

June 26, 1974

Pensacola Painted Red, Green...
In Volunteer Mission Project

74-4

By Tim Nicholas

PENSACOLA, Fla. (BP)--This city got a new coat of paint because a Southern Baptist minister of music envisioned a mission project to be carried out on a citywide basis.

Paul Royal, minister of music for the Pensacola First Baptist Church, planned to ask the city to donate \$50,000 while manpower was to be provided by skilled carpenters and a thousand young volunteers.

With what was attributed to detailed organization and the "guidance of the Holy Spirit," the plan succeeded.

Royal previously led the church's youth in similar small-scale projects, repairing four Pensacola homes and a Pass Christian, Miss., church devastated by Hurricane Camille in August, 1969.

He put his latest, larger plan on paper and went to the church's pastor, James L. Pleitz.

Pleitz, current president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Pastors' Conference, is also chairman of a task force on housing and welfare for Action '76, a bicentennial group, which took over sponsorship of the project.

Project V. I. P. (Volunteers Improving Pensacola) as the venture was known, asked the city for \$50,000 to buy whole sale building materials. The city council voted the entire amount to be taken out of the city's federal revenue sharing funds.

Then they asked the local home builders' associations for volunteer carpenters, plumbers and electricians. People such as Joe Napier, former chairman of First Baptist Church's board of deacons and current secretary of the western Florida home builders' association, helped in recruitment. Ten of his own construction company employees volunteered.

They also set out to recruit a thousand young people from local high schools and colleges, but four days before the Saturday work day, only 150 young people had been enlisted.

Royal hit the high school circuit. In three days he spoke at every high school in Pensacola. "God opened doors all over," said Royal, "especially in schools where there is a direct policy against outsiders calling assemblies."

At one school the principal who introduced him said, "As you know, young people do not have a better friend in Pensacola than First Baptist Church."

By Friday, 1,200 young people had been divided among the 100 substandard homes to be repaired.

"Most people were skeptical because of the magnitude of the project," Napier said. "But this was a love-for-your-fellowman sort of thing, and we got an outstanding response from all segments of community life."

The operation ran like a naval fleet in tight formation, but not on the planned Saturday. That ran more like a submarine. It rained-- not just a shower, but an all-day thunderstorm. The entire operation had to be moved to the next Saturday.

Most of the hundred carpenters, electricians and plumbers returned. Navy corpsmen who were teamed up with volunteers owning citizens' band radios all came back. "But we didn't need any first aid," said Royal.

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"Matter of fact, for a film documentary that was made of the project, we had to fake the smashing of a finger so a corpsman could bandage it."

The day's work consisted of almost every conceivable type of building repair. The skilled workers supervised the young people in each house as they painted and repaired roofs, doors, floors, plumbing and walls inside and out.

One 70-year-old woman said this was the first time she'd ever had hot water in her home. "If you love the Lord long enough, He'll take care of you," she said.

Others got new hot water heaters, new showers, toilets, and many workers went beyond original work specifications, working on into the next week.

Contractors even gave extra time off to men who wanted to continue on their assigned houses. Some who finished their assignments early went on to other houses that needed extra work.

"At first I wasn't too sure about this project," said one carpenter, "but after seeing what some of these people live in, well, I'm just happy to be out here working."

Barney Burks, mayor of Pensacola, said, "There's an awful lot of good feeling when a person reaches out to help somebody else. He may not understand the feeling, but he likes it."

Most of the houses repaired in the project would likely have been condemned otherwise, said J. Donald Roberts, minimal housing supervisor for Pensacola.

One elderly woman summed up the feelings of most participants as her home was being repaired. "This is the happiest day of my life...the world must be getting better, I feel it."

-30-

(BP) Photos mailed to Baptist state editors

Gilbert Barrows is Alumni
President for New Orleans

6/26/74

By Baptist Press

Gilbert Barrows, the pastor of First Baptist Church in Leesburg, Fla., is the new president of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Alumni Association.

Named as president-elect of the association, during an annual luncheon in Dallas recently, was Charles Christmas of Alabama. Others elected were Mrs. Elwood Ulmer of Maryland as secretary and Joe Courson of Florida as treasurer.

A Southern Baptist Convention release from Dallas noted that the New Orleans alumni heard a progress report from the seminary's acting president, Ray P. Rust, and set a goal of \$15,000 for alumni fund raising for the coming year, an increase of \$3,000 over the 1973-74 goal.

J. Hoffman Harris, the pastor of Briarlake Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga., was recipient of the faculty's outstanding alumnus award. (BP)

-30-



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June 26, 1974

**Court Upholds Student
Use of Flag for Peace**

74-4

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U. S. Supreme Court here upheld the right of free speech in a case that involved a state law regulating the display of the United States flag.

In a 6-3 decision the Supreme Court reversed a Washington State Supreme Court ruling that upheld the conviction of a college student who displayed the United States flag upside down with a large peace symbol attached to both sides.

In reversing the Washington court, the U. S. Supreme Court declared that the case was not decided on the charge of desecration of the flag or the improper use of the flag. Rather, the court said that it was confronted "with a case of prosecution for the expression of an idea through activity."

The case arose in 1970 during the national unrest related to the invasion of Cambodia by the United States and the killings of students on the Kent State University campus in Ohio.

A college student by the name of Harold Omand Spence hung his United States flag from the window of his apartment on private property in Seattle, Wash. Attached to the flag on both sides was the peace symbol (a circle enclosing a trident) made of removable black tape.

Spence was arrested and charged with "improper use" of the flag. The local justice court found him guilty. He appealed to the King County Superior Court and a jury also found him guilty of violation of state law. The Washington Court of Appeals reversed the decision, but the Washington State Supreme Court reinstated the conviction.

The U. S. Supreme Court reversed the Washington State Supreme Court on the ground that Spence was engaging in constitutionally protected freedom of speech.

Spence contended, and the State of Washington did not contest his contention, that his purpose in the unusual display of the American flag was to associate the American flag with peace instead of war and violence.

"I felt there had been so much killing and that this was not what America stood for," he said. "I felt that the flag stood for America and I wanted people to know that I thought America stood for peace," he continued.

Four major factors were outlined by the Supreme Court in its decision to uphold Spence's right to communication by activity even though it involved the flag: (1) this was a privately owned flag, (2) it was displayed on private property, (3) there was no proof of any risk of breach of peace, and (4) the student was engaging in a form of communication.

In upholding Spence's right to communicate in the way he did, the Supreme Court, however, pointed out, "We cannot accept the view that an apparently limitless variety of conduct can be labeled 'speech' whenever the person engaged in the conduct intends thereby to express an idea."

The court then explained, "But the nature of appellant's activity, combined with the factual context and environment in which it was undertaken, lead to the conclusion that he engaged in a form of protected expression."

Free Press, Freedom of
Speech Upheld by Court

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Supreme Court ruled that newspapers are not obligated to print replies to editorials critical of political candidates and made easier a private individual's standing to sue for defamation of character in two decisions affecting freedom of speech and the press.

In the newspaper case, the high court held that the First Amendment's guarantee of a free press gives newspaper editors the right to criticize a political candidate editorially without printing his reply.

The case, Miami Herald Publishing Co. V. Tornillo, involved a suit originally brought by a candidate for state office in Florida.

Pat Tornillo, a candidate for the state's house of representatives, was attacked in two editorials printed in the Miami Herald. Tornillo, taking advantage of a Florida "right of reply" law which had been invoked in only one other instance since its passage in 1913, claimed that the newspaper was legally bound to print his reply to the attacks. The newspaper refused.

When Tornillo first brought suit, a local circuit court declared the "right of reply" statute unconstitutional. The Florida Supreme Court reversed the lower court. The Miami Herald then brought the case to the U. S. Supreme Court.

The high court's unanimous decision, written by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, declared that the editorial role of newspapers is necessary in a free society, because a "newspaper is more than a passive receptacle or conduit for news, comment and advertising."

Although such an interpretation of the freedom of the press runs the risk of some newspapers being irresponsible, the court stated, it is a risk which must be taken. "A responsible press is an undoubtedly desirable goal," the opinion declared, "but press responsibility is not mandated by the Constitution and like many other virtues it cannot be legislated."

In a concurring opinion, Justice Byron R. White underscored Burger's concern for a free press unencumbered by right of reply laws by stating: "Any other accommodation--any other system that would supplant private control of the press with the heavy hand of government intrusion--would make the government the censor of what the people may read and know."

The libel case, Gertz V. Robert Welch, Inc., had to do with the media's immunity from libel in instances when a private citizen sues for defamation of character. Under guidelines in libel cases over the past ten years, the Supreme Court had maintained that a public official or a public figure may not sue for libel.

The new ruling states that a private citizen, not in the limelight of public prominence, may sue for defamation of character. One of the reasons given by the court for distinguishing between public and private is that "Public officials and public figures usually enjoy significantly greater access to the channels of effective communication and hence have a more realistic opportunity to counteract false statements than private individuals normally enjoy."

The case involved an attorney in Chicago who represented the family of a young man in a civil suit against a policeman convicted of murdering the son. An article subsequently appeared in the magazine American Opinion, an organ of the John Birch Society, accusing the attorney of "framing" the policeman as part of a communist conspiracy against policemen. The article further alleged that the attorney had a criminal record and labeled him a "communist-frontier."

After the attorney filed suit against the magazine, a local jury awarded him \$50,000 in damages. The magazine then appealed before a U. S. district court, where the jury's decision was reversed. The U. S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit affirmed the district court's decision, thereby setting the stage for a final decision by the Supreme Court.

Although the high court ruled for the attorney, and thus for a private citizen's right to sue for libel, it went on to say that recovery for damages can be allowed only when a citizen proves that what was printed against him was based on "falsity or reckless disregard for the truth."

The 5-4 decision was another in a long series of actions by the high court to hammer out libel laws. Justice White, in a lengthy dissent, held that the court did not go far enough in protecting the right of individuals to bring libel suits.

At the other end of the spectrum, Justice William O. Douglas repeated his belief that the First Amendment bars Congress from passing any libel law. Chief Justice Burger and Justice William J. Brennan Jr. also dissented.

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Sunday School Board
Seeks Tax Rehearing

6/26/74

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board has filed with the Tennessee Supreme Court here a petition for rehearing of the property tax case on which a decision was issued June 17 by the court.

The petition, according to Board president James L. Sullivan, is "for the purpose of clarifying some of the uncertain and confusing areas of the decision."

The board is asking the court to reconsider and clarify or correct: the formula to be used in determining the tax liability; the categorization of materials distributed by the Board as to "general religious" or "denominational" or "secular;" the constitutionality of the approach taken by the court in terming non-exempt those areas serving religious rather than denominational purposes, and the further legal procedures to be followed.

In its petition, the Board outlined areas of uncertainty which resulted from the hearing of the case of the United Methodist Publishing House along with that of the Sunday School Board. Two examples are the fact that the Methodist house does printing, while the Baptist board does not; and the Methodist book stores are general interest book stores, while Baptist Book Stores specialize in materials religious in nature.

The state Supreme Court ruling, issued June 19, held that publishing and printing of materials for distribution to members of the parent denomination or those to be used in specific programs of the parent denominational organization are uses of property which are exempt.

Publishing and printing of books for the general public, according to the decision, even though the subject matter of such books is religious, was held not to be a use of property which is exempt.

In the 3-2 opinion, the majority cited some areas of the board's work which are clearly exempt from property tax, some which are clearly not exempt, and set forth a general formula for determining tax liability on areas which are not clearly in either category. This formula is one of the items about which the Sunday School Board is seeking clarification.

In 1969, the metropolitan Nashville tax assessor placed a new assessment on Sunday School Board Nashville property. A similar assessment was made against the United Methodist Publishing House.

The case was appealed to the state Supreme Court after the matter was not satisfactorily and clearly decided by the metropolitan and state boards of equalization and the Chancery Court and state Court of Appeals. Rulings of the lower bodies were appealed by both the publishing houses and the metropolitan assessor because of lack of clarity.

And clarity, according to the petition now filed by the Sunday School Board, is still clearly lacking.

-30-

SBC Educators Urge 'Remarriage
Of Missions and Education'

6/26/74

By Robert O'Brien

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--The Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools adopted a six point challenge here by a college administrator from Oklahoma to accelerate exploration of the "remarriage of Baptist higher education and missions."

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Robert L. Lynn, vice president for administration at Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, although outlining many areas of cooperation between missions and Baptist higher education, said "numerous factors" have in past decades often diverted Baptist educational institutions from missionary concern.

One of several speakers at the association's opening session, Lynn, a member of the Foreign Mission Board, issued the six point challenge to educators to continue and accelerate current efforts to intersect with the missions enterprise of Southern Baptists.

His remarks bore the ring of an address earlier in the week by Baker James Cauthen, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, to a meeting of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in nearby Alexandria.

In the Alexandria meeting, the Education Commission voted to initiate a joint venture with the Foreign Mission Board to determine what impact Christians can make on proliferating national universities in developing nations and how Baptist schools in the States can assist Baptist schools abroad.

Lynn urged Baptist college presidents and other administrators and faculty comprising association membership to:

- "1. Present the challenge of missions to 84,000-plus students in Baptist schools (one of the Education Commission's 1974-75 program goals) and develop resources for student financial aid for missions volunteers;
- "2. Provide expertise in research and development of mission strategy;
- "3. Assist educational institutions abroad through faculty exchanges and advisement on accreditation. (Baptist missions in 77 countries, Lynn said, have some relationship with 506 schools of all types with 85,076 students);
- "4. Develop a model for Baptist campuses in the United States to upgrade preparation and training of mission volunteers, enrich and encourage their commitment and help them develop attitudes and skills effective for cross-cultural communication and ministry;
- "5. Relate study-abroad programs of Baptist schools, where appropriate, to foreign mission fields;
- "6. Continue and increase emphasis on the training of international students in Baptist schools in the States to improve cross cultural communications and contribute to Christian leadership development for emerging nations."

Lynn said he did not mean to downgrade the "significant contributions to foreign missions" already being made by Baptist institutions and the Education Commission, but merely to "call for reassessment in the face of new and unparalleled challenges and opportunities."

He cited the SBC's recent request in Dallas for the Foreign and Home Mission Boards and a special study review committee to present "bold, new plans" for world missions advance. Participation of higher education in the coming surge of missions, he continued, will not only return it to the center of its historical relationship, but help guarantee strong Baptist support for education.

Roger Voskuyl, executive director of the Council for the Advancement of Small Colleges, Washington, D. C., told the Southern Baptist educators he admired their stance on refusing federal aid.

"If you are to protect what you are doing, now is the time to be careful," he said, indicating that acceptance of federal aid could open the way for federal interference with the creed and distinctive purposes of Baptist schools.

Voskuyl, a Presbyterian, also congratulated association members on aspects of their annual meeting which he said indicate they are taking seriously their duty to provide distinctively Christian education.

The former college president further noted, although he said he had no survey at his disposal to document it, that he doesn't know of any denomination which financially supports its colleges better than Southern Baptists.

Two executives from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, outlined ways Baptist educators ^{and} at the Sunday School Board can work together to increase the number of educated leaders available for Southern Baptist churches and agencies.

Allen Comish, director of the board's church services and materials division, urged school administrators to upgrade their religious education courses and faculty, provide excused absences to make professors available to attend writers' conferences so they can accept board writing assignments and make a concerted effort to work with the board on the new emphasis on church-related vocations.

Howard Foshee, secretary of the board's church administration department, outlined points of intersection where colleges and the board can participate in church, associational, state and SBC-wide efforts to find church vocation volunteers, channel them into Baptist colleges and then into denominational churches and agencies to increase trained leadership.

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Sells Elected President
of SBC Schools Association

6/26/74

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--James Sells, president of Southwest Baptist College, Bolivar, Mo., was elected president of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools here, succeeding Abner McCall, president of Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

Harold Fisher, president of Blue Mountain (Miss.) College, was named vice president and H. I. Hester, retired of Liberty, Mo., was re-elected treasurer.

The association also approved a \$5,450 annual budget and voted to take \$5,000 from reserved funds to help finance a National Colloquium on education that the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention will sponsor in Nashville in 1976.

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Missouri Children's Home
Administrator to Retire

6/26/74

BRIDGETON, Mo. (BP)--Edgar E. Blake, administrator of the Missouri Baptist Children's Home for the past 30 years has announced his retirement, effective Dec. 31, 1974.

Blake became administrator of the Missouri Baptist Convention institution in January, 1945. Under his leadership, the program moved rapidly into shorter-term care from an average stay of two years per child to less than a year, a Home spokesman said.

Although the Blakes have no children of their own, "Dr. Blake has served with love and devotion the needs of children whose fate has denied them parental love," the spokesman noted.

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