

(BP)**BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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**Court Asked to Protect
Charitable Solicitation**

WASHINGTON (BP)--Three major religious groups have joined a host of secular nonprofit organizations in asking the U.S. Supreme Court to uphold two lower court decisions invalidating an Illinois town's efforts to regulate charitable solicitation.

The potentially far-reaching case, Village of Schaumburg v. Citizens For A Better Environment, will be heard by the high court sometime this fall.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, the national Council of Churches and the Lutheran Council in the U.S.A. have joined in a legal brief arguing that religious organizations, because of "special protections" guaranteed under the First Amendment, are particularly vulnerable to local ordinances restricting charitable solicitation. The three groups represent a combined membership of more than 72 million persons.

Schaumburg, Ill., a suburb of Chicago, requires all organizations canvassing and soliciting donations door-to-door to prove annually that at least 75 percent of all funds collected are spent directly on charities. To ascertain compliance, the ordinance also requires a certified audit of the last full year of each organization's financial statement.

Schaumburg's 75 percent rule defines "charitable purpose" to exclude all amounts paid to solicitors, salaries, attorneys' fees, advertising costs, and other administrative costs.

Citizens For A Better Environment, a nonprofit Illinois corporation which enjoys tax exemption and tax deductibility status with the Internal Revenue Service, declined to comply with the Schaumburg ordinance's requirement, choosing instead to challenge the law in court.

Two lower federal courts have ruled already for the environmental group, declaring that the ordinance violates First Amendment's free speech rights.

Schaumburg town officials brought the case to the nation's high court, arguing that more than 60 percent of funds raised by Citizens For A Better Environment are used "for the benefit of employees and not for any charitable purposes."

Attorneys for the town also argued in a written brief that "there is no absolute right under the federal Constitution to enter on the private premises of another and knock on his door for any purpose."

The traditional police power granted municipalities "permits the type of reasonable regulation" called for by the disputed ordinance, the argument continued. The absence of such ordinances "opens the door to unrestricted solicitation in the name of charity by organizations which may, in fact, be practicing fraud or deceit on the unwitting public."

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Citizens For A Better Environment, on the other hand, argued in its written brief that the Supreme Court has consistently recognized door-to-door canvassing and solicitation of funds as activity protected by the First Amendment's free speech provision, "particularly in light of its importance as a source of support for new, small and unpopular causes."

The brief for the three religious groups argued that the Schaumburg ordinance fails to state clearly whether religious organizations are subject to its regulation and is therefore "unconstitutionally vague."

Two officials have insisted that the ordinance's definition of "charitable organization" was not intended to cover religious groups. But because the ordinance lacks regulations controlling local officials' discretion in determining which groups are covered, the religious groups argued that local authorities may choose to hold some religious groups subject to regulation while exempting others. Such vagueness in the law "invites favoritism of one religious group over another," attorneys for the religious groups maintained.

Beyond the vagueness issue, however, the brief argued that ordinances such as Schaumburg's would deny free exercise of religion "by restricting the amounts that religious groups may spend on solicitation and by imposing a cumulative burden of conflicting and confusing regulations" across the nation. The religious groups held that such ordinances "would impermissibly entangle the state in the affairs of the church."

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Canal Treaty Will Permit
Churches to Buy Property

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RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The new Panama Canal treaties and the Oct. 1 changeover of all Canal Zone property to the Republic are expected to bring only improvement in Southern Baptist mission work there.

"We feel very good about the arrangements," said Charles W. Bryan, Foreign Mission Board secretary for Middle America and the Caribbean.

Bryan sees the land issue as a positive step for Baptists. "Before the new treaties, we were only able to lease the land where our mission offices, parsonages and other Baptist buildings are located and built. Now the land we leased will be turned over to Panama and we can buy that land."

He explained that those who have built on the leased land have the first right to purchase the land. Bryan believes the land will be sold at "fair market price."

"We feel the churches will be better off than before, because now they buy and own their property," he said. "And we feel the government is acting fairly and is being very understanding in the matter."

For more than a year, missionaries and pastors have been in contact with Panamanian and Zone officials, talking about the property exchange. "It's been handled very carefully," said Bryan. "And we've not detected any heavy-handedness in this matter."

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Reed Joins Seminary Extension
As Associate for Home Study

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--James Everette Reed, a doctoral candidate at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, will become associate director for home study education for the Southern Baptist Seminary Extension Department, Dec. 1.

Seminary Extension's administrative committee, made up of the presidents of the six Southern Baptist theological seminaries, elected Reed unanimously. He will join two other associates on the department staff, directed by Raymond M. Rigdon.

As head of Seminary Extension's Home Study Institute, Reed will work with some 2,000 individuals who have enrolled for correspondence study of one or more of the theologically oriented courses offered by the department. He succeeds Robert L. Lamb, who accepted a faculty position at Gardner-Webb College in North Carolina in August.

Reed, 35, has completed all residence requirements for the doctor of education degree at New Orleans Seminary, from which he already holds the master of divinity degree. He expects to receive his doctorate next spring. A native of Mathiston, Miss., he also is a graduate of Clarke College in Newton, Miss., and Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

Reed has also served as pastor of churches in Mississippi and Louisiana and taught in Louisiana and Alabama. During recent years, in addition to his graduate work at the seminary, Reed has served as assistant pastor of the Gentilly Baptist Church in New Orleans, a teaching fellow at the seminary, and manager of the campus store.

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Baptist Leader Cautious
About New Ed Department

By H. Rex Hammock

Baptist Press
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NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--While expressing fear of a "new surge of restrictive regulations," a Southern Baptist education official expressed "cautious optimism" about the creation of a new cabinet-level Department of Education.

Arthur L. Walker, Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Education Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, said that many SBC educators have opposed the legislation creating the new department. He cited "a real fear" among them "that more centralized power in the area of education will result in the continued build-up of regulations interfering with church-related schools."

The Education Commission is the SBC's liaison with 72 colleges, schools and seminaries with a total enrollment of 165,272 students.

The bill, now at the White House for President Carter's signature, gained final congressional approval after compromises were made on different House and Senate versions of the bill in a conference committee.

Opponents of the bill in the House of Representatives had earlier succeeded in attaching several controversial amendments to the bill. The amendments called for a ban on busing of students to desegregate schools, permission of so-called voluntary prayers in public schools and a ban on racial and sexual quotas for college admission.

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The House-Senate conference committee compromise bill dropped the controversial amendments.

Approval of the new department, which will bring together most federal education-related agencies, was hailed by President Carter as "a significant milestone in my effort to make the federal government more efficient."

The new department will have an initial budget of about \$14.1 billion and will have between 17,000 and 18,000 employees.

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Relationships Called Key
To Drug Abuse Prevention

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MADISON, Wis. (BP)--The most important factor in the abuse of alcohol and other drugs among young people is the relationship between teenagers and their parents, said John A. Wood of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission.

Churches must focus on that area if they want to help prevent drug-related problems, declared Wood, who spoke at a human relations conference sponsored by the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission for Southern Baptists in Wisconsin.

Wood, who coordinates the national Christian Life Commission's work in the area of alcohol and drug abuse, believes "that the single most influential factor of adolescent behavior is the young person's perception of being loved."

Research reveals, he said, that "those youths who see their parents as loving and providing freedom within guidelines are not prone to severe problems."

Wood urged churches to utilize creative ways to help families cope with parent/child problems. Church programs, he said, should "instill in young people a sense of worth and self-esteem that flows from a deep awareness of God's grace and unconditional acceptance of them as his dearly loved children. They must continually be reminded that 'in Christ they are somebody.'"

Many times, Wood said, teenage alcohol and drug use is triggered by relationship difficulties with their parents. "Since young people cannot alter the relationship between themselves and their parents, they seek to alter their perception of this relationship, often by indulging in drugs," he explained. "When young people do not feel good about themselves, they often will resort to antisocial behavior in order to gain acceptance from a group of peers.

Parents can help, according to Wood, by "keeping the lines of communication open," with their children, especially when confronted with a problem such as drug abuse. Most importantly, he added, parents should try to build a positive self-image in their children.

"Anxious parents, aware of the many bad moral influences upon their children today, often make a studied effort in the home to teach Christian values and behavior," Wood explained. "Unfortunately, many parents unconsciously go about this process in a negative way. If they continually criticize or put down their young people, it will likely foster a negative self-image that makes them more vulnerable to the use of alcohol and drugs."

On the other hand, Wood added, "the greatest armor parents can provide their children is that of a good self-esteem."

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Special Sunday School
Gives Residents Love

CANTON, Miss. (BP)--Each Sunday afternoon, two buses pull up to First Baptist Church in Canton carrying the entire congregation.

It's not the regular membership; most of them went home at noon. Instead, this congregation consists of about 105 adults who are residents of the Canton Nursing Center.

Into the church fellowship hall they bounce, giving the volunteers who operate the program affectionate kisses, hugs and infectious smiles.

The program is a weekly Special Sunday School for the residents of the nursing center. It includes crafts, a Bible study and a worship service, led by Louis Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church.

"Every level of retardation is represented in this group," said Lorraine Middleton, a voice and piano teacher who directs the program which has been going on for three years.

She told the Mississippi Baptist Record that the residents look forward to the program all week. "They start putting out their clothes on Wednesday," she said.

Said one resident, "I love coming here so much because they love me here."

She added that some of the residents have passed up trips to the circus, the zoo, and other outings so they wouldn't miss the services.

The Bible study, according to Mrs. Middleton, is kept to the basics. "We're able to give short memory verses," she said.

On Sunday, the top class went through the first five of the Ten Commandments. Some of the divided classes use 4th-6th grade material, the others use material for ages four to six.

"You have to choose your words very carefully," she said, "they take things so literally."

Smith leads the group in the same children's sermon he teaches to the children in the regular services. "We have to have Jesus in our hearts to be happy," he tells them.

Smith says the program only costs the church about \$300-\$400 each year. First United Methodist Church in Canton offers one bus and driver, and First Baptist Church, Canton, sends the other.

"We have difficulty getting leadership for this group," admitted Smith, who added that anyone who got to know the people would lose their inhibitions quickly.

Said Mrs. Middleton, "If you're going to look for sincerity, the love, they're giving back six times more than we give."