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News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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May 17, 1989

89-80

High court rejects employee's  
religious discrimination claim

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

WASHINGTON (BP)--An employee who claimed he was fired for religious reasons has lost his appeal before the U.S. Supreme Court.

In a one-line order, the high court refused to review Larry Blalock's claim he was fired as a sales representative with an Ohio metal fabricating company because of religious discrimination.

Blalock was offered a job after being introduced to the company's president, Wendell Woodward, by John Rothacker, who was Woodward's "spiritual leader." At the time, Blalock also was studying under Rothacker's direction.

Within a month, the company's vice president voiced dissatisfaction with Blalock's work and conduct. But Woodward said he wanted to make an extra effort to resolve the problem because Blalock was a Christian.

During the following months, Blalock broke off his relationship with Rothacker. On several occasions, Woodward served as an intermediary between Blalock and Rothacker, attempting to forge a reconciliation between the two men.

Finally, after consulting with Rothacker and other members of a small prayer group to which he belonged, Woodward decided to fire Blalock.

Blalock filed suit, claiming his termination was unconstitutionally based on religious discrimination.

A trial court ruled Blalock would have been discharged "absent the impermissible factor of religious discrimination." The 6th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld that decision. (87-1830, Blalock v. Metals Trades Inc.)

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Trends in society, denomination  
said to require strategic planning

By Terri Lackey

N-SSB

Baptist Press  
5/17/89

KONA, Hawaii (BP)--A constantly changing society, turbulence within the Southern Baptist Convention and an economic slump within state Baptist conventions creates a need for top-notch planning by state leaders, a professional planner told Baptist state church training directors attending mid-year planning meetings in Kona, Hawaii.

The answer to planning amid change, uncertainty and budget cuts lies not in long-range planning but in shorter-term strategic planning, said Howard Foshee, director of planning services at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Strategic planning is more immediate, flexible and places an emphasis on implementing a few priority goals well, said Foshee. Strategic planning is a must for "these turbulent times and times of discontinuity."

"There was a time when everything was so stable that we could plan years in advance. We do well at the Sunday School Board to plan five years in advance, and three years is a better plan to follow," he said.

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Even at that, plans must be flexible, said Foshee, who noted world trends and technology are creating an ever-changing society in which the needs of people constantly are being altered.

While lack of money, personnel and times of uncertainty are creating pressure on state leaders who must plan future programing, "there is also some good in it," he pointed out.

"From all of these negative forces arise some positive forces," said Foshee, who noted program leaders are having to "accept some challenges and get in touch with themselves, the future and their priorities.

In strategic planning, Foshee said, one must envision a dream, make it a goal and "do something about it." He outlined four steps to strategic planning: develop a purpose statement, priority concerns, priority goals and actions to achieve priority goals.

A purpose statement points direction, determines values, communicates corporate image and provides motivation and foundation for strategy planning, he said.

Developing priority concerns means "choosing one, two or three priority heart concerns and saying, 'I'm going to do these things with the Lord's help,'" said Foshee.

Rather than trying to promote every facet and activity of the church training program, Foshee urged, "Choose a few that are important to you."

Priority goals "must be measurable, realistic, dated and understandable," he said. "A goal is a precise statement of intent. It must be as clear and free-standing as possible."

Finally, developing actions to achieve the goals "is where the creativity and innovation is needed, Foshee said. This is where the risk-taking is called for."

Meanwhile, Roy Edgemon, director of the church training department at the board, said state leaders "could reach more people for discipleship training more effectively if they were given guidelines to strategic planning. We really felt we needed to make a contribution to state leaders and help them in this."

Bob Holley, director of the church training department for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, said the planning session "has helped me see the need to sharpen the focus of our priorities, because we cannot do everything right now. We have to decide what to do with the resources we have."

Other action during the mid-year planning meeting included a report on the proposed name change of the church training department, program and magazine to discipleship training.

The changes were approved by Sunday School Board trustees in February. Changing the name of the program also was approved in February by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, as required by SBC bylaws, and will be considered by messengers to the 1989 SBC annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nev., June 13-15. If messengers approve the program name change, discipleship training would be implemented as the name of the program, board department and magazine Oct. 1, 1989.

Church training directors also heard a report on DiscipleALL, a plan to highlight discipleship training during 1990-95.

The purpose of the growth strategy is to lead all churches to provide a balanced discipleship training program involving church members and their families. Programming would include member training, new-member training and leader training, as well as training in doctrine, ethics, history, polity and ministry skills.

Stanley Howell, manager of the growth section in the church training department, reported a church training enrollment gain of 218,060 between 1978 and 1988. He said the number of churches reporting Baptist doctrine study doubled during the same 10-year period, from 6,339 in 1978 to 12,625 in 1988.

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Howell said a new record-keeping system that will enable churches to better report church training enrollment is now available through Baptist Book Stores and the board's toll-free order number and is set for an Oct. 1 implementation.

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Court rejects parents' appeal  
in medical treatment dispute

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press  
5/17/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has rejected the appeal of an Oklahoma couple who were convicted in the death of their infant son.

Kevin and Jamie Funkhouser were convicted of second-degree manslaughter and sentenced to two years in the Oklahoma State Penitentiary following the death of their 3-month-old son from broncho-pneumonia.

The Funkhousers, who are members of the Church of the First Born, did not seek medical treatment for the child but rather relied on prayer for his healing.

The couple's attorney argued the Funkhousers' decision not to seek medical treatment for the child was within state law. He cited a statutory exception for parents who follow good-faith religious beliefs for healing.

But a state court found the couple guilty on the manslaughter charges and handed down the two-year prison sentences. The Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals upheld the lower court ruling. (88-1541, Funkhouser v. Oklahoma)

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Church sees missions giving  
as "thank you" note to God

By Ken Camp

F-Texas

Baptist Press  
5/17/89

KELLER, Texas (BP)--Missions giving is more than a denominational emphasis or budgeted line item at NorthWood Baptist Church in Keller, Texas. It's a way of saying "thank you" to God, Pastor Bob Roberts said.

NorthWood was begun a little more than three years ago as a mission of North Richland Hills Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. Now a self-supporting congregation, the church each year has been increasing its giving to missions through Southern Baptists' unified giving plan, the Cooperative Program, by 0.5 percent of its undesignated receipts.

However, because of continued growth in membership and stewardship, actual Cooperative Program gifts have increased more than 300 percent in three years.

"God has blessed our church both in membership and finances," Roberts said. "We want to help take up some of the slack for churches that are not as well off right now."

To say the church has been blessed is not to say that it is without financial concerns, Roberts stressed. Although meeting the annual budget is a struggle and some cuts may be necessary from time to time, the church is committed to continue its missions support.

"We're not going to start cutting the Cooperative Program just to pad our own pews," he said. "Even if the budget is not met, we will still keep increasing our Cooperative Program giving."

Currently, 9 percent of undesignated offerings at NorthWood is directed to missions through the Cooperative Program.

"We're a young church. We don't have a lot of money," said Roberts. "But because we have been a mission ourselves, we know the importance of giving to missions."

NorthWood's projected giving to missions through the Cooperative Program in 1989 is more than \$28,000, and goals for the foreign, home and state missions offerings total \$16,400.

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"My goal is that ultimately we will be able to give 50 percent to missions and evangelism," said Roberts.

"I believe the church should tithe to missions just as an individual should tithe to his church. I don't have any biblical basis for that, but I think it's just practical. I think the church can say 'thank you' to the Lord for what it has been given by giving back to missions."

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Teacher's green thumb sprouts  
congregations across country

By Chip Alford

F - CO  
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press  
5/17/89

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Jack Redford isn't the same guy from the story "Jack and the Beanstalk," but like the storybook character, this Jack has a green thumb.

Redford, home missionary-in-residence and adjunct professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, also is director of missions for Cisco Baptist Association in central Texas. During more than 40 years in Christian ministry, he has started about 75 churches and played an administrative role in the formation of countless others.

"The hope of the world is getting churches girdling the globe," said Redford, who wrote the widely-used textbook "Planting New Churches" in 1979. That book was the compilation of his experience as director of the church extension division of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and associate secretary of the board's department of pioneer missions and secretary of the department of missions for the Southern Baptist Convention of Indiana.

Redford's career in church planting began out of necessity during his years as a student at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, Texas. He shared a room with C.B. Hogue, who is executive director of the California Southern Baptist Convention. Both were eager to become pastors.

"Nobody wanted us to preach," Redford explained, "but I knew of an inactive church up in Young County (Texas), so the two of us went up there and asked if we could start it up again. We knocked on a lot of doors and had 25 the first Sunday."

Redford and Hogue took turns each week preaching and singing, and the church began to grow. Then the duo came up with an idea that would characterize their ministry for the rest of their lives. They got another Howard Payne student to preach at their church, let the church call him as pastor, and they left to start other churches. During their last two years of college, the two resurrected eight inactive churches and started 10 rural mission churches in Young and Comanche counties.

"It wasn't a lifetime strategy," Redford said. "It was just a one-day-at-a-time thing. We saw the need and realized there were people who needed to be reached."

After his graduation from college, Redford earned a master's degree from Hardin-Simmons University and a bachelor of divinity from Southwestern. He was pastor of churches in Texas and Arkansas and as a U.S. Army chaplain during the Korean War. His venture back into church starting began in 1960 as an area missionary in southeast Indiana.

He took an early retirement from the Home Mission Board in 1986 to take his current job with Cisco Baptist Association. Since Redford went back to Texas, 10 new churches have been started in the association, and others are in the planning stages.

Church starters must keep two things in mind when planting churches: "people are important," and "the harvest is the resource," he said.

"We have a real estate mentality in ministry," he explained. "We're so busy building and maintaining buildings we forget about the people. And we need to remember that the people that we involve in starting a church are the resource for getting things done."

In addition to his work in Cisco, Redford continues to lead seminars on church starting and teach his course on "Strategies for Starting Churches" at Southwestern. He has extended his influence in new work by implementing the Summer Praxis and Church Planting Apprenticeship programs through the Home Mission Board. Those programs involve seminary students and graduates in starting churches across the nation.

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"I think Southern Baptists have made a great deal of progress in church planting in recent years," Redford said. "But I'll never be satisfied because I think starting churches is our whole deliverance."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by Southwestern Seminary.

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CORRECTION: The last sentence of the fifth paragraph of the 5/12/89 Baptist Press story titled "Attitude of praise said to fight stress" should read:

He recommended that people battle stress symptoms by participating in a "five-fold discipline," involving physical exercise, spiritual exercise, taking one day at a time, doing something they despise and doing something they enjoy.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press

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Albuquerque Baptists cross river  
to new era of church starting

By Mark Wingfield

F - HMB

Baptist Press  
5/17/89

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (BP)--Southern Baptists in Albuquerque, N.M., turned a corner on their declining record of church starting by crossing the river.

Although the population of the metropolitan Albuquerque area increased by 10,000 people per year for the past six years, Southern Baptists started no new English-speaking churches during that time.

That pattern changed with the birth of Taylor Ranch Baptist Church, a new mission on what locals call the West Mesa, across the Rio Grande River from central Albuquerque. In nine months, the mission grew from 12 people to 90, baptized three adults and called a full-time pastor.

The situation in Albuquerque parallels many U.S. metropolitan areas, said John Embery, church-starter strategist for Central Baptist Association. Southern Baptists there started a rash of new churches in the 1950s and '60s but focused most attention in the '70s and '80s on existing congregations.

Don Seigler, associational director of missions, said several things "came together" to motivate his association to start more churches:

-- Associational leaders undertook a study of advances in the association's ministry over the past 10 years and found a surprise, Seigler said. Although several churches had experienced growth, the association as a whole was barely holding its own in the midst of significant population growth.

-- Faced with increasing population and declining churches, the association voted to start one new church per year for the next seven years.

-- With help from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Baptist Convention of New Mexico, the association hired Embery as its first church-starter strategist.

-- Embery introduced an aggressive approach to church starting. "My concept is seen in the difference between strip shopping centers and malls," he said. "There are lots of small shopping strips all over Albuquerque where the people are. In the same way, we need to put churches where the people are."

To launch the first start, Embery enlisted five churches as sponsoring partners. A summer team from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, also came to lay groundwork for the mission.

The need for a church in Taylor Ranch was great because it is one of three communities on the West Mesa, with 64,000 people and only two Southern Baptist congregations, Embery said.

He already has begun work toward a new congregation in another mesa community, Rio Rancho, currently the fastest-growing small city in America.

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"We're in a catch-up mode in the association," Embery said. "We have a need for at least five new churches now, in addition to planning for future growth."

Both Embery and Seigler believe what happens in Albuquerque will determine the future of Baptist work throughout New Mexico. One-third of all New Mexicans live in the metropolitan Albuquerque area. Central Baptist Association encompasses 40 percent of the state's population.

"If we fail here, it will impact our work across the state," Seigler said. "But if we can have some success with these first starts, it will help us move into other areas."

"Taylor Ranch has given us a new vision."

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

California church loses  
employment dispute

By Cameron E. Crabtree

Baptist Press  
5/17/89

CUPERTINO, Calif. (BP)--First Southern Baptist Church of Cupertino, Calif., must pay a transient two years' back wages and \$80,000 disability income if a ruling by the state Workers' Compensation Appeals Board stands.

The appeals board ruled Thomas Hoppmann was employed by the church in a funds-for-work relief ministry and is owed compensation for injuries he sustained while working at the church in 1986, said Scott Southard, former pastor of the church and a principle figure in the dispute.

"We were flabbergasted," Southard said. "The preponderance of the evidence was that the guy was not employed. ... It was a way to help with financial assistance."

Part of the church's relief ministry allowed transients to do odd jobs at the church in exchange for financial assistance, usually \$5 per hour of work performed, Southard said. The program was developed on the premise many people don't want a handout, but will take assistance if it can be earned, he said.

"Usually it was a one-time thing, but we saw this as a way to help a guy," said Southard, pastor of the church when Hoppmann was injured. "He showed up when he wanted and left when he wanted."

Hoppmann was working on the roof of the church and fell to the ground below, fracturing his heel and elbow. After Hoppmann refused transport by an ambulance, church leaders took him to a hospital where he was treated for his injuries. But Hoppmann wouldn't let the church pay for any liability or medical claims because he was afraid it would jeopardize any public assistance he was receiving, Southard said.

Hoppmann only recently filed a lawsuit against the church, asking for the back wages and disability compensation. The appeals board ruled Hoppmann was a church employee because he kept coming back for work, and an hourly rate had been negotiated, Southard said.

The decision is being appealed.

"It has real implications for not only churches, but other non-profit organizations, such as the Salvation Army," Southard said, fearing ministries to the poor may be severely threatened if the appeal is denied.

"To me, the real tragedy is there is a lot of criticism about the church not doing enough to help the homeless," Southard said. "So now there's a real feeling that you put a hand out to help, and it was biten."

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CORRECTION: The 5/16/89 Baptist Press story titled "Sunday School Board pays tribute to Hobbs" was written by Frank Wm. White, not Jim Lowry, as noted on the story.

Thanks,  
Baptist Press