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89-33

Court upholds use of Rico  
laws in fighting obscenity

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has upheld the use of state racketeering laws in fighting the sale of obscene materials, but ruled that states may not violate the First Amendment by seizing such materials before trial.

The high court ruled 6-3 that the Indiana Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations law is neither unconstitutionally vague nor insensitive to First Amendment rights.

Writing for the majority, Justice Byron R. White said since Indiana's RICO statute encompasses the state's obscenity law, it is not too vague.

Since deterring the sale of obscene materials is a legitimate end of state anti-obscenity law, White continued, the possibility that some self-censorship may result from such a law does not render it unconstitutional.

Although divided over such use of racketeering laws, the high court was unanimous in overturning an Indiana court order that allowed prosecutors to seize all the property of three adult bookstores before any of the materials were found to be obscene by a trial court. The Fort Wayne, Ind., bookstores were emptied and padlocked after their owners were charged with racketeering for selling obscene books and films.

"This court has repeatedly held that rigorous procedural safeguards must be employed before expressive materials can be seized as obscene," White wrote, adding that "mere probable cause to believe a legal violation has transpired is not adequate to remove books or films from circulation."

Indiana is one of 27 states with RICO statutes similar to a 1970 federal racketeering law. In 1984, Congress added obscenity to the list of racketeering offenses, and 20 states, including Indiana, followed suit.

RICO laws impose severe penalties, including pre-trial seizure and post-conviction forfeiture of assets, for a "pattern of racketeering activity," which usually is defined as committing two offenses from a specified list over a period of years.

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Hultgren seeks humor  
in every situation

By Linda Lawson

F-SSB

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TULSA, Okla. (BP)--The capacity to look for humor in every situation has been a hallmark of Warren Hultgren's 32-year ministry as pastor of First Baptist Church of Tulsa, Okla.

But an intense love for people, a passion for world missions and a willingness to be involved in community and denominational activities also have characterized his career.

In addition to leading the 6,300-member church, he has been a fixture in the community life of Tulsa. Activities have ranged from chairing Tulsa Brotherhood Week to serving as vice chairperson of the Diamond Jubilee of the State of Oklahoma to being honored by the National Conference of Christians and Jews.

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His denominational activities have included chairing three presidential search committees at Oklahoma Baptist University, serving as president of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Hultgren has been a member of the SBC Executive Committee, a trustee of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and a trustee of the Sunday School Board, now serving as its chairman. He was re-elected to a second term in February.

"I take every opportunity I'm physically able to accept," said Hultgren. "This is not bad if you do not forget who you are and what you are supposed to be doing."

And Hultgren clearly knows that serving as pastor of First Baptist Church of Tulsa is what he is supposed to do.

Most fulfilling in his ministry has not been the preaching, though he feels that "is probably my gift." Personal contact with people, such as making 37 hospital visits on a typical Saturday, is where Hultgren feels he ministers most effectively.

"When I come back from the hospital on Saturday, my wife will tell you I'm almost euphoric," he said.

Hultgren preaches an average of seven times a week on a wide variety of topics but always with a biblical base.

"The only thing God blesses is his word," Hultgren said firmly. "The older I become the more sure I am that the word of God is the great common denominator of all people, regardless of social, economic or moral level.

"I have found that people like to use their Bibles when you preach," he said. "But don't assume they know how to find a text. Help them to be comfortable with the Bible."

In 1976, Hultgren presented the Missions Challenge Committee report to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Norfolk, Va. The culmination of two years of work, the report included the proposal that Southern Baptists launch Bold Mission Thrust, an effort to share the gospel with every person in the world by the year 2000.

"One of the critical questions that came up early in our discussions was the thought that the goal was impossible," Hultgren recalled.

"However, anything less than the Great Commission would not have been adequate. Jesus didn't say; Do your best. We had to go with the ideal."

As chairman of trustees of the Sunday School Board, Hultgren sees his role as a presiding officer, not a spokesman.

"I have no agenda. I want to be fair, give everyone a hearing and participate in electing administrators and encouraging them to do what they were called to do," he said.

At the same time, Hultgren said he wished all Southern Baptists could know "the intensity of activity and the unquestioned integrity of those in places of leadership at the board. They have the highest commitment to the teaching of the inspired word of God."

At 67, Hultgren could retire, but is staying to complete several major projects. He also has accepted a position on the committee to plan a sesquicentennial celebration for the Southern Baptist Convention in 1995.

Perhaps the depth of Hultgren's character beneath the surface of humor was best described in a 1982 editorial in the Tulsa Tribune: "It takes more than inherent camaraderie and optimism to make a great counselor for the frightened, the insecure and the bereaved. The fact that Hultgren is both a student and an intellectual adds power to his persuasiveness, and his persuasiveness leans heavily to the theory that life should be a joyous journey and that good works are the most joyous of all."

Churches should provide radical vision,  
futurist tells Texas CLC workshop

By Ken Camp

N-T 4

AUSTIN, Texas (BP)--Churches should help provide the vision for radically designing culture in the 1990s, a futurist told participants at the annual Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission workshop.

"Issues of the '90s" was the theme of the workshop, which brought more than 50 Texas Baptists to First Baptist Church of Austin Feb. 20-21.

They were joined by nearly 100 state elected officials at a legislators' breakfast held in conjunction with the workshop.

Robert Theobald, economist and futurist from Wickenburg, Ariz., said the '90s hold the potential either for massive societal breakdown or for fundamental positive change. He pointed to indicators of possible crises in areas ranging from elections to the environment and from economics to education.

"I would suggest to you that such indicators as the election of a Ku Klux Klansman in Louisiana is not a trivial indicator of where we are in our culture," he said, pointing also with disdain to the lack of innovative ideas in the most recent presidential race.

To cope with the environmental crisis in the coming decade, Theobald said, humankind must make something other than economic growth its ultimate goal and society must rediscover the original meaning of stewardship as "caring for our earth."

Economic inequity and the hoarding of limited resources is a source of potential crisis that must be addressed in the '90s, he maintained: "In a world that is environmentally limited, we will have to ask the question, 'How much is too much.' I do not believe it is proper for certain people to be multi-millionaires in an environmentally limited world."

Education in the '90s must inspire young people to dream, to envision change and to manage a continually changing world, Theobald said.

Bio-medical ethics, the "right to die" and social changes caused by technological innovations are among the issues with which churches must struggle in the next 10 years as they seek to offer positive values and a vision of social justice, he noted.

Replying to a question concerning an appropriate response to the drug problem, Theobald said education and the elimination of economic incentives for drug peddling are preferable to prohibition, noting cities are losing the war on drugs. To control drugs, he proposed legalizing them and then mobilizing society around prevention.

"We have wonderful rhetoric, but get down to the problem, it doesn't work," he said. "I don't like that conclusion, but I think MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving) has probably done more to stop alcohol than we ever did with legal prohibition. We are beginning to be able to put pressure on that sort of behavior.

"I would rather do it by education and have a chance than try to do it the way we're doing it."

The spirituality that can best serve society in the '90s should be cosmic, compassionate, converted and contemplative, said E. Glenn Hinson, professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

"In the '90s, spirituality must underline, accentuate and reiterate the cosmic, for a narrow nationalistic spirituality has dominated the thinking of many Southern Baptists, as well as that of other Americans, in the '80s," Hinson said.

Too many people have been possessed with a Puritan vision characterized by super-patriotism and founded on belief in biblical inerrancy, he added, noting, "This is the vision which brought the Moral Majority into being in 1979 and which has propelled the fundamentalist takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention."

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As an alternative, Hinson suggested a world-conscious spirituality rooted in compassion, transformed by God's love and grounded in contemplation of the Bible.

Ray Perryman, professor of economics at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, outlined and analyzed the economic history of Texas during the last 15 years. To meet human need in the next 10 years, he said, emphasis must be placed on education and local economic development.

Noting that 85 percent of the Texas Department of Corrections inmates are high school drop-outs, Lt. Gov. Bill Hobby also pointed to the importance of education in reducing crime and other social ills.

"Our greatest challenges are ahead of us," said Hobby, "and education is the only answer to those challenges."

Baptist leaders should take up the mantle both of priest and prophet as they seek to minister to elected officials and influence public policy, said Phil Strickland, director of the Texas CLC.

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Christmas gifts opened door  
to begin migrant mission

By Mark Wingfield

F - HMB  
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HOMESTEAD, Fla. (BP)--An annual Christmas ministry has given birth to a Southern Baptist mission for migrant farm workers in the Everglades Camp south of Miami.

Members of First Baptist Church of Cutler Ridge, Fla., started out to give Christmas gifts to children living in the camp. In the process, they helped entire families discover the gift of Christian salvation.

"I was waiting for someone to come explain the gospel to me," says Camila Garcia, a new Christian who has opened her family's trailer for a weekly Bible study. "I feel very happy now."

Garcia and six other adults from her family will be baptized soon. All professed faith in Jesus Christ through the ministry of the Cutler Ridge church, a predominantly white congregation that meets 18 miles from the camp.

Door-to-door witnessing in the camp by members of First Baptist has resulted in about 300 professions of faith thus far, said layman Humberto Hallancia. Because the migrant population is so transient, many moved away before they could be baptized. However, establishing a permanent mission in the camp will allow for better discipleship and follow-up, he says.

The Everglades Camp is one of three county-owned housing areas for migrant workers who harvest the crops from thousands of acres of farmland in southern Dade County. Families who stay only through the peak season of September through May live in rows of simple white trailers. Families who stay longer live in permanent multi-family housing units in an adjacent area.

As many as 300 adults and 1,000 children live in the Everglades Camp at one time, says Hallancia. Trailers commonly house 10 or 12 people.

Hallancia and other members of the Cutler Ridge church began coming to the camp around Christmas 1986. The church's Woman's Missionary Union had decided to provide Christmas gifts as a ministry project. Soon all the church's missions groups -- Brotherhood, Girls in Action, Royal Ambassadors and a Spanish-language Bible study -- were involved.

"We didn't want to just give away gifts, so we invited people to a Bible study," Hallancia says. "The people responded because they saw a love that was consistent. This has enabled us to start a mission here."

Cutler Ridge Pastor Larry Mayo says once his church members got involved, they were compelled to continue beyond Christmas: "We have seen an enormous need. Just about all these families have no Christian message and no roots. Very few of them have come to know the Lord previously.

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"We decided have to go to them, because they're not going to come us."

That one point distinguishes the Cutler Ridge church from most other Southern Baptist congregations, says Ray Carvajal, director of language missions for Miami Baptist Association.

"This is an exceptional church," he says. "My experience is that most churches will not do this kind of program. They want the migrants to come to their churches, because they're not willing to go out where the migrants are and reach them.

"This church has its heart in the right place. They have a vision for missions."

Members of the Cutler Ridge church conduct three weekly Bible studies in the camp, one for children and two for adults, with about 40 people in attendance. Hallancia says more would come if space were available.

Currently, adults meet in the living area of Garcia's trailer, and children meet under a large ficus tree. Hallancia and others are working to find a larger, permanent meeting place.

"I see a limit to our growth having Bible studies in family trailers," he says. "When we have a neutral place of our own, more people will come. These people are kind of private about their homes. Many are already asking, 'Where's your church?' They want a building.

"We're just reaching one-tenth of the whole community. The potential is great."

Mayo agrees: "The people are very receptive to the gospel. The doors are wide open. Through the Christmas gifts and meeting their needs, we got closer. Now they welcome us."

In addition, this ministry has strengthened the sponsoring church, Mayo notes: "It has enlarged our concept of ministry. We've learned ministry is not just taking little packages at Christmas. It's evangelizing."

Henry Galvan, a layman who is stationed in south Florida with the Coast Guard, teaches children at the camp. He says he hopes to leave something positive behind when he moves away.

"Maybe when I'm gone, some of these children will be able to say, 'I remember that man who came to our camp and told me about the Lord,'" he says.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press

Southwestern Seminary names  
1989 distinguished alumni

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(SWBTS)

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FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Six men will be recognized as distinguished alumni of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, during the seminary's annual luncheon June 14 in the Las Vegas, Nev., Hilton Hotel.

Those named are Nilson Fanini, William Souther, Ben Elrod, John Seelig, William Hendricks and Finlay Graham.

The recipients represent a variety of service in Baptist life, including foreign missions, music evangelism, teaching, administration and pastoral ministry.

Fanini, a 1958 graduate of Southwestern, is known as "the Billy Graham of Brazil." He is pastor of First Baptist Church of Niteroi, Brazil, and is known in Brazil for his television program, "Reencontro," which has been carried by more than 150 television stations over the years. Last April, Fanini launched a television station known as TV Rio. Fanini's church has 5,000 members and oversees 92 missions along with providing care for 3,500 slum children.

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Souther holds three degrees from Southwestern, including a doctor's degree. He received his first degree from the seminary in 1935. He has been in Christian service more than 51 years and was minister of music at First Baptist Church in Dallas for 12 years. Souther then taught at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary from 1959-74 when he retired and became director of music/church training/church administration for the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention.

Elrod is president of Ouachita Baptist University. He was president of Georgetown College from 1978-83 and Oakland, Ind., City College from 1968-70. He was president of the Independent College Fund of Arkansas for five years before becoming president of Ouachita. For more than 12 years he was pastor of churches in Texas, Arkansas and Oklahoma. He graduated from Southwestern in 1956 and earned a doctor's degree in 1962.

Seelig, vice president for public affairs at Southwestern, graduated in 1949. He joined the seminary staff 29 years ago and has directed the school's offices of public relations, news and information and development. Seelig has been editor of "Southwestern News," the school's alumni publication, since 1960. He has been on the staff of churches in Texas, with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the Dallas Baptist Association.

Hendricks is director of graduate studies, director of the center for religion and the arts, and professor of Christian theology at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He taught at Southwestern for 20 years before joining the faculty at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., where he taught for five years. He has been at Southern Seminary since 1984. Hendricks graduated from Southwestern in 1954 and earned a doctor's degree in 1958.

Graham graduated from the seminary in 1958 and earned a doctor's degree in 1965. A native of Oban, Scotland, he was as a missionary in the Middle East for more than 43 years. During that time, Graham founded and was first president of the Arab Baptist Theological Seminary in Beirut, Lebanon. He was associate area director of the Foreign Mission Board for the Middle East and North Africa from 1976-84. Since his retirement in 1986, Graham has been adjunct teacher at Southwestern in the missions department.