

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Supreme Court Denies Six
Church-State Petitions**

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--On the first day of the 1978-79 U. S. Supreme Court term, the justices disposed of 800 cases, denying six petitions involving church-state questions. Only 22 cases were accepted for oral argument and eventual decision.

The church-state cases included rulings against the Church of Scientology and the Unification Church, two of the more controversial sects in the U. S. in recent years. The court also denied a petition by an evangelistic association in Texas; refused the appeal of an Orthodox Jewish woman in Tennessee to have the state provide employment tests on days other than Saturdays; let stand a Wisconsin plan for providing bus transportation to students in parochial schools; and declined to review a Colorado policy of assigning some child custody cases to Roman Catholic welfare agencies.

The Missouri Church of Scientology was contesting a decision by the Missouri Supreme Court that the church is not exempt from property taxes because its properties are not used exclusively for religious worship. The Missouri high court held that the Church of Scientology is only an applied philosophy and falls short of meeting the minimum standard of being devoted to the worship of a supreme being.

In declining to hear the appeal of the Unification Church, the justices agreed with the immigration and naturalization service that a church training program for foreign members in the United States amounts to little more than fund raising activities. The church claimed that the immigration laws were being used unconstitutionally to forbid its right to the free exercise of religion in its missionary training program.

Under the church's plan, some 600 aliens were admitted to the country beginning in 1972 on short-term visas. When these expired, the church sought extensions which were denied by immigration officials who maintained that the trainees actually spent three-quarters of their time selling such items as tea, flowers, candles, peanuts, and candy for the church.

The high court also denied a petition by Lester L. Roloff, president and founder of an evangelistic association in Nueces County, Texas, who held that child care homes he operates should not be subject to state laws regulating such facilities. The justices agreed with three Texas courts, including the state Supreme Court, that the 1976 law requiring licensing and regulation of such facilities does not deny religious freedom. In his legal brief supporting the Texas statute, State Attorney General John Hill said Roloff's position was "patently without merit and approaches the frivolous."

In the Tennessee sabbath case, Glenda Kantor, a practicing Orthodox Jew, was thwarted in her effort to force the state of Tennessee to provide employment tests for state jobs in her town on days other than Saturday. Two lower federal courts ruled earlier that the fact that the tests are available on other days in a city 200 miles from where Kantor lives constitutes "reasonable accommodation" to her religious needs.

In the Colorado child custody case, the court rejected the contention of George E. Schulke that the state violated the First Amendment to the Constitution by contracting a Roman Catholic social agency to recommend the custody of his two children. Although Schulke and his former wife are life-long Lutherans, three Colorado courts ruled that such decisions may be made by the challenged agencies.

New Missions Campaign Gets Bold Thrust Funds

PASCAGOULA, Miss. (BP)--Calvary Baptist Church, Pascagoula, pledged \$101,512 for Bold Mission Thrust at one Sunday evening service through a Missions's Challenge Campaign, a new effort designed by the Mississippi Baptist Stewardship staff.

Calvary is the first church in the Southern Baptist Convention to use this campaign procedure to raise money for home and foreign mission projects related to the Southern Baptist Bold Mission Thrust goal to present the gospel to every person in the world by the year 2000. The money will be divided evenly between the SBC Home and Foreign Mission Boards.

The fund-raising campaign provides for an extensive emphasis on missions education culminating in trained vicitors going into every member's home, seeking a weekly commitment to the new church budget and further weekly commitment to Bold Mission Thrust. The budget commitment is for one year and the mission commitment is for three years.

"Any church in the nation can use this program successfully if we can here on the Mississippi Coast," said Calvary pastor Byron Mathis. The coast area has a very mobile population making it difficult for churches there to develop strong leaders who are permanent residents of the community.

In the last three years, Calvary Baptist Church has given a total of \$7,363.85 to home and foreign missions through the special annual offerings. In the next three years they will contribute over \$100,000.

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ERA Extension Passes;
Battle Back in States

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WASHINGTON (BP)--The Senate, following similar action by the House of Representatives, has extended the deadline for ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment by 39 months, to June 1982.

Both Houses rejected earlier attempts to allow states which have already ratified the ERA to rescind their action. Three states still must ratify the amendment before it becomes law.

The extension margin was 60-36 in the Senate, following passage Aug. 15 in the House 233-189.

Moments before the vote in the Senate, Phyllis Schlafly, national chairman of Stop ERA, predicted that the extension would have no legal effect. She said that suits would be filed by states which have ratified the amendment, those which have not ratified, and those which have ratified but rescinded that action. "All of these states are aggrieved," Schlafly said.

Sen. Donald W. Riegle Jr., (D.-Mich.) pointed out that there are 800 federal laws alone which discriminate against women. In addition, he said, there are "tens of thousands" of such laws in the states. He also noted that attempts to achieve equality for women through the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause have failed.

Sen. Spark Matsunaga (D.-Hawaii) cited a Supreme Court case of this year which ruled that the Fourteenth Amendment does not apply to gender based discrimination.

The Southern Baptist Convention opposed extension of the deadline of the ERA at its annual meeting in Atlanta in June.

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Beirut Couple Temporarily
Replaces Leeper in Turkey

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)--A Southern Baptist missionary family, leaving behind escalated fighting in Beirut, has gone to Turkey to replace James F. Leeper.

R. Edward Nicholas will replace Leeper, a missionary who was forced to leave Turkey after resident permit difficulties forced a brief imprisonment, as interim pastor of an English-language congregation in Ankara. The Nicholas family had to seek shelter in their basement during recent fighting in Beirut.

J. D. Hughey, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's area secretary for Europe, the Middle East and South Asia, said although Nicholas was only planning a short stay, the assignment might be extended if fighting in Beirut continues.

Mrs. Leeper and their children are still in Ankara. Leeper first went to Germany but returned to the United States Oct. 4 because of his mother's death.

Some 21 other missionary personnel, including one volunteer and 13 missionary children, remain in Beirut.

Southern Baptists have mission work in both Muslim and Christian sectors of the city. Some churches and missionary residences are located in the villages where fighting began Oct. 5. As of the most recent contact with the board, all missionary personnel were safe and no Baptists had lost their lives.

Great property damage continues throughout the Christian sector according to Nicholas, who reported the destruction there now probably equals that of the full-scale civil war of two years ago.

The most recent fighting is between the Syrian peace-keeping force and the Christian rightist militia. Israeli military intervention in the form of shelling from gunboats became a factor in the fighting Oct. 5.

Lebanon has a much larger Christian population than any other Arab nation. This group is in part descendants of second and third century Christians and claims to predate the Muslim religion's entrance into the Arab world. In all other Arab nations, Muslims far outnumber Christians.

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Archivist Group
Recognizes May

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10/6/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Lynn E. May Jr., executive director of the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, received a share of the Sister M. Claude Lane Award from the Society of American Archivists during its annual meeting in Nashville.

The award is for the outstanding contribution in religious archives during the last year. William B. Miller, curator of the archives of the United Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., which are housed in Philadelphia, also was voted half of the small cash award by the 2,000 member organization.

May, who has served as chairman of the religious archives section for the society, has been on the Historical Commission staff since 1956 and its director since 1971.

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New Sunday School
Starts Total 1,174

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10/6/78

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A total of 1,174 new Southern Baptist Sunday Schools were started during the year ending Sept. 30, more than doubling the 567 begun last year.

The two-year total of 1,741 new Sunday Schools means that 1,219 must be started by Sept. 30, 1979, to reach the three-year goal of 3,000 set by the Sunday School Board Sunday School growth section.

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Texas led all state conventions with 152 new starts. The next highest were Ohio, 84; Northwest, 71; California, 65; Illinois, 64; Michigan, 63; and Florida, 61.

Three of the top seven--Ohio, Illinois and Michigan--are part of the North Central Thrust, a major growth project of six state conventions and fellowships. The other three are Indiana, Iowa Fellowship and Minnesota-Wisconsin Fellowship. Together, the North Central participants started a total of 290 new Sunday Schools last year.

"The doubling of our work by 1983 is a state convention goal," said Joe Watson, director of Sunday School work in Michigan. The state convention staff used an ACTION enrollment campaign for the third straight year to start a new Sunday School, this time in Marshall, Mich.

ACTION has been a primary tool for new starts in Michigan, Watson said. Student summer missionaries and seminary student teams also were instrumental. The convention also utilized five contract workers, enlisted by the state convention, with expenses and honorariums paid by the Sunday School Board.

In Ohio, Sunday School Director Mike Collins worked with missions director Arthur Walker and associational missions committees to select new work areas. Then associations aimed toward a "New Start Sunday" and used ACTION, contract workers and summer missionaries to start a new Sunday School.

For example, Lane Avenue Baptist Church, Columbus, recently used ACTION to start a new Sunday School, in Dublin, Ohio. The first Sunday, 78 persons were present.

Beginning with an ongoing program like a backyard Bible club or mission Vacation Bible School has been a key to new starts in the Northwest Convention, said Bob Flegal, convention Sunday School director.

"I hope to make mission VBS a priority," Flegal said. "I am telling church leaders if they have to choose between conducting their own Bible school and a mission VBS, choose the latter."

The single largest growth project in the Northwest last year was Miracle 25 in Portland where 18 new starts were made in one day.

Also, Flegal reported a heightened motivation by churches to begin new Sunday Schools and missions. "More of our churches on their own are going out and starting new work," he said.

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Currin Elected Director
For New England Baptists

Baptist Press
10/6/78

NORTHBOROUGH, Mass. (BP)--Jim Currin, Indiana pastor and former state Sunday School and missions director, has been elected executive director of the Baptist General Association of New England, effective Dec. 1.

Currin, 50, has been pastor of the Northside Baptist Church in Indianapolis for nine years and chairman of evangelism for the local association.

He held pastorates in Kentucky and served on the executive boards of both Kentucky and Indiana.

A native of McKenzie, Tenn., Currin graduated from Bethel College there with a bachelors degree in education. He attended The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and graduated from the Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis with masters degrees in sacred theology and ministry.

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