



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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83-99

Supreme Court Upholds
Legislative Chaplains

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)--State legislatures do not violate the First Amendment's ban on an establishment of religion by opening each day's activities with prayer offered by a paid chaplain, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled.

In a 6-3 decision, the high court upheld the practice because of the long history at both state and federal levels of maintaining legislative chaplains at public expense.

Against that historical background, the court held, the facts such chaplains may serve over extended periods of time, that they are paid at public expense, and that most of their prayers are in the Judeo-Christian tradition do not make the practice unconstitutional.

Chief Justice Warren E. Burger, who wrote the majority opinion, refrained from applying the court's now-traditional three-part test in judging the validity of the practice, a point not missed by dissenting justice William J. Brennan Jr.

That the court failed to address the questions of legislative purpose, primary effect and excessive entanglement, Brennan wrote, "is, in a sense, a good thing, for it simply confirms that the Court is carving an exception to the Establishment Clause rather than reshaping Establishment Clause doctrine to accommodate legislative prayer."

The ban on an establishment of religion is one of two guarantees enshrined in the First Amendment, the other being the free exercise of religion.

Although he did not explain why he chose not to apply the usual tests, Burger wrote instead: "In light of the unambiguous and unbroken history of more than 200 years, there can be no doubt that the practice of opening legislative sessions with prayer has become a part of the fabric of our society. To invoke Divine guidance on a public body entrusted with making laws is not...an 'establishment' of religion or a step toward establishment; it is simply a tolerable acknowledgment of beliefs widely held among the people of this country."

But Justice John Paul Stevens, another dissenter in the case, based his objection on the preferential treatment shown prevailing religions in the hiring of legislative chaplains. While a Catholic priest might say the prayers in Massachusetts or a Presbyterian minister those in Nebraska, he argued, "I would not expect to find a Jehovah's Witness or a disciple of Mary Baker Eddy or the Reverend Moon serving as an official chaplain in any state legislature."

Specifically at issue in the decided case was the practice of the Nebraska legislature of retaining a single chaplain, Robert E. Palmer, a Presbyterian minister, since 1965. Palmer is paid \$319.75 per month for each month the unicameral legislature is in session.

Palmer's longstanding appointment was challenged in federal district court by Ernest Chambers, a member of the legislature. The court ruled although the Establishment Clause was not violated by the prayers, it was breached by paying the chaplain from public funds. The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals went even further, invalidating the practice entirely.

While the July 5 Supreme Court decision overturning that ruling applies technically to state legislative chaplains, it will no doubt squelch any hopes of successfully challenging Congress' employment of chaplains in both the Senate and House of Representatives.

WMU Signs Contract,
Pours Foundation For New Building

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--Foundation-laying ceremonies and a contract signing launched the major phase of construction on the new nationwide headquarters for Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union July 1.

Standing amid construction gear atop New Hope Mountain south of Birmingham, officers of Woman's Missionary Union signed a \$5.5 million contract with Brasfield and Gorrie, Inc. Concrete flowed for the first portion of foundation slabs, and women on WMU's national relocation committee etched their initials in it.

WMU President, Dorothy Elliott Sample, a psychologist from Flint, Mich., announced the building would be two-and-one-half times the size of WMU's present accommodations--137,280 square feet. Its three wings will include an office and conference center, a distribution center and an auditorium-television facility. Sample said WMU expects to be working in the new building next June.

Relocation committee members, wielding pink-ribboned trowels in the concrete, were led by Betty Gilreath of North Carolina, chairman and national recording secretary of WMU. Others on the committee are Camilla Lowry, Auburn, Ala., former president of Alabama WMU; Rachel Howard, president of Georgia WMU, from Doraville, and Pattie Dent, president of Mississippi WMU, from Holly Springs.

Construction costs will be just more than \$40 per square foot. Sample described the cost as "a miracle of God and a testimony to the carefulness of our committee, our staff, our contractors, and our architect."

WMU's development will cost approximately \$7.5 million, including an initial purchase of more than 25 acres of land in The Meadows Business Center.

Architect Robert W. Black's design of white brick, white precast concrete, and black glass replaced an earlier proposal for a circular office tower. That plan was scrapped after construction estimates convinced WMU officials that the design was inefficient use of money and space.

Approximately 150 staff members will work at the new site in north Shelby County. Their tasks include designing and planning missions education and promotion in Southern Baptist churches. WMU has more than 1.1 million members in 24,942 churches.

The 95-year-old national organization established offices in Birmingham in 1921. WMU has occupied the corner of Sixth Avenue and Twentieth Street North since 1951.

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IFW Holds National Meeting
For State Coordinators

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ATLANTA (BP)--The future of the world will rely on trust and openness between faith communities rather than any one faith community isolating itself from others in a fortress of announced truth, said Lois Wilson, keynote speaker for the combined 20th annual national workshop on Christian unity and national meeting of state interfaith witness coordinators.

"This will not be a tea party," Wilson warned. "Can we Christians speak freely out of our faith perspective to others about our common search for community for the whole inhabited world? It will mean facing past estrangement (the atrocities of the Crusades, the persecution of the Jews, etc.)."

In her address, "Jesus Christ The Life of The World," Wilson noted a search for a common community, "will also mean facing a present reality and responsibility to formulate provisional community...It will mean a sharpened sense of sharing a common future together, or not at all." Wilson is the former moderator for the United Church of Canada.

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Later representatives from 16 state conventions gathered to honor two retiring IFW workers in the field for a combined total of 33 years, Lloyd N. Whyte and Ernest C. Upchurch.

Whyte, native of Gorham, N.Y., directed the interfaith witness work in a 12 state area for 13 years and has been an IFW worker for 18 years.

Whyte has been a Home Mission Board member, a director of Baptist Hospital in Miami, moderator of Miami Baptist Association and president of the Greater Miami Fellowship of Churches. He received the Leonard L. Abess Human Relations Award from the Florida Regional Anti-Defamation League in 1980.

Upchurch served for 15 years as North Carolina interfaith witness coordinator and worked in church extension, research and urban ministries.

In Upchurch's final year as coordinator, North Carolina was one of only three states in the nation to offer every possible program the IFW department lists, including awareness conferences, training of volunteers and dialogues with Jews, Catholics, Lutherans and Anglicans.

The state ranked second in the number of interfaith witness conferences held in 1982 and first in attendance at such conferences.

Glenn Igleheart, HMB Interfaith Witness department director, John E. Steely of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary faculty, Jerome Dollard, a Catholic priest who directs the Ecumenical Institute in North Carolina, Robert Dalton, a representative of the Catholic Germany Missioners and Richard Harmon, HMB specialist in American Christianity, presented a report on three years of dialogue between Roman Catholics and Southern Baptists.

Dalton summed up the dialogue as educational. "We have two things to learn from Baptists--evangelism and being more whole-hearted in discipleship." He added Catholics have two riches to offer Baptists: "diverse prayer life and tradition."

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SBC Building Committee
Named; Has First Meeting

Baptist Press
7/6/83

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A five-person committee to oversee the construction of a new Southern Baptist Convention Building has started work.

Rodney Landes, a layman from El Dorado, Ark., who headed the Executive Committee Long Range Study Committee, was named to chair the committee. Landes rotated off the Executive Committee in June.

The other members, all members of the Executive Committee, are William A. Fortune, a Knoxville, Tenn., developer; Conrad Willard, recently retired pastor of Central Baptist Church of Miami; Jimmy Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala., and Nelson Duke, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jefferson City, Mo., and vice chairman of the Executive Committee.

Ex-officio members of the committee are David Maddox, a layman from Fullerton, Calif., and chairman of the Executive Committee's administration and convention arrangements subcommittee, and Dewey Presley, a layman from Dallas and chairman of the Executive Committee.

During the orientation meeting in late June, the committee was briefed on their duties, reviewed the architectural contract, went over needs for the building and discussed the need to keep Baptists adequately informed about the building.

They authorized Reginald McDonough, associate executive secretary of the Executive Committee and staff coordinator for the building project, to work to develop a guaranteed maximum price for the building, based on competitive bidding, and to negotiate an agreement for a general contractor and construction manager.

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During the 1983 annual meeting in Pittsburgh, messengers approved the \$8 million in capital needs funds for 1984-88 to construct the seven-story building on a site at Ninth Avenue North and Commerce Street in downtown Nashville, adjacent to the Baptist Sunday School Board. approval came after long debate over the need to build such a structure.

In reviewing the need, McDonough noted the allocation of the capital needs funds is the first time the SBC has allocated capital needs funds for the eight groups which will occupy the new structure. When the present building at 460 James Robertson Parkway was constructed in 1963, funds were provided by the BSSB.

Seven entities occupying the present building will move to the new structure. The Executive Committee, Stewardship Commission, Christian Life Commission, Education Commission, the SBC Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Foundation and the Seminary External Education Division of the six SBC seminaries.

The SBC Historical Commission, currently housed in the BSSB building, also will be in the new building.

"The increasing inadequacy of space, mechanical systems and parking led the Executive Committee to appoint a long range study committee in February of 1980," McDonough said. "For three years the committee and the agencies studied needs and alternatives relating to adequate facilities for the present and future."

After the long study, the committee recommended a new building be constructed.

The reasons included:

--Present facilities already are inadequate in office space, conference rooms, assembly rooms and parking;

--R modeling and adding additional parking space would cost almost as much as a new building;

--The proposed building would provide adequate facilities through the turn of the century,

--The proposed building has the advantages of being located on land provided without cost to the Cooperative Program by the BSSB, as well as offering the convenience of having all Nashville-based SBC agencies located in one strategically placed Baptist Center.

During the orientation meeting, representatives of the eight entities met with committee members. Included were Foy Valentine, CLC; Ronald Tonks, Historical Commission; George Capps, Education Commission and American Seminary Commission; A. Rudy Fagan, Stewardship Commission; Raymond Rigdon, Seminary External Education Division; Hollis Johnson III, Foundation, and McDonough, Tim A. Hedquist and Harold C. Bennett, Executive Committee.

The committee will meet again in Nashville on July 28.

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HMB Appoints More Than
1,500 Summer Missionaries

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ATLANTA (BP)--The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board appointed a record number of summer missionaries in 1983, reported Bill Lee, assistant director of the HMB's special mission ministries department.

Lee said 1,542 college and seminary students began 10 weeks of mission service in June, up 100 from the 1982 total of 1,442. The summer missionaries will serve in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and four western provinces of Canada.

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Lee attributed the record appointments to increases in Baptist Student Union-sponsored positions. BSU groups picked up the tab on 436 out-of-state appointments and 276 in-state appointments, said Lee. BSU groups throughout the country raised more than \$1 million to send fellow students to both home and foreign mission fields.

BSU efforts, said Lee, saved the HMB at least \$500,000 in transportation costs alone for summer missionaries.

Texans accounted for the greatest number of assigned missionaries with 196 summer workers. California and New York received the largest number of summer workers with 115 each. Southwest Baptist College in Bolivar, Mo., led the list of the top 100 colleges/universities sending summer missionaries with 37.

Lee said 1983 summer missions appointments included 21 ordained ministers and 29 seminary students. He noted 164 of the 1983 assigned missionaries also served in 1982.

"The figures point out the vitality and health of our student missions and volunteer missions programs," said Lee, noting increases in the number of requests for volunteers from the field and in the number of student applicants.

Summer missions appointments "benefit students in terms of their future involvement in missions, either as a missionary, a church staffer or a layperson," Lee said. "It also provides missions education as these students bring back first-hand reports to their home and college churches and to their BSUs.

"In fact, the success of the program can really be attributed to the recruiting efforts of summer missionaries among their fellow students," said Lee.