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March 11, 1986

86-33

Texas Acteen Hurt
In Traffic Mishap

WACO, Texas (BP)--A 13-year-old Acteen from University Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, is in critical condition in Fort Worth's Harris Hospital following a March 7 car-pedestrian accident on the Baylor University campus.

Stefani Johnson, daughter of Crawford and Karen Johnson of Fort Worth, has been in a coma since being admitted to Waco's Providence Hospital shortly after the 9:30 p.m. accident. She was transferred from Providence to Harris Hospital March 10, where doctors are reported to be "cautiously optimistic" after a CAT scan.

Two other Acteens and their 33-year-old leader--all from University Baptist Church--also were hospitalized during the weekend with injuries resulting from the same accident. The four were in Waco for "Acteens Impact 1986," the annual Acteens conference held at Baylor. Acteens is a missions education organization for girls ages 12 through 17.

Thirteen-year-old Carrie Bass, daughter of C.L. and Charlene Bass of Fort Worth, was hospitalized at Providence in critical condition during the weekend, but her condition was upgraded to "serious" on March 9. The next day, she was in the intensive care unit in "stable but serious" condition, and on the day after, she was being moved out of intensive care, with her condition listed as "satisfactory."

Kelly Lynn Greene, 14, daughter of Charles and Minnie Greene of Fort Worth, was hospitalized at Waco's Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center during the weekend. Greene remained in Hillcrest until March 9, when she was taken home to Fort Worth. She is awaiting knee surgery at All Saints' Hospital in Fort Worth.

Melanie Tate, 33, the girls' Acteens leader, was transported from Hillcrest March 10 after being listed in stable condition throughout the weekend. She was taken to All Saints' Hospital in Fort Worth, where she will undergo surgery on both legs. Her husband is Mahlon Tate of Fort Worth.

The driver of the car, a Baylor senior, was not injured in the accident. He was issued a traffic citation for failure to prove liability insurance. The citation is considered a "pending charge," which means the person has 14 days to contest the citation, or in this case, to provide proof of liability insurance. No other charges have been filed.

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SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
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Baylor Community
Responds To Need

Karen Benson

Baptist Press
3/11/86

WACO, Texas (BP)--Before Friday, March 7, not that many people knew who Carrie Bass, Stefani Johnson, Kelly Greene and Melanie Tate were.

By Monday morning, March 10, people throughout the nation were praying for them all, by name --including 7,000 scouting leaders and thousands more Woman's Missionary Union groups from every state.

The four were part of a large group of Acteens and their counselors who left University Baptist Church in Fort Worth to attend the annual Acteens conference March 7-9 at Baylor University in Waco. On the opening night of the meeting, which drew almost 2,500, the four were struck by a car as they crossed a street on campus.

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Immediately, the community responded. First on the scene were some Baylor students who had lingered around campus even though their spring break had begun hours before. They summoned emergency vehicles, ran to their dorm rooms to gather blankets to cover the four until help could arrive and then aided campus police as they blocked traffic around the scene.

One of the students called Ron Durham, pastor of Columbus Avenue Baptist Church, Waco, who went to Waco's Hillcrest Baptist Medical Center and Providence Hospital, arriving soon after ambulances brought the victims in.

Durham called James Carter, pastor of University Church in Fort Worth to inform him of the accident, and Carter, in turn, began notifying family members, church staff and church members.

When the families began arriving at the hospitals, they were met by Waco pastors, Baylor officials and students, and concerned Acteen leaders from the Baptist General Convention of Texas staff. Durham and William Hillis, Baylor executive vice president, began arranging lodging for the families, since Waco hotels were full with Acteens. Some stayed in Baylor apartments, others with families of Columbus Avenue Baptist Church members.

It was not until nearly dawn on Saturday that those who had come to help slowly began to leave. Most went home for only a few hours sleep before returning, once again, to sit with the families.

Shortly after the accident, Jim Johnson, interim pastor of Waco's Calvary Baptist Church, and A.A. Hyden, Baylor vice president for student affairs, went to the La Quinta hotel where the remainder of the University Baptist Church Acteen group was staying. They ministered to them for several hours, praying and counseling with the group.

"They really weren't aware of the gravity of the situation at that point," Johnson said later. "None of us knew just how seriously Stefani and Carrie had been injured. But they were still in shock over what had happened. They just needed someone who could talk to them calmly and pray with them."

In the hours after the accident, friends from Fort Worth and members of the Waco community gathered at the hospitals. Outside the intensive care unit at Providence Hospital, where Carrie and Stefani were fighting for their lives, "the waiting room was packed with people," Johnson said. "The families are really surrounded by a lot of people who care about them and who love them."

C.L. Bass, Carrie's father, was surprised at the outpouring of love. "I think our whole church came," he said. Bass told of a prayer chain of scouting leaders that was activated by a church member who is a leader in University Baptist Church's scouting program. "Word came to us that there were 7,000 scout leaders throughout the nation involved in this prayer chain," he said.

He also told of "tremendous support" from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, where he is a faculty member--support including personal phone calls from Seminary President Russell Dilday and other colleagues on the faculty and staff. "Everyone has been so good to us," Bass said.

Baylor President Herbert H. Reynolds and his wife, Joy, also have been regulars at the hospitals, along with other members of the Baylor faculty and staff.

"I wish everyone could have seen how Baylor responded in love and compassion and help to the families during these circumstances," Durham said. "It was just a beautiful thing to behold. People reached out to other people that they didn't even know, and it was beautiful."

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Philippine Baptists Joined
Others To Prevent Bloodshed

By Jan Hill

Baptist Press
3/11/86

MANILA, Philippines (BP)--Baptist church members in the Philippines were among other Christians joining a "people-power" movement to prevent bloodshed during four days in late February when control over the country shifted to President Corazon Aquino.

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Baptists were among the million people whose rallies formed a human buffer separating military forces loyal to former President Ferdinand E. Marcos and forces rebelling against him. The rebels were led by Marcos' former deputy armed forces chief, Lt. Gen. Fidel V. Ramos, and his defense minister, Juan Ponce Enrile, who announced on Saturday, Feb. 22, their backing of Aquino as president of a new government. Ramos and Enrile called the rallies "people power."

Though Baptist church members supported both sides of the conflict between Aquino and Marcos, they prayed together for a peaceful resolution to it. They were among other evangelicals and Catholics who opened their sanctuaries and formed "chains" of people to pray for the country before, during and after the national election that both candidates claimed to win.

After a tense Saturday night in which Filipinos began responding to Ramos and Enrile's plea for unarmed citizens to surround and seal off their headquarters at Camp Aguinaldo and nearby Camp Crame, Baptist churches throughout Manila filled as pastors called their members to pray. Party affiliation among the members made no difference.

Military Col. Romy Montero, a member of International Baptist Church in metropolitan Manila, was at Camp Aguinaldo when Ramos and Enrile announced they were breaking with Marcos. Montero helped set up barricades along Epifanio de los Santos Street, a major Manila artery, which runs between the two camps, and gathered intelligence reports to prevent military conflict.

Monday morning Montero said he prayed harder than he ever had prayed in his lifetime, as he watched military helicopters sent from Marcos flying toward the camp with orders to bomb and strafe the rebel stronghold. The helicopters landed at the camp and the troops were welcomed. "I had claimed the promise of God, and asked for a miracle," he said. "I saw the hand of God in everything that took place."

Montero circulated in the crowd and encouraged prayer. He prayed for God to answer the nation's need, he said. "Many of the people (Catholics) brought their images of the Virgin Mary and idols to the rallies. My prayer was for God to look beyond all of this and answer our need of the hour." He was pleased to see members of his church among the crowds telling about the gospel and the love of God, and handing out tracts.

Tuesday evening, just before Marcos fled his home and offices in Malacanang Palace, Montero went on government-run television to ask volunteers to assemble in front of Camp Crame and clean up after the crowds. About a thousand people came, with brooms and buckets. They worked until the street was clean.

One Filipino, a young man from Village Baptist Church, joined the rallies around the camps early one morning in response to reports that tanks loyal to Marcos were approaching. "By 5 a.m. we formed a people's battalion behind a barricade of cars," he said. "I was very afraid." He watched as the tanks approached and were plastered with Aquino campaign stickers and yellow ribbons before they retreated. Later in the day many Filipinos among the crowd professed faith in Jesus Christ after Eddie Mesa, a former movie star and born-again Christian, sang and gave his testimony.

Myra Gaculais, a member of Evangelical Christian Baptist Church, participated in a special prayer meeting led by her pastor Sunday afternoon and the next day responded to a request over the radio for type AB blood, rare among Filipinos. When she arrived at the hospital, the names of donors who had arrived before her took up five pages.

Those among the rallies could feel the love for fellow countrymen, Gaculais said. "Everyone was friendly and smiling, volunteering food. The rich and the poor alike slept on the ground."

In Baguio City, about five hours north of Manila, students at the Philippine Baptist Theological Seminary passed a resolution to have an all-day prayer rally and cancel classes during the week of the conflict. They organized a 24-hour prayer chain. Some wanted to go to Manila to minister to the people and act as agents of reconciliation. Their main concern was that bloodshed be avoided.

Another member of International church, Henry Pascual, was one of several hundred people standing at the gates of Malacanang Palace after Marcos and many of his closest associates were airlifted to Clark Air Base. He, like most Filipinos, had never seen the palace. He was among those who persuaded a man climbing the wall not to rip down the Philippine flag. "Don't take anything," he shouted.

Pascual stayed on the grounds of the palace with hundreds of others for four hours. He said he believed it was important for him to participate in the people-power rallies. "I felt it was my Christian duty," he said. "I have been taught to obey authority, but I felt the rallies were legitimate."

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(Jan Hill is missionary press representative for the Philippines.)

Hunger Experts: Africa
Crisis Not Over Yet

By David Wilkinson

Baptist Press
3/11/86

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--While the Africa hunger crisis may no longer be Page One news, two Southern Baptist hunger experts have warned the crisis is far from over.

"Tremendous progress has been made, but to breathe a sigh of relief when millions of people still face critical food shortages would be premature and potentially disastrous," said Robert Parham, director of hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Parham said desperately-needed rains in some areas, combined with millions of dollars in international aid, have relieved the famine crisis in some countries, Parham said. Nevertheless, 17 to 19 million Africans this year will require emergency assistance because of continued food shortages.

John Cheyne, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board senior consultant for human needs ministries, pointed out Africa is still "only one minor drought away from utter catastrophe." Cheyne recently surveyed Southern Baptist ministries in famine-stricken Ethiopia where the Foreign Mission Board has channeled \$4 million for hunger relief and development.

Ethiopia has benefitted from "spotted, reasonably good rains" for the 1986 growing season, he said, and if the rains continue, the country "may be in a position to do slightly better than last year." Nevertheless, "these people are extremely vulnerable. They are living on the edge of human existence."

Parham said the United Nations Office for Emergency Operations in Africa still includes six nations on its "critically affected" list:

--Angola, with more than 500,000 people facing severe food shortages while civil war disrupts the economy and hampers agricultural recovery;

--Mozambique, with 2.2 million people critically affected as civil strife continues;

--Botswana, where drought continues for the fifth consecutive year, leaving 600,000 of its 1.1 million people with acute food shortages;

--Ethiopia, where the total of 6.2 million critically affected people will climb as harvests in some provinces are depleted by late March;

--Cape Verde, where a severe drought that began in 1969 has left one-third of its 300,000 inhabitants facing critical food shortages;

--Sudan, where five million persons--nearly one-fourth of the population--are critically affected and one million people in the western part of the country face starvation.

Seven other nations are being monitored closely because of continued food shortages in some areas--Burkina Faso, Chad, Lesotho, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Somalia.

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UN relief officials estimate the continent still has \$880 million in unmet emergency needs. Parham pointed out these needs do not address the massive problems associated with chronic malnutrition which affects more than 30 percent of African children.

In the face of continued need, Parham and Cheyne expressed concern about the level of giving to hunger relief in 1986.

Cheyne said officials of one of the largest volunteer relief agencies in the world told him declining funds will force the organization to cut relief to Ethiopia by 75 percent compared to last year. Throughout his visit, he said, relief workers repeatedly mentioned the problem of "donor fatigue."

Among Southern Baptists, Cheyne noted the Foreign Mission Board received more than \$5 million for hunger relief during the first four months of 1985 following the news media blitz that focused the attention of the world on the Africa crisis. While receipts in January 1986 of more than \$1 million were only 19 percent less than January 1985, February receipts of \$600,498 were more than 61 percent less than the same month last year.

"I hope February is not an indication of what will happen during the rest of the year," Cheyne said.

Parham called on Southern Baptists, who gave a record \$11.8 million last year to domestic and overseas hunger relief, to "let needs rather than news be the basis for our response."

"Without continued aid," he said, "the Africa crisis that has moved to Page Three will return as the Africa disaster on Page One."

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Gallup: 74 Percent Of Southern
Baptists Say Religion 'Very Important' By Stan Haste

Baptist Press
3/11/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—Pollster George Gallup has reported that more Southern Baptists—74 percent—say religion is "very important" in their lives than do members of any other major denominational body in the United States.

Mormons follow closely, with 71 percent agreeing religion is "very important."

In a comprehensive survey conducted last year and released recently, the famed pollster reported further that 55 percent of Lutherans describe their religion as "very important," followed by Catholics (54 percent), Methodists (53 percent), Presbyterians (46 percent) and Episcopalians (42 percent).

Overall, Gallup reported for his Princeton Religion Research Center, 55 percent of the American people say religion is "very important," with 31 percent describing it as "fairly important" and 13 percent as "not very important." Those figures have been statistically identical for the past six years. As recently as 1965, however, 70 percent gave their answer as "very important," and in 1952 fully three-quarters of the American people so described religion in their lives.

Besides the 74 percent of Southern Baptists surveyed who responded with "very important," another 21 percent said religion is "fairly important" to them, with only 4 percent describing it as "not very important."

Another survey question, asked last November, yielded information that 45 percent of the American people believe religion "as a whole" is increasing its influence on public life, with 41 percent saying religion is losing its influence.

Answers to other questions showed little change in religious practices in recent years. Slightly more than four adults in every 10 (42 percent) attended church or synagogue in a typical week in 1985. Commenting on the figure, Gallup wrote: "Churchgoing has remained remarkably constant since 1969 after having declined from the high point of 49 percent recorded in 1955 and 1958."

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Likewise, the proportion of adult church members "has also changed little in recent years," he reported, with 71 percent now claiming membership in a church or synagogue. Such membership peaked in 1947, when 76 percent said they belonged to a church or synagogue.

Figures on the relative importance of religion were based on in-person interviews with 7,649 adults, 18 and older, questioned during five selected weeks during 1985. Attendance and membership figures came in response to in-person interviews with 5,093 adults conducted in four selected weeks last year.

Gallup estimated sampling and other random errors could account for a 2 percent variation in either direction in surveys of the size conducted.

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SBC Preschool Child Care
To Be 'Model' Program

Baptist Press
3/11/86

ATLANTA (BP)—Atlanta Baptists will offer a model program of preschool child care when the Southern Baptist Convention meets in the Georgia World Congress Center June 10-12.

Total care will be offered for up to 450 children who have not yet entered the first grade. During last year's SBC meeting in Dallas, about 300 children were provided child care; 100 more were turned away for lack of space.

Tommy Gilmore, preschool director for First Baptist Church in Atlanta, and Carol Crowder, preschool director for Briarcliff Baptist Church in Atlanta, are this year's co-chairpersons of the child care committee. They said child care would be provided for all SBC sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, but not for pre-convention meetings on Sunday and Monday.

Only children of messengers from churches outside the metropolitan Atlanta area will be accepted.

The child care center, located one floor above the main meeting hall of the World Congress Center, will be fully staffed with volunteers and registered nurses. The convention first aid center will be next door.

The center will be open 30 minutes before the music starts at each session and close 30 minutes after each session adjourns. A fee of \$5 per child per session will be charged, with maximum charge of \$25 for the full three days.

"We are working with the Baptist Sunday School Board to put on a model demonstration of how to handle preschool children. We will have puppeteers, an indoor playground and, if possible, a petting zoo," Gilmore said.

The five largest churches in metro Atlanta that have preschool directors each will staff one session of the convention. At least 75 volunteers will be on duty at each session.

Parents wanting child care for their children must make reservations by May 1, giving names and ages of children needing care. Write to SBC Preschool Committee, 754 Peachtree Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30365, or call (404) 881-1221.

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Long-time College President
H.D. Bruce Dies At Age 90

Baptist Press
3/11/86

TOCCOA, Ga. (BP)—Harvey Daniel Bruce, president of East Texas Baptist University in Marshall for 18 years, died in Toccoa, Ga., March 2.

Bruce, 90, was president of the Texas Baptist school from 1942 until 1960. His wife, Merle, preceded him in death in December of 1983.

During his tenure as president, Bruce saw the college step up from two-year to four-year status. Twelve major buildings were added to the campus and more than \$1 million was in the endowment when he retired in 1960.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the second of two articles on ethnic ministries by Roy Howard Beck, associate editor of the National Christian Reporter. The weekly newspaper is a non-denominational publication of the United Methodist conferences of Texas and New Mexico.

Church Planting Pays
In Ethnic Communities

By Roy Howard Beck

DALLAS (BP)--Residents of America's ethnic-minority neighborhoods have seen it happening for a decade.

Hundreds of Assemblies of God and Southern Baptist congregations have sprung up in their communities.

Often that church "planting" was done by individual, white congregations outside the neighborhoods.

During the same decade, mainline Protestant denominations have started varied programs to make their churches ethnically inclusive.

But ethnic-minority neighborhoods have seen few new Christian (Disciples of Christ), Presbyterian and United Methodist congregations, for example.

Because mainline Protestants have started so few congregations in those neighborhoods, it is not surprising, say Assemblies and Baptist leaders, that they have not added many ethnic-minority members.

Leaders of successful minority ministries of the Assemblies and Baptists denominations talked to the National Christian Reporter about why they think their churches have reached goals that have eluded mainline Protestants.

Creating congregations is a key ingredient in evangelizing unchurched ethnic minorities in this country, they said.

Their ethnic-minority membership has grown between 50 and 70 percent the last 10 years while ethnic-minority membership in such denominations as Disciples, Presbyterian and United Methodist has barely grown.

Consider Hispanic ministries.

From 1975 to 1984, the Assemblies of God developed 350 new Hispanic congregations.

The Southern Baptist Convention, a much larger denomination, started 208 Hispanic congregations in 1983 alone.

At most, mainline Protestant denominations were starting a handful of Hispanic churches each year.

Oscar I. Romo is head of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's amazing quiltwork of fast-growing language ministries based in Atlanta.

Ethnic-minority people primarily respond to an evangelical appeal sensitive to their culture, Romo said.

Mainline Protestant churches too rarely make that appeal, he suggested.

He said some denominations seriously handicap their efforts by putting Hispanic preachers into seminary programs "aimed more at Latin America and liberation theology."

But Hispanic Americans have a different culture and interests than what seminaries often seem to suggest, he said.

"You can't take Hispanic people out of their Hispanic-American culture like that and then expect them to go back and evangelize their people," he contended.

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Romo acknowledged his analysis likely would draw debate. But undebatable is the fact the Southern Baptist Convention and the Assemblies of God have become the dominant Protestant presence in Hispanic communities.

Southern Baptists have more than 2,000 Hispanic congregations. The largest mainline Protestant denomination, the United Methodist Church, has only around 250.

The Assemblies' efforts among Hispanics are the most diverse, geographically. Their 1,125 Hispanic congregations are in the Northeast (198), Southeast (60), Puerto Rico (176), South Central (280), North Central (47) and West (364).

The focus--some would say obsession--by Southern Baptists and Assemblies of God on starting new congregations doesn't stop with Hispanics.

Romo's department deals only with ethnic minorities who need or desire ministries involving languages other than English. But its definitions go far beyond the generalized Asian, Native American and Hispanic categories of some denominations.

The Southern Baptists have formed, for example, 57 congregations for 13 different Middle East ethnic groups in the United States.

They have 95 congregations for 20 European language groups.

They especially have been successful in organizing congregations of Asian groups--Chinese (151), Laotians (85) and Vietnamese (77).

The Southern Baptists claim 446 American Indian congregations in 97 tribes.

Included in Romo's language ministries are 798 "congregations/units."

In the state of New York, 45 percent of Southern Baptists are ethnic minorities, said R. Quinn Pugh, executive director of the Baptist state convention in New York.

"We get a lot of Korean Presbyterians and Methodists who don't find a home in their denominations in the United States because they want more of the evangelical emphasis than American Presbyterians and Methodists offer," he said.

The Assemblies of God doesn't even have any record of a black Assemblies congregation until 1970, said Sherry Paul of the church's research office. Pentecostals traditionally divided into denominations according to race, she explained.

Now the denomination has more than 70 black congregations, five of them started just last year, she said.

Emmanuel L. McCall, head of Southern Baptists' black ministries department of the Home Mission Board, attributed his denomination's big increases to:

--"About eight years ago we quit selling our (white) churches in transitional communities" and started black congregations in them.

--A department of about 70 "home missionaries" helps in the starting of new black congregations.

--The absence of a black caucus. "Many blacks have wanted to start a caucus, but I've resisted it," McCall said. "I've seen the caucus method flop. I prefer to work within the system. Southern Baptist leadership has not been sensitive" to ethnic representation in high office. "But we're going to get our representation" and continue channeling most energy into evangelizing unchurched blacks.

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(Artwork mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Baptist Press)

Senator Advocates Reform
In Judicial Appointments

By Kathy Palen

WASHINGTON (BP)—Amid continuing debate over the U.S. Senate's role in the federal judicial appointment process, one senator has challenged his colleagues to examine ways to improve that process.

Sen. Paul Simon, D-Ill., expressed concern about recent judicial nominations—including nominees' professional quality and legal views—during an address at the National Press Club.

"We in the Senate must think harder about how we can try to assure that judicial appointments are the best possible," said Simon, who—although in his first Senate term—heads the Democrats' judicial nominations screening effort.

Simon advocated the Senate's active role in the appointment of federal judges, adding "there should be no automatic presumption that the president gets the judge he wants."

In explaining why judicial nominees should receive special scrutiny by the Senate, Simon said, "In contrast to the president's nominations to positions within his own executive branch, appointments to the judiciary are to a branch of government that is supposed to be independent of the president and for a duration exceeding his own term of office."

He pointed out that during the Reagan administration a majority of the federal judiciary will have changed membership and a substantial turnover in the U.S. Supreme Court still is possible. "What is at stake in all these changes is the character of our judicial branch for a generation and the real-world meaning of our Constitution and federal law," he said.

In participating in the appointment process, the Senate first should evaluate a nominee's quality, Simon said. That quality includes the nominee's professional competence—intellectual capacity, legal skills and experience—as well as his temperament—open-mindedness, judgment, consistency and fair play.

Simon insisted senators need to be more demanding in this area than they have been in the past. During his tenure on the Senate Judiciary Committee, he explained, 50 percent of the U.S. Court of Appeals nominees ranked next to the bottom on the American Bar Association's four-tiered ranking system.

"For years, my image of federal judges was of those who are really stellar members of the bar," Simon said. "That image, unfortunately, is changing, for me and for many others. Those appointed to our federal bench for life should be the best the legal profession has to offer. Too many clearly are not."

The senator said a more difficult—yet vitally important—consideration is the nominee's legal views, especially regarding the meaning of the Constitution and the role of federal courts.

"This may be the most significant issue about the confirmation process facing a senator today," Simon said, "and it has broad implications for the judiciary and for the country. "President Reagan has candidly stated his intention to try to shape the substantive direction of our constitutional law by nominating judges who share his constitutional views and who seem likely to decide cases in accordance with them."

Simon, who is not a lawyer, gave two fundamental reasons the Senate should examine a nominee's legal views. First, he said, the nominee's individual views about legal matters will to some extent affect decisions that nominee will make as a judge. Second, the nominee's views were relevant to the president's decision to nominate him.

The senator proposed a possible standard for measuring those legal views. That standard would pose the question: "Are the nominees' views about the meaning of the Constitution and the role of federal courts views which, at least in their broad outlines, the senator believes are correct ones?"

That standard, said Simon, would focus on nominees' views on key elements, such as majority and minority rights, presidential and congressional authority, federal power and state and local authority and the meaning of the First Amendment. The standard, however, would not force a senator to vote against every nominee with whom he disagreed but would require political compromise on both sides, he added.

Implementing such a standard would require the Senate—in addition to using sources in the public record—to ask certain questions of the nominees, Simon explained. He said appropriate questions would include those concerning the nominee's general views about the Constitution and constitutional interpretation and about particular provisions of the Constitution. Questions about specifics should be used only to provide illustrations of the nominee's views, not as a checklist for special-interest groups, he added.

"Some have already objected to questioning nominees about issues, because, they say, this path would be a new one for the Senate and they are uneasy for that reason," Simon said. "Even if that objection were factually accurate, it needs to be evaluated in light of the way the president is systematically making ideological nominations, moreso than any president since Franklin D. Roosevelt."

Because of that and other objections, Simon said he has proposed the Senate Judiciary Committee hold hearings on the role of the Senate in judicial nominations. He is working through the committee's ranking Democrat, Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware, to encourage the committee chairman, Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., to set up such hearings.

"We need to consider whether an active Senate role will make the appointments process more political and ideological, thereby undercutting the courts' authority and stature," Simon said. "The Senate's willingness to play a more active role may, in fact, be the best strategy for ultimately reducing the role of ideology in the process."

"Senate passivity itself can allow the law to become that pendulum swinging back and forth, simply following ideological changes at the White House. The Senate's willingness to counter the president's nominations that are too ideological could well induce the president to propose fewer such nominees. The Senate's failure to play that role leaves today's appointments process ideological, but solely on the president's terms."



BAPTIST PRESS

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