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1985 Lottie Moon Offering  
 May Fall \$3.6 Million Short

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists may fall as much as \$3.6 million short of the \$70 million goal they set for their 1985 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions.

The projected shortfall reported by Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board officials could be the biggest since 1982, when the offering fell almost \$4 million short of the goal.

The annual Lottie Moon offering supports a hefty portion of the work of more than 3,600 Southern Baptist foreign missionaries worldwide. The 1985 goal of \$70 million already has been budgeted to finance 43 percent of the Foreign Mission Board's \$162 million budget for 1986.

The size of the shortfall projection, based on a poll of selected state Baptist conventions, came as a surprise to the Foreign Mission Board.

"It was unexpected, to say the least," said Carl Johnson, vice president for finance. "There are several states that show actual decreases in giving. I don't have an answer why."

The 1984 offering of \$64.8 million totaled more than 98 percent of that year's goal of \$66 million. It represented almost a 12 percent increase over the previous year, three times the U.S. inflation rate in early 1985. The increase for the 1985 total offering, if the projection proves accurate, will reach only about 2.4 percent, below the current 3.2 percent inflation rate. An 8 percent increase was needed to meet the \$70 million goal.

Actual Lottie Moon receipts forwarded to Richmond, Va., at the end of March totaled about \$59.2 million, or 84.5 percent of the goal, with more money coming in from state conventions. The Foreign Mission Board calculates the final total May 31.

"There may be more money out there," Johnson said. "I'd like to miss this (projection) by a mile."

The forecast usually is accurate, however. Foreign Mission Board finance staffers developed it to give overseas mission planners a realistic projection of how much Lottie Moon money actually will become available.

The projected shortfall won't cut personal missionary support but is sure to affect overseas capital budgets, which provide funds for missionary houses and cars, aid for church buildings and other needs.

The 1981 Lottie Moon offering was the last to exceed its goal. Southern Baptists have surpassed their annual goal only three times since 1975, but the target amount has nearly tripled in the same period.

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**News Analysis**

'Equal Access' Decision May  
 Mean More Than Meets The Eye

By Stan Hasteley

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
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 Baptist Press  
 Historical Commission, SBC  
 Nashville, Tennessee

WASHINGTON (BP)—Although the Supreme Court recently disposed of its most important church-state case of the term on a technicality, the opinions filed by the justices and past votes yield clues as to the ultimate legal fate of the concept known as "equal access."

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Equal access is the view that students in public secondary schools have a legally-protected right to gather on school premises for religious meetings on the same footing with groups of pupils who meet for other non-academic, extracurricular purposes. Put another way, if a local school board establishes a policy permitting the Young Republicans, Young Democrats and photography and stamp clubs to use classroom space for their meetings, it may not discriminate against religious clubs.

This right was acknowledged by Congress two years ago when it passed the Equal Access Act of 1984 by the overwhelming margins of 88-11 in the Senate and 337-77 in the House of Representatives. President Reagan signed the bill into law in August 1984.

While the case before the nation's high court this term dealt not with the federal law, but with denial of permission to meet to a student religious club at Williamsport (Pa.) Area High School, the ruling may well signal the court's eventual willingness to uphold the statute.

The decision itself, written by Justice John Paul Stevens, seems on first impression a disappointment to advocates of equal access who had hoped the Williamsport case might settle the question once for all. Realistically, however, the chances never were good that the court would do so, in light of the well-documented trait of the Burger court to decide most issues along narrow legal grounds. What was surprising was who was on which side in the 5-4 ruling.

What is considered the more activist wing of the court—consisting of Stevens and Justices William J. Brennan Jr. and Thurgood Marshall—was joined by one of the tribunal's "swing" votes, Justice Harry A. Blackmun, and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, a member who usually advocates judicial restraint. Her compatriots on that wing of the court—Chief Justice Warren E. Burger and Justices Byron R. White and William H. Rehnquist—were joined in this instance by Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr., the panel's other swing vote.

The breakdown in the vote in *Bender v. Williamsport Area School District* was, in other words, precisely the inverse of what might have been expected, with the narrow majority holding that a former school board member, John C. Youngman Jr., had no standing to pursue the case on appeal after a U.S. district court ruled for the student religious club. Youngman, defying the other eight members of the Williamsport school board, took the case to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals, where a 2-1 majority reversed the lower decision. The students then appealed to the Supreme Court.

By ruling Youngman had no legal standing to take the case from the district court to the appeals panel, the five-justice majority left standing the first decision favoring the students. But by declining to rule on the merits of the case, the decision has no effect elsewhere, presumably leaving the key question of the constitutionality of equal access itself unsettled.

While that is true in a technical sense, the court's written opinions in the case leave the strong impression that in a future dispute unencumbered by the "standing" problem, a majority clearly would favor equal access as such.

To begin, one may conclude unequivocally all four justices in the *Bender* minority eventually will vote to uphold equal access. In separate dissenting opinions—one written by Burger, the other by Powell—the four state plainly their conviction that the Williamsport case should have been controlled by a 1981 ruling (*Widmar v. Vincent*) that religious groups on state university campuses must be given the same access to campus facilities enjoyed by other groups of students.

That decision five years ago came down on an 8-1 vote, with only White dissenting on grounds that state officials should be given the latitude to decide such questions for themselves. In numerous other cases, however, White has favored a view of the religion clauses of the First Amendment to accommodate religion, arguing that the court generally has applied the Establishment Clause too strictly.

Were it not for one consideration, a strong argument could be made that all nine justices might indeed vote to uphold the Equal Access Act when it eventually reaches them. That has to do with a distinction the court has made several times between the impressionability of elementary and secondary pupils in religious matters as over against that of college students. In a future case testing the Equal Access Act, as many as three of the justices—Brennan, Marshall and Stevens—might use that rationale in voting to strike down the act.

What troubles many of the religious organizations that lobbied hard for passage of the act is the idea that those particular three justices might vote against it. Groups such as the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the National Council of the Churches of Christ—longtime advocates of a strict separation of church and state—worry that their normally staunch allies on the court might end up voting against equal access.

They also are understandably sympathetic to the ongoing objections to the Equal Access Act by their usual church-state partners in the American Jewish community. All the major Jewish organizations fought passage of the law out of concern that equal access will turn out to be unequal access to school property by overly zealous evangelical or fundamentalist groups intent on converting Jewish youngsters. The Baptist Joint Committee, for one, has pledged to side with Jewish students so victimized in any legal challenge they might mount against such a violation of the act's provisions.

Despite the likelihood of some abuses of the law, most religious groups in the country continue to support equal access strongly. Many of these, including the Baptist Joint Committee and the National Council, have been fierce opponents of every effort to amend the Constitution to return state-sponsored prayer and Bible reading to the nation's public school classrooms.

They are convinced that equal access strikes the needed balance between the legitimate free exercise rights of secondary school pupils and the equally important constitutional ban on an establishment of religion. Unless that balance is reached, they believe, the First Amendment itself will be jeopardized.

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Seminar Addresses Needs  
Of Single Parents, Children

By Terri Lackey

Baptist Press  
4/4/86

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Southern Baptist churches are beginning to understand the ministry needs of single-parent families, and therefore are better able to do something about those needs, a counselor of Christian singles said during a weekend singles seminar in Ridgecrest, N.C.

"As single-parent families become more prominent in our society, churches are beginning to exercise a clearer understanding of the theological needs of single parents," said Charles Smith, director of CharlAnn Christian Growth Ministries in Asheville, N.C. "Churches are more likely today to ask, 'What can we do in form of ministry to help these people?'"

Smith was one of the speakers at the annual Spring University of Single Living Conference, held March 21-23 and sponsored by the family ministry department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Although the spring singles seminar has been held for about eight years, this is the first year separate conferences were held for single persons and their children, said Tim Cleary, single adult consultant in the family ministry department.

"The response of the single-parent families was excellent," Cleary said. "There is a real need to minister to the child as well as the parent." The family ministry department established the conferences for single parents and their children when "single parents called us and told us we weren't doing as much for them as for other singles," he explained.

The conferences gave the children a chance to share with other children from divorced families and learn about common problems they face, he said.

Meanwhile, Smith, author of the resource guide, "Helps for Single-Parent Christian Families," said by 1990, the number of single-parent families will make up 30 percent of all family units in the country.

"At least 50 percent of the average congregation will experience fragmentation of some kind before the children involved in those families reach adulthood," Smith predicted.

But he said because statistics show the divorce rate in the country has been declining for about three years, "we expect the percentage of single-parent families also to decline."

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Smith said churches can minister to single-parent families by appointing church members to act as a model of the missing parent for the children.

"For instance, if an organization sponsors a father-son banquet, but the father of the family is not around, a church member could attend the banquet with the son," Smith said.

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Brazil Currency Change  
Expected To Aid Economy

By Eric Miller

Baptist Press  
4/4/86

BRASILIA, Brazil (BP)—Brazilians hope their economy will get a boost from a recent currency change and price-salary freeze. But it is too early to tell whether Baptist churches' offering plate collections will be affected.

In late February the Brazilian government switched the nation's unit of currency from the cruzeiro to a new currency, the cruzado. In essence, the change crossed off the last three zeros of the cruzeiro, making a 1,000 cruzeiro bill worth one cruzado.

Before the change 13,800 cruzeiros equaled one U.S. dollar; now 13 cruzados and 80 centavos add up to a dollar.

Annual inflation in Brazil has been running about 200 percent, said Southern Baptist missionary Kathie Chute in Brasilia. The dollar has risen steadily to compensate for inflation, she said, noting, "We came in July of 1983. When we came, it took 600 cruzeiros to make a dollar. Now it takes 13,800 to make a dollar."

Despite the high inflation, Brazilian Baptists consistently have given to continue their church and denominational programs.

Missionary work budgets probably will get tighter, said missionary Glenda Miller in Recife. If the Brazilian monetary measures succeed in slowing the nation's inflation, the dollar will have less purchasing power than expected when the budgets were planned.

Missionary support will hold steady, however, since the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board adjusts cost-of-living supplements for missionaries to reflect changes in the purchasing power of the dollar.

The currency switch has resulted in some confusion, stockpiling of groceries and isolated looting and damage to stores which illegally raised prices, said missionary Mike Chute. Government officials have "asked that everybody in Brazil police the prices and report to the federal government anybody that is raising prices," Miller added.

Newspapers release a daily list of prices approved by the government. Any consumer finding a violation is asked to contact the government, which will send auditors to investigate claims. Store managers are fined when they raise prices.

After finding prices raised, shoppers in one grocery store dumped products onto the floor and circled around the products until government officials arrived, Kathie Chute said.

Equipment and tables in a hamburger restaurant were damaged when an angry group of consumers re-entered the restaurant after the management raised prices, she noted. The employees waited in a basement storage room during the upheaval.

Some food items are hard to find in stores, Mike Chute said: "That first day, you could hardly get to some of the big grocery stores. The lines were wrapped around the buildings. People were trying to get in and buy whatever they could find. You couldn't get in the banks those first few days, either."

But Brazilians are optimistic, hoping the changes will remedy inflation. "They've suffered so under the inflation," Miller said. "We're hoping it will bring some stability to prices."

Government officials predict the annual inflation rate during the next two or three years will be only 3 percent.

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Slight Improvement Noted  
In Child With Meningitis

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Doctors have noted a slight improvement in Philip Newberry, Southern Baptist missionary child stricken with meningitis March 27, but his condition remains critical.

Circulation appears to be improving in his hands and feet, said Bill Damon, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's associate director for eastern South America. "His feet and legs had been purple up to his knees, one hand was purple and one hand was black," he said. "Now his parents say they are turning pink."

His fever, which reached 107 degrees early in his illness, is down and doctors have lowered the concentration of pure oxygen he's receiving through a respirator, Damon said.

Philip is the 21-month-old son of missionaries Randy and Jan Newberry of Gordon, Texas. They were attending a furloughing missionary conference at the Foreign Mission Board's Missionary Learning Center outside of Richmond, Va., when Philip became ill.

Damon said his office has received calls from churches all over the United States, saying that they are praying for Philip. There were 67 missionaries and 31 missionary children at the conference who learned of Philip's illness before they left. They carried the prayer concern to churches in cities where they are living during furlough. They also contacted fellow missionaries overseas to ask them and Baptist nationals to pray for Philip, Damon said.

The Newberrys were appointed missionaries to Brazil in 1982. They have two other children, Amy, 15, and Joel, 12.

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