

JUN 18 1986



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Wilmer C. Fields, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 873-4041
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) 741-1996
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Stan L. Haste, Chief, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

June 17, 1986

86-90

High Court Refuses
Home Schooling Case

By Stan Haste

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Supreme Court has rejected the appeal of a Virginia couple who sought to teach their children at home in defiance of state law.

Richard and Margaret Snider, who describe themselves as "traditional Catholics" opposed to changes in the Roman Catholic Church resulting from the Second Vatican Council, failed to convince the high court to review earlier decisions by Virginia courts exempting their two children from the state compulsory school attendance law.

The Sniders had contended they qualified for an exemption under a provision of the state statute excusing "any pupil who, together with his parents, by reason of a bona fide religious training or belief, is conscientiously opposed to attendance at school." But the Virginia courts held the Sniders' beliefs did not qualify under the "bona fide religious" test.

During two trials, Margaret Snider testified she became a member of the conservative "Pius X"—or "traditional Catholic"—movement in 1977. Her husband said he joined the movement in 1983.

In the meantime, Margaret Snider began teaching their children—Dominique, now 11, and Aaron, 13—at home, even though she did not hold a teaching certificate. After several unsuccessful efforts to convince the Sniders to send their children to public or parochial schools, the Henrico County school board took the couple to court. The Sniders subsequently were convicted of a criminal misdemeanor, fined \$100 each and ordered to send their children to school.

On appeal, the Virginia Supreme Court affirmed the lower decisions.

Through their attorney, William A. Beeton Jr. of Fairfax, Va., the Sniders asked the nation's high court to review the proceedings on grounds the state law violated their free exercise of religion and "parental liberty," and deprived them of the equal protection of law. At the heart of the dispute is the law's requirement children under age 17 be sent to a public or parochial school or, in the alternative, be taught at home by a state-certified teacher.

Beeton noted the Sniders are "conscientiously opposed" to sending their children to public schools because to do so "would expose them to the religion of secular humanism." Nor are Catholic parochial schools suitable alternatives, he said, because of "secular influence" on those schools since Vatican II, the ecumenical council held in Rome between 1962 and 1965.

But H. Albert Nance Jr., attorney for Henrico County—a Richmond, Va., suburb—said the Sniders lost in the state courts because they "did not have bona fide religious beliefs" that would prevent "traditional" Catholics from sending their children to public or parochial schools. Other traditional Catholics have complied with the law, he noted.

Nance argued further the Sniders' beliefs, while sincere, "are philosophical and moral rather than rooted in religion." (84-1724, Snider v. Virginia)

—30—

Wrapup

National Congress On Leadership
Focuses On Tomorrow's Leaders

By Lonnie Wilkey

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES**
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee
6/17/86

GATLINBURG, Tenn. (BP)—Leaders from various walks of life have agreed tomorrow's leaders must have vision, imagination, communication skills and competence and that Southern Baptist educational institutions have an important role in developing those leaders.

—more—

About 800 educational, religious and secular leaders attending the National Congress on Leadership in the 21st Century in Gatlinburg, Tenn., heard the topic of leadership from a variety of perspectives. The congress was sponsored by the Southern Baptist Education Commission and the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools.

R. Kirby Godsey, president of Mercer University in Macon, Ga., and chairman of the steering committee for the congress, said problems facing Baptist higher education are the result of "very basic and strong fears."

The fear of freedom has led many to abhor free inquiry which "lies at the very soul and essence of an educational endeavor. Take away free inquiry and we have made our institutions into ideological factories, propagandizing, indoctrinating and seeking to protect our students from the perils of searching for the truth," Godsey said.

He insisted free and open inquiry must not be crippled in Baptist schools, and educators and students should not be afraid to think because the mind is a gift from God.

In order to meet the challenges which lie ahead, Godsey called for the development of trained leaders: "We see clearly that it is far easier to attain authority, even power, than to become a leader. Leadership requires imagination. Call it vision or intuition. Unless our activities are punctuated with a vision of where we are going we very quickly begin to go nowhere."

He urged Baptist educators to "celebrate the contributions of Baptist higher education" while also being willing to "confess our failures in the same arena."

If education is ever excluded from the mission of the church, the church will lose its sense of heritage and destiny, he added.

Warren Bennis, a professor at the University of Southern California and co-author of "Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge," said successful leaders envision the future and communicate what they see.

Bennis said the subject of leadership is "remarkably complex, illusive, even mysterious." With more than 350 definitions, leadership is the "most studied and least understood subject in schools of management," he added.

Bennis, who spent five years studying 90 top American corporate, government and organizational leaders, related two themes present in every leader he studied.

"The first thing that really stood out was their management of attention through vision. When they talked about their organizational vision—their goals—they made me interested. They had the awesome capacity to create a vision which would take you to a different place," Bennis said.

Leaders also must be effective in "the management of meaning through communication," he related. "In order to get commitment, a vision has to be communicated. The leader is the person who can cut through the dense plethora of information and tell people the meaning."

According to Cal Turner, president and chief executive officer of Dollar General Corporation in Scottsville, Ky., a good leader is one who spends a lifetime "constantly narrowing the gap between who you know God wants you to be and who you really are. And you can only do that with God's help."

Turner said good leadership requires the "highest calling." Many people, including Christian educators and pastors, are good at what they do, "but they are not leaders."

A major problem in America today is "neglect of good leadership, not ignorance of it. We know how to do it. The problem is that we're only giving lip service to it," he maintained.

An aerospace industry executive agreed Baptist schools must provide value-centered education for the training of tomorrow's industrial leaders.

Lois Wenger, senior staff member to the vice president for operations at Marietta Aerospace Industries in Orlando, Fla., and recording secretary for the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, said Christians hold the key to the realization of a new kind of leadership for American industry. "God is literally invading the corporate structure of America" with Christian leaders, she said.

Wenger profiled the effective Christian leader of the 21st century as a person of unquestioned integrity, people-oriented, creative, committed to excellence, an expert communicator, a team leader and a team builder, one who exercises leadership through consensus and a person with global vision.

She urged Baptist schools to "continue reinforcing these principles of leadership in the hearts and minds" of young people who will become tomorrow's industrial leaders.

James L. Sullivan, retired president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tenn., noted the "Bible doesn't say much about leadership per se, but it has a lot to say about servanthood and service."

Sullivan, an expert on Baptist polity, related "some lessons learned along the way" during a lifetime of service as a pastor and as a Baptist agency executive.

Good leaders are good learners, he emphasized. Sullivan quoted his mother's advice that "anybody in the world knows something you don't and is your potential teacher."

Unless leaders "recognize that people are the greatest resource we have," he said, "then we have failed before we've even begun."

Sullivan said good leaders will be persons of integrity and high moral character who know how to "love people regardless of background."

Hal Wingo, assistant managing editor of People Weekly magazine in New York, urged educators to look to the future with confidence.

Faced with the mind-boggling challenges of the 21st century, Christians can either "wither into uselessness" or embrace the future with the confidence that "God is always out there ahead of us."

Wingo said a required characteristic for Christian leaders in the future will be the "ability to suspend disbelief within the framework of faith." The Christian must be open not only to new advances in technology, science and other fields but also to new possibilities for God's work in the world, he said.

Wingo added it will be increasingly important as civilization enters the next century that Christian leaders "be willing to see the hand of God in whatever is to be."

Again, he cautioned, that does not mean blindly accepting evil or tragedy as God's intention, explaining what it does entail is the willingness to be surprised by the greatness of God.

The future, with its capacity to turn today's fantasy into tomorrow's reality, may be awesome, Wingo said, but "isn't the mind of God greater than Steven Spielberg's?"

Wingo said Christian leaders can face the future with a certain faith: "Our task is to dare the 21st century to show us its stuff. And we will show it a people whose God is not through with this world yet."

--30--

Saffels New Superintendent
Of New Mexico Children's Home

By J.B. Fowler

Baptist Press
6/17/86

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (BP)—Michael Saffels has been named superintendent of New Mexico Baptist Children's Home in Portales.

--more--

Saffels, 33, will succeed Bert Edmison, superintendent of the home since May 15, 1971, who retired Jan. 1.

Since June 1985, Saffels has been area director of development for the Georgia Baptist Children's Homes and Family Services. He lives in Baxley, Ga.

A graduate of the University of Alabama with a bachelor of science degree in psychology, Saffels also holds the master of divinity degree with a major in Christian social ministries from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

Since 1977 he has been affiliated with various church-related agencies in Kentucky and Georgia. He was a nursing assistant in the acute psychiatric unit at Highlands Baptist Hospital in Louisville, a social services worker with Westminster Terrace nursing home and retirement community in Louisville, a family worker at Glen Dale Baptist Children's Home in Glen Dale, Ky., and unit director, chaplain and area director of development at Georgia Baptist Children's Home.

—30—

Baptists Urged To Oppose
Deprogramming Legislation

By Jim Newton

Baptist Press
6/17/86

WASHINGTON (BP)—A Virginia sociology professor has urged Southern Baptists to oppose legislation which would legalize kidnapping of young people involved in cult groups so their parents can have them deprogrammed.

David Bromley, chairman of the department of sociology and anthropology at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, said such laws, if passed, could be used against Baptists and people of other religions and are dangerous to society.

Bromley, author of several books and a nationally-recognized expert on cults in America, made the statements during a national conference sponsored by the interfaith witness department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Several state legislatures, Bromley said, are considering legislation passed in 1981 by New York but vetoed by the governor which would, in effect, legalize kidnapping. Such laws use "guardianship and conservatorship" provisions allowing parents to get a court order declaring their adult sons or daughters psychologically incompetent. With such a court order, a "cult deprogrammer" may legally kidnap the youth and force him or her to undergo psychological "treatment."

Bromley said such laws are dangerous to all religions because laws passed to be used against one religious group can be used against another group. If anybody should oppose such legislation, said the Virginia professor, it should be Baptists because of their historic stand on religious freedom.

Bromley debunked the myth that religious cults "brainwash" their converts and force them against their will to accept a religious lifestyle. He said such a view is the result of a "conspiracy theory" promoted by former members of cults and anti-cult groups which depend on this kind of scare tactic for their financial support.

Bromley said it does not make sense that cult groups are able to manipulate, brainwash and exploit their members through brainwashing. "If they could brainwash people, you would assume their success rate for recruitment would be very high, and that the escape and defection rate would be very low," said Bromley, noting the opposite is true.

Bromley estimated there are less than 25,000 members of all cult groups combined in America.

Citing statistics from his nationwide research, he said there were never more than 7,500 "Moonies" (members of Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church) at their peak, and now are probably less than 3,500. He said the Moonies are successful in recruiting only about 100 converts a year.

—more—

He added there were probably 3,000 members of Hare Krishna and now only about 1,500 to 2,000. The only cults that seem to be growing are The Way International and the Church of Scientology, Bromley said.

The defection rate among cult groups ranges from 20 percent to 50 percent per year, he noted. One reason the defection rate is so high is because most cults are ripped apart by schism and conflict, he added.

Bromley debunked several other myths about cults.

He said it is not true that the cult phenomenon is new or that these new religions pose an unparalleled threat to American culture and religion. American history, he said, is full of the development of new religions which usually do not survive the death of their founder. "This phenomenon is characteristic of American society," he said.

The myth that all these cults are similar is also untrue, he said. "If you read their theology, they are as different and diverse as General Motors and the local school system."

Neither is it true that all cults are led by power-and money-hungry gurus. For example, the founder of Hare Krishna died in poverty, not in wealth, he said. "Their leaders aren't really much different from the leaders of other religious groups.

"It is true that some of these groups have done some seedy, nasty things, but the fear and apprehension they create is not sufficient for states to pass drastic legislation that could be used against people of all religions," he said.

Gary Leazer, associate director of Home Mission Board's interfaith witness department, responded to Bromley's address by pointing out already the American government has used similar techniques against both Baptists and cults.

Pointing out that after Internal Revenue Service withdrew the tax exempt status of The Way International, several Baptist churches in Jackson, Tenn., faced possible loss of their tax exempt status after they fought legalized liquor-by-the-drink in a local-option election.



BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

LYNN MAY HO
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
901 COMMERCE
NASHVILLE, TN 37203

NEWS SERVICE OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION