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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 8, 1985

85-41

### News Analysis

Creche Stalemate Signals  
High Court Indecisiveness

By Stan Hasteley

WASHINGTON (BP)—When it announced March 27 it was evenly split on a key church-state case involving Christmas nativity scenes—thereby affirming a lower tribunal's decision and avoiding a clear-cut decision of its own—the Supreme Court of the United States exhibited itself at its mystifying worst.

The dispute, involving the village of Scarsdale, N.Y.'s refusal to allow a private group to erect a creche in a public park, gave the high court a badly needed chance to clarify an equally mystifying decision last term. In that case, decided by the narrowest 5-4 margin, the city of Pawtucket, R.I., was told it could continue to own a creche and display it during the Christmas season, provided the Christ-child was surrounded by other, secular figures of the season, characters like Santa Claus and Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

In fact, the high court held in that decision that because Christmas had become so secularized the manger was but incidental to the commercial interests of in downtown Pawtucket merchants, it could rule that official sponsorship of one of Christianity's holiest symbols met constitutional muster.

Presumably reasonable observers of the high court naturally expected this year's decision to buttress that line of thought, perhaps even ruling that municipalities may not be forced against their will to display the creche, especially when it was to stand alone in a public park.

Instead, the 4-4 cop-out resolved nothing, leaving Scarsdale officials and their counterparts elsewhere uncertain as to what they should do, yet with the unavoidable hint they should do little to obstruct zealous citizens who insist that a public park rather than a church yard is where the Christ-child should be venerated.

In fairness it must be noted that the tie vote came about when Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr.—absent from the bench for 10 weeks recovering from prostate surgery—declined to participate in the decision. Although Supreme Court rules gave Powell the right to vote in any of the 56 cases he missed, he apparently has decided not to do so.

Because his is more and more the pivotal fifth vote in close church-state cases and because he prizes judicial consistency, it is certainly conceivable Powell might have delivered the needed fifth vote for the town's position.

But the larger question must be how any of the five justices who endorsed last year's reasoning in the Pawtucket decision that the creche is a "passive symbol" of the season when accompanied by the season's secular symbols, could have voted this year for what was undeniably an active symbol unaccompanied by Santa, Rudolph and the rest.

Perhaps the entire question of where and how the creche ought to be displayed is not one of the pivotal church-state questions of the ages, although Jews probably would argue otherwise. Yet the Supreme Court's bungling of the Scarsdale case points to a larger problem in the church-state field, the court's continued blurring of the line separating the two realms.

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It also undercuts the credibility of Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and his ongoing demand for a new national court of appeals to take some of the pressure of an increased caseload off the high court. As long as his court persists in making irrational non-decisions in cases that ought to be cleanly resolved, how can the chief justice convince Congress another supercourt is needed?

More important, this Supreme Court needs to understand that the country looks to it for definitive interpretations of the Constitution. After all, that is why the nation's founders created the third branch of government. These nine individuals are expected to take on the close calls and make them cleanly and decisively.

Instead the country is getting signals from the Burger court that it is unable or unwilling to decide the close issues, that it would rather put off the close calls for another day. And that is a shame.

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High Court Rejects Student's  
Religious Solicitation Appeal

By Stan Haste

Baptist Press  
4/8/85

WASHINGTON (BP)—A former North Carolina State University student has lost his bid to have the Supreme Court decide whether school officials violated his constitutional rights by forbidding door-to-door religious solicitation in dormitories.

Scott Chapman failed to convince a sufficient number of high court justices to review his suit against NCSU Chancellor Joab L. Thomas and Vice-Chancellor Thomas H. Stafford for a school policy which singled out religious and political solicitation in the ban.

Earlier, two lower federal courts agreed the university, located in Raleigh, N.C., was within its rights to take the action. Four of the nine Supreme Court justices must agree to hear a case before it can be scheduled for oral argument.

Chapman, a member of a local Church of Christ, filed a class action suit in 1980 challenging the policy and seeking a permanent injunction against it as well as monetary compensation. He alleged the policy banning religious solicitation "chilled" his First Amendment rights and complained that university officials "engaged in censorship" by deterring him from "fulfilling the mandate of his faith."

In his written appeal to the high court, Chapman's attorney argued further: "Scott Chapman could knock on a fellow student's door and invite or encourage the room occupant to go to the next basketball game to show support for the team...but he risked discipline up to and including expulsion for knocking on a door and inviting the room occupant to attend a religious service."

Further, he argued, "For school officials to pick and choose through regulations what forms of student solicitation are permitted is state government censorship in its most naked form."

On the other side, North Carolina Attorney General Larry H. Thornburg and two of his assistants wrote residential areas of dormitories "were neither by tradition nor designation public forums" for communicating ideas.

"The university has never attempted to prohibit the expression of one particular opinion, but rather has acted to regulate a certain form of expressive conduct irrespective of the speaker's message," they said.

The school's policy was upheld by the lower courts, they continued, "because it pertained to expressive activities in a nonpublic forum, it was reasonable, and it was not an effort to suppress (Chapman's) speech merely because school officials opposed his views."

Students' need for "security and privacy," they concluded, "more than justified" the university's policy. (84-982, Chapman v. Thomas)

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Black Baptist Students View  
Problems, Observe Anniversary

By Leisa A. Hammett

ATLANTA (BP)—Some 2,000 black students, representing 165 colleges and universities, addressed problems of their generation, observed the 40th anniversary of the National Baptist Student Union and commissioned summer missionaries at their annual retreat.

The meeting was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board black church relations department and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board national student ministries department and is also supported by the three black National Baptist conventions—Progressive National Baptist, National Baptist USA, Inc. and National Baptist Convention of America.

During the conference, thirty-two students were commissioned and an additional thirty-five also volunteered for summer missions.

Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner told conferees life's greatest possibility is that God will use their lives. In keeping with the conference theme, "Growing to Serve" Tanner said, "life is not effective until it fulfills the purpose of serving, for which life was designed."

College campuses, he added, are the most catalytic places for Christian students. If a student cannot take a stand for Christ on campus, he continued, they will not be able to do likewise in the real world. Tanner challenged the students to serve Christ now, where God planted them.

Timothy Sims, a student at University of Kansas and past president of the national BSU reminded his contemporaries to appreciate their past and the social and economic progress of their race. "But I must point out," he added, "we haven't arrived."

Sims named sexual immorality, teen pregnancies, drugs and alcohol abuse and erosion of the family as problems they must recognize. "We must get to the root of the problem," said Sims. "We need to return to dependence on God and the biblical standard of morality."

Trent L. Green, a student at Texas Southern University, Houston, was elected president for 1985-86; Larry D. Bell, from Virginia State University, Petersburg, vice-president, and Serena D. Bush from East Texas State University, Commerce, secretary.

Stenson Tullis, from Selma (Ala.) University, was chosen pastoral advisor and Roy Cotton, director of campus ministries for the Baptist General Association of Virginia as elected faculty advisor.

Francine Fields, a student from University of Missouri, Kansas City, was voted Miss BSU.

In the annual gospel choir competition, the Baptist Student Union-sponsored choir of the University of Texas, Austin, won first place in the small choir division. In the medium division, University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, placed first and East Texas State University won the large choir category.

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Crusade In Rio  
Yields 4,000 Baptisms

By James H. Cox

Baptist Press  
4/8/85

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—A team of 540 volunteers, comprising the largest simultaneous evangelistic effort in the history of Southern Baptist mission work overseas, have reported approximately 4,000 professions of faith in Brazil.

The week-long crusade in greater Rio de Janeiro, sponsored by the Brazilian Baptist Association of Rio and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, involved "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.

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Dehoney is a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The team included 80 preachers, who led 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.

Dehoney said 40,000 persons attended a kick-off rally Sunday, Mar. 10 in a soccer stadium. Net results were more than 2,000 decisions including more than 1,000 first time conversions.

Greetings were read from former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and a pledge for prayer support for the crusade from Kentucky Gov. Martha Layne Collins. Similar expressions came from the governors of Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina.

Neilson Fanini, past president of the Baptist Convention of Brazil and pastor of First Baptist Church, Niteriori, addressed the crowd.

From there, 120 buses brought the crowds to crusade services throughout the week in the churches. Sixty-two churches and several missions were in simultaneous revivals, all with American preachers.

Preliminary reports at a victory breakfast Friday morning, Mar. 15 indicated over 1,400 first time professions of faith recorded in the churches and at least twice that number of other decisions, according to Dehoney. In one church the American support team all came forward in the service to rededicate themselves.

The largest single group of Americans in the crusade included 33 persons from First Baptist Church, Norfolk, Va. The group included a 12-member choral ensemble called "One Voice" which performed at the rally, in churches and at a ferry where a half-million persons cross water daily.

Evangelistic services were conducted each evening for four hours, with 10 minutes' preaching, then witnessing with bilingual tracts and music. Over 2,000 conversions were reported in these meetings at the ferry during the week.

Fanini, who had spoken at the Sunday afternoon rally, estimated that final results of conversions would be "in the neighborhood" of 4,000. Churches, he noted, were organized for immediate followup.

Three associations were involved and buses transported the group from the hotel to four "stations" in the area, with some as far away as 50 miles.

The medical team of about 40 doctors, nurses and dentists worked in clinics in the slums. They reported numerous conversions as well as ministering to hundreds of persons who had never seen a doctor or dentist in their lives.

It was the "greatest experience of my life" said Robert McKechnie, a physician and member of Walnut Street Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky. He said he "wept more" in this one week than he had in "all my life put together"—tears of "compassion, joy and fulfillment."

A dentist reported pulling 263 teeth in one day. He commented on how "appreciative" and "responsive" every person was to the gospel and to the Americans' "show of care and concern."

Said Tom Evitts, who preached at Campo Grande and is pastor of First Church, Clarksville, Ind.: "From the first service the little church was packed. Through the windows, out the doors and into the streets I never saw such a hunger for the gospel."

One church of 43 members reported 65 professions of faith.

Many teams raised money to complete building programs, buy property, start new missions and purchase supplies for the Sunday school.

The crusade was initiated by an invitation from Fanini for Dehoney to organize the group and bring them down. The Brazilian convention formally extended the invitation and the Foreign Mission Board gave full assistance in materials and mission support on the field.

A chartered 747 took the group from Atlanta, with the overflow going from Miami on a regularly scheduled airliner. A total of 540 Americans from 17 states and 120 churches were involved.

Brazilian Baptists, according to Dehoney, have already requested that the crusade be repeated next year in both Rio and in Sao Paulo.

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(Jim Cox is associate editor of the Western Recorder, the newsjournal of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Some material for this story was contributed by Bob Allen of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.)

Southeastern Awarded  
Archaeological Grant

Baptist Press  
4/8/85

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—A \$10,000 grant has been awarded Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., to assist students in an archaeological investigation of Tel Migne/Ekron in Israel during the summer of 1985.

The grant was announced recently by the Dorot Foundation of New York City.

The location of the investigation was one of the five capital cities of the ancient Philistines. After a successful excavation in 1984, the site will be the focus of a seven-year study by a consortium of several American and Israeli institutions, including Southeastern seminary.

Southeastern will provide the largest contingent of workers in the 1985 dig.

"The program will provide our students with on-site experience in geographically peeling back the layers of history to better understand the life and times of the people of the Bible. Not only will they sift through the 'sands of time,' they also will do advance reading, attend lectures and be responsible for a report on their work," he said.

The Dorot Foundation long has been active in support of Jewish welfare funds and in educational organizations generally, both in the United States and in Israel. This is its first grant to Southeastern seminary.

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Parks Says 'Church'  
Must Be Understood

By Mary Speidel

Baptist Press  
4/8/85

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—Foreign Mission Board President Keith Parks urged Southern Baptists to recapture the New Testament meaning of "church" during a recent world missions conference at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Mo.

"Sometimes we corrupt that term until it almost contradicts what Jesus meant when he first used the term," Parks said.

He cited Matthew 16:13-23, where Jesus used the Greek word "ekklesia," which translates "church." In this passage, Simon Peter identified Jesus as the Christ, Parks points out. After this incident, Jesus openly talked about his coming suffering and death but the disciples rejected that possibility, Parks said.

Like the disciples, contemporary Christians also reject the possibility of suffering, said Parks. "The humanity in us always cries out against crucifixion. We don't want to suffer," he noted.

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As a result, Southern Baptists have allowed personal standards to shape their understandings of the church, Parks said.

"When we try to understand what the ekklesia is all about, I am persuaded that we are tempted by using our own standards, our own interests, to think of it as an exclusive religious club rather than as an inclusive spiritual army," stressed Parks.

He also said Southern Baptists try to own the church for themselves and "bring into it those who are as nearly like us as we can find."

The FMB president suggested some Southern Baptist churches lack the power demonstrated by the New Testament church because they are not willing to risk. "I submit to you in our individual lives and in our collective lives that God only pours out the amount of power that we are willing to use for his purposes," said Parks.

Because Southern Baptists do not see themselves as committed to spreading the gospel to the whole world, God does not see the need for "wasting power on a people who won't use it for his purposes," Parks added.

"You don't need an eight-cylinder motor in a kiddy car," he said. "And what we are doing in most of our individual expressions and in most of the churches that I visit doesn't need much power because we are not attempting anything except what we think we can attain in our own resources."

Parks also charged Southern Baptists with viewing the church as a place to enjoy spiritual fellowship rather than as a channel for communicating the gospel. He said Southern Baptists have "corrupted the word 'fellowship' to mean a social time rather than the 'koinoinia' that identified the New Testament church where they were willing to risk their very lives to be together."

Parks told the gathering of seminary students, faculty, staff and area Southern Baptists: "When God has called us to reach the whole world and we limit our attention and our concern to a square block or even a city, I suggest to you we've lost the understanding of what it means to be church."

Parks reported there is "overwhelming responsiveness" in many countries where Southern Baptist foreign missionaries serve. But Parks said when the response to the gospel creates a need for more missionary personnel, the problem becomes "Who can come?"

"How many times have we answered that question by saying, 'Well, there's no one we know can come right now?'" Parks asked.

Parks said one reason Southern Baptists have not decided to share the gospel with the whole world is "we have seen the church as a place to meet our personal needs rather than as a place of sacrificial service."

"God knows redemption doesn't come without sacrifice but his church hasn't learned that," Parks said. "We still believe we can win the world and save ourselves at the same time when Jesus said you have to choose whether you will follow me or try to save yourselves."

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(Speidel is a newswriter for Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.)

Southern Baptists' Preferences  
Influenced 1975 Baptist Hymnal

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
4/8/85

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Research that preceded publication of the Baptist Hymnal 10 years ago provided insights resulting in "a greater flavor of Southern Baptist input than any other hymnal we've ever had," according to William J. Reynolds.

As general editor of the hymnal, Reynolds brought the results of that survey before a 13-member subcommittee as operating guidelines in choosing hymns to include in the new publication.

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"Some 185 hymns from the 1956 Baptist Hymnal had not been sung once in 90 percent of the churches in the previous 12 months," Reynolds recalled. "Not one hymn rated 100 percent in use among all the churches. The highest percentage was 98.6 for some of the Christmas carols. We learned that not all churches sing 'Amazing Grace!' frequently," he said.

Reynolds, associate professor of church music at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, said the bulk of the unused hymns were not included in the 1975 edition because "if churches aren't singing them at all, they aren't valid to be continued or we have done a poor job of educating. This process of time taking its toll has gone on for years and years."

Christians have sung "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" for 400 years, he observed. "It's not my place to say a hymn is good or bad. It's proven itself."

The content subcommittee read through thousands of songs looking for hymns to replace ones rejected by churches. The goal of such a mammoth task, Reynolds said, was to find worthy material.

"Ours was the first hymnal permitted to include 'Because He Lives,'" Reynolds said. In contrast to such new materials, the committee also chose 18th-century hymns like "Jesus Makes My Heart Rejoice" and 19th-century compositions such as "The Sheltering Rock."

Reynolds estimates that the 1975 hymnal includes a dozen or more hymns from the black tradition and many songs that have "anonymous beginnings in the South, sung in Baptist churches in the early part of the 19th century." There are 16 different hymns by the late B.B. McKinney, Southern Baptist gospel hymn writer, and a selection of texts dealing with social concerns, such as "People to People" and "Peace in Our Time, O Lord."

In contrast to some other hymnals available today, Reynolds said the Baptist Hymnal's content underwent a complete theological and doctrinal evaluation. A 12-member subcommittee studied each line of each hymn to ensure that every text reflects what Southern Baptists believe.

"When you're trying to please the tastes of all Southern Baptists, you've got a big job," Reynolds said. "I was braced for critical letters when the hymnal was unveiled a decade ago, but I never really got any."

While hymns continue to be written by today's composers, Reynolds said only a small percentage of compositions from any generation become classics. "This hymnal represents the cream from each generation," he said. "Each generation has an obligation to praise the Lord in its own literary form. When a new hymnal is done, if these hymns will survive, nobody knows."

Wesley L. Forbis, secretary of the Baptist Sunday School Board's church music department, said the hymnal's "popularity and broad acceptance is attested by the fact that more than 4.4 million copies have been purchased and are in use in churches.

"The hymnal broke new ground in its incorporation of new hymns, textually and musically. Southern Baptist churches are indebted to William J. Reynolds and members of the task force that brought Baptist Hymnal 1975 edition, into being.

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

China's Protestant Leaders  
Open Door To Outside Help

By Erich Bridges

Baptist Press  
4/8/85

HONG KONG (BP)—Leaders of China's Protestant church have announced plans to form an independent foundation to promote "health, education and social service projects" in China.

The Amity Foundation, to be formally constituted in late April, will cooperate with Christian and non-Christian groups from abroad, including Christian agencies, churches and individuals in the United States. The foundation apparently will channel not only funds and resources but also personnel from around the world into areas of service in China.

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Plans for forming the foundation were announced at a March press conference in Hong Kong led by Han Wenzao, a close associate of Bishop Ding Guangxun (K.H. Ting). Ding, who also attended the press conference, is president of the China Christian Council and leader of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, China's officially recognized Protestant movement. Also present was Philip Wickeri, an American Presbyterian worker in Hong Kong who will be overseas coordinator for the foundation.

Chinese Christians "want to play a more active role in our nation's social development," said Han, who is directing preparations for the foundation in the city of Nanjing. "Second, we hope that in this way we may make our Christian involvement and participation more widely known to the Chinese people. Third, we seek to strengthen the ecumenical sharing of resources and international people-to-people relationships."

Han said the foundation would seek humanitarian projects or institutions in China needing funds and other support. Planning has already begun for several projects, he added, including support for the Nanjing Children's Mental Health Research Center, which Han called the "only institution of its kind in all of China."

Han also mentioned plans for recruiting teachers from "church agencies and other institutions overseas" to teach in Chinese colleges and universities. "Following consultations with church representatives from Germany, Japan and the United States, we hope that we can have some teachers in China by September," he said.

The Amity Foundation will encourage and respond to project suggestions and initiatives both from within China and from "friends abroad," Han pledged, and will depend on funding from sources "both Chinese and foreign, religious and non-religious, individual and organizational."

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials reacted enthusiastically to the announcement. "We're looking at it as a very, very positive move," said Lewis Myers, board director of consultant services and chairman of a staff committee monitoring developments in China. "We're awaiting the final guidelines upon the actual constitution of the foundation in order to determine exactly the best way we can relate to this opening in China."

Han stressed that the foundation would be independent of both the China Christian Council and the Three-Self movement. He emphasized the initiative represents "no departure" from the Three-Self philosophy of self-support, self-government, self-propagation and independence of foreign control in church work. "We do not seek help from overseas in matters of church finance," he said.

In earlier comments made public by Wickeri, Han and Ding also made clear that the new opening to overseas groups is not a "return to the past missionary era" but rather an opportunity for Chinese and overseas Christians to contribute to China's modernization.

The two leaders cited the decline of "ultra-leftism" after the disastrous Cultural Revolution of 1966-76, the opening of China to the outside world, economic reform and the government's call for all sectors of society to contribute to national progress. All these factors have made it possible for Chinese Christians to take a more public role in society and invite overseas friends to participate, they said.

At the press conference Han said the Amity Foundation would be constituted during the first meeting of its board of directors in late April. Bishop Ding will be asked to serve as foundation president and work with a staff of five or six in Nanjing, he said. Wickeri has been granted a 17-month leave from his work with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to work as overseas coordinator, based in Hong Kong.

In a related development, the United Bible Societies in Hong Kong announced March 27 it hoped to sign an agreement in April with the Amity Foundation to print several hundred thousand Bibles and 500,000 New Testaments each year for distribution in China. Other Christian publications might also be printed under the agreement, according to Chan Young Choi, Asia-Pacific regional secretary for the societies.

The publication operation would reportedly be owned and controlled by the Amity Foundation under the agreement.



Missionary Family  
Hangs On In Lebanon

By Irma Duke

BEIRUT, Lebanon (BP)—Missionary Mack Sacco returned to Beirut last fall knowing his children would be the only Southern Baptist "missionary kids" there. And they'd already evacuated three times.

Before their latest evacuation a year ago, Paul and Julie, both 16, spent a harrowing night in their American school in Beirut. Shells crashed all around them, destroying one of the teacher's apartments on the compound and damaging much of the property.

Unbelievably, Mrs. Sacco didn't worry about her children. She said she had peace that they were all right and were where they were supposed to be.

"When I think back, I wonder how I could have done that," she confesses. "It was probably the result of a lot of prayer in the States."

When the Saccos returned this time, First Baptist Church of McAlester, Okla., gave them a book of prayer promises with pledges from church members to pray for them on certain days. Mrs. Sacco's mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. J.N. Bennett, signed up for "every day."

Mrs. Sacco admits she has been frightened at times. In September 1983 their neighborhood was bombed continuously for three days. Shells destroyed several apartments near them.

"We had to go down to the ground floor, kind of like running to a storm shelter in the States," she explains. During lulls in the fighting they ran upstairs to grab food and other supplies. When the fighting was at its worst, they couldn't decide which end of the hallway was safest. "We kept moving back and forth, kind of like mice."

They moved out of Beirut after returning from the United States. In the Beit Mery suburb where they live now the children feel free to come and go without an adult. They never did that in downtown Beirut. When they were packing to move, random gunfire broke out where the younger children were playing and Mrs. Sacco frantically called them in.

But even where they are now, 5-year-old Aaron occasionally hears those "loud booms."

"Why do you subject your children to this?" is a question many people ask the missionary couple. Even though they're the only Southern Baptist missionary children in the Beirut area now, others have preceded them. More will come as new missionary families complete training and start service.

Still, "Most people tell us there are other places we can witness," says Sacco.

His children are scared at times and miss out on some of the social life they would have in the United States. But Sacco says they seem to be growing up and maturing in a normal way despite all the problems. Mrs. Sacco teaches Annika, the second-grader, in their home while Paul and Julie use self-instruction materials in a vacant classroom at the Baptist seminary. Until this year they attended the American school.

They also have some advantages U.S. children miss, such as seeing much more of the world. Paul, for instance, speaks English, French, some German and Arabic.

Julie says she's sure they are closer as a family and do more things together than most families she has known in the States.

Living in war has heightened her respect for life itself. She says her advice to children in America is not to take life for granted. "Don't waste your life away like you're going to live forever."

Mrs. Sacco says they probably wouldn't have come back if the children hadn't been willing to. "When we came over, they were a big part of the decision," says Sacco. "This is where our home is, where our ministry is, where we feel like we belong right now."

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It's this conviction and the openness of the Lebanese people that brought the couple and four of their children back in spite of the dangers they face. (Their oldest son, David, is grown and lives in McAlester.)

Sacco makes friends everywhere he goes, even in complex Lebanon. Muslim groups fight each other and battle the Christian factions, but Sacco gets along with all of them.

"I don't know how many layers of nationalities we have. Then you have different political ideas and then different religious ideas," he explains. "And it becomes a very complex place. But I grew up in California and I like differentness.

"We seem to have a special gift for dealing with this sort of people," he adds. He calls it the gift of gab.

Sacco is treasurer for the organization of Southern Baptist missionaries in Lebanon and does a lot of running around in Beirut to handle business matters. That's one way he meets people and introduces them to Christianity. But his movement is restricted when fighting breaks out. He was robbed last November while trying to go from his home in Beit Mery to the mission office in West Beirut.

The Saccos sometimes feel limited and wonder if they made the right decision to return to Lebanon. He had several job opportunities in the United States.

"But just about the time when you feel that you're not doing anything, something happens that sort of affirms the fact that you're here," says Mrs. Sacco.

She counsels with several American women who are married to Lebanese. One of her ministries is helping women go through pregnancy, teaching them a natural method of childbirth. She says they occasionally tell her she's been their one source of encouragement during their time in Lebanon.

Sacco does some one-on-one counseling, too. He says Lebanese friends tell him their problems even when they won't confide in other Lebanese. "Since we're foreigners and they feel like we're outside their culture, they'll talk to us."

One friend said to him recently, "You folks could go any time and we know that and appreciate that." That's another reason they stay.

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

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CORRECTION—In (BP) story "Draper, Smith, Rogers Discuss SBC On CBN," mailed 4/4/85 in the last paragraph Pat Robertson is identified as a "non-Southern Baptist." This is in error. Robertson is a member of the Freemason Street Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va., according to a spokesman in his office. Baptist Press regrets the error.

Thanks,  
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