



# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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83-115

### Youngster Found Dead In Church Van

FERGUSON, Mo (BP)--A three-year old Florissant, Mo., boy died while sleeping inside a closed church van.

The youngster, Paul Jason Carter, apparently fell asleep behind the driver's seat of the van and was overlooked when teachers at the day care center of First Church, Ferguson, unloaded the vehicle following a field trip.

As late July temperatures soared above 100 degrees, the child was in the closed van for more than three hours. He was found by his father, Saul Carter, and a church custodian and was pronounced dead at the scene by a St. Louis County medical examiner.

The boy's temperature reportedly was 106 degrees 45 minutes after he was found and the temperature inside the van was 110.

Jason, the only son of Saul and Angela Carter, had been among 45 children with six teachers and one volunteer in two vans on a field trip.

After the vans returned to the church at 3:15 p.m., the vans were locked and the windows rolled up. Several teachers left the center immediately after the trip as a second shift of workers took charge of the children.

When Jason's father arrived to pick up his son at 6 p.m., the boy could not be found. Teachers told Carter his wife must have taken Jason home.

After going home and discovering his son was missing, Carter immediately returned to the day-care center. Upon contacting a teacher who had last seen Jason asleep in the van, Carter and church custodian, Jack Atkins, rushed to the van at 6:40 p.m.

They found the boy lying on a towel on the floor behind the driver's seat. After prying open a window Carter worked to revive his son until an ambulance arrived on the scene.

John Perkins, Ferguson's minister of education, said the tragedy "has had quite an impact on the church as a whole. The church has really expressed a lot of concern for the family and has grieved with them," he added.

The day care center was closed for a week following the death, Perkins continued. "The entire group of child care workers was devastated," he explained.

The young victim was among some 40 St. Louis-area residents who suffered heat-related deaths during the weeklong heat wave.

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Southern Baptists Have Equal Rank  
Military Chaplain Tells HMB Directors By Patti Stephenson

Baptist Press  
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ATLANTA (BP)--The highest ranking Southern Baptist chaplain in the U.S. military services says Southern Baptists must "stop jockeying for personal power and prestige and accept the fact that we all have equal rank before God."

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Gerald Marsh, a major general in the Air Force reserves and professor of pastoral ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, told directors of the Home Mission Board "God's call to service outranks any other human hierarchy."

The two-star general also addressed the issues of church-state separation and world peace. Marsh said Southern Baptist chaplains who serve in the nation's military and public institutions are "thrust into the arena of government service as they serve God," a fact which may concern supporters of church and state separation. But Marsh declared church-state separation "doesn't mean there's to be no religion in government." It means "a free church exists within a free state, neither one dictating the operation of the other."

Marsh also chided those who advocate "easy answers" to peace and warned, "America has not lived through any other time when we were more vulnerable to attack." He questioned, "Do we meet vulnerability with our wishes and wants for peace or with authority and power?"

Marsh's remarks to the HMB directors followed an earlier presentation during their August session of a new plan for endorsing pastoral counselors through the HMB's Chaplaincy Commission. The guidelines, resulting from a year-long study, are a means of "providing professional credibility for Southern Baptist pastoral counselors who otherwise have no endorsement from their denomination," explained James Strickland Jr., chaplaincy commission chairman.

The plan, which directors approved, would require pastoral counselors to be members of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, to participate in SBC life, to be reviewed annually, to submit regular reports and to provide information on the organizational structure of their counseling centers.

The plan will now be presented to the SBC Executive Committee for approval.

In other actions, directors elected James N. Lewis Jr., assistant to the HMB vice president of missions, as director of the associational missions division. Lewis, 39, replaces James Nelson, who retired earlier this year.

Lewis will oversee the division's relationships with 1,200 Southern Baptist associations and 900 directors of missions. He will coordinate the work of three HMB departments: associational administration, rural-urban missions and metropolitan missions. He also will establish ties between associations and other HMB and state convention programs.

Lewis joined the HMB as a missionary in 1973, serving as director of international and language ministries for the Baptist Convention of Maryland. In 1975, he was elected assistant director of the HMB language missions division and was promoted to associate director in 1980. He has held his present position since May 1981.

Lewis is a graduate of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., and holds M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He and his wife, Kathleen, have two children.

Directors approved 90 persons for missions service, including 12 missionaries, 33 missionary associates and 45 who will receive pastoral assistance.

William G. Tanner, HMB president, reported an anticipated increase of as much as 11 percent in 1983 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering receipts, but noted the "yo-yo effect of the economy" may prevent Southern Baptists from reaching the \$25 million goal.

Board members approved allocations of \$22 million of 1984 AAEO funds for support of missionaries, field ministries and special projects and \$7 million for advance in critical areas. The 1984 AAEO goal is \$29 million.

Jerry Graham, associate director of church extension, told directors more than 1,100 churches have now reported starting missions on Pentecost Sunday, the Convention-wide commitment day for new work. "We've had a hard time collecting the churches' reports, but we feel we'll reach our goal of 3,000 new works," Graham said.

Board members also elected 11 persons to serve two-year terms as directors of the H.M.B. Service Corporation, which administers the HMB's church bond program. They include HMB directors Searcy Garrison, Jerry Gilmore, Ronald Henning, Stanley Howells, Wyndell Jones, Frank Lowndes, Marvin Prude, Gerald Stow and James Strickland Jr., and Robert Kilgore and Olin Cox of the HMB church loans division.

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Denton 'Equal Access' Bill  
Hits Snag; Changes Possible

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press  
8/4/83

WASHINGTON (BP)--A bill to give groups of elementary and secondary school students the right to hold religious meetings in the classroom met stiff resistance at a Senate hearing Aug. 3.

But Sen. Jeremiah Denton, R-Ala., strongly suggested he is willing to make changes in the bill to satisfy critics.

Opposition to the "equal access" measure in its current form came from spokesmen for religious and educational groups, including the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

Speaking for the BJCPA General Counsel John W. Baker told Denton during a three-hour hearing that his organization supports the concept of equal access, but only for secondary school students. Because of younger children's "lack of maturity," Baker argued, elementary school pupils would be incapable of conducting voluntary, student-initiated religious meetings.

To include them in such a bill, he charged, "is a farce."

Baker told Denton the BJCPA will file a friend-of-the-court brief in a Williamsport, Pa., case on the side of high school students whose request to hold voluntary, student-initiated religious meetings during an extracurricular school period was denied by school officials. In their initial legal test in a federal district court, the students won. The case has been appealed to the Third Circuit Court.

If Congress is to enact equal access legislation, Baker continued, no government agent, including the classroom teacher, should be given authority to sponsor the religious meetings, nor should public funds be spent beyond the expense of providing the meeting space.

In an introductory statement before Baker and nine other witnesses testified, Denton said he came upon the equal access concept after chairing hearings last year on President Reagan's proposed constitutional amendment on school prayer.

He realized then, Denton said, "some students in our schools might be pressured or coerced to violate his or her conscience by a teacher-led prayer." As an example, he explained, "a Jewish student may be offended or confused should only Christian or sectarian prayers be offered."

After pondering that possibility, the first-term senator and former prisoner of war said he "began to think equal access was a fair and reasonable solution. Each student could choose to participate voluntarily in prayer or religious discussion during extracurricular time."

During question-and-answer periods following witnesses' Aug. 3 testimony, Denton repeatedly insisted he wants his bill to be "fair." He asked Baker and other witnesses who expressed reservations about his measure to submit in writing their detailed objections and to propose new language which would suit them. "We are trying to make this bill fair," he declared.

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Others objecting to the bill included Dean M. Kelley of the National Council of Churches; Ruti G. Teitel of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; Mitchell A. Tyner of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists; Marc A. Pearl of the American Jewish Congress; Robert Alpern of the Unitarian Universalist Association and Janice Piccinini of the National Education Association.

Testifying in favor of Denton's bill in its present form were John Whitehead and Thomas Neuberger, of the Rutherford Institute, and Ted Pantaleo, of the Freedom Council.

Like Reagan's prayer amendment, Denton's bill faces an uncertain future. A separate bill limited to secondary school students and introduced by Sen. Mark O. Hatfield, R-Ore., has yet to be the subject of hearings. In the House of Representatives, no action on the equal access concept has been taken.

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Ghana Running Out of Food;  
Baptist Response Limited

By Mary Jane Welch

Baptist Press  
8/4/83

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) For the first time in a decade, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board is unable to respond fully to a na emergency hunger relief request because of a shortage of funds.

Ghana faces what may be the worst famine in its history, and missionaries there have requested \$574,000 for food and fertilizer, says John Mills, the board's director for West Africa. But the board's balance of \$580,197.62 in hunger relief funds prohibits it from responding fully to the missionaries reuquest without jeopardizing its ability to respond to other crises, according to Tim Brendle, the board's community development consultant.

The board also has in hand requests for another \$3 million for hunger relief, mostly for development projects, to which it has not responded, Brendle added.

The Foreign Mission Board expects to provide rice and a volunteer L. W. Jenkins of Greenville, Texas, who will drive a truck provided earlier by hunger and relief funds to deliver it and food sent by other countries.

The missionaries requested more than 400 tons of rice and more than 600 tons of fertilizer. The board provided 400 tons of fertilizer plus cutlasses and hoes earlier this year when a million refugees returned to Ghana after being expelled from Nigeria.

Mills, who just returned from Ghana, said the country has just experienced a devastating "harmattan," a dry dust-laded wind off the Sahara, and is still experiencing the worst drought in his memory. In the week he was there, which should have been the height of the rainy season, he saw no rain. Corn which should have been headhigh at this time was only ankle-high, he said.

He told the story of a young man who lives in a missionary family's store room behind their house in Accra. The man, a member of Accra's largest Baptist church, had a good job in a factory until two years ago when the factory closed. He has been unable to find another job. Today, he saves the missionary family's tea bags and puts four or five together to make himself a cup of tea.

His plight is not unusual, says Mills. Brush fires have destroyed many crops and a recent currency adjustment made the dollar worth 10 times as many cedis overnight. Prices skyrocketed.

The government intends to implement a new wage scale to bring wages in line with the new prices, but until then an urban laborer seldom earns enough in a day to buy food for himself, much less buy food for his family or provide any other needs. Many urban laborers have begun eating only one meal a day, sometimes shared with their children, he says.

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Many goods are unavailable on the open market, he adds. In the last year missionaries have been able to buy bread, previously a staple in Ghana, only once. The currency adjustment has made some items available again, but at very high prices.

Missionaries Gerald and Mary Mounce of Texas, report that some prices went up 800 percent after the adjustment, bringing the price of gas to \$7 a gallon, an egg to \$4, and 100-lb. bag of cornmeal to \$2,000.

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

Draper: Training Needed  
For Skills, Involvement

by Gail Rothwell

Baptist Press  
8/4/83

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--A trend toward "proxy missions" is one of several problems that needs to be addressed through an increased emphasis on church training, according to Southern Baptist Convention President James T. Draper Jr.

Draper, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, and worship leader during a church training leadership conference, said he is concerned that Baptists are placing continued emphasis on giving to missions but less emphasis on personal involvement.

"We contribute money to missions so we can let someone else do our witnessing," said Draper. "The Cooperative Program is a good thing, but we cannot use it as a substitute for mission involvement. I don't think we need to stop giving; I think we need to start going."

Draper said the leadership skills and motivation to involvement in missions and witnessing he received through his own participation in church training were instrumental in his call to the ministry. "I felt the call to preach when I was 12, but I was shy and uncertain, so I did not publicly acknowledge the call," said Draper.

However, "during the next two years, participating in church training gave me an opportunity to exercise some leadership and ministry skills."

Draper said another discouraging trend he sees in the convention is a minority of churches are baptizing the majority of new converts.

"Southern Baptists are failing in their mission and evangelism responsibilities," he said. "We in America have traditionally led the rest of the world in evangelism and missions, but we are moving furthur and furthur away from these commitments."

He called for church training programs to equip people in practical skills such as witnessing and parenting, provide information on current issues and offer ongoing studies in Baptist history.

"Because there is a lack of ongoing training in Southern Baptist churches we are seeing a generation of Baptists who are uncertain of their heritage," he said.

According to Draper, another problem which faces most churches is an inadequate program of follow-up after the initial conversion experience. "Our churches are failing to help people understand what it means to know God," he said.

In an effort to put missions into practice, Draper said, this past year his church has sent 80 people to do short-term missions in Brazil. "We will continue to give to missions through the Cooperative Program, but we are learning firsthand what it means to be involved."

In addition, he explained, next summer the church's youth group will not only be participating in an out-of-state mission project, but plans have been made to conduct some 50 backyard Bible clubs in Euless and surrounding communities.

Draper concluded by noting Southern Baptists cannot fulfill our responsibility to God by doing the giving and letting someone else do the serving.

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