

(BP)**- - BAPTIST PRESS**

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICESBC Executive Committee
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2365
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Craig Bird, Feature Editor**BUREAUS**ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

June 3, 1983

83-86

**Mysterious Visitor Leaves
Church \$1,750 Gift**

By Herb Hollinger

RENTON, Wash. (BP)--She wore white shoes, white stockings, white dress and had shoulder length blond hair. She was also tall, slim and young. Was she an angel?

"To me, she was an angel--or whatever," Vasco Midkiff insists. Whether the young lady was an angel or not, she was certainly sent by God, she added. And she brought a cashier's check for \$1,750!

On Mother's Day Sunday at Coal Creek Baptist Church, Renton, Wash., only seven people showed up for Sunday School. They gathered in one class with discouragement written all over their faces. Without a pastor and only one deacon left, thoughts of quitting were surely appropriate for the small congregation.

"I just couldn't handle it," Vasco, one of the seven, said. "I left the class and went downstairs to finish running the bulletins. The machine wouldn't run and I could have kicked it. I wanted to cry--just cry. Then Delores Burdick answered a knock at the door and hurriedly brought me what looked like a folded slip of paper. I looked up to see this young lady in the door."

Vasco opened the paper and found a cashier's check for \$1,750 made out to the church. "She just said it was for our general budget, was anonymous and to put it in the offering plate," Burdick excitedly told Vasco.

They looked up and she was gone, they looked everywhere but she just vanished, Vasco said.

The Coal Creek building is in a pasture-type setting not near any other buildings. It had been raining, the grass was wet, it was muddy. The class looked unsuccessfully for a sign as to where she disappeared.

But the surprises weren't over.

"Then people began arriving for church. Would you believe, 59 people, more visitors than members." Vasco said, a really "excellent" Sunday would have been 25 in worship with 20 in Sunday school and "we have some really good prospects as a result of that service," she explained.

"The young lady, the check, the fantastic group for church--all of it, well, it just has to be from God," Vasco said. Her husband, chairman of the deacons at Coal Creek, had to be in Tennessee for a couple of months and Vasco was trying to fill in for him.

The check, drawn on a local bank, was good but no one could tell who had purchased it. No one had ever seen the young lady before, no one could explain why she had come, why she did not stay or identify herself. Maybe it is not important.

But what happened to Coal Creek Baptist Church on that Mother's Day Sunday morning is important. And nobody is questioning that God brought a new ray of hope and encouragement to this small congregation.

SBC Missionaries Enter
100th Country: St. Lucia

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--The reassignment of Jonathan and La Homa Singleton from one Windward Island to another--St. Lucia--places Southern Baptist missionaries in 100 overseas countries.

The Singletons moved south just a little more than 100 miles from the island of Dominica in order to begin the new work. They had been stationed in Dominica since missionary appointment in 1979.

The Caribbean nation of St. Lucia is a former British colony which has enjoyed full independence since 1979. Baptist work has been limited primarily to the capital, Castries, and surrounding area. The predominant religion of the island's 140,000 people is Roman Catholic.

The beginning of work on St. Lucia coincides with the transfer June 1 of missionaries to Angola, Swaziland and Netherlands Antilles.

The achievement of the 100-country milestone this year puts the Foreign Mission Board well ahead of the pace it must maintain to reach its Bold Mission Thrust intention of having missionaries in 125 countries by the year 2000.

The board needs to average a net gain of 1.5 countries a year between now and the end of the century to reach 125.

Earlier the board approved the transfer of Curtis and Betty Dixon from Portugal to Angola, the transfer of Roy and Patsy Davidson from Botswana to Swaziland, transfer of Leo and Margaret Waldrop from Surinam to Netherlands Antilles was approved earlier.

-30-

Intercessory Prayer Line
Continued Through End Of Year

By Charlene Shucker

Baptist Press
6/3/83

ATLANTA (BP)--The "Intercessory Prayer Line" at the Home Mission Board will continue for the balance of the year.

"I would like to explore the possibility of continuing the phone line. I feel it has a great deal of value not only for the HMB and for missions in America but I think it has great value for us in hearing from the people across our country," William G. Tanner, HMB president, said.

From March 1 through May 22, the prayerline has received 5,411 calls for prayer requests. Approximately 9,300 people have called in to accept prayer requests.

Jerry Graham, HMB assistant director of church extension, said, "Everyone has benefited from the prayer line. It has provided mission education for both the intercessors and telephone operators, has given immediate and direct involvement with home mission personnel and their needs, has provided good 'P.R.' for the HMB, has not infringed on any HMB program or other agency assignment and has unleashed the power of prayer in the lives of countless people."

Coordinator Gene Dorsey will continue to oversee the daily operations of the prayer line and orientation of volunteers through August 30. Dorsey and Graham are working constantly to get more volunteers. "We are really indebted to several groups including the Atlanta division of the Woman's Missionary Union of Georgia for helping us organize the volunteers. One person a day is needed from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.," Graham said.

Dorsey has kept a record of the prayer victories attributed to the prayer line. The Adirondack Baptist Church in Glen Falls, N.Y., was given six acres of land on which to build; a church desperately in need of a van was informed where they could get one; a Texas man calling in for a prayer request learned of a church needing help constructing a building--a few days later he volunteered his crew after another project fell through.

-30-

IRS Rejects BJCPA Request
On Public Disclosure Rule

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Internal Revenue Service has denied a Baptist agency's request to hold public hearings before issuing a new regulation requiring public disclosure of gifts and contributions to all non-profit organizations except churches and those church-related organizations considered by IRS to be vital to the religious mission of a church.

An IRS spokesman said the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs made the only request for hearings on the proposed regulation and that the new rule would take effect later this year without hearings.

Baptist Joint Committee General Counsel John W. Baker said his agency sought to oppose the new regulation because concerns the IRS definition of which church-affiliated organizations qualify as "integrated auxiliaries" of a church might exclude agencies and institutions considered by Baptists and other denominations as vital to their religious mission.

"Regulations already in force," Baker said, "take away from churches the power of determining which of their agencies and affiliated organizations are integral to their religious mission and vest that determination in the IRS. This is an assumption of a religious role by the secular state--a role forbidden by the Constitution."

Under present regulations, church-affiliated organizations failing to meet the IRS integrated auxiliary test are required to file financial disclosure forms with the nation's tax collecting agency. The new regulation would make such statements public.

In written comments requesting public hearings, the Baptist Joint Committee asked IRS to retreat from its current definition of integrated auxiliaries and in the absence of such action, exempt all church-related organizations from coverage under the new public disclosure requirement.

-30-

Urban Evangelism Congress
To Draw World Baptists

Baptist Press
6/3/83

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)--Baptist leaders from more than 40 countries are expected for the World Baptist Congress on Urban Evangelism June 26-July 3 in Rio de Janeiro.

The congress, sponsored by the Brazilian Baptist Convention, will present forums, workshops and addresses on proven strategies for reaching cities with the gospel.

"We have gathered information from all over the world, especially the Third World, on the most effective ways to reach urban man," said Perry Ellis, a Southern Baptist missionary who is the congress coordinator and also is urban evangelism director for Brazilian Baptists. "We are particularly interested in having key young people who will share in the formulation of strategy plans for the future."

Ellis hopes the congress sessions--geared for pastors, evangelists, denominational leaders and educators--will motivate international partnership and long-range planning for urban evangelization, rather than a series of "one-week revivals."

Workshop and forum topics will include personal evangelism methods, evangelism and use of the media, church planting methods and home Bible studies, evangelization through social ministries, reaching students and other target groups, the church in the Third World and major city evangelization.

Session leaders and speakers include Baptist leaders from Brazil, Argentina, Nigeria, the Philippines, Sweden, Mexico, Jamaica, South Korea and the United States.

-more-

Among the scheduled American participants are Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission leader James H. Smith; Southern Baptist Home Mission Board evangelism specialist Howard Ramsey; Foreign Mission Board staffers Ervin Hastey, Thurmon Bryant and Alan Compton; evangelist Rudy Hernandez; John Bisagno, pastor of First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, and Jack Stanton, director of Southwest Baptist University's Institute of Evangelism in Bolivar, Mo.

The world congress will also feature a special session for Baptist women, titled "Baptist Women Meeting Urban Social Needs." Congress planners called for a day of prayer June 12 for the congress and for world evangelization.

-30-

Racetrack's 'Forgotten People'
Jesse Hood's Congregation

Baptist Press
6/3/83

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Cool summer dresses in bright colors and the traditional panoply of hats adorned the Derby Day crowd of 134,444. Strains of "My Old Kentucky Home" cushioned the cheers as the thoroughbreds paraded by---minutes before the eighth and most important race of the day.

A man in a bright-blue jacket with "Kentucky Racetrack Chaplain" embroidered on the back smiled at the fervored hoopla surging around him. "This is, by far, the most exciting day of the year for Churchill Downs," explained Jesse Hood. "I'm not able to do much work today, but I'm available if needed."

Hood serves as official chaplain at the Churchill Downs--home of the world-famous Kentucky Derby. But his work is not with the well-dressed "front side" crowds that have traveled from all corners of the world. He shares the daily grind with the "backsiders"--the grooms, "hot walkers," trainers--those who care for the horses, but rarely share in the glory.

"They are the forgotten people. Not only has society forgotten them, but religion tends to shove them aside, also," Hood declared. "Many times I have heard Baptists say, 'Having a chaplain at the racetrack supports gambling.' I don't support gambling; I support people."

Huey Perry, director of business-industrial chaplaincy at the Home Mission Board agrees. "If I know anything about the New Testament, Christ was in some of the most undesirable places. We, as Southern Baptists, would be negligent if we didn't take the opportunity and responsibility of ministering to these people."

Hood is endorsed by the Home Mission Board but is actually employed by Racetrack Chaplaincy of America. "RTCA usually gets their money from the race track we serve and the Horseman's Benevolence and Protection Association," Hood explains, "but they have cash-flow problems and we are always wondering if we're going to survive."

But recently the Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union gave Hood's work a financial "shot in the arm" by donating \$47,450. "The gift itself was a real transfusion to our work," says Hood. "It gave health, hope, and energy at a time when we needed to hear 'Hey, you're OK, we believe in what you are doing.'"

"We received Jesse's letter requesting we underwrite one of the many needs he listed," said Kathryn Akridge, Kentucky's WMU director of missions. "When we prayed we realized this was a ministry that needed foundation money desperately and we felt we should do it all."

"Doing it all" doubled Hood's ministry. Another chaplain was added, plus an automobile and a travel trailer for living quarters. The funding allows for seminary student assistants and video-cassette equipment to provide equine and basic education programs, Bible studies and educational films. "We are now even able to minister to Red Mile Harness Track and Louisville Downs," Hood adds. Hood is also investigating buying a house across from Churchill Downs for a child-care center for horse people which would provide counseling year round "to help people recognize their self-worth."

-more-

Hood walked through the barns on the backside. One hot walker nodded, grinned, and called out, "Hey Preach. How ya' doin'?"

Hood knelt in a horse's stall as a girl wrapped the animal's ankles with bright yellow bandages. He questioned her about her new husband--Hood married them in the winner's circle at Churchill Downs just weeks before the Derby.

"I guess I'm an all-purpose chaplain," Hood said. "I marry these people, give their funerals, dedicate their children and listen to their heartaches."

He also feeds them when they're hungry, takes them to the hospital when they're sick, clothes them when they are cold. "I can't separate the spiritual from the physical. These people have immediate needs that must be met before I can reach them on a spiritual level," he explained. "I can't ignore that."

Hood responds to their needs because he understands. "My father was an alcoholic. I felt rejected, unloved at times. I understand the feelings these people have."

But Hood's decision for race track ministry came out of a period of frustration his life. He was a pastor for many years and returned to Louisville because he was tired of moving around the country. "I taught school for a year and then worked two years as a correctional officer at Kentucky State Reformatory," he explained.

After a year of intern chaplaincy at Baptist East Hospital in Louisville, Hood learned about race track chaplaincy. "I walked backside of the race track. I could see and feel a lot of loneliness, abuse, and low self-image. This was putting the pieces of my life together-- pastor, teacher, correctional officer. "That's why when the opportunity came to work here I felt I was prepared to do a good job."

Yet Hood does admit to struggles in his early years as a racetrack chaplain. "When I came here almost five years ago I had a hard time loving some of these people," he confessed. "They are dirty, many times uneducated, distrustful--and most don't care about themselves. After dealing with them for several months I finally realized the backsiders and frontsiders are not all that different.

"Those on the frontside might look nice and speak well but underneath it all everyone has the same need to be loved. "I also realized if Christ were here today, he'd be on the backside--with the forgotten people."

-30-

After Four-Year Wait, He Refused
To Leave Water Until Baptized

By Anita Bowden

Baptist Press
6/3/83

MAGURA, Bangladesh (BP)--After four years of waiting James Sircar was fed up.

When the worship service was over that Sunday he waded into the nearby pond and announced to stonished church leaders he wasn't getting out until they baptized him.

In emergency session, the church council agreed they couldn't wait any longer. In four years Sircar had not reverted to his former faith. Though they had wanted to test him further, they decided they would have to baptize him.

It was the right decision. Today Sircar baptizes new Christians himself. As a village evangelist in Bangladesh, he works with 14 churches within a 30-mile radius from his home in Magura. All of the village Christians are Muchis, low-caste Hindus, a very responsive group, Sircar has found. And there are 45,000 of them in that district.

Baptisms totaled 315 during 1981 and 1982. Sircar figures he must be doing something right: as the work grows so does the pressure he gets from local religious leaders to renounce his faith. "I believe they think if they stop me, the church growth that's taking place here will stop," he said.

-more-

But they don't know him very well.

Sircar didn't step from the baptismal waters into full-time evangelism. In the 11 years intervening, his faith was tested many times. But a combination of patience and tenacity--the same qualities that led to his baptism--helped him in his journey to becoming an evangelist.

The journey began when he was a young postal worker and happened upon a Bible school correspondence course letter. When he saw it was Christian material, he stuck it away. But it kept reappearing. Finally he read the material, finished the lesson and mailed it. Another lesson arrived by return mail. Before long he had finished the course.

Still full of questions about the Bible, Sircar traveled to the Baptist mission in Faridpur. He walked onto the compound looking for white people, since only whites were Christians in his mind. But the only Christian available was a Bengali pastor who came from the same religious background as Sircar.

They liked each other immediately. Sircar began a weekly routine of pedaling 22 miles into Faridpur on his broken-down bicycle after work Saturday. He'd spend the night with the pastor's family or at the Baptist-run Christian Industrial Center and attend church and Sunday school the next day before returning home.

"My desire was to become a Christian very quickly," Sircar remembers. He realized he needed to spend more time in Faridpur to learn about Christianity and the Christian lifestyle. When his request for a transfer was rejected, he quit his job and enrolled as a student at the industrial center. While he was there a welding accident blinded him.

His father heard about the accident and came to visit him. He had thrown Sircar out of the house while he was taking the correspondence course and his attitude had not changed. "My father came and said, 'Yeah, you've converted to Christianity and you've become blind. Well, that's good. That's good enough for you.'"

Sircar remembered asking the Lord what his plan was for him in the accident. In time he had his answer. After a local doctor said he'd never see again, Sircar went to an eye specialist in Dhaka. On his second visit the doctor discovered he was a Christian convert. Angrily, he confronted Sircar.

"He said to me, 'Aren't you ashamed? Converted to Christianity. Go. Your eyes will never be any better,'" Sircar said. "And he wrote on his prescription pad I would never see. I told the doctor, 'The Lord I serve is a living Lord. He is my Lord and you will see that in one week my eyes will be better.'"

Sircar didn't sleep that night. "I prayed and cried all night long," he remembered. "The next morning I thought my eyes were a little better. Three days and three nights I prayed. Then I realized my eyes were better--I could see everything."

Back to the doctor he went. The doctor admitted what Sircar had believed was correct and fitted him with glasses. "I was a believer before then, but after this happened my faith really was strengthened," Sircar admitted.

He completed his training at the industrial school and worked in the automatic transmission section of a motor company until former missionary Carl Ryther offered him an instructor's job at his alma mater. That's when he began spending his weekends preaching in the villages, with missionary evangelist Tom Thurman as teacher.

Still, he didn't feel he was where the Lord wanted him. He began having differences of opinion with the director of training at the industrial center. After a particular disagreement over a welding job, Sircar quit. While he was looking for other work Thurman approached him about full-time evangelism. And Sircar felt it was right.

He and missionary James Young worked hard witnessing, teaching, preaching. The schedule was rugged: 14 villages in seven days. After about a year and a half, one group said they wanted to become Christians.

But religious pressure in the village took its toll. Of the 52 who had said they wanted to become Christians, only seven showed up for baptism. Only six were baptized; the seventh, a young man, was dragged off by his mother.

Then 32 in another village were baptized. Sircar was encouraged. The patience and tenacity seemed to be paying off. But another test was coming.

In less than a year four of the six in the first village and all 32 in the second village had returned to Hinduism. But many of them said they would come back to Christianity when their village leader, who was responsible for most of the pressure, died.

Sircar saw an important principle of village evangelism in action: you must baptize a leader for a church to continue. No leaders were baptized in either of the first two villages.

He learned the lesson well. In the third village--Hajrapur--Sircar baptized half of the people, including a village leader. This group has remained one of the strongest churches in the area and has been the hub church from which most of the other groups have come.

The journey hasn't been easy or short. But Sircar's faith, patience and tenacity have kept him on the track. "I firmly believe the Lord has called me to do village evangelism, to do preaching work," he explained. "And that is what I will do."

-30-

(BP photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press)

Dissidents Attack, Burn
Relief Truck In Zimbabwe

By Robert O'Brien

Baptist Press
6/3/83

SESSAMI, Zimbabwe (BP)--Anti-government dissidents in Zimbabwe burned a 10-ton Southern Baptist relief truck May 28, threatened to kill its African driver and robbed him of nearly \$1,400.

Despite the incident, missionaries in Zimbabwe voted four days later to continue the massive hunger and relief effort which began in 1982.

Five dissidents, on the run from government troops, attacked Kilian Sibanda at his home in Sessami. He had stopped there briefly en route from transporting corn meal to the starving people in Zimbabwe's drought-stricken Gokwe area. Most of the cash stolen was money people had paid for the meal. Those with money buy their grain at cost and others receive grain free.

The Zimbabwe mission runs two 10-ton trucks twice weekly to the drought area as a first step "band-aid approach" to stave off starvation among the 30,000 Tonga until Southern Baptists' massive "People Who Care" project can develop long-term assistance. The project is a joint effort of Louisiana Baptists, the Foreign Mission Board and the Zimbabwe mission.

The mission voted June 1 to ask the Foreign Mission Board for another \$455,000 in hunger relief funds to develop the project and up to \$35,000 to replace the burned truck. The board has already appropriated more than \$1 million for relief work in the area.

Missionaries and Kilian believe the dissidents, who wielded Russian-made AK rifles with fixed bayonets, burned the truck to keep it from being used to report their location. Kilian believes he convinced them it wasn't a government vehicle, but one used for hunger relief.

The youthful dissidents attacked Kilian as he prepared to leave his home in Sessami after a stopover for a meal and a visit with his wife and children. He usually works 16-hour days trucking food to the Tonga.

One of the young men jumped onto the truck and stuck a bayonet into Kilian's ear. After robbing him of the cash, including \$100 of his own money, the dissidents forced him to pour diesel fuel over the truck. When he refused to torch it, they did it themselves.

-more-

The dissidents roughed up Kilian and repeatedly threatened his life. At one point, he scuffled with a dissident while pushing a bayonet away from his ribs. The man pushed him down and was poised to kill him. "Leave the old man alone," the other dissidents told him.

They forced Kilian, his wife and children to lie on the floor of their home, where they stayed from 5 until 8 p.m., when government troops arrived in search of the fleeing dissidents.

The troops fired a warning shot outside the door. Kilian, mistakenly fearing dissidents had shot a son who had hidden in the garden, rushed to his aid. The son, fearing they had shot his father, also hurried to check on him.

Investigating soldiers discovered the dissidents had murdered a soldier on leave in civilian clothing and beaten up some civilians down the road while making their escape.

Reports of kidnapping and violence crop up from time to time as dissidents continue to harass the Marxist-led government. But mission chairman John Faulkner said missionaries personally have experienced no confrontation since missionary Archie G. Dunaway Jr. was killed by guerrillas during the country's war for independence from white rule in 1978. "They realize, however, they could face an isolated incident like this at any time," he added.

"We will be honest with Louisiana Baptists and tell them an element of danger exists," Faulkner explained. "Such problems may cut back on the number of volunteers who will come. The deciding factor will be whether or not they feel called of God to help us meet this overwhelming problem. This is God's project, and those who come here should do so in answer to his call--and only his call."

Faulkner said missionary personnel went into the Sessami area the day after the incident and continue to move freely in Zimbabwe. He said Kilian, an active Baptist layman who was beaten badly by guerrillas during the war for independence, insists he keep on driving.

"The dissidents terrorized him and his family, but he's seen the appalling hunger of the Tonga and how grateful they are just to get enough to subsist on," Faulkner said. "He's also seen their openness to our evangelistic efforts. He's committed to keep going on."

The ambitious three- to four-year plan has anticipated use of more than 250 volunteers from Louisiana in the next 18 months. It includes development of medical and community health clinics, grain grinding mills and storage facilities, agricultural development, evangelism and church development, digging bore holes for clean water, dams, road repair, construction of an air strip for clinic personnel and cooperative stores operated by the Tonga.

From now on, Baptist vehicles will be marked with huge block letters which read "Baptist People Who Care."

-30-

(BP photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press)

Reagan Urged To Give Gambling
Top Priority In Crime Commission

By Tim Fields

Baptist Press
6/3/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A Southern Baptist ethicist has urged President Reagan to carry through with his announced plan to name a commission on organized crime and has suggested the link between gambling and organized crime be among the top priorities for the commission.

Larry D. Braidfoot, general counsel and director of research for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, told the president in a letter "such a commission would be helpful in focusing the concerns of criminal justice more specifically on the activities of organized crime rather than upon those who do not represent an ongoing threat to society and are good candidates for alternative sentencing.

"The commission could investigate thoroughly the link between legal and illegal gambling. "Illegal gambling represents one of the major sources of income of organized crime," he wrote.

-more-

Braidfoot told the president that in 1980 the estimated gross income of organized crime was \$150 billion, an amount surpassed only by the income of the oil industry.

"Organized crime pays no taxes, skims profits from their businesses and channels this money into legitimate businesses. In this manner, organized crime strangles the competitive environment in which legitimate businesses seek to provide jobs and earn justified returns," he wrote.

Braidfoot said organized crime represents one of the greatest threats to the long-range economic stability of our nation.

He also told the president organized crime has a negative impact on a wide range of special moral concerns such as citizenship, family life, race relations, and alcohol and drug abuse. "Drugs, gambling and prostitution are but three avenues by which family life and moral decency are eroded by organized crime," he wrote.

Braidfoot also pointed out to Reagan that many contend the link of organized crime to gambling can be broken by legalizing gambling. "Instead, gambling seems to flourish in an environment in which gambling is legal," he stressed. "The true relationship between legal and illegal gambling needs to be more clearly understood because of the massive campaign being waged to legalize gambling, ostensibly to help provide additional sources of revenue for both states and the nation.

"Unwise public policy should not be established which will whet appetites for gambling and create customers for organized crime from among the citizens who should be protected from organized crime."

Braidfoot also called on the president to oppose H.R. 85, a bill now pending which would establish a national lottery.

"Gambling is bad for morality, for politics and for economics," he wrote. "It simply provides a more optimum environment within which organized crime can set up shop and sap the strength of our society."

Braidfoot concluded his letter by assuring the president many of the nearly 14 million Southern Baptists pray for him on a regular basis as he fulfills his responsibilities faithfully "in working for peace with justice and in promoting the general welfare of citizens of both our nation and our world."

-30-

Analysis

Bob Jones Ruling Yields
'Agonized Ambivalence'

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press
6/3/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Supreme Court's decision upholding the denial of tax exemption to religious schools which discriminate on the basis of race is neither the awful calamity some in the religious community say it is, nor is it the absolute victory for righteousness others claim it to be.

It has, in fact, left many religious leaders with a sense of what James M. Dunn of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs describes as "agonized ambivalence."

What is not in doubt is the decisiveness of the 8-1 ruling supporting the 13-year policy of the Internal Revenue Service to deny tax exemption to all private schools whose admissions policies discriminate against blacks. The high court, led by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, was apparently determined to issue a forceful ruling leaving no doubt that such discrimination will not be rewarded with tax exemption. Throughout the history of the Supreme Court, such momentous rulings have been written by chief justices, and Burger, despite critics' views that he has not exercised such decisive leadership often enough, was clearly in charge this time.

Insofar as it makes plain racial discrimination will no longer be tolerated, not just in public educational institutions, but in private and religious schools which enjoy the benefit of tax exemption, the decision must be applauded.

-more-

All nine justices, including the lone dissenter, William H. Rehnquist, agreed Congress may condition the granting of tax exemption upon compliance with "fundamental public policy." As Burger put it in the majority opinion, "not all burdens on religion are unconstitutional... The state may justify a limitation on religious liberty by showing it is essential to accomplish an overriding governmental interest." That one statement knocked the props from under the arguments of religious leaders that not even Congress, much less the IRS, has the authority under the Constitution to deny tax exemption when the beneficiary claims sincerely held religious views, however repugnant they may be.

Interestingly, not many of those religious leaders have quarreled publicly with the court's clear language that the First Amendment does not give absolute freedom for such views.

What many of them have criticized is the court's view that IRS may deny tax exemption to religious institutions with views contrary to established public policy, even if Congress has not given the tax collecting agency specific authority to do so. They agree with Rehnquist's position that Congress had not so authorized IRS with respect to the policies of schools such as Bob Jones University and Goldsboro Christian Schools.

On this significant point, the church leaders deserve to be heard. They are understandably worried about the decision's long-range effect, in part because they know the sorry history of IRS abuse. They remember, for example, the twin legal proceedings of the late 1960s when a blatantly politicized IRS took both the National Council of Churches and Billy James Hargis to court seeking to strip those polar opposites of their respective tax exemptions for the same reason: both were criticizing Richard Nixon's Vietnam policy.

Now, in light of the Bob Jones result, legal experts representing religious groups ranging from the National Council to the evangelical Christian Legal Society are saying the justices went too far in giving IRS such broad statutory authority.

Does the ruling mean, they ask, that IRS at some future date may strip tax exemption from a church that opposes prevailing public policy on nuclear arms or refugee resettlement? Does it mean that opposing the prevailing view that a woman is entitled to seek an abortion endangers the tax exemptions of churches whose own theology denounces that view and whose members seek to have it overturned?

Although he has been accused by some commentators with fence straddling on this key issue in the Bob Jones ruling, Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., considered by most lawyers to have the finest legal mind on the court, put his finger on the best solution to the dilemma. His concurring opinion, agreeing with the outcome, nevertheless suggests the burden of limiting IRS authority rests upon Congress.

He is right. For although members of both parties on both sides of Capitol Hill breathed a collective sigh of relief when the decision was announced, they should now be reminded an unfettered IRS is like the proverbial bull in a china closet. It is clearly the lawmakers' obligation to make unmistakably clear the high court's ruling in Bob Jones be limited to the fundamental public policy of eliminating race discrimination.

If Congress fails to act, the Supreme Court will in all likelihood be faced again with resolving disputes between religious groups whose views on public policies run afoul of those declared to be of fundamental importance to the nation by IRS bureaucrats.

Congress can head off this grim prospect by rising above its normal inertia and passing legislation reining in IRS. By doing what it ought to do, Congress can dissolve the "agonized ambivalence" hanging over the nation's churches and their leaders in the post-Bob Jones era.