



BAPTIST PRESS

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85-22

Court Overturns Conviction In 1979 Douglass Murders

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)—In a decision which plows significant new ground in the field of criminal law, the U.S. Supreme Court has thrown out the conviction of a confessed murderer who five years ago killed a prominent Oklahoma Baptist pastor and his wife and severely wounded their two children.

Richard and Marilyn Douglass were shot to death Oct. 15, 1979 in their rural Canadian County home after they and their children, Brooks and Leslie, were bound and gagged in their living room. At the time, Richard Douglass was pastor of Putnam City Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. The Douglasses earlier had been Southern Baptist missionaries to Brazil.

Marilyn Douglass died almost instantly as the result of a single shot to the back of the head; Richard died a short time later of two gunshot wounds to the back of the head and strangulation.

The children—Brooks was 16 and Leslie 13 at the time—survived. He is now a senior at Baylor University; she a freshman at Oklahoma State University.

In its Feb. 26 decision, the nation's high court ordered a new trial for Glen Burton Ake, the triggerman in the case. Under holdings in the court's decision, the state will be required to provide Ake with psychiatric assistance in the preparation of his defense, a practice already used by more than 40 states and the federal government.

According to David Lee, chief of the criminal/federal division of the office of Oklahoma Attorney General Michael C. Turpen, Ake will be re-tried in a state court proceeding in which Garfield County District Attorney Cathy Stocker will prosecute.

In an 8-1 opinion written by Justice Thurgood Marshall, the high court held that when a criminal defendant has made a preliminary showing that his sanity at the time of the crime is likely to be a significant factor in his defense, "the Constitution requires that a State provide access to a psychiatrist's assistance...if the defendant cannot otherwise afford one."

Marshall said further: "We recognized long ago that mere access to the courthouse doors does not by itself assure a proper functioning of the adversary process, and that a criminal trial is fundamentally unfair if the State proceeds against an indigent defendant without making certain that he has access to the raw materials integral to the building of an effective defense."

Marshall rejected Oklahoma's argument to provide such assistance would cost too much, noting Oklahoma is one of fewer than 10 states whose legislatures and courts do not require the provision of a psychiatrist in helping accused criminals prepare their defense.

In oral arguments last November, Ake's attorney argued his client's constitutional rights were violated by the denial of psychiatric assistance to help determine whether Ake was insane at the time of the crime, even though Ake admitted in a 44-page confession that he was the triggerman who killed Richard and Marilyn Douglass and wounded Brooks and Leslie Douglass.

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Ake and co-defendant Steven Keith Hatch were arrested in Colorado after a month-long crime spree following the Douglass killings. (In a separate proceeding Hatch was convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death. He is currently awaiting execution on death row at Oklahoma's state prison at McAlester.) Ake was arraigned early in 1980 but exhibited behavior so "bizarre" before and during the arraignment hearing the trial judge ordered him examined by a state-appointed psychiatrist to determine if he were mentally fit to stand trial.

After the examining psychiatrist diagnosed Ake as a probable paranoid schizophrenic and recommended further evaluation, he was committed to a state hospital. Six weeks later, however, the institution's chief forensic psychiatrist informed the court Ake was competent to stand trial, in part because he was receiving 200 milligrams, three times daily, of Thorazine, an antipsychotic drug. The state then resumed proceedings against Ake.

At a pretrial conference in June 1980, Ake's attorney informed the court his client would plead insanity and asked for a separate psychiatric evaluation to assist in preparation of his defense. But after the trial judge rejected the request, Ake was convicted on all counts, after which he was given two death sentences for the Douglass murders and a total of 1,000 years imprisonment on two counts of shooting with intent to kill.

Lee, who assisted Oklahoma Attorney General Turpen in arguing the case for the state, told Baptist Press the evidence against Ake is "overwhelming," and added, "We don't think there is any question he was sane at the time of the crime."

He said while the question raised in the Ake case is "probably something that needed to be answered," by the Supreme Court, "it is unfortunate" the ruling had to come in a case "with such outrageous facts."

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People Who Burned Church
Help Celebrate Anniversary

By John Brackin

Baptist Press
2/28/85

POCOLA, Guatemala (BP)—Almost 6,000 people showed up for the 16th anniversary service of a little country church in Pocola, including local residents who burned down the church building 13 years ago.

A majority of those who once violently opposed the evangelical gospel message preached by Jerusalem K'ekchi Baptist Church now have accepted Jesus Christ as personal Savior through its ministry.

The multitudes of other people attending the February anniversary represented 49 Baptist churches and mission points started over the years by the Jerusalem congregation.

The church kitchen crew fed more than 3,000 people daily during the celebration Feb. 7-10. Local church members donated six cows, 15 turkeys, 60 hens, 50 pounds of rice, 500 pounds of beans and 60,000 pounds of corn for tortillas.

Activities began at 5 a.m. daily with a prayer meeting and ended after 10 p.m. with a Christian film. Three preaching services came in-between, and the majority of people present participated in all activities, though many had to stand outside the church building. More than 2,000 slept each night in a revival tent borrowed from Southern Baptist missionaries.

The church, which ministers to K'ekchi Indians, is located in a remote valley north of Guatemala City. Only a handful of houses can be seen from the church. Miguel Coc Macz became pastor of the new congregation when he was 15. He later worked as a Baptist home missionary among K'ekchi Indians elsewhere but has since returned to the Jerusalem church, which now counts some 600 members.

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Brackin is press representative for Southern Baptist missionaries in Guatemala.

Judge Leaves \$2 Million
Estate To Baylor

WACO, Texas (BP)—A district judge in Texas has left a sprawling south Texas ranch worth about \$2 million to Baylor University.

Jim W. Weatherby who died last month at age 74 in Kerrville, stipulated Baylor use the money to establish scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students from Hubbard, Bandera, Kerr, Gillespie, Kimble and Kendall counties, the five counties where he had lived.

Also, money from his estate is to go to Texas schoolteachers "who have demonstrated they are dedicated teachers and who wish to pursue their education and sharpen their teaching skills."

Weatherby received both his bachelor's and law degrees from Baylor and was admitted to the Texas Bar in 1934.

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Hollywood Group Honors
ACTS For Excellence

Baptist Press
2/28/85

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—The ACTS network has won its first award, for "excellence in religious programming," from a group of Hollywood actors, directors and producers which, for the first time, honored a Christian network.

The Southern California Motion Picture Council, represented by David Soul, star of TV's "Starsky and Hutch," presented its prestigious Golden Halo Award to Jimmy R. Allen, president of the Southern Baptist TV network. The group, which is committed to raising the standards of decency in the entertainment industry, has given similar awards to Gregory Peck, Robert Stack and Haing Ngor, star of the movie, "The Killing Fields."

Soul said the council's award recognizes the need for substantive, people-centered TV programming. "As an actor, I am becoming increasingly frustrated that there is no place to take compassionate material about people's lives," he said. "I am hungry for that kind of outlet."

Soul, himself a Christian, was accompanied to Fort Worth by Jess Moody, pastor of First Baptist Church, Van Nuys, Calif. Soul said many in the Hollywood creative community would welcome the chance ACTS provides to express their convictions on the air. "What you have accomplished so far must continue," he added. "If the church does not do the kind of programming that captures the attention of the American people with the gospel, we are fools."

Allen emphasized ACTS' commitment to produce programming which would challenge and inspire American viewers. "The new technology has given us a new responsibility to impact our nation with the gospel message, and provide moral leadership in the family of nations," he said.

The nine-month-old ACTS network now reports a potential audience of almost three million homes through cable TV and low-power television, Allen said. The network is operated by the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission.

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Metro Clinic Boosts
Sunday School Growth

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
2/28/85

LOS ANGELES (BP)—Some churches developed a Sunday school organization where none existed before, others created new age group departments while still others gained a new spirit for their Sunday school work.

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But for all of the 200 churches participating in the Southern California Metro Enrollment Training Clinic, the week-long session brought a boost in enrollment with a total gain of 1,568 new members. The churches created 836 new units and have 2,415 newly trained workers.

The new members were found during a People Search Feb. 17 conducted by 6,000 canvassers from the participating churches.

Those canvassers also located nearly 16,000 new prospects for Sunday school enrollment bringing the total number of prospects of the churches to nearly 37,000.

While the People Search leads to new prospects for a church, its greatest value is in what participation does for the church members, said Blake Withers, minister of education at Crescent Baptist Church, Anaheim, Calif. "A hundred people going out on a People Search means 100 people getting excited about prospects," he said.

"They become more concerned about the prospects than if someone hands them a card with the name and address already on it. They have the attitude, 'Those are my prospects.' They're more likely to follow up on them," Withers explained.

The Crescent church canvasses the community about twice a year. The searches have contributed to the growth of the Sunday school which had six classes with 500 enrolled three years ago and now has 19 classes of more than 1,000, according to Withers.

The Southern California metro clinic involved 200 churches in an eight-association area. Nearly 800 volunteer workers from 39 state conventions participated in the clinic as guest directors and age-group leaders. Only the conventions of the District of Columbia, New England and Puerto Rico were not represented in the clinic.

About half of the churches in the eight associations chose to participate in the clinic. The clinic area includes 13 million people. According to surveys, 85 percent of those people are unchurched.

The training portion of the clinic led to the creation of 836 new units with 2,415 workers trained to lead those units. In many cases, the new units were developed by dividing large group classes into age groupings.

For example, Central Baptist Church, Inglewood, had a preschool class with 15 attending and a children's class with 30 attending. One teacher worked with each of the two classes. The visiting team recommended two classes be developed for preschoolers and three for children.

The clinic brought an awareness of what can be accomplished through the Sunday school, said Bruce Stokes, pastor of First Baptist Church, Westminster, Calif.

"The people have seen what Sunday school can be. The team has led our church to understand Sunday school," Stokes said as 39 church members gathered for Thursday night follow-up visitation after the Sunday People Search. Stokes said before the metro clinic he would not have expected more than two people to show up for visitation.

The Southern California clinic is the largest of 10 planned by the Baptist Sunday School Board as part of the 8.5 by '85 emphasis of reaching people for Christ. Clinics will be held later this year in Houston and Louisville, Ky.

The Southern California clinic may be the largest such project ever undertaken by the Sunday School Board in terms of the number of people involved and organizations contributing, said Ernest Adams, coordinator of the clinic and supervisor of the program promotion section of the board's Sunday school department.

The clinic has "lived up to our hopes and expectations," Adams said. "The benefit to the churches here will be great. Some will show immediate and spectacular growth."

Jerry Harris, director of the Sunday school department of the Southern Baptist General Convention of California, said the clinic is "a prime example of what Southern Baptists are all about. It shows we can do together what we can't do alone."

The greatest impact of the clinic will be the effect on the commitment and skills of the volunteer workers who attended, Adams said. The clinic also will help break down ethnic barriers in the convention, he added. About one-fourth of the churches in the clinic are black or ethnic. In some associations, half the churches participating were black.

At the beginning of the clinic, Lloyd Elder, president of the Baptist Sunday School Board insisted, "We are building lives and building churches through building Sunday schools. Regardless of how small the work may be, you don't know how big God wants that work to be. We don't know what God wants to do in our lives; we only know he wants us to reach people."

The Sunday School Board plans to conduct one clinic each year between 1986 and 1990, Adams said. Locations have not been identified yet. Each state convention will be encouraged to conduct its own enrollment-training clinic between 1986 and 1990, Adams said.

By 1990, with 15 clinics in seven years and separate clinics conducted by state conventions, it is hoped there will be clinic teams in each association capable of conducting a church enrollment-training clinic, Adams said.

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Baylor Fund-Raising Project
Surpasses \$100 Million Goal

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2/28/85

WACO, Texas (BP)—Baylor University officials have announced the five-year campaign to increase net assets by \$100 million, begun in January 1980, has been surpassed by \$27 million.

The project was labeled "Profile '85" concluded in January 1985.

Baylor's net assets now stand at more than \$272 million. As a result of the campaign, the number of academic chairs increased from 18 to 28. Lectureships increased from nine to 13, and student scholarships were upped from 374 to 691. Approximately 7,000 donors contributed to "Profile '85." More than 22,000 gifts were received during the five-year campaign.

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Polish Baptist Leader
Dies Of Apparent Stroke

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WARSAW, Poland (BP)—Michal Stankiewicz, 61, president of the Baptist Union of Poland, died at home Feb. 21 of an apparent stroke.

For the past 20 years Stankiewicz had been either president or general secretary of the Baptist union. Stankiewicz, editor of a number of books for Polish Baptists, had been a member of the European Baptist Federation Council and Executive Committee and the Baptist World Alliance General Council.

He was baptized in 1941 and studied at the Polish Baptist Seminary, then located in Malbork, graduated from the Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and earned a doctorate in Polish literature and language from the University of Warsaw.

Stankiewicz was a longtime trustee of the Ruschlikon seminary. He formerly acted as superintendent of Baptist churches in the Warsaw region, edited the Baptist union's monthly periodical and taught at the Baptist seminary, now in Warsaw. He also actively participated in the Polish Ecumenical Council.

He is survived by his wife, Joanna, and their daughter, Bogumila. Funeral services were scheduled for Feb. 28 at First Baptist Church, Warsaw.

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