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March 28, 1996

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Ga. church criticized for asking
that infant be buried elsewhere By James Dotson

Baptist Press
3/28/96

THOMASVILLE, Ga. (BP)--An attempt to move the body of a mixed-race infant from a whites-only cemetery has brought national attention and widespread criticism to a small rural Georgia Baptist church near the Florida state line.

Deacons at the 130-member Barnetts Creek Baptist Church reportedly voted March 24 to remove the body of newborn Whitney Elaine Johnson -- who was born without a skull March 19 -- when they learned the father was black. The child lived less than 24 hours.

"It's not a matter of racism. It's just the way it's always been," said deacon Logan Lewis, according to a report in The Atlanta Constitution.

Whitney is the daughter of Jamie Wireman, 18, and Jeffery "Bubba" Johnson, 25. She was buried in the cemetery of the church where her grandmother, Sylvia Leverett, 41, has been a member for about three years, according to news reports. The infant is buried in a plot next to her great-grandfather.

Logan called Leverett March 25 on behalf of the deacons requesting the body be moved. Leverett said she initially gave tentative approval, but after consulting with family members she called Lewis back and said they wanted the girl to remain in the cemetery, according to news reports.

At that point, deacons agreed not to pursue the matter.

When contacted by The Christian Index, newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Convention, Lewis would say only the issue had "been resolved" by the church and that he had no comment.

Leon VanLandingham, the church's pastor, also had no immediate comment, other than to say he was gravely disappointed in the lack of support from fellow Baptists during a time when the church has been "maligned," "misused" and "abused" over the incident.

"Surely a church that is 140 years old and has been a stalwart church in the Georgia Baptist Convention, somebody could have called and said we loved you. But they didn't do it," he said. "I am so frustrated. ... I have never been so pained in my life as this has caused me to be pained."

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VanLandingham said he was not able to talk further about the situation at the time of the interview because he had to deal with a television news crew outside the church asking passers-by what they thought about the case.

Both the Georgia Baptist Convention and Ernest E. Mosley, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, released statements noting under Southern Baptist polity neither state nor national conventions have any authority over the local church. Both conventions have spoken out strongly against racism, however, the statements said.

"In June 1995 the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Atlanta, adopted a resolution on racial reconciliation in which racism in all its forms was denounced and which affirmed 'that every human life is sacred, and is of equal and immeasurable worth, made in God's image, regardless of race or ethnicity . . .,'" Mosley said. "The resolution further called on Southern Baptists to 'eradicate racism in all its forms from Southern Baptist life and ministry.'"

Mosley also noted the SBC Inter-Agency Council in February created a racial reconciliation task force to work as an agent for reconciliation in the Southern Baptist Convention and its agencies and institutions.

"Churches recognized as being in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work retain total autonomy in all church matters," he noted.

"The Constitution of the Southern Baptist Convention, Article IV. Authority: states that 'while independent and sovereign in its own sphere, the Convention does not claim and will never attempt to exercise any authority over any other Baptist body, whether church, auxiliary organizations, associations, or convention,'" Mosley recounted.

A Georgia Baptist Convention news release also noted the convention's own Race Reconciliation Resolution passed in November 1994. "As indicated by these resolutions, Georgia Baptists believe in sharing the gospel of Christ with all people without regard to race or culture."

J. Robert White, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention, echoed support for anti-racism resolutions of the GBC and SBC and noted he has made a special effort to reach out to African American pastors in Georgia since taking his position in 1993.

"We just want to be supportive of the autonomy of the local congregation in allowing a church to work through affairs of their own congregation without the convention interjecting a position. This is in our agreement within the polity of Southern Baptists, in agreement with our practice and also in keeping with the guidelines of the Georgia Baptist Convention," he said. White added the convention does offer counsel in congregational matters only when requested by the church.

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, in a March 28 statement, noted: "While each Southern Baptist church is an autonomous body, all Southern Baptists are free to offer their autonomous opinion about a local church's actions. I am confident that most Southern Baptists join me in finding the proposed actions of Barnetts Creek Church reprehensible and an embarrassment to the gospel of Christ. I would urge the church deacons to consider the fact that their church is under the lordship of Christ. They are not autonomous in relation to him, and he has made it clear that racism in any form is the antithesis of his gospel."

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Gaming industry organizes
to fight Christian influence

By Jon Walker

Baptist Press
3/28/96

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--It's a sure sign of success for Christian groups trying to stop the spread of gambling: Gaming advocates are organizing for a counterattack.

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In an article called, "The Moral Politics of Gaming," published in the trade magazine International Gaming and Wagering Business, industry experts outline steps for "turning the tables" on anti-gaming groups. The steps include attacking arguments that gambling hurts the economy and causes increased crime, pushing for limited-stakes riverboat and casino gambling (presumably easier to pass among voters) and uniting the industry for additional political clout.

The article, written by Paul Doocey in December, also suggests the economy could "push gaming back into the forefront," particularly if a recession "creates a sudden need for taxes and economic renewal ... ;" that government decentralization could help the gambling interests if states are forced to find other methods for funding programs abandoned by Washington; and that some gaming victories could be helped by dissension among Republicans caused by the tension between belief in a free market and the government controls typically imposed on gambling.

Although the article acknowledges the moral arguments made by many opponents to gambling, it suggests even those opponents are beginning to de-emphasize the morality aspects of gaming, focusing instead on the economy and crime. This, according to the article, is exactly the "window of opportunity" needed by gaming interests "to score some much needed public relations points."

Arguing that gambling improves the economy of an area is just not factual, said Lamar Cooper, a Southern Baptist expert on gambling.

"It's really a question of whose economy you're improving, perhaps the gamblers?" Cooper said. "Atlantic City is not a model for a rebuilt, restructured community, based on the influence of gambling. Before gaming came to Atlantic City, there were over 2,000 businesses. At one point, they were down to around 300."

The pro-gambling article also claims law enforcement studies "show few incidents of organized crime infiltration or rises in other social crimes associated with casinos." Evidently, these statistics do not include Gulfport, Miss., where crime increased 300 percent in some categories after gambling was introduced to the area, said Cooper, currently faculty dean at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

"Crimes have gone up in many states where gambling has been introduced," Cooper said. "Because gambling is an addiction, people will steal to satisfy that addiction."

The addictive argument is the one gambling interests should be most concerned about, cautions the pro-gambling article. "The compulsive gambling argument is the one opponents of gambling are beginning to latch on to, and to be quite honest, it is a legitimate concern," said Randolph Baker, a professor of gaming studies at the University of Nevada Reno's Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming who was quoted in the article.

"Due to the addictive element, we have not yet seen, and we cannot document the social cost of gambling on our society," said Paul Jones, executive director of Mississippi Baptists' Christian Action Commission. "Gambling has been seen as a moral and social problem for 200 years, one that creates problems for individuals and institutions. Suddenly, we're trying to ignore all that!"

Speaking of government-operated lotteries, Jones asked, "Is it ever a legitimate function of government to promote that which is known and demonstrated to be addictive, destructive and harmful to individuals, families and society?"

Cooper said this "facelift" of gambling is simply a reaction to the success anti-gambling groups have had in stopping its spread. "It's going to be incredibly difficult for gambling elements to sell their claims to state and local governments because the facts are just not there to support them. The longer the track record, the easier it will be to demonstrate gambling's destructiveness."

And that destructiveness, the moral element, is at the core of any Christian argument against gambling, said Cooper. "Gambling is not a harmless form of family entertainment; it's a moral blight."

**Jones lists key questions
in debate over gambling**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--"The gambling cartel cannot be allowed to frame the questions of the gambling debate," said Paul Jones, executive director of the Christian Action Commission of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

He offered four questions that should be answered before government-operated gambling, such as lotteries, are allowed into the community.

1) Is it a function of government to make losers out of its citizens? State-operated lotteries guarantee that most citizens will become losers, and seemingly, has one government agency working to hurt citizens when other agencies are working to help them.

2) Is it a function of government to compete with legitimate businesses? State-operated lotteries place the state in competition for the same dollars being spent for goods and services elsewhere.

3) Is it a function of government to advertise that which is known and demonstrated to be addictive? The American Psychiatric Association lists gambling as a compulsive disorder, Jones noted.

4) Is it a function of government to conflict with its own consumer protection laws? Truth in advertising laws would not allow a grocery store to make outrageous claims, such as, "Buy our food and live to be 100!" Yet, lotteries promote false hope, advertising that a few dollars can lead to millions, Jones said.

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**Partial-birth abortion ban bill
passes House, goes to Clinton**

By Tom Strode

**Baptist Press
3/28/96**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The fate of a ban on a gruesome, late-term abortion procedure rests with President Clinton.

The House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved the prohibition March 27, sending it to the White House, which has promised a veto from the president. The 286-129 vote on the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act completed a successful effort by pro-lifers in Congress to outlaw a specific procedure for the first time since abortion was legalized in the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe v. Wade decision.

While the margin of passage in the House meets the requirement for a two-thirds vote to override a veto, the Senate passed the bill only by a 54-44 vote in early December. Congress' action places Clinton in a difficult position in a year in which he is seeking re-election. Even some pro-choice members of Congress voted for the ban because of the offensive nature of the procedure, labeled "partial-birth" by bill supporters but normally called "dilation and extraction" (D and X). Most abortion rights organizations, which strongly support Clinton's re-election, ardently oppose the ban.

In a Feb. 28 letter to congressional leadership, the president said he finds the method "very disturbing" and would sign H.R. 1833 if it is amended by Congress to allow the procedure when it is "necessary to preserve the life of the woman or avert serious adverse health consequences to the woman." Otherwise, he would veto it because he does not believe the bill meets the "constitutional requirements" set forth by the Supreme Court in Roe v. Wade and other decisions, Clinton said.

Supporters of the bill labeled Clinton's position misleading. An exception for health reasons would have the effect of allowing abortions for a wide range of reasons, thereby rendering the bill meaningless, they said.

High court decisions buttress the arguments of the bill's supporters. The Supreme Court's definition of health in Doe v. Bolton, the 1973 companion case to Roe v. Wade, includes "all factors -- physical, emotional, psychological, familial and the woman's age -- relevant to the well-being of the patient."

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"He is trying to deceive the American people by claiming he supports banning this 'disturbing' procedure, while at the same time proposing an amendment that would gut the bill," said Rep. Charles Canady, R.-Fla., chief sponsor of the bill. "In reality, his amendment would allow partial-birth abortion on demand.

"This is the question I would raise to the president and my colleagues who support abortion on demand: Is there ever an instance when abortion, or a particular type of abortion, is inappropriate? Abortion opponents' vehement opposition to this bill makes their answer clear; for them the right to abortion is absolute, and the termination of an unborn child's life is acceptable at whatever time, for whatever reason and in whatever way a woman or an abortionist chooses," Canady said in a prepared statement after the vote.

Rep. Chris Smith, R.-N.J., said, "If the president vetoes this bill, then he and he alone empowers the abortionists to kill babies in this way," The Washington Post reported.

Will Dodson, director of government relations for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, said, "We commend the members of Congress who have supported and voted for this piece of legislation which would end this inhumane and grisly procedure.

"There is no rational explanation why anyone would oppose this legislation. Therefore, I hope that people of conscience in this country will hold those members of Congress who voted against this legislation accountable for their irrational position. Furthermore, the president of the United States, the leader of our nation and the leader of the free world, needs to realize that his decision on this matter is under the scrutiny of people of conscience who will hold him accountable as well."

Opponents of the bill charged it is an attempt to begin reversing abortion rights as well as an election-year maneuver.

"All they're doing is making 30-second campaign ads," said Rep. Pat Schroeder, D.-Colo., according to the Post.

The procedure banned by the bill occurs in the second half of pregnancy. With ultrasound for guidance, an abortion doctor uses forceps and his hands to deliver an intact baby feet first until only the head is left in the birth canal. The doctor pierces the base of the baby's skull with surgical scissors. The doctor inserts a catheter into the opening and suctions out the brain. The collapse of the skull enables easier removal of the dead child. This method is used by a limited but unknown number of doctors in the country.

Among pro-choice congressmen who voted for the ban were Rep. Richard Gephardt, D.-Mo., and Rep. Patrick Kennedy, D.-R.I. Seventy-two Democrats joined 214 Republicans in voting for the ban March 27.

The Senate defeated an attempt to amend the bill using Clinton's recommended language. By a 51-47 vote, the Senate rejected an amendment by Sen. Barbara Boxer, D.-Calif., which would have permitted the procedure to avoid "serious adverse health consequences to the woman."

The Senate approved unanimously an amendment to the original House bill which provides an exception for a "mother whose life is endangered by a physical disorder, illness or injury." The amendment's passage brought the need for the House to approve H.R. 1833 again. The House had approved the original bill by a 288-139 margin in early November.

Punishment of up to two years in prison and fines could be levied on any doctor found guilty under the legislation.

Opponents of the bill have said the procedure is used only in cases of severely defective children or a threat to the mother's life. Martin Haskell, one of the leading practitioners of the procedure, has said, however, about 80 percent of his D and X abortions are "purely elective," according to a 1993 interview with American Medical News, a journal of the American Medical Association. In a 1992 speech, Haskell said he had performed about 700 D and X abortions.

**Carver social work students
presented graduation options**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Church social work students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary have been presented three options to meet requirements for the master of social work degree.

The Louisville, Ky., seminary's board of trustees voted in October to close the Carver School of Church Social Work in May 1997. The trustee action followed the recommendation of a special trustee study committee, which concluded it would "not be feasible" to offer the M.S.W. degree "in light of the expressed mission and purpose of the seminary." The committee reported that "considerable differences exist in the structures, processes and issues of social work education and theological studies."

Following this May's commencement, about 25 social work students will remain in the program.

In a March 21 letter to first-year social work students, seminary President R. Albert Mohler Jr. offered three "tracks" for degree completion:

-- Students who can complete M.S.W. requirements by May 1997 may remain in their current program. The seminary will help students accelerate progress toward degrees by raising the maximum number of credit hours that can be taken per term. Since a heavier academic schedule will decrease available hours for income-producing jobs, the seminary is offering up to \$1,000 per semester and \$225 per "J" term in financial assistance. Presently, the seminary is recruiting faculty and an interim dean in order to satisfy accreditation standards through May 1997.

-- Students may transfer to Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. The seminary will provide \$1,000 for moving and miscellaneous expenses and will pay the difference between the LSU tuition and matriculation charges at Southern Seminary. (Currently, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has a partnership agreement with the LSU social work program.)

-- Students can transfer to a school other than LSU. The seminary will consider student-initiated proposals on a case-by-case basis. If seminary approval is obtained, students will be eligible for the same package offered to students who transfer to LSU. The seminary's tuition assistance, however, will not exceed the amount that would be paid through the LSU option.

Controversy surrounded Southern's social work school in March 1995 when Mohler dismissed the school's dean, Diana R. Garland, for breaching administrative processes by releasing a document criticizing Mohler's refusal to approve a social work faculty nominee, David Sherwood, who had been recommended by faculty and student committees. Sherwood is director of the social work program at Gordon College, Wenham, Mass. Mohler had cited Sherwood's stance allowing for the role of women as church pastors in refusing to recommend Sherwood to Southern's trustees for final approval.

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Foundation assoc. reviews
SBC restructuring, annuities

Baptist Press
3/28/96

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--The Association of Baptist Foundations received updates on the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention and on a lawsuit that had threatened the nation's charities during its annual meeting, March 24-26 in Jackson, Miss.

Hollis E. Johnson III, president of the Southern Baptist Foundation, was asked for an update on the status of the agency, which will be merged with the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee under the SBC "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring.

According to association President George R. Borders, no action was taken by the association regarding the SBC restructuring. Borders is president of Florida Baptist Financial Services.

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The Southern Baptist Foundation is one of seven agencies scheduled to be dissolved or merged with another SBC entity under the restructuring, approved by messengers to the SBC sesquicentennial in Atlanta last June. Under the merger with the Executive Committee, the foundation will become a subsidiary corporation with a seven-member board. The merger will take place in June 1997, assuming a favorable vote by messengers at this year's annual meeting in New Orleans on SBC Bylaw 15's listing of SBC entities and on a proposed charter amendment for the foundation. Morris H. Chapman, Executive Committee president, has said he will recommend Johnson continue to lead the foundation.

The 95 participants in the association's meeting, representing 20 of the nation's 32 Baptist foundations, also received an update on a lawsuit against the Lutheran Foundation of Texas involving charitable gift annuities it issued to a 96-year-old Texas woman. The lawsuit later was expanded to a class action that included the Baptist Foundation of Texas, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Salvation Army and about 1,900 other charities.

Subsequent to the filing of the case in 1992, two Texas laws and two federal laws were passed in 1995, all aimed at guaranteeing charities the right to issue gift annuities. And in a summary judgment hearing March 1 in a Denton County, Texas, probate court, the judge ruled the 1995 Texas laws could be applied retroactively.

Reviewing the case during the association's meeting were Lynn Craft, president of the Texas Baptist Foundation; Tal Roberts, national chairman of the Committee on Gift Annuities; and attorney Terry Simmons of Charitable Accord.

Bo Childs, executive director of the Tennessee Baptist Foundation, was elected president of the association; Stephen Mathis, executive vice president of the Missouri Baptist Foundation, was re-elected secretary-treasurer.

Featured speakers included John L. Manley, senior financial manager, Smith-Barney, New York; Peter Brinckerhoff, management consultant from Springfield, Ill.; Bruce Heilman, chancellor of the University of Richmond (Va.); Al Shackelford, editor of Mature Living, a Baptist Sunday School Board periodical for seniors; and Jackson pastors Frank Pollard of First Baptist Church and Jim Futral of Broadmoor Baptist Church.

Next year's annual meeting, to be held in Boston, will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the association's founding.

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Compiled by Art Toalston.

Union Univ. names Duduit
as executive vice president

Baptist Press
3/28/96

JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--Trustees of Union University have elected Michael Duduit to serve as executive vice president of the university, effective June 1.

Duduit presently is director of public relations and adjunct professor of Christian preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. In addition to his seminary post, Duduit is editor of Preaching magazine, a professional journal for evangelical ministers, and is executive director of the American Academy of Ministry, an interdenominational professional association and scholarly society for ministers.

In his new role at Union, Duduit will have management responsibility for the university's administrative divisions, including institutional advancement, business services and student services. He also has been named assistant professor of communication arts and will annually teach courses in preaching and journalism.

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His election came at the recommendation of President-elect David S. Dockery, who said, "Dr. Michael Duduit brings to Union University a genuine commitment to quality Christian education that will enable him to give excellent leadership to the areas of institutional advancement and operations. I believe his creative and visionary gifts, combined with his rich and broad-based experience, will help propel Union into the 21st century. We are grateful the Lord has added Dr. Duduit to a team of talented administrative leaders for this strategic time in the university's history."

Duduit has been on the staff of Southern Seminary since December 1993. Previously he was director of development and church relations at Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., for more than six years. He has also served as director of public affairs at Palm Beach Atlantic College, West Palm Beach, Fla.

He is a graduate of Stetson University and Southern Seminary and earned the Ph.D. in humanities at Florida State University. Duduit is the author of one book and editor of several other volumes, including the "Handbook of Contemporary Preaching" and the Abingdon Preaching Annual series. His most recent book, "Communicate with Power," will be published by Baker Books in August 1996. He leads the annual National Conference on Preaching and is director of the International Congress on Preaching which will be held in London's Westminster Chapel in April 1997.

He is married to the former Laura Niemann of Louisville, and they are currently expecting their first child.

In additional actions, trustees named Howard Newell to the newly-created position of provost, effective June 1, with responsibilities for all aspects of academic administration. Newell has served since 1989 as vice president for academic affairs.

Four other administrators will receive new titles, effective June 1: Gary Carter was named vice president for business and financial services; Charles Fowler was named vice president for student services; John Adams was named vice president for campus ministries and church services; and Jimmy Davis was named executive director of institutional research.

Union University, located in Jackson, Tenn., is a four-year, liberal arts university affiliated with the Tennessee Baptist Convention. Founded in 1823, the 2,000-student institution is the oldest university in the Southern Baptist Convention.

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Seminary cagers, Dallas Cowboys
equal, at least for one night

By Bryan McAnally

Baptist Press
3/28/96

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--An arena of hollering school children disagreed with the old saying "a tie is like kissing your sister," as they roared their approval of a 79-79 basketball game between a collection of Dallas Cowboys greats and a team of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary all-stars.

The contest featured former Cowboys Tony Dorsett, Everson Walls, Ron Springs, Michael Downs and Billy Joe Dupree. The players signed autographs during halftime and interacted with the crowd throughout the March 15 game.

Hall of Fame running back Dorsett said he uses the games to boost the children's spirits. "When you are with disadvantaged kids, I just have fun with them, let them know they're normal and that we believe in them."

The contest raised money for Cowboys Caring for Kids, an ongoing project benefiting the children of Sagamore Hill Elementary School in east Fort Worth. A joint effort between Players Ink, II, the Cowboy's alumni organization, and Sagamore Hill Baptist Church, the project began when Springs and Gary Miller, pastor of the church, sat next to each other on a flight and found they shared a common interest -- helping children.

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Proceeds for the game helped pay for winter jackets supplied by Players Ink, II, which the children received shortly before Christmas. Walls said the jackets were the only gifts some of the students received during the holidays.

According to Sagamore Hill Elementary School principal Sherry Breed, more than 160 children were able to attend the game because Sagamore Hill Baptist Church provided buses to and from the gym.

"It was a perfect evening. The kids loved it and everybody had a wonderful time," Breed said.

Miller agreed: "What a perfect game. Everybody left here happy. This wasn't about competition -- this was about having a good time and providing for the needs of the children."

Keith Fortenberry, assistant to the pastor at Sagamore Hill church and also a third-year master of divinity student at Southwestern, said money is a continuing need for the program. "We still need to raise about \$10,000 for incentive patches, but we plan to do that through corporate sponsorship."

Walls said the game was not a one-time event.

"This is an ongoing project," he said. "We plan to continue our involvement with these young people's lives. We want to be uplifting and encouraging to them on a continual basis."

Future gifts to the students may include needed books, he added.

The game itself was highlighted by an aggressive seminary team that led by as many as 15 points late in the game.

The Southwesterners took an early 14-4 lead, but the Cowboys fought back to 38-32 at the half. Walls had 13 first-half points for the Cowboys and Chan Hearron led the seminarians with 9.

During the break, Hearron said the Southwestern "All-Stars" planned to pick up the intensity.

The halftime intermission was extended to accommodate the children -- who asked for and received signatures on footballs, basketballs, programs, scraps of paper, jerseys and even on the shirts on their backs.

Short of manpower, the Cowboys enlisted Steve Ware, a friend of Walls who the fans mistook for former defensive end, Ed "Too Tall" Jones. Especially since he wore Jones' former Cowboys jersey number, 72.

The Seminary All-Stars increased their lead to as many as 15 points in the first 12 minutes of the second half.

But the Cowboys staged a dramatic comeback fueled by former safety Downs.

Behind his aggressive play, the silver and blue crept back into the game. Downs scored 20 of his game-high 27 in the second half. Throughout the second half, the fans filled the gymnasium with "Go Cowboys" chants, led by Dorsett from the court.

Downs said later, "We kept expecting them to get tired, but they never did."

In the middle of the Cowboys' comeback, Dupree hit a three-pointer and then went to the sideline to give Pete Carpenter, 12, a high-five.

"I just know they're going to win," the youngster said enthusiastically, waving to his grandfather and pointing wildly to his hand.

After tying the game at 79 with 4 seconds to go, the Cowboys' greats missed three chances to win the game, including the second half of a one-and-one free throw opportunity. Following the rebound and a quick time out, a half-court heave by the seminarians bounced off the rim as the buzzer sounded.

Walls left the game surprised by the level of competition offered by the seminary squad.

"We thought we would be playing a bunch of priests and fathers. Is that what they are? Well, the Lord works in mysterious ways. We haven't played a game that competitive in quite some time."

Springs agreed. "We can only play about 10 of these games a year, so we're pleased when we can get good game like this."

Southwesterners who participated were M.Div. students Wayne Roberts, Richard Rollerson, Tony Sheffield, Sean Parmer, Steve Bass and Fortenberry; religious education students Hearn and Troy George; alumnus Danny Smith; and Ph.D. student Brent Schlittenhart.

Smith said playing against the Cowboys greats was "awesome. We knew they were world-class athletes, but they gave us a great game and got the fans excited. I hope to be in that good of shape when I'm that age."

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(BP) photos posted on SBCNet and available upon request from Southwestern office of public relations.

Drama in Florida church
no skit, but robbery

By Keith Hinson

Baptist Press
3/28/96

LEISURE CITY, Fla. (BP)--Imagine being startled by a skit in church. After all, many congregations have begun using drama to help communicate spiritual truth.

That's what Herman Rios thought while attending a Saturday night service March 9 at Primera Iglesia Bautista La Hermosa in Leisure City, Fla. Two young men -- each with a gun -- walked into the back of the sanctuary and created quite a commotion, said Rios, who is director of language evangelism for the Florida Baptist Convention.

"We had a good crowd, the service was moving along real well and the pastor was making the announcements," said Rios, who was guest speaker for the one-day soul-winning workshop and weekend revival. "I was sitting on the front pew on the far right of the church, and I heard a disturbance at the back, so I stood up and looked."

What Rios -- and others in the audience of 55 people -- saw was one man about 6'4" wearing a ski mask and brandishing a gun. The other man also had a gun and was wearing a ski cap.

"He had a gun to one of the young people's heads," Rios said. "When I saw this, I thought it was a skit. I figured the pastor had some kids do a skit to get some point across. So I just sat back down and relaxed and thought, 'I'll play along with it.'"

But the worshipers quickly became aware this was no skit. It was stark reality. "When the young man with the gun -- the tall one -- began to speak, I realized it wasn't a skit because of the profanity he was using and the sound of his voice," Rios said.

The church's pastor, Guillermo Pichs, also thought the commotion was a drama. "I thought it was something the youth group had planned, but ... one of the clues that it wasn't part of a drama was that the men spoke in English," said Pichs, who spoke through an interpreter. "They grabbed two 13-year-olds and pointed a gun to their temples."

Before the robbers fled, they stole approximately \$1,400 in jewelry from young women sitting on the back row of the church, Pichs said.

A couple of young men from the church followed the robbers as they left the church and saw them go into some nearby apartments.

But Pichs said he has seen no indication the crime is going to be solved. The church has been burglarized 11 previous times and on the worst occasion, thieves stole the church's organ, said Pichs, who has been the pastor nine years.

This is the first time, however, that personal property of church members was taken or even that church members have been present, Pichs said.

Asked if any property had been recovered after previous thefts, Pichs answered in Spanish, "Nada. Nunca" -- meaning "absolutely nothing ever."

In the aftermath of the robbery, one young woman was especially distraught, Pichs said. "One of the girls who had the jewelry taken got very nervous and was having difficulty because she has trouble with one of her heart valves. Her parents were very worried about the girl because of her condition."

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Still, "she's doing better. She's calmed down," Pichs reported. "Thank the Lord that her heart condition hasn't been aggravated too much. But it did scare them enough that she and her sister did not want to come back for the evening service on Sunday."

On average, the church's Sunday school attendance is around 100, Pichs said, but many regular worshippers were not at the Saturday night service, "because a lot of the deacons and their wives had gone to a special service at another church. ... During the course of the robbery, a lot of members of the congregation started praying. Now the majority of the congregation is calm. They're just grateful that the Lord watched over them and that nobody got hurt."

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Reprinted from the Florida Baptist Witness.

Church bringing new life
to bus station, passengers

By Shannon T. Simpson

Baptist Press
3/28/96

ABERDEEN, Miss. (BP)--Members of First Baptist Church, Aberdeen, Miss., have taken the term "community revitalization" to heart. With witnessing tracts in their pockets, they have been working to "spruce up" the local bus station.

The church's Adults on Mission group last June took scrapers in hand to make the first dent in the five coats of paint accumulated on the 1930s-era structure. After several sessions with power washers, donated by the local Sherwin-Williams and Lann Hardware stores, the building's owners sent carpenters to repair trim work.

On March 16, First Baptist volunteers finished scraping and were ready to paint around windows, doors and eaves.

The project is the brainchild of Linda Davis, Woman's Missionary Union leadership team member, churchwide missions coordinator and wife of Bill Davis, First Baptist Church's minister of music and education.

"The Lord just put this place on my heart as I drove by here one day about two and a half years ago," she said. "'That's a place of ministry,' the Lord was almost telling me. After all, he's in the business of mending things -- making rubble into cathedrals."

Two buses come through the Greyhound depot daily -- one northbound, one southbound. Station manager Maurine Mize estimated about 10 people per week get on or off one of those 14 buses in the east Mississippi town of about 7,000.

Davis has befriended bus driver George Keys of Jackson, Tenn. She put together a "travel bag" of snacks and candy -- and a New Testament -- and gave it to him during his brief stop March 16.

The bag is similar to the First Baptist's "Love Kits," another church project which goes into the hands of Aberdeen police officers, firemen and other community servants.

Immediate plans for the downtown bus station include washing blinds and curtains and placing a Chamber of Commerce display rack inside. The rack will hold information about Aberdeen's attractions alongside Bibles and witnessing tracts.

"This (effort) is for the town of Aberdeen," Davis said. "The whole thrust of our ministry is to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and bring people into relationship with him. What better place to do that than in your own town?"

An ongoing bus station ministry is listed in the church's WMU yearbook as a specific objective in reaching the goal of involving the entire church family in missions.

"We are hoping once we get the bus station ... painted, and some shrubbery planted in the back, that we can get church members ... to greet the passengers as they get off the bus, and maybe serve some coffee," said Elizabeth Curlee, First Baptist's WMU director. Emphasis on churchwide missions involvement comes out of new study materials for Adults on Mission, the co-ed organization for adults introduced in October 1995 by the national WMU.

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"We are really trying to think of ways to involve the whole church," Curlee noted, "especially the men. We thought the bus station renovation and the SMARTeams might give them an outlet to minister."

SMARTeams (small maintenance and repair teams) target "household and spiritual needs of widows, widowers, homebound and needy," according to the church's WMU yearbook.

"In the last year, it has really sunk in that missions -- undergirded by prayer -- is not just for WMU, but for everyone," Davis said.

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(BP) photos (black/white) available from the Mississippi Baptist Record. Simpson is a staff writer for the Mississippi newsjournal.

Mentorships plus academics
are needed, Hanks contends

By James A. Smith Sr.

Baptist Press
3/28/96

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--"Some things we want to communicate in life are better communicated through a mentorship, through an apprenticeship, than through a classroom, cognitive, teaching experience," according to evangelist Billie Hanks.

Speaking at the March 26 chapel service of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Hanks quoted a modern translation of Philippians 4:9, "... all that you heard me say and all that you saw me do, put into practice."

Hanks asserted most seminaries emphasize "all that you heard me say," with little attention given to "all that you saw me do."

This conviction was confirmed by an extensive study by Hanks of curricula of seminaries throughout the world. He noted most of the seminaries admitted their weakness in practical mentorship.

The principle to solve this deficiency, Hanks told the chapel audience at the Kansas City, Mo., seminary, is a balanced ministry of "one on many, the ministry of preaching; one on some, the ministry of teaching; and one on one, the ministry of training/mentorship."

Jesus showed these methods by his ministry to the multitude, the disciples and his intimate training of Peter, James and John, Hanks said. Each church today needs all three methods to reach people for Christ, he said.

"There is no conflict between teaching and training -- one desperately needs the other," Hanks said. "For training is as weak for teaching church history, as teaching is weak in conveying the knowledge that requires practical application of a learned skill.

"If we have any problem in the church today, it is having enough trained, effective leaders," leaders who reproduce themselves through soul-winning and discipleship, Hanks said.

The education and training of doctors and pilots was used by Hanks as illustration of the importance of mentorship. While doctors and airplane pilots receive rigorous teaching of their craft, it is necessary for them to have an apprenticeship or internship where these professionals are actually shown what to do.

While these professions can affect the temporal lives of other people, "What you and I are called to do has eternal, everlasting consequences," Hanks said. "The more critical the function, the greater the dependence upon mentorship.

"Do we not owe it to our calling to try to get a good mentorship experience ourselves so that we in turn, as we freely receive, might then freely give to the layman who we disciple and will lead the church in the future?" Hanks asked.

"The world is waiting on a generation of graduates who value being mentors, who value mentoring and who hold that in a loving, seriously balanced approach with one on some and one on many," Hanks said.

"We need emphasis on laity, theology and love that enables us to be the most effective generation of Christians since the Lord came."

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**Southern Baptists win
25 awards in RPRC contest**

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Southern Baptists took 25 awards in the Religious Public Relations Council's DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards competition for 1996.

Of those, communicators at the Foreign Mission Board based in Richmond, Va., captured 17 awards, more than any other single religious entity entered in the competition. These included a "best of class" award in the writing division, four awards of excellence and 12 awards of merit.

The Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., received eight awards. These included two awards of excellence and six awards of merit.

RPRC is an interfaith organization of communicators. Its annual awards competition is given to recognize excellence in religious public relations and communication. For 1996, 62 awards of excellence and 74 awards of merit were presented.

An award of excellence and a best of class award for the writing division went to a news package published by the foreign board for Baptist Press titled, "Cry the Beloved Continent: Crisis and Hope in Africa," by Craig Bird, Steve Evans, Norman Miller, Wendy Ryan and Mark Kelly.

Other awards of excellence were given to material produced by Terri Lackey and Charles Willis at the Sunday School Board and Van Payne, Terry McMahon, Warren Johnson and Marty Croll at the Foreign Mission Board.

Awards of merit went to products of Jim Veneman, Stephanie Delgado, Chip Alford and Jennifer Davidson at the Sunday School Board and Warren Johnson, Van Payne, Ray Fetty, David Walker, Gunther Friedrichs, Trish Landers Ragsdale, Craig Bird and Mike Creswell at the Foreign Mission Board. Other awards of merit were presented to the Foreign Mission Board for its annual report, state convention displays, appointment service promotion, bulletin inserts and The Commission magazine.

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