

Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN

BAPTIST CONVENTION

JAN.- MARCH 1989

A MAN OF MORAL VISION Richard Land Takes Commission Helm

By Louis Moore

Pledging to lead the agency in new directions and to a wider public posture, Richard Land became the Christian Life Commission's fifth executive director on October 24.

Land, 42, formerly vice president of academic affairs at Criswell College in Dallas, was elected Sept. 15 by agency trustees in a 23-2 vote.

He succeeded N. Larry Baker, who resigned June 3 as executive director to accept the pastorate of First Baptist Church of Pineville, La.

Trustee search committee chairman Joe Atchison of Rogers, Ark., said, "We believe the Lord led us to Richard Land; we believe he is the best man."

Land moved crisply into the job amid a flurry of news stories and positive editorials in both Baptist and secular newspapers around the country. Those stories focused on Land's commitment to improving race relations, his opposition to abortion, his support of capital punishment and his affirmation of females in ministry roles other than local church pastorates.

Land "showed a deep sincerity that our Convention should lead



NASHVILLE--Richard Land answered questions from trustees of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission prior to his election as executive director of the social and moral concerns agency. (BP photo by Jim Veneman).

in moral positions--and not from knee-jerk reaction," said the *Baptist & Relector*, newsmagazine of Tennessee Baptists. "He showed himself to be qualified in many of the areas where Southern Baptists need leadership."

"Without question, Land represents the beginning of a new era for the Christian Life Commission," said the *Florida*

Baptist Witness. "By education, training and experience, he appears to be eminently qualified."

Word & Way, news magazine for Missouri Baptists, said, "We hope he proves to be the best executive director ever to lead the Christian Life Commission."

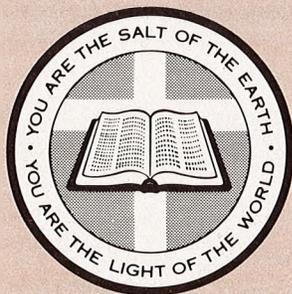
After his election, Land

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 Richard Land, Executive Director
 Louis Moore, Managing Editor



**Christian Life
 Commission
 Of The Southern
 Baptist Convention**

P.O. Box 25266
 Nashville, TN 37202-5266

Think About It!

Those of us called in God's providence to serve Him in the concluding decades of the twentieth century face a challenging task. Living in a society wracked by hedonism, materialism, narcissism and a callous, barbaric disregard for the sanctity of human life, Christians must bear witness against the idolatrous, false gods of our time. Nowhere is the inevitable conflict precipitated by this situation more clearly illustrated than in the challenge of the abortion epidemic in our society.

As we prepare to observe Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, January 15, 1989, an appalling moral and spiritual crisis confronts our nation. At least one out of three children conceived in America is now aborted. Apparently, 1.5 million babies have their "right to life" ignored because they are determined by at least one parent to be too embarrassing, too expensive or too inconvenient. In the past year, three out of every 100 American women between the ages of 15 and 44 underwent an abortion. This deadly virus afflicting the bloodstream of our society touches and impacts everyone.

Southern Baptists, increasingly outraged by such callous behavior, have responded vigorously. In impressive numbers, we have lobbied legislators--federal, state and local--for legislative and judicial remedies to abortion on demand. We have preached with eloquence and conviction the biblical truth of the sanctity of life in the womb. We Southern Baptists have also shown a growing willingness to shoulder the burden of providing positive alternatives to women facing unwanted or problem pregnancies.

This issue of *LIGHT* spotlights the story of some sterling examples of Southern Baptists opposed to abortion, who have responded with positive initiatives, providing support services and counseling. The proactive efforts of First Baptist Church, Orlando, outlined by Bill Curl, are symbolic of efforts by local Southern Baptist churches to minister to abortion's numerous victims (born and unborn).

The article detailing Sylvia Boothe's activities at the Home Mission Board, and earlier in Oklahoma, brings additional dimensions to the ministry of providing constructive alternatives to abortion.

This *LIGHT* also inaugurates a new feature which will appear periodically, entitled "Point-Counterpoint." This feature will allow those of differing views to discuss their disagreements, allowing Southern Baptists to hear "firsthand" the proponents of each view with only sparse editorial comment. This first "Point-Counterpoint" is between Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Jim Wood, pastor of Atlanta's Mount Vernon Baptist Church and a commissioner of the Christian Life Commission.

Whenever we speak about abortion, we must assume someone, somewhere may understand for the first time what they did when they advised or had an abortion. When we speak of abortion, we must also proclaim that Jesus our Saviour is the Great Physician, and "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). *Think about it!*

Richard D. Land

Land Takes Commission's Helm

(Continued from Page 1)

acknowledged that the current theological turmoil in the Convention and his prominent role as a conservative leader have caused some to have a negative perception of him.

"There are many who will see this [election] in a way that will be profoundly disturbing," he said. "I have a need and an obligation to try to dispel as many of those concerns as possible, and, if given the opportunity, I can dispel them."

Immediately after taking over the helm of the agency, Land met with agency personnel to ensure a harmonious transition and to set the wheels in motion to again set the agency on track as the moral and ethical nerve center of the Southern Baptist Convention.

He focused his attention first on two important issues--race relations and the pro-life movement. Planning is under way for a January conference on Southern Baptists and race relations, and this issue of LIGHT focuses on pro-life information.

Following are some of the statements Land made about issues on which the Commission will focus:

On race relations:

"Since I was a teenager, I've been very deeply committed to racial equality and racial justice as part of my Christian faith."

On the pro-life movement: "The CLC needs to be on the cutting edge of the pro-life movement of Southern Baptists and in our society. If we are judged as a nation by how we treat the most helpless and defenseless within our midst, then we as a nation are failing. Abortion is epidemic. At least one-third of all pregnancies in this nation are ended [by abortion]."

On pornography: "Pornography is a plague on our nation."

On drug abuse: "Drug abuse is a plague on our society. It is destroying our children."

On homosexuality and AIDS: "God hates homosexuality. God loves the homosexual. We have got to bear witness against the sin and witness to the sinner. That is going to be increasingly difficult. Just as the women's ordination issue has been used by many--too many, I'm afraid--to disguise sexism, the AIDS issue has been used by some to mask hatred of homosexuals. We've got to bear witness against that."

On child abuse: "We've got an

epidemic of child abuse in our society. We live in an anti-child society."

On capital punishment: "Instead of seeing an inconsistency between being pro-life and pro-capital punishment, I think there is a consistency because both are based upon the sanctity of life. When a person callously disregards another human being's right to life and wantonly takes that person's life, one of the options that must be open to the civil magistrate and is given to the civil magistrate by the New Testament is the forfeiture of that perpetrator's life."

On female pastors: "There is only one reason that I oppose the ordination of women to pastoral authority in a local church. That is because in light of what the Apostle Paul wrote in his epistles, I can't justify and convince myself that it is permissible. On the other hand, many people, I suspect, use the women's ordination issue as an excuse for having attitudes about women that aren't Christian."

Moore is a Christian journalist, based in Plano, Texas.

A Close-Up Look At Richard Land

1946--Born, Houston, Texas
 1953--Baptized, South Park Baptist Church, Houston, Tx.
 1965--Licensed to preach, Townwood Baptist Church, Houston, Tx.
 1969--A.B. *magna cum laude*, Princeton University
 1969--Ordained, Townwood Baptist Church, Houston, Tx.
 1970--Elected, Student Body President, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

1970-1972--Pastor, Vieux Carre Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana
 1971--Married Rebekah Ruth Van Hooser
 1972--Th.M., New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Broadman Seminarian Award as Outstanding Graduating Student
 1972-1975--Pastor, South Oxford Baptist Church, Oxford, England

1975-1980--Academic Dean and Professor of Theology and Church History, Criswell College
 1980--D. Phil., Oxford University
 1980-1988--Vice President for Academic Affairs, Criswell College
 1987-1988--Administrative Assistant to the Governor of Texas (on leave from Criswell College)

The Unborn Child Is Our Neighbor, Too.

By Robert Parham

Few questions have been asked more often, sparked more turmoil, and produced more excuses than the question, "Who is my neighbor?" It is a deeply troubling question, for the answer demands so much from us at such inconvenient times.

An already tough question becomes even more jarring when it is asked in the context of a crisis pregnancy. The answer jolts us into a new awareness about how the second great commandment to love our neighbor applies to the issue of abortion.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday is a time which Southern Baptists have set aside in 1989 to think about the relationship between the national crisis of abortion and the Bible's mandate to love our neighbor.

Think about how you would answer the following questions: Is the unborn child a neighbor? Is the teenager in East Tennessee who is pregnant and homeless a neighbor? Is the professional woman in Georgia who has just

had an abortion a neighbor? Is the male college student in Texas who refuses to bear any responsibility for an out-of-wedlock pregnancy a neighbor?

Next, think about how you can love your neighbor who faces the issue of abortion. Can you speak in defense of the unborn child in a society that places little value on children? Can you open your home to a teenager who wants to carry her child to term but has no home of her own? Can you offer forgiveness without guilt to a woman who has had an abortion? Can you love an irresponsible male college student who views women as sexual objects and refuses to accept any responsibility for his sexually permissive behavior? Can you accept someone who disagrees with you on abortion?

Think about a statement adopted in 1987 by a diverse group of Southern Baptists:

- Human life from conception is sacred . . .
- Abortion at any stage of pregnancy is ending human life .
- In those incidents in which this divine ideal is not fulfilled,

there can be redemption in God's grace. Therefore:

- Let us speak against abortion on demand and encourage alternatives to abortion.
- Let us pledge ourselves to be compassionate, aggressive agents of God's grace in nurturing human life.

Not only is Sanctity of Human Life Sunday a time to think about abortion and love of neighbor, it is also a time to commit oneself to concrete action: Educate your children about Christian values concerning sex. Work at a Baptist home for children. Lobby for restrictive abortion laws in your state legislature and the U.S. Congress. Support a special emphasis in your church on the sanctity of life. Offer financial support to those facing crisis pregnancies.

On Sunday, January 15, 1989, think about the relationship between abortion and love for your neighbor. Then, act!

Robert Parham is Associate Director of the Christian Life Commission of the SBC.

Ten Ways to Observe Sanctity Sunday

By Robert Parham

Messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention in 1985 voted overwhelmingly to set aside a special day on the denomination's calendar to pray and to think about the sacredness of human life, especially unborn human life. For the fourth consecutive year, Southern Baptists are encouraged to observe Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. Here are ten action suggestions for what churches and church members can do:

1. **Pray** on a daily basis during the week leading up to January

15, 1989 for the wisdom to act on the abortion issue as an agent of God's grace.

2. **Study** what the Bible has to say about the value of children and the eagerness with which children were anticipated in biblical times (Samuel, John the Baptist and Jesus).

3. **Read** a book about the abortion issue during the first weeks of January. Here are two suggestions: Michael J. Gorman, *Abortion and the Early Church*, Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1982; and John Stott, *Involvement: Social*

and Sexual Relationships in the Modern World, Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1984.

4. **Purchase** a Christian Life Commission pamphlet rack, displaying material related to abortion. Also stock it with pamphlets such as "The Bible Speaks on Family," "The Bible Speaks on Sex," "Issues and Answers: Biomedical Ethics" and "Issues and Answers: Teenage Pregnancy."

5. **Host** a Sunday luncheon for those in your community addressing the problem of teenage

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Sylvia Boothe: Ministry to Mothers

Oklahoman Helps Baptists Organize For Ministry to Unwed Mothers

By Louis Moore

Copies of a successful Oklahoma City pregnancy crisis center will soon start showing up in Southern Baptist churches coast to coast.

Since March, Sylvia Boothe, the former director of the Oklahoma project, has led the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in organizing a newsletter, seminars and a referral system to help churches and groups of churches organize similar effective crisis pregnancy centers.

With the help of the Home Mission Board and the Christian Life Commission, Boothe hopes within a few years to see crisis pregnancy centers spring up everywhere Southern Baptists have a presence.

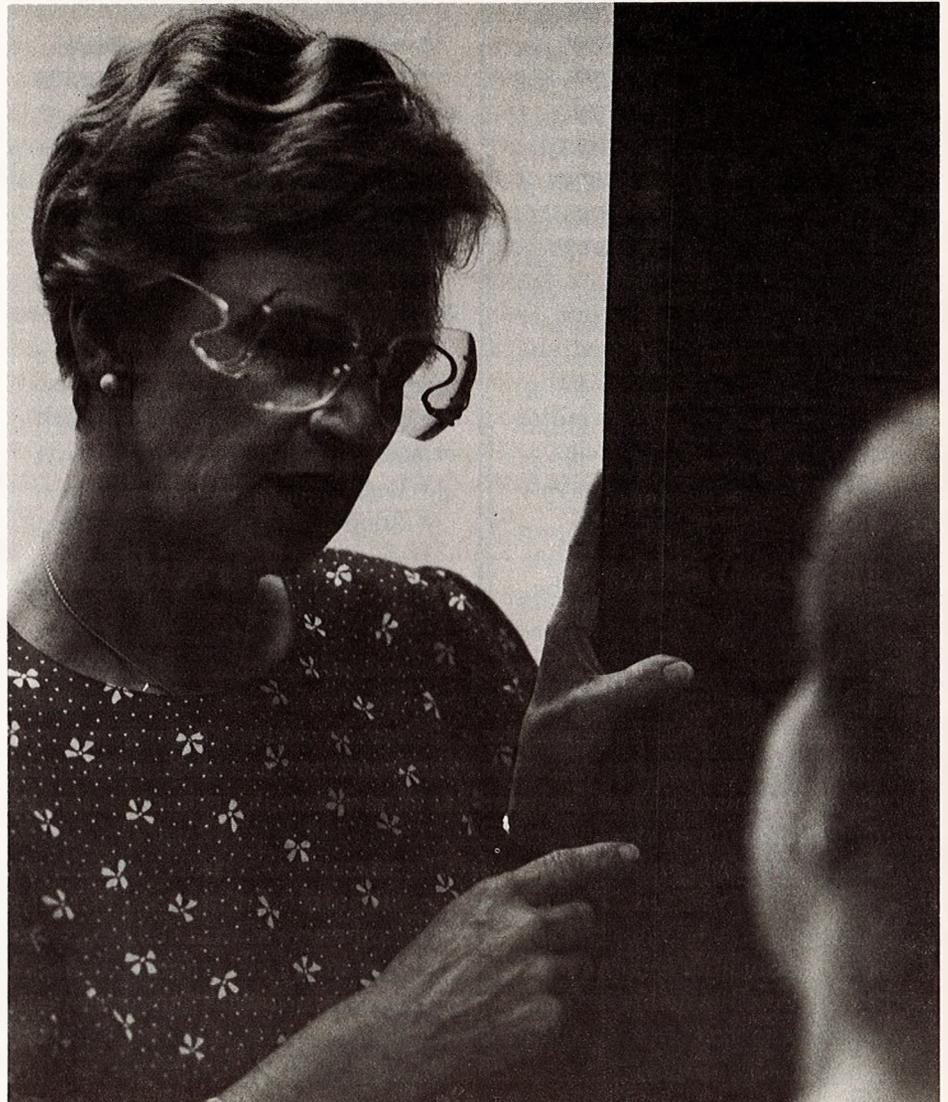
"Most abortions are performed in panic," Boothe said. "The role of the crisis pregnancy center is to let women know they do have a choice."

With enough love, concern, prayer and crisis counseling centers, Boothe says she believes Southern Baptists can help stem the growing tide of abortion today.

After Boothe organized Crisis Pregnancy Center in Oklahoma City in 1986, she and the center's Oklahoma Baptist sponsors were amazed at the type of young women who showed up in the waiting room for counseling.

Boothe and the organizers had expected a multiracial, lower-income, uneducated, non-Christian clientele.

Instead, almost all their first 1,700 clients were white, middle



Sylvia Booth

class, educated, between the ages of 15 and 24 AND were Southern Baptist.

"We didn't advertise that we were a Southern Baptist group, and most of the women came to the center not knowing about our Southern Baptist affiliation," Boothe said.

The dramatic contrast between the clientele they expected and who actually showed up for crisis pregnancy counseling convinced Boothe that abortion is not just an issue outside the church doors, but one inside it as well.

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Pregnancy Centers Work for Life

Key focus is an atmosphere of love and acceptance for the women

By Bill Curl

We chose the name "Center for Pregnancy" for our church's pro-life ministry primarily because of a yellow pages ad for an abortion clinic saying "Don't be fooled by Crisis Centers," and to subtly position us as being *for* pregnancy at a time when some were being accused of using deceit in order to attract clients.

The CFP is many things, but first and foremost, it is Christians demonstrating and extending the love of God to women and families experiencing crisis pregnancies. Out of that love, the CFP exists to meet the needs of pregnant women and those affected by the pregnancy, whether the needs be physical, emotional or spiritual.

Women may be in conflict between their personal, vocational or financial needs and the added responsibilities of a pregnancy. This often makes them feel pressured to choose abortion. At the CFP, the key focus is the atmosphere of love and acceptance given to the women and their families.

With this focus, the CFP strives to educate women on the sanctity of life and the humanity of their preborn child. Then the women are assisted in investigating positive, pro-life alternatives.

All services are free of charge.

Immediate Services:

- Free pregnancy tests (40% of the results are negative)
- Information on pregnancy and prenatal development
- Information on alternatives to abortion

Support Services:

- Ongoing friendship and emotional support
- Maternity and baby clothes
- Baby furniture and supplies
- Temporary housing during the pregnancy
- Information on nutrition, prenatal development, exercises, breast-feeding, childbirth and child care

Referrals:

- Ongoing Bible study
- Medical care during the pregnancy
- Assistance in continuing work or school while pregnant
- Legal help
- Adoption

"The CFP . . . is Christians demonstrating and extending the love of God to women and families experiencing crisis pregnancies."

If a woman wants an abortion, we tell her the CFP is not a medical facility. (No information is ever given to imply that abortions are available at the CFP). The CFP firmly believes that activities of the CFP cannot be honored or blessed if any intentionally deceptive tactics are used. The Operations Manual instructions are very clear on this.

Since its inception one and a half years ago, 2,185 folks have been ministered to personally at the Center. Over 5,000 phone calls for assistance have been han-

dled and 100 babies have been born. (Thirty-six have been born since January 1, 1988!) In addition, 224 commitments to Jesus Christ as Savior/Lord have been recorded and have received follow-up.

To keep the ministry in the minds of our church family, various avenues have been exercised. Our church newsletter has periodic updates and statistics. Roses are placed in the Narthex when babies are born; with red roses symbolizing the babies that would have been aborted and yellow roses showing babies born where other types of assistance were involved. The Center itself has a bi-monthly newsletter which is mailed to prayer pillars and committee members.

Our annual Month of Missions emphasis gives us an opportunity to highlight local mission efforts and affords an excellent time to reeducate and reemphasize the ministry. Testimonies and updates have also been a part of various worship services; a Church Training course was dedicated to the pro-life issue. Numerous Sunday School classes and departments have "adopted" the Center and keep it stocked with food items for the pantry, diapers and formula for the infants and daily prayer support.

First Life

First Life is the umbrella term for all pro-life ministries of First Baptist Church, Orlando. In addition to the CFP and referrals services, the location of and processing for shepherding homes is a major thrust. This gives resi-

dential family care for mothers who have decided to birth their babies but have no place to live until the baby is born. Return to a normal routine is usually possible on a limited basis. Families are recruited and volunteer from the church body. They are trained. An agreement is made between the shepherding family and the birth mother, and accountability between them and First Life is maintained.

An abundance of good pamphlets, booklets and books now exists to aid in dispelling ignorance on our subject. Distribution of printed information is essential for keeping our congregation informed and motivating them to action. Selected books are placed in the library and promotion pamphlets are distributed with bulletins and left at distribution points. Besides using our weekly newsletter, we print a monthly issue-oriented publication called "The Current." This contains reprints of current articles and statistics, as well as information concerning actions which may be taken. In 1988, for Sanctity of Life Sunday, we printed and distributed a special Pro-Life Sunday School Bible Study which two of our laity developed. It was complete with a teacher's guide and student workbook materials. These lesson materials were used in all Bible Study classes for Senior High and up. The teachers were shown "A Matter of Choice" video as part of their preparation.

We encourage the discreet use of the well-prepared audio and video materials like "Silent Scream," "A Matter of Choice" and "The Mourning After" with Sunday School classes, deacons and youth groups.

The Psychological Services Center (P.S.C.) is the counseling ministry of the First Baptist Church

of Orlando. It is housed in a portable building on church property but has entrances separate from the main church facility. Currently the staff includes a psychologist, a licensed marriage and family therapist, an intern in family counseling and a full-time secretary. A wide variety of psychological problems are treated.

No fees are charged for church members. Nonmembers are charged on a sliding fee schedule with a fee cap of \$30 per visit.

Support group programs are run periodically in such areas as parenting, weight control, and divorce recovery.

Dr. Charles Bell, a counseling psychologist since 1973, has directed the Psychological Services Center since its inception in 1982. He has therapeutic contact with over 1,000 families in the Orlando area each year.

Dr. Bell states that he has encountered 20 women in the past five years who have had an abortion. They are equally divided between those who had abortions when unmarried and who had an abortion as married people.

"Unquestionably," he says, "my experience has been that abortion-related stress tends commonly to manifest itself in a delayed manner."

Dr. Bell says, "In my 20 years as a marriage and family therapist, I have never seen an abortion that manifested itself in an ego-enhancing or marriage-supporting manne. When the woman is married the abortion may provide temporary relief; i.e., 'Bob and I just couldn't have another kid right now!'. Ultimately, however, the abortion may become a very destructive issue in the marriage." We are committed to providing an effective ministry to those who are hurting because of post-abortion

trauma.

Pulpit

The pulpit plays a vital part in creating a climate for post-abortion ministry. In addition to supplying some information, (though we err if we rely too heavily on this as an effective means of communicating facts) it is irreplaceable for laying a biblical foundation and creating a favorable climate for a broader ministry. Special days (Sanctity of Life, Mother's Day, etc.) have provided natural opportunities for sermons. Topical preaching and series allow for planned scheduling of messages on the subject of abortion and the ills related to it. The pastor's expository preaching also affords many opportunities for segments which the biblical content naturally or obliquely suggests.

Our age-group programs also provide excellent forums for addressing the issues of human sexuality. No age is exempt from confronting some misuse and abuse of God's intentions concerning our sexual behavior. And, the ripple effect of a problem pregnancy or abortion involves persons of both sexes and of all ages.

Personal Counseling

Personal counseling is often a result of public ministry. When the pastor opens the counseling door from the pulpit, he will not be immediately invaded by women suffering post-abortion trauma. However, these women will gradually filter in, finding their way to the study and feeling enough acceptance to share their hurt.

The objective is to help grieving families find joy in the morning after a night of darkness.

Curl is associate pastor, First Baptist Church, Orlando, Florida.

Civil Disobedience: Stanley Urges Caution

Biblical Exceptions Few and Far Between

By Charles Stanley

A great deal of confusion surrounds the approach of Operation Rescue in protesting abortion clinics by breaking the law (i.e., civil disobedience). We need to examine carefully what Scripture has to say about the issue of civil disobedience. One of the purposes of the Bible is to provide us with an objective, impartial standard of truth by which we can measure the rightness of our attitudes and actions.

"A believer has a biblical responsibility to obey God's higher law when there is a direct, specific conflict with man's law."-- Stanley

From our perspective, the wrongness of abortion is not up for discussion. God's Word clearly teaches that life begins at conception (Psalm 139) and that abortion is murder (Genesis 9:6; Exodus 23:7). We strongly oppose abortion as an abomination before God. We also advocate all *lawful* means of protesting abortion.

The issue in the present context has to do with the proper method to use in protesting abortion as sin and in proclaiming the truth of

God's Word about abortion. We believe that the most productive and proper means of changing the law of the land (*Roe vs Wade*) involves carefully working through the judicial, elective and legislative process to effect change--especially in the composition of the Supreme Court.

The real issue when properly framed is this:

When, if ever, is civil disobedience *an approved biblical* alternative means of effecting moral, legislative, social or spiritual change?

A careful review of relevant Scriptures reveals one clear, general biblical principle and one equally clear, recognized biblical exception.

The General Biblical Principle

There are at least three major passages (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:11-17; Titus 3:1; see also Genesis 9:1-6) which clearly set forth the general principle which is as follows:

A believer has a biblical responsibility to submit to and obey the governing authorities

The underlying premise on which the general principle is founded is that *government is a divinely ordained institution for the maintenance of order, the punishment of evil, and the promotion of good in the world* (see also 1 Timothy 2:1-8). This premise is supported by the following ideas:

- All authority is from God.
- Governing authorities are God's ministers.
- Observing the law is a matter of a positive, public testimony for Christ.
- Observing the law is the right thing to do.
- Observing the law is ordered by God.

"Now, for example, if the law required an abortion or prohibited the preaching of the gospel, the biblical exception would be met and the battle lines drawn -- but every act of civil disobedience would still carry with it the normal, natural consequences -- obey God not men, but pay the price!"

Note carefully in Romans 13:2 that to break the law is to rebel against God. In the gospels Jesus advocated submission to authority and not civil disobedience as a means of effecting change.

The Biblical Exception

Having stated the general principle, this question must be asked: Is it ever right biblically to break the law? The answer is yes IF the biblical exception to the general principle is met! What is the biblical exception? Simply stated, it is this:

It is right to break the law when there is a direct, specific conflict between God's law and man's law because God's law is higher.

The three major examples
(Continued from Page 10)

By Jim Wood

I love and respect Charles Stanley. He is a champion of biblical inerrancy, an outstanding example of institutional leadership and a man whose response to his critics has repeatedly been one of kindness and meekness. Recently he issued a statement that represents the "prayerful and carefully studied view of the pastoral staff and deacons of the First Baptist Church of Atlanta." Because this statement has received wide circulation and because many look to Dr. Stanley for leadership, I believe I must answer the concerns which he raises.

I am grateful that Dr. Stanley has so eloquently stated the position of Operation Rescue. Unfortunately, when Dr. Stanley endeavors to apply these sound biblical insights to the current situation regarding the legal status of abortion in the United States, he argues, "The law being broken (ordinance designed to insure free access to business) has nothing whatsoever to do with abortion," and therefore may not be dis-

"We know that children are dying. We know where. We know when."
--Wood

obeyed. While I do not question Dr. Stanley's sincerity, his reasoning at this point cannot remain unchallenged. We could similarly argue that it would be wrong to jaywalk in order to prevent a rape, because the ordinance that prohibits jaywalking is designed to keep pedestrian and vehicular traffic moving safely, and therefore, has nothing to do with rape.

Wood: Civil Disobedience OK Way to Fight Abortion

Believes No Government Has The Authority to Sanction Murder

The trespass laws were never designed to prevent a person from saving a human life. In fact, if I believe that a person is drowning, I am legally permitted and morally obligated to attempt a rescue if it is within my power, regardless of fences or "No Trespassing" signs. Dr. Stanley states, "Abortion is murder." I do not believe that the heart of this dear man of God will long permit him to avoid the weight of his own statements. Citizens are permitted by U.S. law to violate the trespass ordinances in an effort to prevent a murder. Dr. Stanley knows this. If abortion is murder, then our responsibility is clear.

Dr. Stanley says, "One of the purposes of the Bible is to provide us with an objective, impartial standard of truth by which we can measure the rightness of our attitudes and actions." How true! In the Parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus shows us that the test of whether I love my neighbor is most clearly manifested by what I do when someone is dying. All too often the priest and the Levite can find an excuse to pass by on the other side of the road. The love of God caused Him to lay down His life in order to rescue some of us from destruction. That is the kind of love which He now longs to show to the world through the church. He promised a cross to all who would follow Him. God help us to obey.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is being played out in Atlanta. We know that children are dying. We know where. We

"No government has the authority to sanction murder! No Christian has God's permission to simply 'pass by on the other side of the road.'"

know when. God commands, "Rescue those being led away to death. Hold back those staggering toward slaughter. If you say, 'But we knew nothing about this,' does not He who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not He who guards your life know it?" (Proverbs 24:11-12). Generations ago my forefathers risked their lives and became "criminals" because of their belief that we are "endowed by our Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life. . ." No government has the authority to sanction murder! No Christian has God's permission to simply "pass by on the other side of the road."

Wood is pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.

Stanley Continues to Fight Against Abortion

Tension Exists Between Christianity and Citizenship

(Continued from Page 8)
which depict the biblical exception are as follows:

• *Exodus 1:16-2:10* where Pharaoh commanded the Hebrew midwives to kill all male Hebrew babies, which they did not do.

• *Daniel 6* where Daniel violated a specific decree of King Darius which prohibited worship of anyone other than the King.

• *Acts 4:1-31; 5:12-42* where Peter and John violated a specific command not to preach the gospel after they had been told by an angel to do so. Their response was, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

Each of these examples of the biblical exception has two common elements:

(1) There was a direct, specific conflict between God's law and man's law.

(2) In choosing to obey God's higher law, they paid the normal, natural consequences of that disobedience (i.e., jail, beating or even death).

The biblical exception can be thus stated:

A believer has a biblical responsibility to obey God's higher law when there is a direct, specific conflict with man's law.

Now this biblical exception exists in basically two instances where the law of man either

• requires an act which is contrary to God's Word, or

• prohibits an act which is consistent with God's Word.

Either situation activates the biblical exception.

So, in context, the question related to Operation Rescue's approach becomes: Does the civil disobedience advocated by Opera-

tion Rescue fit the biblical exception?

We believe the answer to this question is NO, because:

(1) The law being broken (ordinance designed to insure free access to business) has nothing whatsoever to do with abortion.

'We must let God's Word speak the truth to us about this matter of civil disobedience.'

Those arrested are not being arrested because they are protesting abortion. If certain anti-God protestors blocked the entrance to First Baptist Church of Atlanta so we could not enter to worship, we would use the same ordinance to have them arrested!

(2) *Roe vs. Wade* (the law of the land) neither requires abortions nor prohibits them, but makes them permissible with certain restrictions.

(3) The women who choose to have an abortion are free moral agents responsible before Almighty God for their actions, including the exercise of the rights of their innocent, unborn child.

Now, for example, if the law required an abortion or prohibited the preaching of the gospel, the biblical exception would be met and the battle lines drawn--but every act of civil disobedience would still carry with it the normal, natural consequences--obey God not men, but pay the price!

One additional concern must be expressed related to civil disobedience as an acceptable alternative means of effecting change. Where does civil disobedience stop? If blocking an entrance is permitted, then why not physical restraint of those who are trying to enter, or even destruction of those who are performing the procedure? If one restrained act of civil disobedience does not work, then surely you are justified in advancing to the next more extreme step. Anarchy and chaos will ultimately result, and then it will be very difficult to preach the gospel. When other historical examples like the Holocaust are cited, make sure the factual situations are, in fact, parallel. Every example must be viewed in light of the general biblical principle and its one recognized exception.

We must let God's Word speak the truth to us about this matter of civil disobedience. This is only one issue. There will be others equally as offensive to our Christian convictions. Our responsibility as believers is to share Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit to effect spiritual change in a person's life, *not* to change either people's minds or the law by methods which have no strong biblical support and which may, in fact, become counterproductive to the cause of Christ.

This article reflects the prayerful and carefully studied view of the Pastoral Staff and Deacons of the First Baptist Church of Atlanta.

Stanley is pastor of First Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga. and former President of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Boothe: Opposing Abortion Not Enough

(Continued from Page 5)

Boothe believes it is not enough for Christians to just oppose abortion. Concerned Christians today must minister with deep commitment and deep pockets to women who choose to carry their unwanted babies full term, she said.

"It is easy to tell these young women not to have an abortion, but it is far better to be able to say, 'Here are your options. We will help you in every way we can,' so they won't have to choose abortion out of necessity," she said.

In its ads, the Crisis Pregnancy Center in Oklahoma City offers a free pregnancy test and confidential counseling. Once a pregnancy is confirmed, the center then offers everything from free prena-

tal care and delivery to private homes for the young women whose parents have kicked them out and whose boyfriends have deserted them. The center also offers free maternity clothes, free baby clothes and help in placing a baby for adoption.

"We also offered an ongoing relationship with the mother after the baby was born," Boothe said.

Christians should do everything they can to clear the financial hurdles for a woman to choose not to have an abortion, she said.

Boothe left the Oklahoma City project in March to move to the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Atlanta to begin franchising the crisis pregnancy center concept nationwide. A former foreign missionary, Boothe has the

title of coordinator for abortion alternatives at the Home Mission Board.

Ironically, she says Christian parents are sometimes the greatest hindrance to alternatives to abortion. In their haste to save the family's reputation, these parents put pride ahead of an unborn baby's life, she said.

"We now have a generation of young people who have never known abortion to be illegal," she said. "If government says it is okay, they assume it must be okay. They think it couldn't be bad if it's legal."

Christians must work to change that situation, Boothe said.

Moore is a Christian journalist, based in Plano, Texas.

Here Are Ways to Observe Sanctity Sunday

(Continued from Page 4)

pregnancy, caring for infants with profound health problems, serving as hospice volunteers and working with the mentally retarded. Let these people know of your church's appreciation for them.

6. **Write** your state representative and senators asking them about parental consent. Urge them to restrict the right of teenagers to obtain abortions without parental consent.

7. **Sponsor** a mini-conference in your Baptist association on the sanctity of human life. Invite representatives from the medical and

legal communities to participate.

8. **Talk** about the issue. Talk to fellow church members about the problem of abortion and the information shared in this issue of LIGHT.

9. **Share** material in this issue of LIGHT during the opening assembly of your church's Sunday School on January 15, 1989. A brief devotional word is appropriate.

10. **Observe** Sanctity of Human Life Sunday with a church-wide emphasis. Plan the entire Sunday morning service around the issue of abortion and

what Christians can do.

January 15, 1989 is a time to reflect on the issues of abortion and to commit ourselves to action. Join hands with the other Southern Baptist churches observing Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. Remember that from a tiny acorn comes a mighty oak, from a simple Sunday observance may come reform of the social order.

Robert Parham is Associate Director of the Christian Life Commission of the SBC.

Sanctity of Human Life Sunday
January 15, 1989

By Larry Braidfoot

In spite of all the efforts by Universal Studios to make the movie "The Last Temptation of Christ" successful, it was a disaster financially as well as morally.

The studio spent about \$6 million to produce the movie, but total costs for such items as publicity have more than doubled the bill. Some estimate the film will have cost Universal between \$15 million and \$16 million.

By fall, the film has shown in only 130 of the 13,000 commercial theaters in the country and has grossed about \$10 million. That means Universal has yet to recoup even its \$6 million initial investment.

Because of its moral bankruptcy, the film has drawn sharp rebukes from Christians around the country.

The protests were a natural result of the content of the film which used the camera to discredit and distort the life of Jesus.

The movie was not just a presentation of the humanity of Jesus. It was the kind of humanity portrayed which was infuriating. Throughout most of the movie Jesus was an indecisive human being who was, in varying ways, influenced and directed by Judas, then John the Baptist, then Mary Magdalene, then a guardian angel, then Judas again. In the fantasy at the end, Jesus was unable to even detect the true identity of the angel, who was in reality Satan.

The treatment of sexual themes portrays women in a role that was contemptible. The big question is not why conservative Christians reacted to the movie. It is, instead, curiosity at the absence of an outcry from the feminist movement.

Release of the movie was about as objectionable as the content.

A Boondoggle

Film 'Last Temptation of Christ' Has Flopped Financially

Universal invited a number of "fundamentalists" (the term used by Universal to characterize what in our terms would include conservatives, evangelicals and/or fundamentalists) who, they were quick to say, boycotted the preview. This boycott was anticipated, thereby enabling Universal to posture those calling for a boycott of the movie as persons who had not seen the movie. Thus, critics were cast in an unfavorable light.

The crowning blow, however, was

"Throughout most of the movie Jesus was an indecisive human being who was, in varying ways, influenced and directed by Judas, then John the Baptist, then Mary Magdalene, then a guardian angel."

the "Discussion Guide" which arrived in the mail from the Cultural Information Service. It came at a busy time and was set back for a season. An enterprising reporter with the *Los Angeles Times* was curious enough, however, to track down the facts about this slick, glossy, multicolor piece. Who produced it? Who mailed it? Who paid for it?

About 200,000 copies of this propaganda were mailed by the Cultural Information Service, which scant information indicates is a nonprofit organization. But the copy was approved by Sally Van Slyke of Universal, and the

cost of the printing and mailing was paid for by none other than Universal!

Universal didn't count on Southern Baptists to go in significant numbers to see "The Last Temptation of Christ."

The call for a boycott involves selection of a target which is a likely product for consumption. Southern Baptists need to understand that the growth segment of the entertainment industry is in their local video store. That's where Universal is making money.

With over 50 percent of American television households now owning VCRs, and with annual sales of prerecorded videocassettes passing 100 million units, expectations are high. Video sales and rentals for the industry have hit \$6.9 billion annually and now exceed movie box-office receipts.

I hope that some other families had the conversation our family did.

"Can we buy a copy of 'E.T.' when it comes out?"

"No."

"Why?"

"The same company that is selling 'E.T.' made 'The Last Temptation of Christ.'"

So the issue is not dead, even though the film has faded. Now is a time to think, and to act.

Larry Braidfoot is Associate Director of the Christian Life Commission.

Bills Pass in Waning Hours

By Larry Braidfoot

In fishing lore, the tale frequently revolves around the big fish that wasn't landed. The boat may be filled with a worthy catch, but the imagination burns for the one that "got away."

Such is frequently the case with politics. It certainly was in the recently completed term of Congress. Most of the media attention was given to welfare reform, to the omnibus drug bill, and to child-care legislation. The first two passed overwhelmingly, with bipartisan support built over almost two years. No child-care legislation passed. The needed bipartisan support failed to materialize.

Within the last month of the term three separate pieces of legislation were passed which, from the media's perspective, didn't fall into the "big fish" category. But from the vantage point of the Christian Life Commission, they were bills that weighed heavily on public policy in several areas of the Commission's program assignment. They represented significant commitments of staff time and resources. Their passage is an occasion for celebration.

Debate about warning labels on alcoholic beverage containers began in the 1960s. Hope for action during this term had almost vanished by the time hearings were held by a subcommittee of the Senate Commerce committee. Chaired by Senator Gore (D-Tennessee), the hearings included an impressive array of experts who supported the legislation. In

a strategy that proved disastrous to their position, the liquor industry did not participate in the hearings. The apparent indifference on the part of the industry proved its undoing.

Perhaps the key Senator was Danforth (R-Missouri), who, incidentally, was standing for reelection. Bob Terry, editor of the *Word & Way*, editorialized on the legislation. One hundred and fifty persons took Bob and the issue seriously enough to write to Danforth. As the waning days of Congress passed, the bill was attached to the Senate version of the omnibus drug bill. It passed both Senate and House.

The drug bill became the vehicle for another legislative victory. One of the more bitterly contested bills was the Child Pornography and Obscenity Enforcement Act. The bill was finally introduced in early 1988, months after having been drafted as embodiment of recommendations developed by the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography. Frustration over President Reagan's tardiness in getting the bill introduced subsequently was directed at the Congressional committees of jurisdiction.

The legislation was supported by the Religious Alliance Against Pornography, Citizens for Decency through Law, the American Family Association, James Dobson and his "Focus on the Family" ministry and a host of other organizations. The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission presented testimony supporting the legislation in both

House and Senate.

Hearings were first held in the House in late April. The legislation began moving in the Senate when Senator Heflin (D-Alabama) joined Senator DeConcini (D-Arizona) as a cosponsor of the legislation. Senator Thurmon (R-South Carolina), principal Senate sponsor of the legislation, and four other Republicans on the Senate Judiciary Committee were supporters. The two Democrat cosponsors gave the legislation sufficient support within the committee to anticipate successful passage, and hearings were held.

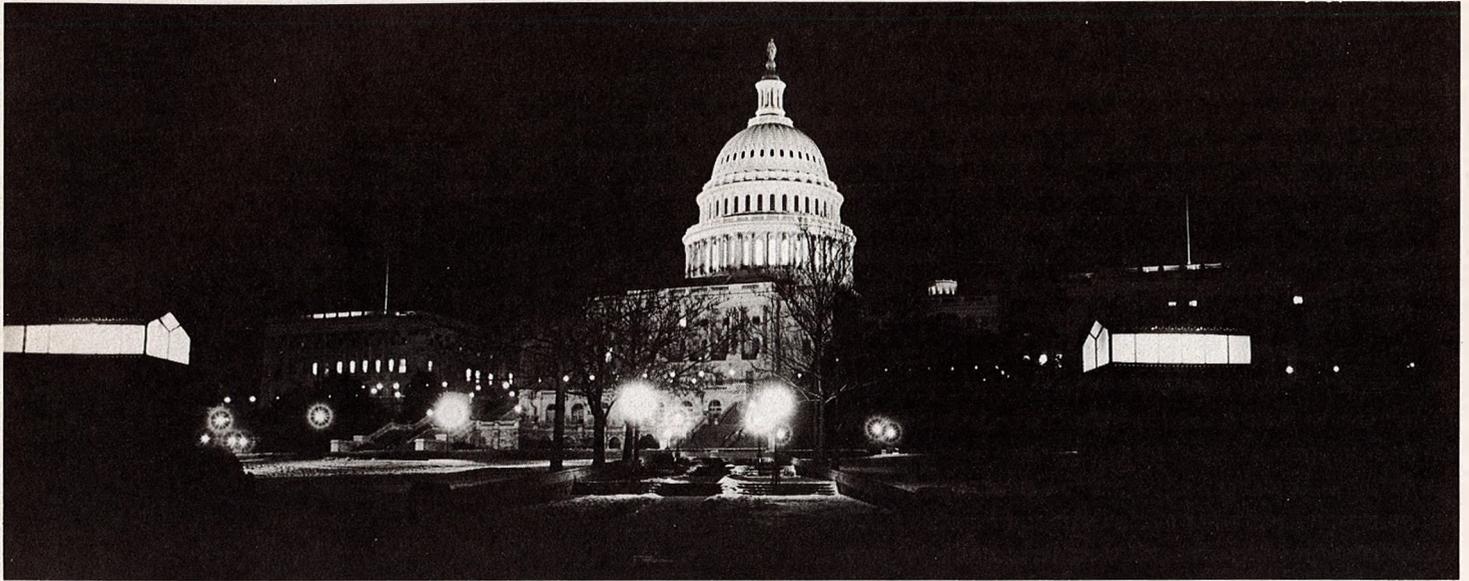
Controversy swirled around the legislation's section which would establish federal forfeiture provisions. These provisions would be new tools to use in stripping the

"When coupled with the legislation enacted earlier banning 'Dial-a-Porn' (which is currently being litigated on appeal), this Congress passed probably the most important anti-pornography legislation in our national history."

financial benefits from those who engage in child pornography and obscenity. Opponents of the legislation claimed any forfeiture provision would be unconstitutional. Proponents of the legislation generally took an "all or nothing" attitude. A stalemate looked inevitable.

The measure was eventually attached to the drug bill by the Senate, with minimal modification. After the House passed its version of the drug bill, a confer-

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ence committee worked out a compromise which retained the criminal forfeiture provision. The result? An aide to Senator Thurmond expressed satisfaction with the result. Pat Trueman, acting director of the National Obscenity Enforcement Unit, called the bill a "great victory" which "will greatly strengthen the hand of federal prosecutors."

When coupled with the legislation enacted earlier banning "Dial-a-Porn" (which is currently being litigated on appeal), this Congress passed probably the most important anti-pornography legislation in our national history.

The third bill to pass dealt with federal legislation governing gambling advertising, legislation which had existed since the 1890's. The corruption of the Louisiana lottery in the 19th century had led to the passing of federal legislation prohibiting the use of mail (this preceded radio and television) for interstate lottery advertising and sales. This legislation had been amended in recent years to allow advertising by lotteries in those states where legal.

Efforts at revoking this legisla-

tion surfaced in 1984. By 1987, the casino representatives had dropped out of sight and had been replaced by representatives for the newspaper, broadcasters, advertisers, the charitable gambling practitioners, and, it seemed, a supporting cast of thousands.

The bill almost passed the House of Representatives on the suspension calendar in late July, 1988. A telephone call from an alert aid in Congressman Wolf's (R-Virginia) office provided the opportunity for a "Dear Representative" letter from the Commission's Washington office the day of the vote. Observers were astounded that the two-thirds vote necessary for passage on suspension failed -- by twelve votes! The most promising course of action, in the face of the opposition and first vote was to seek to amend the legislation by adding a specific ban on casino advertising. Rep. Wolf and Rep. Shaw (R-Florida) carried the floor debate, and the amendment passed.

The overwhelming vote in the House indicated that the rhetoric for charitable gambling's privilege of advertising was going to be unstoppable. Prospects for holding the ban on casino advertising

looked good. The one area where ground might be gained related to lottery advertising in states where a lottery is not legal.

The best ally was--time! If the bill became "controversial," it probably would not pass. Suddenly, the supporters of the legislation were anxious to talk about the possibility of keeping the bill "noncontroversial." From our side, that was relatively simple. We were obviously beaten on the issue of charitable gambling being able to advertise, but perhaps we could get back the prohibition against advertising lotteries in states where lotteries were not legal.

The other side accepted. We lost a federal prohibition and on the advertising of charitable gambling.

But we "gained" by retaining two major prohibitions: The ban on casino advertising and the ban on interstate lottery advertising where not legal under state law.

Larry Braidfoot is Associate Director of the Christian Life Commission.

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