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'Right from Wrong' resources
voice principles for morality By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press
7/25/95

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--You deposit 60 cents in a soda vending machine outside the local market. You get your drink, and your deposit also is returned. Do you keep the money or turn it in to the convenience store owner?

Keeping the change might not make its mark as an alarming moral turpitude, but it does go against a basic biblical principle -- honesty, according to Larry Dry and Jimmy Hester, who taught the new Right from Wrong materials at Discipleship and Family Development Week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center July 15-21.

"Many kids lack basic moral perspectives, and that is partly because adults don't see them all that clearly," said Dry, manager of the preschool/children's section of the Baptist Sunday School Board's discipleship and family development division. "If children are going to learn right from wrong, adults are going to have to teach it to them. We've discovered that many children do not fully understand that God is the standard for right and wrong."

The BSSB together with Josh McDowell, lecturer, author and head of the Josh McDowell Ministry, have developed a series of Right from Wrong resources for adults, youth and children. The resources were generated from McDowell's recent study which reveals that even young people who have made personal commitments to Jesus are participating in immoral and even illegal behavior.

The campaign was begun in 1993 and is supported by 42 denominational and para-church groups. It has as its goal "to launch a nationwide grassroots effort to resource parents, grandparents, pastors, youth workers and Christian educators to equip youth to know right from wrong, enabling them to make right choices."

"Right from Wrong is not about just completing a study," Hester, editor of discipleship materials for the BSSB, said of the adult workbook, "Truth Matters: For You and Tomorrow's Generation."

"It's about a journey, a trip we will have to take if we plan to see some changes in some of the distressing trends taking place in America today," he said.

Hester cited some of those trends. He said every day in America:

- 1,000 unwed teen-age girls become mothers.
- 1,106 teen-age girls get abortions.
- 4,219 teens contract sexually transmitted diseases.
- 500 adolescents begin using drugs.
- 135,000 pupils bring weapons to school.

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- 3,610 teens are assaulted; 80 are raped.
- 2,200 teens drop out of high school.
- 6 commit suicide.

"These trends in our society are being lived out all around us. Think about your community or your church," Hester said. "You can find that a lot of these statistics have hit right in our own churches. What can we as Christians do to confront those issues?"

First, Hester said, adult Christians can learn the biblical difference between right and wrong and begin immediately teaching them to children and youth.

"This is not just a book for parents, but for any adult with a significant relationship with children or youth," he said.

The workbooks for adults, youth and children teach the same basic principles, Hester said.

"On different language levels, of course, they take you through the standards of truth, models of truth, stages or processes of truth and the four Cs (consider, compare, commit, count)," he said.

One of the basic elements the workbook teaches, Hester said, is the difference between precepts and principles and how to apply those to one's life.

"Precepts are rules, requirements, standards. They are the Ten Commandments. Principles are the way you live those precepts," he said.

For example, Hester said, "'Thou shalt not steal' is the precept for the principle of honesty.

"I'm not so sure young people or children ever put together precepts and principles. Kids want to understand the reason behind the precepts or the rules. And adults should be able to tell them why."

The "why," Hester said, is "because we believe the principles and the precepts in the Bible are the very nature and character of God.

"The Bible teaches us to be honest because the Bible said God is honest. And because God is honest, and I am created in his image, then I am to be honest."

When faced with a moral dilemma, Hester said, Christians can apply the 4 Cs outlined in the workbook. Those are:

1) Consider the choice.

"Ask who determines what's right and wrong in this situation -- me, somebody else or God."

2) Compare it to God.

"Compare your attitude or action to God's Word, which reflects his character and nature."

3) Commit to God's ways.

"Turn from your selfish ways and submit to God's sovereign lordship. This is one of the areas where most people have problems."

4) Count on God's provision and protection.

"This is another tough one for a lot of people. We expect him to provide and protect us, but we expect immediate response. When we commit to God's way, we have to commit to God's timetable."

In his book, McDowell relays some startling statistics occurring among church youth.

For example, it was found:

- 66 percent lied to their parents.
- 36 percent had cheated on an exam.
- 55 percent had engaged in sexual activity.
- 20 percent had tried to hurt someone physically.
- 23 percent had smoked a cigarette or used another tobacco product.

Of those youth surveyed, 65 percent claimed they pray daily, and 84 percent said they attend Sunday school and youth groups at least once a week.

"We've got to counter this culture," Hester said. "The goal of Right from Wrong is to become a grassroots effort, and to resource parents, grandparents and teachers to help youth and children become like Jesus by giving them practical ways to do it.

"We have a tool to counter a culture that needs to hear God's message."

Resources include:

- "Truth Matters: For You and Tomorrow's Generation," (adult workbook and leader's guide).
- "Out of the Moral Maze" (workbook for college aged adults).
- "Setting You Free to Make Right Choices" (junior high and senior high edition workbook and leader's guide)
- "Truth Works! Making Right Choices" (older children's edition, younger children's edition and leader's guide).

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World Changers Jr. High
sets participation record

By Susan Watt

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7/25/95

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The soaring temperatures were no match for almost 500 junior high school students and their leaders who participated in a World Changers work project June 17-22 in Savannah, Ga. The project marked the highest attendance ever at any World Changers site.

Sponsored by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, World Changers involves youth in coeducational missions projects. Stressing "hands-on" involvement through participation in home construction and renovation work, participants learn about missions firsthand by becoming personally involved in meeting needs of others.

In Savannah, seventh- and eighth-graders from 33 churches in 13 states teamed up to work among some of the city's low-income residents, painting and making minor repairs on 36 homes.

During the same week, another group of 430 junior high school students and their leaders were literally "painting the town" of Jackson, Tenn. In all, more than 900 seventh- and eighth-graders were involved in World Changers Jr. High.

"We are very excited about the response we've had with junior high students," said Andy Morris, World Changers director at the Brotherhood Commission. "It indicates that youth are desiring missions involvement at an earlier age."

In 1996, World Changers Jr. High will return to Savannah as well as three other locations, including West Frankfort, Ill.; Charleston, S.C.; and Maryville, Tenn.

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SACS affirms 'good standing'
of Southwestern Seminary

By Mark Christie

Baptist Press
7/25/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--A recent evaluation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools affirmed Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's standing with the accreditation agency.

According to David Carter, associate executive director of SACS' Commission on Colleges, "Southwestern remains as a member in good standing" with SACS, an agency of more than 800 institutions. Carter is the SACS representative of the team, which did an intensive and extensive study of the seminary in early May. It was the most recent visit of an accreditation team to the seminary's Fort Worth, Texas, campus.

The SACS report follows an announcement by the Association of Theological Schools earlier this year that the accrediting agency was placing Southwestern on probation for two years, beginning last January, in the wake of the March 1994 firing of Russell H. Dilday Jr. by the seminary's trustees.

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SACS Commission on Colleges' Criteria and Reports Committee, following a June 26 meeting in Charlottesville, Va., declared no sanctions of any kind were necessary for the seminary. According to Southwestern President Ken Hemphill, SACS' positive remarks are a strong reflection of the good spirit on campus and the seminary's commitment to academic excellence.

"This is an affirmation of the cooperative spirit among our students, faculty and trustees -- that everyone is working for the continued progress and health of the seminary," Hemphill said. "It indicates that the environment remains very conducive to the academic enterprise of the campus.

"That's always a major concern for us, because we want the students to have the best atmosphere possible for theological education," Hemphill said.

Southwestern has been in good standing with the accreditation agency since it became a member in 1973.

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Art Toalston contributed to this story.

WRAP-UP

CBF will study denominational question; OKs faith statement

By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
7/25/95

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Although it struggled with the issue of whether the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is a "denomination," the General Assembly of the 4-year-old moderate Baptist organization did approve the CBF's first identifying mission statement at its July 20-22 annual meeting in Fort Worth, Texas.

Initially, an attempt to force a vote on the "denomination" issue was ruled out of order, but later officials decided the issue will be studied in depth by the group's coordinating council.

The CBF was formed in 1991 by moderate Southern Baptists critical of a decade of Southern Baptist Convention leadership. CBF leadership has consistently denied the group is a denomination but SBC leaders disagree, charging the group is competing for mission monies of Southern Baptist churches.

With one of the smallest crowds in the short history of CBF, the fifth meeting of the General Assembly was three days of business, preaching, music, reports and fellowship. Registration for the event was 2,969, compared to last year's 4,433. The traditional Friday night mission rally attendance, 3,800, fell far short of last year's 5,000-plus at Greensboro, N.C. CBF's largest attendance was in 1993 in Birmingham, Ala., when 6,000 attended the missions evening rally, with registration at about 5,000. In 1992 CBF first met in Fort Worth with about 6,000 in attendance. Texas CBF leaders had expressed hope for a much larger contingent of Texas Baptists in 1995.

The "denomination" issue was brought in the form of a motion by Bill Montgomery, a retired chaplain from San Antonio, Texas, who wanted CBF to vote on it at its 1996 meeting. But his motion was ruled out of order by moderator Carolyn Crumpler, whose ruling was upheld in a challenge. At a later news conference, Crumpler, former executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, now from Cincinnati, said she would allow a motion to study the question at the next day's general session.

However, Crumpler did not allow any motions the next day and later said she had "changed my mind."

CBF's new moderator for 1995-96, Patrick Anderson, a Lakeland, Fla., college professor, told the General Assembly the coordinating council was aware of the issue and it would be addressed.

"Our bell has been rung on this issue, and I think it is time a committee make a systematic and careful study of our options," Anderson said. However, he said the committee would not be asked to make a recommendation at next year's meeting in Richmond, Va.

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Some attending the meeting want a clean break with the SBC and a unique identity for the CBF, while others feel a break with the SBC might drive many of the churches, now funding both, to stay with the stronger SBC. CBF claims nearly 1,400 churches as contributors but admits some of those are passing on designated gifts from church members but not including CBF in their church budgets.

The SBC has nearly 40,000 churches and 15.6 million members.

CBF's first "mission statement" declares the group is a "fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches who share a passion for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and a commitment to Baptist principles of faith and practice. Our mission is to network, empower, and mobilize Baptist Christians and churches for effective missions and ministry in the name of Christ." The lengthy statement also lists seven priorities, four Baptist principles and six initiatives.

In other action, CBF approved its first July-June fiscal year budget. The new budget is \$13.3 million, including \$3.2 million of the CBF global missions offering. Heretofore, the group operated on a calendar year basis, making the transition via a January-June interim budget for the first part of 1995. About \$6.7 million was received by CBF through June 30, 1995, in contributions from individuals and more than 1,300 churches.

Lavonn Brown, pastor of First Baptist Church, Norman, Okla., was elected moderator-elect and will serve as the group's top elected official in 1996-97, if affirmed in Richmond in 1996. Cindy Johnson, a minister from Gaithersburg, Md., was re-elected CBF recorder.

Also elected were 34 new members of the 76-member coordinating council, including Molly Marshall, controversial former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary who is now a visiting professor at the American Baptist Churches' Central Baptist Seminary, Kansas City, Kan. Six new members with three-year terms were added to the trustee board of the CBF Foundation, including Jerold McBride, San Angelo, Texas, pastor and president of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

In the Friday night missions rally at the Tarrant County Convention Center, 16 new missionaries were appointed, bringing the group's total career mission force to 77.

Speakers for the meeting included Anthony Campolo, professor at Eastern College, Philadelphia; Russell Dilday, professor at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary, Waco, Texas; Richard Jackson, evangelist from Brownwood, Texas; Bill Leonard, religion professor at Samford University, Birmingham, Ala.; R. Keith Parks, CBF global missions coordinator; Sam Medina, pastor of Alliance Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas; and Marshall. Jeri Graham Edmonds, Shawnee, Okla., music and worship specialist, led the group's music presentations.

Crumpler's report to the General Assembly on her year as moderator spoke to the issue of the CBF's identity.

"There is no doubt that the CBF is a product of the SBC. Those characteristics which define us are ideological differences with current Southern Baptist leadership and direction. Our biggest challenge, I believe, is to define ourselves, then to be able and willing to rebut the definitions of us provided by others," Crumpler said. "This is a critical day for the CBF. I feel the tension."

Cecil Sherman, CBF's top executive, in his report said the CBF wants to help churches do missions, be a caretaker of Baptist ideas and be a resource for congregational health and growth.

"We send missionaries and we fund schools," Sherman added.

Sherman, with an administrative staff of 17 people, cited CBF's early growth and thanked churches and individuals for their gifts.

CBF's new missionaries and places of service are Ronnie Adams, New York City; Warren and Karen Hatley, Middle East; Bobby and Louise Hendley, Miami; Dwight and Brenda Jackson, St. Louis; Jim Keith, Long Beach, Calif.; Lori Knight, Miami; Tom and Elnora Pinner, Czech Republic; Rick and Martha Shaw, Macedonia; Tamara Tillman, Middle East; Mich and Pat Tosan, U.S.

Care, listening ear advocated
for children in today's society By Charles Willis

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--When it comes to the welfare of children of all ages, Dessie Dixon says, "It's not how much we do, but it's important that we do something."

While children are considered innocent and dependent, many today are put in situations where they are expected to respond as adults, Dixon, Woman's Missionary Union director and pastor's wife at El Bethel Baptist Church, Fort Washington, Md., told participants in Black Church Leadership Conference at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. She cited, as an example, placing a 7-year-old in charge of caring for smaller children at home while the parent is away.

Among factors Dixon said affect children are that they are naturally curious, but adults sometimes fear answering their questions; some live in close families, while others live in the uneasiness of a blended family; and they face of world of technology which requires more education.

"Technology can put a man on the moon," she said, "but it can't tell you how to feed the children in your neighborhood.

"Some children live in poverty while others have all they want. This can lead to killing for clothing and shoes."

Dixon said Jesus set the example for his followers by making time for children.

"He requires of us to do justice and to speak out for those who have no voice. The Bible calls us to minister to the needs of persons and to speak out against injustice."

As examples of situations which should concern Christian adults, Dixon cited teen-agers who become obsessed with thoughts of death, churches where no programs are offered for children and youth, low-income families without child care options who live near the church and children who come to church bearing suspicious scratches and bruises.

Adults carefully can investigate situations that concern them, many times by building on their relationship with a child to gain trust.

"If you aren't sure how to handle a situation," she urged, "talk with your pastor or a social worker for advice. You will not be able to solve every situation you find, but you can speak out for those who have no voice."

Dixon said talking to children, listening to them, understanding and encouraging them to share their lives does not come easily for everyone. She offered guidelines to help adults get to know children:

-- Children experience the world differently from adults. Try to see how they view the world.

-- Children do not always believe adults really want to talk to them.

-- Speak normally. Loud or shrill speech does not communicate best to children.

-- Use space to communicate both respect and affection.

-- Be sensitive to the fact that children and their parents live in a world haunted by scary adults. If you talk with a child alone, mention the conversation to the parent to relieve any concerns.

-- Actions and physical presence communicate as loudly as words to children. They feel special when an adult friend attends a school event in which they are involved.

-- Children often communicate most effectively through actions and play. When adults play with them, often they will talk about concerns.

Churches, she said, can take actions also. She suggested:

-- Provide support and encouragement to families in crisis as friends and parent aides.

-- Encourage adults to become friends with a child who needs an adult friend.

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- Offer friendship and care to children in a residential treatment facility or children's home.
- Encourage members to consider becoming foster parents or adoptive parents for a child with special needs.
- Adopt a social worker in your community's protective service agency.
- Develop a family support program in the church or in cooperation with other churches in your community.

"God doesn't call us to be successful," she reminded conference participants, "but he calls us to be faithful."

Black Church Leadership Conference was sponsored by black church development of the Baptist Sunday School Board, black church relations of the SBC Foreign Mission Board, black evangelism of the SBC Home Mission Board and Woman's Missionary Union.

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Volunteer spirit thrives
in Baptist association

- By Guy Henderson

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HATTIESBURG, Miss. (BP)--Several years ago Doug Benedict, director of missions for Lamar Baptist Association, lay in a Dallas hospital, waiting for a liver transplant.

Expenses mounted as he was forced to maintain a residence near Hattiesburg, Miss., and one in Dallas. He heard the house at Hattiesburg was leaking. Flat on his back, there was nothing to do but pray. The next Saturday 83 Baptist laymen drove to his house and -- in four and half hours -- put on a new roof.

Benedict eventually received his new liver and returned to the work he loves.

Lamar Baptist Association, as one deacon said, is the "volunteering-ist" place on earth. This may not be an idle boast. This relatively small association, with 19 churches, has made 13 mission trips involving 191 people in the last 10 years.

They have built a church in Brazil. Construction teams have gone to Montana. Five times, teams have gone to California and three times to Arizona. Add to those, trips to construct buildings in Colorado, Florida and Wyoming.

Of the 191 participants, 40 have gone once, 38 have gone twice, 16 have made three trips, 12 have gone four times, nine made five trips, three went seven times, two have gone eight times and one man has gone nine times. The group indeed has a mind to work.

The volunteers have performed more than 10,700 man-hours in labor, estimated value of which is over \$100,000.

In addition to their labor they have donated \$25,000 to the Brazilian church and to a Montana project.

Nor have they neglected "home missions" in the 13-year span of Doug Benedict as director of missions.

Last April the Lamar Association Mission Center was dedicated. The building is arguably second to none in the state. It houses the associational offices, food pantry, clothes closet, counseling center, prayer room and conference/assembly halls -- all staffed (with the exception of the associational offices) by volunteers. The appraised value of the building is \$320,000; its actual cost was \$195,683.

Volunteers, an automatic attitude in Lamar, were involved from the beginning. Richard Miley, pastor at Richburg Baptist Church for 18 years, was the building superintendent. Richburg has sent out 53 team workers in the past 10 years.

The social ministry of the Lamar association is extremely productive. Last year it assisted 493 people (157 families) with food. There were 257 people who received clothing, 425 received personal items, and the gospel was presented to many of them. A local pastor was informed of recipients who lived near his church.

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J. Ray Grissett, former director of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's cooperative missions department, was the foster missionary for seven years before Benedict was called. Grissett laid the foundation and Benedict, even with the added burden of a liver transplant, continued to build on it.

Harold Hartfield is mission coordinator for the association. He has made 10 mission trips and declared, "I can't preach or sing but I found something I could do. It has been the highlight of my life. Mission work is stressed in our church and in the association, and it spreads from church to church. Thank God for the experiences I've had in this."

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Desire to learn English leads
to full-time work in U.S.

By Dana Williamson

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OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--When Andrea Carsch came to the United States to learn English, she never dreamed four years later she would be a full-time minister to international students.

"I planned to spend one semester studying English, then go back and perhaps teach," the 23-year-old Brazilian said.

However, Carsch did so well her first semester at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant that she was offered a scholarship for the next semester in addition to room, board and a job.

Carsch said the first week she was in Durant, someone knocked on her door and invited her to the Baptist Student Union.

"I had no idea what BSU was," she recounted, but that visit started a string of events that changed her life.

She attended vespers and felt it was "weird for me to see all those people laughing, clapping and singing."

Carsch, who was born in Uruguay and moved to Brazil at age 5, grew up Jewish.

"I had never heard about Jesus and who he was," Carsch said. "I thought it was wrong of me to listen to things about him."

In Durant, Carsch started dating the son of a preacher, who introduced her to the Bible.

"He gave me my first Bible," she said. "It was an easy translation and I started reading it. But I was confused."

When Carsch and a friend of hers from Japan saw ads for a BSU-sponsored international conference, they decided to go. But Carsch said she was even more confused after the conference.

"Being Jewish, I didn't know how I could become a Christian," she said.

"I talked to my mom in Brazil, and she told me my brother, who was in Israel, was going through the same struggle. I called him, and he told me to read the 13th, 14th and 15th chapters of John. I read the whole book of John. I was excited because I felt I was on the right track, but at the same time I thought I was still doing something wrong."

While in Brazil for Christmas, Carsch talked with a rabbi to get his side of the story but said she didn't feel he had the answers. When she returned to Durant following Christmas vacation, she started going to church regularly.

"I learned about a synagogue in Dallas where the rabbi preaches about Jesus," she said, "and I went there. I saw people who were believers and they were rejoicing."

Carsch said she had a conviction she needed to let someone know what she was believing.

"I was confused about baptism because I was baptized when I was a baby," she admitted. She went to talk with the pastor at First Baptist Church in Durant, "and on July 18, 1993, I was baptized. Everything came together, and I understood."

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Carsch joined a discipl ship program sensing she needed more Bible knowledge.

"I didn't want to be just one more believer," she said.

In the summer of 1994, sh served as a summer missionary in Arizona where she helped with Vacation Bible Schools, backyard Bible clubs and translated materials from English to Spanish.

Her senior year in college was a time to reflect on her future, and she said she had a peace that she needed to graduate and work in the United States.

"I had a feeling I wanted to do something with either Jewish people or internationals," she said. "For four years I went through things that happened for a reason. I wanted to apply that."

Carsch met Jack Comer, language director for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma missions department during spring break, and he told her he didn't have a job for her but would do everything he could to help her find one. Three weeks later Carsch received a phone call from state Baptist Student Union director Bob Lee, who offered her a job helping BSU directors develop programs for international students.

As coordinator for international student ministries in the metropolitan Oklahoma City area, Carsch will be working with each of the BSU directors in helping them understand better how to work with internationals and how to coordinate international work among various campuses.

Lee said he chose Carsch for the job because she was an international student, she understands the heart and mind of the international student and the need an international student has in this country.

"She was won to the Lord through one of our BSU ministries, discipled there and was involved in the local First Baptist Church," Lee said. "That's a good combination of what we are trying to do as far as our ministry is concerned. We want to help our BSUs reach these students with the gospel, lead them to the Lord, disciple them and get them involved in a local Baptist church. Because of her background, Andrea brings all that to this job."

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