



## BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

### NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee  
901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203  
(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. Hastey, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

March 15, 1985

85-29

### Kidnapped Nicaraguan Alive, Says Atlanta Journalist

ATLANTA (BP)--A young Nicaraguan Baptist kidnapped by contra forces last October is alive and now a rebel herself, according to an Atlanta journalist.

Marcia Chamorro is living with Nicaraguan rebels based in a large camp in southern Honduras, revealed Gary Moore, a reporter for the Atlanta Journal and Constitution newspapers, in a special report on Central America published March 3.

Moore joined a team of reporters and photographers in Central America for seven weeks. He interviewed Chamorro in mid-December at the Las Vegas base camp of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force (FDN), located near the Coco River on the Nicaraguan border in south central Honduras. The FDN is the largest of the contra (counterrevolutionary) groups fighting to overthrow the Sandinista government in Nicaragua.

Chamorro, 17, was among five volunteer government teachers kidnapped Oct. 5 in the Jinotega region of Nicaragua. A group of about 60 armed men reportedly stopped a truck carrying the teachers, shot one to death and took five others, including Chamorro. Unheard from for months, she had been feared dead.

Moore reported Chamorro looked healthy and well-fed in December. A photograph of her face published in the March 3 Atlanta Journal and Constitution report appears to confirm this.

"I was in the camp for a number of days," Moore said in a telephone interview. "I first saw her walking around one day and was struck by her smile.... She had a big smile on her face and was kind of helping in some little kitchen there." She bore no readily visible signs of physical torture, he said.

Moore was later told Chamorro had "come over" from the Sandinistas. He then questioned her several times, both in the presence of contra leaders and alone.

Chamorro recounted her kidnapping and how she had been torn from the arms of her terrified mother, who was with her when she was seized. Separated from the other four kidnapped teachers, she had not seen them since, Chamorro said. She fully expected to be tortured or killed, but instead was treated kindly, she claimed. Moore said she described her captors as "just kids...just country people."

The contra fighters were on an extended combat mission in Nicaragua and kept Chamorro with them. She was given the "little blue-and-white book," the guerillas' handbook of ideology. Soon she met the "Black Hand" (code name for the leader of the rebel band). "He did not threaten her," Moore reported. "He was eloquent, impassioned" and very persuasive about the justice of the contra cause.

The "Black Hand" also thrust his automatic rifle into her hands during a subsequent battle with Sandinistas and told her to fire at them. She protested but obeyed. In discussions with Moore she admitted, "He's my boyfriend." She also acknowledged participating in rebel radio broadcasts.

Moore speculated Chamorro's situation may be a "classic Patty Hearst-type case." He believes she could have been brainwashed or intensively indoctrinated, or become a victim of what some psychologists call "hostage identification syndrome," in which a terrified hostage begins to identify with a forceful captor after the hostage isn't personally mistreated.

Whatever happened, it caused a complete turnaround in Chamorro's outlook. Described by her pastor as an active member of Genezareth Baptist Church in Managua before her kidnapping, she told Moore she also had been a member of the Sandinista Youth and Sandinista Popular Militia, had been sent to Cuba for teacher training and had "dedicated herself to the (Sandinista) revolution."

"There's something that happened to her that goes beyond ideology," Moore said.

The reporter said he personally delivered a "very emotional" letter from Chamorro to her family in Managua on Dec. 23, along with a Polaroid photograph of the young woman taken in the Honduras contra camp. They reacted with sobs of joy, followed by disbelief. Moore said they had heard rumors Chamorro had spoken on contra radio broadcasts, but could not accept her statements that she willingly remained with the contras.

A Baptist source contacted March 5 in Managua described the Chamorro family as "glad she's alive" but "confused." Other Baptists, some of whom had come to regard Chamorro as something of a heroic martyr figure after her kidnapping, remain "in the dark" about her current situation, the source said.

Moore described the Las Vegas camp as the largest contra stronghold in southern Honduras, a base for what he estimated to be 6,000 Nicaraguans as of December. Kidnapping appears to be a common form of recruiting on both sides, he said. Some contra "recruits" who refuse to fight may be executed, he added; others apparently are allowed to escape.

The Sandinistas recently launched a major offensive against contra bases in the border region. Chamorro's family has received no further communication from her since December, according to the Baptist source.

--30--

House Sets Panels To Focus  
On Hunger, Drugs, Children

By Larry Chesser

Baptist Press  
3/15/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—The U.S. House of Representatives voted March 7 to reestablish select committees to focus on hunger, narcotics abuse and control and children, youth and families.

All three select committees functioned during the 98th Congress but reauthorization for such panels is required during each Congress. In addition to authorization, the Houses must also approve funding for the committees to operate.

The Select Committee on Hunger, which will be composed of 17 House members appointed by the Speaker, will have no legislative jurisdiction, but will conduct comprehensive review and study of hunger issues. Based on its reviews it will make recommendations to any of the eight standing committees of the House which have jurisdiction over aspects of domestic and international hunger. In addition, the Select Committee on Hunger will be required to submit an annual report to the House including a summary of its activities.

The Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control—first established in 1976, will function in a manner similar to that of the hunger panel. It also will have no legislative jurisdiction, but will be directed to conduct a comprehensive review of drug abuse problems and recommend legislative action to appropriate House standing committees.

The panel will be made up of 25 members appointed by the Speaker, but including one member each from the following committees: Agriculture, Armed Services, Government Operations, Foreign Affairs, Energy and Commerce, Judiciary, Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Veterans' Affairs and Ways and Means.

The Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families was first authorized late in the 97th Congress and functioned during the 98th Congress. The new authorization provides for a membership of no more than 30 House members to be appointed by the Speaker.

--more--

Like the other select committees, this panel will not have legislative authority, but will conduct a comprehensive review of issues related to children, youth and families and make recommendations to House committees with appropriate jurisdiction. During the past Congress, the Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families conducted 25 hearings and issued five reports.

Although all three resolutions establishing the select committees cleared the House by wide margins, a number of House members spoke in opposition, describing the committees as an unnecessary expense and duplicative of other committees.

—30—

CORRECTION: In Baptist Press story mailed 3/14/84 titled: Home Mission Board Acts On Ordination, Farm Crisis, please insert the following paragraph as paragraph 9 of the story as sent: Later in the meeting, the chairman of the board's personnel committee, Eddie Rickenbaker of Belton, S.C., said any personnel matters of a sensitive nature in the future would be discussed by the full personnel committee, rather than during the smaller executive committee meetings.

Then pickup with the previous graph 9, beginning: "Board members also acted..."  
Thank you,  
Baptist Press

Water Returns To Uganda City  
As Baptists Install New Pump

Baptist Press  
3/15/85

LIRA, Uganda (BP)—Water runs again in the pipes of Lira, Uganda, where officials feared an outbreak of disease before Southern Baptists offered to provide the city a new pump.

Southern Baptist missionaries Walter Allen of Texas and Paul Eaton of New Mexico worked almost a week installing a new pump purchased with Southern Baptist relief funds after the town's old pump was judged beyond repair.

After the old pump grew unreliable, missionaries joined other residents crowded around two boreholes with hand pumps. The holes had become the primary water source for the town of 35,000. Some residents used local springs, but the springs began to dry up during the dry season. People became desperate, said Eaton.

The town pressed every available vehicle into service hauling water, especially for institutions such as boarding schools. The district commissioner began to fear an outbreak of disease.

When the new pump was installed, Lira District Commissioner Agnes A. Onyu wrote to the missionaries, "Sometimes when people are or have been too kind to one in such a way as you and your mission have been to the people of Lira Town, it is very difficult for one to just say 'thank you' because it is a common word which does not show the inner feeling of a grateful people."

—30—

HMB Approves Title Changes,  
Reorganization; Elects Two Staff By Michael Tutterow

Baptist Press  
3/15/85

ATLANTA (BP)—Board of directors for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board elected two new evangelism staffers, approved title changes for two other board staff and voted to reorganize the board's missions ministries division during its spring meeting.

—more—

Board members approved the change in title of Robert T. Banks from vice-president for administration to executive vice-president, effective immediately.

Banks, who will continue to oversee the board's internal operations, interagency relationships and financial affairs, joined the staff in 1981.

Jack R. Smith, evangelism director for the Baptist Convention of Pennsylvania-South Jersey since 1981, was elected associate director of the board's personal evangelism department.

Smith will assume the newly-created post April 1, 1985. He will coordinate evangelism projects to motivate, equip and involve laypersons, pastors and evangelism leaders in cultivating and/or building witnessing relationships with non-Christians.

He will also coordinate witness commitment day emphases and saturation witness projects.

Smith, a native of Gainesville, Ga., was director of associational missions for Northeast Pennsylvania Baptist Association prior to joining the Pennsylvania-South Jersey state convention staff. He also has been pastor of churches in Pennsylvania, Alabama and Mississippi, and was minister of music/education for Main Street Baptist Church in Bogalusa, La.

He is a graduate of the University of Alabama and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Board members also elected Darrel D. King associate to the special assistant in spiritual awakening.

King will supervise and direct scheduling, planning and promotion, and conduct all Prayer for Spiritual Awakening training institutes in state conventions. He also will assist with planning and conducting all regional and national Spiritual Awakening conferences.

King's responsibilities also will include overseeing reprinting and distribution of all materials related to the board's office of spiritual awakening.

King, a native of Campbell, Mo., has been a Mission Service Corps volunteer working with the Prayer for Spiritual Awakening office in Atlanta. Prior to joining MSC in 1981, he worked with King Film Ministry in St. Louis, and was a seminar instructor with Change the World Schools of Prayer.

King attended Missouri Baptist College and is a graduate of Luther Rice Seminary.

Directors for the Atlanta-based missions agency also approved a title change for Jimmie L. Hurst from director of media art to director of specialized art services.

Hurst will continue to create exhibits, displays and artwork used in special projects, including motion pictures, video and filmstrips. Hurst's position also was transferred from the board's media department to the promotion department.

In other actions, the board approved of a reorganization of the agency's missions ministries division, adding a new position as associate division director.

The reorganization dissolved the present Christian social ministries department and created two new departments to deal with Christian social ministries.

The church and community ministries department will relate to missionaries who serve with associations and churches. It also will include the work of the national consultant for the blind and handicapped and the work of literacy missions.

Beverly Hammack, assistant director in the former CSM department, was named director of the new church and community ministries department. Mildred Blankenship, assistant director in the former CSM department, was named assistant director in the new department.

A newly created Christian social ministries centers department will relate to missionaries serving institutions and Baptist centers. Charles McCullin, associate director of the former CSM department, was named director of the Christian social ministries centers department. Harold Wilcox, assistant director in the former CSM department, was named associate director to McCullin.

Paul R. Adkins, director of the former CSM department, was named associate director of the missions ministries division.

In other actions, board members appointed seven missionaries, six missionary associates and four church planter apprentices and upgraded two missionary associates to missionary status. The board also approved 20 persons for church pastoral assistance, 10 people for language pastoral assistance and 49 people for field pastoral assistance.

—30—

Teleconference Offers  
Direct Training, Feedback

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press  
3/15/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Baptist Telecommunication Network was used for the first time March 11 by the Baptist Sunday School Board's Sunday school department as a tool for direct training and immediate feedback with local church Sunday school workers during a one-hour teleconference.

"The teleconference gave us immediate feedback rather than waiting six months to figure out what the churches need," said Max Caldwell, manager of the youth-adult group of the Sunday school department.

The session provided a training medium to show workers how to use the weekly BTN Sunday school worker preparation messages more effectively in weekly workers meeting and the opportunity to answer their questions immediately, Caldwell said.

Callers asked for suggestions on when to conduct weekly workers meetings, assistance on planning department sessions along with the existing suggestions on teaching the lesson, tips for motivating class members and lesson applications.

Others suggested more visuals be used with the BTN messages and persons presenting the material become more comfortable on camera.

One caller asked for worker preparation messages for preschool and children workers. Monthly 40-minute messages are scheduled to begin in October for preschool and children materials. Currently, BTN lesson helps are produced for youth and adult workers using the Life and Work Series and Bible Book Series. Messages to support the Convention Uniform Series begin March 24.

In an introduction to the teleconference, Harry Piland, director of the Sunday school department explained the BTN worker preparation messages are not to replace the church's weekly workers meetings but to support them.

Recent changes in the structure of the BTN messages were a response to comments from users, Larry Shotwell, adult program supervisor, explained during the teleconference.

Those changes involved lengthening the time allotted to biblical background discussion, providing background material not available in the curriculum material and using seminary professors and other noted authorities to present background material.

Youth-adult group consultants will attempt to contact churches and associations subscribing to BTN soon for their responses to the teleconference.

Additional teleconference-style training sessions are likely to be developed. "I see possibilities for additional things of this kind. We will think about how we can use BTN to train church leaders," Caldwell said.

—30—

Anti-Apartheid Measures  
Introduced In Congress

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (BP)—A bipartisan group of more than 100 lawmakers has introduced legislation which would impose economic sanctions on South Africa because of that government continuing policy of apartheid—separation of the races.

"The time has come for the United States, by our actions, to get on the side of freedom for South Africa's disenfranchised majority," declared Sen. Lowell Weicker Jr., R-Conn., one of the sponsors of the Senate measure (S. 635). Heading a long list of sponsors of the House bill (H.R. 1460) is Rep. Bill Gray III, D-Pa. Gray, new chairman of the House Budget Committee and a Baptist minister, sponsored similar legislation in the 98th Congress.

The proposal contains four types of sanctions against South Africa. First it would permit no new bank loans to the South African government except those used "to construct and/or operate educational, housing, or health facilities open to and accessible to all on a non-discriminatory basis." Under the bill, this provision would be waived only after the apartheid system had been dismantled.

Second, it would ban exportation to the South African government of all computers, software and goods intended to service its computers.

Third, it would ban new investment in and bank loans to South Africa. Sponsors said this provision is aimed at stopping the flow of new funds from the U.S. to South Africa but would not curtail such activities as reinvestment of profits, obtaining loans and raising capital from sources within South Africa.

Finally, the bill would prohibit the importation of South African kruggerands (gold coins) into the U.S.

The bill provides penalties including fines and imprisonment for companies and individuals convicted of violating its sanctions.

The last two restrictions could be waived by the President and Congress for periods of up to 12 months when the South African government has met any of a number of conditions listed in the bill designed to eliminate apartheid and improve quality of life for the nation's black majority.

Sponsors said all sanctions of the bill would be removed once apartheid has been dismantled "and South Africa is moving toward a system of full participation by all its people in the political, economic and social life of the country."

"Up to this point, the United States, through Republican and Democratic administrations and Congresses, has adopted a cost-free approach to apartheid," Weicker said. "Wonderful words and diplomatic entreaties have done little more than salve our consciences while the oppression goes on. As Bishop Tutu has said, there can be no neutrality with respect to apartheid: we are either on the side of the oppressed or the oppressor."

Meanwhile, in another congressional proposal at least partially directed at South Africa, Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., and others have introduced legislation authorizing the U.S. to mint a gold coin which could compete against South Africa's kruggerand.

Dole said his bill (S. 636) was based on a House bill sponsored by Rep. Jerry Lewis, R-Calif., and Rep. Julian C. Dixon, D-Calif., and members of the Black Caucus in the House.

Dole said the legislation would be appropriate because every year about three million for ign gold coins are imported into the U.S. resulting in a \$1 billion trade deficit. In addition, Dole said "many Americans view the kruggerand—which accounts for \$400 million of that \$1 billion trade imbalance—as a symbol of apartheid."

Record Size Mission Team  
Embarks On Rio Crusade

By Bob Allen

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—A team of 540 volunteers headed for the largest simultaneous evangelistic effort in the history of Southern Baptist mission work overseas March 8.

The week-long crusade in greater Rio de Janiero, sponsored by the Brazilian Baptist Association of Rio and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, involves more Southern Baptist volunteers working in a single evangelistic effort at one time than ever before on a mission field, said Wayne Dehoney, coordinator and organizer of the crusade.

The team includes 80 preachers, who will lead simultaneous evangelistic services in 80 churches in the greater Rio area, 40 medical and dental personnel working in 25 clinics in the slums of Rio; musicians, and lay persons organized into teams for street witnessing and leading training sessions in Brazilian Baptist churches.

A Sunday afternoon rally kicking off the crusade in a soccer stadium which seats 100,000 people was expected to be a highlight. Crusade rallies are common in Rio, Dehoney said, and it is common for stadiums to be packed and for hundreds of people to come forward at the invitation.

Tracts with parallel English and Portuguese explaining the plan of salvation will enable lay persons who are not bilingual to effectively witness from door to door and on the streets, Dehoney said.

There are many opportunities for street witnessing in the city of eight million people, Dehoney said. A half million people cross at one ferry each day, and a 10-minute service there can draw a crowd of 500, he added.

Brazilian Baptists comprise the largest national convention with which Southern Baptist missionaries cooperate. Baptist work in Brazil began more than 100 years ago. More than 3,000 churches and 550,000 members belong to the Brazilian Baptist Convention.

Dehoney, retired pastor of Louisville's Walnut Street Baptist Church and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said the crusade is also the first instance of a full carrier load of Baptists being transported overseas for a massive evangelistic/mission thrust.

The 540-member team is by far the largest ever to embark on such a mission effort, Dehoney said. Last year, a total of 2,000 persons were involved in partnership evangelism in all program areas, he said.

--30--

College Students Spend  
Break Building Housing

By Leisa A. Hammett

Baptist Press  
3/15/85

ATLANTA (BP)—For many college students, spring break means "Beach or Bust," but not for 82 North Carolina State University and Meredith College, students.

They chose to make their break "count for something" by cooperating with various Atlanta Protestant groups in constructing low income housing and helping with after school and senior citizen ministries.

Spring break was an "ecumenical" experience for the students who ranged from freshmen to seniors and included several Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary students.

The students, representing a variety of Protestant faiths, are all participants in the college ministry of Forest Hills Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C. This was the ministry's second such trek to Atlanta for similar mission projects.

--more--

Forest Hills College Minister Don Patty and fellow leaders arranged the spring break projects with Habitat for Humanity, an ecumenical organization; the Parish House, a Presbyterian and Methodist sponsored senior citizen ministry and Bethlehem Center, a United Methodist operated community ministry.

The Forest Hills students "guttled" three Habitat homes and helped build two others. In an effort to preserve neighborhoods and family dwellings, Habitat volunteers either built homes from scratch or remodeled existing homes, with plumbing, wiring, insulation, and other things.

Habitat for Humanity is an interdenominational organization concerned about providing housing for the poor. The Americus, Ga., organization received national media attention last fall when former President Jimmy Carter and wife Rosalynn assisted other volunteers in renovating a seven-story building in lower east New York City.

"We were guinea pigs for Habitat," said Forest Hills Minister of Music Larry Ballard. The Baptist group was the largest group of volunteers that had ever worked for the organization on any given project. "We were an experiment," Ballard added.

Forest Hills, according to Ballard, built one home "from the ground up--including, the insulation, and the water and sewer lines, exterior paint and a porch. Many of the N.C. State students, he said, are studying engineering and possess the needed technical and practical experience. The students also landscaped the yard of another newly-completed habitat home.

Habitat homes are sold at low, interest-free, non-profit prices to poor people who qualify. The home's surrounding property is leased. Habitat owns the leases to insure the land remains residential.

In addition to Habitat project, singing at two Baptist and one Methodist church and a local college Baptist Student Union, Forest Hills students also assisted in craft and inspirational programs offered at the senior citizen center. The group also performed plumbing and needed construction on an Atlanta community center called Parish House.

Participating college students originally anticipated 15 to 50 kids the first day they led an after-school program at Parish House. But the clowning and drama the students had performed at local schools and neighborhoods, prior to that afternoon, produced a surprise number of 125 children.

The spring break in Atlanta, explained Amy Hardison, a Merideth College sophomore from Newport News, Va., consisted of a grueling 12 hours of labor each day.

Scott Walker, N.C. State senior computer science major from Rocky Mountain, N.C., added: "Even though you work and get so tired that you can't stand up, you get something out of it."

The students received surprised reactions from peers when they learned how the Forest Hills students planned to spend their break. When fellow students heard the group was headed for Atlanta, many assumed it was to attend a basketball tournament, which was held in Atlanta that week and included N.C. State as one of the competing teams. But after a week of bone-racking work, loyal fans in the group lounged in front of a television set to watch their team.

The college ministry's six previous mission jaunts have included spring break and summer projects in New York City, Washington and rural Kentucky and West Virginia. Participating students have also done construction work for a Baptist assembly and helped coastal North Carolinians clean up debris left by a tornado.

Working in rural Kentucky, said Ballard, inspired an ongoing local construction program. Following leads from Raleigh-area social services and various ecumenical groups, Forest Hills college department members spend two or three Saturdays, each month, installing storm windows, fixing electrical and plumbing problems for senior citizens and other needy.

Besides donating their Saturdays, and spring and summer breaks, participating Forest Hills students were responsible for the cost of their stay in Atlanta.



"The people in the community," said N.C. State sophomore, Kevin Rust, "have had a hard time understanding why we pay to work."

But projects like this, he said, provide a chance to "reach out and make a difference. And despite the fact that they sacrificed the tropical rays to do home missions, Kevin and his co-workers agreed, "It was worth it."

--30--

### News Analysis

Supreme Court Struggles With  
'Accommodation' Of Religion

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press  
3/15/85

WASHINGTON (BP)--"Accommodation" is the word being used to describe the shift taking place in the U.S. Supreme Court's views of the First Amendment's religion clauses.

That such a shift is well under way is undeniable, especially in view of decisions over the past two terms, including approval of tuition tax deductions at the state level (*Mueller v. Allen*, 103 S.Ct. 3062 (1983)), paid chaplains in state legislatures (*Marsh v. Chambers*, 103 S.Ct. 3330 (1983)), and municipally owned creches displayed on privately owned property (*Lynch v. Donnelly*, 104 S.Ct. 1355 (1984)).

The degree to which the doctrine of accommodation will be further applied may well be signaled over the next four months as the high court hands down opinions in several church-state cases. With seven such disputes to be decided, the current term will go down as the most prolific church-state term in court history.

Among issues to be decided are Alabama's silent prayer statute; Grand Rapids, Michigan's practice of leasing classroom space from parochial schools to provide special education programs to nonpublic pupils; New York City's use of federal elementary and Secondary Education Act funds to send public school teachers into parochial schools for special education classes;

Scarsdale, New York's refusal to permit a privately owned creche on public property; Nebraska's law requiring even persons who object for religious reasons to have their photographs displayed on driver's licenses, and Connecticut's statute requiring private employers to give their employees a day off each week as requested for religious observances.

An argument can be made that the heavy volume of such cases in the current term, added to the important rulings of the last two terms, indicate fundamental changes in the court's approach to the church-state equation. Something significant must be happening, goes this line of reasoning, or why would the court tackle all these disputes in such a short time.

On the other hand, a case can be built that what is now labeled "accommodation" has been around a long time. Justice William O. Douglas, for example, wrote in *Zorach v. Clauson*, (334 U.S. 306 (1952)), "We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being." That phrase has been used since its penning more than 30 years ago by some high court justices troubled by what they have considered an overly strict interpretation of the First Amendment's ban on an establishment of religion.

In fact, Douglas himself—who was indisputably a strict separationist—made the point forcefully in *Zorach*, a 6-3 decision upholding a program of released time for public school students to receive off-campus religious instruction: "There is much talk of the separation of Church and State in the history of the Bill of Rights and in the decisions clustering around the First Amendment. There cannot be the slightest doubt that the First Amendment reflects the philosophy that Church and State should be separated.

--more--

"And so far as interference with the 'free exercise' of religion and an 'establishment' of religion are concerned, the separation must be complete and unequivocal. The First Amendment within the scope of its coverage permits no exception; the prohibition is absolute. The First Amendment, however, does not say that in every and all respects there shall be a separation of Church and State.... Otherwise the state and religion would be aliens to each other—hostile, suspicious, and even unfriendly."

In a generalized sense, the question is, how different are those views of the libertarian Douglas from those of current Chief Justice Warren E. Burger as expressed in *Walz v. Tax Commission of the City of New York*, (397 U.S. 664 (1970)): "The course of constitutional neutrality in this area cannot be an absolutely straight line; rigidity could well defeat the basic purpose of these provisions, which is to insure that no religion be sponsored or favored, none commanded, and none inhibited. The general principle deducible from the First Amendment and all that has been said by the Court is this: that we will not tolerate either governmentally established religion or governmental interference with religion. Short of a benevolent neutrality which will permit religious exercise to exist without sponsorship and without interference."

From Douglas's concern that the state not be hostile to religion to Burger's "benevolent neutrality," the court appears now to be moving to "accommodation." While constitutional scholars and others may debate whether the present majority goes beyond accommodating religion to establishing it, philosophically the doctrine of accommodation does not seem essentially different from its antecedents.

Actually, even the precise concept of accommodation itself is not new. In another passage in *Zorach*, Douglas wrote that whereas in *McCollum v. Board of Education*, (333 U.S. 203 (1948)) public school classrooms were used for religious instruction and public schools were used to promote such teaching, the *Zorach* situation was different in that "the public schools do no more than accommodate their schedules to a program of outside religious instruction."

He added that the court's striking down of the practice in *McCollum* did not mean the ruling could be expanded to cover the situation in *Zorach* because to do so would mean "that public institutions can make no adjustments of their schedules to accommodate the religious needs of the people."

Thirty-two years after *Zorach*, it was Burger who resurrected the Douglas language, using the idea in a critically important passage of *Lynch*, last year's case upholding the Pawtucket, R.I., creche: "No significant segment of our society and no institution within it can exist in a vacuum or in total or absolute isolation from all the other parts, much less from government.... Nor does the Constitution require complete separation of church and state; it affirmatively mandates accommodation, not merely tolerance, of all religions, and forbids hostility toward any."

In short, although journalists over the next few months may well make much of the accommodation doctrine, it is not new. How far the Supreme Court pushes it, however, remains to be seen. And at what point accommodation of religion becomes establishment of religion will be the focal point of the ongoing church-state debate.

— 30 —

(Reprinted from REPORT from the CAPITAL, March 1985.)

#####



**BAPTIST PRESS**

901 Commerce #750  
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

*fm*

LYNN MAY      HQ  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
901 COMMERCE  
NASHVILLE, TN. 37203

NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION