

# Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

MARCH-APRIL, 1994

## Bill requiring alcohol-ad warnings faces vote

By James A. Smith

Legislation requiring warning messages to be included in alcohol advertising will soon face its first vote in Congress before the Senate Commerce Committee. This providential timing allows Southern Baptists to focus on the bill during the weeks preceding this year's

observance of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday.

The Sensible Advertising and Family Education Act (SAFE Act), S. 674, would require health and safety warnings to be in all alcohol ads broadcast on radio and television or printed in newspapers, magazines or promotional displays. These warnings will

help balance the often misleading and glamorous ads for which the alcohol industry is so well known.

The legislation calls for seven rotating messages in print and broadcast advertisements. The print warnings contain more information than the broadcast ones and also include a toll-free

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## CLC issues 'framework' for health care reform

By Tom Strode

WASHINGTON - Describing Christians as "morally obligated" to address health care reform, the Christian Life Commission recently issued documents forming an ethical and theological framework by which to judge all such proposals.

The CLC specifically criticized aspects of President Clinton's proposal which endanger the sanctity

**See related articles on pages 14 and 15**

of human life, religious liberty, the physician-patient relationship, family relationships and the ministry of Southern Baptist churches and agencies.

"We feel a special responsibility to address health care reform because President Clinton is a member of a Southern Baptist congregation," CLC Executive

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Jim Herod of the SBC Annuity Board speaks during the CLC's Health Care Consultation in Washington, D.C., January 18. Also pictured, left to right, are the CLC's Richard Land and Ben Mitchell, and Tom Elkins, a medical doctor.

**Observe Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday  
March 20, 1994**

**See exciting new CLC products on pages 12 and 13.**



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LIGHT is printed  
on recycled paper 

*LIGHT*, a Christian ethics, public policy and religious liberty publication for pastors, teachers, state and national denominational workers, and other persons with special interest in applied Christianity, is published six times a year by the Christian Life Commission. *LIGHT* is sent free to individuals who request it. Voluntary subscriptions, for persons who wish to help defray costs of printing and mailing and to help underwrite a growing mailing list, are \$10 annually (6 issues). Checks should be made payable to *LIGHT*. Your canceled check will serve as your tax-deductible receipt.

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Southern Baptist Convention

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## PERSPECTIVE

### Legalize Drugs?

By Richard D. Land



Jack Hamm

The nation's surgeon general, Dr. Joycelyn Elders, recently suggested that legalizing drug use would greatly alleviate crime in America. Dr. Elders' comments, while stirring great controversy, focused attention on a debate that has been building in the country for the last several years. People representing virtually all shades of the political spectrum have suggested the "legalization" or the more politically correct "decriminalization" of currently illegal drugs such as marijuana, cocaine, heroin, and even LSD and amphetamines.

Faced with an epidemic of violent crime spawned by a seemingly ever-rising tide of drug abuse, some Americans have concluded that the only solution is to redefine illegal drug abuse out of existence, thus condemning even more Americans to the diminished lives and premature deaths which will inevitably follow in the wake of drug legalization. Just how deeply this lethal argument has permeated American society was revealed dramatically to me a few weeks ago. While traveling in North Carolina, I attended a typical small-town Rotary Club meeting. There, in the midst of middle-class American suburbia, I heard the case for legalization of drugs advanced boldly, advocated vigorously and received with a malignant mixture of resignation, fatigue and misinformation. Perhaps most shocking was the legal fraternity's view that drug use should be legalized, thus eliminating the profit motive of drug dealers and the crimes drug users commit to finance their addiction. The attempt during the Prohibition era to make alcohol illegal in America was cited repeatedly as an example of the futility of attempting to keep such widespread substance abuse illegal.

Prohibition is as false an example as it is dangerous. Perhaps the fairest thing that can be said about Prohibition is that America, after a long struggle, concluded reluctantly that it could just barely tolerate, with strict controls, the human suffering and social dislocation wrought by alcohol. Numerous factors contributed to this conclusion, among them deep-seated cultural and social patterns of alcohol use in American history.

However, there are serious and critical differences between alcohol and the drug use currently being advanced for legalization. First, alcohol was far more widely used by a far more universal cross section of American society for a far longer period of time than any of the currently illegal drugs. Second, as harmful as alcohol is, it is not nearly as inherently addictive as drugs such as heroin and cocaine. Third, alcohol, as powerful a drug as it is, does not as automatically lead as rapidly to the dangerous, antisocial behavior produced by drugs such as cocaine. Fourth, alcohol, while deadly in its long-term health impact, is not nearly as dangerous to the health of every user from the first usage onward.

These factors are among the many that guarantee that the legalization of drugs such as heroin and cocaine would have a calamitous and devastating impact on our society. With such drugs readily and legally available at affordable prices, their usage would soar. We would face the reality of large segments of the population, addicted to such drugs, putting themselves into a permanently drug-altered state until such time as their drug-ravaged bodies finally died. Are we prepared for that? Will we, as a nation, deal with the physically and emotionally impoverished in our inner cities by anesthetizing them with drugs and "warehousing" them for the rest of their drug-shortened lives? Is our answer to the spir-

(Continued on Page 4)



# Churches can help heal family violence

By Louis A. Moore

**Fact:** Some parents hit their children so hard their necks break or their internal organs collapse.

**Fact:** Parents or caregivers each year kill more than 2,000 children.

**Fact:** Some children shoot their parents with guns, stab them with knives or strangle them with ropes.

**Fact:** Some husbands break their wives' bones, knock out their teeth and leave permanent scars.

**Fact:** Parents abuse more than two million children each year.

**Fact:** One of four females under age 18 and one of every 10 males under age 18 say they have been sexually abused.

**Fact:** The incidence of wives injuring and even mutilating their husbands is on the increase.

**Fact:** Abused children are much more likely to grow up to become abusers themselves. This keeps the cycle flowing through many generations.

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Family violence, including child and spouse abuse, has reached epidemic proportions in the United States today.

This abuse takes three forms: physical, emotional and sexual.

Sadly, Christians find that the finger of guilt sometimes points back to them as well.

"Before we become smug and perhaps self-righteous, consider that incestuous abuse tends to involve religious, churchgoing men as perpetrators," says Joe E. Richardson, Jr., a psychologist who is a personnel counselor at the Baptist Sunday School Board. "Abuse also crosses all races, religions and socioeconomic backgrounds. In other words, abuse is also a Southern Baptist problem."

"The church must accept the



Here are  
some  
suggestions  
for what  
Christians  
can do in  
response  
to the  
tragedy of  
family  
violence  
and abuse

1. Recognize the influence that alcohol, illegal drugs, pornography and television violence play in violence and abuse in the home. Work to free families of these moral evils.
2. Remember that abusing parents also are often tragic victims. Trapped by an abusive past, the incredible pressures of their lives and their own violence, they need Christian compassion, help and ministry. Recognize that many such parents are church members. Develop programs that will help them.
3. Discover what local agencies, such as police departments, hospitals and children's service agencies, are doing. Cooperate with them. Help organize a local, coordinated effort if one does not exist in your community.
4. Sponsor or help organize a local support group to help abused children and abusive parents.
5. Report cases of child abuse. The law protects you, and Christian duty demands it.
6. If violence exists in your family, seek help. People nearby in the family of God will understand and help.

fact that abuse—physical, sexual, emotional and neglect—occurs within the church," he says.

Ocala, Fla., police chief Lee McGehee, an active Southern Baptist and a Christian Life Commission trustee, says, "While I feel that a majority of child abuse occurs in unchurched families, I have seen abuse—especially emotional abuse—within Christian families. Within these families, however, are other signs of dysfunctionality: pressures for success, financial security, community or church reputations and so forth. Just because we are a body of believers doesn't isolate us from Satan's attacks."

Whether inside or outside the church, abuse is becoming a front-

burner issue for many Southern Baptists.

"Churches seem to have a growing awareness to openly address child abuse," says McGehee. "I have noticed increased discussion on SBCNet among churches who are developing policies to ensure positive, healthy programs for children and youth."

Churches can do many things to address this issue, says David Gushee, assistant professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "The greatest answer to this problem in our society is that we have lives tamed by the Spirit of God."

"The Bible clearly teaches that

*(Continued on Page 4)*



## Family violence found both inside, outside of churches

(Continued from Page 3)

in marriage men and women are to be loving, gentle and kind to one another and to exhibit the fruits of the Spirit. That contrasts markedly to the scenes of domestic violence."

Gushee says pastors need to address from their pulpits the family-abuse issue. "It is not God's will that we would take the family and make that a place where people get abused, and that fact ought to be said from the pulpit. Therapeutic approaches are part of the answer, but straight-out preaching is what is most needed from our churches."

Also, churches need to offer ministries that grapple with and address directly the issue, he says. "The church ought to be a place of community support—a trusting environment—where people can deal openly and authentically with things they are wrestling with, such as family violence and abuse," he says.

As a police chief, McGehee



Richardson

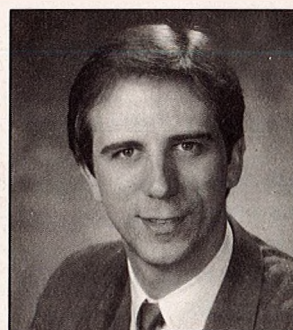
says he is gravely concerned about the statistics that show child abusers were themselves victims of child abuse.

Gushee says this generational connection between those who abuse and those who were abused helps explain how abuse turns up among Christians as well.

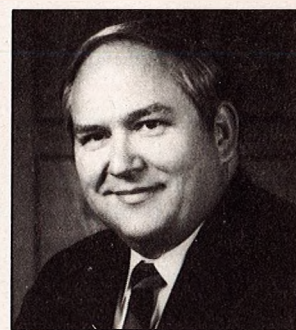
"Christians can't exempt themselves from having grown up in that kind of environment," he says.

In an article in *Church Administration* magazine, Richardson advocated that churches tighten their guidelines and procedures to keep incidences of physical, emotional and sexual abuse from occurring in church settings.

"In several cases of child sexual abuse with which I'm familiar involving an active church member, the family was allowed to simply disappear," he says. "The abuse never was reported or



Gushee



McGehee

investigated. Those church members aware of the problem had a variety of reasons for not handling the situation.... Doing nothing generally springs from not wanting to accept the reality of the problem."

McGehee says he also believes Christians must confront underlying societal evils, such as alcohol and drug abuse, pornography and television violence, which contribute to family violence and physical, sexual and emotional abuse today.

"I recently saw a political cartoon that showed two men standing on a street corner. Behind them were signs saying: 'Now playing: Blood Bath', 'Abortions R Us', 'Women in Chains.' The caption under that cartoon said, 'I just don't understand why kids have such a lack of respect for human life these days.'"

## Land: We must not legalize illegal drugs

(Continued from Page 2)

itual hunger of our people to ease the pain of their nihilistic conclusions about life's meaninglessness by encouraging drug-altered and numbed minds? Do we realize what we would be saying about ourselves as a civilization if we accept such a foolish and false panacea for our drug and crime problems?

Make no mistake about it! We would be writing our nation's obituary. We might just as well write

"Rest in peace" across America because it would be an acknowledgment that the soul of the nation had expired. The epidemic of drug use afflicting America is symptomatic of a deeper crisis of the spirit and the soul.

As believers we are called to be salt and to do our best to stop the illicit traffic in, and use of, these terrible drugs. In obedience to our Savior's command to be light, we must proclaim the inherent meaning and purpose of every individual human life to answer

the void and emptiness which has driven so many of our fellow countrymen to seek—if not happiness—at least momentary pleasure or oblivion in heroin or cocaine.

May we never surrender to the *status quo* and allow it to dictate what is legal or illegal, much less what is right or wrong. Instead, let us resolve to change actions, behaviors and habits with the salt of the law and to change attitudes, beliefs and hearts with the light of the gospel.



# Witt knows the cost of alcohol consumption

By Louis A. Moore

Claude Witt, of Louisville, Ky., knows personally the high cost of human tragedy caused by the consumption of alcoholic beverages.

In 1941, an accident caused by a drunken driver killed his uncle, for whom he was named. Witt was six at the time.

Then seven years later, another accident caused by a drunken driver killed his father. Witt was 13 at the time.

Neither Witt's uncle nor his father consumed alcoholic beverages. "They were victims of alcohol," he says.

"I have seen firsthand the impact of alcohol on families and the destruction of human life to the point that I feel God has called me to focus my ministry on this moral problem.

"One of the most tragic things in America is to see people whose lives have been destroyed by alcohol," he says.

And focus on the issue, he has. The Louisville *Courier-Journal* once said The Temperance League of Kentucky, which Witt has headed since 1986, is the strongest nonpartisan organization in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

The League focuses its attentions on two areas:

- the state legislature,
- local wet-dry elections.

Anytime a Kentucky county or a city has a local-option election on whether to allow the sale of alcoholic beverages within its jurisdiction, Witt and his team engage the battle and usually are victorious.

Seventy-seven of the 120 counties in Kentucky remain dry. Each year about seven counties or cities in the state hold wet-dry elections. Witt and The Temperance League have defeated the pro-alcohol forces in all but two



Claude Witt

***"One of the most tragic things in America is to see people whose lives have been destroyed by alcohol," he says.***

instances in the past five years.

At the same time, Witt and the League keep a sharp eye out for any maneuvering in the Kentucky Legislature that might signal a change in favor of the pro-wet forces. And when they sense something brewing, they leap into combat.

"We see ourselves as watchdogs over the Legislature," he says.

The League's goal is clear and simple: expose the danger of alcohol and drugs.

"Alcohol makes alcoholics," says Witt, who rejects the notion that alcoholism is a physical disease.

"It is a sin disease," he says. "People become sick because of the sin of drinking alcoholic beverages.

"If it were true that alcoholism is a [physical] disease, then it would be the only disease that we

bottle and advertise and that is self-induced."

Does he sound like a Prohibitionist?

Absolutely, says Witt, a trustee on the board of the Christian Life Commission.

"People who say Prohibition didn't work need to look at the statistics. Prohibition lessened by more than half the total consumption of alcohol per person.

"Just think," says Witt, "how many health-care costs could be eliminated in the United States if we could reduce alcohol consumption. One-fourth of the people in hospital beds today are there because of an alcohol problem."

Besides cirrhosis of the liver and other physical ailments alcohol causes, alcohol also plays a role directly or indirectly in psychiatric illnesses, Witt says.

"Every alcoholic touches at least six other people," he says.

"To me, it's the number-one moral problem, or cancer, in America."

Witt believes churches should get tougher on social drinkers as well as alcoholics in their midst.

"It saddens me that this problem receives so little attention in our churches," he says.

Does he think Southern Baptist churches ought to disfellowship members who consume alcoholic beverages?

"That would be too harsh," he says. "But I would require people to be educated about what the consumption of alcohol does to their testimony.

"I go into churches all the time where the pastors tell me to be very forceful in my stand against consumption of alcohol because if they did themselves they would have to leave the church."

Witt is also affiliated with the American Council on Alcohol Problems, which Curt Scarborough, another CLC trustee, leads.



(Continued from Page 1)

Director Richard Land said at a Jan. 19 news conference, "and many Southern Baptists are deeply opposed to numerous elements of the President's proposed agenda on health care reforms."

The documents, "Health Care Reform: A Moral Preamble" and "Health Care Reform: A Statement of Concerns," were formulated and issued by the CLC after a Jan. 18 consultation sponsored in Washington, D.C., by the agency. The private consultation featured medical ethicists, health care workers and Southern Baptist agency representatives.

The documents will be used as an "interpretive and evaluative grid through which all proposed health care reform legislation will be analyzed and critiqued," Land said. The CLC is not supporting one proposal over another, Land said.

The CLC, which plans to distribute the documents to all SBC pastors, hopes Southern Baptists will use the statements to impact their senators and representatives, thereby moving health care reform in a more satisfactory direction, Land said.

"We would love to have an embarrassment of riches," he said. "We would love to have four or five plans that emerge as sort of hybrid proposals that all [meet] our criteria with equal satisfaction."

While the "Moral Preamble" provides a theological and philosophical framework for addressing health care, the "Statement of Concerns" specifies six fundamental concerns it has about the President's plan and those proposed by others.

The CLC already had announced its opposition to the President's proposal as long as it included abortion coverage.

The Commission also expressed concern about health care

## Health care consultation produces reform guidelines

at the end of life. It will "contest any plan which opens the door to or actively promotes euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide as a method of reducing medical expenditures near the end of life," the "Statement" says.

On religious liberty, the document says, "It is embarrassing that a President who claims the Baptist heritage of religious freedom would consider so violating the consciences of millions of pro-life Americans by forcing them to pay for abortion with their taxes."

It also calls Clinton's proposal

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of a "conscience clause," which allows hospitals, physicians and nurses not to perform abortions, "merely smoke and mirrors," because the President has acknowledged taxes and employer contributions, apparently even from those morally opposed, would underwrite abortions indirectly.

The other four concerns expressed in the "Statement" are:

- Allocation of limited resources — "Health care rationing based on factors other than medical need and patient willingness are ethically suspect. We will oppose any form of restricted access based on age, quality of life or disability."

- Effect on Southern Baptist churches and agencies — "The consultation made clear that every Southern Baptist, every Southern Baptist church and every Southern Baptist organization will be impacted significantly by any of the health care reform proposals currently under consideration. We are concerned that Southern Baptists, along with most Americans, will be worse off under the Clinton blueprint."

- Violation of family relationships — "We will resist any plan which will fund abortion counseling, contraceptive distribution to minors, medical care without parental consent and school-based clinics which facilitate these activities."

- Revamping of traditional physician-patient relationships — "The insinuation of health care alliances into the relationship threatens the quality of care and erodes the level of trust between the physician and patient. A physician's best efforts to preserve human life must never be impeded by harmful government intrusion."

Representatives of the President's health care proposal, including Hillary Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, were invited to the consultation but declined.

The only person sponsoring a health care reform bill to participate in the consultation was Sen. Don Nickles, R.-Okla. He spoke for about 30 minutes about his legislation, "The Consumer Choice Health Security Act."

Other sponsors of legislation who were invited but did not attend were Rep. Dick Armey, R.-Tex.; Rep. Jim Cooper, D.-Tenn., and Sen. Phil Gramm, R.-Tex.



By C. Ben Mitchell

An alcohol-related traffic death occurs every 20 minutes. Alcohol causes almost 100,000 deaths per year. About 90 percent of unwanted pregnancies occur as a result of the influence of alcohol. Up to 36 percent of suicide victims have a history of alcohol abuse or were drinking shortly before their suicides. One snort of cocaine can kill a person. The World Health Organization predicts that in the next three decades the number of women who die of smoking will more than double to over 1 million per year. And we could go on and on.

But that's not the half of it. Alcohol and other drugs are spiritually dangerous! In Galatians 5:19-26, Paul contrasts the "works of the flesh" with the "fruit of the Spirit." The works of the flesh (the sin nature) are expressions of the cravings of an unregenerate heart. He describes three classes of activities of the flesh: impurity ("sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery"), paganism ("idolatry, witchcraft"), and intemperance ("hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like"). Alcohol and other drugs are mentioned twice. First, in verse 20, the word for witchcraft is the word from which we get the word "pharmacy." Drug use and the occult have also been friends to each other. Second, in verse 21, drunkenness or intoxication is associated with the use of alcohol or other drugs.

Frighteningly, Paul declares that those persons whose lives are characterized by these practices "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." A lifestyle of intoxication is evidence that a person is not a child of God! Paul echoes this important warning in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 and Ephesians 5:5. Alcohol and other drugs are both physically and spiritually deadly.

## 'The works of the flesh'

(Galatians 5:19)



**Observe Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday  
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But the fruit of the Holy Spirit is, among the other characteristics listed, "self-control." Attempting to master our sinful appetites and passions is a mark of a person who is a Christian and who is, therefore, indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Christians possess the power of the Spirit to resist the use of intoxicating and disease-causing substances.

Likewise, those who belong to Jesus Christ should resist the "media-hype" that alcohol and other drugs need to prosper in our society. We should also:

- Support federal, state and local legislation aimed at restrict-

ing ads for alcohol and cigarettes.

- Support school groups that emphasize and reinforce abstinence.

- Call on legislators, athletes and others not to accept money from death-producing substances.

On Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday and every other day of the year, walk in the Spirit and do not manifest the works of the flesh.

*C. Ben Mitchell is the staff member of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission assigned to the issue of alcohol and drug abuse prevention.*



By Brian & Sheila Bertholomey

In its stated form this question presupposes that natural methods of birth control are biblically acceptable, but that artificial methods of birth control should be scrutinized in light of biblical authority. The question isn't whether Christians may participate in timing, spacing and planning family size, but which methods of planning are acceptable in light of Scripture.

If the question is as simple as rhythm versus "the pill" or natural versus artificial, it can be simply answered. Those artificial birth control methods which kill the fertilized egg or kill the tiny new human being by preventing him or her from adhering to the wall of the womb and being nourished are not acceptable.

Implicit biblical evidence indicates that life begins at conception. Theologian R. C. Sproul states in his book *Abortion: A Rational Look at an Emotional*

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***The question isn't whether Christians may participate in timing, spacing and planning family size, but which methods of planning are acceptable in light of Scripture.***

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*Issue*, "The Bible clearly indicates that unborn babies are considered human living persons before they are born. The weight of the biblical evidence is that life begins at conception." Sproul cites such passages as Psalm 139:13-16 and Isaiah 49:1-5. These and other passages credit God with fashioning the human in the womb. The prohibition of the Sixth Com-

## Artificial birth control is biblically acceptable



Brian & Sheila Bertholomey

mandment, "Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. 20:13), decries any act of feticide. These artificial methods, known as abortifacients, include: IUDs, the abortion drug RU-486, the so-called "morning after" pill and oral contraceptives known as "progesterone only" pills.

Are there types of artificial birth control methods which are acceptable for Christian husbands and wives to use? Yes, we believe there are, but before a believing couple can feel right in using them, they may need to answer the more complex question: Is birth control (artificial or natural) biblically acceptable?

There are those who believe that any interruption of the procreative process is challenging the sovereignty of God. The Catholic Church's position on birth control is that every sexual act must be open to potential life. We can find no explicit or implicit Scripture which supports this belief. The procreative cells, as individual, unfertilized sperm and egg, cannot produce life. They are cells of the human body, as are skin cells, muscle cells or nerve cells. There

is no biblical prohibition against the destruction of these cells (unless you take this example to the extreme of homicide or suicide). Dry skin, hair cutting and surgery destroy cells. The female body itself naturally destroys the unfertilized eggs on a monthly cycle during menses. Scripture does not teach that individuals exist before conception. We know from Isaiah 49:1-2 and Jeremiah 1:4-5 that God designed and had a plan for us before we were born, but we were not human life before conception. Artificial or natural birth control methods which prevent fertilization or which place a barrier between egg and sperm to prevent conception cannot be considered to be morally reprehensible or biblically unacceptable. Once conception occurs, any act which purposefully causes the destruction of the fertilized egg can be considered feticide and, as such, totally contrary to Scripture.

While we believe there is no biblical prohibition to the use of non-abortifacient birth control, we do believe that the Bible does give us guidance on potential use and misuse. Birth control can only be biblically acceptable within the bonds of marriage. To condone any methods short of abstinence between unmarried partners is to condone immorality, which the Scripture explicitly forbids. "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral" (Heb. 13:4).

In the Genesis 2:21-25 creation passage, we see that God ordained marriage, and He created us for sexual love and unity within marriage. In Psalm 127:3, we read

*(Continued on Page 10)*



By Emmett &amp; Debra Dykes

After searching the Holy Scriptures for specific examples and principles regarding procreation, we unhesitatingly state that there is no biblical defense in favor of artificial birth control. From the very beginning we have been told by God to "be fruitful and multiply." This command has been repeated several times, and never has been nullified under any set of circumstances. In fact, mathematically, childbearing couples, on average, need at least five offspring in order to "multiply." This is due to childless families, celibate singles, homosexual lifestyles and early age death tolls. God may send only one or two children (example: Sarah, Rachel) or He may send six or seven (Hannah, Mary) or even more (Susanna Wesley). It should be by His plans, for He desires godly offspring (Mal. 2:15).

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**After searching the Holy Scriptures, . . . we unhesitatingly state that there is no biblical defense in favor of artificial birth control.**

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God calls children gifts (Ps. 127:3), rewards (Ps. 128:4), blessings (Ps. 37:26), heritage (Gen. 22:17), fruit (Deut. 7:12-14), arrows (Ps. 127:4), glory (Prov. 17:6), exaltation (1 Chron. 25:5), etc. Who are we to contradict God? Or to refuse His gift? Esau "despised" his blessing, thus rejecting his birthright. He was later labeled

## Artificial birth control is not biblically acceptable



Emmett & Debra Dykes

an "immoral and godless" person (Heb. 12:16).

Some say that because of financial reasons and the "evils of our day," we Christians should have few, if any, children. The Israelites did not heed this advice even during their bondage as slaves in Egypt (Ex. 1:12, 17, 20) and Babylon (Jer. 29:4, 6).

Just think, if *we* had continued bearing the children we *should* have borne, America would have a far different makeup throughout its leadership.

Some Christian leaders misquote Genesis 2:7, making strong implication that *man* has the power to choose *when* to "give breath" to offspring. This Scripture clearly focuses on God as the Life-giver, not man. The large number of infertile couples attests to that.

Others say that the Onan incident (Gen. 38:8-10) is irrelevant to the birth control issue. Here again, God's Word plainly says that Onan was killed by God because "what *he did* was

displeasing in the sight of the Lord." Onan wasted his seed on the ground so as not to fill a fruitful womb after already performing the conjugal act. Deuteronomy 25:5-10 explains what should have happened to him if he had *only* broken the "law of redemption": He would have lost a sandal and the wife would have spit on him. There is obviously a big difference between the two penalties. Onan's younger brother, Shelah, was not killed. He only broke the "law of redemption," and did not practice birth control.

God also had a great deal to say about the value of our sexual organs. If they are torn, bruised, crushed or cut, God labels them as a defect or injury (Lev. 21-22). In fact, a wife was to have her hand cut off if she seized a man's genitals even if trying to protect her husband in a fight (Deut. 25:11-12). The death penalty accompanied a number of sexual abuses (Lev. 20:13, 15, 16, 18). No one emasculated was allowed to enter the assembly of the Lord (Deut. 23:1).

We wonder if urologists and gynecologists would treat their vasectomy or tubal ligation patients differently if they thought these penalties were still imposed today! Perhaps they would agree: "If it ain't broke, don't 'fix' it!" God designed our bodies to function by His order. The woman's (womb-man) natural function (Rom. 1:26), created by God and different from man's function, is childbearing and breast-feeding.

Contraceptives have been around since 1900 B.C. in Egypt.

(Continued on Page 10)



## Point

### **Bertholomeys: Artificial birth control is biblically acceptable**

*(Continued from Page 8)*

that children are a blessing from God. He made these wonderful provisions to develop a human community which would glorify Him, extend the kingdom and care for the needs of the world around us. Christian couples must prayerfully and carefully examine their motives for contraception, particularly sterilization. Self-indulgence, materialism and cultural norms should not be the basis for family planning. To refuse the "blessing" of children for such comparative trivialities would surely affront our gracious God. When the decision is made to space or limit the number of children in order to provide adequate resources and time for individual nurturing, it must be made

prayerfully and for the ultimate glory of God.

Health may also be a valid reason for Christian spouses to consider birth control. A genetic predisposition which would put children at risk for a serious disease may cause couples to prevent pregnancy. The health of the mother may also be a valid consideration for contraception. In both of these, prevention of conception, not abortion, is the only biblically acceptable reproductive choice.

Dr. Hilton Terrell, editor of *The Journal of Biblical Ethics in Medicine*, finds no biblical ban on planning. He states, "God works by design, and man, made in His image, has the capacity to plan." Galatians teaches that where

there is no law, our choices are free. Within the boundaries God has set out, Christian liberty allows us to use that which is not prohibited, if we seek to honor Him with our obedience and faithfulness.

*Brian and Sheila Bertholomey are lay leaders at Memorial Baptist Church in Pulaski, Va. Brian is a general dentist, and Sheila is a community mental health administrator. Brian is a deacon, and Sheila teaches an adult ladies' Sunday School class. They are both very active in the crisis pregnancy ministry in their church and in the New River Valley of Virginia. They have two young adult children.*

## Counterpoint

### **Dykes: Artificial birth control is not biblically acceptable**

*(Continued from Page 9)*

Up until 1958 the church condemned birth control. Christian leaders and theologians consistently spoke and wrote against it: Protestants like Charles Spurgeon, the Pilgrims, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Matthew Henry and Anthony Comstock, just to name a few. But, Margaret Sanger's Planned Parenthood propaganda has been accepted wholeheartedly by today's generation. Psalm 1 says not to walk in the counsel of the ungodly. Today's "church" seems to be running with this wicked counsel.

Christians risk the many health problems incurred by artificial birth control and sterilization such as breast cancer, birth defects, blood clotting,

embolism, heart attack, stroke, liver tumor, diabetes, prostate cancer and dozens more. It is also a medical fact that the IUD induces abortion and "the pill" causes abortion 2%-50% of the time. (With 30 million women, that's 1.5 million annually, minimum.) Christians are to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1) and to glorify God in our bodies (1 Cor. 6:20), for they are the temple of God (2 Cor. 6:16). Can we do that and use artificial birth control? No.

If a couple feels that childbearing would be dangerous, then perhaps self-control (a fruit of the Spirit) through Natural Family Planning or the Billings Method should be considered.

We must stop doing what is right in our own eyes (Judges 17:6) and begin to be filled with

discernment (Prov. 2), leaning not on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5-6), but trusting God. The whole Bible is profitable for reproof and instruction (1 Tim. 3:16). Jesus Himself directs us to the Old Testament (Matt. 5:17-19). The New Testament refers to it more than 1,600 times.

As we seek the kingdom of God in our family planning, He will add all things to us that we need (Matt. 6:33). God is the best family planner.

*Emmett and Debra Dykes are active at Palma Sola Bay Baptist Church in Bradenton, Fla. He is a deacon and she is a Sunday School teacher. Debra is a freelance Christian writer, and they have compiled a Bible study entitled Freedom in Godly Family Planning. They have four children.*



# Alcohol-ad warnings bill faces vote

(Continued from Page 1)

phone number providing more details on alcohol use. (The box on this page illustrates the broadcast warnings.)

S. 674's lead sponsors are Senators Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., and Paul Simon, D-Ill.

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission is represented on the steering committee of the 85-member Coalition for the Prevention of Alcohol Problems, which supports the legislation.

The National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) and the alcohol industry have begun a fierce lobbying effort against S. 674 after failing to derail the bill in the Senate late last year. The NAB sought the support of Thurmond, as chief sponsor of the SAFE Act, for an alcohol "education campaign" in exchange for not moving forward on the bill.

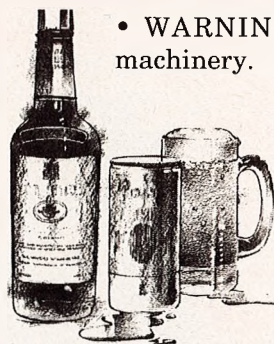
The Coalition for the Prevention of Alcohol Problems recommended Sen. Thurmond not

## Here are the broadcast warning messages:

- SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: If you are pregnant, don't drink alcohol. Alcohol may cause mental retardation and other birth defects.

- WARNING: If you are under the age of 21, it's illegal to buy alcoholic beverages.

- WARNING: Alcohol is a drug and may be addictive.



- WARNING: Don't drink and drive or operate heavy machinery.

- WARNING: Don't mix alcohol with medications and other drugs.

- WARNING: Alcohol poisoning can kill you. Don't drink too much too fast.

- WARNING: Drinking increases your risk of high blood pressure, liver disease and cancer.

accept the NAB offer because it was an inadequate substitute for the bill. Sen. Thurmond agreed with the coalition, and a vote in

the Senate Commerce Committee is expected sometime during March.

The NAB has shown a history of putting forward "educational campaigns" as a means of stopping legislation which impacts the broadcast industry. The Center for Science in the Public Interest reports the advertising industry's (Ad Council) own data for 1992 indicate that even popular drinking and driving messages ran in prime time only 4 percent of the time—the time when children and adults need the balanced information offered by the SAFE Act.

The time for action is now! Please contact your senators and urge them to support S. 674. Senators who are on the Commerce Committee (see box on this page) must hear from hundreds of Southern Baptists from their state to urge them to vote for S. 674. Only a massive grass-roots effort will overwhelm the powerful political lobbies in Washington which oppose the SAFE Act.

## Key Votes in Senate Commerce Committee



At least 10 members of the Commerce Committee need to vote affirmatively to move the bill to the Senate floor. Right now, four votes are solid; several other senators have indicated a willingness to consider compromise legislation. Here is a list of the Senate Commerce Committee. **Supporters of the bill are marked with a +. Those members whose votes we absolutely need are identified with an \*. Now is the time to let them know of your support for health and safety messages in alcohol advertising.**

### Democrats:

Ernest F. Hollings (SC)+  
Daniel K. Inouye (HI)+  
Wendell H. Ford (KY)  
James J. Exon (NE)\*  
John D. (Jay) Rockefeller IV (WV)+  
John F. Kerry (MA)\*  
John B. Breaux (LA)\*  
Richard F. Bryan (NV)  
Charles S. Robb (VA)\*  
Byron L. Dorgan (ND)\*  
Harlan Mathews (TN)

### Republicans:

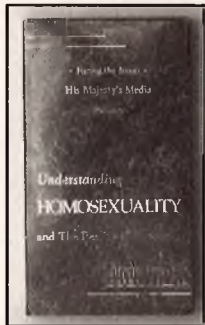
John C. Danforth (MO)  
Bob Packwood (OR)  
Larry Pressler (SD)\*  
Ted Stevens (AK)+  
John McCain (AZ)  
Conrad Burns (MT)  
Slade Gorton (WA)  
Trent Lott (MS)\*  
Kay Bailey Hutchinson (TX)\*



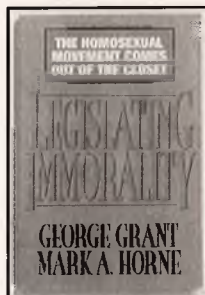
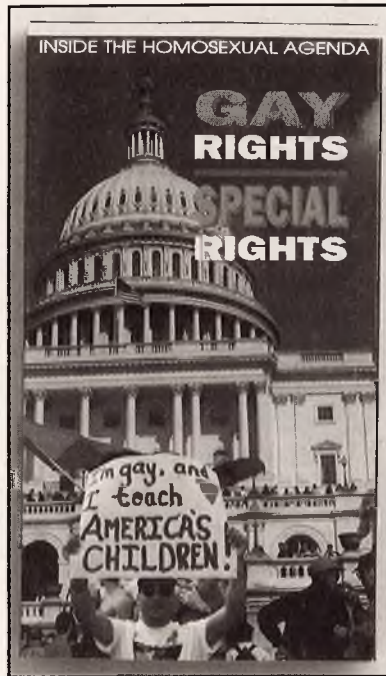
# You

can make a difference in the fight against alcohol and drug abuse and the homosexual rights movement.

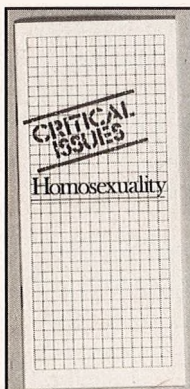
The video Gay Rights/Special Rights defines what the Gay Rights Movement wants today.  
\$19.95



The video Understanding Homosexuality details how the gospel of Jesus Christ is liberating males and females who are trapped in the homosexual lifestyle today.  
\$19.95



The new book *Legislating Immorality* (Moody Press) is one of the most important books on the Christian market today!  
\$9.99



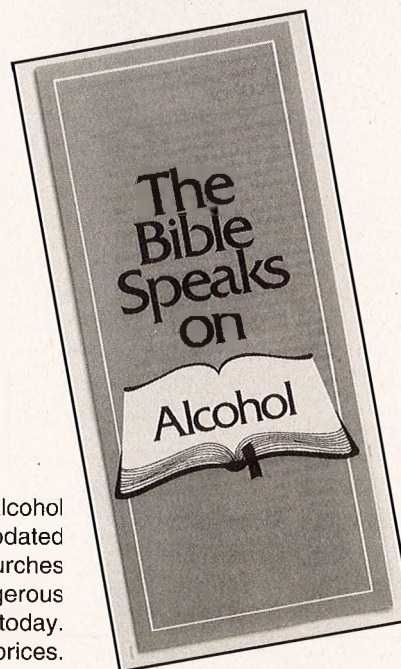
The newly revised "Critical Issues: Homosexuality" and the brand new "Critical Issues: The Homosexual Political Agenda" offer insights every Christian needs. Each sells for 33-cents.

Because of the Gay Rights Movement, homosexuality has moved to the forefront of ethical/moral debates today. Every Christian needs to be aware of what this Movement advocates. What they say will surprise you. What they do will alarm you! And it should motivate you with righteous indignation mixed with Christian love for the people who are being victimized by it.

The Christian Life Commission has produced and assembled an arsenal of material to help Christians and local churches understand this issue and prepare to confront it.



These new bulletin inserts for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday will help you and your church focus on this important issue today.  
6-cents each



Other Christian Life Commission tracts on alcohol and drugs, including tobacco, have been updated and in some cases redesigned to give churches the tools they need to address these dangerous addictions in our society today. See the order form for prices.



# Resources

Quantity	✓ Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention	Price	\$Total
_____	<b>New Bulletin Insert</b> for Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday (undated, color)	\$ .06	_____
_____	<b>New Poster</b> - For Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Sunday (undated, color)	.95	_____
_____	Pamphlet - The Bible Speaks on Alcohol	.17	_____
_____	<b>Revised Pamphlet</b> - Issues and Answers: Alcohol	.17	_____
_____	Pamphlet - Critical Issues: A Case for Abstinence	.33	_____
_____	<b>New Sermon Outline</b> on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention (Romans 14:1-15:6)	.22	_____
_____	<b>Fact Sheet</b> - Hard Facts About Alcohol and Other Drugs	.22	_____
_____	Guide - Alcohol Awareness: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Parents	4.25	_____
_____	<b>Alcohol Resource Set</b> (one copy of each of above 8 resources)	5.50	_____
_____	Guide - Drug Awareness: A Guide for Youth and Youth Leaders	1.95	_____
_____	Poster - Drug Awareness Promotional Wall Poster	.75	_____
_____	<b>New Pamphlet</b> - Christian Life Style for Youth: Drugs	.35	_____
_____	<b>Revised Pamphlet</b> - Issues and Answers: Drugs	.17	_____
_____	<b>Revised Pamphlet</b> - Issues and Answers: Smoking	.17	_____
_____	<b>Drugs Resource Set</b> (one copy of each of above 5 resources)	2.95	_____
_____	<b>Videotape</b> : Cocaine: The Broken Promise 1/2" VHS, 65 min. (for all ages)	16.95	_____
_____	<b>Videotape</b> : Your Family and Alcohol 1/2" VHS, 14 minutes	12.95	_____
<b>✓ Homosexuality Resources</b>			
_____	<b>New Pamphlet</b> - Critical Issues: Homosexuality	.33	_____
_____	<b>New Pamphlet</b> - Critical Issues: The Homosexual Political Agenda	.33	_____
_____	<b>Videotape</b> : Understanding Homosexuality and the Reality of Change 1/2" VHS, 60 min.	19.95	_____
_____	<b>Videotape</b> : Gay Rights/Special Rights 1/2" VHS, 35 min.	19.95	_____
		\$Total	

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P.O.Box (For billing only) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Bill to (if other than above) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person placing order \_\_\_\_\_



# Light from the Capital

## Tithes to fund abortion under Clinton plan

President Clinton's health care proposal would force churches and denominations to pay for abortions or face the consequences, a Christian Life Commission staff member recently said in a congressional hearing.

"Every congregation as an employer would be coerced to take money from the offering plate and offer it up to abortionists," said Ben Mitchell, the CLC's director of biomedical and life issues. "The choices would be extremely limited: Pay up and shut up or face the harsh repercussions of following religious conscience. There would be no 'safe harbor.'"

The CLC will "oppose vigorously" the Clinton proposal and any other plan which includes abortion coverage in its basic benefits package, Mitchell told a House of Representatives subcommittee.

"This is such a critical concern for us that we are prepared to oppose any reform which is otherwise excellent if it also includes abortion on demand," he said.

Mitchell offered his warning in a Jan. 26 hearing on women's health and the Clinton plan before the Health and Environment Subcommittee of the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

His testimony included pointed criticism of the "conscience clause" language in Clinton's plan.

"The so-called 'religious exemption' or 'conscience clause' is a presidential placebo for the pain of a wounded conscience, intended to try to make religious persons feel better about their participation in the morally nauseating practice of abortion," Mitchell said in written testimony also prepared for delivery but removed because of a time limit.

"Religious institutions will either harden their consciences toward the killing of unborn babies, as the President's plan tempts them to do, or religious institutions will follow their consciences by engaging in widespread civil disobedience," he said. "In a nation which has ranked religious freedom as its first liberty, it is unconscionable that our government would force us to make that choice."

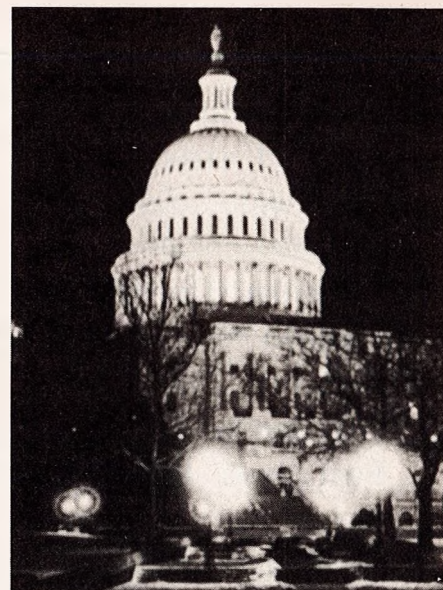
The CLC and other pro-life groups have described the "conscience clause" as meaningless. Though the Clinton plan does not require pro-life physicians, nurses and hospitals to perform abortions, an administration official has said the "conscience clause" does not apply to health care plans. Taxes and employer contributions, apparently even from those morally opposed, would underwrite abortions indirectly, Clinton has told reporters.

Clinton is a member of a Southern Baptist church in Little Rock, Ark. In numerous annual meetings in recent years, the SBC has passed resolutions opposing abortion, except to save the mother's life, and abortion funding.

While abortion was not the only issue considered in the hearing, it was the most divisive one discussed by the 20 witnesses. In addition to Mitchell, four other pro-life witnesses testified, but a majority of the panelists addressing abortion called for its coverage to be included in health care reform.

The CLC opposes elective abortion, Mitchell told the subcommittee, not only because it is wrong ethically, theologically and medically, but because it fails to regard women's health as a fundamental value.

The practice of elective abortion is, in fact, contrary to women's health," he said. "We are



troubled by the probability that studies of the link between abortion and women's health will not be investigated adequately.

"Whatever our lawmakers choose to do, we must be true to our God, our convictions and our conscience," Mitchell said. "We cannot do otherwise. We hope we will be able to stand with our elected officials for revisions and reforms in health care that will evidence our commitment to the intrinsic value of every human life."

The CLC sponsored a consultation on health care Jan. 18 in Washington, D.C. Two documents formulated as a result of the consultation were included in the written testimony submitted to the committee

— Tom Strode

## Express your opinion

The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

White House Comment Line  
(202) 456-1111

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable \_\_\_\_\_  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Capitol Switchboard  
(202) 224-3121



# Health Care Reform: A Moral Preamble

**WE BELIEVE** as citizens of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, the Great Physician, we are called to participate in the current public dialogue on health care reform. As our Creator is actively concerned and involved in all of life, we, as His disciples, are morally obligated to speak to this value-laden issue. Furthermore, since we are citizens of the United States of America, the addition of our voices is a legitimate expression of the American democratic enterprise and helps to provide a moral and spiritual grounding for the dialogue.

**WE BELIEVE** all persons find themselves in need of medical care at various times in their lives. Christians historically have been at the forefront in providing compassionate medical care as a ministry to the people of the world. Southern Baptists have demonstrated their palpable concern for health care on a national level through the establishment of charitable hospitals and clinics. Our Southern Baptist institutions of higher learning have trained countless health care providers. Internationally, we have provided medical personnel and facilities for many of the world's poor. We commit ourselves anew to help meet the health care needs of the world's poor and suffering, wherever they may be.

**WE BELIEVE** there is a need for revision in the health care delivery system. We must work harder in both the public and the private sectors to help provide affordable care for all those in need.

**WE BELIEVE** the key elements in any successful health care reform include reducing unnecessary medical care and costs (with attendant tort reform), liberalizing access to health insurance and providing medical assistance to those truly in need. This does not necessarily mandate a government-controlled health care system. As Baptists, we are committed to our forebears' insistence on limited government as exhibited in the Constitution of the United States. Government, even with the best of intentions, often breeds bureaucracy, complacency, insensitivity and ineptitude.

**WE BELIEVE** the benefits of health care should extend to all of humanity, including the elderly, the chronically ill, the disabled and the unborn. We remain steadfast in our commitment to proclaim-

ing the precious nature and uniqueness of all humanity as created in the image of God. We must oppose, therefore, any attempt to subordinate the life or health of any individual to inferior claims of so-called "reproductive rights," "individual autonomy" or "economic necessity." Public tax monies or proposed mandated employer contributions must not be used directly or indirectly to fund abortion on demand, and end-of-life decisions should not be predicated strictly upon economic constraints or government protocols. The sanctity of every human life is the superior and more humane ethical norm.

**WE BELIEVE** the Hippocratic tradition of medicine, especially as it subsequently has been enriched by the Christian ethos, represents the noblest advance of the healing arts. Inherent in this tradition is a deeply personal, covenantal relationship between physician and patient. Compassion and skill supplied by the physician, coupled with the patient's trust and compliance, work together toward healing. Reform efforts must not undermine this time-honored relationship and the enduring values surrounding it. A physician's best efforts to preserve human life must never be impeded by harmful government intrusion. Neither should government in any way discourage or limit access of patients to physicians or counselors of similar life and world views. This is of particular concern in the realm of mental health where the psychological and spiritual are closely interwoven.

**WE BELIEVE** the promotion of good health habits is a worthy goal of preventive health care. Proper diet, exercise and regular physical examinations are to be encouraged, and the use of tobacco, alcohol and other harmful drugs is to be discouraged. We encourage moral responsibility by promoting premarital sexual abstinence, marital fidelity and advocacy of the traditional family. At the same time, we recognize a moral obligation to provide compassionate care for all who suffer. Moral education remains essential in this regard, and we, as members of the body of Christ, recognize our ultimate responsibility to bring the gospel claims of Christ to our world and to demonstrate Christian virtues by being salt and light in a fallen world.

*This document, issued by the Christian Life Commission, was formulated as a consequence of the Southern Baptist Consultation on Health Care Jan. 18, 1994, in Washington, D.C.*





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Southern Baptist Convocation on World Hunger

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DISASTER  
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**Ends at noon Sunday, May 15**

**Ridgecrest Conference Center**

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