



BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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April 25, 1988

88-67

Bombing damages
Missionary home

N-FMB

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras (BP)--A bomb which exploded in the carport of a nearby house April 23 did minor damage to the home of Southern Baptist missionaries David and Joyce Harms in Tegucigalpa, the capital city of Honduras.

The bomb, which left a large hole in the driveway where it went off, heavily damaged the house it apparently was intended to destroy and broke windows in the neighborhood. A car was destroyed and several others were damaged. No one was injured by the blast, however.

"The sound was just terrible," said Mrs. Harms, of Shelbyville, Ind., who was at home that evening with her son, Michael, 20, and 10-year-old daughter, Davina. "Then I could feel all the dust and dirt and smoke that came in our window from the bomb." Her husband, a missionary physician from Miami, was out of town on a preaching mission.

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"Our little girl was really afraid," she said. "The one bomb went off and our thought was would there be another one? We didn't know whether to go out of the house or what to do, but we tried to stay together and finally did go out front. I would like not to live that experience again. We were very frightened."

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Mrs. Harms said the incident appears to have no relation to the recent anti-Americanism seen in Honduras. However, anti-American sentiment has continued since the extradition of a reputed Honduran drug dealer to the United States in early April set off a deadly attack on the U.S. embassy and heavy rioting. Missionaries in the country still are exercising caution in their public movements.

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N-BJC

Report spotlights persisting
Acts of religious intolerance

By Kathy Palen

Baptist Press
4/25/88

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The report, prepared by the U.N. special rapporteur on religious intolerance, focuses on examples of religious intolerance in seven countries. The examples represent a "broad geographical distribution" highlighting the "nearly universal nature of the problem" of religious intolerance and discrimination, said Angelo Vidal D'Almeida Ribeiro, a longtime human rights advocate from Portugal who in 1986 was appointed special rapporteur to examine incidents of governmental actions throughout the world inconsistent with the provisions of the U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

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Ribeiro's report explores allegations of specific instances of religious intolerance, including restrictions on various faiths in the Soviet Union; harassment of Christian minorities in Turkey; persecution of Catholics and Protestants in Burundi; total abolition of religion in Albania; repression of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria; torture and execution of Baha'is in Iran; and laws forbidding the Ahmadiyya faith in Pakistan.

The report also discusses general examples of religious intolerance in more than 40 countries, including the right to have a religion, maintain places of worship, establish charitable institutions, disseminate religious publications, receive voluntary financial contributions, train or choose religious leaders, celebrate holidays, maintain contacts abroad, practice religion without discrimination and raise children according to their parents' chosen religion.

During an April press briefing, representatives from the Department of State, Congressional Human Rights Caucus and Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty voiced support for the report.

Richard Schifter, assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, said although the special rapporteur had no authority to make nations stop their religious liberty violations, his report places the "spotlight of world attention" on the violations.

In addition, the report brings the full weight of the United Nations to bear against those countries, said Rep. Christopher H. Smith, R-N.J.

Smith was joined by Rep. John E. Porter, R-Ill. -- a fellow member of the bipartisan Congressional Human Rights Caucus -- in praising Ribeiro for presenting an in-depth report.

"By reporting specific instances of religious persecution in seven countries, Mr. Ribeiro provides a base for understanding of the broader issues of religious intolerance which he described in his first report," said Porter, who serves as caucus co-chairman. "It is necessary to draw attention to worldwide violations of religious intolerance in order to emphasize their importance to the international community."

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Church planter uses
Outreach Bible Study

By Linda Lawson

F-SSB

Baptist Press
4/25/88

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Mission Service Corps volunteer Randy Walters is leading eight of the weektime evangelistic Bible study groups as a major step forward in making the dream happen.

"We want people to know Outreach Bible Study will work, but it takes work," Garland said as he sat at a table in Issa's Restaurant, the original meeting place for the First Southern Baptist Mission of West Logan, which now gathers in a trailer a half mile down Highway 10. "We haven't had 100 percent success. We have had bumps along the road, but we've got something here from God that will work."

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"We'll take any number as long as we can show them the way to Christ," he said.

"People want to hear the Word of God," said Walters. "As long as you're open and honest with the people they will listen. They are seeking the truth."

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"We've got to reach out," he said. "This is the best way I've seen to reach out with the true gospel."

Since beginning his work as a Home Mission Board church planter in October 1985, Garland has started three missions, including the work in Logan. Outreach Bible Study has been a part of all three.

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"Outreach Bible Study is a restating of the Great Commission. It's a new opportunity. I know it works. The gospel is always steadfast and steady," Garland said.

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

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Absent in Great Britain

By Art Toalston

N-FMB
Baptist Press
4/25/88

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Spiers, a regular participant on BBC programs for the past 25 years, was interviewed at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in Richmond, Va., during a late-April visit to the United States.

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Court to decide on charitable
Deductions for Scientologists

By Stan Haste

N-BSC
Baptist Press
4/25/88

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has announced it will decide if members of the Church of Scientology may deduct payments from their federal income tax forms made to the church for "auditing" and "training" sessions.

In Church of Scientology doctrine and practice, "auditing" involves one-on-one counseling of a newer member by an experienced adherent of the faith. Described as "the essential religious experience" of Scientology, auditing includes use of an instrument invented by church founder L. Ron Hubbard known as an "E-Meter."

"Training" refers to the study of church doctrine, polity and scriptures.

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The case accepted for review, Hernandez v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, is one of three identical disputes pitting Scientologists against the Internal Revenue Service now pending before the high court.

Altogether, four federal courts of appeals have ruled in such cases over the past several months. Of them, only one has resulted in a decision favorable to Scientologists.

In the case accepted, the IRS disallowed Scientologist Robert L. Hernandez' claim of \$7,338 as a charitable deduction for what was described as a "fixed donation" to the church for auditing and training sessions. The U.S. Tax Court agreed and was upheld by the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals.

Both the tax court judge who first decided the case and the federal appeals panel that upheld him ruled Hernandez received services in exchange for his contribution, thereby forfeiting his right to claim a deduction. The tax court assessed Hernandez a tax deficiency of \$2,245.

Hernandez' attorney, Michael J. Graetz -- who also represents the other Scientologists whose cases are pending -- argued in a written appeal that for nearly 70 years the IRS has allowed deductions for payments made to churches and other religious organizations "to participate in the religious sacraments of their faith."

Accusing IRS officials of discriminating against Scientologists, the New Haven, Conn., lawyer wrote: "No principled basis exists for distinguishing the payments of Scientologists ... from a wide variety of other payments to other churches. ... The government has stated in effect that Scientology fails to satisfy the state's measure of orthodoxy."

For its part, the government cited the reasoning of the appellate court that "where contributions are made with the expectation of receiving a benefit, and such benefit is received, the transfer is not a charitable contribution, but rather a quid pro quo."

Oral arguments in the case will not be heard until sometime after the high court convenes next October for its 1988-89 term. A decision is not likely to be handed down before early next year.

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James Dunn calls for
Return to soul freedom

By Scott Collins

N- (O) (SWS) Baptist Press
4/25/88

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Baptist identity is at stake in the current debate among Southern Baptists, James Dunn told students and faculty during an April chapel service at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, said Baptists must come to an understanding of the soul liberty of every believer, or the belief "in the competency of the individual before God." It is a belief, he said, which is more of a Baptist distinctive than morality, baptism, missions or evangelism.

"The bedrock belief in direct and equal access to God, the doctrine of the priesthood of all Christians is a part of and essential to everything that is Baptist," Dunn said.

The belief in soul freedom is a "theological essential. If we depart from that, we've lost who we are," he said. Using the third chapter of Second Corinthians as a text, Dunn added soul freedom begins with the individual, "but it doesn't end there. Our subjective, intensely personal inward faith is not a private faith. And seeing the Bible as the sole rule for faith and practice keeps us on the track."

Dunn said Baptists' traditional belief in soul freedom keeps them from the bondage of corporate Christianity, or being "caught up in the crowd."

Some people today "appeal to what the majority of Baptists believe," Dunn said, adding that what the majority of Baptists believe makes no difference to God. "It's a matter of competence of the individual before God, not a matter of marketplace polling to figure out what everybody else believes before we decide whether we believe in it."

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God's will and the competency of the believer must be based on the "open Bible," Dunn said. "As Southern Baptists we still believe that."

Soul freedom also frees individuals from the bondage of rationalism, or the need to know everything, Dunn said, adding: "There is a sort of theological scientism where we've taken our scientific mood of the day in this land, feeling that we know everything clearly and certainly, and applied it to the scripture. That's the illegitimate child of an optimistic faith in man's mind."

Christians are freed from the bondage of "impossible expectations of super spirituality," he said. "We need not be in bondage to a brand of religion that demands more of us than the Lord himself demands."

"The Baptist distinctive is soul freedom. That religious liberty that we commit ourselves to defend is a theological necessity," he added.

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Power seeking threatens
World peace, Coffin says

By Pat Cole

N-10
(4519)
Baptist Press
4/25/88

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--World peace is being jeopardized by nations intent on "seeking status through power," the president of one of America's largest peace groups, told students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The world's superpowers find the pursuit of power an "irresistible temptation," William Sloane Coffin, president of SANE/FREEZE, said at an April meeting of the Ethics Luncheon, a student forum at the Louisville, Ky., seminary.

Military strategies of the superpowers go beyond providing for national security, and nations are more concerned with weaponry than with genuine defense systems, Coffin said.

Nuclear arms have changed the way nations must approach national security issues. Because of the destructive force of nuclear weapons, he said a "common security" must be sought. "In a nuclear age, nobody is safe until everybody is safe," he said.

Coffin, former senior minister of New York City's Riverside Church, noted, "God has the authority to end life on earth, but we have the power."

The church has "much to say" about social issues, and Coffin urged Christians not to ignore pressing social problems: "It's always offended my sense of the gospel to retreat from the giant social issues of the day to the pigmy of private piety. The church has the vision the world needs today."

Coffin warned against "self righteousness" among developed nations, a condition he described as the "bane of international affairs." He criticized attitudes that portray America as a "city on the hill" or as "God's political messiah."

"Jesus would not be soft on communism or capitalism," he said. "Jesus would say, 'Let the nation that is without sin aim the first missile.'"

Coffin said Americans should be concerned with the lack of civil liberties in the Soviet Union, but he added they also must assess the status of personal freedoms in their own country.

"We should be appalled at the repression of civil liberties in the Soviet Union and the repressive regimes in Eastern Europe," he said. "But let us remember that while we have better civil liberties (than the Soviet Union and Eastern European nations) we don't have perfect civil liberties."

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**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
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The case accepted for review, Hernandez v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue, is one of three identical disputes pitting Scientologists against the Internal Revenue Service now pending before the high court.

Altogether, four federal courts of appeals have ruled in such cases over the past several months. Of them, only one has resulted in a decision favorable to Scientologists.

In the case accepted, the IRS disallowed Scientologist Robert L. Hernandez' claim of \$7,338 as a charitable deduction for what was described as a "fixed donation" to the church for auditing and training sessions. The U.S. Tax Court agreed and was upheld by the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals.

Both the tax court judge who first decided the case and the federal appeals panel that upheld him ruled Hernandez received services in exchange for his contribution, thereby forfeiting his right to claim a deduction. The tax court assessed Hernandez a tax deficiency of \$2,245.

Hernandez' attorney, Michael J. Graetz -- who also represents the other Scientologists whose cases are pending -- argued in a written appeal that for nearly 70 years the IRS has allowed deductions for payments made to churches and other religious organizations "to participate in the religious sacraments of their faith."

Accusing IRS officials of discriminating against Scientologists, the New Haven, Conn., lawyer wrote: "No principled basis exists for distinguishing the payments of Scientologists ... from a wide variety of other payments to other churches. ... The government has stated in effect that Scientology fails to satisfy the state's measure of orthodoxy."

For its part, the government cited the reasoning of the appellate court that "where contributions are made with the expectation of receiving a benefit, and such benefit is received, the transfer is not a charitable contribution, but rather a quid pro quo."

Oral arguments in the case will not be heard until sometime after the high court convenes next October for its 1988-89 term. A decision is not likely to be handed down before early next year.

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James Dunn calls for
Return to soul freedom

By Scott Collins

Baptist Press
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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Baptist identity is at stake in the current debate among Southern Baptists, James Dunn told students and faculty during an April chapel service at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs in Washington, said Baptists must come to an understanding of the soul liberty of every believer, or the belief "in the competency of the individual before God." It is a belief, he said, which is more of a Baptist distinctive than morality, baptism, missions or evangelism.

"The bedrock belief in direct and equal access to God, the doctrine of the priesthood of all Christians is a part of and essential to everything that is Baptist," Dunn said.

The belief in soul freedom is a "theological essential. If we depart from that, we've lost who we are," he said. Using the third chapter of Second Corinthians as a text, Dunn added soul freedom begins with the individual, "but it doesn't end there. Our subjective, intensely personal inward faith is not a private faith. And seeing the Bible as the sole rule for faith and practice keeps us on the track."

Dunn said Baptists' traditional belief in soul freedom keeps them from the bondage of corporate Christianity, or being "caught up in the crowd."

Some people today "appeal to what the majority of Baptists believe," Dunn said, adding that what the majority of Baptists believe makes no difference to God. "It's a matter of competence of the individual before God, not a matter of marketplace polling to figure out what everybody else believes before we decide whether we believe in it."

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God's will and the competency of the believer must be based on the "open Bible," Dunn said. "As Southern Baptists we still believe that."

Soul freedom also frees individuals from the bondage of rationalism, or the need to know everything, Dunn said, adding: "There is a sort of theological scientism where we've taken our scientific mood of the day in this land, feeling that we know everything clearly and certainly, and applied it to the scripture. That's the illegitimate child of an optimistic faith in man's mind."

Christians are freed from the bondage of "impossible expectations of super spirituality," he said. "We need not be in bondage to a brand of religion that demands more of us than the Lord himself demands."

"The Baptist distinctive is soul freedom. That religious liberty that we commit ourselves to defend is a theological necessity," he added.

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Power seeking threatens
World peace, Coffin says

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
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LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--World peace is being jeopardized by nations intent on "seeking status through power," the president of one of America's largest peace groups, told students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The world's superpowers find the pursuit of power an "irresistible temptation," William Sloane Coffin, president of SANE/FREEZE, said at an April meeting of the Ethics Luncheon, a student forum at the Louisville, Ky., seminary.

Military strategies of the superpowers go beyond providing for national security, and nations are more concerned with weaponry than with genuine defense systems, Coffin said.

Nuclear arms have changed the way nations must approach national security issues. Because of the destructive force of nuclear weapons, he said a "common security" must be sought. "In a nuclear age, nobody is safe until everybody is safe," he said.

Coffin, former senior minister of New York City's Riverside Church, noted, "God has the authority to end life on earth, but we have the power."

The church has "much to say" about social issues, and Coffin urged Christians not to ignore pressing social problems: "It's always offended my sense of the gospel to retreat from the giant social issues of the day to the pigmy of private piety. The church has the vision the world needs today."

Coffin warned against "self righteousness" among developed nations, a condition he described as the "bane of international affairs." He criticized attitudes that portray America as a "city on the hill" or as "God's political messiah."

"Jesus would not be soft on communism or capitalism," he said. "Jesus would say, 'Let the nation that is without sin aim the first missile.'"

Coffin said Americans should be concerned with the lack of civil liberties in the Soviet Union, but he added they also must assess the status of personal freedoms in their own country.

"We should be appalled at the repression of civil liberties in the Soviet Union and the repressive regimes in Eastern Europe," he said. "But let us remember that while we have better civil liberties (than the Soviet Union and Eastern European nations) we don't have perfect civil liberties."

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