

\*\*\*\*\*

A S S O C I A T E D   B A P T I S T   P R E S S

\*\*\*\*\*  
Phone: (904) 396-0396   Fax: (904) 396-4441   Cserve: 70420,73

June 2, 1992

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Historical Commission, SBC  
Nashville, Tennessee

IN THIS ISSUE:

- \* Strack to be nominated for first vice president
- \* Analysis: 'Conservatives' in transition, not fragmentation
- \* Chapman withdraws invitation for Price to introduce him
- \* Confederate flag stirs debate over image of new South
- \* House votes to lift ban on fetal-tissue research
- \* House panel rejects educational 'choice'
- \* BJC, others ask court to strike ban aimed at religious ritual
- \* Hotline provides glimpse of compulsive-gambling woes
- \* Compulsive-gambling warning signs cited
- \* Mississippi 'moderates' lay plans for state CBF organization
- \* Russians look to Christianity to inject hope into bleak future

Strack to be nominated  
for first vice president

DALLAS (ABP) -- Dallas evangelist Jay Strack will be a nominee for first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Strack's intention to be nominated was confirmed by a member of his staff June 2. Strack's pastor, Jack Graham of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas, has asked for permission to nominate the evangelist during the SBC meeting June 9-11 in Indianapolis..

Strack, whose wife had surgery May 29, was unavailable for comment. But Tex Reardon, executive vice president of the Jay Strack Evangelistic Association, said Strack agreed to be nominated after "he started getting a bunch of calls" from people encouraging him to do so.

"After prayerful consideration, he decided he would allow his nomination," said Reardon.

Strack is the first confirmed candidate for SBC vice president. Another evangelist, Joe Aulds of Ruston, La., announced in May that he might be nominated for first or second vice president, depending on the circumstances.

A former Florida pastor, Strack, 38, is a trustee of the SBC Christian Life Commission and formerly was a member of the SBC Public Affairs Committee, which was merged with the CLC. He also served on the SBC Committee on Order of Business and has been a frequent speaker on the Pastors' Conference program.

Reardon acknowledged both Strack and Graham have been involved in the SBC fundamental-conservative movement, which has dominated the election of convention officers for more than a decade. "I don't think either one of them will dispute that," Reardon said.

Graham could not be reached for comment.

Although Graham's nomination of Strack is not certain, Reardon said, the Dallas pastor has offered "and we would be honored to have Jack (Graham) nominate him."

If elected, Strack would encourage Southern Baptists to give "primary attention" to evangelism, Reardon said.

Strack's ministry emphasizes youth evangelism. A drug addict before his conversion to Christianity, Strack now is a frequent anti-drug speaker in public schools in conjunction with his areawide evangelistic crusades.

His ministry drew national attention last September when a court order was filed to keep him from speaking in an anti-drug rally in Nacogdoches, Texas, on the grounds his presence in a public school violated church-state separation.

Strack and Reardon currently are working with the Bush administration's anti-drug campaign. They are part of an interfaith anti-drug coalition under the auspices of national drug czar Bob Martinez, director of the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy. The coalition is drafting a "call to action" to enlist churches of many denominations in the fight against drug abuse.

-30-

-- By Greg Warner

News analysis:

'Conservative' movement in transition,  
not fragmentation, leaders say

By Greg Warner

INDIANAPOLIS (ABP) -- An unprecedented challenge to fundamental-conservatives' control of the Southern Baptist presidency -- this time from within their own ranks -- does not signal fragmentation of the fundamental-conservative movement, say its leaders.

"I think that whatever is going on is certainly transitional in nature, and in no stretch of the imagination does it indicate fragmentation," said Morris Chapman, the latest of six prominent Baptist pastors to be elected president as part of the fundamental-conservative campaign to steer the Southern Baptist Convention in a more conservative direction.

Chapman will complete his second one-year term as president of the nation's largest Protestant body June 9-11, when the Southern Baptist Convention meets in Indianapolis and elects his successor.

But for the first time since the movement's first success in 1979, fundamental-conservatives will not present a unified front when nominations are made for SBC president June 9. Two nominees with ties to the movement are expected to be offered, along with a third unaligned candidate. No moderate-conservative is expected.

Fundamental-conservative presidents have been elected in very predictable fashion in recent years, with highly visible pastor-candidates riding the endorsement of the movement's leaders to certain, if not always landslide, victories.

But Southern Baptists watched in puzzlement this year as Nelson Price, a fundamental-conservative insider, defied the movement's protocol and announced his candidacy Feb. 21 without the endorsement of the movement's leaders.

Although Price had benefitted from the support of those leaders in the past -- he was elected president of the Pastors' Conference six years ago and first vice president of the convention last year -- he said it is time for the movement to abandon "party" politics in favor of an "open convention."

"Many conservatives feel we should be a movement and not a party," Price told Associated Baptist Press recently. Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., said the concept of a "conservative party,"

with its attendant political strategies and endorsements, was "expedient and necessary" for the movement to rise to power in the SBC. "But it has to have a day for termination."

Price said the denomination now is securely in the hands of fundamental-conservatives, who insist on a standard of biblical inerrancy for all SBC positions of leadership and employment. With that goal assured, it is time for closed-shop politics to end, Price said. "That would demonstrate the viability of the movement (and) its strength," he explained.

But top leaders of the movement aren't so anxious to change the ground rules just yet.

Within days of Price's announcement, Dallas pastor Joel Gregory announced his intention to nominate Houston pastor Edwin Young for president.

Unlike Price, Young carried the endorsement of the movement's top leaders. Although Gregory, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, was careful not to mention any names, he said "some of the fellows have talked together" and agreed Young should be nominated.

In a later meeting of Texas pastors April 22 at Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas, Gregory noted Young "did not anoint himself" for the office but that he was the consensus choice.

"Across the years of this great renaissance in the Southern Baptist Convention of conservative and fundamental Bible belief," Gregory told the group, "time by time, I'm told by those who have been part of it, this has been the case -- that groups of godly men have prayed together and there has emerged someone obvious and manifest as the man of that moment."

That candidate is Young, Gregory told the pastors attending the free steak luncheon. He then introduced Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, for the candidate's only "campaign" speech to date.

While Price emphasizes that as president he would be obligated to no one, Young's supporters characterize Price's candidacy as self-nomination.

"I think anyone today who desires that position," Young told the Dallas group, "ought to automatically be excluded, automatically, up front."

There is a third candidate, of course. In fact California pastor Jess Moody was the first to announce last August, describing himself as a bridge-builder who would promote healing between warring SBC factions.

Although conservative in his theology and unaligned with any political faction, Moody was immediately tagged as the likely recipient of moderate-conservative support. But moderate-conservatives, 13-time losers in the annual presidential ritual, have now lost interest in the election. Many say they won't even attend the Indianapolis convention.

Moody himself concedes he has little chance of winning. "But I do want to make a point," he told ABP.

Clearly fundamental-conservatives are more concerned about Price. For the record, however, Gregory said he has no objection to Price's nomination. "We're at a time when there can be more than one conservative candidate," he told Associated Baptist Press recently. But he added there should be "a movement among the brothers and sisters toward a candidate."

Gregory, whose endorsement of Chapman was critical to Chapman's first-term election in 1990, said the nomination announcements of Price and Young were "virtually simultaneous." He had already made up his mind to nominate Young when he heard about Price, he said.

He said Young's nomination reflected the wishes of "a broad-based populace across the convention" and not just the choice of the recent SBC presidents or other key leaders.

"I don't think the former SBC presidents were the sole or solitary, unilateral group that expressed interest in Edwin Young," he said.

Still that endorsement is critical; since 1979 no candidate has been elected president without the blessing of the movement's inner circle. Young himself was asked to be nominated in 1984 but declined.

While the movement's leaders recognize the value of that endorsement, they also are sensitive to the impression it creates in the minds of some -- that a small group of kingmakers are hand-picking the denomination's leaders.

"I don't see Edwin's nomination," Gregory said, "as the result of some cabal," a secretive group trying to manipulate the system.

But others say that is exactly what has happened.

"The powerbrokers did a good job (in the 1980s)," said one fundamental-conservative leader who asked not to be identified. "I know. I was a part of that. And yet relinquishing power is a difficult thing to do. They are having trouble letting go with someone they have not chosen."

Competition for the SBC presidency is not the only challenge fundamental-conservative leaders face. Some see an even bigger threat to the ship of state in the current dispute over the role of the movement's most powerful leader, Houston judge Paul Pressler.

"He is the issue," said one insider.

After completing seven years' service on the powerful SBC Executive Committee, Pressler recently was nominated to the first of potentially two four-year terms on the Foreign Mission Board. Allowing one person to serve 15 years on two key boards could reflect badly on the movement, which was built on the premise of returning power to mainstream Baptists.

Pressler designed the strategy followed by fundamental-conservatives in gaining control of the SBC's agencies and institutions. His tireless political efforts delivered the votes that put most of the movement's current leaders in power.

But many of those leaders are uncomfortable with the hardball political style and often confrontational tactics that strategy employed. While such an approach was useful during the decade when fundamental-conservatives were wresting control of the denomination from moderate-conservatives, they say, the movement now needs a new, less abrasive style of leadership.

"Judge Pressler is no longer in the driver's seat of the conservative movement, if he ever was," said Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church. "The old lines of communication are basically spilt up."

Most of the movement's key leaders say privately they are opposed to Pressler's FMB nomination. Seven of them, including Young and at least four recent SBC presidents, advised Pressler to decline the nomination during two conference calls in late April. Yet none of the leaders has agreed to nominate a candidate in opposition to Pressler.

The former presidents tried once before to distance themselves from Pressler in 1988, when they called a press conference to "clarify the agenda" of the movement.

If Pressler's FMB nomination is challenged at the Indianapolis convention, Graham said, the vote will test the judge's influence. "We will see how strong his network is," he said.

It is unclear what influence Pressler is trying to exert on this year's presidential election. He did, however, pay a visit to Price March 1, soon after the Atlanta pastor's candidacy was announced. "He said he thinks it's a good thing to have more than one candidate," Price reported, "(but) he said he was going to be neutral in this."

Some fundamental-conservatives speculate that Pressler, now out of favor with the movement's top leaders, will try to use Price to re-establish his influence. Price objects to that suggestion. "I'm definitely not his candidate," Price said.

Pressler did not respond to requests for an interview.

Southern Baptist moderate-conservatives, now reduced to watching SBC happenings from the sidelines, speculate such leaks in the fundamental-conservative ship of state may signal the long-awaited unraveling of the movement itself. Deprived of their common enemy of "liberalism," the theory goes, fundamental-conservatives now are turning on each other.

Daniel Vestal, the last person to challenge the fundamental-conservative lock on the presidency, said such predictions may be premature.

"It's too early to tell the decision-making dynamics that are going on," said Vestal, now a Houston pastor. "There really is no organized challenge to their control, so they have got to decide how they are going to function."

Chapman agreed those who are celebrating the demise of the fundamental-conservative movement have jumped the gun. "Tell the moderates its too early for that," he said. The movement is "in the process of stabilization, not fragmentation," he said.

Most agree that it is time for a change, and that the movement stands at a significant crossroads. But there is disagreement within fundamental-conservative ranks over how the movement should change and who should lead the reform.

"Leadership is passing on to another generation in another decade," said Graham, 41, one of the up-and-coming leaders of the movement. "I believe we will see some changes in leadership and leadership style in the denomination." The new brand of leadership, he said, will be "based on the same commitment and integrity, but with fresh faces."

"I think we've gone beyond the party agenda," candidate Young told ABP. "I pray we have. My mind has gone beyond that."

Every fundamental-conservative candidate since 1988 has campaigned on the need to move past the controversy and work toward healing the denomination's wounds. Young is no exception.

Healing can begin now that Southern Baptists "are on the same place on the same page" theologically, Young told the Texas pastors. Now that "the battle for the Bible is over," he said, "the choice is simply to get in or get out."

Young echoed a growing sentiment among fundamental-conservative leaders, and one that likely will characterize his presidency if elected: the movement needs a new agenda, a new rallying cry.

"We need an agenda out there," Young told the pastors. With the "roots" of biblical inerrancy now deeply imbedded in the SBC, a new focus is needed, he said.

Young said he would focus on evangelism and missions. His plan for Southern Baptists to baptize 500,000 people in 1995 and a million in the year 2000 is "a doable goal."

Young said Bold Missions Thrust, the denominational goal to preach the gospel to everyone in the world by the year 2000, "has been a phony deal." "We haven't been bold as a denomination, and that's sad."

"We're going to have to change the way most of us do church," Young said. For churches to be true to the New Testament model, he said, "the people have to give up leadership" and "the pastor has to give up ministry."

The pastor, "as the man of God," is the primary leader of the church, he said. The pastor needs to concentrate on evangelism, leaving "ministry," or meeting people's other needs, to laypeople.

"We surrender ministry in order to be leaders," Young said.

-30-

Chapman withdraws invitation  
for Price to introduce him

INDIANAPOLIS (ABP) -- Nelson Price, first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention and a candidate for the SBC presidency, won't be allowed the customary role of introducing the current president, Morris Chapman, during the opening session of the SBC meeting June 9.

Chapman acknowledged he invited Price to introduce him for the

presidential address Tuesday morning -- a role usually assigned to the first vice president -- but then withdrew the invitation when he learned Price would be nominated for president.

Chapman told Associated Baptist Press giving Price that role might afford him an advantage over the other candidates in the presidential election, which is scheduled for that afternoon.

Chapman said he asked Price, an Atlanta-area pastor, to introduce him during a personal conversation Feb. 18, three days before Price announced he would be a nominee for president.

"At that time he said nothing about his intention to be nominated," Chapman recalled. "Once he announced for the presidency, I had the growing conviction that I did not want to politicize the introduction of my presidential address. I explained to him my concern. He seemed to fully understand."

Price, pastor of Roswell Street Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., told ABP, "I had not concluded on the 18th that I was going to allow my nomination." That decision was not made until Feb. 20, he said.

Price, a leader in the SBC fundamental-conservative movement, disrupted the usually predictable pattern of SBC elections by announcing his candidacy Feb. 21 without the endorsement of the leaders of the movement, which has controlled the election of officers for more than a decade.

Although voted first vice president last year with the support of those leaders, Price said it is time for the movement to abandon "party" politics in favor of an "open convention." Noting the movement had no public candidate at the time of his announcement, Price said, "If all they wanted was a conservative candidate, they had one."

Within a week of Price's announcement, however, those leaders came out in support of Houston pastor Edwin Young for president.

Chapman, twice elected president with the endorsement of the fundamental-conservative movement, said the circumstances of Price's announcement put him "in a bind" between Price and Young. As moderator of the convention, Chapman said, he did not want to be "perceived as providing someone any advantage prior to the election."

By disinviting Price, Chapman said, "I was not trying to sell him down the river. In no way did I consider this a slight of Nelson."

Chapman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Wichita Falls, Texas, said Price will moderate a Wednesday session of the convention, which will be held June 9-11 in the Hoosier Dome in Indianapolis. Likewise, second vice president Ed Harrison, a pastor from Pine Bluff, Ark., will moderate one session.

Although messengers to the SBC likely won't hear from Price on Tuesday, most will have an opportunity to hear Young in the customary role of the fundamental-conservative candidate -- preaching in the closing session of the Pastors' Conference, which concludes the night before in the same arena.

-30-

-- By Greg Warner

Confederate flag stirs debate  
over image of new South

ATLANTA, Ga. (ABP) -- The Confederate battle flag, a symbol of the segregated South, is under renewed criticism from politicians and Baptist ministers.

Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia announced last week that he would introduce legislation to remove the Confederate symbol from the state's official flag.

"What we fly today is not an enduring symbol of our heritage but the fighting flag of those who wanted to preserve a segregate South in the face of the civil-rights movement," Miller said in making the announcement.

"It is time we shake completely free of that era," Miller said. "We need to lay the days of segregation to rest, to let bygones be bygones, and rest our souls."

Georgia incorporated the Confederate symbol into its state flag in 1956 to demonstrate disdain for the U.S. Supreme Court's 1954 decision to integrate public schools. In 1961 Alabama and South Carolina began flying the Confederate flag along with their state flags. Mississippi has had the Confederate stars and bars as part of its state flag since 1894.

"The flag shows the worst of Southern history," said Atlanta pastor Emmanuel McCall, "and pulls Christians back to an era that we should have left a long time ago." McCall, pastor of Christian Fellowship Baptist Church, is a director of the Baptist Center for Ethics.

Earlier this year, the Georgia Civil Rights Network launched a petition drive to replace the Confederate battle emblem, which they say represents racism, with the state's original flag. Until last week, Miller had been non-committal about the issue.

In 1988, when the Democratic National Convention met in Atlanta, civil-rights activists tried to change the state flag, saying it was an embarrassment to the state of Georgia. They failed.

The renewed effort is tied to the 1996 Summer Olympics, which will be held in Atlanta. Some African-Americans and Anglo-Americans have complained the flag will damage the state's international image.

For the past three decades, the flag -- a field of red with stars and blue-and-white crossed bars -- has been used by the Ku Klux Klan and other white-supremacy groups.

The flag has been a source of ongoing controversy on college campuses. The Kappa Alpha fraternities on many Southern colleges and universities hold "Old South" observances, designed to promote Southern heritage. Male students dress in uniforms of Confederate soldiers and females wear hoop skirts.

Other groups also take pride in the Confederate battle flag, maintaining that it represents Southern nobility and values.

But the fact the Confederate symbol was added to the state flags after the 1954 Supreme Court decision "negates the argument that it is to honor the Confederate dead and the culture that united around slavery," said historian Bill Leonard.

"It's past time to put that terrible era behind us," said Leonard, chairman of the religion department at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. "Anything we can do, symbolically as well as actually, to alleviate racism in our culture we ought to do."

"Our Baptist witness is affected by those who still cling to that image," added McCall, an African-American who for many years directed the black church relations department at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. "If we do not speak now and take a stand to put this issue behind us, we have muted our witness."

Christian leaders, and especially Baptists, "are silent on this issue," charged Wayne Flynt, a professor at Auburn University and member of First Baptist Church of Auburn, Ala. "They do not view it as a critical issue in their congregations where there is no consensus about what to do."

The real key to change, however, is the business community and not the church, said Flynt, who has written extensively on Southern history and poverty.

House votes to lift ban  
on fetal-tissue research

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. House of Representatives approved a measure May 28 that would lift a four-year-old ban on federally funded research using fetal tissue from induced abortions.

The 260-148 vote fell short of the two-thirds majority needed to override an expected presidential veto.

The Bush administration has staunchly opposed use of fetal tissue in medical research, upholding the ban imposed by the Reagan administration in 1988. Both administrations have maintained that such research would provide an incentive for women to have abortions.

Ban opponents say the moratorium has stopped promising research on the treatment of Parkinson's disease, juvenile diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and other genetic disorders.

Hill observers had speculated the fetal tissue debate could end President George Bush's perfect veto record, with 28 vetoes sustained. Facing a possible override, Bush reiterated his position to House leaders last week but offered a unique compromise.

Bush said he favors fetal-tissue research if the tissue comes from spontaneous abortions or tubal pregnancies. He signed an executive order May 19 directing the Department of Health and Human Services to establish a fetal-tissue bank to receive tissue exclusively from those two sources.

The administration says the fetal-tissue bank would provide an ample supply of tissue for research.

Congressional leaders, including staunch pro-life Republicans, disagreed. They contend tissue from spontaneous abortions or tubal pregnancies often is unsuitable for tissue-transplantation research.

The provision lifting the ban is part of a bill reauthorizing the National Institutes of Health and would fund research in several areas, including women's health, cancer and AIDS.

The House approved the original bill (H.R. 2507) last year by a 274-144 vote, while the Senate approved a similar measure, 87-10, in April. A conference committee ironed out the differences in the two bills, and the Senate is expected to vote on the conference report in early June.

-30-

-- By Pam Parry

House panel rejects  
educational 'choice'

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Recent action by a U.S. House committee has solidified congressional opposition to federal funding of private and religious schools. But the parochial-aid battle is not over.

In approving a school-reform bill 23-12, the House Education and Labor Committee defeated two attempts to substitute so-called "educational choice" provisions. But one congressman, whose choice proposal failed, said he is gearing up for a floor fight.

The choice debate heated up when President George Bush announced his "America 2000" educational initiative. Educational choice, allowing parents to use federal tax dollars to pay for private and parochial education, was a centerpiece of the president's plan.

Last year the House committee approved a different bill (H.R. 3320) that would have allowed tax dollars to go to private and religious schools if such

payments are permitted under state law. After the Senate rejected attempts to include private-school choice in its education bill (S. 2), however, leaders of the House committee decided to revisit the issue.

The Senate's Neighborhood Schools Improvement Act, approved by a 92-6 vote in January, would allow choice for public schools only.

The new House bill (H.R. 4323) drops all choice provisions. But during committee consideration, two Republican members unsuccessfully attempted to reinsert choice.

Rep. Richard Armev, R-Texas, offered a substitute requiring that at least 25 percent of the funds be spent on choice programs for public, private or religious schools. Armev's amendment was defeated 31-7, but he said he will take the choice battle to the House floor.

"The key is the floor fight," Armev said. "My amendment has an excellent chance on the floor, and we'll definitely line up enough members who will sustain a presidential veto of a bill that lacks a strong school-choice element."

Rep. William Goodling, R-Pa., offered a substitute that would have restored choice language from the predecessor bill, and it was defeated 27-13.

The bill passed by committee would authorize \$800 million in block grants for states in fiscal year 1992. Floor consideration of the bill has not been scheduled.

If the House joins the Senate in rejecting Bush's choice proposal, he is expected to veto the bill.

"The committee did the right thing," said Brent Walker, associate general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee. "This time the committee stood on principle and said 'no' to misguided attempts to spend tax dollars for religious indoctrination."

-30-

-- By Pam Parry

BJC, others ask court to strike  
ban aimed at religious ritual

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- A diverse group of 16 religious and civil-liberties organizations, including the Baptist Joint Committee, has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to strike down a Florida city's ordinances that target the religious practice of animal sacrifice.

In a friend-of-the-court brief, the organizations argue that the city of Hialeah's ordinances that prohibit the ritual sacrifice of animals, while permitting their killing for a variety of other purposes, violate the First Amendment's protection of the free exercise of religion.

Hialeah officials enacted the ordinances after adherents of the Santeria religion -- who consider the sacrifice of chickens, pigeons, doves and other animals an integral part of their religion -- announced plans to establish a church in the city.

The friend-of-the-court brief notes that none of the religious or civil-rights organizations espouses or endorses animal sacrifice, and many of the brief's signers consider the practice "repugnant for moral and religious reasons."

The organizations nonetheless asked the high court to step in after lower federal courts upheld the ordinances, despite concluding that the restrictions are not "religiously neutral but were intended to stop the practice of animal sacrifice in the City of Hialeah."

"This is religious discrimination at its worse," said Oliver Thomas, general counsel at the Baptist Joint Committee and one of several attorneys who helped draft the brief.

"You can kill animals for sport, food or fun in Hialeah, but woe betide the person who sacrifices an animal to God," Thomas said. "If government can get away with this, it can ban the distribution of literature in schools simply because it's religious or prohibit churches from lobbying while allowing the same activity by secular organizations."

In asking the Supreme Court to strike down the ordinances, the friend-of-the-court brief notes that "the practice of animal sacrifice, though contrary to the religious convictions of many, is an ancient, long-standing, well-established, sincere religious practice."

The brief further argues that the ordinances are unconstitutional because they are "specifically directed at a religious practice," not the killing of animals in general.

"We suspect that (Hialeah) might be forced to consider how powerful its interests are in this matter if it has to apply the same rules to hunting and other acceptable forms of killing that it applies to this unfamiliar and unpopular minority religion."

The brief also argues that Hialeah has demonstrated no compelling reason to support restrictions aimed at one religious practice.

Finally, the brief asks the high court to reconsider the reach of its 1990 decision in *Employment Division vs. Smith*. Under *Smith*, government needs only a reasonable basis, not a compelling reason, to justify generally applicable laws that restrict religious practice.

While arguing that the Hialeah ordinances are not generally applicable and should be struck down even under *Smith*, the brief notes that "religious and civil-liberties communities across the spectrum of theological and political opinion, are united in the conviction that *Smith* was wrongly decided, not only because it has had consequences that we believe were unintended and unanticipated, but also because it radically diminished the substantive liberty of each American to worship in the manner and season most agreeable to the dictates of his own conscience."

The brief states that lower courts "have interpreted *Smith* as requiring or inviting a radical withdrawal of constitutional protection for religious freedom, beyond anything this court could likely have expected. This court should be aware of that fact, so that it will be able to take corrective action."

Thomas said that crucial issue in the case is not the specific religious practice in question but the standard of protection for all religions in America. "Because this case involves a bizarre practice like animal sacrifice, we let government get away with it," he said.

He compared the case to the *Smith* decision, in which the high court drastically reduced its view of free-exercise rights in upholding the application of an Oregon anti-drug law to the religious use of peyote.

"It is sickeningly similar to the peyote case, where good people were silent in the face of a constitutional injustice because they didn't want to be viewed as supporting illegal drugs," Thomas said.

The organizations signing the brief represent a broad range of theological and political perspectives: Americans United for Separation of Church and State, James Andrews as stated clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Baptist Joint Committee, the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, the Christian Legal Society, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the First Liberty Institute, the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Home School Legal Defense Association, Mennonite Central Committee U.S., the National Association of

Evangelicals, and People for the American Way.

A ruling in the case, Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye vs. City of Hialeah, is expected in the court's 1992-93 term, which begins Oct. 5.

-30-

Hotline provides glimpse  
of compulsive-gambling woes

By Ken Camp

DALLAS (ABP) -- A compulsive-gambling hotline, launched the same day as the Texas lottery, averaged about 100 calls a day during its first three days of operation from persons with serious concerns about problem gambling.

"The fact that the opening of the state lottery was followed by a significant number of calls to a 1-800 number for compulsive gamblers offers a clear view of the sickness that is being created and fostered by a state-run numbers game," said Weston Ware, citizenship associate with the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission.

At 6 a.m. on Friday, May 29, the first Texas lottery tickets were sold. Within three minutes, someone had turned over his lottery ticket and dialed the toll-free number printed on the back.

Within 15 minutes, a compulsive gambler used the hotline to locate a local Gamblers Anonymous meeting.

Within half an hour, a teenager called to say her mother, who had a pre-existing gambling problem, already had been to a nearby convenience store and spent all their money on lottery tickets.

And so it went, as the phones continued to ring at the Dallas offices of the Texas Council on Problem and Compulsive Gambling. In its first three days of operation, 290 Texans expressing serious concerns about problem gambling called the council's compulsive-gambling hotline at (800) 742-0443.

The council and its hotline were created by lottery legislation passed by the Texas Legislature as a concession to anti-gambling activists.

The legislation appropriated \$2 million for 1992 and an equal amount for 1993 for public education regarding problem gambling and for the treatment and prevention of compulsive gambling. It also directed \$100,000 to a non-profit organization on compulsive gambling, which led to the creation of the Texas Council on Problem and Compulsive Gambling.

"I've read the studies and followed the research on gambling for the last 10 years," said Sue Cox, executive director of the Texas Council on Problem and Compulsive Gambling. "I knew the breadth of compulsive gambling in Texas, but I had misread its depth."

On its first day, more than half of the 2,500 callers dialed the toll-free number in the mistaken belief that they could find answers to questions about how and where to play the lottery. Others called out of curiosity. Nearly 100 callers were playing pranks. Some just dialed the wrong number.

But that same day, 122 people called to seek help for their own gambling problems or for the compulsive gambling of family members or friends. Though persons with genuine needs made up less than 10 percent of the total callers on May 29, that percentage rose to 14 percent the next day and 16 percent the day following.

In three days, nearly 300 persons called to discuss genuine concerns about their gambling activities -- a rate considerably higher than other states with similar hotlines, even though some of those states have more established, deeply entrenched forms of gambling.

"We were not surprised at the number of calls we received, but we were very surprised at the number of callers with gambling problems," Cox said.

"We expected a lot of confusion and curiosity-seekers since our number was the only one appearing on the lottery tickets. We didn't expect to hear from so many people with serious concerns so quickly."

About half of the callers were concerned about their own gambling impulses and actions, and the other half expressed concern about friends or family.

"A mother of six children called to say she spent \$500 -- all she had -- on lottery tickets," Cox said. "She was furious, demanding to know how she could get her money back."

"One woman called to say she had spent all of her rent money on lottery tickets. 'I can't go home,' she said. 'My husband will beat me up.'

"Some called to say they had written hot checks in order to get cash for gambling. One 18-year-old said he had stolen to get gambling money. Others just called to ask, 'How do I know if I have a problem?'"

Counselors introduced callers to the warning signs of compulsive gambling, such as the inability to stop, impatience with loved ones, fantasies about "this week's win" to overcome "last week's loss," frequent and unexplained absences from work or home, severe mood swings and the neglect of responsibility to concentrate on gambling activities.

If callers recognized themselves or their loved ones as problem gamblers, they were referred to local meetings of Gamblers Anonymous.

While applauding the council's willingness to "pick up the bodies by the roadside," the CLC's Ware blasted the state for inflicting the wounds by sponsoring a lottery.

"It is immoral for the state of Texas to sell hope and merchandize chance," he said.

Ware pointed out only about 3,000 people won prizes ranging from \$100 to \$10,000 during the lottery's first three days. "Probably all of those who won smaller prizes spent more on lottery tickets than what they were awarded," he said.

While those 3,000 Texans "may have become hooked on gambling by their winnings," Ware said, "there must have been 10 million losers created by the state. And many of them will become just as addicted as the winners."

-30-

#### Compulsive gambling warning signs cited

DALLAS (ABP) -- The Diagnostic Standards Manual of the American Psychiatric Association indicates that pathological gambling behavior is indicated by the presence of at least four of the following characteristics:

-- Frequent preoccupation with gambling or with obtaining money to gamble.

-- Frequent gambling of larger amounts of money or over a longer period of time than intended.

-- A need to increase the size or frequency of bets to achieve the desired excitement.

-- Restlessness or irritability if unable to gamble.

-- Repeated loss of money by gambling and returning another day to win back losses ("chasing").

-- Repeated efforts to reduce or stop gambling.

-- Frequent gambling when expected to meet social or occupational obligations.

-- Sacrifice of some important social, occupational or recreational activity in order to gamble.

-- Continuation of gambling despite inability to pay mounting debts, or despite other significant social, occupational or legal problems that the person knows to be exacerbated by gambling.

-30-

Mississippi 'moderates' lay plans  
for state CBF organization

JACKSON, Miss. (ABP) -- A steering committee has been named to consider forming a Mississippi chapter of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Rebecca Wiggs, a member of Northminster Baptist Church in Jackson, was named chairwoman of the five-member committee, which will "explore and study the purpose, nature and structure" of a Mississippi CBF organization.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is a national organization of Southern Baptists displeased with the current direction of the Southern Baptist Convention and supporting alternative ministries.

The committee was announced by Joe Tuten, retired pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Jackson, in a May 26 letter to selected Mississippians.

Members of the study committee were chosen by the 61 people attending a May 1 meeting of Mississippi Baptists. Tuten was moderator of that meeting, held during the general assembly of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in Fort Worth, Texas.

The study committee will make its report at a meeting of Mississippi Baptists Oct. 16-17 in Jackson, Tuten said. Cecil Sherman, coordinator of the national Fellowship, will attend that meeting.

In anticipation of the committee's work, the name "Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Mississippi, Inc." has been reserved with state officials, Tuten said in his letter.

In addition to Wiggs, other members of the study committee are James Yates, retired pastor of First Baptist Church of Yazoo City and a member of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, who will serve as vice chairman; Marvin Bond, professor at Mississippi State University in Starkville and former Southern Baptist missionary to Hong Kong; Dick Conville, professor at the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and a member of University Baptist Church in Hattiesburg; and Greg Snowden, an attorney and member of First Baptist church, Meridian.

During their meeting in Fort Worth, the Mississippians also nominated John McGraw, an orthopedic surgeon and member of First Baptist Church of Laurel, to serve on the Coordinating Council of the Fellowship. He joins other Mississippians Jean Bond of Starkville, Suzii Paynter of Jackson, and Tuten on the council.

-30-

-- By Don McGregor

Russians look to Christianity  
to inject hope into bleak future

By Trennis Henderson

KHABAROVSK, Russia (ABP) -- Russia is a country in disrepair -- both physically and philosophically.

In the wake of perestroika, a bungled coup and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian people are struggling with their newfound freedom

and the gradual shift from socialism to privatization.

Beyond key government facilities, museums and ornate Russian Orthodox cathedrals, few buildings show any sign of recent maintenance. The former superpower's technological accomplishments in space exploration and military expertise have failed to trickle down to the common folks.

In a society where medical doctors work six hours a day and earn about \$20 a month, an apartment may rent for as little as 70 rubles (about 70 cents). Yet a T-shirt may cost 2,000 rubles -- a month's salary -- and a kilo of meat may go for 300 rubles. The hunger crisis among much of the population is prompted more by lack of money than lack of available food.

In the midst of such turmoil, some Russians remain optimistic about their country's future. Others do not.

During the 74-year reign of communism and socialism in the former Soviet Union, "individuals had guarantees for everything but they had no freedom," noted Julia Solovjova, a Russian tutor, tour guide and interpreter in Moscow. "Now the government gives people freedom but no money, no flat, no food. The situation is now a crisis."

Andrey Vasenyov, head of the polyclinical department for Khabarovsk Regional Health Services, bluntly declared: "I am afraid our society has crossed the point of return. Some people disagree with me, but I am afraid the nation will not come back to the point of being a great nation. Maybe God will help us, but nobody prays for this.

"We were a society of slaves that got freedom, and freedom is worse than a narcotic," Vasenyov said. "Our heads cannot accept the freedom in a normal way.

"To tell the truth, I don't see any hope," the young medical doctor admitted. "It's an awful statement. It makes me quite sad. It's difficult for a Russian to say, but nothing can change my conclusion.

"What concerns me most is the future of my children," he added. "Emigration would be the ideal way out."

Yet emigration of the nation's most educated citizens -- those with the greatest opportunity to leave -- would only compound Russia's problems in the long run.

Many professionals are committed to staying and making a difference in their country. Boris Kogut, deputy director of the Khabarovsk Medical Institute, talks of leading the institute successfully through the complex maze of privatization. His goals include strengthening the educational requirements for medical training and establishing private medical clinics in which the institute's students can practice.

Yet even he acknowledges there are many problems to overcome. He poetically describes Russia as a ship on the open sea in a storm. "If the pilot of the ship is good, he will lead the ship to safer waters. If the pilot is not capable, he will break the ship.

"Our pilots have made many mistakes" in the past few years, he said. "That is why our way is so long and so hard."

What is the answer? No one knows for sure. Some leaders affirm growing interaction with the United States and other Western nations, with an emphasis on receiving financial aid and technological support. Others stress the need for Russians to recapture a healthy national work ethic which deteriorated under years of socialism.

Amid the chaos, one group sounding a clear word of hope is the Protestant Christian community. After seven decades of government restrictions and persecution, Christian believers began to regain religious freedom under the rule of former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev. Today they are able to worship openly.

"It's not people's fault but people's trouble that they didn't know God, they were brought up as atheists," said Lena Brest, a Russian tutor and interpreter in Khabarovsk. "Now we have neither communism or socialism. Our

only way out is through God."

"Christianity is the way to personal freedom," agreed Vasenyov. "I see only Christianity, through its Protestant variant, as the way out." By contrast, he sees the Russian Orthodox Church, in which he was baptized, as "a religion of a primitive monarchy."

"Protestantism had a very bad past here. It couldn't develop normally," Vasenyov recalled. "Some had closed baptism and couldn't show it because it was dangerous."

With an uncertain national future unfolding, "honest relations and love to surrounding people" are vital to survival and success, he noted. "These are the features of Christianity."

Gennady Abramov is chief pastor of Khabarovsk Baptist Church and superintendent of Baptist work in the far eastern region of Russia. "It is said in the Bible to give comfort to people," Abramov pointed out. "In our time full of problems and worries and troubles, the church is the only place where the people can find peace and comfort and hope."

"The role of churches is to open Christ for many people," he said. "It is the most urgent task."

Even Kogut, who describes himself as a "materialist," freely offers words of affirmation for the Christian community. "Christianity has a positive effect on the development of society," he acknowledged. "It makes our people to survive hardships better."

"Christians have a positive role on other people, even atheists, because they teach them how to be kinder and better and more open-hearted," he added.

As Russians strive to cope with their changing world, personal love and concern for one's neighbor remain unchanging needs. And that is where the Christian community can make a lasting impact, the Russians agreed.

"Love cannot appear by itself," Vasenyov emphasized. "Angry, hungry people can find love only through God."

-30-

\*\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*\*