



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
Telephone (615) 244-2955
W. C. Fields, Director
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Orville Scott, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203, Telephone (615) 254-5461
RICHMOND Jesse C. Fletcher, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (703) 353-0151
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

December 19, 1972

**Supreme Court Declines
Compulsory Chapel Case**

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has denied a request from the government to hear its complaints against a district court of appeals rule which declared that compulsory chapel at the nation's three military academies is unconstitutional.

The request for review from the Departments of Defense and Justice was turned down by the high court without comment. No justice was on record in favor of hearing the case.

Thus, the opinion of the lower court will now be enforced. That opinion, issued in July of 1972, held that mandatory chapel and church attendance at military academies violates both the establishment and free exercise clauses of the First Amendment.

The three-judge panel at the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia declared in a split decision that "individual freedom may not be sacrificed to military interests to the point that constitutional rights are abolished."

Military regulations requiring attendance at worship services at the Army, Air Force and Naval academies "violate the core value of the establishment clause and completely abolish its protection," the majority held.

In its petition to the Supreme Court, the Justice and Defense Departments maintained that the military should have the right to restrict the religion clauses of the First Amendment "to the extent necessary" to ensure effective military training.

The Pentagon maintained that mandatory chapel and church attendance was primarily for educational purposes and was essential for instilling an "awareness of our moral and religious heritage" in future military leaders.

In the government's petition to the Supreme Court Solicitor General Erwin N. Griswold denied that forced chapel attendance was an unconstitutional "establishment of religion."

"No cadet or midshipman is required to believe what he hears," Griswold said. "No one is subjected to a catechism by governmental authority."

Griswold said, as the Pentagon claimed in lower court hearings, that the military was trying to develop in its future officers "a respect for, and understanding of, and a sensitivity to religion and the religious feelings of others."

The Justice Department lawyer said further in his unsuccessful petition to the high court that it should be left to military leaders to decide whether religious sensitivity should be taught in a chapel setting in preference to comparative religion courses.

When the case of Anderson v. Laird was in the Court of Appeals the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs was one of several groups filing friend-of-the-court briefs against the government's position. If the Supreme Court had agreed to review the decision, the Baptist agency again planned to file a brief agreeing with the court of appeals rule.

In addition to saying that required church attendance is unconstitutional under First Amendment protections, the Baptist Joint Committee protested the right of the military to "use" religion to accomplish a secular purpose.

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James E. Wood Jr., Executive Director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs said the refusal of the court to review the case was "most gratifying and reassuring." The court's action should be viewed as a significant one in protecting not only the free exercise of religion, Wood continued, but because of "the prohibition of the government's use of religion to serve secular ends."

"Compulsory chapel attendance at institutions supported by public funds is incompatible with the First Amendment" Wood said. He added that such a regulation must also be viewed as a violation of Article VI of the Constitution prohibiting any religious test for government employment.

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Top 25 Award Announced
By Sunday School Board

12/19/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--The annual "Top 25 Award," acknowledging the 25 churches in the convention most outstanding in Sunday School training for the 1971-72 year, has been announced by the Sunday School department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

This award, part of the New Church Study Course, is to recognize churches receiving the highest number of awards for training Sunday School leaders. Subject area 63, Bible Teaching Program, is the specific area for the award in the New Church Study Course.

Trinity Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, Tex., number one church with 986 credits, has been number one for four of the last five years. The next three churches, also from Texas, are Plymouth Park Baptist Church, Irving, 649 credits; Hampton Place Baptist Church, Dallas, 347 credits; and First Baptist Church, Garland, 326 credits.

The remainder of the award winning churches, in the order they placed according to the number of study course credits received, are: First Baptist Church, Slidell, La.; First Baptist Church, Pineville, La.; Delaney Street Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.; Shively Heights Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.; Central Baptist Church, Springhill, La.; Poplar Springs Baptist Church, Dublin, Ga.; and Calvary Baptist Church, Waynesboro, Miss.

Others are Friendship Baptist Church, Lincoln Park, Mich.; Mary Ann Baptist Church, St. Ann, Mo.; First Baptist Church, Anna, Ill.; Doyle Baptist Church, Livingston, La.; First Baptist Church, Chickasaw, Ala.; Killarney Baptist Church, Winter Park, Fla.; First Baptist Church, Brandon, Fla.; First Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Tex.; and First Baptist Church, Hialeah, Fla.

Completing the list of the "Top 25 Award" are First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Ga.; Sevier Heights Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn.; Sagamore Hills Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, Tex.; Denman Avenue Baptist Church, Lufkin, Tex.; and First Baptist Church, Dover, Fla.

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Miller Named Manager
Of Lifeway Book Store

12/19/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--Loren G. Miller has been named manager of the Lifeway Book Store in Jackson Mall, Jackson, Miss., according to Jay O. Turner, area manager for the store.

Miller, a native of Tennessee, had been the floor sales supervisor at the Baptist Book Store in Little Rock, Ark., since August 1970, before his transfer to the Jackson store. His educational background includes training in administration and supervision.

The Jackson Lifeway, opened in August 1972, is first in a chain of book stores being opened on a pilot basis. The second store is scheduled to open in early 1973, in another city.

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