



BAPTIST PRESS

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79-20

O'Hair Motto Suit Fails
In U. S. Court of Appeals

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)--Atheist Madalyn Murray O'Hair's suit seeking the removal of the phrase "In God We Trust" from U. S. coins and currency was thrown out by a federal court of appeals in New Orleans.

The Austin, Texas, based atheist leader, who has waged a long battle in the courts to have the trappings of religion removed from public life, was defeated earlier in her present suit when a Texas federal district court ruled that the challenged motto does not violate the "no establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution.

The First Amendment states in part that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

According to a spokesperson at the New Orleans court, Mrs. O'Hair will appeal the lower court rulings to the U. S. Supreme Court.

Her suit was originally filed in 1977 with the U. S. District Court for the Western District of Texas. In a separate action, she unsuccessfully sought to have the same court halt the minting of the new Susan B. Anthony silver dollar until a ruling on her main complaint was issued. Her injunction motion was dismissed.

The Texas court issued its main ruling in the case April 17, declaring that Mrs. O'Hair failed to prove a "cause of action" and that the federal law requiring that the motto be printed on coins and currency does not violate the Constitution.

The motto "In God We Trust" has been used on U. S. coins and currency only since 1955 when President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed into law a bill passed by Congress requiring the motto's use. The official U. S. motto or slogan is "e pluribus unum" (out of many, one).

Several years ago, Mrs. O'Hair was similarly unsuccessful in a federal suit against the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) over the issue of Bible reading aboard American space ships. She was protesting the 1968 Christmas Eve reading of the Christmas story by astronauts aboard Apollo 8 as it orbited the moon. She claimed then that the government was establishing and financing religious exercises.

Mrs. O'Hair, who heads the American Atheist Center in Austin, is often incorrectly credited with single-handedly having prayer and Bible reading removed from public school classrooms in a pair of highly misunderstood Supreme Court decisions in 1962 and 1963.

Her case was actually one of three separate cases decided by the high court in the two rulings. Then Madalyn Murray and living in Baltimore, Md., she brought the case challenging a requirement that the Lord's Prayer be recited or that a chapter of the Bible be read in the city's classrooms.

The Supreme Court, in an 8-1 decision, sided with her and with a Pennsylvania man who in a companion suit challenged his state's requirement that the Bible be read publicly before the beginning of school each day.

The year before, the justices had likewise declared unconstitutional a prayer composed by the New York State Board of Regents which was required to be read each day in every public school in the state.

In neither case did the high court ban prayer and Bible reading by individual pupils. On the contrary, several of the justices took pains to explain that their decisions were not intended to be anti-religious or to discourage the study of the Bible as academic material. What they did find unconstitutional were state-mandated devotional exercises.

Both the Southern Baptist Convention and the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs went on record at the time in support of the Supreme Court decisions. The Washington organization, supported by Southern Baptists and seven other U.S. Baptist bodies, has since worked against repeated efforts to require devotional exercises in the public schools.

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Dodson Named Annuity
Board Trustee Chairman

Baptist Press
2/8/79

DALLAS (BP)--D. William Dodson Jr., pastor of the First Baptist Church, Martin, Tenn., became the first non-Texan to be named chairman of the Southern Baptist Annuity Board's trustees when elected to succeed John S. Rasco of Odessa, Texas.

The Annuity Board is the Southern Baptist agency which administers retirement and insurance programs for ministers and church and agency employees. Its assets total almost \$580 million.

-30-

R-TV Commission Drops
Small Stations for Larger

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2/8/79

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The number of radio and television stations which carry Southern Baptist programs is at an all-time high, according to Claude Cox, marketing director for the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

"Our station count is now at 3,275 as a result of an increased marketing push," said Cox. "We're pinpointing our marketing and it's really made a difference. We've dropped almost 300 smaller stations but have added more than 600 larger commercial outlets since September."

The stations dropped were mostly college and high school operations. "In most cases when we eliminated one, there was another station in that area which carried our programs," said Cox. "We've done this in order to concentrate on the stronger stations which reach more people."

Some of the larger radio stations which carry Baptist programs now include WZGC-FM in Atlanta, WQUE-FM in New Orleans, WFLA-FM in Tampa-St. Petersburg, WBAP-AM in Fort Worth, WLS-AM in Chicago and WSM-FM in Nashville.

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Volunteer Missions Conference
Planned To Kick Off Decade

Baptist Press
2/8/79

ATLANTA (BP)--In a tribute to the volunteer, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board announced it will sponsor Missions USA 80s, a conference for volunteers, April 24-27, 1980, at the Atlanta Civic Center Auditorium.

The board's directors in their February meeting also appointed two missionaries and nine missionary associates and approved 13 pastors to receive financial aid.

"The approaching 80s will be the decade of the volunteer," said William G. Tanner, executive director-treasurer of the SBC Home Mission Board. "The 70s have climaxed with an explosive emphasis on volunteers and the 1980s should reap the harvest of the largest volunteer force in history."

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Last year volunteers in home missions numbered more than 21,600. The volunteers, both old and young, served for a week to a year in capacities ranging from pastor to carpenter, from directing music to teaching Bible or leading Vacation Bible Schools, from plumbing to practicing law.

Nearly 100 served as home missions Mission Service Corps volunteers in the SBC plan to place 5,000 volunteers for one and two year terms alongside missionaries at home and abroad by the year 2000.

Plans for the volunteer conference include preliminary meetings for groups with responsibility to enlist and supervise volunteers in home missions. The meeting officially begins on Thursday night and closes on Sunday, enabling laypersons to use their weekend to attend.

"It is more than fitting that a national conference give recognition to this army of volunteers," Tanner said. "Without them, missions in the United States in the 80s will limp or crawl. With them, missions hold the promise of accomplishing the objectives of Bold Mission Thrust: evangelizing and congregationalizing our nation."

Appointed missionaries were Fred and Mollie Anderton of Albertville, Ala. They will serve as catalytic language missionaries in the Boston area for the Baptist General Association of New England.

The Andertons were foreign missionaries in Italy from 1964 until 1978. He was pastor of churches in Indiana, Kentucky and Alabama, is a graduate of Samford University and holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mrs. Anderton is a graduate of Judson College.

Appointed missionary associates were: Arthur and Charlene Bingham of Dayton, Ohio; Terry and Ginger McIlvain of Wichita, Kan., Tom and Betty Masaki of Honolulu, Hawaii; Jim and Irene Murphy of Warner Robins, Ga.; and Gwen Williams of Louisiana.

Bingham, a native of Kentucky, will be pastor/director of the German Village Baptist Church in Dayton. He was pastor of Gethsemane Baptist Church in Dayton prior to appointment.

McIlvain will be an evangelism intern for the Kansas-Nebraska Baptist Convention. He's a native of Enid, Okla., and a graduate of Wichita State University. Ginger Blackburn McIlvain, a native of San Antonio, Texas, plans to work in real estate.

Masaki, to be pastoral missionary for the Cloba association in Hawaii, is a Hawaii native and graduate of Baylor University. He holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. From 1956 to 1977 he and his wife, Betty, were foreign missionaries in Kyoto, Japan. Since returning to Hawaii, he has been administrator of voter education in the office of the lieutenant governor.

Murphy, to be director of Christian social ministries in Anderson, S.C., is a native of Greenwood, S.C., and former executive for the Boy Scouts of America in Macon, Ga. He holds the master of sociology degree from the University of Tennessee. He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College, as is his wife, Irene Dow Murphy.

Miss Williams, who will continue to work as supervisor of the women's unit at the Baptist Rescue Mission in New Orleans, is a graduate of the University of Southwestern Louisiana and holds a master of church music and special education degree from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. She was a US-2 missionary for the Home Mission Board in Detroit, Mich., and has taught in both high school and seminary.

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Brazil Gets No Black Eye
From Cunningham's Shiner

Baptist Press
2/8/79

DALLAS (BP)--Getting mugged in Sao Paulo turned out to be one of the greatest things that's happened to Texas Baptist Convention President Milton Cunningham.

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It's not that Cunningham would like to repeat the experience, but he's overwhelmed at how God is using it in mission to Brazil.

Cunningham, pastor of Westbury Baptist Church, Houston, was in for the annual Brazilian Baptist Convention when he became temporarily separated from fellow Texan Fred Swank by the dense crowds in the city of 11.5 million people.

Suddenly, a young would-be robber slugged Cunningham above the eye, dazing him and inflicting a wound that took five stitches to close. Three accomplices hit the former missionary in the chest and back as they searched for his money.

"The whole thing took about 10 seconds," said Cunningham. "I yelled to Fred, but by the time he could come to my aid, they had melted into the crowd."

Swank helped Cunningham back to the hotel where he received medical aid and went on to speak to 2,500 Brazilian Baptists three hours later.

Along with pledging Texas Baptists' support to help Brazil Baptists reach their goal of 6,000 churches and 1 million members by 1983, Cunningham explained his swollen face. "I sure am glad to see you, because the people I met a while ago weren't typical of Brazil," he told the shocked crowd.

Co-incidentally, the Brazilian convention president, Rubens Lopez of Sao Paulo, was mugged and robbed in New York City two years ago.

After Cunningham spoke, a Brazilian banker who is a deacon in First Baptist, Sao Paulo, was among the many who expressed their regrets. "People in Brazil aren't like this," the banker apologized. "I want to replace any money that was stolen."

Cunningham explained he hadn't been carrying any money, but the incident continued to create concern and draw new friends wherever the Texans went in Brazil.

They preached in the churches, visited Baptist institutions and met with Brazilian Baptist leaders and 100 Southern Baptist missionaries from all three of the country's mission fields.

"I've never been so excited with the opportunities in my life as we found there," said Cunningham. "The Baptist pastors and lay people we met showed real vision and concern about reaching their communities for Christ. It's clear they aren't asking for money but for people to come from America and help them make Christ known to their huge nation."

When Cunningham told of his experiences at his home church--black eye and all--about 40 people volunteered to pay their own expenses and serve in mission to Brazil. Some 400 others said, "we can't go, but we'll help pay someone else's expenses."

"People's response in both countries has been so overwhelming," said Cunningham, "that my wife told me jokingly, 'Why didn't you turn the other cheek?'"

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CORRECTIONS: In (BP) story mailed Feb. 5 entitled "Alaska Executive Director Resigns," please change the first sentence of graph seven to read: Office responsibilities will terminate Feb. 16, one day after hosting the annual meetings of the Southern Baptist Press Association and the association of state executive secretaries. (This change adds the meeting of the executive secretaries.)

In the same mailing, the story entitled "BSU Leader Turns Handicap Into Effective 'Bionic Arm'" was adapted from the January 1979 World Mission Journal and not 1978.

Thanks, Baptist Press Staff