



BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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June 28, 1988

88-100

Court lets stand exemptions
for religious daycare centers

By Stan Hasty

N-BJC

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has let stand an Illinois law exempting religious daycare centers from state regulation.

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At issue in the dispute between the state and the Pre-School Owners Association of Illinois was a 1982 amendment to the state's childcare law exempting church-run centers. The association -- a non-profit group consisting of more than 100 owners of childcare facilities -- challenged the law in a Cook County circuit court, claiming in part it violated the First Amendment's ban on an official establishment of religion.

That panel agreed, invalidating the religious exemption. But on appeal, the Illinois Supreme Court reversed the trial court, ruling the state acted properly in granting the exemption.

In asking the nation's high court to review that ruling, the owners' association argued the Illinois legislature did not have a valid secular purpose in passing the law, noting religious daycare centers in fact had been regulated under state law from 1957 to 1983. State regulations, the argument continued, "do not burden or infringe upon religious liberty."

Further, attorneys for the association wrote, the religious exemption "increases government entanglement" with churches and advances religion by relieving the church-run centers of "significant financial and administrative burdens."

Among these, they said, are requirements on other childcare centers to provide a minimum square-foot area for each child as well as nutritious meals. The church centers also may combine age groups, employ untrained supervisors, waive health and hygiene requirements, refuse to carry liability insurance and refuse to conduct background checks on employees, including any history of child or sexual abuse, association lawyers insisted.

In reply, Illinois Attorney General Neil Hartigan wrote, "It is well settled ... that the government may accommodate religious practices and promulgate laws which permit churches to advance religion."

Religious daycare centers, Hartigan continued, "are not singled out for favored treatment" because other centers also are exempted under the law, including public and non-sectarian private facilities that are part of a school.

On the question of governmental entanglement with religion, Hartigan argued that exempting church daycare centers results in a more complete separation of church and state by avoiding state inquiries into religious beliefs. Such inquiries would be required, he said, if church centers were licensed by the state.

Lewis challenges campers
to start 20,000 churches

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB

STONE MOUNTAIN, Ga. (BP)--Larry Lewis challenged 600 campers to hit the road to help start 20,000 new churches in America.

Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, addressed the national Campers on Mission rally at Georgia's Stone Mountain Park. Campers on Mission is an organization sponsored by the Home Mission Board to support lay involvement in missions projects.

"If we're going to start 20,000 new churches by the year 2000, every one of us is going to have to be at it," Lewis said. "We need you."

He told the campers 167 million people in America do not know Jesus Christ. Many of those cannot be reached through existing churches, he said.

"When we see the vision of the living Lord, it's going to compel us to break out of the church house and go out where the people are," Lewis said.

The eight states of the Old South claim 20,000 churches, he said. But a larger population lives in the cities of Los Angeles and New York, where only 500 churches exist.

"We need to be at the task of starting churches everywhere people are," Lewis said. "We need you to help start those churches."

Campers on Mission has been an important part of church starting since its formation in 1972, said Carl Reagan, national Campers on Mission specialist from Franklin, N.C. The organization's state chapters often adopt specific projects of construction, evangelism or surveying work related to starting new churches, he said.

At the rally, the Texas chapter reported its members had logged 14,000 hours of ministry in the past year. Alabama, a smaller chapter, reported giving 6,000 hours.

Reports on past projects, calls for help on future projects and instruction for doing projects better dominated the three-day camp meeting. The 600 participants came to Stone Mountain in 242 camping units, filling the park's camping area.

Stone Mountain provided a realistic setting for talking about ministry projects in campgrounds and resort areas. Major conference sessions were conducted under the campground's large, open-air pavilion. For smaller conferences, campers picked up their lawn chairs and clustered under shade trees at nearby campsites.

The Christian campers left behind their Sunday dress for more practical missions attire -- cool clothes, sensible shoes and fishing caps to beat the 100-degree heat.

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Kokomo the clown, alias Tom Rives, showed up outside one trailer to teach campers how to begin clowning ministries. Clowns can present the gospel where preachers cannot, said Rives, associate pastor of Bay Area Baptist Church in Tampa, Fla.

"Many people won't listen to preachers today, but they will listen to a clown," Rives said. He cited his own experience as a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, to illustrate.

A class assignment required him to preach on one of the downtown street corners, where he received more heckling than attention. However, Rives said he later returned to the same corner as a clown and immediately drew the attention of 200 people.

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Reagans become 1st
Camper specialists

By Mark Wingfield

N-HMB
Baptist Press
6/28/88

STONE MOUNTAIN, Ga. (BP)--Carl Reagan quit his job to go camping.

Now the retired Sears employee and his wife are traveling the country in their 27-foot Winnebago encouraging other campers to become fishers of men and women in America's resorts, parks and campgrounds.

Carl and Mary Reagan are the first national Campers on Mission specialists for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. They are self-supporting Mission Service Corps volunteers assigned to the board's special mission ministries department.

Campers on Mission is an organization sponsored by the Home Mission Board to encourage campers to participate in missions projects. The group held its annual rally this summer at Georgia's Stone Mountain Park.

At that rally, the Reagans found a captive audience for their favorite topic -- missions through camping. They moved among the 600 participants, encouraging them and enlisting them for service.

"We have one of the best ministries I have ever seen," Reagan said of Campers on Mission. "That's why I quit my job early."

Reagan took early retirement from Sears, where he had worked for 23 years. His wife had retired two years earlier as financial secretary at First Baptist Church in Tampa, Fla. They have moved to Franklin, N.C.

Although Campers on Mission was begun in 1972, the Reagans said they were doing Campers on Mission work in the 1960s. It all started when they bought a 13-foot Scotty trailer and joined the Florida Scotty Club. They joined on the condition they could conduct worship services for the members each weekend.

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Reagan was president of the Florida chapter of Campers on Mission for four years before accepting his new national assignment. In Florida, he and his wife organized creative ministries at state fairs. They planned their vacations around the fair in Tampa in order to camp there and minister to the employees and visitors.

If given the invitation, Reagan is certain other Christians will become as excited about Campers on Mission as he is: "Without a doubt, there are Christian campers eager to serve in construction and evangelism efforts. If they are just given the information, they'll volunteer for it."

"The ministries are there. All you've got to do is be available."

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Lighthearted jesting
leads to nomination

By Bob E. Mathews

N- (O)
(OKla.)

Baptist Press
6/28/88

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Lighthearted jesting among a group of Oklahomans led to the nomination of a Tulsa, Okla., layman as president of the Southern Baptist Convention this summer.

James Craig was nominated for the SBC post during the convention's annual meeting June 14 in San Antonio, Texas.

Oklahomans who fellowshipped in a hotel room the night before the election discussed the presidency. Sources who asked not to be identified confirmed the conversation led to Craig's nomination the following afternoon.

Craig was nominated by a participant in the informal meeting, Robert Maples, a former Oklahoma pastor and music-youth director and now a chaplain at a New Mexico military institute.

Craig was one of four presidential nominees and placed third in the balloting. Jacksonville, Fla., pastor Jerry Vines won the election with 50.53 percent of the votes, topping Phoenix, Ariz., pastor Richard Jackson, who netted 48.23 percent. Craig received 276 votes, or 0.88 percent, while Alabama evangelist Anniece Shorrosh drew 82 votes, or 0.26 percent.

SBC observers noted Craig and Shorrosh did not affect the outcome of the vote. If Jackson had received all 358 votes cast for the other two candidates, Vines would have won by 334 votes instead of the final margin of 692 ballots. (Vines was the candidate of SBC conservatives. Jackson was supported by moderates. Craig and Shorrosh were not affiliated with either group.)

"A group of us was sitting around discussing the convention and the upcoming election," said one source to the story. "Craig and Maples are longtime friends and got to joking about the nomination. It went on for awhile, and the gathering broke up."

The next many of the participants knew of the situation was when Maples was recognized at the SBC podium and nominated Craig as representative of the millions of laymen who support Southern Baptist churches and their ministries and are deserving of recognition.

At home in Tulsa following the annual meeting, Craig verified the incident and said it was not entirely frivolous.

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"While I was surprised when Maples really did nominate me and almost fell out of the balcony, this is an indication that a bunch of laymen are very unhappy at the 'jawing' of the preachers. It's time for a layman to be elected," he said.

"Some laypeople feel the pastors are not our real leaders any more and are just on ego trips," he added, predicting a layman will be nominated for the presidency again next year.

"Many small-church pastors can't afford to go to the SBC, and when they do, they can't get elected because they don't have a voice in the events and are not included in the inner circle."

Maples used the nomination to get the laypeople's attention and to remind them that the laity are in the majority and "pay the bills," Craig said. He admitted 1988 was not the year for a layman, and the laity will need a "heavy" if their nominee is to be successful.

Maples had difficulty gaining access to the SBC platform to nominate Craig. As has been the practice in recent years, the stairs to the platform were monitored and access was controlled. Maples was asked repeatedly if he really wanted to make the nomination, he said, noting he told platform monitors that if they continued to delay him, the nominations would cease. An associate of SBC President Adrian P. Rogers eventually allowed him access to the platform.

Craig, a construction inspector for the city of Tulsa's engineering department, is a former president of the Oklahoma Baptist University alumni association and is a member of South Tulsa Baptist Church.

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Wife of late leader
Porter Routh dies

N-10

Baptist Press
6/28/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Ruth Purtle Routh, wife of the late Southern Baptist executive Porter W. Routh, died June 26 in Nashville following an extended illness. She was 74.

Mrs. Routh was born in Sulphur, Okla., in 1913. She graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee in the early 1930s and was named an OBU distinguished alumna in 1982.

She and her husband were married for more than 52 years prior to his death Nov. 7, 1987. He was executive secretary (now president) and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee from 1951 to 1979 and was editor of the Baptist Messenger, Oklahoma Baptists' weekly newsjournal, and worked on the staff of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Mrs. Routh was a home economics teacher in Oklahoma before her children were born. She traveled around the world with her husband several times, visiting Southern Baptist mission fields.

She was involved in the support of Clover Bottom Developmental Center in Nashville and was a parent representative on the center's human rights committee.

She is survived by five children: son Charles of Seattle; daughters Betsy Routh Green of Wichita, Kan.; Dorothy Routh of Tallahassee, Fla.; Susan Routh of Nashville; and Lelia Routh Cothen of Cheverly, Md.; seven grandchildren; and a sister, Frances Graves of Midwest City, Okla.

Her funeral service is to be June 29 at First Baptist Church of Nashville.

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Elder urges building
fellowship of consensus

By Linda Lawson

N-55B

Baptist Press
6/28/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--If unanimity is not possible, Southern Baptist should build a Christian fellowship of consensus, said Lloyd Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"If we cannot have unanimity, unanimous votes or unanimous feeling about one another, by God's grace we can surely build the kind of consensus that focuses on the lordship of Christ in a world that is as lost as it can be without him," Elder said. "It is that kind of consensus that will draw us back together."

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Reporting in a chapel service on the annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting June 14-16 in San Antonio, Elder said Southern Baptists also need to be "involved in prevailing prayer for one another and for the convention and be gracious to one another in our differences."

Eighteen new trustees were elected in San Antonio, 16 of whom attended orientation sessions at the board June 23-24.

Elder asked employees and trustees to join him in being "hopeful about the future usefulness of our convention. If you hear someone talk about a split in the convention, put me over in the other column. It is still possible for the Convention to have its greatest days."

"The Sunday School Board family is not going to become a people who wring our hands and wonder what our assignment is. We do not get to write all the rules, but we do know who we are and what our work is," he added.

The commitment of the Sunday School Board will continue to be service to all the churches and to "supporting missionary cooperation on a voluntary basis on a solid biblical foundation."

"That is our long-term commitment and we stand beside that with great enthusiasm and joy and anticipation that the Lord will honor that," he said. "There is a single mandate to all of us to obey Holy Scripture in pursuing the work of our denomination."

Elder reported on major convention actions including the election of Jerry Vines as SBC president, the final report of the SBC Peace Committee and the adoption of 22 resolutions.

In response to resolution five on the priesthood of the believer, Elder noted the board is "where we have been in the middle of our long heritage on as significant a doctrine as this."

The resolution says the doctrine "has been used to justify wrongly the attitude that a Christian may believe whatever he so chooses and still be considered a loyal Southern Baptist."

However, Elder said: "The Baptist Sunday School Board, in its work among Southern Baptists, has sought to develop and affirm a proper biblical understanding of the priesthood of the believer.

"This doctrine is a significant, historic, relevant doctrine among Southern Baptists. Also, this doctrine is believed and expressed on the acceptance of the complete and trustworthy authority of Holy Scripture.

"The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer expresses the freedom and responsibility of every believer without human interference. And the doctrine affirms the gifts, callings and ministry of every believer to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord."

He added: "This doctrine undergirds and affirms the biblical undershepherd, servant role, responsibility and authority of the pastor in the midst of the congregation. It does not abrogate the accountability of the convention agencies' employees to perform their responsibilities within the doctrinal guideline of the Baptist Faith and Message.

"Our theme song can never be 'I Did It My Way.' Our theme always has been to do it the Lord's way and come to Holy Scripture as a priest unto God, to understand Holy Scripture and to do it with great integrity and enthusiasm."

He commended employees "for a responsible understanding of the priesthood of the believer."

Concluding, Elder called on employees to practice their faith through their work and through their lives: "As members of the Baptist Sunday School Board and as trustees, our beliefs are deep and they are profound. They are not frivolous and they will not go away.

"They did not come to us recently and they will not go away tomorrow. Our beliefs are very biblical; they are sound; they are as deep as life itself.

"The focus of all of our work should be on Jesus Christ. He is the Lord of each one of us, of the Southern Baptist Convention and this Sunday School Board. It is our honor and glory to find out what Jesus Christ wants us to do and to praise his name above every name."

(BP)

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"Some laypeople feel the pastors are not our real leaders any more and are just on ego trips," he added, predicting a layman will be nominated for the presidency again next year.

"Many small-church pastors can't afford to go to the SBC, and when they do, they can't get elected because they don't have a voice in the events and are not included in the inner circle."

Maples used the nomination to get the laypeople's attention and to remind them that the laity are in the majority and "pay the bills," Craig said. He admitted 1988 was not the year for a layman, and the laity will need a "heavy" if their nominee is to be successful.

Maples had difficulty gaining access to the SBC platform to nominate Craig. As has been the practice in recent years, the stairs to the platform were monitored and access was controlled. Maples was asked repeatedly if he really wanted to make the nomination, he said, noting he told platform monitors that if they continued to delay him, the nominations would cease. An associate of SBC President Adrian P. Rogers eventually allowed him access to the platform.

Craig, a construction inspector for the city of Tulsa's engineering department, is a former president of the Oklahoma Baptist University alumni association and is a member of South Tulsa Baptist Church.

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Wife of late leader
Porter Routh dies

Baptist Press
6/28/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--Ruth Purtle Routh, wife of the late Southern Baptist executive Porter W. Routh, died June 26 in Nashville following an extended illness. She was 74.

Mrs. Routh was born in Sulphur, Okla., in 1913. She graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee in the early 1930s and was named an OBU distinguished alumna in 1982.

She and her husband were married for more than 52 years prior to his death Nov. 7, 1987. He was executive secretary (now president) and treasurer of the Southern Baptist Executive Committee from 1951 to 1979 and was editor of the Baptist Messenger, Oklahoma Baptists' weekly newsjournal, and worked on the staff of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Mrs. Routh was a home economics teacher in Oklahoma before her children were born. She traveled around the world with her husband several times, visiting Southern Baptist mission fields.

She was involved in the support of Clover Bottom Developmental Center in Nashville and was a parent representative on the center's human rights committee.

She is survived by five children: son Charles of Seattle; daughters Betsy Routh Green of Wichita, Kan.; Dorothy Routh of Tallahassee, Fla.; Susan Routh of Nashville; and Lelia Routh Cothen of Cheverly, Md.; seven grandchildren; and a sister, Frances Graves of Midwest City, Okla.

Her funeral service is to be June 29 at First Baptist Church of Nashville.

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Elder urges building
fellowship of consensus

By Linda Lawson

Baptist Press
6/28/88

NASHVILLE (BP)--If unanimity is not possible, Southern Baptist should build a Christian fellowship of consensus, said Lloyd Elder, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"If we cannot have unanimity, unanimous votes or unanimous feeling about one another, by God's grace we can surely build the kind of consensus that focuses on the lordship of Christ in a world that is as lost as it can be without him," Elder said. "It is that kind of consensus that will draw us back together."

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Reporting in a chapel service on the annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting June 14-16 in San Antonio, Elder said Southern Baptists also need to be "involved in prevailing prayer for one another and for the convention and be gracious to one another in our differences."

Eighteen new trustees were elected in San Antonio, 16 of whom attended orientation sessions at the board June 23-24.

Elder asked employees and trustees to join him in being "hopeful about the future usefulness of our convention. If you hear someone talk about a split in the convention, put me over in the other column. It is still possible for the Convention to have its greatest days."

"The Sunday School Board family is not going to become a people who wring our hands and wonder what our assignment is. We do not get to write all the rules, but we do know who we are and what our work is," he added.

The commitment of the Sunday School Board will continue to be service to all the churches and to "supporting missionary cooperation on a voluntary basis on a solid biblical foundation."

"That is our long-term commitment and we stand beside that with great enthusiasm and joy and anticipation that the Lord will honor that," he said. "There is a single mandate to all of us to obey Holy Scripture in pursuing the work of our denomination."

Elder reported on major convention actions including the election of Jerry Vines as SBC president, the final report of the SBC Peace Committee and the adoption of 22 resolutions.

In response to resolution five on the priesthood of the believer, Elder noted the board is "where we have been in the middle of our long heritage on as significant a doctrine as this."

The resolution says the doctrine "has been used to justify wrongly the attitude that a Christian may believe whatever he so chooses and still be considered a loyal Southern Baptist."

However, Elder said: "The Baptist Sunday School Board, in its work among Southern Baptists, has sought to develop and affirm a proper biblical understanding of the priesthood of the believer.

"This doctrine is a significant, historic, relevant doctrine among Southern Baptists. Also, this doctrine is believed and expressed on the acceptance of the complete and trustworthy authority of Holy Scripture.

"The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer expresses the freedom and responsibility of every believer without human interference. And the doctrine affirms the gifts, callings and ministry of every believer to carry out the Great Commission of our Lord."

He added: "This doctrine undergirds and affirms the biblical undershepherd, servant role, responsibility and authority of the pastor in the midst of the congregation. It does not abrogate the accountability of the convention agencies' employees to perform their responsibilities within the doctrinal guideline of the Baptist Faith and Message.

"Our theme song can never be 'I Did It My Way.' Our theme always has been to do it the Lord's way and come to Holy Scripture as a priest unto God, to understand Holy Scripture and to do it with great integrity and enthusiasm."

He commended employees "for a responsible understanding of the priesthood of the believer."

Concluding, Elder called on employees to practice their faith through their work and through their lives: "As members of the Baptist Sunday School Board and as trustees, our beliefs are deep and they are profound. They are not frivolous and they will not go away.

"They did not come to us recently and they will not go away tomorrow. Our beliefs are very biblical; they are sound; they are as deep as life itself.

"The focus of all of our work should be on Jesus Christ. He is the Lord of each one of us, of the Southern Baptist Convention and this Sunday School Board. It is our honor and glory to find out what Jesus Christ wants us to do and to praise his name above every name."

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