

**(BP)****BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Court Continues to Forbid  
 School Religious Services**

By Stan Hasteay

WASHINGTON (BP)--In a unanimous action, the U. S. Supreme Court declined to hear a Massachusetts woman's case against a local school district on the volatile subject of religious exercises in public schools.

The high court's refusal to schedule the case for argument has the effect of letting stand the decisions of two lower federal courts which supported Brockton, Mass., school officials in their refusal to allow an eighth grade pupil to conduct public prayer on school premises during school hours.

Massachusetts law provides for a one-minute period of silent meditation at the beginning of each school day but forbids that the time be used in any kind of activity.

Rita F. Warren, a Brockton resident, petitioned local school officials in 1969 to grant her daughter permission to pray orally either before class or during recess or lunch, without teacher involvement, in the classroom. She also proposed that if such an arrangement were not agreeable, the school designate a special room for a "non-denominational chapel" where students could engage in public prayer.

School officials declined to grant the request and Warren took her case to the U. S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts.

The district court ruled earlier this year that authorizing oral prayer in the classroom "would be constitutionally infirm" because "it would require an impermissible involvement of the school system in religious practices."

The court ruled that the alternate proposal to designate a separate room where oral prayers could be said "is but another version of the 'release time' approach" which the U. S. Supreme Court struck down in 1948.

In addition, the district court declared that the practice of providing for the one-minute period for silent meditation "is consistent with the individual coexistence mandated by the First Amendment with respect to church and state."

The U. S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit affirmed the district court's decision last June, saying that "The First Amendment does not confer upon persons a right to engage in public prayer in state-owned facilities wherever and whenever they desire."

The decision also held that "the refusal to permit such prayer in school is not an establishment of atheism." That same argument was used in 1963 in the Supreme Court's decision striking down Pennsylvania's practice of having the Lord's Prayer recited each day at the beginning of classes.

In her written brief asking the Supreme Court to take on her case, Warren argued that the case differed from previous similar ones in that "the force of the public school system would not be used to propagate religion."

"School officials," the brief stated, "have merely been asked to tolerate oral prayer, and tolerance is on the level of accommodation rather than establishment."

The brief argued further that if the proposals to the Brockton school officials violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment, so do other practices such as opening each day in the U. S. Congress with prayer, beginning each day's Supreme Court proceedings with the cry, "God save the United States and this honorable court," and inscribing "In God We Trust" on U. S. Coins. -30-

'Foreign Missions Hotline':  
Latest News by Telephone

RICHMOND (BP)--Once again, news from the foreign mission field is as close as the nearest phone now that the "Foreign Missions Hotline" has resumed operation.

For the fifth consecutive year, the hotline will provide not only the latest news of Baptist work amid crisis, but also the everyday thoughts and prayer requests of Southern Baptist missionaries on the field.

The prerecorded message, which will be changed each Thursday, will be available Nov. 15 to Dec. 15 for the price of a three-minute station-to-station call to Richmond, Va. to (804) 355-6581.

Operating each year during the special season of foreign mission emphasis, the hotline is designed to aid churches, small groups and individual callers in understanding specific prayer needs of foreign missionaries.

The voice of Foreign Missions Hotline for the fourth year is William R. Smith, pastor of Chamberlayne Baptist Church, Richmond. A native of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Smith was an announcer for WBAP-TV in Fort Worth, Tex., while attending Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary there.

Preparations for hotline will involve daily consultations with the board's eight area secretaries and other staff members, as well as contact with field representatives stationed in each mission area and with the missionaries themselves. The project is coordinated by Samuel M. Pittman, associate secretary in the department of promotion and furlough ministries.

If a crisis occurs after the tape of the week is recorded, the tape will be rerecorded to include updated information.

Because the number of calls is expected to reach into the thousands, a second backup line has been installed to handle simultaneous calls.

"The purpose of the hotline is two-fold," said R. Keith Parks, director of the board's mission support division. "It is designed to provide current and fresh information about foreign missionaries and Southern Baptist mission work around the world. Hotline will also help guide and motivate Southern Baptists in personal prayer involvement.

"We can't all go to the mission field, but we can all pray. Prayer is a vital part of mission work," he said.

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(BP) Photo to be mailed to Baptist state papers.

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'Baptist Bed & Breakfast':  
A Bicentennial Contribution

Baptist Press  
11/4/75

BOWIE, Md. (BP)--The Maryland Baptist Bicentennial Committee has endorsed a "Baptist Bed and Breakfast" (BBB) plan which would provide a morning meal and night lodging for Baptist wayfarers during the Bicentennial observance in 1976.

The idea was presented by Mrs. Robert Giles of 12604 Kilbourne Lane, Bowie, Md. 20715, a member of the committee.

The plan employs Mrs. Giles' living room as a central check-point for thousands of potential match-ups between Maryland Baptists and other Southern Baptists traveling from around the country to the nation's capital during the Bicentennial.

Potential guests will fill out a registration card, pay a \$3 fee to cover costs, and receive an identification card to present to their Maryland host for the evening.

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Mrs. Giles, who expects the heaviest interest to coincide with the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), June 15-17, 1976, in Norfolk, Va., said she wants the program to catch on for several reasons.

"We need for Baptists in different parts of the nation to be able to share what is happening in their lives and in their state," says Mrs. Giles, a member of Bowie Baptist Church. "Hosts in this area can share what they know about the history with their guests, many of whom have never been in this part of the country.

"The program will also reduce costs for visitors and allow Christians to participate in the Bicentennial in a meaningful way."

She said the overall effect of BBB "will be that Baptists can become more aware of the history in different parts of the nation and familiar with Baptist work throughout the SBC."

BBB has been listed and registered as a Horizon '76 event by the Washington, D. C.-based American Revolution Bicentennial Administration (ARBA) and approved by the Bicentennial Register for Maryland.

An unrelated offer to travelers through Maryland comes from the University of Maryland, College Park, which will make its residence halls and apartments available for travelers on a daily or weekly basis, at reduced rates, May 23, 1976, until August 6, 1976.

The ARBA has prepared a "how-to" booklet on low cost accommodations for Bicentennial visitors. The 36-page primer outlines basic information on alternatives, pitfalls, and possible resources that can be used to establish low-cost lodging facilities in a community. It discusses existing facilities and directories of helpful contacts, among other items.

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Psychologist Endows Chair  
At University of Richmond

Baptist Press  
11/4/75

RICHMOND (BP)--An alumnus who gave a \$100,000 trust to support a professorship in psychology at the University of Richmond has pledged a minimum of \$250,000 more and announced an immediate annual increment to initiate the professorship as soon as the appointment can be consummated.

Dr. MacEldin Trawick of New York, who recently retired as an industrial psychologist with Exxon Corporation, is the first person to endow a professorship at the Baptist-affiliated university which will support a professor during the lifetime of the donor. Usually, funds in a trust do not come to the institution until after the death of the donor.

University officials have indicated the hope that the MacEldin Trawick Professorship will be identified with a professor whose background includes general familiarity with industrial psychology, the field in which Dr. Trawick won national recognition.

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SBC Begins 1975-76 Fiscal  
Year With Running Start

Baptist Press  
11/4/75

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's national Cooperative Program unified budget moved into the 1975-76 fiscal year with a running start, showing an 18.8 percent increase over the same month in the 1974-75 fiscal year.

During October, the first month of the new fiscal year, the national Cooperative Program received \$3,721,304 from the Cooperative Program budgets of 33 state or regional conventions covering all 50 states. The state budgets are supported by gifts from 34,734 churches in the nation's largest Protestant-evangelical denomination.

The \$3.7 million figure is \$589,000 more than \$3.1 million in contributions in October 1974.

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Total contributions for October, including an additional \$447,190 in designated gifts, amounted to \$4,168,494, or a 17.85 percent increase over \$3,536,988 given at the same point in the previous year.

During the 1975-76 fiscal year, the national Cooperative Program will shoot for a \$51 million budget, part of a combined \$150 million Cooperative Program goal of all the state conventions. The \$51 million figure includes a combined operating and capital needs budget of \$42,080,000 for national SBC agencies and an additional "challenge" portion of \$8,920,000. The 1974-75 fiscal year produced \$41,114,253 in national Cooperative Program contributions.