



July 15, 1976

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A World's Champion
Ropes for Christ

by Toby Druin

SILVERTON, Tex. (BP)--For as long as Walter Arnold could remember, he had wanted to be the best steer roper in the world. Roping was his life.

The worst spanking his father ever gave him, he recalls, was one day when he and his cousin almost killed three roosters, seeing which was better at putting a loop around the chickens' bobbing necks.

When Walt got a little older he worked for area ranchers roping and dragging calves to the branding fire. He began dreaming about using his talent in rodeos.

His father bought him his first horse off the Matador Ranch for \$25 but told Walt that expense money for his rodeoing would be up to him. Walt sold an old coon hound for his first entry fee, and when he ran out of hounds and other things he turned to breaking horses.

In the summer of 1956, as an 18-year-old, he won 12 of 14 match ropings against some of the best ropers in the Southwest. And not long after that he married his high school sweetheart, Gail.

Working for a Silverton rancher breaking horses, Walt would get up early in the morning, practice roping, put in a day's work with the horses and then rope until dark. Gail worked the chute for him and shouted encouragement.

Walt's goal was simple--to be the best steer roper in the world. Simple, but far from easy. Steer roping is probably the most difficult of all the rodeo events. But in 1969 Walter Arnold had mastered the art and his dream came true. He won the national steer roping championship. He was the best in the world.

But he was disappointed. He came home to the adulation of the town's 900 people. Instead of basking in the spotlight, he sought the solitude of the caprock, the limestone rim that ran along his parent's ranch. It's always been his favorite place--where a man can get off to himself and look off across the canyons and get close to God.

Walt took his disappointment there and shared it with God. Having made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ at age 6 Walt had grown up in the church--First Baptist at Silverton--but hardly had been active.

"I had felt for a long time that I should be witnessing to the other cowboys," he recalls, and it kept nagging him. One night he dreamed that God wanted him to tell the others about Christ.

"It almost scared me to death," he says, "I told the Lord there was no way I could do it; and even if there was, those cowboys would never believe me after the kind of life I had been living."

Another thing that bothered him, he says, was the memory of not being able to speak before a group. When he was a student at South Plains College in Levelland, Tex. he had to make a speech in a class one day and was unable to make a sound. Whenever he thought about witnessing for Christ the memory of that day in class flashed across his mind. "Satan kept reminding me of that," he says.

Then, in 1973, in Phoenix two other cowboys, Mark Schrieker, a Methodist, and Wilbur Plaugher, a Baptist and rodeo clown, came to him and said they were thinking about starting a Christian organization among the cowboys. They asked Walt to join.

When he got back to Silverton, he called his pastor, Larry Wilson, to tell him of his decision. Wilson asked if he could share his testimony with the church that Wednesday night.

Walt tried to tell them of the change that had occurred in his life, but he just couldn't get it out. That same night a young man who had just felt called to preach gave his testimony. It gave Walt new courage.

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"I asked the pastor if I could throw a second loop," he recalls. He gave his testimony and has continued to "throw second loops," witnessing wherever he goes and becoming a positive influence in the church. He gave his testimony at the Southern Baptist Convention in Norfolk in June and is featured in a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board film on lifestyle evangelism.

Walt, Schreiker and Plaucher and a few other cowboys formed the Rodeo Cowboys Chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. They were assisted, fittingly, by Dallas Cowboys Coach, Tom Landry. Walt is now president of the chapter.

The chapter began having breakfasts in motels in rodeo cities where Walt and the others would share their testimonies with anyone who would come. Now many worship services are held at the rodeo arenas on Sunday morning. More than 1,000 attended a service at Burwell, Neb., last year and 100 professions of faith were recorded.

One of the first goals the cowboy chapters adopted was to get Bibles distributed to the other cowboys. They arranged for the printing of 1,000 copies of the Living Bible--a "Cowboy Edition" with a special cover depicting various rodeo events. The first printing was gone in six weeks and another 1,000 were ordered. Walt keeps two or three in his pickup and uses them in witnessing to young people who come to him for roping advice.

When Walt first announced his convictions, he said, many of his friends on the rodeo circuit didn't understand it and used to look at him as if they wondered what made him tick. And he took a lot of kidding and even some ridicule. Now with a couple of years behind him of open identification as a practicing Christian, he doesn't have to look for opportunities to witness.

"I must have roped in 40 rodeos last year and 35 or 50 jackpot ropings," and at every one of them somebody wanted to talk about being a Christian."

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(BP) Photo will be mailed to Baptist state papers

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Wingate College Approved
For Four-Year Status

Baptist Press
7/15/76

QUIES CREEK, N. C. (BP)--Wingate College, a two-year Baptist institution near Charlotte, N. C., was approved for four-year status by the general board of the North Carolina Baptist State Convention which met on the campus of Campbell College here.

Wingate, founded in 1896 as a high school, became a junior college in the mid 1930's. It became affiliated with North Carolina Baptists in 1949.

It will begin offering the four-year baccalaureate degree in only a few disciplines, aiming for four-year accreditation in 1979. The school will still place major academic emphasis on its already accredited two-year program.

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Heilman Heads
Accrediting Committee

Baptist Press
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RICHMOND (BP)--E. Bruce Heilman, president, University of Richmond, has been named to head a committee to advise the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools in accrediting and fund-raising matters.

The committee will advise and give assistance to the Commission in identifying accreditation-related projects to serve the membership and fund sources from which financial support might be obtained, the president of the Baptist school said.

Some of the possible program areas to be included in the consideration of the committee are assistance of private colleges in educational planning, legal assistance to member institutions, non-traditional learning, cooperate programs among institutions, establishment of a regional data bank for continuing education units, the self-study program, and the future role of institutional regional accreditation.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The U. S. Supreme Court took far-reaching actions in its recently-concluded term on a number of issues involving church-state relations and human rights, which were reported by Baptist Press. The following wrapup on the church-state actions will be followed by a wrapup on the opinions involving human rights.

Wrapup

Supreme Court Hands Down
Major Church-State Opinions

By Stan Hastey

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U. S. Supreme Court handed down far reaching church-state decisions in its just-concluded term, including opinions on tax aid to sectarian colleges and universities and internal church disputes.

Without question, the most important decision in the church-state field was the high court's 5-4 ruling that states may help subsidize some institutions of higher learning controlled by churches.

A Maryland plan, in effect since 1971, provides direct financial assistance to private colleges, including church-related schools. The program's only restriction is that such public funds may not be used for sectarian purposes. Opponents of such plans argued, unsuccessfully, that the restriction is essentially meaningless in that colleges may divert funds from "secular" to "sectarian" purposes. The end result, the argument goes, is the same--religious schools benefit at taxpayers' expense.

The high court's decision seems at least a setback to strict adherents of separation of church and state and appears to contradict the tribunal's reasoning in striking down similar arguments for state funding of elementary and secondary schools. The justices went to great pains to make a distinction between the nature of education at the college level as opposed to the elementary and secondary levels.

This view, although plausible to many church-state observers, leaves unresolved one disturbing question. Does the court's decision in *Roemer v. Board of Public Works* indicate that sometime in the future the same "sectarian" and "secular" distinctions might be applied to all schools at every level?

At the same time, the *Roemer* decision does not necessarily mean that state programs, such as that presently being contested in the Missouri Supreme Court, will be likewise upheld. Missouri's plan involves state aid to students, rather than directly to the schools themselves. The court has been reticent to strike down prohibitions in state constitutions forbidding aid of any kind for sectarian purposes.

What the high court did virtually guarantee by its badly divided *Roemer* decision is that state and federal courts will be increasingly faced with a variety of such plans much on the order of similar programs designed to help church-related elementary and secondary schools.

In the other major church-state case this term, the justices decided that internal church disputes in hierarchical churches must not be decided by civil courts.

The 7-2 decision marked the end of the long struggle by Bishop Dionisije Milivojevich, head of the American-Canadian Diocese of the Serbian Eastern Orthodox Church. In 1963, after being defrocked on charges of insubordination, Milivojevich took his case to state courts in Illinois. The Illinois Supreme Court eventually ruled in his favor, holding that procedural irregularities in his church trial invalidated his defrockment.

The U.S. Supreme Court disagreed by citing a long line of similar cases dating to 1871 in which the court has declined to intervene in internal church disputes when hierarchical structures are involved.

The decision may or may not have much bearing on similar cases involving congregational-type churches, such as Baptist congregations. The court made a point of noting that its decision applied to churches which have structured into their organizational life judicial processes. Presumably, the high court might well decide otherwise in the case of a minister whose denomination does not have a judicial structure.

The court also dealt with several other church-state issues this term, but none of them involved a major decision.

The justices agreed to schedule for oral argument next term the case of a Kentucky man who contends he was fired from his job for refusing to work on Saturdays because of his religious convictions about the Sabbath.

Paul Cummins, an employee of the Parker Seal Co. of Berea, Ky., argues that his church, the World Wide Church of God, observes the traditional Sabbath and that he was discharged because of repeated absences on Saturdays. The company argues that to make an exception for Cummins is unfair to other workers, while Cummins holds that he is giving up overtime pay on Saturdays to the benefit of his fellow workers.

The controversy centers around a provision in the Civil Right Act of 1964 forbidding discrimination by employers on religious grounds unless they can demonstrate that making "reasonable accommodations" to the religious needs of employees causes "undue hardship."

The high court continued to stand by its landmark decisions of 1962 and 1963 forbidding prescribed prayer and Bible reading in the public schools. It rejected an appeal from a Massachusetts woman who wanted her daughter to conduct public prayer meetings at her school with school officials' blessing.

Rita F. Warren, a Brockton, Mass., woman who has long opposed the court's controversial decisions on prayer and Bible reading, asked school officials to grant her daughter permission to pray orally in the classroom or, as an alternative, to designate a "non-denominational chapel" in the school where students could voluntarily worship.

The court also declined to hear another case which permitted a Roman Catholic priest to continue celebrating mass in a student dormitory at the University of Delaware.

The religious services have been conducted in a common area on the university campus in spite of an order by school officials to discontinue them. The Delaware Supreme Court ruled, however, that the university violated student's free exercise of religion by banning the services and that the practice did not unconstitutionally establish religion.

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25,000 Evacuated;
Baptists Offer Aid

Baptist Press
7/15/76

BASSE TERRE, Guadeloupe (BP)--Fear of an eruption of the volcano, La Soufriere, has caused the Guadeloupe government to evacuate about 25,000 persons here.

Food, blankets and water purification tablets are being provided by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and by Medical Assistance Program (MAP) for the refugees.

According to reports, the volcano has spewed ashes, cinders, rocks and sulfuric fumes. A 1,500-foot crack in the cone of the semi-active volcano also caused concern for the safety of some 70,000 persons in the threatened area.

Southern Baptist missionaries approached government authorities, who had placed evacuees temporarily in school buildings, and offered the supplies for 250 families for at least a week. The action was in conjunction with a program of action planned by the Baptists more than six weeks earlier, when the volcano's potential eruption was made known.

"Working with MAP International, a relief agency in Wheaton, Ill., plans are being made to deliver the tablets, 900 double blankets and 1,600 pound of meat to Guadeloupe," said W. Eugene Grubbs, the board's consultant on disaster relief and laymen overseas.

Larry Dixon, vice president of operations for MAP, is coordinating the shipment.

According to Grubbs, the relief aid should amount to about \$10,000 worth of goods. He has been in daily phone contact with Guadeloupe regarding specific requests for relief supplies.

Following contingency plans made earlier, Baptist church members will open their homes to victims of the disaster. The home of Mr. and Mrs. Wayne L. Frederick's Southern Baptist missionaries, will be used as the "Baptist Center for Emergency Help." They will have names and addresses of Baptists where evacuees can go for a limited time. They also will have food to distribute.

There are four Baptist churches and one Baptist mission on the island, with about 100 members total. Southern Baptist missionaries on the island are the Fredericks and Mr. and Mrs. Alvin L. Cary.

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