

Light

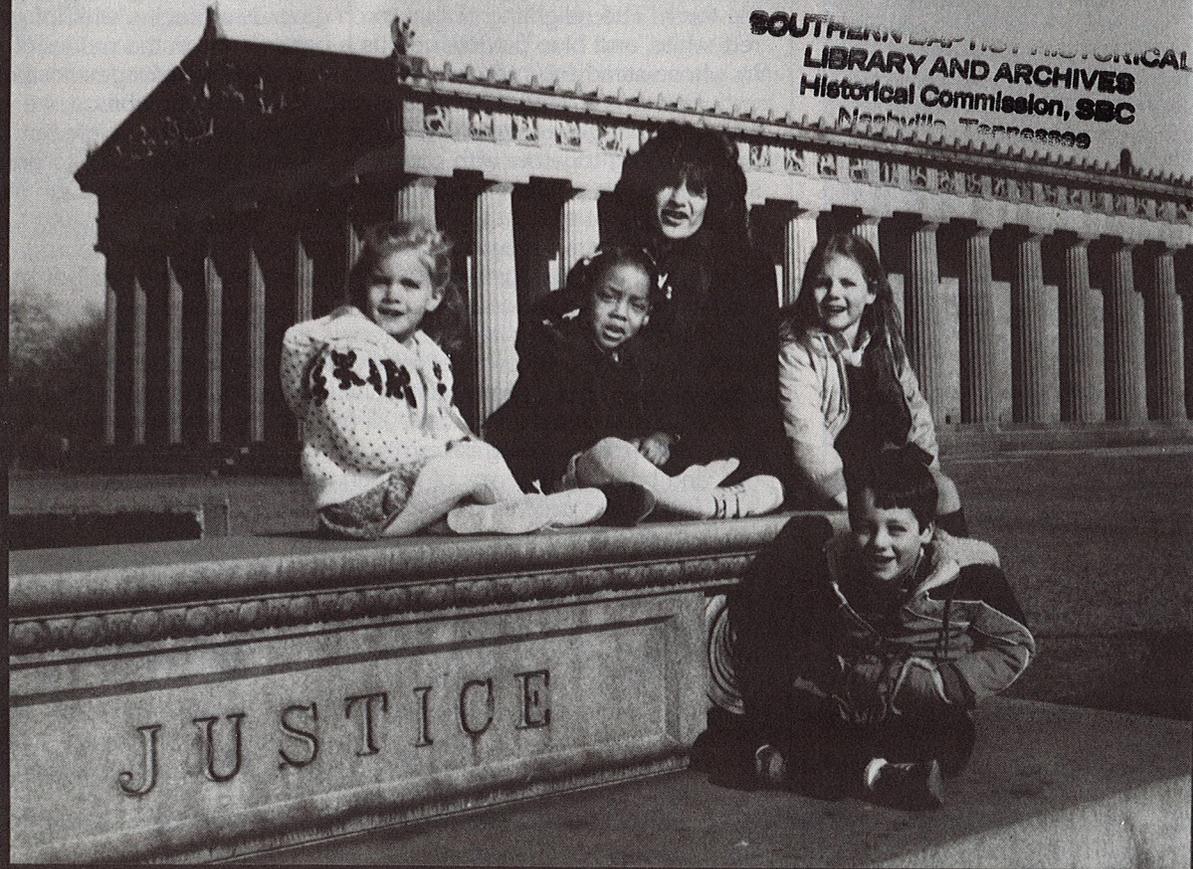
THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN

BAPTIST CONVENTION

JANUARY 1987

THE LORD LOVES JUSTICE (Psalm 37:28)

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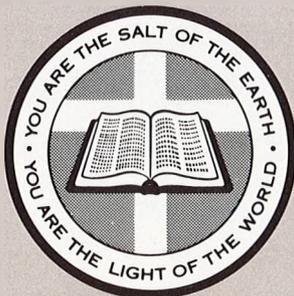


**Observe Race Relations Sunday
February 8, 1987**

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Of The Southern
Baptist Convention**

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Ten Good Things in 1986

Since Gannett started publishing *USA Today*, I have been asked to write a column for their first issue of each new year on "Ten Good Things that Happened" in the old year just ended. This has proven to be a challenging assignment. It is bracing to be upbeat even if you are driven to it, kicking and screaming, by a deadline.

1. *The nation stumbled along toward justice.* We fumbled in Iceland, got egg on our face in Iran, and blew it in Nicaragua, so that a McLuhanesque spell was broken and Americans began to pole the raft of government away from the shoals of secrecy and lawlessness back toward the mainstream of authentic democracy.

2. *The democratic process held together.* Even though only 37 percent of qualified voters went to the polls in November and even though this constituted the lowest turnout in more than 40 years, people went freely and peacefully to the voting booths and we were reminded again of how splendid is our heritage of freedom, civic responsibility, and self governance.

3. *A free press once again proved to be worth its weight in gold.* It began the painful but necessary process of calling to the tawline the hardly heroic perpetrators of yet other harebrained schemes to placate terrorists, circumvent the will of Congress, and defeat the administration's opponents related to help for the Contras.

4. *The Statue of Liberty got fixed.* The strength and richness of our American traditions were highlighted in the refurbishing of the lady with the torch. The relighting of that torch gave us a bracing whiff of good old red, white, and blue patriotism plus a better hold on the rudder of history by whose steadying memory we can steer a safer passage into the future.

5. *Economic collapse was avoided.* At home and abroad, we still face imminent danger of drowning in a fearsome flood of red ink; but if we keep clinging together with commitment and determination to grasp at such straws as present themselves, who knows but that enough straws can be brought together to make an ark?

6. *Institutions like apartheid in South Africa, insider trading on Wall Street, and the Marcos regime's ripoffs in the Philippines got some overdue comeuppance.*

7. *Some important moral concerns were heightened.* Corporate responsibility, the recovery of family life, human rights, teenage pregnancies, sexual promiscuity, child abuse, drug abuse, and alcohol abuse, to name just a few, have all moved up somewhat in our national consciousness. Bending in terms of moral compromise is somewhat more in, and bonding in terms of human relationships is somewhat more in.

8. *Peace has prevailed for most of the human race.* Glaring exceptions come to mind; but they are exceptions and not the rule. Terrorism has reared its ugly head; but most of us have gone to work, moved about our daily affairs, and traveled around in relative safety, freedom, and peace. Appallingly, the nations spent about \$900 billion on weapons and utilized the lives and energies of some 100 million human beings in that process so that we missed the biblical ideal of *shalom* by a country mile; but, still, the whole world, and all of us in it, did not go up in radioactive smoke.

9. *Basic commitment to help the homeless, feed the hungry, and care for the needy held reasonably steady.* Some public policy began to be bent a little back in the direction of compassion.

10. *At the Christmas season just passed, we experienced the most fundamental of all truths—that it is more blessed to give than to receive, the most elementary of all insights—that life does not consist in the abundance of things possessed, and the most basic of all realities—that the first law of life is not self-preservation but self-sacrifice.*

It may not have been the best of times; but it was a good year when some good things happened.

Foy Valentine

Foy Valentine
Executive Director

RACE RELATIONS INVOLVES JUSTICE

Achieving Racial Reconciliation Requires A Commitment to Social, Economic Justice

By W. David Lockard

Newspaper headlines about the growing number of organized hate groups in this country are an ugly reminder that the battle against prejudice, racism and injustice has

**Theme Interpretation
for
Race Relations Sunday**

not been won. The need for more tangible progress in the area of social and economic justice is painfully evident. Even the progress that has been made in improved race relations must be fortified lest it be forfeited.

Christ began his earthly ministry by declaring a special concern for "the poor," "the broken-hearted," "the captives" and the "bruised" (Luke 4:18). While these categories are not limited to any one segment of American society, it is true that ethnic minorities continue to have a significantly higher proportion of persons who are socially and economically disadvantaged.

Southern Baptists several years ago made a strong and eloquent stand for dignity, worth and equality of all people. The Declaration of Human Rights, presented by the Christian Life Commission, and approved by the 1978 Southern

Baptist Convention in Atlanta, included the following statements:
"Let Southern Baptist citizens be committed to political action on

Even the progress that has been made in improved race relations must be fortified lest it be forfeited.

behalf of human rights at home and abroad, responsibly involving ourselves as God's salt, God's light, and God's leaven in the whole political process Let Southern Baptist churches be boldly involved in championing justice for the oppressed, providing food for the hungry, supporting changes in those laws and systems which abuse the poor while providing loopholes for the rich, doing the things that make for peace, and effecting change where change is needed to support basic human rights."

Race Relations Sunday is an appropriate occasion to consider the challenge of this declaration and to pray to the Lord who loves justice that our lofty words will find expression in living deeds. ■

Lockard is director of organization for the Christian Life Commission.

Race Relations Resources

The Christian Life Commission provides a variety of awareness/action resources on race relations for the local church or association. The materials are undated and may be used any time throughout the year but are especially appropriate for emphases related to Race Relations Sunday.

The Bible Speaks on Race Relations pamphlet (10 for \$1.50)

Issues and Answers: Race Relations pamphlet (10 for \$1.50)

Issues and Answers: Human Rights pamphlet (10 for \$1.50)

Critical Issues: Refugees booklet (4 for \$1.00)

Undated Race Relations Bulletin Insert (20 for \$1.00)

Declaration of Human Rights pamphlet (4 for \$1.00)

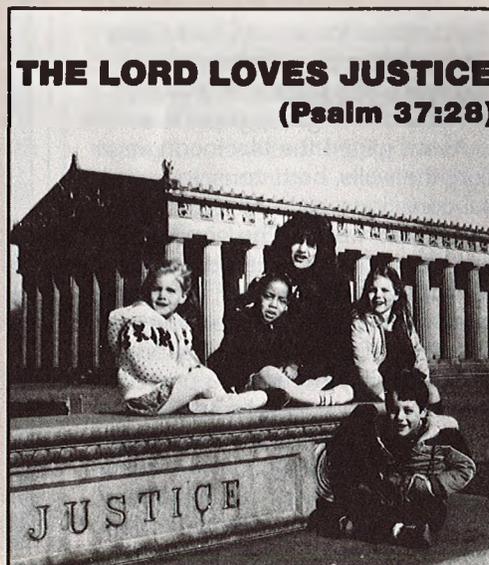
"A Christian Approach to Human Rights" with Pablo Deiros audio cassette tape (\$3.00)

"Race Relations in America" with Andrew Young cassette tape (\$3.00)

"The Black Experience" with Andrew Young audio cassette tape (\$3.00)

A free copy of the CLC's 32-page catalog, "Resources for Solving Problems People Face" also is available. *Save postage by sending cash with your order.*

THE LORD LOVES JUSTICE (Psalm 37:28)



THE WALLS CAME TUMBLING DOWN

A Worship Experience in a Rural Church In Jericho, Arkansas, Overcomes Barriers

By Bill Moore

On a hot August Sunday in Jericho, the walls came tumbling down.

Jericho, Ark., is identified by one small sign and a single store. It's the kind of place that if you drive through and blink, you'll miss it.

The small town a few miles from Memphis was one of the stops for 50 Habitat for Humanity supporters who participated in a walk from Americus, Ga., to Kansas City, Mo., to celebrate Habitat's 10th year of building houses for the poor.

The 1,000-mile walk generated publicity about the need for shelter and helped raise funds for Habitat, an ecumenical ministry which works in partnership with the poor to build or renovate houses which are then bought on a no-interest, no-profit basis.

Pastor J.E. Watson of Jericho's Pilgrim Rest Missionary Baptist Church had agreed to move the Sunday morning service to 9:30 so we could join them for worship. He also had invited us to conduct the service. Since Habitat executive director and founder Millard Fuller was speaking at a church in Memphis, Mel West, a Methodist minister in our group, led the service.

As we joined the black congregation, the walls, both conscious and subconscious, were apparent. The pastor had warned the congregation that we would be dressed casually for walking, but many of them were understandably uncomfortable with our attire of tee shirts and shorts. They certainly expected a preacher to be wearing a jacket and tie.

Although the words were familiar, the tempo of the hymns was unfamiliar to the black congregation, and when Pastor Watson led a few hymns, the tempo was awkward for the walkers.

When the Pilgrim Rest ushers re-

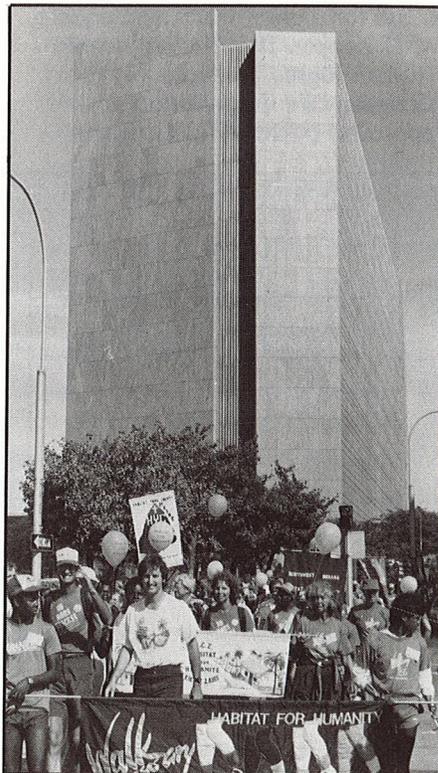
ceived the offering, Pastor Watson tactfully had them do it the "white" way by passing the plates.

For their part, most of the walkers were unaccustomed to uniformed ushers, shouts of "amen" and other fervent responses, singing without hymnals and women wearing hats.

But despite the cultural awkwardness, the walls gradually came tumbling down.

The process began before the service as two ladies greeted us at the road as we ended over three hours of steady hiking. It continued as Pastor Watson opened the service with a warm welcome.

The walls came down as Mel West knelt at the altar for the morning prayer. One could sense the blending of spirits through prayer.



HIKING FOR HOUSES—Habitat supporters join a 1,000-mile march. (Habitat photo)

The walls came down as three of the walkers shared testimonies about their experiences with Habitat. Azariah Rajasekhorarao told of being offered water as a weary traveler in India but then being refused a glass and having to drink from his cupped hands because of his caste.

Reggie McMorris, a black teenager from Kansas City told about helping to build houses and being enlisted for the walk. "The first time I heard about the walk I said, 'That's a dumb

As we joined the black congregation, the walls, both conscious and subconscious, were apparent.

thing to do,' " he confessed. "But here I am."

Kay Spofford of Danvers, Mass., described how she had been led by God to quit a high-paying job in order to work with Habitat.

The walls came down as the congregation stood and sang "Amazing Grace," as Pastor Watson and the deacons served the Lord's Supper. Christians of 10 nations and several races broke bread and shared the cup together.

The walls came down as Pastor Watson closed the service with a reference to Christian brotherhood and service. "We've got to get together here before we can get together in heaven," he said.

The rest of the day as we walked westward the words from the spiritual about Joshua and the walls of Jericho hummed in my mind. I also recalled Paul's words in Ephesians: "Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies" (Eph. 2:14, TEV). ■

Moore, a retired Southern Baptist home missionary, is a member of Bellevue Baptist Church, Owensboro, Ky. He participated in nine days and 160 miles of the Habitat walk. A review of *No More Shacks* by Millard Fuller (a speaker at the Christian Life Commission's 1978 national seminar) was included in the October issue of LIGHT.

MORE THAN BEING AGAINST ABORTION

Southern Baptists Are Working to Provide Ministries Through Abortion Alternatives

By David Wilkinson

When Edgewood Baptist Church in Columbus, Ga., opened a crisis pregnancy center in 1981, they knew very little about the challenge before them.

They learned in a hurry.

The first person to walk through the center's door was a young mother of two preschoolers. She was poor, pregnant and virtually without hope. Earlier she had been left to fend for herself when her husband was violently killed. Now the man she had been living with had abandoned her after learning she was pregnant. Barely able to feed the two children she now had, abortion seemed the only alternative.

However, after talking with a counselor, the woman readily decided against abortion. For the next three months, Edgewood church members provided emotional and spiritual support and assisted with food and clothing for the children.

The woman committed her life to Christ and became a member of the church. She later volunteered her services at the center and has

Barely able to feed the two children she now had, abortion seemed the only alternative.

become one of its most effective counselors.

She gave birth to twins, one of whom died due to lung complications. But the names she gave them were a testimony to her new lease on life: Faith and Hope.

Since that initial visit, more than 12,000 women, ranging in age from 11 to 58, have sought help at the center. Inspired by the center's dramatic impact, the church has

launched a variety of related ministries, including a self-supporting adoption agency. A training program based on Edgewood's experience has been used in the last two years to help establish similar programs in 30 Baptist churches in seven states.

While Edgewood is unique in many ways, it is not alone. Across the Southern Baptist Convention, churches and individuals are responding to the issue of abortion through education, social action and ministry. In addition to speaking out against society's callous attitude toward abortion, more and more Southern Baptists are speaking for the sanctity of human life through active involvement in providing alternatives to abortion.

Some examples:

- Oklahoma last year became the first Baptist state convention to open an alternative to abortion counseling clinic. The initial crisis pregnancy center in Tulsa has been followed by centers in three other communities, along with crisis pregnancy hotlines in six locations statewide.

- The Missouri Baptist Children's Home sponsors a Biological Parents Program to assist women in exploring and planning alternatives faced during an "untimely pregnancy." The program assists with medical services and expenses and provides counseling, parenting classes, legal assistance in placing a child for adoption and other services. The Coleman Group Home in Bridgeton provides a place to live for up to eight women during pregnancy. A toll-free, alternatives-to-abortion hotline also is available.

- Tennessee Baptist Children's Homes last year opened an "alternative home" for women with problem pregnancies.

- In New Orleans, the Sellers

Baptist Home and Adoption Center has been reaching out in love to unwed mothers for more than five decades. Affiliated with the Home Mission Board, Sellers each year ministers to 80 to 100 pregnant, unmarried women from all walks of life.

- In Mississippi, a multi-faceted educational program called Redeem-a-Child is being coordinated by the Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission. Approved by the state convention, the program deals with the problem of abortion, but is concerned about "more than just abortion," says CAC executive director Paul Jones. Other issues include incest, child sexual abuse,

The Christian Life Commission has expanded its materials related to sanctity of human life concerns.

teenage pregnancy, sexually-transmitted diseases, sexual misinformation, youth marriage, suicide and runaway or abducted children.

- Southern Baptist Convention agencies are developing strategies and resources to help Southern Baptists confront the abortion crisis.

Following up on a resolution adopted at the 1984 meeting of the SBC, the Home Mission Board convened a special committee to deal with alternatives to abortion. Last year the HMB appointed Oklahoma City physician Fred Loper as a medical consultant to help the board to assist associations and churches in ministries related to abortion.

The Christian Life Commission has expanded its materials related to sanctity of human life concerns. In December 1986, the agency introduced eight new resources, ranging from a pamphlet on teenage pregnancy to a sermon outline on the sanctity of human life. The CLC also has promoted the observance of Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, set on the denominational calendar for the third Sunday in January. (See *November/December 1986 issue of LIGHT.*)

While action is taking place on many fronts, the development of crisis pregnancy centers has attracted the most interest.

Lowell Milburn, special care ministries director for the Oklahoma convention, encourages churches and associations to investigate the possibility of starting crisis pregnancy center and hotline services. "It's an opportunity to reach people in a time of need," he says.

Like the Edgewood program, the Oklahoma centers offer a free pregnancy test. While the woman waits for the results, she views a slide show about fetal development. The presentation also includes some explanation of the abortion process. A volunteer counselor discusses with the woman the available alternatives to abortion.

Milburn says the counselor always tries to establish a supportive relationship, even if the woman opts for abortion.

"We try to follow up," he says. "Some of the women who left the center with the intent of having an abortion have called back to say, 'I've changed my mind. Thanks for helping me.'"

Babies offered for adoption are placed through the convention's child care program.

Funding for the centers is generated by the special care ministries department and by local churches or associations. Directors of the Tulsa and Oklahoma City centers receive a part-time salary. More than 100 volunteers have been trained to counsel callers and drop-in visitors.

The Oklahoma centers are modeled largely after the program at

Last year 4,000 women received counseling at Edgewood Baptist Church's crisis pregnancy center.

Edgewood which has pioneered the crisis pregnancy center ministry among Southern Baptist churches. Edgewood's center operates with a full-time director (the only paid position) and about 40 volunteers.

Last year 4,000 women received counseling at the center, says as-

sociate pastor Andy Merritt, the guiding force behind the church's pro-life ministries. In 1986 the center averaged about 100 women a week.

Three out of every four women who come to the clinic are unwed. More than 80 percent of the women decide to reject abortion. Merritt believes the presence of the clinic also has contributed to a reduction in the abortion rate in Columbus in recent years.

Three out of every four women who come to the clinic are unwed. More than 80 percent decide to reject abortion.

He also points out that 40 percent of the girls who receive the free pregnancy test are not pregnant. Many of them are open to counseling about a Christian approach to moral values and lifestyles.

The crisis pregnancy center has never drawn from the church budget. It operates on gifts over and above the regular tithes and offerings of church members.

The center is complemented by other ministries. A prenatal care program is available. Through a "shepherding home" ministry, women during pregnancy can live with a Christian family. A group maternity home is on the drawing board. An adoption agency, licensed by the state in 1985, placed more than 30 babies in Christian homes in its first 18 months. An educational team gives presentations on the ministry of the center, abortion and the case for sexual abstinence outside of marriage.

The church hopes to begin this year a post-abortion ministry to provide emotional and spiritual support for women dealing with the repercussions of an abortion.

While the church pursues a broader anti-abortion agenda overall, "the focus at the crisis pregnancy center is on these girls and their families and trying to minister to them in a holistic way," Merritt explains.

"The distinctive thing about the center is not so much to save a baby, as important as that is, but to

offer an extension of God's love. When the girl chooses life for her baby, we rejoice, but that's when the work really begins."

A similar attitude is evident at Sellers Home in New Orleans.

At Sellers, mothers-to-be receive professional prenatal and postnatal care as well as delivery services. Equally important, Sellers provides them with the emotional breathing space they need during their pregnancy.

The women "come from all walks of life and every level of society," explains director Mary Dan Kuhnle.

Over the past decade, the average age of Sellers' clients has risen. Most are now between the ages of 18 and 22. The majority of residents—68 percent—are from white, middle-class Southern Baptist homes.

Sellers' adoption service has placed every child since Kuhnle became director 11 years ago, including non-white children and those with non-correctable disabilities.

In Mississippi, the Redeem-a-Child program is designed to provide

Equally important, Sellers provides them with the emotional breathing space they need during their pregnancy.

practical help related to alternatives to abortion and other issues.

"We're trying first to identify the problems and the issues and then set forth some ideas about what can be done at the local community and church level," says Jones.

A three-day conference in April will provide training by Christian experts in four areas: abortion, child abuse, sexual misinformation and child molestation and abandonment.

Jones says response to the program, which will take four to five years to implement fully, has been enthusiastic. "We're giving Mississippi Baptists a means of addressing some issues they've been concerned about without knowing where to begin." ■

Wilkinson is director of news and information services and editor of LIGHT for the Christian Life Commission.

MISSION ACTION & SOCIAL ACTION

WMCU Leader Is Convinced Missions Agenda Can Include Dealing with Moral Concerns

By Karen Benson

Mission action—one of the main reasons Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union exists—could call for Baptist women to become involved in social and moral concerns, says a Missouri WMCU leader.

Barbara Bray, former state WMCU president and a current WMCU officer in her church in Knob Noster, urges WMCU members to consider women's roles in dealing with social and moral issues.

"We are fortunate. We have the freedom to express ourselves in this country, but we don't use that freedom. We don't even use the power to vote," Bray says.

It is all right for Christians to get angry, she said, especially about drug abuse, drunk driving, gambling, child or spouse abuse, pornography

or a host of other social or moral issues.

"We tend to get really upset and let our anger churn around inside of us, but we don't do anything about it. Preachers often decry what's happening, but they don't often offer you anything to show what you can do about it."

What Southern Baptist women can do about it, she advises, is to translate mission action into political action, economic action, consciousness-raising action and advocacy action.

She adds that some biblical guidelines should undergird such actions. "Our first allegiance is always to God. We are to support the government and to obey the laws. We are to pray to God on behalf of all our government leaders, but we cannot

allow prayer to be a substitute for becoming involved."

The Bible commands Christians to "work for justice—to establish justice and righteousness and peace," Bray says. "The moral quality of our government is what the people choose to make it."

There are appropriate ways to effect change, she notes. For starters, "do your homework. Find out anything you can about the issue. Find out what the law is."

Second, contact appropriate political representatives, depending upon whether the laws governing the issue are federal, state or local laws. "Say, 'I'm concerned, and I want to know everything you can tell me about this.' Ask for copies of laws or ordinances that might apply to that subject."

Then, talk with people responsible for enforcing the law. Find other people who are interested in the same issue, even if they are against it while you are for it, or vice versa. Either way, she says, "They're still valuable sources of information."

Also, contact the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission or the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. These agencies keep close tabs on social and moral concerns and on what's happening in the arena of religious liberty respectively.

Then, with homework done, gear up for political action. "Talk personally with people who are in government. When your congressman or congresswoman is at home, go see him or her. Write ahead of time and request an appointment, specifying what you want to talk about. When you get there, state your view and tell what action you want him or her to take."

Go to local council meetings regularly and encourage local officials to enforce existing laws. "Spread the word about officials who don't do what they're supposed to do."

Also, praise officials who are doing what they're supposed to do. "Don't just contact them when you're angry about something."

Finally, involve others in the issue through consciousness-raising actions. ■

CASE IN POINT

Hendricks Confronts Child Abuse

When confronted by the issue of child abuse, Ginny Hendricks was "shocked into action."

Now the Glorieta, N.M., Woman's Missionary Union leader is urging other WMCU's to become involved.

Hendricks, a member of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, believes Baptist women in churches across the country can combat child abuse in their local communities through WMCU's mission-action efforts.

"Child abuse touches all types of children—the advantaged as well as the disadvantaged; all races; all ethnicities; even our church members," she says. "We can't push it aside as something that doesn't touch us. We have to push aside the comfortable curtains and lethargy and deal with it, even though it's something we'd like not to know about."

Hendricks says statistics on child

abuse and child molestation should be a call to action. About 1.5 million of America's children suffer from physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect each year. Up to 5,000 of them will die from their injuries.

By the time they reach age 18, one of every four girls and one of every six boys will be sexually molested.

Hendricks notes that in 83 percent of child abuse cases, abusers are people with whom the child lives. And 95 percent of these caretakers are the child's parents.

"Experts—or professionals—are needed to deal with troubled families where child abuse is a problem," she says. "But we as Baptist women can help the process along. We are desperately needed to give personal care and concern."

Involvement is essential, she adds, "for your own sake and for the family's sake." ■

Benson is communications group manager, WMCU, Birmingham.

CONCENTRATING ON ILLEGAL OBSCENITY

The Religious Alliance Against Pornography Sets Its Sights on Hardcore and Child Porn

By David Wilkinson

The battle against pornography, often an empty war of words more than effective action, has taken a new turn.

In what one speaker called an "ecumenical miracle," 250 representatives of America's religious community gathered in the nation's capital in November for a strategy conference of the Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RAAP).

RAAP's strategy is simple: Build the broadest possible coalition and then focus its power on a limited and specific goal.

The organization was born last July in the New York home of Cardinal John O'Connor in a meeting led by O'Connor, Cardinal Joseph Bernadin and Jerry Kirk, president of the Cincinnati-based National Coalition Against Pornography. Representation includes leaders of nearly every major religious body in the U.S.—Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Mormon and Greek Orthodox.

"We're talking about material that clearly exceeds the definitions of obscenity established by the Supreme Court."

While representation is diverse, the coalition's target is clearly identified. RAAP's stated purpose is to mount "a vigorous and responsible effort to attack and eliminate hardcore and child pornography."

That message, along with an appeal for help, was delivered to President Ronald Reagan and Attorney General Edwin Meese by 21 RAAP leaders in a private White

House meeting during the final session of the conference.

The delegation included Southern Baptist Convention President Adrian Rogers and Home Mission Board language missions director Oscar Romo, both members of the RAAP's executive committee.

In an interview after the conference, Rogers said the President promised his administration will give "new priority" to the problem of pornography.

Rogers said Reagan agreed to speak out personally on the issue and to push for a coordinated effort between the Justice, Treasury and Postal departments to combat obscenity.

Throughout the RAAP meeting, speakers and participants had expressed growing frustrations with the reluctance of most U.S. attorneys to prosecute obscenity cases.

"We need to light a fire under these U.S. attorneys," said Rogers.

He urged pastors to "take the lead in informing and motivating public opinion" on the pornography problem.

"We cannot do what the government can do, and that is to enforce the laws," he said. "On the other hand, government cannot do what we can do, and that is to uphold morality, righteousness, and even righteous indignation."

During the conference, speakers repeatedly emphasized that the coalition's targets are "illegal obscenity"—pornographic materials which lie outside the broad-sweeping protection of the First Amendment.

"We're not talking about air-brushed nudity portrayed in men's magazines," declared one speaker. "We're talking about material that clearly exceeds the definitions of obscenity established by the Supreme Court."

"We are against censorship," RAAP chairman Kirk told a news conference following the visit with the President. "But we are for enforcement of obscenity laws."

While reiterating their commitment to First Amendment protections, speakers also documented the justification for an all-out assault on hardcore pornography. They occasionally used audio-visual presentations to illustrate descriptions of magazines and video cassettes depicting graphic sexual violence against



JOINING FORCES—SBC President Adrian Rogers, far right, stands next to Cardinal Joseph Bernadin as RAAP chairman Jerry Kirk, backed by many conference participants, addresses a news conference. (Mattox photo)

women and sexual abuse of children.

They described materials picturing homosexual and heterosexual involvement of children as young as age three, incest, bestiality, torture and rape.

Ken Wooden, a former television reporter and now president of the National Coalition for Children's Justice, noted that children are not only abused directly through child

pornography but are increasingly being exposed to hardcore materials.

Wooden, who has talked to more than 30,000 children about child molestation, said more than 500 out of 700 children in one elementary school told him "they can see all the pornography they want." Many of them, he said, could give the titles of the video cassettes they had seen.

During the conference, religious

leaders also discussed strategies for raising their constituencies' awareness of the pornography problem and mobilizing them to fight against it.

"We're mainstreaming the debate" about the devastating impact of pornography, declared Father Bruce Ritter, a member of the pornography commission who has worked extensively with abused children.

Eileen Lindner, associate general secretary for the National Council of Churches, emphasized that "it is our job—our right—to work as citizens to curtail this great threat to the human family and especially the women and children."

In a half-day briefing preceding the conference, Attorney General Meese outlined plans for the Reagan Ad-

ETHICS LIBRARY

Reviews of Works in Applied Christianity

Choices: Making Right Decisions in a Complex World by Lewis B. Smedes. Harper and Row, 1986. Hints of *Mere Mortality* and *Forgive and Forget* are reflected in *Choices*. For those unfamiliar with Smedes these points will only blur into the personable approach which Smedes uses to convey his thought. For those familiar with the other books, their reminiscences will be shattered by redundancy. Also, readers will find places where stronger editing would have helped. (In one illustration, for example, a man changes names within the story.)

Chapter titles give an idea of contents: What's Good about Being Right?; Sorting Out the Categories; Face the Facts; Respect the Rules; Consider the Consequences; When You Can't Be Sure, Be Responsible; and Being Wrong Is Not All Bad.

Some will respond to *Choices* as "too much ethics and not enough Christian." Despite some flaws, I believe Smedes is on the right track for opening communication with an unchristian world which needs to see the better way provided by the Christian gospel.

—William M. Tillman, Jr.

Crime and Its Victims by Daniel Van Ness. InterVarsity, 1986. Thoughtfully addresses America's approach to justice, analyzes the philosophical rationale for punishment and offers pragmatic insights into restructuring our judicial system to reflect biblical ethics. Van Ness, president of Justice Fellowship, the lobbying and educational arm of Prison Fellowship, examines the foundations of American criminal justice, explains why it fails to prevent crime or rehabilitate offenders and discusses the framework of a proposed system based on justice rather than anger.

His thesis is that criminal offenses are primarily specific acts against individual victims, resulting in disrupted personal relationships. He calls for an approach to corrections that forces offenders to accept responsibility for "restoring their victims" and provides opportunities for accountability and reconciliation in the community. Instead of merely criticizing society's failure to control crime, this work presents pragmatic arguments for caring, helpful discussion of relevant biblical principles and workable proposals for reform.

—Tim Jones

Fire in My Bones by Charles H. King, Jr. Eerdmans, 1986. If we ever hope to recognize the systemic and institutionalized injustice in our society, we must look to the clear testimony of the victims. King, president of the Urban Crisis Center in Atlanta, provides this needed perspective.

This book is gripping, insightful, provocative, sensitive. The reader is caught up in the struggle of a black activist who insists upon exploring positive ways to harness the legitimate fire kindled by attitudes and actions which tolerate and use unjust patterns and practices.

King's fire contains an understandable rage. Yet, rooted in the central message of the gospel, it also contains love, concern and religious fervor.

—W. David Lockard

REVIEWERS—Tillman is assistant professor of Christian ethics, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Jones is assistant professor of criminal justice, Athens (Ala.) State College. Lockard is director of organization, Christian Life Commission.

Speakers described materials picturing homosexual and heterosexual involvement of children as young as age three.

ministration's "new offensive against illegal obscenity." The plans incorporate many of the proposals set forth in the report of the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography.

The White House briefing also included spokesmen from the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography, the office of the U.S. surgeon general, the FBI, U.S. Customs Service and U.S. Postal Service.

Meese reviewed plans to establish a Justice Department center for obscenity prosecution and creation of a high-level task force of attorneys who will assist local prosecutors with obscenity cases in addition to working directly with the prosecution center.

Meese said the crackdown also will include "an enhanced effort" in all 93 U.S. attorneys' offices to "vigorously prosecute" obscenity cases.

He said he will direct U.S. attorneys at their annual meeting in February to make obscenity prosecutions one of eight priorities for their offices. ■

Wilkinson, editor of LIGHT, is director of news and information services for the Christian Life Commission.

Global Arms Costing \$1.7 Million a Minute

The nations of the world are spending nearly \$900 billion on weapons in 1986, a year designated as the United Nations International Year of Peace.

That's an historic high of \$1.7 million a minute, according to an annual study by Ruth Leger Sivard, former chief of the economics division of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

Last year worldwide military spending was estimated at \$800 billion.

The U.S. ranks No. 1 in military spending, followed by the USSR. Together the two superpowers account for 23% of the world's armed forces, 60% of the military expenditures, more than 80% of weapons research and 97% of all nuclear warheads and bombs.

In 1985 the U.S. spent roughly \$268 billion on weapons, and the Soviets about \$237 billion, Sivard estimates.

Of 140 countries listed in the report, the next biggest weapons spenders were Saudi Arabia (\$28 billion), United Kingdom (\$27 billion), France (\$24 billion), West Germany (\$23 billion) and China (\$22 billion).

—New York Times

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Costs Society Billions

Abuse of alcohol and other drugs costs money as well as lives.

Measured in terms of costliness in the American workplace, alcohol and drug abuse in 1985 cost more than \$115 billion in reduced productivity and lost employment, according to estimates compiled by the Research Triangle Institute.

Alcohol abuse accounted for \$78 billion of that total, while abuse of other drugs cost more than \$37 billion.

—USA TODAY

TV Still Dishes Out Hours of Violence

If you watch much TV, be prepared to take it on the chin.

A study of prime-time network programming concluded that TV's "family hour" is really the violence hour.

The three networks' shows in the 8 to 9 p.m. slot included the most violent acts—168 a week—in the 19 years the study has been done by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications.

Violence in the study could include physical violence or threats of violence without actual depiction of someone being hurt.

Even "Christian broadcasting" may be contributing to the problem.

A recent study by the National Coalition on Television Violence found that the most popular programs on the Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) are high violence and have harmful effects on children and adolescent viewers.

Last June CBN's Pat Robertson announced the network had 12 of the 15 most popular programs on cable TV and that CBN "limits its programs to ones that strengthen the family."

Yet a study by NCTV found that all 12 CBN programs were cowboy westerns high in violence. A study of two weeks of drama-action programming found that CBN series average a very high 34 violent acts per hour.

—Compiled from news reports

Uncle Sam's Debts Set Record in 1986

The Treasury Department's final bank statement for fiscal 1986 shows a record \$220.7 billion deficit—about \$880 for each person in the U.S. The government spent \$989.8 billion and took in only \$769.1 billion.

Total U.S. debt: \$2.1 trillion, or \$8,400 per person. In 1985 the government paid \$187 billion interest on the national debt—more than the entire national debt through 1943.

—USA TODAY

Erosion 'Exceeds Tolerable Levels'

Treating our soil like dirt is a costly policy.

The Conservation Foundation says that for every pound of food produced in the U.S., 22 pounds of soil erodes. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says "loss of soil through erosion exceeds tolerable levels on 44 percent of U.S. cropland."

—Seeds' Sprouts Edition

Teen Use of Cocaine Continues to Increase

A national study has reported both good news and bad news about teenage drug abuse.

The good news is that data show a decline during the past five years in high school seniors' use of a number of illegal drugs.

The bad news is that cocaine abuse over the same period shows a steady increase.

The most recent findings from an ongoing national research project sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse also included the following:

- More than one-fourth of all seniors said they had used marijuana in the past

30 days. One of every 20 smoked marijuana daily last year; nearly 46% have never used the drug.

- After marijuana, stimulants were the most commonly used illicit drug, which more than one-fourth of the seniors said they have tried. Nearly 18% have used inhalants, and more than 17% have tried cocaine.

- Dramatic regional differences were evident in the reported use of some illegal drugs. For example, more than one-fourth of seniors in the Northeast and West have tried cocaine, while only about 11% in the South or North Central states reported any cocaine use.

—The Tennessean

Women Heading More Families

More than one-fourth of American families with children—and more than 60% of black families—were headed by a single parent in 1985, the Census Bureau reported.

That compares to 12.9% in 1970.

The overwhelming majority are headed by women—4.9 million of the 5.7 million white, single-parent families and 2.6 million of the 2.8 million that are black.

The bureau called the growth in the number of one-parent families "one of the most significant changes in family composition over the past 15 years."

In addition to the factor of divorce, many women are having children and getting married later—or not marrying at all.

—Compiled from news reports

Troubled Teen More Likely To Turn to Music Than Mom

Kids in trouble will turn to music, drugs, friends and even video games before they will talk to their parents or other adults, says a new survey.

Listening to music was the top coping technique chosen in a survey of 3,600 rural Minnesota teenagers surveyed by University of Minnesota Medical School, the university's extension service and the 4-H.

The teens ranked 54 coping options. Talking with parents or other adults was listed near the bottom—moms were 31st, dads 48th.

Faring even worse was the option of talking with teachers, guidance counselors or clergy. It was ranked dead last.

Surveyors plan to do an urban study for comparison.

—USA TODAY

Other items of interest:

- The Mennonite Central Committee reports that in 1982 a mere 1.5% of U.S.

farms received about 90% of all net farm income.

• Oxfam America accused the U.S. of playing "the politics of hunger" by refusing to let the relief agency ship \$41,000 in farm supplies to Nicaragua to ease food shortages. Nicaragua, suspected of assisting Soviet-sponsored Central American subversion, is a U.S.

trade embargo target.

• The percentage of U.S. children under age 18 living below the poverty level has increased during the last decade. The most dramatic increase has been among Hispanic children—from 30.1% in 1975 to 39.6% in 1985. Among blacks, the increase was from 40.4% to 43.1%; among whites, 11.3% to 15.6%.

• Packages of snuff and chewing tobacco will start carrying specific health warnings beginning this year. The warnings, similar to those already required on cigarette packages, were developed by the FTC in response to congressional action.

"On the Moral Scene" is compiled and edited by the editor.

CLC NATIONAL SEMINAR

Dealing with Issues Facing Today's Families

If you care about the family, you will care about the Christian Life Commission's 1987 national seminar.

"Critical Issues Facing Today's Families" is the theme for the March 23-25 seminar at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Charlotte, N.C. A cross-section of Southern Baptist leaders from across the country will gather to hear and discuss ideas about how to strengthen and minister to families.

The seminar, an annual event for Southern Baptists concerned about applied Christianity, will blend information, inspiration and practical help.

Speakers enlisted to date include the following:

Robert Bellah, professor of sociology, University of California, Berkeley; author of *Habits of the Heart*.

Bill Bradley, U.S. senator from New Jersey.

Jerry Clower, Baptist layman, humorist, regular host of programs produced by the Radio and Television Commission.

Joel Gregory, pastor, Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth.

Carolyn Koons, professor of Christian education, founding director of Institute of Outreach Ministries, Azusa Pacific University, Azusa, Calif.; her autobiography *Beyond Betrayal: Healing My Broken Past* deals with domestic violence.

Everett Koop, U.S. surgeon general who has been active and outspoken on tobacco, AIDS and other issues related to public health.

Kyle Rote, Jr., sportscaster, speaker, author.

Mahan Siler, pastor, Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C.; co-author with his wife of *Communicating Christian Values in the Home*.

Merton Strommen, minister, psychologist, founder of "Search Institute" which addresses issues related to youth and the church; author of *Five Cries of Youth* and co-author with his wife of *Five Cries of Parents*.

Topics to be addressed by these and other speakers include nurturing moral values in the home, pornography, domestic violence, suicide, the church and the family, aging and moral issues facing children and youth.

Special rates have been secured at the Adam's Mark: \$58 per night for single, double, triple or quadruple occupancy. After the registration form has been received, information for making hotel reservations will be sent promptly to each registrant.

To register, complete, clip and mail the form on this page.

RESERVE A PLACE FOR ME

Christian Life Commission National Seminar March 23-25, 1987

Enclosed is my registration check:

- \$35 for myself \$17.50 for myself as a student
 \$52.50 for myself and my spouse who should be registered as:

(Spouse's Name) _____

(Your Name) _____

(Street) _____

(City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip) _____

Clip and mail to: National Seminar, Christian Life Commission, 901 Commerce, No. 550, Nashville, TN 37203. Make checks payable to CLC. (Refunds can be made for cancellation of reservations received prior to March 9 and after that only in case of extreme emergency.)

'RESOLVING' ISSUES AT STATE MEETINGS

Resolutions at Fall Conventions Address Pornography, Gambling and Other Concerns

Pornography and gambling headed the agenda of social concerns addressed through resolutions at the 1986 annual meetings of Baptist state conventions.

Messengers to 14 of the 37 conventions approved resolutions dealing with one or both of those issues, according to a *LIGHT* survey of news reports from the meetings.

But 1986 may also be noted for an absence of resolutions. Thirteen state conventions met without approving any resolutions on social concerns. At least five of those conventions avoided resolutions altogether.

The pattern continued a recent trend toward eliminating resolutions or limiting them to non-controversial issues in an attempt to avoid controversy.

Resolutions, while non-binding on any Southern Baptist board, agency or institution, can nevertheless be significant expressions of Southern Baptist opinion.

A total of 12 state convention resolutions addressed the issue of pornography, an issue highlighted in 1986 by the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography.

Indeed, five of the 11 resolutions expressed support for the work of the pornography commission.

Twelve conventions also passed resolutions expressing opposition to gambling, especially state-sponsored lotteries.

In a survey of 1985 state conventions, gambling that year was the subject of the most resolutions (14), followed by pornography (8) and abortion (7). (See February 1986 *LIGHT*.)

In the 1986 conventions, the dominant issues after pornography and gambling were abuse of alcohol and other drugs (8 resolutions), sex education (6) and abortion (6).

Sex education, always a controversial subject, was a new entry among resolution concerns. The subject was not addressed in 1985 resolutions.

In Arkansas, messengers recorded their opposition to "school-based clinics" that distribute contraceptives without parental consent and offer counseling that promotes promiscuity.

Arizona Baptist messengers criticized "adolescent sex education programs taught from a secular humanistic viewpoint" and called on families and churches "to educate

children about spiritual insights and Christian understanding of sexuality."

Other subjects of state convention resolutions:

- The economic crisis faced by America's farmers, the focus of three resolutions.

- Responsible Christian involvement in politics and support for government leaders (three resolutions).

- Support for women in ministry (two resolutions). In Virginia, messengers sent a message of disapproval to the SBC Home Mission Board over its recent refusal to give financial assistance to churches with women pastors.

In Georgia, the HMB's action was in the background as messengers approved without debate a resolution affirming the role of women "in their efforts to express their faith through ministry in the church" and the authority of a local church "over whom it ordains into the ministry and whom it calls as its minister."

In Alabama, the resolutions committee elected not to report out a resolution recognizing women as "co-professionals" in ministry because it was considered "divisive and controversial."

- Homosexuality, including one resolution dealing with the crisis of AIDS.

- Television morality, smoking, apartheid, child abuse and political refugees (one resolution each).

Compared to previous years, two issues were conspicuously absent from the list: world hunger and peace. ■



**Christian Life
Commission
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