

Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER, 1994

CLC, other religious groups oppose U.N. paper on population control

By Tom Strode

Southern Baptists joined two major world religious bodies in expressing opposition to a working document prepared for a major United Nations population summit in early September.

The draft statement for the U.N.-sponsored International Conference on Population and Development, held Sept. 5-13 in Cairo,

Egypt, supported, among other things, abortion as a method of family planning, the distribution of contraceptives to unmarried minors and the acceptance of homosexuality. The United States strongly supported the document, although it later signaled an apparent softening of its stance.

Led by the Christian Life Commission, Southern Baptists—like the Vatican and Muslim leaders—

protested the document, and the United States' advocacy of it, in the months prior to the conference. Among the ways were:

- In late August, the CLC expressed objections at a Washington, D.C., news conference, which included a diversity of organizations opposed to the statement.

- In mid-August, SBC President Jim Henry was listed as a signatory

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Hunger ministry can win others to Christ, says SBC missionary

By Louis A. Moore

Besides feeding starving people, Southern Baptist hunger ministries help win lost people to Christ, says a veteran Southern Baptist missionary.

When properly used, hunger ministries are effective evangelistic tools, the missionary says. The key is how the two are combined, he says.

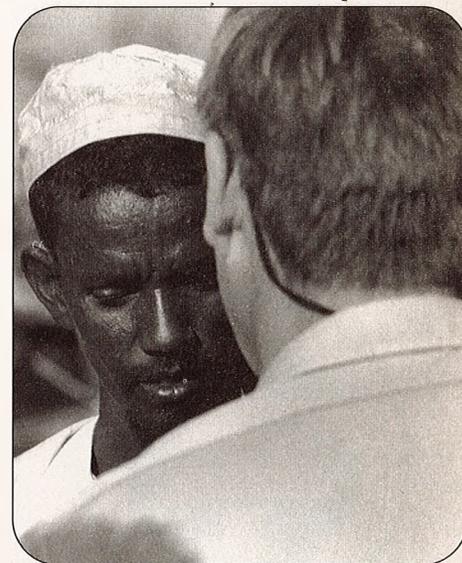
Giving people food and water to coerce them into making professions of faith produces "rice Christians" or "water Christians," missionary scholars long have maintained. The people who profess conversion to get

temporary relief often fall back into their old ways shortly after the relief supply stops, they say.

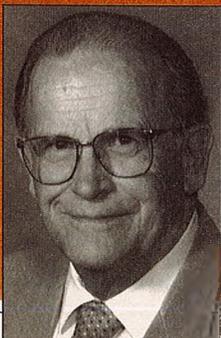
On the other hand, simply feeding starving people without some plan to share the gospel with them makes the act simply another social service, others have said.

The third alternative is to provide the hunger relief without any strings attached, then later use the resulting open door because of the earlier effort as an opportunity to share the gospel with those who have been helped, missionary

(Continued on Page 6)



Missionary George Reichter witnesses through hunger ministries.



Cheyne

A formal hunger offering for SBC?

That question has divided Convention leaders for years. See Point/Counterpoint on pages 8-9 for both sides of this question.



Goode

Alcohol: Some Sobering Facts

By Richard D. Land



Southern Baptists have long been identified with the view that Christians should be total abstainers from the use of alcoholic beverages. The most popular church covenant among Southern Baptists (published in J. Newton Brown's *The Baptist Church Manual* in 1853 and circulated widely for more than a century) states that church members will "abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage." This total-abstinence position has served Southern Baptists well and doubtless has protected tens of thousands of Southern Baptists from the personal tragedy, heartache and health problems which have been alcohol's constant companions throughout human history.

In present-day America, the human wreckage caused by alcohol litters the societal landscape. The facts are both mind-numbing and heartbreaking. Alcohol directly causes about 100,000 deaths in America every year. Drunk driving kills 25,000 people annually, while diseases, homicides and suicides comprise the remainder of the grim annual harvest of alcohol-related deaths. Alcohol is a factor in half the murders, perhaps a third of the suicides and a majority of the divorces in America each year. Alcohol is also a contributing factor in 9 out of 10 unwanted pregnancies, and Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, caused by pregnant women drinking alcohol, is one of the leading known causes of birth defects with accompanying mental impairment in the nation today. Heavy drinking (defined as more than two beers, mixed drinks or glasses of wine a day for a man, one for a woman) is the second leading cause of premature death in America, led only by smoking.

It is now clear that consumption of alcohol in any amount is harmful. Professor E. Don Nelson, of the University of Cincinnati's School of Medicine, concluded, based on latest research, that "the less we drink, the better off we are." He noted that in any amount alcohol kills cells in every organ of the body. Consequently, alcohol in any amount "causes permanent brain damage, primarily to the outer layers of the cortex, which governs complex thinking" (*Nashville Tennessean*, 8/14/84).

Sadly, in spite of the overwhelming evidence that their historic stance of total abstinence is both right and prudent, increasing numbers of Southern Baptists have succumbed to the seductive temptation of "social drinking." Recent surveys reveal that between 45% and 50% of people who identify themselves as Southern Baptists use alcohol at least occasionally and that 23% of Southern Baptist families are experiencing significant problems directly related to alcohol consumption.

Far too often today Southern Baptist young people hear their adult Sunday School teachers say that the use of alcohol is an individual choice. Far too often they see the parents consume alcohol. What impact does that have? We do know that 18% of teenagers say no to alcohol when their parents drink, and 72% say no to alcohol when their parents say no as well. Parents and other adults have a moral responsibility to know, absorb and share these sobering facts with our young people.

Charles Spurgeon once said, "Wisdom is the right use of knowledge. To know is not to be wise. Many men know a great deal and are all the greater fools for it. . . . But to know how to use knowledge is to have wisdom." The sobering facts of alcohol consumption should be abundantly clear to everyone. Those with wisdom will act accordingly; those without it will continue to prattle on about "individual choice" and "socially responsible" drinking.

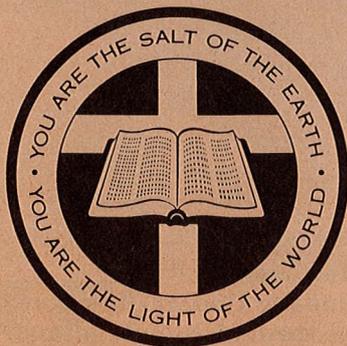
As the current fictional "philosopher" Forrest Gump would put it, "Stupid is as stupid does."

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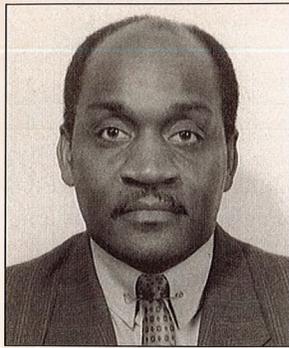
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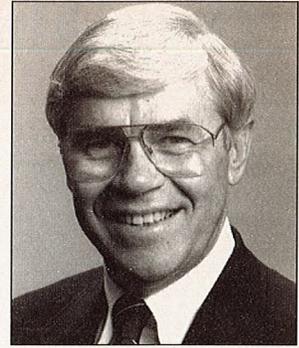
Gary Frost



Charles Colson



Dorothy Patterson



Jim Henry

'95 CLC Seminar is in North Carolina

Focus to be on "World Views and the Struggle for the Nation's Soul"

By Lamar E. Cooper, Sr.

The 28th Annual Christian Life Commission Seminar will be held February 27 to March 1, 1995, on the campus of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N. C. Theme for the meeting is "War of the Worlds: World Views and the Struggle for the Nation's Soul."

Keynote speakers will include Charles Colson of the Prison Fellowship who will speak on Monday evening, Feb. 27, on "The Struggle for the Soul of the Nation"; and Richard Land, CLC executive director who will speak on "The Struggle for the Right to be Involved."

SBC President Jim Henry will deliver the theme interpretation for the Monday evening session.

Keynote speakers for Tuesday evening include James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga., who will bring the theme interpretation; Timothy George, dean of the Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., who will speak on "What is Truth?"; and Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Seminary, "War of the Worlds: A Perennial Battle."

Other speakers include Steve Lempke, professor of philosophy at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, "World Views in Our Culture"; Russ Bush, academic vice president, Southeastern Seminary, "The Issue is Truth"; Danny Akin, dean of students at Southeastern,

"The Struggle for Hearts and Minds"; Dorothy Patterson, Southeastern Seminary, "The Struggle for the Home"; Charles Page, pastor, First Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C., theme interpretation, Tuesday a.m.; R. Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, "The Struggle Over Gender: Homosexuality and Gender Bending, A Revolt Against God"; Gary Frost, first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Rising Star Baptist

To obtain registration information, write the Christian Life Commission 901 Commerce St., Ste. 550 Nashville, TN 37203-3696 or call (615) 244-2495 or FAX (615) 242-0065

Church, Youngstown, Ohio, "The Struggle for the Inner City"; Rick Irvin, director of the Institute for Environmental Studies, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La., "The Struggle for the Environment"; C. Ben Mitchell, CLC consultant on biomedical ethics and life issues, "The Battle for the Sanctity of Human Life"; and Mark Coppenger, vice president for communications, SBC Executive Committee, Nashville, Tenn., "The Struggle for the Media."

Workshops will be offered from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesday.

Each workshop session will be offered three times to allow maximum exposure for registrants. These workshops include: "Sex Education in America's Schools," with Mark Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport; "World Population Control," with Daniel Heimbach, professor of ethics at Southeastern Seminary; "The Struggle for the Home," Dorothy Patterson, Southeastern Seminary; "The Struggle for America's Campuses," Jerry Solomon, Probe Ministries, Richardson, Texas; "Paganism, Pluralism and the American Pantheon," Phil Roberts, director of the Interfaith Witness Department, Home Mission Board; "The Struggle for World Evangelization," Keith Eitel, professor of missions, Southeastern Seminary; and "True Love Waits: Sexual Abstinence in Teenage America," Paul Turner, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn.

The seminar will begin Monday, Feb. 27, with registration at 10:30 a.m. and the first session at 1:30 p.m. The seminar will conclude at noon on Wednesday.

Special room rates of \$62.00 for a single or a double have been arranged with the North Raleigh Hilton. Reservations may be made by calling the hotel directly at 919-872-2323. The Hilton provides transportation from the airport, and the CLC will provide transportation from the hotel to Southeastern Seminary.

Opposition mounts to U.N. document

(Continued from Page 1)

in a full-page *New York Times* advertisement, which was an open letter asking President Bill Clinton to reverse his administration's support of the document. In addition to those listed, CLC Executive Director Richard D. Land was among about 20 others who endorsed the letter but whose names did not appear in print.

• In late July, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor Daniel Heimbach represented the CLC at a multi-religious consultation in Geneva, Switzerland, in preparation for the conference. The CLC statement, drafted and presented by Heimbach, expressed Southern Baptist thinking on population issues and urged changes in the U.N. document. The CLC's statement, as well as those of the other participants, was to be distributed to the U.N. conference's delegates.

• In April, then-SBC President Ed Young and 10 other evangelical Christian leaders asked the President to overturn a State Department cable seeking greater support from other countries for liberalized abortion policies. In preparation for the Cairo conference, the March cable said the United States believes access to legal abortion is a "fundamental right of all women" and called for its increased availability internationally.

At the Aug. 23 news conference, CLC Director of Government Relations James A. Smith and representatives of religious, consumer, family, women's and other groups decried the Cairo conference proposal. Smith denounced the United States' role, especially its promotion of "safe sex."

"Although America has much to offer the peoples of the world regarding political and economic freedom, our government can offer little of value to other nations with respect to morality and culture," Smith said. "The culture of death which is strengthening its grip on America must not spread throughout the world. We urge delegates to

the ICPD to reject the attempt of the American government to export our culture of death." The draft document "seeks to promote the very policies of 'safe sex' and distribution of condoms to minors which have led to skyrocketing teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted disease rates in America," he said.

While the "Clinton administration is leading the charge for 'safe sex' in Cairo," Smith said, "Southern Baptists continue to promote 'True Love Waits,'" a Sunday School Board sexual abstinence program for teenagers, which has become a popular movement internationally.

...Heimbach found widespread agreement in discussions with Muslims, Buddhists, Roman Catholics and other religious leaders.

"Clearly, while Southern Baptists and others believe 'True Love Waits,' the Clinton administration believes true love wears a condom," Smith said.

The CLC's five-page statement presented in the three-day consultation at Geneva objects to a wide array of positions in the document, including the "assumption, reflected throughout the Draft Programme, that having children is a burden or inconvenience that threatens well-being and economic development."

The CLC statement also urges the Cairo conference to reject abortion as a method of family planning, to do nothing to encourage governments to assume they may control husband-wife decisions about family size, to give priority to premarital sexual abstinence and affirm the "True Love Waits" campaign, to avoid "rigid assumptions" connecting economic prosperity to contra-

ceptive services, to refuse to undermine male leadership in the family, to promote the two-parent, heterosexual family and to avoid the legitimization of homosexual unions.

The CLC's Land and Ben Mitchell, the agency's consultant on biomedical and life issues, signed onto the statement. CLC staff assisted Heimbach in preparing the statement.

At the Geneva consultation, Heimbach found widespread agreement in discussions with Muslims, Buddhists, Roman Catholics and other religious leaders.

With the possibility of one exception among the 11 participants, Heimbach said, they agreed on the sanctity of human life from conception, the immorality of extramarital sex, adolescent accountability to parents, opposition to government regulation of the number and spacing of children in families and the need to maintain strong families.

"I was ready for a lot of conflict," Heimbach said, "but I was hopeful for some significant and important agreement, because the way this was arranged [the World Conference on Religion and Peace] had asked for people who could speak from their central faith convictions . . . and that was what we found."

While Southern Baptists would want to evangelize those participants who do not know Jesus Christ, Heimbach said, this "context was one in which we were addressing a challenge really from a very anti-religious, humanist, materialist world view that was contrary to fundamental convictions that are shared across most traditional religious faiths. . . ."

"Something that [late evangelical author] Dr. Francis Schaeffer spoke of and urged was the need to be co-belligerents with others with whom you may disagree on other points," Heimbach said. "Where you agree, you need to stand for truth in society."

The consultation sponsor, the WCRP, was to present a general statement and specific recommendations in Cairo.

By **C. Ben Mitchell**

According to God's Word, one priority of kings and judges is to relieve the poor, needy and oppressed. The least advantaged and the most vulnerable stand in need of the greatest protection against those who would exploit or neglect them.

Such is still the business of government. Most importantly, however, it is a first-order business of the people of God. The apostle James reminds us that ministry to the oppressed and vulnerable is the essence of true religion (Jas. 1:27).

Christians have at least a three-fold responsibility to the impoverished. First, we are obliged to provide direct, personal ministry to the hungry and poor. Too many churches are feeding themselves. Too many churches are attending only to their own interests. To the degree that churches cease to minister to the poor and needy, they oppress them. Instead, we are called to be Samaritan Christians who reach out to others. We must minister to the whole person. Food for the stomach and meat for the soul should be served up through feeding ministries, clothes closets, work programs, alternative housing opportunities, urban church planting, etc. We should, in the words of The Baptist Faith and Message, "work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the aged, the helpless, and the sick." Rescuing the poor and needy demands compassionate hearts and spiritual insight.

Second, Christians have a responsibility to call on elected officials to protect the interests of the hungry and poor and break down barriers that keep the church from providing ministry. When the church is free to be the church, ministry becomes a priority. Government must not so restrict the churches that they are unable to focus on "doing the Word." Government must not so restrict or financially burden its citizenry that they

'Deliver the poor and needy'

(Psalm 82:4)



**Observe World Hunger Day
October 9, 1994**

are unable to assist in serving the needs of others.

Third, Christians must elect national leaders who have both a heart of compassion for the most vulnerable in our society and who understand the proper role of government in delivering the poor and needy. Even though the United States is not a theocracy like ancient Israel, we have a national responsibility to our citizens, especially those who are being ravaged by poverty and hunger. Elected officials should be sensitive to community, state, national and global needs. They should work for legis-

lation that will be incentives for honest labor, societal justice and compassionate care, at the same time, refusing to create an underclass dependent on government assistance. Citizen Christians have a duty to God and to other persons to help elect leaders who will justly protect and defend the interests of the least advantaged of our society.

As your church observes World Hunger Day, pray, minister and witness with a view toward delivering the poor and needy.

C. Ben Mitchell is a consultant for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Witnessing, fighting hunger are compatible

(Continued from Page 1)

George Reichter (not his real name) says.

"We (at the SBC Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board) spend human-needs money for human needs," he says. "We are not trying to make rice Christians or water Christians."

After missionaries are able to meet human needs, that opens doors later for them to witness about God in Christ, he says.

"The people we have given water to in our country are the ones who come back in the evenings and ask about Christ."

Reichter, who must be referred to by a pseudonym because of security reasons involving the country in World A where he works, says he has personally, successfully done evangelistic hunger ministry.

Reichter and his wife felt called to a tribe of more than a million people who are spread across three Middle Eastern countries. The tribe



George Reichter feels called to witness to members of this tribe, in which only 20 out of 1 million are known Christians.

who before 1990 were Christians, although he doesn't rule out the possibility that somewhere a few might have existed. Today, he says some 20 out of the 1 million are known Christians.

Christianity is not against the law in the country where Reichter works, but it is restricted and oppressed.

The Reichters' ministry involves helping develop water projects and food-distribution projects in desert conditions. The Foreign Mission Board funnels SBC hunger funds into these projects. These relief projects have included such activities as digging wells at a refugee camp, establishing farm cooperatives and teaching crafts to help women generate income.

"I don't want people to think we go into countries like these and use money illegally," he says. "We go into these countries and do the various projects the way the governments there want them. These are water projects and food distribution projects."

But once these projects are completed—or even during off-hours while the projects are under way—Reichter looks for opportunities to point to God as the source of his own personal salvation and hope.

"When we do these projects, peo-

ple start asking who is this God that we worship who leads us to do these kinds of things," he says.

"I spend my working hours on these relief projects," he says. "I am a full-time evangelist, but I have to do my evangelism work on my own time in the evenings."

He has preached some 65 to 75 times in this country and even has baptized new converts openly. Once he showed a film about the life of Jesus to some business associates at their home.

"Some think we ought to go into countries and tell everybody who we are and what we are doing and that we are Southern Baptists. There are parallels for not doing this in the Bible. Scripture never says we have to go into a strange land and unburden our soul to every person we meet. We can be selective."

Reichter said such cloaked evangelism often must be subtle and cautious.

"We want to make disciples but we have no desire to make unnecessary martyrs or get kicked out of an area by making our witness unnecessarily public," he said.

Craig Bird of the SBC Foreign Mission Board's news office contributed to this story.

These relief projects have included ...digging wells at a refugee camp, establishing farm cooperatives and teaching crafts to help women generate income.

is reputed to have had no known formal contact with Christianity for more than 1,000 years. The Reichters are CSI personnel who work in countries or regions where Christianity is either illegal or severely restricted and where the government restricts the traditional role of a missionary.

The Reichters' tribe is predominantly Muslim. Reichter cannot identify any members of the tribe

MYTHS

that shackle Citizen Christians

By Michael K. Whitehead

Every election year, myths and half-truths abound regarding Christian involvement in politics.

Myth No. 1: *"The Church will lose its tax exemption if the pastor preaches about political issues."*

No church has ever lost its tax exemption because the pastor preached about moral and biblical issues which also have become political issues. The federal statute regulating tax exemption for churches and nonprofits does impose certain restrictions on official church activity in politics, but not on actions by individual members. The general rule is that a church, as a body, may not, by official action, endorse a political candidate during a campaign, or otherwise seek to influence the outcome of an election. This in no way restricts the right of individual church members to work for or support political candidates. The CLC produced a pamphlet last year, entitled "Tax Exemption and Political Candidate Campaigns," outlining what churches and individual Christians can and cannot do in this area (see page 12). It may be prudent for pastors and church leaders to avoid identifying themselves with partisan personalities so closely that, when a political scandal ensues, the church's prophetic witness is compromised. But if good people do not support good people for office, we will deserve the bad officials who are elected by default.

Myth No. 2: *"You can't legislate morality."*

This is a pernicious half-truth. It is true that a man cannot be "saved" or otherwise have his heart attitudes changed merely by passing a law. However, it is false that laws dealing with moral issues are useless. In fact, there are no moral-

ly neutral laws. All laws choose someone's morality. The very essence of law is a rule about right and wrong conduct, permitted or prohibited behavior. Even parking tickets involve a moral decision that it is "wrong" to park overtime, and that it is right to fine or punish an offender.

Secularists argue that, since legislation cannot transform the human heart, we should not pass laws against "moral wrongs" like abortion or homosexuality. The absurdity of this logic is revealed when we apply such thinking to murder, or slavery, or drunk-driving, or gambling. Should we repeal such laws because they don't change men's hearts or because they coerce man's conscience? The Bible does say, after all, that divine law is a "schoolmaster" or "tutor" (Gal. 3:24) to lead us to Christ. Even civil law is like an x-ray machine: It is not intended to heal the broken bone, but to reveal that the bone is broken. If we do not legislate from our moral perspective, opponents will succeed in legislating immorality.

Another variation on this myth is that *Christians are imposing their morality on the public, or forcing their religious views on the people who do not believe their religion.* If the charge is that Christians are practicing democracy, then we should plead guilty. But when candidates or laws are passed by majority vote, there is no "forcing" or "imposing" anything. The CLC's new video, "Citizen Christians," addresses in detail the fallacious argument that Baptists who vote their Bible-based convictions are somehow violating church-state separation principles (see page 12).

Myth No. 3: *"The mission of the Church is evangelism, not politics."*

Scissors must have two blades to

cut. The Great Commission also has two "blades": evangelism and discipleship. Discipleship includes "teaching them all things I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:19) which includes the command to be "salt and light" in society. (Matt. 5: 13, 14) and to "love thy neighbor" (Matt. 22:39). This means teaching Christians to think and act "Christianly," regarding laws and public policies which affect not only our own families, but also our neighbors. Voting for and supporting moral people to support moral public policies is the minimum required of good Citizen Christians in a system of self-government.

A variation on this myth is that *"America needs revival, not reformation."* This is a false dichotomy, pretending that we can or should have one or the other. The Great Commission commands that the church pursue both, and at the same time. Win people to Christ and teach them to think and make choices according to the mind of Christ. Get involved in the world to love and serve our neighbors, for the sake of Christ.

Bonhoeffer would warn modern pastors to be very careful not to preach a half-true gospel. Don't use your calling to "just preach Jesus" as an excuse to ignore the stench of the burning ovens of the holocaust. Preaching Jesus means to confront the modern manifestations of wrongs and injustices which Jesus confronted boldly.

May our pulpits be aflame during this election year, and every year, with pastors of prophetic courage, proclaiming the whole counsel of God's Word. Is it possible that our nation might just repent, like Nineveh, if Christians would just obey God in both parts of the Great Commission?

By Tommy Goode

I believe we should have a Southern Baptist World Hunger Offering. Currently, we observe World Hunger Day, which indicates a serious concern on the part of Southern Baptists for those who are hungry. Recent events in Somalia and other African countries have startled our sensitivities and demanded an international humanitarian response. International militaries have learned to hold their guns in one hand and serve food with the other. Southern Baptists have learned that we must take both the Word of God and food for life to the people of our world who are hungry. Yet we do not have a designated World Hunger Offering.

Southern Baptist concern for hungry people on the mission field goes as far back as Lottie Moon's work in China in 1878. In 1977, the Southern Baptist Convention approved a recommendation that World Hunger Day be observed. Beginning in 1981, that date was designated to be the second Sunday in October. And in 1994, hunger relief remains one of the most

***Southern Baptist
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important features of both foreign and home missions work among poor people. Lottie Moon wrote in 1911, "How can we bear to sit down to our bountiful tables and know of such things [famine] and not bestir ourselves to help?" That question is even more poignant as we face the beginning of a new century. In a time when so many urgent issues

The SBC should have a world hunger offering



Tommy Goode

call for our attention and action, global hunger screams out to be heard by Southern Baptists.

I share with others a concern that Southern Baptist giving to world hunger relief is significantly down. I have experienced personal frustration in trying to keep the issue of world hunger relief focused and effective. Sometimes hunger relief advocates are met with the attitude of, "I don't *want* to know that people are hungry." However, I am encouraged by the enthusiasm of many of my fellow Southern Baptists who get personally involved in the battle against hunger and starvation. Many pastors and laypeople alike are giving effective leadership to our churches for global hunger relief offerings and local hunger relief ministries. As has been often stated, "We must think globally and act locally." Further, we must do so prayerfully and urgently.

I call for a renewed response to world hunger on the part of all Southern Baptists, especially among denominational ethics and ministry leaders. I believe having a World Hunger Offering would significantly contribute to this renewal of commitment and resources. An official offering would help formal-

ize what is already being done by many churches. The Christian Life Commission promotes awareness of hunger relief giving and ministry. For all practical purposes, many Southern Baptists think we already have an offering because they collect money every October for world hunger relief. This money is then distributed (without any administrative deductions); 80 percent through the Foreign Mission Board to disaster and hunger relief ministries, and 20 percent through the Home Mission Board to hunger relief ministries.

Why is it important that Southern Baptists give to world hunger relief? It is important to Darlene, coordinator of an inner-city ministry, who told about children in its Vacation Bible School who every day said they were hungry. "Finally," she said, "it dawned on me that they really were hungry. Their bellies were empty, and we were feeding them cookies! The next day we prepared 70 sandwiches, and they ate them all up in no time." It is important to mothers in a small rural community who collect coins every week for hunger relief in Somalia because they know that the mothers in Somalia love their children just as much as do mothers in America, and they want to help those mothers so far away whose babies are dying in their arms from starvation.

It is also important from the point of Christian obedience and service. (1) God's concern for those who are hungry is the most dominant theme in the Old Testament, so it seems that we should do something concrete about God's command (Deut. 15:7-11). (2) The most frequently taken offering in the New Testament was taken to meet the needs of those who could not meet their own needs (Acts 11:27-30). (3) How are we going to obey a specific command of Scripture

(Continued on Page 10)

By John R. Cheyne

Now the idea of taking up special offerings has both positive and negative overtones—especially to the pastor of the local church who is already overwhelmed with special appeals. The question of giving to the poor or meeting the needs of the hungry is not really debatable for a Christian. The Scriptures are clear both in the Old and New Testaments on this subject.

Concerning the possibility of adding a Conventionwide special offering for world hunger, there are two important questions which need to be raised:

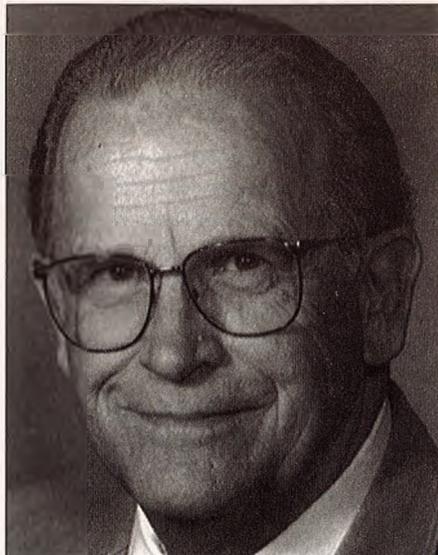
1. *How many special offerings should we have?* Some time ago the leaders within our Convention recognized that there are limitations as to how many different special offerings can be sustained throughout our churches. They also recognized the value of focusing on missions as part of our fundamental task in evangelism. The three mission offerings, foreign, home and state, reflect the essential imperative of the Great Commission as our

It could just as easily be argued that we should have a special offering for evangelism, another for medical work, and yet another for theological education or social work.

basic task. However, when we talk of additional special offerings, it could just as easily be argued that we should have a special offering for evangelism, another for medical work, and yet another for theological education or social work. The list of possibilities or single issues is almost endless.

The question here is not one of

The SBC should not have a world hunger offering



John R. Cheyne

whether we ought to give to the hungry. It is one of primary focus and essential purpose. The *task* of the church is to “Go into all the world. . .” with the good news of Jesus Christ. The *context* of that task is one of compassion which manifests the love of Jesus Christ. It is easy, however, to become sidetracked with single issues, however vital they may be, rather than seeing them as a part of the whole purpose in reaching out for Christ.

2. *Is a one-time-per-year big Conventionwide offering the best way for the average church member to be involved with our hungry and hurting world?* Hunger and hurt are not one-time-a-year problems. A study of the Book of Job will reveal that there was an expectation that the man of God would respond to the needs of the poor and hungry as part of a lifestyle of giving and sharing. In response to the charges of his three “friends” that he had failed in this vital part of sharing the blessings of the Lord, Job asserts, “If I have denied the desires of the poor...if I have kept my bread to myself, not sharing it with the fatherless...let the Almighty answer me” (Job 31:16-17, 35, NIV).

Christ did not call for His disciples to go around taking up funds to meet the needs of the congregation on the hillside, but He did call upon them to be sensitive and respond to their needs as a lifestyle. He said, “When you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets...do not let your left hand know what the right hand is doing” (Matt. 6:2-3, NIV). In the familiar words of Jesus in Matthew 25, the emphasis on meeting the needs of the hungry is based upon “seeing the need” and responding personally to the immediate situation.

There is always the danger that we will make a single offering for the year and then feel we have become exempt from further involvement. Ministering to the needy is an essential aspect of the nature of the Holy Spirit within the life of the believer.

Even in the Book of Acts, we do not find a resolution to set up an annual offering for the poor and needy. On the contrary, the basis for responding to need was conditioned on the relative level of prosperity of the brethren and the corresponding need within a given situation on the other. The “all things in common” attitude indicated that the church was to have an ongoing concern for those in need.

Part of our problem is the fact that the mass media has tended to focus our attention toward giving in response to the latest international crisis. Relief agencies have seized this opportunity to appeal to the public through the presentation of graphic photo essays of these tragedies. However, the genius of Southern Baptists has been at the point of developing programs and projects to enable people to help themselves to overcome the worst aspects of such situations. In order to do this, we must continue to provide educational programs through which individuals can participate

(Continued on Page 10)

Point

The SBC should have a world hunger offering

(Continued from Page 8)

unless we have some mechanism to do it, i.e., "if your enemy is hungry, feed him" (Prov. 25:21)? (4) It is a means of communicating the love of God to the disenfranchised, those at greatest physical and economic risk. (5) There are other responsibilities for Christians other than traditional missions and evangelism, i.e., social justice issues and social ministries. (6) Biblical writers never counselled against an offering because it competed with another offering; on the other hand, they challenged God's people to give more. Maybe we have not challenged Southern Baptists enough. (7) Real needs demand real actions, not just cliches.

Strengthening our denominational response to global hunger might include several other actions in addition to authorizing a World Hunger Offering, such as:

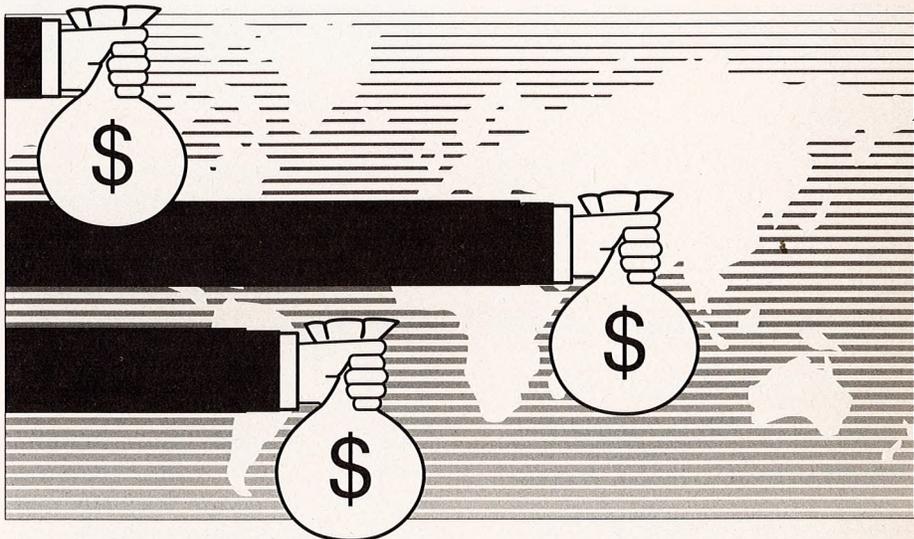
- Strengthening the SBC agencies', organizations' and state conventions' involvement in hunger relief;
- Broadening the denominational leadership network for hunger relief;
- Developing a stronger coalition and collaboration among ethics and ministry leaders throughout the Convention;

• Providing denominational leadership and guidance, not only for greater giving to hunger relief, but for more effective stewardship of ministry to the world's poor and hungry peoples including public policy advocacy.

We can do more—we must do more. According to the 1994 Southern Baptist Convention resolution on hunger, Southern Baptist hunger and relief giving in 1993 was down nearly \$1 million from 1992. The resolution concluded, "Be it finally resolved, That we encourage Southern Baptists to give regularly and systematically to Southern Baptist Convention hunger and relief min-

istry and that we engage in personal ministry to and prayer for the chronically hungry and undernourished persons through our local congregations." Isn't this a call for a World Hunger Offering? I think so. With the Holy Spirit's guidance, let's take the next step in response to global hunger by designating a World Hunger Offering on the second Sunday in October.

Tommy Goode is the church and community ministries associate, State Missions Department, of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.



Counterpoint

The SBC should not have a world hunger offering

(Continued from Page 9)

personally through hands-on experiences in ministering to the hungry and hurting. Those who first give themselves will inevitably give of their means.

Over the past 15 years, Southern Baptists have averaged designating \$6.4 million per year to world hunger. This has been accomplished because church members have been encouraged to give on a regular basis. Many churches choose to have offerings on the Sundays when the Lord's Supper is being celebrated. Others choose one Sunday each

month or other regular giving plans or projects related to the hungry.

Children and youth get involved as part of their educational experience by holding skatathons or walkathons, etc. The experience is one of personal involvement and activities which help those who give to recognize the personal, ongoing aspects of those in need.

The MANNA projects of the Foreign Mission Board and the Jerusalem Projects of the Home Mission Board provide an excellent opportunity to focus this kind of involvement.

No, let's not limit ourselves to one special offering—one single time of focus or concern—one offering a year! Let's make sure that members are constantly sensitized to meet human need wherever and whenever it may arise.

John R. Cheyne is pastor of New Bridge Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia. He was special assistant to the executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board until his retirement in March 1994.

Christian influence being felt

Alternatives forming to ABA's, NEA's leftward drift

By Tom Strode

For Gary Beckner and Mario Mandina, the biblical account of David and Goliath should have fresh meaning.

In recent months, Beckner and Mandina have taken on the giants of American education and law, respectively: The National Education Association (2.2 million members) and the American Bar Association (352,000 members). They lead two organizations committed to providing viable alternatives to the NEA and ABA, and the response to both efforts has been, at the least, encouraging.

In its first eight months, Beckner's group, the Association of American Educators, has signed up 2,200 members. They add an average of 12 new members per day, he said.

"I'd say we're thrilled...this thing may snowball on us," Beckner said by phone from his office in Mission Viejo, Calif.

The National Lawyers Association, Mandina's organization, has enrolled nearly 200 attorneys from 42 states in its first 10 months.

"If the response continues the way it is, ... I think we'll put a dent in their membership," Mandina said by phone from his Kansas City, Mo., office.

Why are alternatives needed to these powerful organizations?

In the NEA's case, it is the way it has used its power, Beckner said.

While the NEA was begun as a professional trade association for educators, it began "to get an elitist attitude that [its] ideas are best... you believe that you know what is best for America's kids," Beckner said. "Now they think they know what is best for America, as well as America's kids."

As the years passed, the NEA began to take positions increasingly out of the mainstream. It endorses abortion rights, homosexual rights, confidential access to birth control devices through school-based clinics

and outcome-based education. It opposes teacher competency testing, as well as educational choice programs such as tuition tax credits and vouchers. The NEA uses its members' dues to support political candidates and initiatives of its leadership's choosing.

The NEA "has moved so far left that anyone in mainstream America would seem far right to them," said AAE's executive director.

***In recent months,
Beckner and
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taken on the giants
of American
education and law.***

Despite the dissatisfaction many educators experience as they learn more about the union, solid liability insurance "was the last remaining link it seems to keep teachers tied to the NEA," Beckner said. AAE has just such coverage, and it is making a difference.

When interested educators call AAE, typically they ask for a description of the organization, then if it has liability insurance, then how good the coverage is, then about dues, which are one-fourth of the NEA's average, said Beckner, a former insurance agent.

"Our universe is probably literally half of the teachers in America," Beckner said. The AAE probably "has about a two-year window to really make things happen."

Why? The NEA and the American Federation of Teachers is expected to merge in about two years, Beckner said. The AFT, which has about 850,000 members, is an arm of the AFL-CIO labor union.

For Beckner and his wife, Pieterke, former Southern Baptists, the defining moment in moving

from the insurance business to forming an educators association was an eye-opening weekend two years ago with their sons. With both, one a recent graduate and the other a near graduate from California public universities, the Beckners realized they had paid educators "to brainwash our kids" after spending "20 years trying to inculcate [our values] in them," he said.

For several thousand attorneys, the ABA's 1992 decision to endorse abortion rights caused them to resign from the association. Michael Whitehead, the Christian Life Commission's general counsel, resigned in 1992.

Mandina "saw the handwriting on the wall" a couple of years earlier.

He "had written them and expressed my dissatisfaction, and they basically said, 'That's too bad,'" Mandina said. "I think anybody who stays in the ABA is fooling themselves. That organization, I don't think, will ever be abortion neutral in this century."

Last October, nine other attorneys and Mandina formed National Lawyers for Life. In response, many lawyers asked the new organization to consider becoming a full-service alternative to the ABA. After gaining members from 37 states by June, the NLL board decided to change directions and become a full-service bar association.

It also chose to remain pro-life.

"Lawyers who join our association will never have to worry about it becoming in favor of abortion on demand," said Mandina, NLA's president.

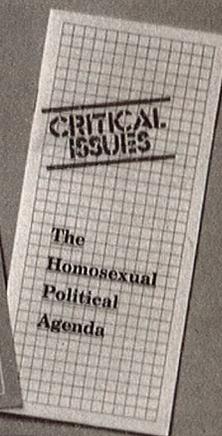
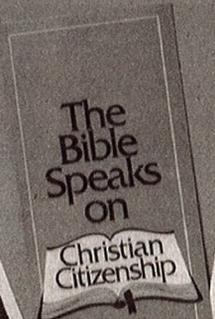
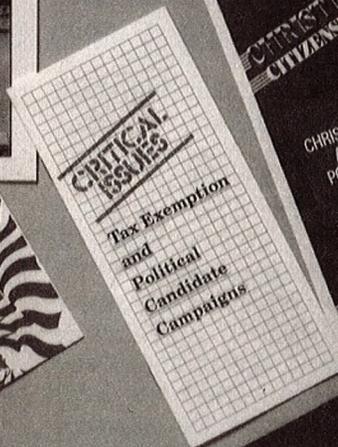
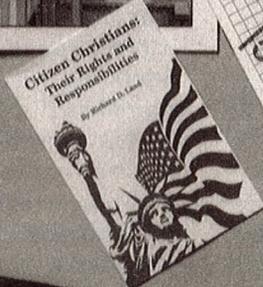
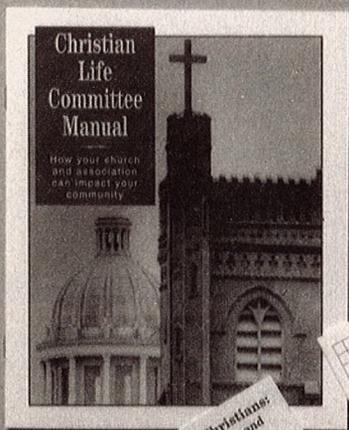
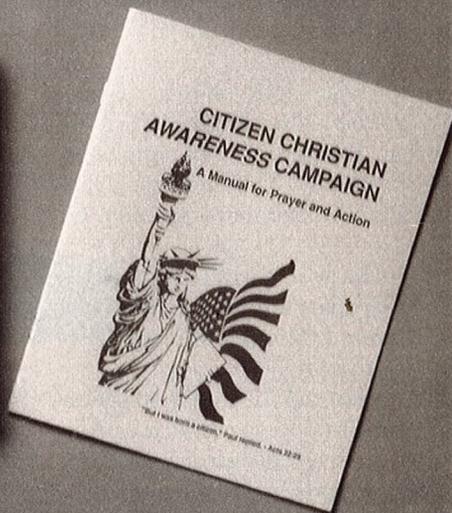
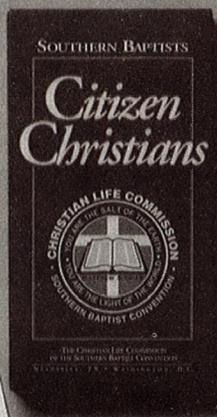
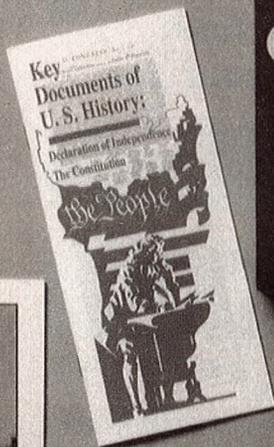
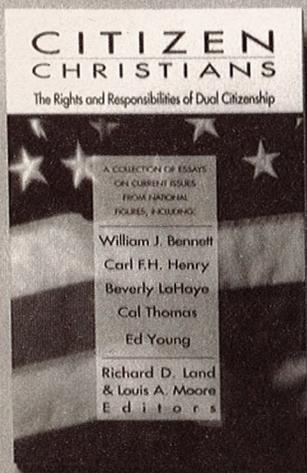
For now, NLA is in its infancy, he said, but it will add services as funds are available.

While Beckner and Mandina are Christians, the organizations they head are not exclusively. Christian organizations are available in both fields, and they want their associations to be able to be large enough to provide genuine alternatives to the giants of education and law.

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Light from the Capital

Bill would use Justice to promote homosexuality

The homosexual lobby has quietly worked for a major change in a Justice Department agency which will greatly enhance its efforts to promote homosexuality as a legitimate minority worthy of civil rights protection.

Late last year a controversy arose in Mississippi surrounding the efforts of lesbian activists to establish a so-called "feminist training center" in the community of Overt. Camp Sister Spirit was met with opposition from the local residents, largely led by Southern Baptists, who were concerned about the negative influence of an openly lesbian camp which would be used to promote a radical feminist and lesbian agenda, as promised by camp leaders. Local citizens were also concerned that Camp Sister Spirit would be a hub of homosexual and lesbian political activity and training, and would radically alter the traditional values of the community.

In February, at the urging of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, Attorney General Janet Reno sent mediators of the Community Relations Service of the Justice Department in order to "mediate" the dispute between the community and Camp Sister Spirit. However, the community would not consent to federal mediation, and James Hendry and John Allen, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Richton, filed a lawsuit challenging the statutory authority of the attorney general to use CRS in this manner.

The federal statute which created the Community Relations Service only permits CRS to "Provide assistance to communities and persons therein in resolving disputes, disagreements, or difficulties relating to discriminatory practices based on race, color, or national origin..."

Since the judge agreed that CRS has no authority to mediate disputes in the areas of religion and "sexual orientation," the homosexu-

al lobby is now seeking legislation which would expand the authority of CRS to become involved in certain alleged disputes in these areas.

The Christian Life Commission was set to testify before a House of Representatives committee in August on this matter when the hearing was canceled because of the press of other legislation. The CLC strongly opposes this mandate expansion. Religious differences are not proper subject matter for government intervention, as has been demonstrated by the controversy over the EEOC's proposed guidelines on religious harassment in the workplace. The addition of "sexual orientation" to any federal statute has the effect of placing sexual perversion on the same moral level of other categories protected under civil rights laws. Finally, the homosexual lobby will use the CRS to force local communities, like Overt, to bend to the wishes of homosexual radicals and accept their public policy and community agendas.

—James A. Smith

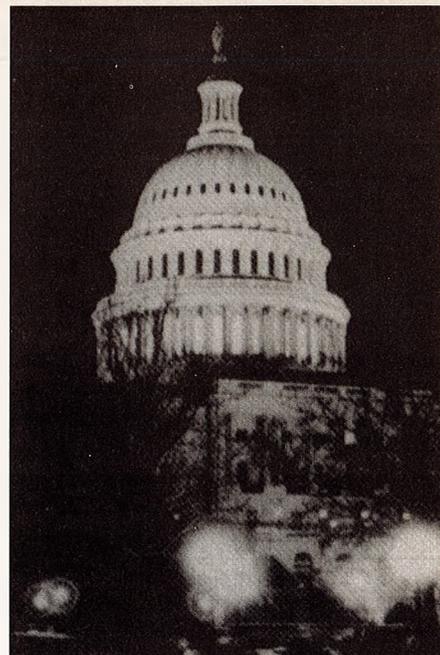
Congress acts to restore abstinence funding

Both houses of Congress have voted to restore funding to the federal government's only program promoting teenage sexual abstinence after the Clinton administration sought to eliminate it.

On August 10, the Senate approved a spending bill which includes \$6.7 million for Title XX, also known as the Adolescent Family Life program. The bill appropriates funds for the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education

Earlier, the House of Representatives approved the same amount of funding in its version of the Labor, HHS and Education legislation. Though the versions will go to a Senate-House conference committee to work out differences, supporters believe funding for Title XX will remain in the final bill.

Sen. Slade Gorton, R.-Wash.,



and Rep. Lamar Smith, R.-Tex., led efforts in their respective chambers to restore Title XX after the White House proposed its elimination. In its 1995 budget, the administration put forth as an alternative \$6.8 million for establishment of the Office of Adolescent Health to address a variety of teen problems. Promoting abstinence would be a part of the program, administration officials said.

Supporters of Title XX expressed doubts the administration would support abstinence through the new office.

The Christian Life Commission strongly endorsed the restoration efforts.

—Tom Strode

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Washington, DC 20500

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United States Senate or House of Representatives
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Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear (Your Senator/Representative Name):

I urge you to oppose any health care reform plan which will pay for abortion on demand. The problem of abortion coverage remains in the compromise versions of health care reform.

As you consider health care legislation crafted by the so called "Mainstream Coalition," please remember: millions of Americans, including myself, are unalterably opposed to supporting abortion in any health reform plan. In fact, a poll published in the May 18, 1994 *Journal of the American Medical Association* revealed that 68% of Americans are opposed to including abortion in a health care benefits package.

I agree with the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission, the snuffing-out of unborn children cannot be regarded as true health care. I would consider it a serious violation of my conscience to be made complicit in the act of destroying human life if my taxes were used to pay for abortion or if my private insurance was mandated to cover abortion services.

Please support amendments which seek to exclude abortion on demand from legislation Congress considers. If abortion is not explicitly excluded from coverage in the final legislation, please oppose that legislation. I look forward to your reply and learning your views on this important issue.

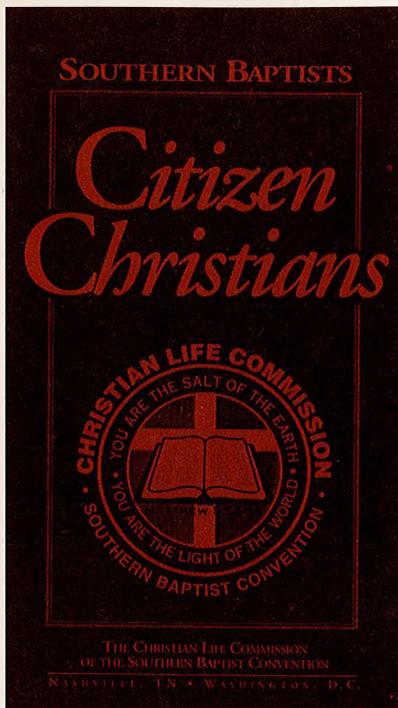
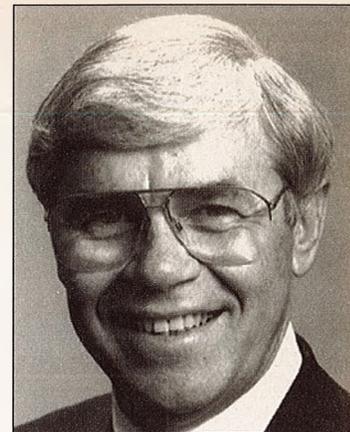
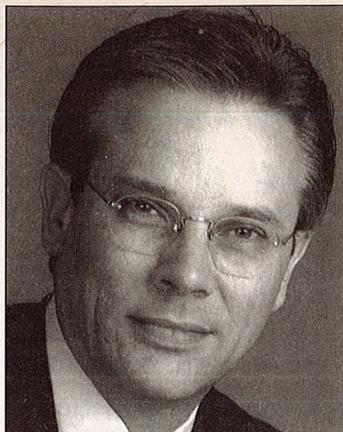
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Latest!



See page 13
for complete
ordering information

In a day when churches are settling down comfortably to tolerate a declining civilization and at the same time adjusting their demands to accommodate indifference, Dr. Richard Land and our Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission are on the cutting edge of New Testament activism. When we are watching our nation sink rapidly into the quicksand of immorality and insensitivity with the seeming inability to call ourselves to arms, and when from television, newspapers and other public media we hear the raucous cries of a thousand voices calling our children to lifestyles of ungodliness, it is time as never before for Christian activism. The "Citizen Christians" video produced by our Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission is a must for every church and every individual follower of Christ who is serious about the Great Commission and the cultural mandate.

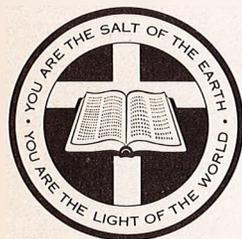
O. S. Hawkins, pastor
First Baptist Church
Dallas, Texas

"Citizen Christians" is a video that is long overdue. It is an excellent commentary on our Christian heritage, giving us the history of our forefathers and their involvement in the politics of their time.

Our forefathers gave us the second greatest document ever written: the Constitution, that was based on the greatest Book ever written, the Bible.

We are at a very critical time in our history, and Christians should have the courage to stand up and take their rightful place at the table. "Citizen Christians" should be shared with others, in churches, Sunday Schools and Bible studies. There needs to be a recommitment to the principles of our Founding Fathers, which made this a great nation. We enthusiastically recommend "Citizen Christians."

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