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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICESBC Executive Committee
480 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, Tennessee 37219
(615) 244-2355
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. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

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84-148

**Clergy Housing Resolution
Put Off Until Next Year**

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)--Resolution of the two-year controversy surrounding tax treatment of clergy and military housing was passed on to the 99th Congress when the 98th Congress adjourned Oct. 12 without agreeing to a solution.

Congressmen and senators entered the debate after an early 1983 Internal Revenue Service ruling reversed a nearly 30-year policy of allowing clergy to take normal mortgage interest and real estate tax deductions in addition to any tax-exempt housing allowance they received.

As speculation mounted IRS might issue a similar ruling in the case of military personnel who also receive tax-exempt housing allowances, several proposals were introduced on both sides of Capitol Hill to prevent implementation of such rulings for military personnel and clergy.

In the end, Congress managed to delay until 1986 implementation of the 1983 ruling for clergy who owned or had a contract to purchase their residences as of Jan. 3, 1983. Also, in the final hours of the just completed session, the Senate approved a non-binding resolution expressing its sense that IRS should issue no similar ruling in the case of military housing. But these actions fell far short of the substantive proposals introduced to provide both groups permanent relief from such IRS rulings.

Earlier this year, Sen. John Warner, R-Va., attached an amendment to the 1985 Department of Defense authorization bill to provide statutory prohibition against IRS rulings on clergy and military housing. In conference, Warner reluctantly agreed to let the provision be dropped as opponents challenged the germaneness of tax legislation being added to a military authorization measure.

According to an aide, Warner intended to offer his proposal as a rider to a tax measure the Senate considered during the final days of this session. But the aide told Baptist Press continued opposition from the Treasury Department and House Ways and Means Committee chairman Dan Rostenkowski, D-Ill., coupled with a filibuster threat in the Senate, persuaded Warner instead to go with a resolution co-sponsored by Sen. William L. Armstrong, R-Colo., expressing the sense of the Senate that IRS should not disallow military personnel normal housing-related deductions "before the 99th Congress statutorily resolves the issue."

The Warner-Armstrong amendment on military housing, coupled with Congress' earlier approval of another Warner amendment delaying implementation of the 1983 ruling for certain ministers, established what Warner's aide said is a "solid legislative history" on which to build in the 99th Congress.

Opponents of the clergy housing ruling have charged during the past Congress that IRS violated the clear intent of Congress in issuing the 1983 ruling. They have further contended that clergy were unfairly singled out by the ruling, pointing to an internal IRS memorandum recommending that clergy and military housing situations be treated in the same fashion.

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New Single Hearted Church
Caters To UnmarriedBaptist Press
10/16/84

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (BP)--God never intended for the word "single" to mean left out, said Don E. Lane, founding pastor of the Single Hearted Church.

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But Lane has found churches often unwittingly cater to families, while single members of congregations are left to fend for themselves.

Lane hopes to remedy this saga of neglect with the Sept. 2 opening of the Single Hearted Church, Anchorage's first church designed specifically with singles in mind.

The singles' church is the brainchild of Muldoon Denali Baptist Church officials, Lane said. He added the singles' church will meet for worship at the Muldoon Denali Baptist Church complex at 382 Muldoon Road.

Although many Anchorage churches have special programs for singles, Lane said this will be the first church singles can call their own.

"Within six months, we hope to have 100 singles who regularly worship at the Single Hearted Church," Lane said. "We believe the church will be self-supporting by then."

Lane, 32, who until four weeks ago worked as the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Caddo Mills, Texas, said Sunday school classes are scheduled for 9:45 a.m. Sundays and worship services for 5 p.m. Sundays at the singles' church.

The new church also will offer singles the chance to participate in weekly Bible study, group fellowships, choirs and dramas, he said. A nursery will be provided at all services.

"The Muldoon Denali Baptist Church has about 35 single members who will begin attending the new church when it opens," Lane said. "We think by setting worship services for 5 p.m. Sundays, we will draw singles from other congregations about town."

"Singles could attend our worship services and still have time to make it to other churches for evening services."

Besides a pastor, the church will have its own music director, choir and ushers, he said.

"Although singles have the same basic spiritual needs as married Christians, they have altogether different lifestyles," he said, adding with a laugh. "I won't be preaching many sermons on marriage enrichment."

He said he hopes the opening of the church will allow singles to become one another's family, and that members will be able to help each other with practical matters. Plans call for the members of the church to take vacations together. "We're already planning a vacation to Hawaii," he said.

Lane said the Muldoon Denali Baptist Church receives daily calls from people asking about religious activities for singles.

"Services at the Single Hearted Church aren't going to be big pity parties," Lane said. "We're not going to let singles moan and groan about their fate; we're going to show them the way to live their lives to the fullest—we're going to put them to work for the Lord."

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Robber Assaults Missionary,
Gets Gospel Instead Of Money

By Mike Chute

Baptist Press
10/16/84

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (BP)—"I'm a believer. Jesus Christ is my Savior," missionary Bill Moseley repeated over and over as the robber pointed a pistol at his stomach.

Moseley, a Southern Baptist missionary from Florida, had just cashed his monthly mission check at a bank in Rio de Janeiro and he was getting into his car when he felt something jabbed into his ribs. A man holding a loaded revolver demanded the briefcase Moseley had already put in the car. When the missionary refused, the robber hit him on the head with the gun butt.

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Though stunned, the 6-foot-2 missionary didn't fall. Instead, he proclaimed Christ as his Savior. The robber struck him again, threatened to kill him, pointed the pistol at Moseley's feet and pulled the trigger. The pistol misfired. He fired again but somehow missed.

At that point, said Moseley, "I think he just realized he wasn't going to get the money without killing me and he just took off." Witnesses said the man jumped on the back of an accomplice's motorcycle and disappeared into afternoon traffic.

The missionary escaped with bumps and bruises and wasn't noticeably shaken by the incident. An avid jogger, he went home and ran nine miles that afternoon. What separated the 46-year-old mission veteran from injury was "the presence of the Lord," he said later. "There's no other explanation."

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Court Expands Church-State
Docket With Pair Of Disputes

By Stan Hastey

Baptist Press
10/16/84

WASHINGTON (BP)—The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to review two more church-state disputes, bringing to seven the number of such cases set for decision during its new term.

Accepted Oct. 15 were cases involving a Christmas nativity display in Scarsdale, N.Y., and application of a federal fair labor law to a religious foundation in Arkansas.

The Christmas creche case reopens a heated debate within the high court over the constitutionality of nativity scenes displayed on public property. Last March the court decided, 5-4, that cities and towns may choose to erect such displays on public property without offending the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

But in the new case, the question is whether the village of Scarsdale may be forced to provide publicly-owned property for a creche sponsored by a private group.

Arguing the town makes its centrally located Boniface Circle available to all kinds of groups, the Scarsdale Creche Committee contends that it may not be singled out for discrimination. The town has denied permission for the creche since 1981, although it had allowed the display each year from 1957 to 1980.

Scarsdale, a prosperous suburban town with a sizable Jewish population, has been the scene of a growing battle over the creche, a dispute the town's attorneys labeled as "hotly contested" in a written brief asking the Supreme Court to review the matter.

Although objections to the creche have come from both Christian and Jewish residents, the sponsoring committee has chosen not to accept the offers of numerous Scarsdale churches to provide their grounds for the display.

In lower court proceedings, a federal district court concluded the town was justified in denying the permission. But the Second Circuit Court of Appeals reversed, holding allowing the creche would not have the "direct and immediate effect of advancing religion" (84-277, Board of Trustees of the Village of Scarsdale v. McCreary).

Also accepted for review was a case brought by the Tony and Susan Alamo Foundation of Alma, Ark., against the Department of Labor over the question of whether federal fair labor provisions apply to the group.

Founded in California in 1969 and subsequently moved to the Arkansas town, the Alamo Foundation provides work opportunities for some 300 former drug addicts and criminals who live on foundation property and receive other material benefits for their "volunteer" service.

But the Department of Labor took legal action against the foundation in 1977 for what it alleged were violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act, a federal law mandating minimum wages and other protections for workers. Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan maintains the foundation owes some \$19 million in back wages to the "volunteers."

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Earlier both a federal district court and the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the foundation, the latter panel holding that "there is surely no constitutional right, under the religion clauses of the First Amendment, to pay substandard wages."

In a written appeal to the Supreme Court, attorneys for the foundation argued that while the foundation is involved in numerous businesses, it is a not-for-profit organization that enjoys federal tax exemption and is therefore not subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Each of its commercial enterprises, the foundation's lawyers argued, is actually a "church in disguise" and provides a "forum for rehabilitation."

No mention is made in either the foundation's brief or that submitted by the Department of Justice of the Alamo Foundation's extensive publication of anti-Catholic pamphlets and other materials (83-1935, Tony and Susan Alamo Foundation v. Donovan).

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Ohio Convention
Breaks 500 Mark

Baptist Press
10/16/84

COLUMBUS, Ohio (BP)—The 500th Southern Baptist church in Ohio was constituted as Community Baptist Church, Dover, in Muskingum Valley Association, with about 50 charter members.

The 501st came into being the same afternoon about 200 miles away as Forest Ridge Baptist Church, on Dayton's north side. Forest Ridge reverted to mission status in 1977 after once being a church, and most recently was sponsored by Far Hills Church, Dayton.

The milestone was reached over a decade after the 400th church was constituted in Worthington Sept. 9, 1973.

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Rosalynn Carter
Urges Gender Equality

By James H. Cox

Baptist Press
10/16/84

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, emphatically condemned a resolution passed by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention last June in a Louisville, Ky., address Oct. 15.

"The time has come," said Carter, "to move beyond resolutions. It's time to encourage all Americans, male and female, to develop their talents to the fullest, to become leaders based on merit, not on sex."

At this point, the audience of more than 650 persons interrupted with lengthy applause.

Carter's address came at a banquet at which she received the first Distinguished Christian Woman Award of the Woman's Committee of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. The award dinner was the highlight of a two-day conference on "The Changing Role of Women in Church and Society" sponsored jointly by the committee and the seminary.

"My faith has freed me, rather than enslaved me," Carter observed. "I can do whatever I want under God if I'm willing to work for it. It's time for us to accept the fact we are all one in Jesus Christ. God's acceptance of us (as individuals) is already complete."

When a reporter later asked Carter if she specifically avoided mentioning the ordaining of women in her address and the SEC resolution against it, she replied she had "already gone on record as very much opposed to the resolution" passed in Kansas City last summer. She acknowledged it is "time to get past resolutions" and to "recognize equality."

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When specific questions were interjected into the discussion about the current presidential campaign Carter said she would "have preferred" separation of church and state issues had been avoided in the campaign, "but I am strongly for that separation." She said the introduction of certain religious elements into the campaign "is not good."

Asked to respond to President Reagan's statement during the recent televised Louisville debate that he was unable to attend church because of the inconvenience to other worshippers due to security precautions, she replied the Carters attended church "every Sunday we were in Washington." There were "no objections from anyone," she said. "They made us feel welcome and that it was worth the trouble to have us wherever we were," she said.

Carter gave glimpses of the strong commitment to her faith during her Louisville address, declaring her "greatest blessing" is she was raised in a Christian home." She emphasized the influence her husband had been on helping her fulfill her Christian womanhood. "Jimmy has pushed me to explore every talent I possess," she added.

The award given Carter in Louisville was, according to Patty P. Cox, executive secretary-treasurer of the Woman's Committee, "for choosing to benefit humanity" by using her ability and influence to help mentally handicapped, aged, poor and broken people of society, for aiding the cause of women, for crusading for justice and world peace and for her devotion to her family and to Jesus Christ and to the church.

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Western Recorder

Southern Seminary Faculty
Affirms Commitment To Bible

Baptist Press
10/16/84

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—In a unanimous vote, the faculty of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., has adopted a resolution affirming belief "without reservation, in the inspiration and authority of the Bible and all that the Bible affirms about itself."

The document, "A Resolution of Gratitude and Commitment to Southern Baptists," expresses thanks to Southern Baptists for 125 years of prayer and financial support of theological education through Southern seminary, and reaffirms the faculty's commitment to "Jesus Christ as Lord and to the centrality of the Bible for all matters of faith and practice."

The resolution commends to all Southern Baptists historic Baptist beliefs concerning soul competency, liberty of conscience, and the priesthood of all believers, and specifically supports the statement on the Bible included in the 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" statement.

The Southern seminary faculty called on Southern Baptists to join in reaffirming "the Lordship of Jesus Christ, the authority of the Bible, the ethical imperatives of the gospel, the unity of the Southern Baptist Convention with all its diversity, (and) our cooperative partnership as Southern Baptists in education, evangelism, and world missions."

Seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt said the resolution should encourage Southern Baptists the faculty "consists of dedicated Christian teachers who are committed to the Lordship of Christ and to the inspiration and authority of Scripture."

The resolution was adopted on the 125th anniversary of Southern seminary. The seminary was founded in 1859 in Greenville, S.C. In 1877 the seminary was moved to Louisville.

The document reaffirmed the group's commitment "to teach in accordance with and not contrary to the Abstract of Principles, the oldest confessional statement governing a Southern Baptist institution or agency." Since the seminary's founding, each seminary professor has signed the Abstract, agreeing to teach in accord with its twenty theological principles.

Citing 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:20-21, the resolution declares the faculty's belief in "the inspiration of Scriptures" and "the inspiration of the Biblical writers." The resolution stated the faculty's "continuing fidelity to the...historic statements which have guided Southern seminary and the Southern Baptist Convention."

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