster.

"We are grateful for the opportunity to partner with the FMB in this effort," said Rusty Griffin, assistant to the vice president of program services at the Brotherhood Commission. "We are trusting God to call out the Southern Baptists needed for this response."

The Foreign Mission Board will purchase 10 water purification systems and other supplies -- at a total cost of at least \$250,000 -- from Water for the World, a nonprofit company based in Dallas. The board also will purchase tents for the units and medical base camps, other support equipment and about 250,000 durable, reusable plastic bags refugees can use to hold clean water.

"We hope the first teams will leave the United States on Aug. 5 and arrive in Goma Aug. 7," Foster said. "We've had contacts thus far with everybody from the Pentagon to the State Department, and we're still waiting to talk to the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance. So a number of logistics still have to be worked out, but we believe channels will open up for us to go."

One particular hope, Foster added, is that the water purification units will go in on one of the 78 U.S. government relief flights reportedly scheduled to fly to Goma.

The only source of water for refugees in the Goma area is also the source of the cholera now beginning to kill them, Foster reported.

"There's a lake, really a large pond," he said. "It's in a volcanic region so you have a lot of volcanic ash. This same lake is being used by livestock, so it's almost a quagmire -- a soupy mixture of mud, manure and water."

Violence in the area also threatens the refugees -- and relief workers -- as conditions worsen.

"There's an existing security force there, but it's my understanding that it may be supplemented by U.S. troops," Foster said. "They're not there yet, though, and I'd be reluctant to say we're counting on it. We hope to work with the other relief agencies there for joint security."

Foster urged Southern Baptists to support the effort with their prayers and continued giving to the Foreign Mission Board's world hunger and relief fund, which has reached a dangerously low level.

"Those who are interested in serving on one of the teams or helping to support their work should contact us at the Brotherhood Commission at (901) 272-2461," Griffin said. A valid passport must already be held.

Contributions may be sent to the board in care of the human needs department at P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, Va. 23230, or the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN, 38104, designated for world hunger and relief.

--30--

Volunteer in critical condition
after fall in Buenos Aires

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press
7/21/94

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (BP)--Southern Baptist volunteer Paul Sutherland is "fighting for his life" following surgery for head injuries sustained in a fall in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Sutherland, from Sanford, N.C., apparently fell from a ladder July 20 while painting the library of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Buenos Aires. He suffered a broken cheekbone and brain contusion.

Surgeons removed a blood clot from the right side of his brain early July 21 at The British Hospital in Buenos Aires. Sutherland, breathing with the aid of a respirator, remains in critical but stable condition.

--more--

"He's better than he was before the surgery even though he's fighting for his life," said Southern Baptist missionary Marion Lineberger. He spoke with Foreign Mission Board officials in Richmond, Va., about 3 a.m. EDT, about 30 minutes after the operation.

"These hours following the surgery are most critical," said Bruce Muskrat, Southern Baptist missionary in Buenos Aires. "It could go either way at this point."

Muskrat said missionaries in Buenos Aires will stay with Sutherland in the hospital on a rotating basis. Sutherland's wife, Julie, planned to travel to Argentina July 21 to be with her husband.

Sutherland, 66, was working with a team of 13 other Southern Baptist volunteers, all from Broadmoor Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. A member of Cool Springs Baptist Church in Sanford, N.C., Sutherland had gone on at least nine other volunteer mission trips through the Foreign Mission Board.

Meanwhile, the rest of the volunteer team continues to do maintenance work at the Baptist seminary through July 26.

On July 18 the team experienced another scare when they felt the blast from a car bomb that leveled a building about five miles from their work site. The explosion, reportedly linked to Islamic fundamentalists, leveled a seven-story building that housed two Jewish groups in the city's Once district. The blast killed at least 26 people and injured 127.

Officials of the Argentine Evangelical Baptist Convention issued a statement condemning the violence, linked to terrorists. Once Baptist Church, one of Argentina's largest Baptist churches, is located in the neighborhood but was not damaged in the blast, according to missionaries.

Muskrat said he drove through the area July 20, visiting a friend who lives about two blocks from the crime scene. There was no damage to his friend's home, and no one was injured.

"Still, everyone is just in shock (at) the idea of this happening," said Muskrat.

--30--

Battle lines drawn in fight
over student-led prayer

By William H. Perkins Jr.

Baptist Press
7/21/94

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--Mississippi became the first battleground in a national war over student-initiated school prayer when opponents filed suit July 15 in federal court in Jackson, seeking to strike down the state's new law approving such prayers.

"This statute is part of a growing movement by the religious right to attack public education," said Judith E. Shaeffer, attorney for Washington-based People for the American Way, which filed the suit on behalf of the Mississippi American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU).

Shaeffer was referring to the Mississippi legislature's March 1994 approval of a statute permitting "non-sectarian, nonproselytizing, student-initiated prayer" in public schools across the state. Several other states have since passed similar laws.

The legislation was introduced after Jackson Public Schools Superintendent Ben Canada suspended Wingfield High School Principal Bishop Knox Nov. 11, 1993, and fired him 13 days later for allowing student leader Kim Fail to pray three consecutive days over the school's intercom system.

Hundreds of student protested Knox's treatment, resulting in a number of suspensions from school.

Thousands of people, including Gov. Kirk Fordice, rallied to Knox's defense, and Canada announced July 20 he was leaving Jackson to take over the Atlanta public school system.

Rob McDuff, a Jackson attorney representing the ACLU, stressed opponents of the state law are not against students praying on their own, but they are concerned about students who don't want to listen to a prayer but feel captive.

Paul Jones, executive director of the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, said he believes Shaeffer and McDuff are off base, as are others who allege a religious right takeover of public education.

--more--

"This is typical of the paranoia from those who fear any infusion of religious values into the public sector," Jones said. "The fact that conservative Christians seek to use the Constitution's free exercise clause to advance their concerns does not reflect an attack on public education. It does reflect a new willingness of many concerned citizens to be salt and light in a dark and decaying world."

--30--

Sizemore elected president
of William Jewell College

By Bob Terry

Baptist Press
7/21/94

LIBERTY, Mo. (BP)--W. Christian Sizemore has been elected president of William Jewell College. The action occurred July 15 in a special meeting of the 18-member board of trustees on the college campus in Liberty, Mo. Sizemore was elected without opposition although one trustee abstained from voting and one was absent.

Sizemore, who will be on the Liberty campus by mid-August, comes to William Jewell from Alderson-Broadus College in Philippi, W.Va., where he has been president the past 11 years.

Trustee chairman John White of Boston called Sizemore's election "the beginning of a new era at William Jewell."

"The trustees hired Dr. Sizemore to move the college toward stronger relations with the Missouri Baptist Convention," White said. "We are all committed to the mission of William Jewell as a premier Baptist liberal arts college. Dr. Sizemore is right for that task. That is what he has done where he is and that is what he wants to do at William Jewell College."

Contacted by telephone, Sizemore said, "One of the things that attracted me to William Jewell College was its church relations. We have strong church relationships here and they are very important to me. I look forward to being in the churches and working with Missouri Baptists."

Sizemore also praised the reputation of his new charge. He called William Jewell College "a great school with a great faculty and great support." He said he wanted to build on the reputation and accomplishments of the school but said it was "too early" to be specific about future directions.

Before going to Alderson-Broadus, Sizemore was at South Georgia College in Douglas for 17 years. At various times he served as acting president, academic dean, dean of the college and professor. He also taught and served on the staff of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., for two years. A native of Virginia, Sizemore is a graduate of the University of Richmond and Southeastern Seminary. He earned a master's degree in library science from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the doctor of philosophy degree from Florida State University in Tallahassee.

Sizemore, who turned 56 on June 19, was ordained to the gospel ministry by the Beth Car Baptist Church in Halifax, Va., in 1965. He had been licensed to preach by the same church nine years earlier.

Frank Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Douglas, where Sizemore was a member for 17 years, described the new William Jewell president as "a minister and a missionary." Sizemore served in numerous church capacities there, including chairman of deacons, Sunday school director, Sunday school teacher and Royal Ambassador leader.

Since becoming president of Alderson-Broadus, an American Baptist-affiliated school, he has served on the West Virginia Baptist Convention executive board, the commission of church leadership and the committee on ministerial leadership. He also is a member of the Baptist World Alliance evangelism and education work group on academic and theological education.

Mrs. Sizemore, Anne, has been equally active in church life. In 1982 she received a distinguished service award from the department of student work of the Georgia Baptist Convention for her efforts as chairman of the student work committee of her local Baptist association. She taught Girls' Auxiliary and was Baptist Young Women president in her Georgia church.

--more--

More recently she has been a speaker and workshop leader for West Virginia Baptist women's groups and student groups and has been active in Philippi Baptist Church, where she and her husband are members.

Mrs. Sizemore is a graduate of University of Richmond and holds a master's degree in journalism from West Virginia University in Morgantown. For the past five years, she has served as an instructor in journalism at Alderson-Broadus College.

The Sizemores have three grown sons and two grandsons.

William Jewell College trustees contacted by the Missouri Baptist newsjournal Word & Way unanimously praised Sizemore's churchmanship and his leadership abilities.

"I was impressed with the quality of the man's personal faith," said G. Nelson Duke of Jefferson City, an emeritus trustee and a member of the search committee. The former Missouri Baptist Convention president added, "He will be a good and godly leader for all William Jewell College constituencies. I believe he will help strengthen relationships with Missouri Baptists."

John Hughes of Independence, also a former MBC president and immediate past chairman of the college trustees, recounted that when Sizemore assumed the presidency of Alderson-Broadus College there were pressures to weaken ties with the denomination. Sizemore rejected those pressures saying he would resign before weakening denominational ties.

"I asked him specifically if he would take the same stand with Missouri Baptists," Hughes stated. "And he said he would."

Wally Jones of St. Louis described Sizemore as "unique." He said the depth of Sizemore's Southern Baptist background is unquestionable and his service among American Baptists the past 11 years means he has not been involved in denominational controversy. "He will be able to relate to all sides in Baptist life," observed Jones, another former MBC president.

Emeritus trustee Gene Moore of St. Joseph pointed out Sizemore is the first president of William Jewell College who served as a college president before being tapped by the Liberty school.

"He is already doing what we are asking him to do here," said Moore. "There is a lot of strength in that."

Reports from Alderson-Broadus College noted Sizemore's leadership brought record-breaking enrollments, increased financial resources, innovative new programs and increased recognition for the school. Last year Alderson-Broadus led all West Virginia colleges and universities with a 14 percent increase in enrollment.

Under Sizemore's direction, endowment increased by five times and the school installed a state of the art computer system linking all students, faculty and departments. An alumni center was constructed during Sizemore's presidency and the campus saw a major renovation of classroom buildings, residence halls and the student center.

--30--

Every day is Father's Day
when you have 18 children

By Tim Palmer

Baptist Press
7/21/94

WINTER HAVEN, Fla. (BP)--When you have 18 children, every day is Father's Day. Just ask Pat Williams. He and his wife Jill have four biological children and 14 children they adopted from four foreign countries.

Williams is general manager of the Orlando Magic National Basketball Association team who recently brought greetings from the Florida city to messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

When their family was much smaller than it is now, the Williamses coauthored a popular book, "Rekindled," in which described how they breathed life into a dead marriage.

Having 18 children makes nurturing the marriage a lot harder, Williams acknowledged in an interview with the Missouri Baptist newsjournal Word & Way. He continues to rely on the four keys listed in "Rekindled" -- blessing, edifying, sharing, touching. Neglecting any of those can lead to rocky times.

"I've learned one thing," Williams said. "You're never there. There's never a point when you've arrived as a husband."

--more--

"It takes an awful lot of attention daily."

For Pat and Jill, time alone and time away can be hard to come by. The two do make occasional trips together, nervously. "It's a rather terrifying experience to leave behind 18 children," he said.

The 14 adopted children are natives of Korea, the Philippines, Romania and Brazil. "I think international adoption is every bit as miraculous as biological birth," Williams noted.

A mental struggle is part of the process, he explained. Parents will ask themselves: Why this child? Why this country? How can I adopt this child on the basis of a little photograph and sketchy information on his/her physical condition?

The answer, Williams said from experience: "God knew all about it. He had them handpicked. He moved on our hearts."

And the need to move forward in faith continues after the child joins the family, as 14 children have joined the Williams clan. "We're trusting him to provide," Pat said.

"We did not count the cost," he added. Since he and Jill are looking at a potential outlay of \$2 million for college education, they can credibly urge prospective parents to not be intimidated by the price of an international adoption.

The adoption agencies have to stay in business, Williams pointed out, and they have a lot of expenses. "That's the real world -- nothing is given to us." A couple who cannot afford an international adoption on their own often find amazing support from their church family, Williams noted. "If a family really wants to do it, they can do it."

He doesn't necessarily recommend an exploratory trip to a foreign country, based on his emotional reaction to what he finds. "My heart is bigger than my head," he said. "Literally I would take 10 more kids."

Teamwork is big around the Williams house. Children are assigned chores and are held accountable for doing them. They learn to carry their share of the load and to do things well.

"No kid in the world likes to sweep," Pat observed. They'll try to cut corners, he added, but Jill won't let them get away with it.

The name of the game -- and "a worthy goal as a parent" -- is raising children to be self-reliant adults. "We really are focused hard against their 18th birthday," Pat said.

All the children stay busy in school and extracurricular activities, especially sports. "I think it's vital for adoptive or biological parents to find out their children's desires and get them focused on that," Williams said.

"A life headed for trouble is a child who doesn't have anything he or she is really interested in.

"They're going to drift into something -- every child is."

Not all the Williams children are athletic. One daughter "couldn't catch athlete's foot" but loves being a Brownie. Another is "allergic to sweat," but she's a talented artist and a gifted cook -- for 20 people.

Sports has a side benefit, Williams noted. It wears out the children. "I want them at bedtime to be absolutely exhausted -- so tired they couldn't even 'think' of a troublesome act."

The bottom line, Williams concluded, is parents must take the initiative and must be willing to drive the children to various activities. "The kid is doomed if the parents don't care."

Bible study and prayer are another daily component of life in the Williams household. The family has a five- or six-minute devotional each day at breakfast, often led by Pat. "We're teaching our kids to pray out loud." On Sundays the family fills a couple of pews at First Baptist Church in Winter Park.

Until tuition costs hit \$50,000 a year, all the children were in Christian schools. Now just one is. "I've been amazed at the number of Christian teachers they've had in public schools," Williams said.

The children seem to have a knack for adapting. Still another aspect of their lives is a "never-ending procession" of print and broadcast media reporting on the family -- magazines like Sports Illustrated and Good Housekeeping, television networks NBC, CBS, Dutch national TV ...

"We even are hitting the tabloids this summer," Williams said, referring to an article in the Globe. Jill and he have allowed their brood to become some of the most visible children in America to spread the message of international adoption. They tell their children, "You've found your forever family" and that the Williams family can help other parents and children find each other.

Pat and Jill's children also carry a certain amount of celebrity status by virtue of their father's job with the NBA franchise that employs superstar Shaquille O'Neal. Pat won't let them take advantage of it for their friends.

"I tell them 'just say no' to drugs and alcohol and 'just say no' to Shaquille autograph requests."

Southern Baptist Convention President Jim Henry, pastor of the Orlando church the Williams family attended before they moved to nearby Winter Haven, said that in a world where children are abused and misused, loving adoption can be a positive Christian witness.

Henry noted God's Word calls compassion for widows and orphans a religion that works and a true faith. "Jill and Pat exemplify that and show that's one way to express faith," he said.

On a recent Sunday at First Baptist Church in Orlando, Henry recalled, a couple came up to him and proudly showed him their new baby. The couple had adopted the child overseas after hearing the Williamses speak at the church.

--30--

(BP) photo available upon request from Word & Way.

Hal Poe returns
to Southern Seminary

Baptist Press
7/21/94

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Harry L. "Hal" Poe, an evangelism professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1988-91, has returned to the Louisville, Ky., school.

Poe recently assumed duties as director of professional doctoral studies and associate professor of evangelism at Southern Seminary. For the past three years, he has been associate dean for academic affairs at Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. He also served as associate professor of evangelism and director of the doctor of ministry program at Bethel.

A native of Greenville, S.C., Poe received a bachelor's degree from the University of South Carolina and the M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from Southern Seminary.

Prior to his teaching career, Poe was associate director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's evangelism department. He also has been pastor of Simpsonville (Ky.) Baptist Church and a prison chaplain.

Poe is the author of "The Fruit of Christ's Presence" published by Broadman Press and currently is writing "The Gospel and Its Meaning" for Zondervan Publishing House.

Poe and his wife, Mary Anne, former director of student development at Southern Seminary, are the parents of two daughters.

--30--

EDITORS' NOTE: Baptist Press is providing the following review of selected currently showing movies as a special article. If you are interested in periodic reviews in (BP), such as this one, please contact us via E-Mail, phone or letter.

'Be informed about movies,'
says Christian reviewer

By Phil Boatwright

Baptist Press
7/21/94

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (BP)--This column has been designed not to promote movie-going, but merely to inform. If you don't like the direction Hollywood is leading our society, then be careful what you support. Know before you go!

--more--

Angels In The Outfield. Danny Glover, Tony Danza, Jay O. Sanders, Christopher Lloyd. Kids' fantasy/adventure -- PG (one character smokes but the film shows its bad effects, one expletive, mixed messages about angels and God). A boy living in a foster home is told by his ne'er-do-well father, "We'll be a family when the Angels win the pennant." In other words, when you-know-where freezes over. So guess what the kid prays for? Here's where some mixed messages come into play. A gang of angels fix the games on behalf of the child's prayers, causing the inept team to win all season long. When it comes to the championship, however, angels' rules preclude them from further helping the team. So why was it okay to interfere during the other games? Was that not cheating? Shouldn't a team win on its own merit? It didn't seem fair to this sports enthusiast, because that team couldn't beat the Bad News Bears.

Perhaps the most disappointing film of the year. The problem: not one scene rings true. It's maudlin when it attempts to inspire and lame when it wants to be funny. The pros overact, the kids don't even try. There are some in the Christian community who will praise the film simply because of the positive messages (it does speak of the possibility of God and angels interceding in our lives, we must have faith, etc.), and the lack of profane language (a rarity today in the movies), but that doesn't excuse it for mediocrity. Kids may get a kick out of the angels' silly antics, but it strikes out for adults. Video Alternatives: Damn Yankees or Here Comes Mr. Jordan.

True Lies. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jamie Lee Curtis, Tom Arnold, Tia Carrera. Action/comedy -- R (profanity, obscenity and crude sexual references sprinkled throughout; the cartoonish violence turns sadistic and overwhelming; two sexual situations, but no nudity; edge-of-your-seat action sequences). Helen thinks her husband is a simple salesman. Little does she know, Harry is a spy in the James Bond mold, complete with tuxedo and a pilot's knowledge of Harrier fighter jets. There are several funny escapades, with Tom Arnold nearly stealing the film. It has been reported the picture cost over \$100 million, and it's all there on the screen. Without question, it is the action-packed flick of the summer. The question you must answer, however, is, should we support R-rated material? If not, may I offer this Video Alternative: The Thin Man, which masterfully blends comedy and suspense with one of the all-time great screen couplings, William Powell and Myrna Loy. (Caution: the hero is a drinker.)

Forrest Gump. Tom Hanks, Gary Sinise, Robin Wright, Sally Field. Fable -- PG13 (a lot of obscene language surrounding the Vietnam War segments, but at no time does the lead use foul or profane language; there is implied incest which affects the girl Forrest loves; graphic violence and gore during the Vietnam sequences; blasphemy from an embittered war vet, but it's stated that the character later comes to peace with God; brief shot of a Playboy magazine; brief nudity; drug use; two implied sexual situations and one not so implied). Charming, insightful movie with an Oscar-worthy performance from Hanks as a slow-minded but gifted gentle soul who makes his way through life, favorably affecting those around him. In spite of some negative content, it is full of uplifting and moralistic messages. Very funny, often moving, but if you do not wish to support the objectionable material, may I suggest this Video Alternative: Harvey, starring James Stewart.

The Lion King. Disney's 32nd animated feature. Rated G (the father of a lion cub is murdered, a couple of intense action sequences may be a little frightening for very young viewers). Thinking he is the cause of his father's death, a lion cub goes into exile until he is reminded of his responsibility.

--more--

Many in the Christian community are concerned with several messages in this film. Is the concept "We are all part of the circle of life" just a politically correct slant? Is the idea of the monarch lion speaking from the clouds after his death part of a New Age philosophy? Does a monkey sitting in the lotus position suggest Eastern doctrines? The answer: Maybe! But wasn't the same scrutiny applied to Jesus' parables? After all, what's wrong with the "circle of life" concept? We are all connected. As for a God-figure speaking from beyond, didn't God speak to Moses from a bush, a cloud, a mountain? It's called symbolism, and the parables are replete with symbolic meaning. Concerning the monkey meditation, although we do it differently from Hindus, the Bible does acknowledge the need to meditate (Psalms 77:12, "I will meditate on all your works").

In other words, we might be looking too closely for filmmatic misdemeanors. On the other hand, Hollywood is not known for its presentation of biblical principles. My advice, parents, is to view this film and any other children's program with your kids. It can lead to discussion of offending messages. You can't protect them from the media, but you can give them biblical teachings that will help their maturing minds cope with Hollywood's influence.

--30--

Phil Boatwright is editor of The Movie Reporter newsletter and author of the movie guidebook How to Choose a Good Video Every Time. Articles about Hollywood from a Christian perspective by Boatwright are featured in newspapers and magazines across the country. He has also reviewed for USA Radio Network. For the past seven years he has written about Hollywood and reviewed films, not with the desire to promote movie-going, but merely to apprise you of the direction the media is leading our society. The first step to dealing with any issue is to be informed.

ANALYSIS:

Combatting the
media's influence

By Phil Boatwright

Baptist Press
7/21/94

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (BP)--Should we attend movies? This is a question members of church groups have debated ever since the first silent film. At no other time has the question been more valid. The film industry has never been guided by spiritual truths, but the '80s and '90s have evidenced an unrelenting momentum by the media at ridiculing biblical principles, focusing on sex as a cure-all, and promoting bigotry, Christian-bashing, violence and cynicism.

Whether you attend movies or not, the media has an effect on your life. It's way beyond time Christians stop hiding their heads in the sand, hoping the problem will solve itself, or pretending we are doing our part by not viewing Hollywood's product. No longer can we view TV and attend the cinema with the same attitude we did in the '40s, '50s and '60s. That was a time when you could send your children to the Saturday matinee with assurance Hollywood would deal with the subject matter with some sort of taste and temperance. Those days are long gone. Now, anything goes and the local bijou has moved into the home via the video cassette.

The two most powerful weapons in the world are the TV and the silver screen because they devastate not the body, but the mind and spirit of man if not used properly.

Each day we read articles about children or teens or disturbed adults who take a lead from something they've seen on television or at the movies to upset the lives of those around them. In the past year alone we've heard of several teens killed or seriously injured imitating a scene from the film The Program. Four other boys made a flame thrower after watching GI Joe on television. Inventive, I'll admit.

Unfortunately, it resulted in one boy being badly burned. A man influenced by rap music fatally shot a state trooper. Researchers claim beer ads influence not just teens, but children as well. MTV's Beavis & Butthead has been blamed for children setting fires, one of which killed a 21-month-old baby. And on it goes.

There have been several polls and cultural studies that indicate TV and movie viewing coincide with the decline in SAT scores and the increase in everything else: illegitimate births, single mothers, teen suicide and violent crime.

--more--

We can take steps to improve the quality of entertainment, but the first step is to restrain our viewing habits.

Understand, I am not suggesting censorship. But it is very obvious the movie industry moguls take no responsibility for what we view. It's up to us. Here are four simple but, if applied, effective suggestions:

1. Be careful what you support. How often have you heard this: "You've got to see this film. Jack Lemmon is fabulous." Well, folks, Jack Lemmon has been making movies for 40 years; he should be pretty good! But is a fine performance reason enough to support a film? Philippians 4:8 says, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable -- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy -- think about such things." Can that verse be applied to the movies you are attending? The bottom line for filmmakers: How much did it gross at the box office? If you are upset with Hollywood's lack of values, then why are you supporting it?

2. Be informed. I'll bet you've heard this one: "If you haven't seen the film, how can you object to it?" There are a few resources you can turn to for information, including The Movie Reporter (Central Christian Publications, P.O. Box 7178, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359; one-year subscription \$17.95). It gives reviews of the latest releases, as well as the content. The Movieguide: A Biblical Guide to Movies and Entertainment (P.O. Box 9952, Atlanta, GA 30319). \$29.95 per year. And, Preview Movie Morality Guide, which reviews G, PG, and PG-13 movies (1309 Seminole Drive, Richardson, TX 75080). Armed with this info, you can decide if the new releases are suitable for your family, as well as discuss why we shouldn't support a certain film without having to subject yourself to it.

3. Communicate with the media. Every letter TV execs receive concerning programming is equivalent to hearing from a thousand viewers. Although the TV industry attempts to deny it, your correspondence with the program sponsors is influential. In reference to the cancelling of Against the Grain, a family series on NBC, American Family Association Journal says, "The producer of the series reported receiving over 130,000 cards and letters of support from AFA members. NBC received a similar number. And while NBC did not respond to the request, it appears that the advertisers and CBS have." The article goes on to say that General Motors, AT&T, Clorox, McDonald's and Coca Cola have asked CBS to produce a two-hour movie based on the series. Most sponsors are eager to please as long as they know the public is watching their commercials. For more information concerning TV sponsors, contact the American Family Association, P.O. Drawer 2440, Tupelo, MS 38803.

If you wish to write to film or television studios, the addresses are conveniently placed in the book How to Choose a Good Video Every Time by Phil Boatwright. Contact Christian Book Bargain at (800) 221-2648. Ask for item number BBOT-68. The price is \$4.95.

3A. Communicate with your local TV affiliate. If you are upset with profanity (the taking of God's name in vain) on television (which is happening more and more frequently), call the offending local channel (the number is in your phone book). Without anger, say, "I'm watching your movie (or program) and they are using profanity. I'm a Christian and it's very offensive to me and my family. Would you please tell your station manager? Thank you." I guarantee, if a hundred people in your community would do the same, you'd see a change. Which means it's not only important that you make that call, but that you get others to do the same.

4. Communicate with your kids. You can't protect them from all of Hollywood's influence. MTV's images and those from the local theater influence your children whether they view it or not, because the media's messages affect their friends which, in turn, affect them.

Maybe what is more important than saying "no" to MTV is for your kids to say "yes" to biblical teachings. If a society is to survive, it needs standards. Can you point out better standards than the Ten Commandments or Christ's directive to love one another (John 13:34)? These are concepts that, once ingrained in youngsters, take hold and last through life.

The entertainment world often tries to point out society's faults. Seldom, however, does that community present solutions to the ills of this world. The Bible does. If your child understands biblical principles, he or she will be able to cope with the contradictory teachings and images the media bombards them with, i.e., disregard, lust, greed, selfishness and an overall "do to others before they do it to you" attitude.

Where some factions point fingers at violence, exploitive sex, and obscene behavior as the problems, I believe those culprits are only symptoms. Consider for a moment: If you go to a surgeon and detail the symptoms you are suffering, he doesn't just treat the symptoms. If he does, the malady will remanifest itself. The symptoms tell him what the problem is and guides him in the treatment.

Is it too simplistic to suggest that the core problem with today's standards is a disregard for God and man? With all the laws we have in this country, is there not yet a great deal of hostility between people? Without wanting to sound fanatical or, heaven forbid, fundamentalist, looking at the problems we face in our world, can they be treated without the disciplines of the Bible? Ultimately, life's standards cannot be raised by laws, but by our regard for one another. Changing what we see in the movies or on television begins with what we are taught in our homes.

I learned a practical lesson from -- of all places -- a movie, Awakenings. In one scene, Robin Williams lectures a group of scientists and educators, emphasizing, "The spirit of man needs to be nourished." We're just like any other living organism on this planet. Everything needs to be nourished; otherwise, it won't grow properly. Since our mind controls our body, shouldn't we control what we put into it?

--30--

ANALYSIS

The CBF/denomination question

pits Baptist tradition vs. trend By Dave Couric

Baptist Press

7/21/94

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The question stirs debate and strong emotion at times despite how simply it's phrased: Is the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship a denomination?

The issue may not be settled as yet, but there are several indicators that the CBF is at least well on its way to denominational status, according to Tom Nettles of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School near Chicago.

"Whether or not they perceive themselves as a denomination, they certainly are going to have the option very soon of engaging in all the different things a denomination sees itself as doing," said Nettles, chairman of the church history department and former Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor.

Nettles cited education, missions, publishing and news as examples of denominational activities in which the CBF already is engaged.

"It's up to them to define whether they want to become a denomination," Nettles said. "It's still up in the air whether they want to. The things that are going to make them determine that will be just how much support they will have, what kind of theological unity they can maintain, and how effective these alternate agencies will actually be."

It remains to be seen, Nettles added, whether the Southern Baptist Convention's official rejection of CBF funds will have a negative or positive effect on the latter's supporters.

Baptist Press recently made an executive decision to officially refer to the CBF as a "denomination" in news releases. That action elicited a sharp response from Cecil Sherman, CBF coordinator, who sent a memo to Baptist state paper editors denying the CBF is a denomination. The memo secondarily objected to implications concerning CBF's views on abortion, Scripture, homosexuality and the virgin birth.

--more--

In his primary concern, Sherman reacted specifically against a description of the CBF as "breakaway moderates launching a new denomination" in a Baptist Press report on the SBC's decision in June to move ahead without CBF funds.

"(It) is not a statement of fact; it is opinion," Sherman wrote. "Furthermore, it is not true. The Fellowship has worked hard to remain within the SBC." Admitting the SBC's rejection of CBF funds "certainly makes that task harder," Sherman said the SBC action may have been intended "to drive the CBF into becoming what they claim we are" -- a denomination.

Noting the CBF previously had voted in its annual session not to withdraw funds from some SBC seminaries, Sherman said, "The truth is that we are neither 'breakaway moderates,' nor have we made any efforts to 'launch a new denomination.'"

Although he didn't state how the CBF perceives itself, Sherman did consider the issue important enough to state how the CBF does not want to be perceived by Southern Baptists. In other words, he said what the CBF is not, but he did not say what it is.

After three years of existence, the Atlanta-based CBF, organized by moderates dissatisfied with the conservative SBC leadership, remains somewhat of a mystery.

Baptist Press' rationale behind using the term "denomination" is that by definition the CBF is clearly in that category, according to Herb Hollinger, vice president for convention news with the SBC Executive Committee who drafted the rationale.

For example, Hollinger cited Webster's dictionary definition of "denomination" as "a particular religious sect or body, with a specific name, organization, etc."

What further supports the contention the CBF is, for all practical purposes, a new denomination is entities can accurately be described as "denominational," which Webster's defines as "of, sponsored by, or under the control of, a religious denomination," Hollinger noted.

For instance, the CBF has its own executive board, mission board and foundation, Hollinger wrote. The CBF "Coordinating Council" is the equivalent of the SBC Executive Committee. The CBF has sent out more than 40 missionaries so far. And similar to the SBC, the CBF has a foundation for fund-raising via wills and endowments, created at the annual session in Greensboro, N.C., in May.

In addition, Hollinger said, the CBF heavily supports alternative agencies and institutions. While the Christian Life Commission handles religious liberty issues for the SBC, the CBF financially supports the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Also in place of the CLC, the CBF contributes to an ethics agency, the Baptist Center for Ethics.

Although the CBF voted to continue contributing to some SBC seminaries, it supports moderate seminaries such as the ones at the University of Richmond and Baylor University. The CBF provides more than half of the Associated Baptist Press budget. And the publishing house Smyth & Helwys serves the CBF much as the Sunday School Board does the SBC.

"A denomination within the (SBC) denomination" is the way its own western coordinator, Bill Bruster, described the CBF in a Baptist Press report on the recent Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas meeting in San Antonio. Bruster was there to introduce the CBF as an alternative for missions giving by Hispanic churches. He affirmed the CBF wants to have some kind of official connection with Southern Baptists.

Another possibility that has been considered is the CBF is more like a "society," or para-church organization, than a denomination. The fact the CBF has constituent churches (and individuals), though, seems to place it in a broader category than a society, which traditionally has had a narrower focus, such as on missions alone -- and was common in the SBC before the Cooperative Program was established in 1925.

Bill Leonard, a professor in the religion and philosophy department at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., said he, for one, thinks asking if the CBF is a denomination is "not the right question," or at least "not the most pressing question. (The CBF) may have denominational-like qualities," he said, "but fewer and fewer religious Americans think of their primary identity in terms of denomination."

Leonard offered an example of how people these days move from one region to another and often join a different denomination in a new place.

The CBF is "de facto" a society, Leonard said, which he described as the wave of the future. The existence of the CBF, he said, is evidence a great shift is taking place at this time not only in the SBC but in American religious groups in general. Whereas the emphasis used to be on the "national-level structures," more emphasis is now being placed at the "local and regional identities and affiliations" in denominational life, he said. Thus, the very definition of a denomination is changing from a 19th- to a 21st-century concept, according to Leonard.

So the question of CBF being a denomination is "less relevant" because it presupposes this change in denominational life across America isn't taking place. Leonard asserted it isn't a matter of whether the "old denominational forms and structures" of the SBC will continue into the 21st century. "They won't -- they aren't," he insisted.

Leonard's sociological assessment suggests the choice for Baptist churches is now between the traditional SBC Cooperative Program and a return to the older society method, represented by the CBF. The cooperative method is the collective way of financing the business of Southern Baptists. The society method is a more direct or designated, individual way of supporting specific causes.

Should this indeed be the trend, the next showdown in SBC life may be over how Southern Baptist churches want to support the work of ministry -- the long-proven Cooperative Program way, resisting the force of change from without, or a "back to the future" new way that acquiesces to the pattern of the larger culture.

--30--

Couric is a free-lance writer in Dallas.

Pastors urge participation
in Here's Hope emphasis

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
7/21/94

ATLANTA (BP)--Even though an Oklahoma pastor almost guarantees participating in "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" will result in spiritual warfare, he recommends every Southern Baptist church take part.

Rick Frie is pastor of Southwoods Baptist Church in Tulsa, Okla., one of 10 churches to participate in a Here's Hope pilot project last year. The churches reported 733 professions of faith and 359 baptisms.

"We saw more people saved and baptized during that time than in the history of our church," Frie said. "We'll do it again, and I think every church ought to do it. I hope to do something like this every year."

When churches commit themselves to evangelism, however, "We become a threat to Satan and he brings on the attack," Frie said. His advice to churches participating in Here's Hope is to "put on the whole armor of God."

The conventionwide personal evangelism effort is scheduled for Jan. 9 to March 9, 1995, to be followed by simultaneous revivals. Southern Baptists will be asked to pledge to participate in Here's Hope this October and follow up with witnessing training.

The theme for churches is "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now." Outside the church, the evangelistic effort's theme is "Here's Hope. Jesus Cares For You."

"Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" asks Christians to attempt to share Jesus with 60 people in 60 days. The goal is for participation by 15 percent of each church's Sunday school average attendance. That would involve more than 560,000 people.

Rose Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Ashland, Ky., also participated in the pilot project. "It was one of the greatest experiences our church went through," said Charles Stewart, recently retired pastor.

"We had more new people get involved in witnessing and become aware of lost people in their community," Stewart said. "We could have the greatest year of evangelism in the history of our convention if churches get involved."

Bob Anderson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Swainsboro, Ga., said churches will achieve lasting results from Here's Hope if they provide proper preparation and if members are diligent about attempting to witness 60 times in 60 days.

--more--

People who consistently witnessed during the pilot project are still witnessing, Anderson said.

For example, a local basketball team was in the state play-offs, and a group went to the game on a church bus. One of the church members led a visitor to make a profession of faith on the way to the game, Anderson said.

In July, 36 members of the Swainsboro church went to Pennsylvania on a mission trip. One of the young people who participated in Here's Hope led two people to make professions of faith, Anderson said.

Participating churches should not send the message that members are expected to witness for 60 days then quit, Frie said. People in his church who took the pilot project seriously continue to share Jesus, he said.

Young people and new Christians were the people at Southwoods who made witnessing a consistent habit as a result of Here's Hope, Frie said.

Anderson agreed youth have been consistent witnesses after Here's Hope. "Think what a difference it's going to make when they get to be adults," he said.

The simultaneous witnessing effort is modeled after a program of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The 1995 thrust will be coordinated by the Home Mission Board and state evangelism leaders.

--30--

CORRECTION: In (BP) story titled "Mark Blankenship to direct new BSSB music department," dated 7/19/94, change the fourth paragraph to read as follows: ... and Fred Kelly, an 18-year employee who has been a music ministries consultant in the church music ministries department.

Thank you,
Baptist Press

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Southern Baptist Library
and Archives