

Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Targeting Disney: Baptists consider boycott

By Dwayne Hastings

All Baptists had to do was mention the word "boycott" and it seemed half the world's population recoiled in horror.

While it is true that religious pilgrims rarely travel to the marketplace seeking a spiritual experience, in every shopping excursion, consumers make buying decisions based upon their tastes and values. It then is more than price that drives the market; it is an opportunity to exercise one's faith.

If a consumer does not like one brand of toothpaste, there are others to choose. If no one else selects

that same brand of toothpaste, the manufacturer is forced to either change the offensive nature of the product or drop out of that market.

It happens every day and rarely earns the attention of social commentators, yet when Southern Baptists meeting in New Orleans for their annual convention this year raised concerns about The Disney Co.—to many, an offensive product in parts—the messengers became the object of scorn and ridicule.

"Boycotts are not an effort to coerce anyone into doing anything," suggested C. Ben Mitchell, visiting professor of ethics at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in

Louisville. "On the surface, it is a statement of Christian conscience and deeply held conviction."

You don't buy Crest, Colgate and Pepsodent because you like Aquafresh with sparkles better; you refuse to shop in the mini-market on the corner because of the magazines the store owner has on the counter.

You have made a decision to buy or not to buy based on personal tastes (and distastes). If Colgate had sparkles, you might switch brands; if the market trashed the magazines, you might switch convenience stores.

While Southern Baptists took

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Sting of Christian persecution felt worldwide

The death sentence handed down to Hussein Qambar Ali by a Kuwaiti Islamic court May 29 for his conversion to Christianity from Islam has gained the 45-year-old contractor worldwide notice, and as of August 17, temporary asylum in the United States.

The Kuwaiti citizen, who is known better as Robert Hussein, lost his wife as well as custody of his children, at least four houses, his contractor's business and nearly \$4 million in assets and inheritance after being found guilty of apostasy for refusing to renounce his faith in Jesus Christ.

In his ruling, the Kuwaiti judge said: "People like the defendant must be killed. In addition, his wife should be divorced from him and all his possessions should be distributed to his heirs," and referring to the *sharia* (Islamic law), continued, "His blood should be shed by Muslims. ...It is obligatory for Muslims to kill an apostate like the defendant."

"This is a far more widespread problem than most Americans know," said Richard Land, CLC's president. "Christians are facing systematic persecution in many countries."

Yet few incidents garner such a high profile; reports of persons persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ do not regularly make the front page.

According to reports from the Puebla Program on Religious Freedom at Freedom House, evangelical Christians and converts in Iran and Pakistan are being murdered as government leaders look the other way. Christian converts in Nepal are being victimized; thousands of Christians in the southern Sudan who resist forcible Islamicization are being sold into slavery; and

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As we face a world that has so many pockets of hunger in both the body and the spirit, let us develop a godly concern for people and their needs.

Pastor Charles D. Page
FBC Charlotte (N.C.)

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Richard D. Land, President
Dwayne Hastings, Editor



**Christian Life
Commission
of the Southern
Baptist Convention**

901 Commerce, #550
Nashville, TN 37203-3696

*"Helping changed people
change the world"*

PERSPECTIVE

Why a Religious Freedom Amendment*

By Richard D. Land



Jack Hamm

We have now entered the third century of the American experiment, and what a magnificent success for liberty and human dignity it has been. In spite of our failures, we have indeed become what our Puritan forebears desired, a shining city on a hill, lighting the way for the world they left behind.

I have had the privilege of sitting down with Russians, ex-Soviet Georgians and Rumanians to discuss religious freedom. It is a humbling thing to sit down with such people and have them quote portions of our Declaration of Independence and our cherished First Amendment with tears in their eyes and say, "We want what you have."

These hearings focus on those basic liberties which are the bedrock foundation of what makes America what she is. Freedom of worship, conscience, and speech are the glorious liberties that have lured people from all over the world to our shores.

As we have become a more pluralistic nation it has become undeniably more difficult to ensure that everyone's freedom of religion and freedom of conscience is protected. Unfortunately, some have sought to deal with the problem by seeking to segregate religion from public life and to banish it to the private, familial and churchly realms alone. Stephen Carter's *The Culture of Disbelief* explains "some of the many ways in which our culture has come to belittle religious devotion, to humiliate believers, and discourage religion as a serious activity." Carter, professor of constitutional law at Yale, argues that the cultural, political, educational, media and even mainstream religious elites in America have been ever more effectively marginalizing religious beliefs and convictions as legitimate factors in the nation's public policy arena. Dr. Carter laments the increasingly anti-religious bias in American law and calls for religious convictions of all persuasions to be given their rightful and needed place in discussing the critical issues of our time.

How has this secularization agenda impacted America and her institutions? The public schools provided the flash point for much of the public debate on religious expression in society. In the early 1960s the Supreme Court issued rulings which have had a "chilling" effect on religious expression. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963) that officially sponsored reading of Bible passages and official, prescribed prayers in the public schools were unconstitutional.

Some Supreme Court justices expressed concern that such "neutrality" could become hostility to religion. In 1963's *Schempp* decision Justice Arthur Goldberg warned, "Un-tutored devotion to the concept of neutrality can lead to results which partake not simply of that noninterference and noninvolvement with the religious which the Constitution commands, but of a brooding and pervasive devotion to the secular and a passive, or even active, hostility to the religious. Such results are not only not compelled by the Constitution, but it seems to me, are prohibited by it." Justice Potter Stewart, dissenting from both the *Engel* and *Schempp* decisions, declared that what the Court had fashioned was not "the realization of state neutrality, but rather an establishment of a religion of secularism." Goldberg's concerns and Stewart's pessimism proved to be prophetic. With breathtaking rapidity, subsequent judicial decisions and widespread misinterpretation by public school officials produced the "brooding and pervasive devotion to the secular and a passive, or even active, hostility to the religious" which Goldberg had feared.

Many people of faith agreed that the rights of religious minorities had not been safeguarded adequately by the officially prescribed prayers and Bible readings the Court had ruled against. They hoped, however, that the Court would still accept the concept of an accommodating, rather than an absolute, neutrality, as outlined by Justice William O. Douglas when he con-

cluded in *Zorach v. Clauston* (1952) that the state "respects the religious nature of our people and accommodates the public service to their spiritual needs. To hold that it may not would be to find in the Constitution a requirement that the government show a callous indifference to religious groups. That would be preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe." The past three decades have witnessed an ever more aggressive, secularizing "neutrality" which has been hostile to, and has discriminated against, the religious free exercise rights of students. The issue has now become



Dr. Land giving testimony before the U.S. House Subcommittee on the Constitution.

one of students' and other private citizens' free exercise of religious rights as well as their freedoms of speech and assembly, rather than a question of perceived violations of the First Amendment's establishment clause.

Most Southern Baptists and most Americans believe that this hostile censorship and suppression of the people's (including public school students') religious free exercise rights has gone way too far. They believe John Adams expressed the "original intent" of our founders when in 1798 he said, "We have no government armed in power capable of contending in human passions unbridled by morality and religion. Our Constitution was made for a moral and a religious people. It is wholly inadequate for the government of any other." Our forebears intended—and the Constitution, as

amended by the Bill of Rights, provided a balance between morality and public virtue. This delicate constitutional balance is endangered, and it must be put right by the means provided by the Constitution itself—a constitutional amendment.

Indeed, five years ago, in a cover story entitled "One Nation Under God: Has the separation of Church and State gone too far?" *Time* magazine concluded "For God to be kept out of the classroom or out of America's public debate by nervous school administrators or over-cautious politicians serves no one's interest. That restriction prevents people from drawing on the country's rich and diverse religious heritage for guidance, and it degrades the nation's moral discourse by placing a whole realm of theological reasoning out of bounds. The price of that sort of quarantine, at a time of moral dislocation, is—and has been—far too high. The court needs to find a better balance between separation and accommodation, and Americans need to respect the new religious freedom they would gain as a result" (*Time*, Dec. 9, 1991).

What most Southern Baptists and what most Americans affirm in our nation is religious pluralism, not secularism. As the CLC stated in its *Lee v. Weisman* brief: One of the values which public schools should transmit is respect and tolerance for the religious choice of

others. Pluralism is promoted by exposing children and adults to differing religious beliefs...in a respectful, accommodating way... This builds understanding and respect. Just as racial harmony cannot grow in the soil of racial segregation, neither can religious harmony spring up in a system of 'religious apartheid.'

Most Southern Baptists and most Americans do not want state subsidy or sponsorship of religion. They do not want to go back to the days before the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court decisions. However, they also do not want continued government censorship and suppression of the religious speech and activity of students in public schools and citizens acting in their private capacities in public arenas.

What they desperately desire, and I am confident they eventually are going to insist upon, is government accommodation of their right as students and citizens to express their religious convictions in the public arena. We do not ask for, and do not want, government's help in expressing our beliefs or acknowledging our religious heritage. In fact, we would oppose such efforts. We believe the most and best government can do is to guarantee a level playing field and then stay off the field. This should apply to all

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Dr. Land (on right at witnesses' table) responding to a question from subcommittee chairman Cannady (R-FL)(center of congressional panel). To Dr. Land's left waiting to give testimony are Oliver Thomas for the National Council of Churches and Forrest Montgomery from the National Association of Evangelicals. The other Congressmen pictured are, from left to right, Henry Hyde (R-IL) and Barney Frank (D-MA).

Sting of Christian Persecution . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

Christians in China, Cuba, and Vietnam are being arrested, beaten and tortured.

"Christians are in fact the most persecuted religious group in the

Southern Baptists will join Christians in 116 countries September 29 for an "International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Christians" in a show of solidarity with persecuted Christians worldwide.

world today, with the greatest number of victims," reported Nina Shea, director of the Puebla Program on Religious Freedom, in the July 15, 1996 issue of *Christianity Today*.

Despite the flood of reports of Christian persecution, "there has been a deafening silence from the church," Shea said.

"For decades when it came to effectively interceding on behalf of

millions of persecuted Christians around the world, all of us fell short," agreed Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.), chairman of the U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee on international operations and human rights.

"It has been a non-issue; it is about time it became a major issue," Smith insisted during the CLC's annual seminar in Washington, D.C., this past spring. "It's time persecuted Christians become a front-burner, nonnegotiable issue in our foreign policy."

Three factors are responsible for most of the persecution of Christians globally: resurgent communism, a religiously intolerant form of Islam, and reemerging nationalism, according to a recent *Christianity Today* report.

"The rise of Islamic fundamentalism has effectively criminalized the practice of Christianity," wrote Michael Horowitz, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, in a *Wall Street Journal* editorial, July 5, 1995.

"The issues test us all," wrote Horowitz, who was legal counsel during the Reagan administration at the Office of Management and

Budget and who describes himself as "rootedly Jewish."

"For American Jews who owe our very lives to the open door of the 'blessed land,' silence should not be an option in the face of persecutions eerily parallel to those committed by Adolf Hitler," Horowitz continued.

For the Christian community to remain mute on this issue, he added, would "gravely tarnish its moral authority."

(Baptist Press accounts were used in compiling this story.)

Send Protests

While Hussein is not expected to attend, his appeal is set for September 15. Interested people should address protests to: His Highness Shaikh Saad Al-Sabah, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, The State of Kuwait, P.O. Box 4, Safat, Kuwait 13001, fax 965-539-7791; and Mohammed Sabah Al-Salim, The State of Kuwait, Chancery, 2940 Tilden St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008, fax 202-966-0517 and phone 202-966-0702.

Why a Religious Freedom Amendment

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governments: national, state, and local.

What about the Clinton administration's guidelines for *Religious Expression in Public Schools* issued in August, 1995? The guidelines are a substantially accurate assessment of the *current* state of the law, but they are woefully insufficient. First, they do not have the force of law. Numerous school boards feel free to ignore the guidelines with impunity since they have no legal "teeth." Second, the Clinton Administration's guidelines are only one judicial decision away from being swept into oblivion. The rights of students enumerated in the guidelines are balanced on far too narrow a knife edge to be acceptable. We must

consolidate and constitutionally guarantee the free exercise and

We do not ask for, and do not want, government's help in expressing our beliefs or acknowledging our religious heritage....

The most and best government can do is to guarantee a level playing field and then stay off the field.

expression rights of public school students and all citizens.

Why a constitutional amendment, and not a legislative remedy? We have given the courts more than thirty years to get this issue right, and they have persisted in not doing so. Legislative remedies would in all probability be overturned by the present federal judiciary. Even they find it difficult to overturn the clear intent of a constitutional amendment. It is time for the people to give the courts further instructions on how they would be governed by the means provided by our founders, namely amending the Constitution.

**Excerpts from Dr. Land's testimony to the U.S. House Judiciary Committee's Constitution Subcommittee on July 23, 1996.*

Nashville mission team rebuilding more than a church

By Dwayne Hastings

FRUITLAND, Tenn. — The screech of a circular saw joined the uneven cadence of hammers in cracking the sultry calm of a summer morning. To the unknowing observer, these were simply the sounds of a carpentry crew at work, but those in this community outside Humboldt, Tenn., realized there was more than construction taking place on this West Tennessee site.

Gingerly traversing rafters above the worship center, scaling scaffolding to hoist siding skyward, and precariously perched on ladders to drive home one more nail, members of First Baptist Church of Nashville were doing their part to provide members of Salem Baptist Church a new church home.

The church, founded in 1872, was reduced to rubble Dec. 30, 1995 as flames devoured the brick and frame building—one of eight African-American churches burned in Tennessee in the last 18 months.

"Though we lost the building, the church never stopped," said Rick Booth, a member of the church in Fruitland, Tenn. "It was just a prelude to bigger and better things—things God had in store for His people here."

The church actually suffered two fires: The week before the entire structure burned to the

ground, a small outbuilding was torched. That building, made of cement block, still stands—its charred interior an ashen reminder of the hate which visited Salem Baptist that Saturday night in December.

Dorothy Jackson, also a member of the rural church, said the memory of the event remains etched in her mind: "It was a real hurtin' feeling, just that somebody could be so mean and so disrespectful to the Lord's house. Out here in this community we are like one big family; it was like somebody came in and took a family member away."

Church members have been nearly overwhelmed by the prayers and words of encouragement from "total strangers," Jackson said. "The togetherness and the support that has been shown has allowed us to rise above this incident," she continued. "People of different racial and ethnic backgrounds have come together to stand by us."

First Baptist Church of Nashville was the first church to contact Salem Baptist Church after the fire. Mark Edwards, minister of music at FBC Nashville, saw the news report of the fire and knew immediately he had to do something to help Salem Baptist.

Edwards, who said the fire has fostered a long-term relationship



between the two churches, said the offering collected during FBC's sanctuary choir's spring concert, nearly \$4,000, was earmarked for Salem's recovery assistance. And June 15-19, more than 20 members of FBC Nashville traveled to the job site to assist in rebuilding the Salem facility.

The rebuilding effort attracted national attention; President Bill Clinton and Al Gore and their wives visited the church Aug. 19 to hang drywall.

Signs of racial reconciliation

•Despite the threat of severe weather, over 170 black and white Christians from nine National and Southern Baptist churches gathered for an annual interracial worship service in Monticello, Ark. The May 6 fellowship provided an opportunity for National and Southern Baptists "to declare to the local community their conviction that as a doctrine, racism is heresy, and as a practice, racism is a sin," reported Jack Kwok, director of cooperative ministries with National and Southern Baptists of Arkansas.

•Three South Carolina Southern Baptists—two black, one white—reached across the racial divide to

join in a revival at Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C., recently.

"In racially charged times, it's important for churches to demonstrate the Christian concern of reaching people regardless of their color," said Mark Jeffcoat, South Carolina Baptist Convention spokesman, to *The State* (Columbia, S.C.) newspaper.

"I have a passion for seeing churches come together," said Jerry Evins, pastor of FBC Pontiac (S.C.). "We want to carry on the work of the convention. We don't want to just talk about reconciliation but do something to make it happen."

•Members of South Jefferson Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., responded to a Ku Klux Klan rally in their city by taking up an offering for the work of the Southern Baptist Racial Reconciliation Task Force.

"How ironic it is for the Ku Klux Klan to help fight racism by rallying for extended hours in our city. The longer they speak, the more we give to help end such ignorance and malice," explained Greg Burton, pastor of South Jefferson Baptist. "It is our prayer that such offerings can help bring needed education and direction to a generation which still sees the wickedness of such prejudice rearing its ugly head."

Targeting Disney . . .

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the unusual step of mentioning boycott, other believers have not hesitated to jump headlong into the economic stream: Calling for economic action against drug manufacturer Hoechst AF (Roussel-Uclaf) for its production of the abortion drug RU-486; against Calvin Klein for his bawdy advertisements featuring adolescents in little more than the designer's jeans; against K-Mart, Walden Books and 7-Eleven Stores for their sale of "adult magazines."

And this summer, Nashville, Tenn., area ministers have joined with members of the United Steelworkers in the union's two-year-old protest against Bridgestone/ Firestone. Organizers hope the pastors' congregations will see the pro-labor view as a matter of Christian justice.

"It's fundamentally a justice issue," said Joe Geevarghese, a union organizer, according to the *Nashville Tennessean*. "When you talk about biblical values, this is a real-world context for it. This fight is a way to demonstrate their faith in a concrete way."

Recalling that much of the economic action during the height of the civil rights movement found its roots in the church, nonetheless, were SBC messengers on solid ground scripturally in suggesting selective economic action against Disney?

"This kind of economic action [boycott] is one of a very few kinds of procedures open to religious believers," said Ron Nash, professor of philosophy at Reformed Theological Seminary in Orlando. "We certainly don't want the state to take some kind of coercive action."

"It is not right to try to persuade people in the name of Christ to support a specific political or economic agenda," stated Daniel Heimbach, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Yet Christians are obligated to study the Bible, and if they believe

moral standards are being violated in the marketplace, economic action is appropriate, the Wake Forest, N.C., ethicist said.

Not unexpectedly, a strident chorus of critics greeted the SBC resolution.

If Southern Baptists meeting in New Orleans this past June had only chastised Disney for the violence and sexism in its cinematic offerings—threatening to unplug their television sets in protest of the studio's cartoons and not offering a whisper about the company's embrace of homosexuality—Baptists would have been applauded for their moxie.

It is then less the call to consider boycott than what prompted the call to boycott that has ignited the firestorm of criticism.

It appears the church may enter the public square to rail against many social evils—real or imagined—but there are some that must be off limits. For the most part, these are the issues of greatest concern to conservative evangelicals; for the greater part, these are the issues directly addressed by Scripture.

There is no wall between the church house and the marketplace. A boycott, properly positioned and grounded, is a form of religious speech, Mitchell said.

To do nothing in the face of "morally corrosive" corporate policies would be wrong, Heimbach stressed. "When God's moral standards are being attacked, it is the moral responsibility of the people of God to speak up and try to influence people's opinion."

While agreeing boycotts can be effective in addressing serious social issues, Union University's George Guthrie warned the costs may outweigh the benefits. "If the church spends its time rallying to boycott this or that, is that standing in the way of nonbelievers coming to Christ?

"I don't want to say we can't address social issues from the pulpits; we do have the paradigm of the prophets who addressed social issues," said Guthrie, chairman of the department of Christian studies

and professor of New Testament and Greek at the Jackson, Tenn., school.

Yet the church must be careful to not disable the church's primary mission—"seeking people to come into the kingdom of God"—Guthrie added.

Disney Family Tree

The Walt Disney Company, in its February 1996 acquisition of Capital Cities/ABC, became even more entwined in the "cultural fabric" of our society.

Walt Disney Pictures

Touchstone Pictures

Hollywood Pictures

Caravan Pictures

Miramax Pictures

Walt Disney Home Video

Buena Vista Television

The Disney Channel

Hollywood Records

Wonderland Music

ABC Television Network

ABC Radio Network

ESPN

Lifetime (part owner)

A&E Network (part owner)

WLS-TV, Chicago

WPVI-TV, Philadelphia

KGO-TV, San Francisco

KTRK-TV, Houston

WTVD-TV, Raleigh-Durham

KFSN-TV, Fresno

as well as radio stations serving New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, Fort Worth, Washington, D.C., and Atlanta

Mouse Works Publishing

Disney Press

Hyperion Press

Discover magazine

FamilyFun magazine

Family PC magazine

plus trade magazines, and general interest and advertising magazines and a variety of publishing companies

Childcraft Education Corporation

The Mighty Ducks of Anaheim

Professional Hockey team

Resolution on Disney Company Policy

WHEREAS, Southern Baptists and their children have for many decades enjoyed and trusted The Disney Company's television programming, feature-length films and theme parks which have reinforced basic American virtues and values; and

WHEREAS, The virtues promoted by Disney have contributed to the development of a generation of Americans who have come to expect and demand high levels of moral and virtuous leadership from The Disney Company; and

WHEREAS, In recent years, The Disney Company has given the appearance that the promotion of homosexuality is more important than its historic commitment to traditional family values and has taken a direction which is contrary to its previous commitment; and

WHEREAS, In recent years we have watched the world's largest family entertainment company with growing disappointment as The Disney Company's moral leadership has been eroded by a variety of corporate decisions, which have included but are not limited to:

(1) Establishing of an employee policy which accepts and embraces homosexual relationships for the purpose of insurance benefits;

(2) Hosting of homosexual and lesbian theme nights at its parks;

(3) Choosing of a convicted child molester to direct the Disney movie *Powder* through its subsidiary Miramax Productions;

(4) Publishing of a book aimed at teenage homosexuals entitled *Growing Up Gay: From Left Out to Coming Out* through its subsidiary Hyperion, connecting Disney to the promotion of the homosexual agenda;

(5) Producing, through its subsidiary corporations, of objectionable material such as the film *Priest* which disparages Christian values and depicts Christian leaders as morally defective;

WHEREAS, These and other corporate decisions and actions represent a significant departure from Disney's family-values image, and a gratuitous insult to Christians and others who have long supported Disney and contributed to its corporate profits; and

WHEREAS, Previous efforts to communicate these concerns to The Disney Company have been fruitless; and

WHEREAS, Boycotts are a legitimate method for communicating moral convictions; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, We as Southern Baptist messengers meeting in annual session on June 11-13, 1996, go on record expressing our deep disappointment for these corporate actions by The Disney Company; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we affirm the employees of The Disney Company who embrace and share our concerns; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we encourage Southern Baptists to give serious and prayerful reconsideration to their purchase and support of Disney products, and to boycott The Disney Company and theme parks if they continue this anti-Christian and anti-family trend; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we encourage the Christian Life Commission to monitor Disney's progress in returning to its previous philosophy of producing enriching family entertainment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we encourage state Baptist papers and national Southern Baptist publications to assist in informing the Southern Baptist family of these issues; and

FINALLY, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Convention requests the Executive Committee to send a copy of this resolution to Michael Eisner, CEO of The Disney Company, and to encourage the Southern Baptist family to support this boycott with our purchasing power, letters, and influence.

Look who's talking — about Baptists and the mouse

"He doesn't agree with that particular position—that doesn't change his faith or membership in that denomination." White House spokesman Michael McCurry on President Bill Clinton's view of the Disney resolution.

"Disney is not just about entertainment—it's about power and ideology." Henry Giroux, Penn State professor and author of *fugitive cultures: race, violence & youth*, a book examining contemporary culture, in the *Orange County (Calif.) Register*.

"From our perspective, the Scriptures certainly do not condemn our lifestyles. We believe the Scriptures confirm holistic, loving relationships,

including gay and lesbian relationships." Ronnie J. Helms, former Southern Baptist and now pastor to a gay and lesbian congregation at Metropolitan Community Church-Open Arms in Rochester, N.Y., in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle*.

"Baptists have the best of both worlds. They insist that no one can tell a Baptist what to believe, and they believe they can tell everyone what to do. ...Excluding people from one thing or another in the name of God—be it heaven or health care—seems to be a fundamental activity of Christians from many denominations. Steve Gushee, columnist with *The Palm Beach Post*

(Fla.), suggesting Disney plays the role of Good Samaritan in providing health care benefits to the partners of homosexual employees.

"At first glance, Disney seems like an odd target for the Southern Baptists' boycott. But Southern Baptists are angry that Disney is talking out of both sides of its mouth, giving the public a double message about its commitment to the family. Disney has an enormous impact on kids, one that the Southern Baptists want to ensure stays as positive as possible...." Scott B. Rae, associate professor of Christian ethics, Talbot Theological Seminary, Biola University, in the *Los Angeles Times*.

Euthanasia Tourism

By Rebecca C. Miller

Tourism. Webster defines it as "the practice of traveling for recreation." Now consider the idea of euthanasia tourism—the practice of traveling to a particular venue in order to die. Though it may seem unthinkable macabre, *The Bulletin With Newsweek* (an Australian publication) reports an increase in the number of terminally ill individuals traveling to the Northern Territory of Australia¹—home of the world's first voluntary euthanasia law. Though immigration laws prohibit terminally ill non-Australian citizens from entering the province for the purpose of euthanasia, Australians would be permitted to enter for that very purpose.²

The Parliament of the Northern Territory legalized voluntary euthanasia in May of 1995,³ and the law took effect July 1, 1996.⁴ Marshal Perron, former chief minister and proponent of the *Rights of the Terminally Ill Bill*, said in his "First Reading Speech" on February 22, 1995: "This bill is based on a relatively simple principle: If there are terminally ill patients who wish to end their own sufferings by accelerating inevitable death, and there are sympathetic doctors who are willing to help them die with dignity, then the law should not forbid it."⁵ Such logic untethers legal provisions which could safeguard the sanctity of human life.

The first issue is that of suffering. Death is never easy; often, its hallmark is suffering. The Northern Territory's intent to relieve the suffering of the terminally ill is laudable: We *should* do all within our power to minimize the suffering of the dying. However, suffering itself is an extremely subjective concept, not limited merely to the physical realm, and not easily quantified or qualified by law. If euthanasia is to be permitted for physical suffering of the terminally ill, could it not just as easily be legalized for those experiencing emotional or psychological suffering?⁶

Secondly, though this bill claims

to give the terminally ill a death with dignity, in reality, it cheapens society's view of the value of human life. Does the liberty to "accelerat[e] inevitable death" safeguard the God-given innate sacredness of human life? As humans, do we really have the prerogative to hasten death for ourselves or for others? Is it our right to decide when death or life should be prolonged? Are we the authority that decides when a life is worth living and when it is not?

In his speech, Mr. Perron says: "If you believe that only God can give life and only God can take it, actions available under this bill are not for you. I aim simply to give those who desire a choice the right to make it."⁷ If humans are the final moral authority on their own life and on death, as implied by this law, could it not be deemed morally acceptable to allow them to be the authority on others' life and death, as long as the death is with dignity? Such reasoning proves circular at best, chilling at worst, and is hauntingly reminiscent of Nazi Germany.

The Third Reich was another government that gave humans the final authority on deciding who should live and who should die. For the Nazis, the value of human life was calculated by a simple utilitarian equation: Could one contribute to the furtherance of the Third Reich? Human life held no intrinsic worth in and of itself. Unless life produced tangible good, it was unworthy of protection. What began as sterilization and euthanasia programs for society's unwanted eventually culminated in the systematic murder of no less than six million Jews.

Though Mr. Perron claims it "an obscenity to associate this practical legislation, which has popular support, with the shadow of the Third Reich,"⁸ the actions of both governments are based on the premise that humans can be the final authority on life and on death—while in reality, God alone has authority to give and to take life. When this responsibility is

assumed by humans, society's view of the value of human life is cheapened. Furthermore, when society attempts to usurp God's rightful authority over human life, human life is put at great risk, left only to the instability of societal whims.

Australia stands divided over this issue of human life. The Australian Capital Territory's defeat of a voluntary euthanasia bill in November, 1995, recognizes the sanctity of human life. However, though many would deny it, the Northern Territory is on its way down the slippery slope that does not recognize human life as inherently precious, the ends of which God alone knows.

A battle is being waged over the value of human life—and Australia is not the sole battleground. We must fight against any action that attempts to rob human life of its innate value. History proves that the social acceptance and legal implementation of the view of human life as unworthy of protection leads down a road of unspeakable horror. If we close our ears to the horrors of yesterday, they will become the reality of our tomorrow. Some have already begun slipping down the slope. Euthanasia tourism is closer to becoming reality than we may even know.

Rebecca C. Miller is an International Officer with The Rutherford Institute, an international legal and educational organization dedicated to the preservation of religious liberty, the sanctity of human life, and family autonomy.

Endnotes

¹Dennis Schulz, "Death Comes Slowly," *The Bulletin With Newsweek*, 24 October 1995, 28.

²*Communique*, 3 May 1996 (from "Australia—Euthanasia," Associated Press, 10 April 1996).

³Marshall Perron, "First Reading Speech," Legislative Assembly, Northern Territory, Australia, February 22, 1995, 1.

⁴*Communique*, 3 May 1996 (from "Australia—Euthanasia," Associated Press, 10 April 1996).

⁵Perron, 1.

⁶Editorial, "Euthanasia, Final Exit, Final Excuse," *First Things*, no. 18 (December 1991):6.

⁷Perron, "First Reading Speech," 5.

⁸*Ibid.*, 6.

Australian state legalizes assisted suicide

By Dwayne Hastings

Australia's Northern Territory joined the growing list of localities around the world giving ascent to physician-assisted suicide and voluntary euthanasia.

The parliament of the tiny territory, which has fewer citizens than the city of Portland, Oregon, narrowly approved the measure, "Rights of the Terminally Ill Act," May 25. The law went into effect July 1.

A patient may request euthanasia if he or she "is experiencing pain, suffering and/or distress to an extent [which is] unacceptable," according to the legislation. It defines as "terminal" any illness "which, in reasonable medical judgment will, in the normal course, without the application of extraordinary measures or of treatment unacceptable to the patient, result in the death of the patient."

Passage of the measure has stirred interest in other Australian states, prompting similar assisted suicide bills to be introduced in other state houses there. The Australian Medical Association (AMA) overwhelmingly opposed the measure, voting 80-1 to condemn the practice.

"[W]e believe the government should be focusing more on pallia-

tive care services so that people can die without pain and with dignity," said AMA Vice President Keith Woolard in an Associated Press release.

Australian Governor-General Bill Hayden hailed the measure, further calling for "utilitarian judgments" to limit medical care for the elderly. "There is a point when the succeeding generations deserve to be disencumbered—to coin a clumsy word—of some unproductive burdens," Hayden said in a June speech, according to *The Australian*.

C. Ben Mitchell, consultant on biomedical ethics for the SBC Christian Life Commission, said, "What so-called 'death with dignity' advocates fail to see is that one cannot promote one's own dignity by destroying oneself." He said physicians should "not treat suffering by killing the sufferer."

This decision, which allows doctors to prescribe and administer lethal drugs to end life, is "a license to murder," Mitchell continued.

"Even in a perfect world, assisted suicide would be immoral; but in a fallen world of scarce medical resources, the triumphalism of personal autonomy, and the utter disregard for the sanctity of human life, legalization of assisted suicide is a travesty," he said.

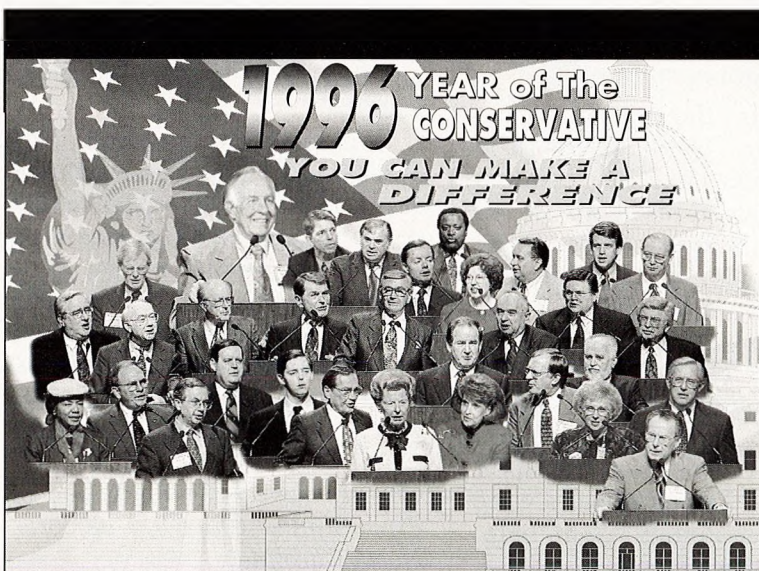
Opposition to the law has con-

tinued to mount since its passage earlier this year; some observers suggest action may be taken to repeal the act on both the territorial and federal levels.

And above the U.S. border, a special Canadian Senate committee, while recommending that euthanasia and assisted suicide not be legalized, did suggest June 6 the Canadian government create a "third category of murder" to carry a "less severe penalty" than exists now for involuntary euthanasia in the nation. This category of euthanasia refers to the killing of a person who is incapable of requesting death.

Kevorkian . . .

"Well, let's take what people think was a dignified death. Christ—was that a dignified death? Do you think it's dignified to hang from wood with nails through your hands and feet...slowly dying, with people jabbing spears in your side and people jeering? You think that's dignified? Not by a long shot! Had Christ died in my van, with people around Him who loved Him...that would be far more dignified. In my rusty van." Jack Kevorkian, who has assisted 35 people in taking their lives since 1990, in remarks to the National Press Club July 29 on the dignity of assisted suicide, as reported in the *Washington Post*.



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By Charles D. Page

The original context of this psalm is probably a worship service of thanksgiving. It is a time to remember the blessings of God, not the least of which is His provision of the necessities of life such as food and drink. In the average American home such gratitude should be easy, but for almost a billion people in the world, hunger is their daily companion. Many parents watch their young die of malnutrition if not starvation.

The lessons of Psalm 107 are critical for both the "haves" and "have nots" of our world. It is obvious the "haves" in the world are no more deserving than the "have nots." In the psalm, hunger pain is not attached to faithfulness nor its lack, for the hungry in the psalm are God's redeemed. It heightens our desire to help those in trouble when we understand that we could have been born into less favorable circumstances of life.

The psalmist is here writing about men, women and children in very difficult circumstances. They are near death from starvation, with no solutions in sight. Our thoughts wander to the pictures we see coming out of Somalia, Rwanda and other countries where starvation is rampant, or to circumstances we might have observed personally even in our own country. We do not have to look far to see the tragedy of hunger.

Finally, the psalmist makes it perfectly clear that God cares deeply about the plight of these sufferers. I feel the love of God on a personal level as I reflect upon His blessings upon my family and me. Personal blessings make me accountable for others. God chose Israel to be blessed, and also to be the carrier of blessing to other nations and individuals. He designed that their blessing be

'Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted'

(Psalm 107:5)



**Observe World Hunger Day
October 13, 1996**

translated into ministry, drawing the pagan nations to Himself.

As we view the suffering of the world, our own blessings lose their flavor unless they are used to meet the basic needs of others. We are blessed to bless. When Jesus saw the multitudes, "He was moved with compassion." His compassion was then translated into action as He went about meeting their needs. We might well object, "But I am just one person, and the needs of the world are so great." I think I hear a voice from heaven saying, "Your help, when joined with that of others,

can become like the boy's loaves and fish. Little is much when God is in it."

We have the method. SBC Foreign and Home Mission Boards stand head and shoulders above most hunger relief programs in getting our gifts for hunger to the most needy places. The method calls for our resources. God wants to bless our gifts. Let us each encourage our church to make world hunger a priority this year.

Charles Page is senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina.

RESOURCES

OBSERVE WORLD HUNGER DAY

October 13, 1996

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	New Bulletin Insert for World Hunger emphasis (Undated, color)	.06	
	New Poster - World Hunger Theme Poster (Undated, color)	.95	
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	New Poster - Dollar-In-Dollar-Out: How Southern Baptists Give to Hunger Relief Discounts available when ordering multiple copies. Call for details.	.85	
	New Hunger Fact Sheet	.22	
	New Hunger Activities for Children	.04	
	Updated Pamphlet - What Are Southern Baptists Doing About Hunger?	.11	
	Book of Plays - World Hunger Scripts for the 21st Century (This includes 5 hunger plays, a number of hunger-related worship materials and reproduction rights within a local congregation.)	8.95	
	Pamphlet - The Bible Speaks on Hunger	.17	
	Pamphlet - Issues and Answers: Hunger	.17	
	Christian Actions for the World's Hungry	.11	
	New Testament Studies for a World Hunger Emphasis	.22	
	Old Testament Studies for a World Hunger Emphasis	.22	
	Calendar - World Hunger Wall Calendar	.17	
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	Book - <i>What Shall We Do in a Hungry World?</i>	.99	
	World Hunger Resource Package - One of each of above resources	18.50	
	Youth Guide - Hunger Alert: World Hunger Awareness/Action Guide for Youth	3.30	
	CLC Hunger Videotape: "Within Your Reach: Hunger in the Homeland" 1/2" VHS, 25 min.	19.95	
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Preaching on ethical issues: Hunger

(Third in a series)

By Charles D. Page

Psalms 107:5

Introduction

Many times, from far away places such as Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia, the images of small, desperate children with distended stomachs and hollow eyes due to hunger and malnutrition disturb us. Our hearts sink for a moment, but we soon recover because they are so far away. It is easy to reason that they are someone else's problem because we are not there and are unable to get there. Then, riding down the street in the comfort of our car we see "one of those people" on the corner with the sign, "Will work for food." We do not have any work for them to do so we pass on by. Again, we make ourselves feel some better by telling ourselves, "Oh well, he would not work anyway. He is just shiftless and lazy." We can even support our case with Scripture because Paul said, "If any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thess. 3:10).

It seems that all around us there are hungry, hurting people. What are we to do? How can we make a difference when there are so many? The disciples faced the same dilemma. The multitudes were following Jesus, and the disciples reminded Him that the hour was late. They reasoned among themselves that if the crowd remained much longer they would become their responsibility. Their solution was to send them away to fend for themselves. Jesus had a different response. His response was to feed them. He had his disciples do the serving while He performed the miracle of providing the food. They needed the experience. This is a modern-day parable because feeding the hungry is His miracle of which He lets us be a part.

Psalms 107 speaks of the hungry and embattled, but also of a God who loves and a people who are called to share.

I. The Character of God

The first thing we notice in the text about the character of God is that He is *good*. The psalmist says, "Oh, give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good" (107:1). It is easy for us to look at all the problems in the world, including hunger, and say, "It is God's fault for He created it all." Not only is God good in His character, everything He does is based on that character. When He finished His creative work He commented, "It is good." The creation is like His character. It is good. He created a world with enough resources to take care of everyone on the earth, but the distribution was left to man, for we are to "have dominion over the earth." When our character begins to match the character of God, we begin to take seriously our part in this distribution process by sharing what we have with others who have not.

I was fortunate to have this lived out in front of me in simple ways when I was just a boy. My father always had a garden, and he made it a point to share with others in town who did not have gardens. When I came home from school, my mother not only had a snack ready for me but for all my friends who would follow me home. They knew there would be enough snack to go around. We are most like God when our actions on behalf of others are good.

Not only is God's character good, but our text tells us that it is an *enduring mercy*. The psalmist says, "His mercy endureth for ever" (107:1). The term "mercy" has nothing to do with something earned. It is compassion regardless of attributes. In the Old Testament the symbol of God's mercy was the *mercy seat*, which was a slab of pure gold measuring 45 inches by 27 inches. It symbolized the throne from which God reigned over His universe and over Israel. On the day of atonement the high priest sprinkled blood of a sacrificed lamb on the mercy seat as a plea for for-

givenness for the nation. The Hebrew word for "mercy" means "to cover over" (Holman Bible Dictionary). This Old Testament symbol has been replaced by the cross as the highest symbol of mercy, for upon that cross died the incarnate God. This was His greatest demonstration of mercy. The hymn writer said it well when he wrote, "Well might the sun in darkness hide when Christ, the mighty maker, died for man the creature's sin." Our character begins to resemble the character of God when our compassion for others does not depend upon their ability to repay or their deserving of our help.

A number of years ago, while on mission in Africa, I attempted to share the good news of the gospel in a local village with a man who was the self-styled philosopher of the village. He was arrogant and belligerently against the message I came to share. He was totally different from most of the villagers with whom we had shared. They were humble and enthusiastic about our message. I started to back away from this man, thinking, "He does not care about what I have come to bring to him. Furthermore, he is arrogant and unpleasant. I will not waste my time on him." In that moment, I realized my motivation was not pure, and my compassion was feigned. I sat down beside him and listened to what he had to say. His attitude began to change. He then began to listen to the claims of Christ upon his life. We must allow the character of God to bleed through our lives if we truly will meet people at the point of their physical needs as well as their spiritual needs.

The psalmist tells us that God's character is *responsive*. He writes, "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness" (107:9). Our Heavenly Father does respond to the cries of His creation, and He could do it Himself, but He has chosen to use His redeemed as His instruments of

ministry and rescue. We are most like God when we too are responsive to the needs of those less fortunate, whether it is a physical or spiritual need. It seems that so often we are tempted to react to a person's need based on past experience when someone took advantage of us. We begin to look at everyone who crosses our path with a need as someone looking for a way to take an unfair advantage.

Some years ago a stranger came into town down on his luck. He needed food, and I tried to provide that. He said he wanted to work, so I used him with odd jobs around my house, paying him by the hour. I then located him a job with an employer I knew. He worked a few days and was gone, leaving this employer in a difficult situation. My responsiveness was dimmed by this experience. I did not know if I ever would try to help another person. I am so glad the sting of that experience did not last long, for I would have missed the next person who came along with a need, who turned out to be sincere in every way. We are more like God when we are responsive to human need.

II. The Condition of Man

The human condition has not changed much since the writing of Psalm 107. All around us we find people wandering from one thing to the next (verse 4) looking for something that might satisfy an inner thirst. It reminds us of Matthew 9, where we read that Jesus was going about all the cities and villages. He had compassion on the multitudes because they were like sheep without a shepherd. I was traveling down a dirt road in Tanzania some years ago and was surprised by the large numbers of people, hundreds of them, just walking by the side of the road. They seemed so aimless. I asked the missionary, "Where are they going?" He replied, "That is the sad thing about it. They are going nowhere in particular."

The psalmist tells us that they are hungry and thirsty, but also that their souls faint within them. There seems to be such a close correlation between spiritual hunger

and physical hunger. All who have ever been on the mission field know that it is very difficult to share spiritual food with a hungry person until we have provided them with physical food.

Then the psalmist gets to the heart of the matter when he reveals that they have been walking in darkness. Jesus said, "Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19). We have here the human condition in a nutshell. When man walks in darkness he has no purpose. His soul faints within him. There is little hope and little motivation for one person to help another. It is a vicious cycle which leads to more poverty and hunger. The problem becomes almost insurmountable. There must come upon the scene a new vision, a fresh breeze blowing, with the redeemed placing more of our God-given resources into the powerful, miracle-working hand of God.

III. The Charge of the Believer

The psalmist says, "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so" (107:2). It is the responsibility of every believer to be a herald of the gospel, and this promotion of the gospel message must be in deed as well as in word. In 2 Corinthians 8 the apostle Paul is writing to the church at Corinth about a very important matter. The Jerusalem church had fallen on hard times economically. Most of the believers in that church were Jews who had been converted. Many of them were craftsmen and could no longer make a living from their trade of carving idols for the pagans to worship. This would not be right.

Others had lost their jobs because of their conversion to the faith. Many were even estranged from family and friends. They were paying a high price for their faith. They could not feed their families or look after the basic needs of life. Many were discouraged. Paul had promised the Macedonian believers that the Corinthians would participate in meeting this need as soon

as they were able. The Macedonians were encouraged by this, and now Paul was advising the Corinthians that the time was right for them to consider the needs of others. In verses 13-14 he writes, "For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality." He is not advocating self-imposed poverty, even though God has called some to this kind of lifestyle in the past. He is not talking about socialism or communism, for we see from past history how those concepts have failed. When Romania overthrew its Communist control and the Ceausescus were killed, it was discovered that while most of the people lived in poverty they had lived in luxury. God has created the resources to feed and clothe the world, and part of the Christian responsibility is to help with the distribution. In Ephesians 4:28 Paul writes, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." That is the charge of every believer.

As we face a world that has so many pockets of hunger in both the body and the spirit, let us develop a godly concern for people and their needs.

Conclusion

The question is naturally forthcoming, "How?" Through our churches we can discover the local needs and take a small step toward meeting those needs. Through our Convention we can discover the worldwide needs and ways those needs are being met and become part of that great army of relief givers. If the desire is there to do our part in feeding a hungry world, God will give us the means and the methods.

Charles D. Page is senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina.

Light from the Capital

RU-486 nears OK; pro-lifers face choices

The RU-486 abortion technique has taken a critical step toward final government approval in this country, leaving Southern Baptists and others to face some decisions about their medical care.

"It is time for patients to ask their doctors if they will use RU-486," said Ben Mitchell, consultant on biomedical and life issues for the Christian Life Commission. "If they say 'yes,' then it is time for us to make some choices of our own. We ought to change physicians. If physicians will chemically target unborn babies for death, who knows what else they will do? They are not the kind of doctors you want."

The Population Council, which holds the United States patent to a drug developed by a French company, recently cleared a major hurdle to approval by the Food and Drug Administration. At the end of a day-long July 19 hearing in suburban Washington, D.C., an FDA advisory committee endorsed RU-486 in a 6-0 vote, with two abstentions.

There appears little doubt the FDA will give final approval, possibly by year's end. The agency rarely overturns the recommendations of its advisory committees.

When approval comes, it appears certain to change the dynamic of the abortion battle and to cause further debate in the medical field. A survey released at the hearing by the Kaiser Family Foundation of California showed four of 10 obstetricians who now refuse to perform abortions would prescribe RU-486 for abortion, *The Washington Times* reported.

"We are facing a fundamental division in modern medicine," Mitchell said. "Either one is a Hippocratic physician who will not intentionally harm patients, or one is a eugenicist who seeks to destroy the weak and vulnerable among us."

"A physician who is worth the title will not use RU-486. Chemical abortion is just as reprehensible and

offensive to a good doctor as manual methods of killing babies."

Pro-lifers and pro-choicers seem to agree RU-486 may increase markedly the number of abortions in the country beyond the current 1.5 million a year and could thwart anti-abortion demonstrations targeting clinics and doctors.

Not only will RU-486 kill unborn children, but pro-lifers fear it will endanger women's health.

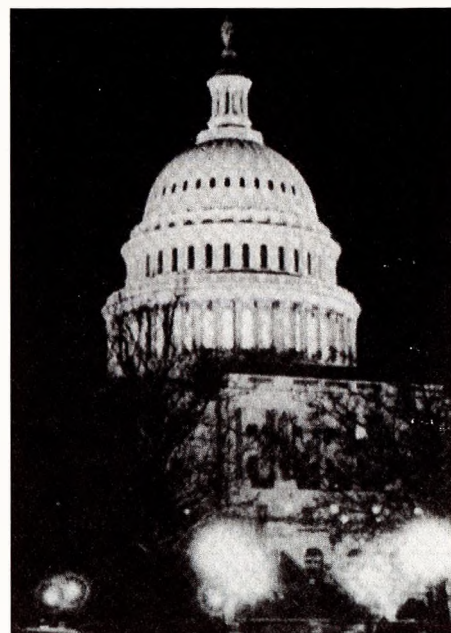
"Not only can we expect more injuries and deaths with the use of RU-486, we can also expect that the women who raise claims of injury will have difficulty recovering (damages). The physicians will blame the woman and the manufacturer. The unknown manufacturer is overseas, and the newly invented distributor will conveniently disappear. The injuries will not disappear," said Helen Donovan, a northern Virginia lawyer who represents women injured by surgical abortion, at a July 18 news conference.

Some pro-lifers have warned the chemical procedure actually may be more traumatic for a mother than a surgical one.

Because the mother using RU-486 may abort at home and it is important "she identify the contents of her womb, she must look at the results of the abortion," said National Right to Life Committee President Wanda Franz. "In a surgical procedure, the woman generally does not see the baby. Thus, the privacy that women claim to want may actually be a contributing factor to increasing trauma."

While doctors and pro-lifers have raised several other questions about potential health problems for the pregnant woman, the FDA continues speeding ahead in a "totally politicized drug approval process" on a timetable "about one-third of the 17 months that fast-track drugs usually take," said Richard Glasow, a consultant on RU-486 to pro-life groups.

Wayne Bardin, a consultant for The Population Council, said at the hearing, "We wanted to make sure it



was applied for during this administration," *The Times* reported.

The process began on President Clinton's third day in office in 1993. He directed the FDA to determine if the import ban on RU-486 should be lifted. At the time, pro-life leaders predicted the federal government would do all it could to gain approval for the drug.

In May 1994, The Population Council received the patent by donation from Roussel Uclaf, the French developer of RU-486. Clinical trials involving abortions for more than 2,100 women at 17 clinics were held in 1994-95.

The week before the advisory committee hearing, some pro-lifers asked FDA Commissioner David Kessler to remove as many as six members of the panel for their pro-abortion advocacy or connections. The CLC, NRLC, Christian Coalition, Focus on the Family, Concerned Women for America and Life Issues Institute made such a request.

RU-486, also known as mifepristone, is used with a prostaglandin, misoprostol, to induce abortion in women in the early weeks of pregnancy. RU-486 causes the lining of the uterus to release the baby, who usually suffocates or starves to death. Misoprostol causes the uterus to contract, expelling the child's body. The procedure requires at least three visits to a clinic.

— Tom Strode

Covert U.S. agenda uncovered at latest UN conference

By Tom Strode

As a veteran of two United Nations-sponsored conferences, Nancy Schaefer recognizes she will have to battle her own country's delegation at such events, but she still doesn't find it a welcome thought.



Schaefer

"It is very difficult, and you really don't enjoy telling delegates from other countries that you don't support what your own delegation believes in, but that is exactly what I did," Schaefer said after her experience at the latest U.N. extravaganza, the Second Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in June at Istanbul, Turkey.

At Istanbul, Schaefer represented the Christian Life Commission. While the conference was designed to focus on housing, Schaefer and representatives from other conservative non-governmental organizations (NGO) found themselves combating a United States-led effort to promote abortion rights and school-based clinics, while opposing parental rights.

"It was like reproductive health was the issue all along, but the front for it was human settlements," said Schaefer, a CLC trustee who heads her own Atlanta-based pro-family organization, Family Concerns Inc.

The conference's final document included the endorsement of housing rights as a universal goal, but it did not include some profligate provisions the United States and other Western delegations promoted.

At one point in the 12-day conference, Schaefer questioned the United States' introduction of an amendment calling for "reproductive health" and "sexual health services" in a meeting with Melinda Kimble, the U.S. delegation's chief negotiator and a State Department official. Kimble refused to define the terms and was "very indignant about my challenging her in those areas," Schaefer said.

"Finally when the United States realized that they had such a battle on their hands for reproductive health, they gave up on the sexual health language."

The G-77, a group of about 130 developing countries, worked with the assistance of the Vatican delegation and the encouragement of about 75 NGOs to block such efforts to radicalize the document.

"I felt like we were able to protect the document more this year" than at the women's conference in 1995 at Beijing, China, Schaefer said. "In Istanbul even more than Beijing, I felt like I had more rap-

port with delegates from the developing countries."

While many of those developing countries are Muslim controlled, "they are very pro-family," Schaefer said, "and they believe in morality, protecting children and in parental rights. 'At one point, [the G-77 countries] said, 'You don't need to lobby us anymore. We agree with you.'"

The United Nations constantly bombarded delegates with misleading information on alleged crises in population, food and other areas, Schaefer said.

The conference was the fourth consecutive such U.N. event to feature battles over population control, family planning and abortion rights: The 1994 population conference at Cairo, Egypt; the February 1995 social summit at Copenhagen, Denmark; and the September 1995 women's conference at Beijing. Habitat II was the last scheduled U.N. conference, but a world food summit set for November at Rome was announced at Istanbul. The Food and Agricultural Organization, an independent U.N. agency, will be the sponsor.

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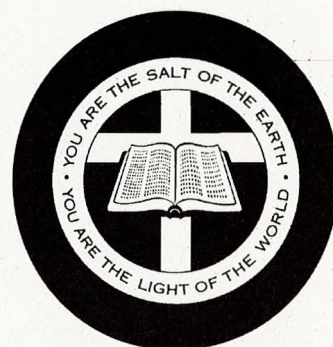
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— Dellanna O'Brien, Executive Director
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We have to do so much more and do so in a more coordinated way. We cannot look the other way while multitudes around the world and in our own nation are severely malnourished and starving to death.

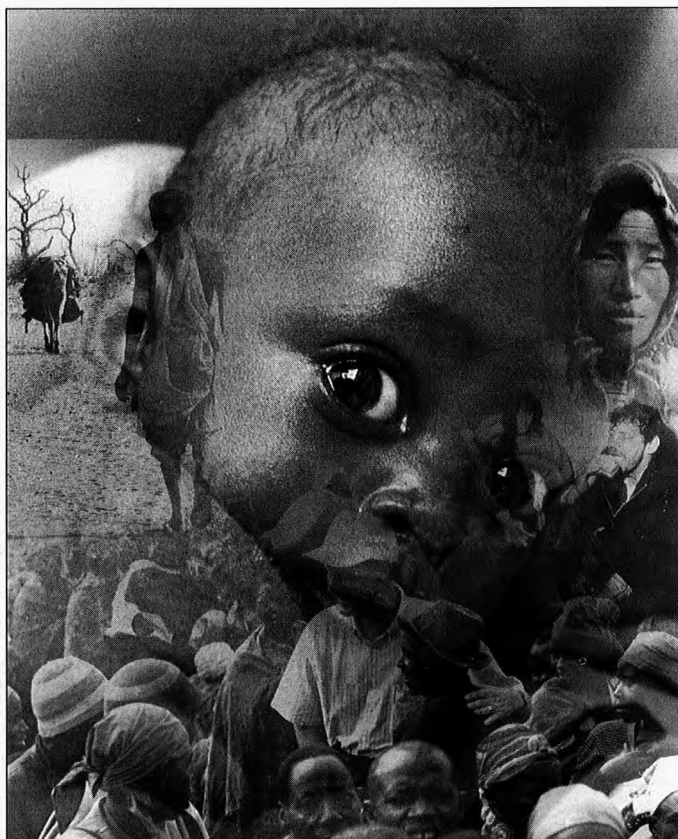
— Richard D. Land, President
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— James D. Williams,
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Without hunger and relief funds we cannot reach out to the starving in such places as North Korea, Ethiopia, Cambodia, or even in the United States, as Jesus would have us do. We urge you to encourage your church to give, so that the Southern Baptist Foreign and Home Mission boards can love that malnourished child, that hungry woman, that starving man, and point them to the Precious Lamb of Calvary.

— Jerry Rankin, President
Foreign Mission Board, SBC
— Larry Lewis, President
Home Mission Board, SBC