



**BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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December 28, 1972

**Church Bus Collides  
With Truck, 19 Die**

FORT SUMNER, N.M. (BP)--Nineteen persons en route to a Baptist retreat were killed near here when a school bus collided with a loaded cattle truck. Fourteen other bus passengers were injured.

The collision occurred in clear, but cold weather on U.S. Highway 60 about nine miles east of Fort Sumner. It was dark at the time of the accident, about 6:45 p.m.

Chartered by Woodlawn Baptist Church of Austin, Tex., and driven by an adult sponsor, identified as Jerry Estes, the school bus was taking a youth group to Vadito, N.M., a ski center near Santa Fe.

Fifteen youth and four adults were killed. Dead included the bus driver and his wife and the wife and daughter of Ron Hicks, Minister of Education for the Austin church. The truck driver received minor injuries.

It appeared the eastbound truck jackknifed in front of the westbound bus. The wreck occurred at a small bridge which local residents consider "very narrow and dangerous."

The highway there is only two lanes.

Cause of the accident was not immediately determined. A state highway policeman reached the scene within 20 minutes after the collision. It took about two hours to pry the dead and injured from the wreckage and longer to clear the roadway.

An ambulance driver who helped carry the injured to hospitals said the bus' "front end was pushed about halfway through the bus like an accordion. It was all torn to pieces."

Despite the impact, the bus remained upright. Gas spilled over the highway but there was no fire.

Ron Killough, Minister of Youth for the 1500-member church, was riding in a bus ahead carrying 31 more persons to the retreat. The two buses were about half a mile apart.

Killough said the first school bus belongs to the church. The wrecked bus was rented from a transport leasing firm but driven by an unpaid church sponsor.

Fort Sumner is a small, county seat town in a sparsely settled area of eastern New Mexico. Some of the injured were taken to hospitals in Clovis, N.M., a city 63 miles away.

John Roberts, driver of the first bus, saw the collision in his rear view mirror, wire service reports indicated. He had crossed the bridge and passed the cattle truck seconds earlier. He realized the truck and following bus might reach the narrow bridge at the same time.

Roberts saw the lights of the second bus flash and go out. He stopped his bus at once. Killough went back to see what happened, Roberts reported.

Roberts was quoted as telling those riding his bus, "You're going to see something you've never probably seen before in your life. If you can't stand to see your brothers and sisters mangled and possibly killed, don't get off the bus. Just pray."

One account surmised the truck hit the bridge railing and its trailer, then swung over the center line into the path of the bus.

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Investigators returned to the accident scene the following morning for further study before filing a formal accident report.

The wreck was called one of the worst in New Mexico history.

First Baptist Church of Fort Sumner responded to the emergency immediately. It provided food and overnight lodging for many passengers on the first bus. Some were accommodated by Baptists in Clovis.

Relatives of the dead and injured started for the scene as soon as word of the tragedy reached Austin. Passengers on the first bus returned to Austin as soon as possible.

It was first supposed the two busloads of young people from Woodlawn Church were en route to the 4-day winter conference for high schoolers at the Southern Baptist Conference Center at Glorieta, N.M., also near Santa Fe.

Killough reported, however, the young people had not been able to get accommodations at Glorieta. Instead, they arranged for a 4-day private retreat at Vadito through an organization, youth-style ministries, based in Abilene, Tex.

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Church Literature  
Refund Scheduled

12/28/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board is making a refund of \$415,000 to church literature customers.

The voluntary refund, most of which will go to Southern Baptist churches, represents earnings for the 1971-72 fiscal year above the amount allowed by Economic Stabilization Program guidelines.

Credit vouchers for the refund are scheduled for mailing to churches on January 31. Vouchers will be redeemable for a check; for credit against any account owed to the Sunday School Board; for purchasing church literature; or for purchasing merchandise from Baptist Book Stores.

James L. Sullivan, executive secretary-treasurer of the board, stated that the year's earnings were affected favorably by economy efforts throughout the year at the board.

"The increase in price in church literature items during the year was justified on the basis on increased product costs," said Sullivan. "The new prices were within pricing guidelines. However, we discovered that operating efficiencies during the year had caused larger earnings than we had anticipated or were allowed by federal regulations."

Earnings of the Sunday School Board are used for support of education and service programs benefiting Southern Baptist churches, plus fixed asset and reserve requirements of the board.

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Pastoral Consultant  
Named at Board

12/28/72

NASHVILLE (BP)--The church administration department at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has named Robert Dale pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Lawrence, Kan., as pastoral ministries consultant specializing in summer youth work.

"Dale will assist in conferences for pastors and youth workers who are interested in summer youth programs," said Ernest Mosley, section supervisor. "He will also be responsible for developing products for use in conducting a summer youth program in local churches.

"Another area of his responsibility is pastoral care. Bob will coordinate the planning and conducting of conferences in pastoral care and will assist state convention and associational leaders in conducting conferences in that area."

A native of Missouri, Dale received the associate in arts degree from Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar and the bachelor of arts degree from Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee. He attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, where he earned the doctor of theology and bachelor of divinity degrees in areas of Christian ethics, pastoral care and theology.

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Church Gives Christmas  
Pageant Via Television

FORT WORTH (BP)--When a church here found the local convention center, through a mix-up, would not be available for its annual Christmas pageant, the church purchased time on television station WBAP to present it to the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area.

More than 300 members of Sagamore Hills Baptist Church were cast in the hour-long production, "Make Mine Peace on Earth." Church members wrote, produced, and directed it, and filmed it in 15 different locations.

The hour-long, commercial free program was televised on Christmas afternoon.

"Any church that can do it financially ought to be involved in some kind of creative ministry," said Cecil Roenfeldt, minister of education. "Television has splendid potential for reaching people for Christ."

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Miami Church Musicians  
Reach National Audience

12/27/72

MIAMI (BP)--A youth group at Riverside Baptist Church here has reached a nationwide television audience for the second time in a year with its Christian message in song.

Director Jack Day said the group, called The New Directions, reached 60 million people when it appeared as part of the televised Orange Bowl football festivities in Miami.

Earlier, the group sang at both Democratic and Republican National Conventions meeting at Miami Beach to nominate candidates for President, Day reported.

The New Directions offer a program of music that "embraces love of Christ, church, and fellow man," its director indicated. It consists of 165 vocalists and a 15-piece band.

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CORRECTION

Please correct graph 10, line 4 of Baptist Press story released 12/21/72, "Mont St. Michel: Sunday on the Rocks!" to read "C'est la guerre, monsieur!"

--Baptist Press



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