

LIGHT

THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

SEPT.-OCT., 1997

Their Blood Cries Out

BY PAUL MARSHALL

MARY, a young Egyptian girl, displays her fragile wrist. It is encircled by a bracelet of scarred flesh. Her disfigurement bears mute witness to her abduction, rape, and nine-month captivity at the hands of her Islamic kidnappers. As part of their program to transform Mary into a Muslim, her captors poured sulfuric acid on her wrist to remove the tattooed cross that she wore as a statement of her faith.

Mary grew up among Egypt's six million Coptic Christians, a minority community which faces increased mistreatment from Islamic zealots. At eighteen years of age she was visiting a friend's home when she was kidnapped by a group of radicals from Gamat Islamaia.

Fortunately, Mary escaped. She was aided by a Palestine group called the Servants of the Cross, who sheltered her. There are between 7,000 and 10,000 such cases of forced conversion to Islam in Egypt.

See PERSECUTION, p.4

Who is on the Wall?

By Richard D. Land, President, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

If America dies, she will perish from self-inflicted wounds. It has always been the case and it always will be, that nations, great nations, die from within, not from without. Surely, that is what God's holy Word is telling us in the sixth chapter of the book of Jeremiah.

God said in Jeremiah 1, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1:5). God put forth His hand and touched Jeremiah's mouth and put God's words in his mouth and sent him forth to speak them to His people who were in rebellion and in pagan idolatry (Jer. 1:9-10).

In the day and time in which Jeremiah lived, the only real earthly protection that could be afforded to a city was to fortify itself with a wall. They would place watchmen on the walls. They would scan the horizon and at the first sign of trouble, they were to pick

Every day in America 1,106 of those girls snuff out the lives of their unborn children through abortion.

Every 78 seconds a teenager in America attempts suicide. In the last 30 years we have seen a quadrupling of the suicide rate of our teenage boys and a doubling of the suicide rate of our teenage girls.

66% of our American teenagers acknowledge that they have used one or more illegal drugs by the time they graduate from high school.

We are being inundated with a tidal wave of moral relativism which centers on human sexuality.

In 1960, hard-core pornography was a \$5 to \$10 million industry in the United States of America. Today, it is an \$8.5 to \$10 billion a year industry. In the United States of 1996, there are more hard-core pornography outlets than there are McDonald's restaurants. Pornography is the third largest source of revenue for organized



up their trumpets and blow a warning blast to call the people to man the defenses to defend their homes and families.

God said, My prophets are watchmen. I've set watchmen on the wall and they have scanned the horizon and they've turned and seen that the real threat is inside the walls, not outside the walls. And they have taken up their trumpets and they have blown the warning blasts saying, "Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls" (Jer. 6:16).

I was in a press conference a couple of years ago and a reporter asked me: "We've heard a lot from you about what's wrong with America. What would America look like if America was the way you wanted America to be?" I replied, "Well, a good place to start would be America in 1955, without the racism and without the sexual discrimination against women."

America in 1955 was a place where the following things did not happen; they do now:

Less than half of our children currently grow up in intact families. In 1960, 80% of our children were reared in homes where the father and the mother were both in the home and were married to each other; less than half of our children experience that today. More than a million children a year experience the pain of parental divorce.

There has been a 400% increase in child abuse significant enough to require a doctor's attention in the last 10 years.

Every hour our children watch 78 violent acts on television. Every day in America 2,795 teenage girls get pregnant.

crime in the United States, exceeded only by illegal drugs and gambling. Last year, Americans spent more money on hard-core videos, peep shows, live sex acts, adult phone calls, sexual devices, computer porn and sexual magazines of a hard-core nature than they spent on Hollywood domestic movie receipts or all the gross receipts from the country music and the rock and roll industry in the United States. And on top of that, we are now being inundated with a subterranean electronic river of pure evil slime known as cyberporn on the Internet.

It wasn't that way in 1955. As a consequence of this moral filth being poured out in our culture, one out of every three girls, and one

See CONVENTION SERMON, p.6

This article is excerpted from the Annual Convention Sermon preached by Dr. Richard Land during the 1997 Southern Baptist Convention.



THE ETHICS & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY COMMISSION
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Shattering the Silence of the Persecuted Church

BY DWAYNE HASTINGS

As American evangelicals struggle with what to do with their children's Disney videos and others castigate their fellow Christians for demonstrating a lack of compassion toward the world's second largest entertainment conglomerate, thousands of their brothers and sisters across the oceans are paying the ultimate price for their faith: persecution to the point of death.

The silence is deafening.

The plague of Christian persecution affects over two hundred million people, says Paul Marshall in *Their Blood Cries Out*, explaining an additional four hundred million believers are "suffering from discrimination and legal impediments." Yet despite the intensity of suffering, Christians in America have not heard the cry of their persecuted brethren around the world. The thought of physical sacrifice for the faith is foreign to most in the church in America.

"The vast body of Christians in the United States, along with their major organizations, have indeed abdicated their responsibility to deal with the persecution of Christians," writes Marshall.

While many groups and individuals have stepped to the foreground in this global struggle, Marshall says "the overall record of the church is abysmal."

"Despite a plethora of TV programs, radio stations and

magazines, despite the presence of the tens of thousands of workers overseas involved in missions, education, and relief and development, despite networks of contacts worldwide and a vast array of intermetted agencies, the situation of Christians is passed by silently," he writes.

Marshall insists the churches' ignorance of the issue has been fed by the silence on the part of secular institutions.

"If we turn to secular news outlets, to academics, to policy analysts, to international relations scholars, to political activists in search of news about the persecution of Christians, we encounter a deafening silence," he says.

A secular myopia trivializes the role of religion in the world, Marshall suggests.

"When I see something like this, my heart aches because the believers here don't even know about it, don't care. We're not expressing moral outrage; we're not indignant of the indifference of the United States government towards this," Chuck Colson said on the September 16, 1996, Focus on the Family radio program. "And we ought to be marching in the streets because our brethren are being persecuted, imprisoned, beaten, sold into slavery, and butchered, and we don't seem to care in this country."

Yet a movement is growing to heed the cries of the martyrs, sparked by a call to prayer for

persecuted Christians last year from the World Evangelical Fellowship.

The 1997 International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church is a resounding call to "shatter the silence," insists Steve Haas, the coordinator of the global effort. He said the season of understanding, prayer and compassionate action begins September 28 and culminates in a day of prayer to be marked in 115 countries and over 50,000 churches on November 16.

Southern Baptists are reaching across denominational lines to link arms with other believers in raising a unified voice for the fate of the persecuted Christians around the world.

"Southern Baptists and other evangelicals are awakening to the plight of their persecuted brothers and sisters overseas," said ERLC President Richard Land. "All across America, Christians are committing to pray for persecuted Christians, to raise awareness of their plight, and to insist that our government adopt a policy of opposition to such atrocities."

"It is rare that an issue has the power to unite all peoples regardless of race, economic background, religious creed or political stripe," Haas wrote in planning for the effort. "The persecution of Christians is an act against the most basic of human rights—freedom of conscience." ■



THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER RESOURCE KIT

The official International Day of Prayer resource kit is designed to educate and energize your church on the issue of Christian persecution. This powerful packet of material is available from the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

The well-designed kit contains a host of materials that will bring the plight of the persecuted church right into your own church:

■ VIDEO:

Part 1: A 3-4 minute clip highlighting the size and scope of Christian persecution, with an introduction by Chuck Colson.

Part 2: A documentary style format highlighting three stories of Christian persecution (China, Sudan, Iran). (Approx. 10 minutes.)

Part 3: "What Can I Do Now?" section with helpful suggestions on how concerned individuals can respond.

■ MAGAZINE:

A four-color, 20-page resource tool created for the purpose of informing and exhorting readers to action. This journal provides a presentation of the basic issues of the persecuted church as well as specific information on selected countries.

■ PRAYER MAP:

A full color (16" x 21") global map highlighting countries where Christians are currently experiencing persecution.

The resource kits can be ordered from the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. (See order form, p.16, and specify product code below.)



Product code: DOPKIT Price: \$15.00

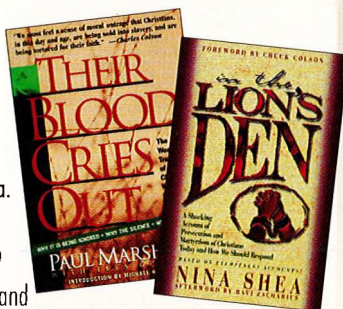
Their Blood Cries Out

In more than 60 countries worldwide, Christians are harassed, abused, arrested, tortured or executed. This book by Paul Marshall shares the tragedy of modern Christians who are dying for their faith.

BKBLO (335 pages) \$12.00 ea.

In The Lion's Den

More people have died for their faith in the 20th century than in the previous 19 centuries combined. Nina Shea shares what's happening, where it's happening, and what America's Christians must do to stop it. BKLIO (125 pages) \$9.00 ea.



See order form, p.16.

Paul Marshall is a senior fellow in political theory at the Institute for Christians Studies, Toronto, Canada, and an academic advisor on religious freedom to the World Evangelical Fellowship. He is the author of Their Blood Cries Out.

A MAMMOTH ISSUE IGNORED

The persecution of Christians worldwide is perhaps the largest single human rights issue in the world today, and one which is all but ignored in the churches and in the secular world.

Knowing about the sufferings of Christians for their faith should alter our view of the situation of Christians in the world. Most of us still assume that the center of world Christianity is in Europe and the United States. Yet 65 percent of nominal Christians live outside the West. The percentage for active Christians is probably 80 percent. On any given Sunday more people go to church in China than do in all of western Europe put together. This is probably also true of Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country. It is perhaps true of India, Nigeria and Brazil.

Even defining a Christian only as one who wants to get baptized, married or buried in the church reveals that the continent with the fewest number of Christians is North America. By that definition, there are probably 220 to 230 million Christians north of the Rio Grande. The continent with the next lowest number would be Asia, with about 290 to 300 million Christians.

In other words, our image of "a Christian" should not necessarily be of a white person who lives near Pittsburgh. Taking the world as a whole, a Christian is as likely to be a Chinese or Indonesian peasant or an Egyptian shopkeeper or an Pakistani refugee as a white middle-class American.

THE GROWING PERSECUTION

One effect of our thinking that the center of world Christianity is in the free countries of Europe and America is that we do not realize that much of the church today is persecuted for its faith. I have documented the suffering of Christians in approximately 65 countries.

I try to limit the term *persecution* to those who face violence, imprisonment, torture and death for their faith, not those who experience legal impediments to the exercise of their faith, as painful as these can be. Given this definition, we can say that 200 million Christians live in situations of persecution and another 400 million live in situations of legal discrimination and oppression, for a total of about 600 million Christians who are suffering for their faith in Jesus Christ. This does not include the hundreds of millions of other Christians who suffer from war, famine and oppression.

EXAMPLES FROM THIS YEAR

Here are some examples from the first months of this year. The Indonesian government has been moving migrants from Java, which is very overcrowded, into the Indonesian part of Borneo, which is comparatively empty.

Most of these immigrants are Muslims. The native population (Dayaks) in that area is largely Christian, and they are becoming swamped by a large number of Muslim immigrants who are also being educated and given top jobs. This has caused tension throughout many parts of Indonesia, and there seems to have been an eruption a month ago in Borneo, in which several hundred people, mainly Christians, were killed.

I should mention that Indonesia has usually been a place of relative harmony between Christians and Muslims. I have been there often and it is an open, generous, friendly society, where Muslims and Christians get along well. But that harmony appears to be breaking down, not only because of the government's immigration policies, but because of the increasing riots by fanatical Muslims against Christians as well.

Just after Christmas in western Java, a mob of about 5,000 Muslims burned down four churches and damaged seven others. In 1996, about 50 Christian churches were destroyed on the island of Java.

And in China, between 80 and 120 Roman Catholics were arrested, beaten and jailed in Jaingxi Province on November 20, 1996, as part of a now formal, deliberate policy to eradicate the underground Catholic churches. An additional 42 Catholics were imprisoned that same day. Several sources report that early in 1997 in the town of Han Dan a Catholic priest was beaten to death by police during interrogation.

MORE CURRENT EXAMPLES

On February 6 of this year, a Muslim mob of about 30,000 people went on a rampage in Punjab Province, Pakistan, burning several churches including at least 13 Catholic churches and schools and thousands of Christian homes. Shantinagar, an 80-year-old Christian town of 15,000, was reported by the local bishop to have been razed to the ground leaving its people homeless, hundreds wounded, an unknown number dead, and two raped. The town has been sealed off by the military.

In Egypt, in March of this year, two of the larger attacks on the Copts in recent years took place several miles south of Cairo. In each case, nine Coptic Christians were killed. Stories like Mary's occur frequently.

Also this year, the government of Myanmar (Burma) is subjecting the Karen, tribespeople in the east of the country, to forcible conversion to Buddhism. Burma's ruling junta are not committed believers of Buddhism, but like any government which is unpopular they reach out to something more popular to legitimate themselves.

It could be nationalism, but in this case it is the country's traditional religion. The ruling junta is trying to dress itself in Buddhist robes, so to speak, and as a mark of its intentions is attacking the Christians and Muslims in the country. ■

SBC RESOLUTION ON RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION (Adopted by messengers to the 1997 Southern Baptist Convention)

WHEREAS, The principle of religious liberty is rooted in Scripture, demonstrated in the Gospel, and foundational to the nature of the human spirit as created by God; and

WHEREAS, As Southern Baptists we believe that all people should have the God-given freedom to form and hold opinions and religious beliefs and propagate them without interference from or coercion by any government, religion, or person, and

WHEREAS, American individuals, businesses, and government officials experience ever-increasing pressure to value economic gain over religious liberties; and

WHEREAS, There is evidence in many nations of escalating imprisonment, torture, killing, and other forms of persecution which demands much greater response by the United States government and the Christian community;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, That we, the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Dallas, Texas, June 17-19, 1997, express our opposition to religious persecution and encourage our government officials to elevate religious liberty concerns to the highest priority in foreign policy, invoking sanctions against those nations which tolerate persecution of those with differing religious beliefs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we urge Americans to refrain from international trade, even at the risk of financial loss, with or in nations that practice religious persecution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we respectfully encourage the media to bring these issues to the attention of the American public; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, That we urge believers to pray fervently for persecuted Christians worldwide and to pray for and urge government officials to eliminate such practices in countries where religious persecution exists.



CONVENTIONAL CHURCH SHAKES OFF CONVENTION TO REACH ATHENS: Looking across the town square of Athens, Tenn., the First Baptist Church stands poised to reach the east Tennessee community with the Gospel by moving away from canned programs and embracing personal ministries.

Changing Their City — Person by Person

BY DWAYNE HASTINGS

The First Baptist Church of Athens, Tenn., is by all appearances a typical Southern Baptist church — its steeple reaching high into the east Tennessee sky. Yet unlike many churches, the members here have determined the heart of real ministry is centered outside the church's buildings and across this community on the edge of the Appalachians.

Searching for ways to reach Athens for Christ, the church began late last year emphasizing a concept pioneered in part at the First Baptist Church of Leesburg, Fla. — meeting needs and sharing Christ.

"We had talked about different programs, but meeting needs and sharing Christ is not just some program of the Southern Baptist Convention," said Carlos Peterson, pastor of FBC Athens since 1989. "It is a perspective on ministry. It is the way you look at how you are the church and focus on the needs of people around you.

"Just because we are the Baptist church, people are not going to flock to us. We have to do what the early church did — go out and touch the people where they are," Peterson explained.

"We are trying to say to our community: We are not just sitting up here looking down on you and trying to correct all the moral ills of our community by just preaching against them; we actually want to be in the community, touching lives, meeting needs and sharing Christ," Peterson said of the church that was founded in 1824.

"Often in the church we get so bound up in our programming and things that we do that we expend our energy in just keeping the 'machinery' going rather than seeing the needs that are around us and extending the church into the community," he said.

When the church becomes consumed with an inward focus, Peterson suggested it will quickly use up its energies just to keep its programs going.

The initial effort involved getting church members to focus on the needs of the people around them, Peterson said. "This was not a launching pad for a program but a means to instill a perspective on how we do church, of we who are as a people, and to become aware of what God is leading each of us to do."

Peterson was introduced to the New Testament concept during

the annual seminar of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the SBC's agency for moral and public policy issues, during a session featuring Charles Rossel, pastor of FBC Leesburg... a session Peterson had originally planned to skip.

"It changed not just my focus of things but it has literally changed my ministry," Peterson said of his attendance at the closing session of the ERLC's annual seminar last year in Washington, D.C.

Peterson said it is not unusual for us to miss the needs of the people around us. "We look through them and past them," he said, but God wants us to see them.

He explained the essence of meeting needs and sharing Christ is using an everyday skill that God provides as a ministry to those who have a need that can be met with that skill. It involves believers asking God where He would have them use their gifts.

"It is being who you are where you are, and seeing yourself as an instrument of God, looking at the needs around you and realizing God put you there to meet those needs."

Members of the church no longer have to be coerced to become a part of a ministry, Peterson said. God gives them a burden for a ministry and they get involved — from minor household repairs for single parents to tutoring at-risk teenagers to a clearinghouse for home medical equipment to developing a bureau of language translators for use by hospitals and local businesses.

The church had been looking at ways to expand the church's evangelistic outreach, Peterson recalled.

Yet the church's new focus is ministry intertwined with evangelism. "Church members must see themselves as instruments of God, realizing God put them here to minister to people that perhaps couldn't be

See ATHENS, p. 12



WALLS DON'T CONTAIN HIS CHURCH: Carlos Peterson, pastor of FBC Athens, Tenn., is convinced ministry evangelism is the heart of what God intends the church to be in its community. It is his desire to have church members take note of the needs around them and use their gifts and skills to minister.

Convention Sermon — from p.2

out of every seven boys in the United States, will be sexually molested by the time they reach their sixteenth birthday, according to the FBI.

Somewhere in America, a

ed, think about what America will be like 30 or 40 years from now. Already, we find ourselves in much the same situation in which the Corinthian Christians found themselves, awash in a tide of moral relativity, in a tide of sexual paganism—a sexual abyss.

Yet when people who are believers try to stand up and speak for the truth, we are told, “Oh you can’t do that! That’s a violation of separation of church and state!” Nonsense! Foolish and dangerous nonsense!

John F. Kennedy once said, “The greatest enemy of truth is often not the lie, deliberate, contrived and dishonest, but the myth—persistent, persuasive and unrealistic.” It is a persistent, persuasive and unrealistic myth to say that you can’t legislate morality. All law is the legislation of somebody’s morality.

When Abraham Lincoln was running for the presidency of the United States in another time of great moral crisis, he received much criticism for making slavery an issue.

In 1860 in the midst of the presidential campaign, he said, “You say you will not let me do a single thing to say that slavery is wrong. There’s no place where you will even allow me to call it wrong. We must not call it wrong in the free states because it is not there. We must not call it wrong in the slave states because it is there. We must not call it wrong in politics because that’s bringing morality into politics, and we must not call it wrong in the pulpit because that’s bringing politics into religion.”

Lincoln concluded that, according to his critics, there was no place where he could call this evil thing evil and this wrong thing wrong.

We have allowed ourselves to believe the lie that somehow Christians don’t have a right and an obligation to be involved in public policy. We have withdrawn and left the field to those who are our enemies.

Jesus said to us, “You are

the salt of the earth and you are the light of the world.” Salt is a preservative. Salt is a purifying agent, but salt must come into contact with that which it would preserve, and salt must touch that which it would purify.

And it not only purifies and preserves, it stings and irritates. That’s why when Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth,” and “You are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:13-14), He preceded it by saying, “Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake” (Matt. 5:11).

We live, by the grace of God, in the greatest nation that has ever been seen on planet Earth. God has blessed us wonderfully; yet he has often blessed us in spite of ourselves. Our salvation will never be in America, but in the cross of Jesus Christ.

My dear brothers and sisters, there is always a danger when we are in crisis to turn to the government and try to make the government our ally, and say, “If we can just get the government to sponsor our religion, we can bring about revival.” That always has been, and always will be, a fatal bargain.

When the government sponsors religion, the government thinks it owns it. Government-sponsored religion is government-dictated, government-diluted religion.

We don’t want the government to sponsor religion. We want the government to quit suppressing our right to be involved. We want the government to guarantee a level playing field, then get off the field!

God knows I love my country, but Christians, our hope is

“We don’t want the government to sponsor religion. We want the government to quit suppressing our right to be involved. We want the government to guarantee a level playing field, then get off the field!”

Government can’t save us. Government is usually part of the problem, not part of the solution. King Josiah is the perfect example that the government cannot bring revival. King Josiah heard the Word of God. It broke his heart. He called for reforms. He instituted right and Holy worship in the temple. He got rid of pagan excesses. He instituted true religion, and what happened? All of Josiah’s reforms died with him because only the king’s heart was changed. The people’s habits were changed, but not their hearts. When the king died, the reform died.

We have a right, we have a responsibility, we have an obligation to be involved in the civic process. We are to hold up a moral standard as salt. Jesus commanded us to be salt and light.

not in America. America’s hope is in Christ. Ask not what your country can do for God; ask what God can do for your country. The answer, of course, is everything.

Southern Baptists, let’s heed the call to stand in the gap and repair the hedge and claim the promise of God when he said, “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land” (2 Chron.7:14). May there be a new birth of freedom, may there be a new birth of morality, may we stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, and heed the watchman on the wall.

God bless you and God bless the United States of America. ■



ALUMNUS AWARD—

ERLC president Richard Land receives the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary’s 1997 Distinguished Alumnus Award from seminary president Chuck Kelley at the annual Alumni Breakfast during the Southern Baptist Convention in Dallas. Land, who received the Broadman Seminarian Award as the outstanding graduating student in 1972, also served as student body president while completing his master’s degree. Land met his future wife, Rebekah Van Hooser, also a seminary student, on campus in 1969. They were married in 1971.

The Ugly Spoils of Gambling—Addiction

BY WILLIAM H. PERKINS JR.

Gaylon (not her real name) wishes she had never accepted the casino's invitation to dinner.

She believes if she hadn't, she would never have become addicted, lost her family, humiliated herself in prostitution or lived in fear of using her real name on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

"I thought I could handle it, but it's the strongest drug I've ever done," Gaylon said as she sat trembling in her counselor's Gulfport office.

What could compel Gaylon — a lifelong Gulfport resident, devout Southern Baptist and stay-at-home mother who voted against the county referendum that brought gambling to the Gulf Coast — to give up everything for a hooker's life on the street?

"Satan can appear to be an angel of light, and that's what those casino lights are for me," she said.

Tempted again and again to return for the elaborate, inexpensive buffets — a casino staple — Gaylon eventually began detouring by the video poker machines on her way out of the building.

In a matter of months, she had stolen \$30,000 from her children, driven her recovering husband back into alcoholism and was hurtling toward utter personal destruction.

She lost 30 pounds because she gambled three to four days at a time without stopping to eat, always convinced the next bet would be the big winner.

"I talked to the machines; I worshipped the machines. I have seen people wet their pants because they couldn't bring themselves to leave a machine," Gaylon said.

As her money vanished into the machines, she became increasingly desperate for more cash to stay "in play."

She was approached by a casino floor employee, who gave her a room number at the casino hotel. He was, in effect, the casino pimp, splitting with her the proceeds of her prostitution.

"They've got all the bases covered," Gaylon said.

At the end of her rope and living an exploited, subhuman existence, Gaylon seriously considered ending her life.

"I had lost all self-respect. Suicide is something you think about when you just want it over," she said, echoing the sentiments of many addicts who want to break out of their downward spiral but don't know how.

In the midst of her personal crisis, a friend urged Gaylon to talk with a Southern Baptist counselor specializing in problem gambling. The counselor helped find Gaylon a place to live and convinced her she could turn her life around.

She confessed her addiction and her lifestyle to her pastor. A godly woman in her church began to pray for her.

Gaylon harbors a special disquiet regarding her fellow Southern Baptists who frequent the casinos.

"I kept thinking, 'If you're really saved, you wouldn't be doing this.' Then I would see church people in there at 3:30 in the morning when they thought no one would see them.

"I thought a lot about their hypocrisy," she said.

Gaylon has a suggestion for anyone who believes legalized gambling has brought prosperity to Mississippi.

"I would invite them to come with me and stand outside a casino at 3 a.m. They will see men and women fighting. They will see wives crying. They will see hungry children locked in cars.

"They will see how wholesome it is," she said. ■



A CHANGING NEIGHBORHOOD — The First Baptist Church of Biloxi, Miss., sits just a few hundred yards from the new \$550 million, 32-story Mirage Casino and Hotel, under construction in the background. Already, traffic is so heavy on Sunday mornings that church members find it difficult to get to church, and many would-be visitors give up trying. "Traffic has gotten so congested that it was the final issue that led the church to vote to relocate its entire facility," FBC pastor Frank Gunn said.

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GAMBLING

A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

"Casino Gambling"

As the casino industry entrenches itself deeper in the fabric of communities across the U.S., it is important for Southern Baptists to understand the dangers that casinos present. This new casino gambling pamphlet forcefully lays out the case against casino gambling from the social, economic and moral perspectives. Thoroughly documented with the most up-to-date sources, it can be read quickly or used for in-depth study and further research.

GACAS

\$.22 ea.

"State Operated Lotteries"

State-sponsored gambling, or lotteries, are being pushed on the American people by their own governments in order to wring more money from their pockets without the political fallout associated with tax increases. Today, 37 states and the District of Columbia conduct some form of lottery in order to raise money. The problem with lotteries is that they encourage people to gamble. Some of those people will find themselves addicted and will actually destroy their lives through this state-sponsored, state-promoted form of gambling.

GASTA

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SBC ADOPTS RESOLUTION OPPOSING GAM- BLING AND ITS ADVERTISEMENT

Recognizing the devastation gambling has left in its wake in the lives of countless people, especially the children, poor, and elderly in our country, messengers of the 1997 Southern Baptist Convention, assembled in Dallas, Texas, June 17-19, called on all Christians "to exercise their influence by refusing to participate in any form of gambling or its promotion" and "urge our political leaders to enact laws restricting and eventually eliminating all forms of gambling and its advertisement."

It is a matter of one's own conscience in determining what is and is not a part of their family's decision to take economic action against Disney. The matter of watching any of the Disney-owned television networks — where the local ABC station's signal is received via the airwaves or the other Disney-owned networks are bundled as part of a basic cable package — remains a debatable issue. It is a question separate from the primary point of withdrawing economic support from a company that promotes immoral ideologies.

At its simplest level, a boycott rests on the premise that families refuse to take part in activities which provide income to the targeted company.

"At the very least supporting the boycott of the Disney conglomerate means you do not initiate any transfer of money to any Disney entity, such as theater tickets, merchandise, video rental, admission to their theme parks, and the like," explained Richard Land, ERLC president.

Calls to the ERLC office have been running heavily in favor of the resolution on moral stewardship and The Disney Company adopted by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Dallas in June. At least half of those favoring the action are not Southern Baptists.

"It would be naive to assume that a global concern for humanity fuels their business. They think in terms of money; it's a business, not the Red Cross," a former Disney studio executive said when asked about Disney's sense of social responsibility.

"When making a commercial film, the idea of social responsibility comes up in one percent of the conversations, usually during the post production phase when you're trying to get a rating," recounted a senior Disney executive. "When you're trying to get a PG-13 over an R or an R over an NC-17, that's when people decide to cut out the swearing and pretend that it's because of social responsibility." (*The Hollywood Reporter*, 25 November 1996)

"Frankly, I feel betrayed. I feel betrayed by those who would say, 'We're family entertainment. Come and we'll teach you how to lower your standard against that which God calls an abomination.'" Pastor Adrian Rogers in June 22, 1997, sermon in which he underscored the point of the Disney boycott as not "wanting Disney to change us."

"The Baptist boycott has already had the impact of calling Disney's wholesome image into question. ... Most important, more conservative Christians are now calling America's pop culture into question, instead of uncritically embracing it. Many evangelicals—in music, worship, publishing, and theology—have sold out to the pop culture with its anti-biblical values and entertainment mentality. In challenging Disney, the Baptists are also challenging American Christians and their too-easy accommodation to the world." (Gene Edward Veith, *World*, 26 July/2 August, 1997)

If Southern Baptists meeting in Dallas this past June are guilty, as many allege, of casting stones at The Walt Disney Company, then they are not the first at the stone pile.

The National Labor Committee, known best for exposing deplorable working conditions in a Honduran factory producing Kathie Lee Gifford clothing for Wal-Mart, accuses The Disney Company of permitting maltreatment of its subcontractors' employees in factories in Haiti and Vietnam.

In Haiti, women sewing Disney-themed children's clothing are paid "starvation wages" of six cents per garment they sew, the NLC reports, noting Disney has licensing agreements with the apparel manufacturers which contract the actual assembly to Haiti.

"It would take a Haitian worker a week and a half to earn enough money to afford to purchase one *101 Dalmatians* outfit," the NLC charges, despite the fact these workers must sew hundreds of these outfits a day.

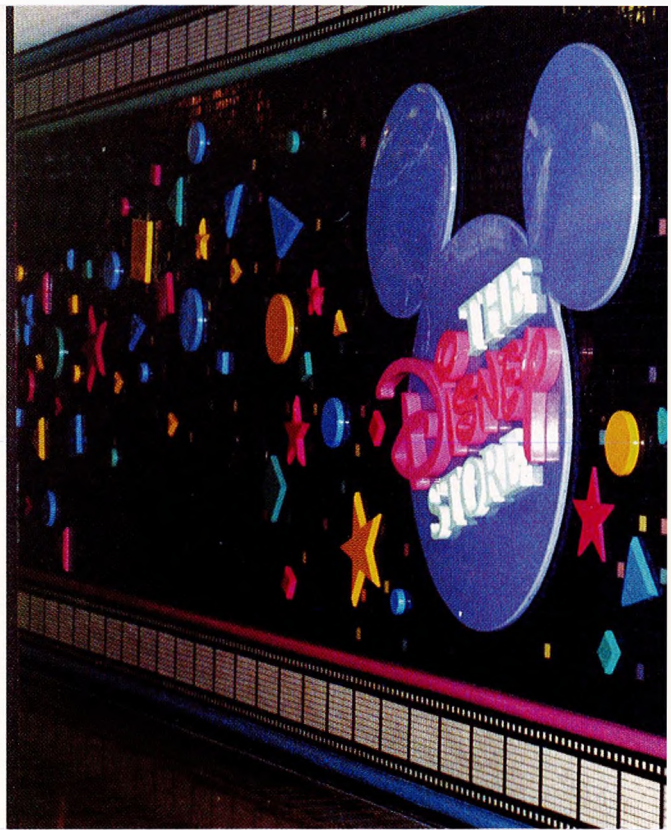
The New York City-based human rights group says work quotas in the factories are often not met by the laborers — dropping their hourly wage from 42 cents to the minimum 30 cents an hour.

The National Labor Committee wants Disney to require its subcontractors to pay workers a bare sustenance living wage of 58 cents and to submit to independent monitoring of these overseas factories.

Disney and factory officials insist the wages are in line with other production plants in the country, a fact U.S. State Department records confirm, and that working conditions are typical for factories on the island.

Disney's involvement was uncovered by accident — an inspection of Haitian factories in early 1996 by the NLC turned up Disney garments and records of a 20-year history between the subcontractor and Disney.

A July 25, 1996 *Los Angeles Times* report pointed



Southern Baptists not a

BY DWI

up the irony of the discovery. "The contradiction of images is irresistible, the wholesomeness of the Magic Kingdom against the toil of the Haitian poor: Disney is supposed to side with Cinderella, not the wicked stepsisters."

According to the NLC, the same manufacturers also produce clothing for Nike, Fisher Price, Warner Brothers and others.

The committee also links Disney along with McDonald's to six-cent-an-hour sweatshops in Vietnam that produce promotional toys for the fast-food chain's children's meals.

Nearly 90 percent of the employees at the Keyhinge Toys Co. factory in Da Nang City, Vietnam, are young women 17 to 20 years old. The NLC reports overtime is mandatory: shifts of 9 to 10 hours a day, seven days a week, with wages averaging six to eight cents an hour.

"The most basic, simple meal in Vietnam—rice, vegetables and tofu—costs 70 cents," the committee reports. Yet

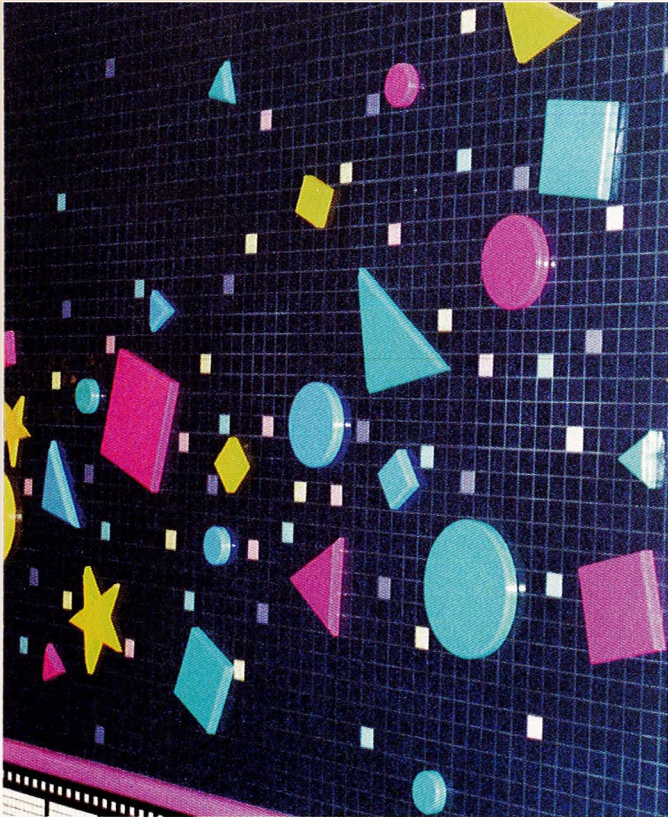
workers in these plants earn just 60 cents after a 10 hour shift, according to NLC material.

"The wages at the Keyhinge factory do not even cover 20 percent of the daily food and travel costs for a single worker, let alone her family—not to mention rent (\$6.00 a month for a single room) and other basic expenses."

The NLC calls for Disney and McDonald's to address unsafe working conditions, especially with regard to poor ventilation and exposure to acetone and other dangerous chemicals, as well as "subsistence wages."

Less than a week after Southern Baptist messengers embraced a resolution on moral stewardship and The Disney Company, Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina called on 30 Latino organizations to boycott The Disney Company.

Suggesting the entertainment conglomerate does not employ enough Latinos in top executive posts, Molina's



One in targeting Disney

ASTINGS

announcement echoed charges raised in April by the National Hispanic Media Coalition, according to Reuters.

"Until Disney improves its hiring and procurement practices among Latinos we are staying away," Hector Barreto, vice president of the city's Latin Business Association, told Reuters. The report said that fewer than one percent of those in creative and policy-making positions at Disney/ABC are Hispanic while Latinos represent 35 percent of the population in California.

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee is criticizing the Miramax studio for utilizing the "lazy movie cliché of violent, unscrupulous and inational Arabs" in the Disney subsidiary's new Jackie Chan movie, *Operation Condor*.

"When the only Arabs on the silver screen are villains, there is something to be said about the prevalence of anti-Arab sentiments in our society," ADC President Hala Maksoud said. "The fact that

a company such as Walt Disney, the leader in family entertainment, is contributing to the perpetuation of anti-Arab stereotypes is alarming. We expect Disney to live up to the standards it sets for itself.

"Don't Arab-American children deserve to feel proud of their Arab heritage? They sure are not seeing any positive role models in Disney films lately."

After *Aladdin*, Disney promised to consult with ADC on movies relating to the Arabs and the Arab-American community. It has repeatedly reneged on that promise, the ADC said in a July press release.

Locked in a contract struggle with The Disney Company, the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians-Communications Workers of America says Disney/ABC is attempting "to eliminate the hard-won union benefits" of the company's 2,700 NABET-CWA employees.

The union, representing Disney/ABC's technicians and other skilled employees nationwide, charges the entertainment giant with trying to "cut costs and create a low-wage, throw-away work force" by hiring non-union and part-time workers.

Negotiations continue on the contract which expired March 31. ■

The National Federation of the Blind has asked The Disney Company to halt production of a movie featuring the Mr. Magoo character.

During its annual convention, the group said Disney should abandon plans for the movie which features the nearsighted cartoon character in a live-action comedy, calling the character an insult to the blind.

"The Disney people have dragged Mr. Magoo back from richly deserved obscurity in the hope that Americans will think it's funny to watch an ill-tempered and incompetent blind man stumble into things and misunderstand his surroundings," Marc Maurer, president of the organization, told the Associated Press.

The resolution calls on the 50,000 members of the nation's largest blind group to take "whatever action appropriate" to protest the return of Mr. Magoo, AP reported.

The ABC Network has come under attack from a Catholic anti-defamation group for a show scheduled to premiere this fall.

Calling the new show, "Nothing Sacred," a "sick" show, officials of the Catholic League said the Disney-owned network should trash the show before its first episode is aired.

ABC's Web site in describing the star of the show, a young priest in a big city parish, says, "And now his mentor is asking him to deliver a sermon proving the existence of God. How should he know if God exists? ... he hasn't even finished the book yet!"

The Associated Press reported the 350,000 member Catholic League can't threaten to boycott the Disney conglomerate — a boycott already exists stemming from the 1995 movie *Priest*.

RESOLUTION ON MORAL STEWARDSHIP AND THE DISNEY COMPANY (Adopted by messengers to the 1997 SBC)

WHEREAS, Everything Christians possess of time, money, and resources is given to them by God as a stewardship for which they will give an account before a holy God; and

WHEREAS, Those who serve the public in any manner also have a stewardship before God regarding their service, and those who have greater influence have greater responsibility for their stewardship and must give a greater accounting; and

WHEREAS, Many entertainment providers including, but not limited to, The Disney Company are increasingly promoting immoral ideologies such as homosexuality, infidelity, and adultery, which are biblically reprehensible and abhorrent to God and His plan for the world that He loves; and

WHEREAS, The 1996 Southern Baptist Convention passed a resolution regarding these issues with a specific appeal to The Disney Company, which had long been a respected leader of family entertainment in keeping with traditional moral values; and

WHEREAS, The aforementioned resolution called for our Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission to 'monitor Disney's progress in returning to its previous philosophy of producing enriching family entertainment' and the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission has now reported that The Disney Company has not only ignored our concerns, but flagrantly furthered this moral digression in its products and policies; and

WHEREAS, We realize that we cannot do everything to stop the moral decline in our nation, but we must do what lies before us when it is right through a proper use of our influence, energies, and prayers, particularly when it affects our nation's children;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, That the messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Dallas, Texas, June 17-19, 1997, urge every Southern Baptist to take the stewardship of their time, money, and resources so seriously that they refrain from patronizing The Disney Company and any of its related entities, understanding that this is not an attempt to bring The Disney Company down, but to bring Southern Baptists up to the moral standard of God; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we encourage Southern Baptists to refrain from patronizing any company that promotes immoral ideologies and practices, realizing that The Disney Company is not the only such provider; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we ask our pastors and church leaders to become informed regarding these issues and teach their people accordingly, and that we urge all Southern Baptists to graciously communicate the reasons for their individual actions to The Disney Company and other companies; and

BE FINALLY RESOLVED, That we pray that God would use these actions to help the employees of such companies to respect the enormous stewardship they have before God, and we affirm those employees who embrace and share our concerns.

An astounding 49.5% of those responding to a poll conducted by *USA Weekend* magazine indicated their approval of a resolution passed during the recent Southern Baptist Convention "to refrain from patronizing" Walt Disney Company entities.

Most of the votes were unduplicated calls to the weekly magazine's 800 numbers. Other responses to the query posed in the magazine's July 18-20 issue were gathered from postcards sent to the weekly as well as the paper's Web site. *USA Weekend*, published by Gannett Co. Inc., appears in 496 newspapers across the country.

Pastor's Love for Disney Prompts His Call for Company to Turn Back

BY DWAYNE HASTINGS

First Baptist Church of Kissimmee is seven miles from the front gates of Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom. Over 100 Disney employees are members of the growing church near the epicenter of the world's most popular tourist destination.

Yet the Central Florida church's pastor, Tim Wilder, didn't hesitate to vote in favor of the resolution on moral stewardship and The Disney Company during the recent Southern Baptist Convention.

Wilder says it's all a matter of "tough love."

"Out of my love for them, I just can't ignore them and turn my back on them," says Wilder, who has served on the church's staff for over 16 years — the last year and a half as senior pastor.

"The Bible teaches when you truly love somebody, you don't ignore them when you see them going down the wrong road, out of love you try to bring them back."

Wilder, who grew up in the Central Florida area, was a frequent visitor to the Disney theme parks. He and his wife celebrated their honeymoon there.

He said he yearns for the day the entertainment giant will heed the call to return to its traditional roots.

"I don't want them to destroy themselves, I want to go back out there again and take my kids and watch their movies," he continued, saying Disney built their empire on family values. "Out of my love for them, I have to reach out to them and bring them back."

Upon his return from the convention in Dallas, Wilder met with church members who were also Disney employees to assure them he wanted only the best for them and their employer, telling them he wanted them to stay at Disney.

The church went so far as to hold a special commissioning

service to recognize and encourage members who work at the area's Disney theme parks and studios — including animators, bus drivers and theme park employees.

"We want to encourage more believers to work out there," he said, noting at age 12 his vocational goal was to be a monorail driver at the Magic Kingdom.

"We want Christians there; we do want to make a difference from the inside out," stressed Wilder, calling the Disney employees "our missionaries."

He said concerns about the resolution were calmed by taking the time to meet with church members so they could better understand his decision was not out of anger but out of love for a company he "grew up with."

"You can take a stand for truth based upon your convictions and not do it in an ugly or judgmental way and also encourage your people to aid in the change from the inside out," Wilder explained.

"Pastors don't need to be afraid to stand up for the issues. We've been quiet for too long, that's why we're in the mess we are in."

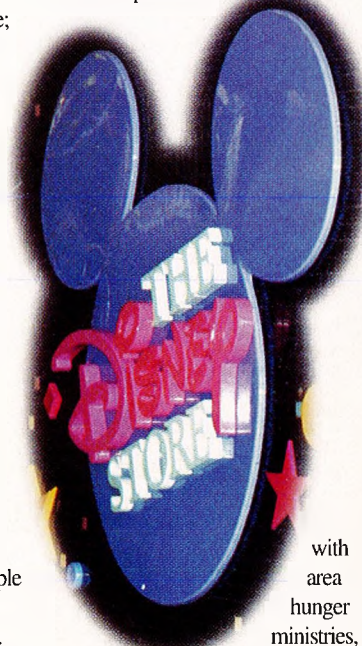
"Sometimes we have been guilty of screaming and being ugly about some issues," he suggested, saying there is a healthy balance of speaking the truth in love.

Wilder said he was careful about respecting individual church members' consciences on the matter: "I didn't come across telling them they had to follow my lead. This is my stance; I asked them to pray about their response."

Despite some fears the issue would disrupt the fellowship of the church, Wilder said summer attendance is stronger than ever and the church is ahead on its budget.

Yet FBC Kissimmee is used to being in the forefront. The church operates the Osceola Pregnancy Center on its property and provides shepherd homes for women who are pregnant and need a place to stay.

The church is finalizing plans for the construction of a building in downtown Kissimmee, where in cooperation



with area hunger ministries, the church will

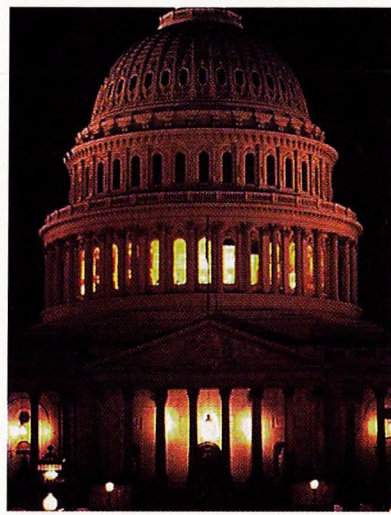
provide food for the homeless and a clothes closet to clothe them, as well as free medical care and Bible studies.

"We want to do more than just stand up and speak out, we want to minister," Wilder said, also telling of plans to develop a ministry to the homosexual community in cooperation with the Exodus organization.

"I want homosexuals here in our church, visiting with us, so they can hear the Gospel," he added. "We can't say just let them live in that hurtful lifestyle; that's not a loving approach."

The world wants to justify its behavior by what feels good rather than what the Bible says, Wilder said. "I'm not politically correct; I'm striving to be biblically correct." ■

Disney stores in malls across the country are expected to be clear targets for those scratching Disney products from their gift shopping lists. The graphics on this page are excerpted from the photo on pp. 8-9 in which the colorful display beckons shoppers to The Disney Store in a mall in Bellevue, Tenn.



Family Impact

BY TOM STRODE

A bill requiring federal government agencies to assess the impact of their policies and regulations on families has been introduced in Congress.

The Family Impact Act (H.R. 2124) was introduced July 9 by Rep. Ron Lewis, R.-Ky., in response to President Clinton's repeal of a 10-year-old executive branch policy mandating a family friendly review by federal agencies. President Reagan issued the executive order in 1987, but Clinton quietly overturned it in April.

Lewis' bill would require agencies considering new regulations to determine whether:

- "The action strengthens or erodes the stability of the family and, particularly, the marital commitment;
- "The action strengthens or erodes the authority and rights of parents in education, nurture and supervision of their children;
- "The action helps the family perform its functions or substitutes governmental activity for the function;
- "The action increases or decreases disposable family income;
- "The proposed benefits of the action justify the financial impact on the family;
- "The action may be carried out by state or local government or by the family; and
- "The action establishes an implicit or explicit policy—(a) concerning the status of the family; and (b) concerning the relationship between the behavior and personal responsibility of youth, and the norms of society."

The seven guidelines for reviewing policies closely resemble those in Reagan's executive order.

In addition to Lewis' bill in the House of Representatives, Sen. Spencer Abraham, R.-Mich., introduced a similar measure in June but was expected to offer a new version later in July.

While Congress "cannot make strong families," Lewis said at a July 9 news conference in the Capitol, the legislation "makes sure the family" is not harmed.

When Clinton rescinded the Reagan order, "I was stunned, as a father of three children, that he would turn a blind eye to the family," said Rep. Joe Pitts, R.-Pa.

Sen. Tim Hutchinson, R.-Ark., said at the news conference, "Many of the social pathologies we deal with would be solved, would be resolved, if we were a nation of strong families. That's the point of this legislation."

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission has endorsed the bill.

"The measure that President Clinton revoked was an important safeguard for those who believe that our government's policies should be consistent with traditional family values," said Will Dodson, the ERLC's director of government relations. "It is certainly in the best interest of traditional families that such a measure be in place."

The legislation defines the family as "a group of individuals related by blood, marriage or adoption who live together as a single household" and "any individual who is not a member of such group, but who is related by blood, marriage or adoption to a member of such group and over half of whose support in a calendar year is received from such group."

The bill requires the head of each agency to certify to Congress that a regulation has been assessed in accordance with the guidelines.

Gary Bauer, president of the Family Research Council, served as

"The measure that President Clinton revoked was an important safeguard for those who believe that our government's policies should be consistent with traditional family values," said Will Dodson, the ERLC's director of government relations. "It is certainly in the best interest of traditional families that such a measure be in place."

Reagan's domestic policy adviser and drafted the 1987 executive order at the President's request. Bauer said at the news conference he was not surprised Clinton revoked the order because he could not tell the White House was abiding by it anyway. "I suspect that it was a constant irritation," Bauer said.

The executive order's primary effect was to prevent "dopey ideas from ever reaching the President's desk," Bauer said. "Nobody here thinks that this is a magic bullet."

Something is wrong, however, when the question of a policy's impact on the family is "not even on the radar screen," he said. ■

Athens — from p.5

"God's people do not have to choose between ministering to hurting persons and winning persons to Jesus Christ. Like the believers in the earliest church, Christians today will find that caring for persons in need often opens the door of opportunity for introducing them to Jesus, the ultimate answer to every need in life." (pg. 61)

"Christians are not called to be monastics, seeking to escape a wicked, corrupt world. Our place of service is ultimately in the world, not in the church building." (pg. 15)

"All too often, religion becomes corrupted by focusing on itself and moving behind protective walls that are designed to serve us and to keep them out." (pg. 61)

"More and more churches are coming to understand what it means to be the body of Christ in a broken world. To such churches, business as usual is not good enough. A hunger is emerging in many Christians to go beyond the protective walls of the sanctuary into a world that is sometimes dirty and dangerous. Many Christians want to make a difference for the masses of hurting people who walk our streets, travel our highways, share our neighborhoods, and sometimes sit in our pews." (preface)

All are excerpts from *Meeting Needs - Sharing Christ: Ministry Evangelism in Today's New Testament Church* (Lifeway Press)

ministered to in any other way," Peterson said, explaining the need for Christians to see themselves "as ministers inserted into the world by God" at critical times and places.

Peterson said the church has baptized more people during the first six months of this year than all of last year, noting the church leads the association in baptisms.

Yet he insists the increase in church membership, attendance and participation is not the result of any modern-day church growth program: "Instead of focusing on growth, we are trying to focus on people and ministries, and in the process God is growing our church.

"It's exciting to see people become aware of ministry opportunities that were out there but they just didn't know existed.

"There are as many [ministries] going on as there are people with ideas," he continued. "I could never have thought of all those things. Our staff could never have brainstormed all those things."

Peterson had focused on growth programs and all manner of outreach schemes, but the church's new direction most closely mirrors "what the church is to be about," he said.

If the church keeps doing what it has been doing for the past 50 years, it will die, Peterson warned. "It's not out there meeting needs; it's answering questions no one is asking and trying to do things nobody cares about."

Some who are not happy about the shift in ministerial direction are hoping the emphasis will fade away, but Peterson tells them, "It's not a program; it's my heart."

He insists the emphasis on personal ministry has set deep roots at FBC Athens. "It won't die because it's not man-made. It's not us coming up with a great idea. It's not a matter of me standing in the pulpit and trying to motivate the church to conduct some program," Peterson said. "It's a matter of saying, 'Here's what God wants us to do,' and people are saying, 'I can do that.'"

In the scriptural account of John 3 where Jesus healed the man born blind, passersby saw the blind man as an object to toss their alms toward, a type of religious duty or obligation, Peterson explained. He said the disciples asked Jesus: "Who sinned, this man or his parents?" They saw him as an object lesson for a theological discussion. Yet Scripture reveals

Jesus saw a man and made him to see, Peterson continued.

"All of us fit in one of those three categories, said Peterson. "I want people to see others like Jesus did; He saw the need. Instead of discussing it, He met the need.

"All of this gets back to what the church is supposed to be. Our church can grow, but more important, are we going to touch lives?" Peterson mused. "Our focus is on people, not growth. If people see we care about them, where they are, people will come."

Peterson said he's been attending Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission seminars for nearly 10 years in order to get a better grasp on the issues "where our faith is touching tangent on life."

He said FBC Athens created a Christian Life Committee to inform and educate the membership on moral and public policy issues.

"We now have a vehicle in place, so instead of the pastor saying we need to do this kind of stuff, there is a committee that is able to bring to the people a focus on the issues so we are not reacting to the things that are happening but we are able to be proactive." ■

Personals: Finding Real Love

Dialogue on "right" and "wrong," which occurs within this journal, has little value when the parties to the discussion have different footings for their morality.

Indeed, we are on dangerous turf when we seek to extract our moral judgments out of thin air, buffeted to and fro by culture's passing fancies. Confusion about the morality or immorality of a particular behavior or policy ensues when moral decisions are made apart from a belief in a sovereign, unchanging God.

While our views may not be in conformity, we can hopefully acknowledge a common moral authority. It is true that a life without God's son, Jesus, is not only filled with moral confusion and distress, but is also joyless and without purpose.

While our sinfulness separates us from God, He has made a way by which our fellowship with Him can be restored.

The Bible says: "For God so loved the world that He gave

His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16-17).

An unshakable belief and trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, built upon the truthfulness of the Word of God, remain the only solid and eternal foundation on which to live your life and construct your own ethical framework to guide your choices.

If you have never called upon Jesus as your Savior and Lord, we urge you to acknowledge your position apart from God and, despite your circumstances, trust in Him. Therein will you discover real hope and meaning by believing in Jesus' sacrificial death and resurrection as a work of unbelievable love for your sake!

"For 'whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved'" (Romans 10:13).

**Share your decision to accept Jesus. Rejoice in your new life.
Hoist His standard of morality as your solitary guide and rule.**

Northwood Church Discovers Needy Sitting in Pews

BY BARBARA DENMAN, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS, FLORIDA BAPTIST CONVENTION

Dan and Jackie Shorter, members of the Northwood Baptist Church in West Palm Beach, Fla., distribute food to an average of 50 families each month. Dan Shorter estimates only 10 percent of the families he helps are from his community. The rest are church members, their friends, co-workers, relatives and neighbors.

Some of these need help "as a way of life," Shorter said. Others need a "pick me up because they have fallen on hard times."

They are "sitting right beside me in the pew," he acknowledged. They are under-employed, unemployed, abandoned wives, handicapped, persons who have been laid-off their jobs, fatherless families and refugees, he added.

When the Shorters took food to a Hispanic family that had been without nourishment, the woman fainted with joy to have food for her children.

Another man started crying when he received a supply of food from Shorter. Through a translator he told Shorter that he had just gotten off a raft from Cuba. All his life he had heard how evil and malicious Americans were. And here was Shorter, as the first American he had met, sharing food with him.

Another time Shorter took food to a home and found naked children covered in filth. When he offered a cookie, they were reluctant to take it. They had never had a cookie before, he learned.

"This was not in a third-world country," Shorter said in amazement. "This was in Palm Beach County, one of the wealthiest counties in the nation."

In each of these instances, Shorter said, "I know that doing good is not enough. We need to touch souls, too." ■

REPRINTED BY PERMISSION FROM THE FLORIDA BAPTIST WITNESS.



One of the hundreds of inner-city Jacksonville, Fla., residents fed by the hunger ministry at Springfield Baptist Church pauses to give thanks for the meal. Arriving in the predawn hours to secure their spot in a line that often extends out into the city street, men, women and children are anxious to enter the church's small fellowship hall for a hot meal and dessert.



Twin toddlers hold bags of bread received from the feeding ministry at Springfield Baptist Church. The inner-city Jacksonville, Fla., church provides food to 200-300 Jacksonville families, single adults, youth and children. For many the noon meal every Tuesday is their only meal of the day. They also take home brown bag lunches and bread and other bakery goods donated by area merchants. "I highly depend on the feeding ministry here at Springfield," commented a young mother during her weekly visit to the church. With the bread they provide, "I can at least feed my kids a sandwich," she said.

All photo credits to Kelly LaDuke.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food"

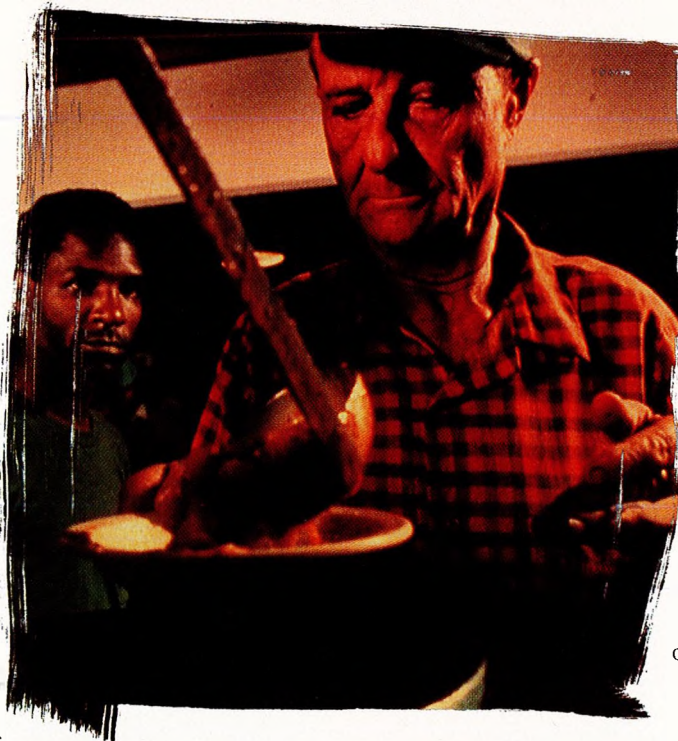
MATTHEW 25:25, NKJV

BY C. BEN MITCHELL

Jesus' portrayal of judgment, "when the Son of Man comes in his glory" (v. 31, NIV), is at once both frightening and encouraging. The presence of angels, the gathering of the nations, and the great throne of God are daunting and fearful images. In the midst of such an awe-filled reality will come the words of the King of glory, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world" (v. 34). This statement reminds us of the wonderful promise of Jesus, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2). One of the truths this passage so clearly teaches is that believers need to live in the light of eternity. We have assurance that whatever befalls us in this present evil age, faithfulness to Christ will be rewarded with unimaginable blessings in the age to come.

This passage also teaches us that genuine Christians look beyond themselves to serve a world in need. To those on Christ's right hand He will say, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in" (v. 35). But "when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?" (v. 37) is the somewhat astonished response of the faithful believers. To which Jesus replies, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (v. 40). In serving others, Jesus says, we serve Him.

Genuine Christianity demonstrates hands-on, concrete ministry.



Doctrinal orthodoxy is important. Believing the truth about who Jesus is really matters. And saving faith and doctrinal integrity manifest themselves in obedient living. The apostle James' potent axiom is, "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:17). There is no substitute for Christian involvement in ministries of hunger and relief. The fact that Jesus and James use these as palpable examples of the faith that saves underscores the necessity of serving human needs.

Southern Baptists and other Christians have abundant opportunities to serve Jesus through service to others. Each of us comes in contact with individuals and families who have physical and spiritual needs.

Serving in a local soup kitchen, clothes closet, or disaster relief team are effective ways to relieve human suffering. Others may serve the needs of the hungry by providing job counseling or by training those who need to learn work skills. It is not enough to feed the poor; we must also work to treat the causes of their poverty.

As you observe World Hunger Sunday, remember that we shall one day give an account for how we served Jesus through serving the starving poor. Jesus has secured an inheritance for us with Him. Let us serve Him through hands-on, life-transforming ministries to a world in need. ■

C. Ben Mitchell is consultant on biomedical and life issues for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and is assistant professor of Christian ethics at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

NAMB Gift Bolsters Ministry

Volunteers at "Macon Helps" look forward to serving the community at the new ministry in Lafayette, Tenn. Southern Baptists' giving to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund helped in establishing the combination food bank and clothes closet. "This looks more like a JC Penney's than a thrift store," noted Doyle Gaines, Macon County executive and a member of the town's First Baptist Church. "It is very impressive; a facility the whole community can be proud of."



OBSERVE WORLD HUNGER DAY IN YOUR CHURCH AND HOME ON SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1997.

See page 15 for products offered through the Ethics & Religious Liberty commission to raise awareness of world hunger needs at home and abroad.

World Hunger Day

OCTOBER 12, 1997

Bulletin Insert*

Invaluable when challenging Southern Baptists to take an active part in feeding the hungry at home and abroad. Also suitable as an informational hand-out. Full color/undated. One of a series.

WHBUL \$.06 ea.

1997 World Hunger Poster*

This full-color 11"x17" poster helps raise awareness to the plight of 800 million people worldwide. Complements the bulletin insert above. Undated. One of a series.

WHPOS \$.95 ea.

Hunger Facts*

This fact sheet shares the startling statistics to quickly inform your congregation regarding the awesome scope of this world problem. Also featured are statistics regarding the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund and Southern Baptist involvement in hunger ministries worldwide.

WHFAC \$.10 ea.

Suggested Sermon For World Hunger Day*

This sermon deals with our mandate to be involved in ministry to the world's hungry and poor. This no-nonsense message serves as a battle cry for the people of God to rise up and act.

WHSER \$.22 ea.

Children's Activity Page

Five activities for children will raise awareness of truths about hunger and the part they can play in helping others in Jesus' name.

WHCHI \$.14 ea.

World Hunger Resource Set

Includes one of each item on this page indicated by an asterisk (*) plus one Hunger Fund offering envelope.

WHSET \$.170

Servants of the Banquet

Cathy Butler details various hunger ministries manned by Southern Baptist missionaries and volunteers and shares ideas for fighting hunger. A must for promoting the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund.

BKSER (98 pages) \$7.00 ea.

Incarnational Agents

John Cheyne describes the reasons why human needs ministry is a must and offers methods for making assessments and pitfalls to avoid in starting a human needs ministry. You'll learn the why, what, and how as you pursue God's command to demonstrate His care for others.

BKINC (257 pages) \$10.95 ea.

A Rose for Abby

This delightful softcover children's book delicately explores the issue of the homeless on America's streets. The book provides an expanded awareness that even people in our own community are suffering from hunger and that the church can aid in their relief.

BKROS \$6.95

World Hunger Placemats

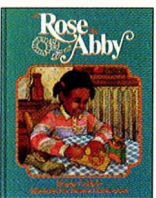
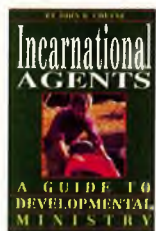
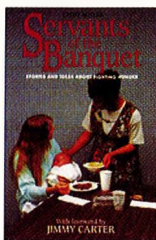
These color placemats depict living illustrations of Southern Baptists' involvement in feeding the hungry in Jesus' name. They are great for use at church fellowships and Wednesday night meals.

WHPLAC \$.12 ea.

Bible Studies on World Hunger

These four exciting studies boldly teach what God's Word has to say about ministry to the poor. These studies are purposely written to be appropriate for a wide range of age groups.

WHBIB \$.40 ea.



"What are Southern Baptists Doing About Hunger?"*

This 1997 update explains how the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund operates and answers pertinent questions about what Southern Baptists are doing to fight hunger around the world.

WHWHA \$.11 ea.

"The Bible Speaks on Hunger"

The Bible speaks clearly and frequently concerning those who are hungry and in need. Pastors, teachers and other leaders may use this pamphlet as a valuable resource to educate themselves and to help equip the saints on this important issue.

BSHUN \$.17 ea.

"Issues and Answers: Hunger"

This concise brochure explains the major causes and opinions about world hunger. It also contains vital statistics which point out the enormity of the problem. Biblical insights as well as individual applications are shared to motivate each person to do their part.

IAHUN \$.17 ea.



Rice Bowls

Rice bowl banks are a great way for the church to promote awareness and raise funds for the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund. Family members of all ages will enjoy participating as each family places a bowl in their home. The church is blessed as bowls are collected and proceeds are used to feed the hungry. Shipping paid.

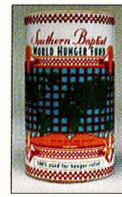
WHBOW (50 per box) \$24.00 ea.



NEW IMPROVED DESIGN Change Canisters

These reusable canisters make a great mission project for church groups. They can be placed in area businesses or even prominent places in the church. Lives are touched as the sponsoring group collects the proceeds to benefit the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund. These attractive canisters will raise awareness as well as funds to help the world's hungry.

WHCAN-4 (4 per box) \$10.00



Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund Offering Envelopes

These envelopes feature the new Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund logo and are used to encourage support for the World Hunger Fund, where 100% of all gifts received are used for hunger ministry. (Available in lots of 50 only.)

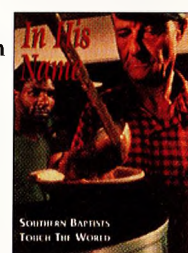
WHENV (50 envelopes) \$2.40



Hunger Magazine: "In His Name: Southern Baptists Touch the World"

This action piece shows living examples of Southern Baptists' involvement in nearly 300 hunger ministries worldwide. Stories home and abroad demonstrate the doors that open when we show compassion in Jesus' name. Also featured are articles which show what a number of churches are doing to take action in addressing this important issue.

WHGUI \$.20 ea.



World Hunger Scripts For The 21st Century

This book of twelve dramas will educate church groups on the Christian mandate of ministry to the poor. The powerful tool of drama brings to life the pain of others and how easily we can make a difference.

WHSCR \$8.95 \$4.50 ea.



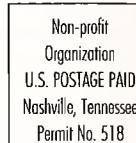
Within Your Reach: Hunger in the Homeland

This video does more than stir the emotions with the tragedies of hunger in America. Testimonies are given by real people involved in helping others. Viewers will be motivated and challenged to get involved in the war against hunger by seeing how a small effort can make a major difference.

VTWITH (1 1/2" VHS, 25 min.) \$19.95 ea.



**INSIDE: Disney a broad target...
economic action growing.**



<http://www.eric.com>

Note: No additional shipping costs on rice bowls.