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86-44

Understanding Of Children Needed
 In Communications About God

By Terri Lackey

JACKSON, Miss. (BP)--How do you explain the virgin birth of Christ to a child who only wants to know if God and Mary got a divorce?

And what do you tell little Julie when she asks if Grandma, who was buried yesterday, is going to heaven to be with the pet hamster, Gerald, who was buried last week?

Although children are quite imaginative, they view the world in a very literal way, said Bill Hendricks, a seminary professor and speaker at a Regional ChildLife conference held in Jackson, Miss., March 13-15.

"When little ones hear something, they take it at a much more traumatic level than it is meant," said Hendricks, a professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

"That's why children become so wide-eyed and resistant when someone asks them if they want to give their heart to Jesus," he said.

Hendricks was one of several conference speakers who talked on subjects ranging from child abuse, self-esteem and children in crisis to ministering to families with terminally or chronically ill children. The first of seven to be held this year, the Regional ChildLife conference in Jackson was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's church training department in cooperation with the board's Sunday school and family ministry departments.

Maurice Graham, director of pastoral care at St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., said families who have terminally or chronically ill children "are permanently changed by the experience."

"Seventy-five percent of parents with a terminally ill child end up getting a divorce," Graham said. "Their values change, and they will never be the same theologically."

Graham said the best way a Christian can minister to parents of a terminally ill child is to "just listen and console them in their grief. They really need someone to listen to them and be genuinely concerned."

On child sexual abuse, James Reddoch Jr. said Christians need to "quit saying 'ain't it terrible' and get out and do something about it."

Reddoch, an education instructor at a Hattiesburg, Miss., hospital and a consultant with the Hattiesburg Rape Crisis Center, told the group to report any possibilities of child abuse.

"If you have a gut feeling that a child is being abused, either sexually or physically, tell someone," he said. "Our common goal is to reduce the incidents of molestation or victimization."

One out of three females and one out of seven males are abused sexually or physically, Reddoch said, noting abusing a child is a "direct attack on the child's self-esteem."

Dixie Ruth Crase, professor of childhood development at Memphis State University, said a child's self-esteem is developed very early in life. Development of a healthy or unhealthy self-concept can be attributed to several factors, she added.

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"The most important element in the development of a healthy personality is a sense of trust," Crase said. Giving a child independence and allowing him to develop initiative paves the way for a healthy self-concept.

"Growing Children Growing" is the theme of the ChildLife conferences and a year-long church training emphasis on children.

"We are trying to prick the awareness of those who attend these conferences and let them know that children are persons of unique gifts and have their own needs and wants," said Bill Young, supervisor of the preschool/children's section in the church training department. "There is an ever-changing environment in our churches and there is really a need to minister in innovative as well as traditional ways."

"Their (children's) understanding is not our understanding. We have to speak to them as children rather than as miniature adults," he said.

Hendricks, who spoke on children and theology, said it is hard to separate cultural myths, such as Santa Claus or the tooth fairy, from the abstractness of God. "Should religious families buy into these secular myths and celebrate them?" he asked. "If their children are going to live in the real world, they need to know the myths of childhood."

However, Hendricks said, children need to be helped to understand that "stories about Jesus' earthly ministry are different from cultural myths because stories about Jesus actually happened."

Information on other ChildLife conferences can be obtained by writing Regional ChildLife Conferences, Preschool/Children's Section, Church Training Department, 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, TN 37234.

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Draper Says Issues
Must Be Dealt With

By Todd Deaton

Baptist Press
3/27/86

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—"What we're doing now is marshalling our forces to see who can elect the president. To tell you the truth, it doesn't make a whole lot of difference who the president is if we don't deal with the issues," a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention told about 100 Kentucky pastors and laymen.

James T. Draper Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, and president of the Southern Baptist Convention 1983-84, was keynote speaker at a fundamental-conservative rally at Ninth and O Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., March 24.

Seeking reconciliation between the two political factions of the SBC, Draper called for a forum where both sides could discuss theological differences.

"What we're trying to determine as Southern Baptists is how diverse can we be and still cooperate," Draper said. "That does not mean that one side is right or wrong.

"I'm willing to do anything to get us to deal with the issues and then go on from there. But you have not found anybody who has been willing to have enough integrity to comment on that perspective," he said.

In his opening comments Draper denounced the impending federal lawsuit initiated by Robert S. Crowder of Birmingham, Ala. "It needs to be thrown out of court because it does not involve money or property. It involves simply an interpretation" by SBC President Charles Stanley at last year's convention, he argued. "Regardless of how we might feel, it (Stanley's action) was a legitimate interpretation of the bylaws."

Laverne Butler, pastor of Ninth and O Baptist Church, a spokesman for Kentucky fundamental-conservatives, said: "Our work is cut out for us (fundamental-conservatives) as never before. I heard just the other day they were printing up 75,000 ballots for our convention."

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Encouraging participants to use all 10 messengers allotted to churches by the SBC, Butler said, "Judge Paul Pressler says we will have to have 36,000 (fundamental) conservatives present to elect a president this year. This will be the most crucial year we have experienced as Southern Baptists, and especially as conservatives."

Following Draper's address, Butler opened the meeting for discussion of current issues.

Henry Evans, visiting scholar at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, asked if it would help to distinguish between the original autograph penned by an apostle or prophet and the English translation nearly 2000 years removed from that original.

Evans is a former faculty member of a fundamental college in Florida who recently lost his position.

Butler answered Evans, "That has been the ploy of the past several years to keep us off the main issue. I don't think any of us has any trouble with the translations.

"It doesn't matter whether we are holding up the Living Bible, the Douay translation or the King James version, we ought to be able to hold up that Bible and say we believe it is without error.... Let's stop fooling our people!" he said.

In defense of the conservative campaign against Southern Baptist seminaries, Draper added, "I've never asked for anyone to be fired. But I fail to see the diversity when a school will be represented 100 percent with a view of condescension toward the conservative viewpoint. That is not valid and we are expected to support it."

In his closing, Butler--while praising the SBC Peace Committee's recent statement on diversity--drew the line between fundamental-conservatives and moderate-conservatives.

"What it is going to boil down to is, can we walk together if you do not believe in the historicity of Adam and Eve? I frankly cannot walk with someone who says he rejects historicity of the first 11 chapters of Genesis," he said.

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(Todd Deaton is a staff writer at Western Recorder, Baptist newsjournal for Kentucky.)

High Court Hears Arguments
In Church School Bias Case

By Stan Hasteley

Baptist Press
3/27/86

WASHINGTON (BP)--Conflicting claims of religious freedom and sex discrimination clashed at the Supreme Court March 26 in a case pitting a Southern Baptist teacher against a fundamentalist Christian school that fired her for consulting an attorney over her claim of sex bias.

In one of this year's two principal church-state disputes at the nation's high tribunal, an attorney for the state of Ohio representing Southern Baptist teacher Linda Hoskinson told the justices her client was unlawfully discriminated against when her former employer, Dayton Christian Schools, refused to renew her contract after she became pregnant.

When Hoskinson consulted an attorney about legal recourses available to her, her school--citing what it called the "biblical chain of command"--dismissed her for taking her complaint outside the church setting.

A key factual dispute in the case swirls around the question of whether Hoskinson was given fair warning of the school's policy denying employment to women with young children. Such women's proper place, Dayton Christian Schools policy maintains, is in the home. Hoskinson has produced documents demonstrating her claim that the school had not informed her of the policy before she began teaching in 1974. She was fired five years later.

Hoskinson then took her complaint to the Ohio Civil Rights Commission which, after failing to resolve the dispute by conciliation, sought to enforce a broadly-worded anti-discrimination law against Dayton Christian Schools. The school system countered by filing suit in federal district court, claiming the commission had no jurisdiction to enforce state law in a sectarian school.

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But the district court agreed with Hoskinson, ruling Dayton Christian Schools came under the jurisdiction of the civil rights panel. On appeal, however, the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati reversed the lower court, holding the First Amendment religion clauses preclude such jurisdiction over the school. The civil rights commission then appealed to the Supreme Court.

Arguing Hoskinson's position, Ohio deputy chief counsel Kathleen McManus acknowledged while the court was faced with a "delicate" dilemma in choosing between the two competing rights, her client should prevail under an Ohio law forbidding sex discrimination and retaliation by employers when workers claim their rights. The state, she contended, has a "compelling interest" in eradicating all forms of discrimination.

McManus repeatedly cited a pair of recent Supreme Court decisions siding with the federal government in disputes with religious groups claiming First Amendment protection from federal laws. In one, *Bob Jones University v. U.S.*, the high court ruled 8-1 in 1983 that federal laws and policy forbidding race discrimination extended to the admissions practices of the fundamentalist South Carolina school.

In the other case, the court held unanimously in 1982 that an Amish employer in Pennsylvania who refused on religious grounds to pay Social Security taxes on his employees' wages must do so in order to preserve the integrity of the whole system.

Asking the justices to extend their reasoning to laws forbidding sex discrimination, McManus argued such bias "seriously interferes" with the state's interest. "We don't question parents' rights" to have their children educated in schools of their choice, she insisted, concluding "reasonable state regulation" should apply to church schools as well as public institutions.

Arguing the other side, veteran church-state lawyer William Bentley Ball of Harrisburg, Pa., countered the Ohio law was so tightly worded it "does not allow any religious objection whatsoever," unlike similar anti-discrimination statutes in other states and the federal Civil Rights Act.

Ball insisted Hoskinson lost her job because she took her grievance with Dayton Christian Schools outside the church context to a secular unit, the Ohio Civil Rights Commission. He repeatedly cited biblical injunctions in Matthew 18 and 1 Corinthians 6 against taking complaints to outsiders. In the Matthew passage, Jesus admonished Christians to settle their disputes one-on-one or within the church itself, while in 1 Corinthians 6, the apostle Paul warned feuding church factions to keep their battles out of courts.

This "chain of command," Ball told the justices, "is a biblically based religious principle" over which a secular unit such as the civil rights panel had no jurisdiction. "Great harm would be visited on the school," he said, if it were forced "to take back someone who is unfaithful to its doctrine."

Both attorneys were peppered with questions from most of the justices, with Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and Justices William H. Rehnquist and Sandra Day O'Connor taking particularly active roles. Most of the questions dealt with the potential extension of the Ohio law to other situations, including one by O'Connor to McManus over the law's possible application to churches themselves. McManus replied that if the complaint were brought by non-ministerial church staff members such as secretaries or gardeners, the law would apply, but if priests or ministers were involved, it would not.

Rehnquist forced McManus to concede the Ohio law would give the civil rights panel jurisdiction over wages and hours disputes in church schools and would extend also to hiring and retention of teachers who openly disagreed with the schools' religious tenets.

On the other side, O'Connor asked Ball if such schools would be immune from state laws requiring the reporting of child abuse, forcing the Pennsylvania lawyer to concede within a church school context even such instances should be resolved internally.

Justice Thurgood Marshall also extracted from Ball a concession that even in the case of a teacher's being raped, she would first be obliged to confront her attacker within the "biblical chain of command," rather than going directly to a court of law.

Concern over the potential ramifications of a decision favorable to Hoskinson brought a far larger than usual number of outside parties into the case as friends of the court on the side of Dayton Christian Schools. Among these were Americans United for Separation of Church and State; American Jewish Congress; American Jewish Committee; U.S. Catholic Conference; Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod; Rutherford Institute; and Beverly LaHaye's Concerned Women for America.

Alone in filing a friend-of-the-court brief on Hoskinson's side was the American Civil Liberties Union, joined by the Women's Legal Defense Fund.

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Baptist Woman Describes Church's
Support During Legal Battle

Baptist Press
3/27/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—When Linda Hoskinson and her husband learned they were expecting their first child they were overjoyed. That discovery in September 1978, however, resulted in a chain of events that ultimately led the couple to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Hoskinson's seven-year trek to the nation's high court centered around a legal battle with Dayton Christian Schools. In early 1979, that school system refused to renew Hoskinson's teaching contract after learning of her pregnancy and then dismissed her for consulting an attorney for legal advice.

After Hoskinson filed a complaint with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, Dayton Christian Schools filed a federal lawsuit challenging the civil rights panel's jurisdiction on church-state grounds. A U.S. district court ruled in Hoskinson's favor, but the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed that decision. Ohio's attorney general appealed the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

During the past seven years of struggle, Hoskinson and her husband, Randy, have been members of Far Hills Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Dayton, Ohio.

The two previously had been members of another area church. Because, however, by Hoskinson's own estimate, about 75 percent of that church's members had some connection with Dayton Christian Schools, the couple volunteered to leave the congregation rather than cause any problems. Although the pastor initially assured the Hoskinsons such action would be unnecessary, he soon came back and asked them to seek a new church home.

Hoskinson recalled the day she and her husband first met with Far Hills church's pastor, Kenneth L. Mahanes, who is the Ohio representative to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

"Our first pastor had seemed supportive but then had changed," she said. "Not wanting that to happen again, we talked to Ken Mahanes and he assured us that it wouldn't happen again. But I still had feelings of really wondering. I'd already been hurt."

She and her husband told Mahanes their basic story without going into the details, Hoskinson said.

"We had that understanding," she recalled. "He (Mahanes) said, 'Linda, you're here for spiritual things. That's (the legal situation) between you and the school and whomever else. If I ever need to know something, I'm here. But you're here just because you're you and we're a family.'"

It was only as Hoskinson's case grew closer to its Supreme Court date and became more prominent in the media that she felt a need to appraise Mahanes of all the details, she said.

"I said, 'Kenny, we need to sit down and talk,'" she recalled. "We shared everything with him. He never changed. He's always been constant."

"In fact, the telephone rang when we got back to the motel the other night and it was Pastor Mahanes. He said, 'I just want you to know I wish I could be there with you.' He didn't have to do that. He's my pastor and he's made it very clear that he loved us."

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Other members of the church also have supported the couple with various acts of friendship and words of encouragement, Hoskinson said.

"I had a tremendous fear that I'd get turned out of church again even though Kenny said absolutely not," she said. "We had been hurt and I had three children I needed to protect."

She added it was during the church's recent Palm Sunday services that she finally felt free to "embrace the church because they have embraced me."

The past seven years have been filled with a number of painful memories for Hoskinson. She recalled that the day she was dismissed from her teaching duties was her birthday. She recounted the frustration she has felt in being unable to tell her own story in court, as well as the burden she and her husband have carried in being unable to share with others many of the case's details. She told of having to buy her children's clothes at garage sales and secondhand shops because of the family's financial problems.

Those same years, however, also have held some bright moments for the family. Following the birth of their first child, David—who will be 7 in May—the couple had two more children, Adam and Sarah. Through what the couple called "the Lord's providing," Hoskinson's husband was selected for a highly competitive apprenticeship program and the family was able to buy a modest house in a Dayton suburb.

All things considered, Hoskinson said she does not regret her decision to enter the legal battle.

When asked why, she responded: "Because four months before this happened to me, Jim Jones happened. I could never understand why somebody didn't do something. Maybe somebody tried, I don't know." Jones was the spiritual leader of a large commune that committed mass suicide in Jonestown, Guyana, in November 1978.

"I would do this again," Hoskinson concluded, "because if the law does not apply to anybody who puts a religious plaque over his door, anything can happen. I firmly believe that's what could happen if Dayton Christian or any other religious—not just Christian, but religious—institution can say, 'Well, because we're religious we don't have to obey the law. We can make up our own law. We can do this and we can do that because we've got this religious plaque over our door.'"

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Retired Seminary Dean
Hugh Peterson Dies

Baptist Press
3/27/86

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)—Hugh Raymond Peterson Sr., retired administrative dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., died in a Louisville nursing home March 25. He was 82.

Peterson, a 1937 graduate of Southern seminary, spent 32 with his alma mater. He held 14 positions at the school, ranging from counselor to faculty member to dean of students. Most post-World War II students knew him as registrar.

He was interim pastor of more than 30 Kentucky churches during his career. He also was active in local civic groups, including the YMCA, Masonic Lodge and Kiwanis Club.

He was a native of Gore, New Zealand. Survivors include his wife, Vera Morris Peterson of Louisville; a son, Hugh Jr., of Louisville; a brother, George, of New Zealand; and three grandchildren.

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