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November 16, 1989

89-164

Ugandan president suspends  
missionary expulsion order

By Craig Bird

N-FMB

KAMPALA, Uganda (BP)--Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, responding to requests from the U.S. Embassy in Uganda, has rescinded the expulsion order issued to Southern Baptist missionary Roger Hesch Nov. 7.

"We have received nothing in writing, but the American Embassy has been assured verbally that the president agreed to suspend the order until it is 'looked at some more,'" said Paul Eaton Nov. 15. Eaton is chairman of the Southern Baptist mission organization in Uganda.

Hesch, of Little Falls, Minn., was arrested Nov. 1, the day after he drove onto a military base at night. He had given a Baptist soldier a ride back to his barracks after the showing of an evangelistic film at a center for the handicapped in Masaka. He was held without formal charges before being released Nov. 7 and ordered to leave Uganda within a week. In issuing the order, a Ugandan official said Hesch's unauthorized entry of a military installation was irresponsible.

Informal contacts over the Nov. 11-12 weekend between American officials and their counterparts in the Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs led to Museveni's decision to reconsider the expulsion order, Eaton was told.

This does not mean Hesch's work permit has been reinstated but only that he can legally remain in the country. However, Hesch, his wife, Meg, and their two children left Nov. 14 for Nairobi, Kenya, since they had been given only seven days to depart when the expulsion notice was issued by the Ugandan immigration office Nov. 7.

Three separate routes of appeal are being followed. The U.S. Embassy has appealed to the Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The mission organization's lawyer, Peter Mulira, has approached the prime minister's office. The mission also is communicating with the inspector general of the government.

Although Mulira and others are guardedly optimistic about a permanent reversal of the expulsion order, Hesch admitted to "being skeptical, mainly because I don't think anyone high enough in government holds me -- or the Baptist mission -- in high enough esteem to overturn the decision." Still, the Heschs are anxious to return to their work and hope they will be allowed to do so.

"This is just a combination of events that normally would not have made any difference to anyone," he explained in an interview in Nairobi. "A lot of times I was at the wrong place at the wrong time. I have visited and even preached at several army barracks in the past two years, so I didn't think anything about it when a soldier whom I believe to be a fine Christian asked me to give him a ride to his barracks the night of Oct. 31."

Hesch believes the action is directed at the Baptist soldier, Joshua Lee Mwaka, since he was arrested at the same time as Hesch. "When I tried to explain that I had not sneaked onto an army base but had driven through the gate with Joshua, I was told that Joshua was a spy who had been giving information to the rebels (opposing the Ugandan government)."

Hesch said he has no reason to believe Mwaka is "anything but a dedicated Christian," an opinion shared by "every Ugandan who knows him that I talked to. Members of our church in Entebbe are praying for him. They don't understand what has happened."

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Mwaka formerly fought against President Museveni's National Resistance Army. But like hundreds of other rebels who surrendered, he was integrated into the army after a year of political reeducation at a special center near Entebbe. During that time Mwaka joined Entebbe Baptist Church. After completing the reeducation program he was assigned to work in army intelligence.

"This (incident) was a major cultural faux pas where I just didn't understand the proper behavior," Hesch said. "Every Ugandan I talked to -- both those that visited me in the jail and those who came to our home later to celebrate my release -- asked if I had not been frightened and said they would never, never go onto an army base after dark.

"I have lived in Uganda when it has been safe (since March 1987), but these people remember what it was like in years past before President Museveni started restoring order to the country. I just assumed since the gate was opened when Joshua identified himself and I passed within five feet of the guards both entering and leaving the barracks that everything was OK."

Hesch clarified the details of his arrest. He said he returned to a hotel in Masaka Oct. 31, not to his home in Entebbe, after taking Mwaka to the army base. He was at the rehabilitation center for the handicapped the next morning. Soldiers from the barracks arrived and told him he needed to come and identify himself.

Hesch was questioned at the barracks from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. He was asked to drive with Mwaka and two soldiers to Kampala so he could be identified there. He arrived in Kampala around 5 p.m. but was told to wait outside while Mwaka was taken inside Basima House, the headquarters for army intelligence. Two hours later Hesch was told to drive his vehicle inside the gates, where he was placed under arrest.

A Baptist pastor who also had ridden to Kampala with Hesch went to Entebbe to tell Mrs. Hesch what had happened. She had been frantically trying to locate her husband.

Meanwhile, Southern Baptist missionaries Wayne and Bertie Paul had gone to the Central Police Station in Kampala and the U.S. Embassy but were unable to find Hesch or anyone who knew anything about him. After the pastor who had seen Hesch taken inside Basima House told Mrs. Hesch where he was, officials there also denied knowledge of him -- even though he had been transferred to the Central Police Station and locked up at that point.

Embassy and mission officials spent most of Nov. 2 fruitlessly trying to find Hesch. At 5 p.m. a representative of the International Red Cross, who had talked to Hesch that day during the organization's weekly visit to check on political prisoners, called Mrs. Hesch.

"By the time we got to CPS (Central Police Station) it was after visiting hours and we were not allowed to go in," she said. "But fortunately we were able to look through a basement window and see that he was OK physically, and even though we couldn't talk, we got to wave to each other and he was given the water and malaria medicine we had brought."

The next five days were an emotional roller coaster for the Hesch family as officials repeatedly said Hesch's release was imminent. Mrs. Hesch visited him three times each day and their children, Sara, 8, and Joel, 6, came once. "Sarah was obviously scared and Joel just kept staring at all the guns," Hesch said.

One prison officer finally asked who Hesch was because of the stream of visitors, who included many Ugandan Baptists as well as missionaries, diplomats and Red Cross personnel. "I had seven to 10 people to see me every visiting time and that Sunday night there were 25 people outside," he added. "They wouldn't let them come in but I got to look out and see them."

Visits from Ugandan friends touched Hesch. "It took courage for them to come see me," he explained. "One young man told me his father had had trouble with a previous government and had been brought to this jail. It was an effort of faith for him to come in the door."

Hesch soon learned that many of the prisoners, all non-Ugandans, had been there for six months to a year. The Christian prisoners had unsuccessfully requested that a minister be allowed to come in and conduct worship services.

"They told me they had been praying that God would send them a preacher and that I was the answer to their prayer. So I told them they could quit praying," he said. He was allowed to preach, teach and lead services, "usually at least two a day."

"We talked about a lot of things, discussed a lot of Scriptures, but the first one we studied was John 8, which says that Jesus will make you free indeed. I tried to give them a balance between hope for the future and the need for repentance from sin."

After Hesch's release Nov. 7 the emotional ups and downs continued. "Everyone came by our house to praise the Lord I had been released. Then when one group left we'd have to go back to packing since we just had a week to leave the country. So we would go from joy to sadness," he said.

The Hesch's will stay in Kenya for about a month, regardless of the outcome of the appeal, to rest after the ordeal and participate in meetings they were already scheduled to attend. And they will deal with the emotional trauma of the event.

"I don't believe God causes things like this to happen but I always look for what he might be trying to teach me," Hesch said. "Maybe this is to show me other needs we need to address with our lives. We want to go back to Uganda, but if that is not possible then our commitment to God and the Foreign Mission Board is to go where other people are not willing to go. That might mean ... someplace like Morocco or being a pastor in the U.S. or going to another African country. I've never tried to be in control of my life so we are open to anything God has in store."

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Organizations file brief  
in equal access dispute

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

Baptist Press  
11/16/89

WASHINGTON (BP)--A group of religious organizations, including the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, has asked the Supreme Court to uphold the constitutionality of the Equal Access Law.

The organizations filed a friend-of-the-court brief in Board of Education of Westside Community Schools v. Mergens, a case challenging the 1984 law that gives high school religious clubs the same right to meet on school property as other non-academic, extracurricular groups.

The dispute arose in 1985 when the principal of Westside High School in Omaha, Neb., and the local superintendent of schools refused to allow a group of students to form a Bible club and meet on campus.

When Bridget Mergens and her fellow students took the school board to court, a federal district judge upheld the school board's position that no "limited open forum" -- which, according to the Equal Access Law, exists whenever non-curriculum related student groups are provided an opportunity to meet on school grounds before or after the school day -- had been created at Westside High.

But the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the school board's claim that all nonreligious clubs meeting at the school -- including a chess club and two service clubs -- were curriculum related. The court ordered that the Bible club be allowed to meet.

Joining the BJC in filing the brief are the Christian Legal Society, National Association of Evangelicals, Presbyterian Church U.S.A. and Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The case now before the high court is similar to a number of other controversies that have arisen at public schools throughout the nation, according to the brief. Such controversies, it says, are a result of widespread misunderstanding of the Supreme Court's decisions forbidding government-sponsored prayer in public schools.

"Some educators have come to believe that all religious speech must be extirpated from the schools," wrote the groups. "Others will permit religious speech by individual students but forbid students to meet as a group to discuss religion."

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"These educators have failed to comprehend the distinction between speech by the school and speech by the students -- between government sponsorship of religion and government toleration of religious exercise. In their zeal to enforce the establishment clause, they have trampled on the free speech and free exercise clauses."

The groups encouraged the high court to uphold the Equal Access Act, including its definition of what constitutes a limited open forum.

"If this court adopts Westside High School's interpretation of the Equal Access Act, the act will become a dead letter," the brief says. Although not all local school officials are hostile to the law, "this case shows that at least some local school officials fundamentally reject each and every premise on which Congress acted. This court should not entrust broad statutory discretion to officials who are so hostile to the statute."

Citing congressional testimony and debate, the groups contend that Congress approved the Equal Access Act in an attempt to end a pattern of discrimination against student religious speech.

"Congress found that many school boards, left to choose a course through conflicting legal advice and local pressure groups, would discriminate against religious speech," the brief states. "If local school boards have unlimited discretion to decide whether the act applies, that discrimination will continue."

Courts, therefore, must interpret the act in a way that solves the problem Congress was trying to solve, according to the brief.

The groups also argue that enforcement of the Equal Access Act at Westside High School would not violate the establishment clause. Rather, they continue, the school artificially created an establishment clause issue by insisting that it must sponsor every group that meets in the school and suppress every group that it does not sponsor.

"WHS's establishment clause argument thus amounts to a self-imposed Catch-22," the brief says. "Plaintiffs do not want school sponsorship, Congress does not want them to have school sponsorship, the establishment clause will not permit them to have school sponsorship, but WHS insists that they must have school sponsorship and that school sponsorship makes the students' meetings unconstitutional. The establishment clause issue is manufactured out of nothing by WHS's insistence that it must sponsor every group that meets on campus."

The brief continues: "An unsponsored religion club presents no serious establishment clause issue. Such a club would be wholly voluntary, initiated and run by students. Its speech and activities would be the speech and activities of private citizens, not the speech and activities of government."

In addition, the groups contend Westside High School's policy forbidding religious groups to meet on campus violates students' rights to free speech and free exercise of religion.

Oral argument in the case is expected to be heard in early 1990 and a decision to be released by next summer.

"The Equal Access Act was a stroke of legislative genius," said Oliver S. Thomas, BJC general counsel. "It maintains strict neutrality with regard to religion on the part of public schools, yet it protects the rights of the students themselves to exercise their religion freely."

"A lot of Baptist energy has gone into this effort. It would be tragic if the court allows a school board to eviscerate the act by declaring all clubs except religious ones to be 'curriculum related.' If students can meet to play chess or discuss community service projects, as they can at Westside High, surely the First Amendment requires that they be permitted to discuss religion."

Missionaries in El Salvador  
calm as fighting continues

By Donald Martin

N-FMB

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (BP)--The three Southern Baptist missionary families in El Salvador reported they were safe Nov. 16 as government troops gained an advantage over leftist rebels in the latest fighting of the country's decade-old civil war.

"It's quite an adjustment to hear bombs go off," said missionary John (Rusty) Alums. "We hear them every night now, so it's not comfortable and yet we realize that it's not going on right in front of us like it was last Saturday night."

Alums said he knew of no Salvadoran friends or Baptist co-workers who had been killed or injured. The fighting has left more than 500 people dead and more than 1,000 people wounded in this last guerrilla offensive, according to Associated Press reports.

Alums and his wife, Peggy, and missionaries Bill and Libby Stennett live in San Salvador, the capital, where a 6 p.m.-6 a.m. curfew was in effect for most of the city. Some areas were under a 24-hour curfew as rebels and government forces battled house-to-house. Alums is from Mobile, Ala. Mrs. Alums is from Birmingham, Ala. The Stennetts are from Richmond, Va., and Washington, D.C., respectively.

The Alumses live near the Salvadoran president's home where rebels attacked Nov. 11. Attackers opened fire in the street in front of their home and threw hand grenades and other explosives. The Alumses and their children -- son John Jr., 15, and daughter Kelly, 6 -- took cover in the stairwell of their two-story town house. A rebel was killed in front of the house; the neighborhood night watchman also was killed.

Alums and Bill Stennett were able to go to the Baptist bookstore in San Salvador Nov. 16, although the store is not open. Both bookstores in the capital area are undamaged. They had no information about possible church damage in the area.

Alums said they are talking daily by telephone to missionaries Sam and Margaret Drummond in the city of Santa Ana, where the situation is much calmer. The Drummonds, of Camden, Tenn., and Louisville, Ky., respectively, have even been able to open the Baptist bookstore in their city.

Food supplies are adequate in San Salvador's central market, Alums said, but in the northern and eastern parts of the city, where fighting is heaviest, some shortages may exist.

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Donald Martin is a staff writer in the Richmond (foreign) bureau of Baptist Press.

Louisiana Baptists elect  
president by slim margin

By Oscar Hoffmeyer Jr.

N-CO  
(LA.)

Baptist Press  
11/16/89

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--Louisiana Baptists elected a president by the closest vote in history, registered the largest number of messengers in history, adopted the 1990 budget of \$15,300,000, and created a committee on Moral and Social Concerns during the 142nd session held at Louisiana College.

Fred Lowery, pastor of Bossier City's 5,000-member First Baptist Church was elected president by a 50.13869 to 49.8613 percent margin over Sid Young, pastor of Haynesville First Baptist Church.

A total of 1,442 ballots were counted; 1,564 messengers had registered by the time of the presidential election.

Young subsequently was elected first vice president by a 62.3 percent margin of 910 ballots over Claude Fontenot, pastor of Rayne First Baptist Church. Kathryn Carpenter of Baton Rouge, retired director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention's Woman's Missionary Union, unanimously was elected second vice president.

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The Committee on Moral and Social Concerns received a unanimous vote of the messengers. It combines two committees, the Public Affairs Committee and the Committee on World Hunger. A 15-member committee will be named later, according to Mark Short, LBC executive director.

The budget, unchanged from the current year, provides 35 percent to Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program causes.

Final messenger registration totalled 1,660, exceeding the record registration of 1,242 in Monroe in 1987, according to Larry Taylor of Alexandria, credentials committee chairman. Including guests, 1,963 persons attended.

Eleven resolutions approved by messengers included:

-- A statement to "oppose any child care legislation that permits tax monies to flow into church-related child care programs".

-- "Sincere appreciation to members of the Louisiana Legislature who worked and voted against further expansion of gambling".

-- Opposition to illegal use of and abuse of drugs and "encouraged churches to minister to individuals and families who have been hurt" by them.

-- "That we use every means ... to educate and lead our young people and church family to adopt a lifestyle that encourages physical, emotional and spiritual wholeness" to avoid becoming infected by the AIDS virus.

-- "Offer assistance in the preventing of abortion and offer assistance in providing alternatives through counsel ... and a message of redemption and forgiveness".

A motion by Perry Sanders, pastor of Lafayette First Baptist Church, was adopted to amend the bylaws to increase the Committee on Committees from nine to twelve members, "one-fourth of whom shall be appointed each year jointly by the president, first vice-president and second vice-president."

Lowery told a news conference his primary goal is to "see us as a state become more aggressive in winning people to Christ. Oil has let us down. Politics has let us down and people are hurting. We must offer Christ to them."

The church of which he is pastor led all Louisiana Baptist churches this past year with 206 baptisms.

When asked about the narrow margin of victory, he said, "I can only guess. I think for good or bad my image has been seen by some folks as a threat, which stirred some interest."

He declared he has no political ties although he said "I am labeled as a conservative. I am totally cooperative. We (Louisiana Baptists) are on the same team."

Calvin Phelps, pastor of Winnfield First Baptist Church, who had served two terms as president and was ineligible for re-election, was elected two years ago over Lowery by a margin of 44 votes.

The 1990 convention will be at Summer Grove Baptist Church in Shreveport Nov. 12-14.

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Southern Baptist adults  
rate high in faith maturity

By Jim Lowry

N-SSB

Baptist Press  
11/16/89

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptist adults score significantly higher in areas related to faith maturity than adults in other mainline Protestant denominations, according to preliminary findings from a three-year study on Christian education.

In the project, "Effective Christian Education: A National Study of Protestant Congregations," Baptist adults scored high in faith maturity, growth in faith, congregational loyalty and denominational loyalty.

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Almost 600 congregations were included in the study in which more than 10,000 individuals participated. Surveyed were pastors, teachers, ministers of education, other adults and youth in each congregation.

Denominational sponsors of the research project were Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Presbyterian Church (USA), the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Site visits were made to 52 congregations with particularly strong Christian education programs, including 23 congregations whose members are largely racial or ethnic minorities. A total of 64 Southern Baptist congregations were included in the survey portion of the study, and six were selected for site visits.

Individual characteristics related to faith maturity revealed few surprises, with older adults having greater faith maturity than younger adults; females rating higher than males among both youth and adults; individuals with less education and lower income rating higher than wealthy, educated persons; and the observation that actively sharing one's faith increases faith maturity.

In congregational characteristics, results showed that faith maturity does not vary by congregation size.

However, leadership of congregations is a significant influence on faith maturity, according to study findings. For instance, churches where leaders have higher faith maturity levels also have youth which rank higher in the same area.

Compared to other groups, Southern Baptist adults participate more often in Christian education (55 percent) than do adults in other mainline Protestant groups (34 percent).

Distinctives for Baptist youth were even more pronounced, with 41 percent saying they read the Bible alone once a week or more, as compared to 13 percent of other Protestant youth.

Also, 90 percent of Southern Baptist youth have at least two of their five best friends who go to their church, as compared to 46 percent of other youth.

Another finding of the study was that church experiences from childhood are some of the greatest influencers in the lives of youth and adults. Frequently, what is important to adults and youth is a direct result of the traditional Christian education they received in their early years.

At the same time, reluctance to modify traditional Christian education methods can contribute to declines in congregational participation, according to the executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

"The forms and structures of Christian education have not kept pace with changes in society," said James D. Williams, a former seminary professor and executive at the 98-year-old education and publishing agency of the denomination.

Williams said while traditions and stability are necessary, "there has got to be an openness to change.

"We need to take a fresh look at how people are behaving and acting, to provide a mirror for religious education to see what's good and what needs correcting," Williams said. "It also is important for Southern Baptists to look at what other denominations are doing.

"Churches characteristically go with something that has worked," Williams continued. "However, we must work toward balance in Christian education which allows us to break out of something that is not working."

Kirk Hadaway, a specialist in urban church growth research in the board's research services department, said Sunday school enrollment in evangelical denominations was as high as 40 million in the 1970s, but presently is between 26 and 28 million. A total of 7.9 million are enrolled in Southern Baptist Sunday schools.

Southern Baptists have maintained many traditional Christian education methods and have kept Sunday school enrollment on a slightly increasing trend, while other mainline denominations have made sweeping changes which have resulted in declines, Hadaway added.

Hadaway also said some denominations have experienced significant problems in the area of adult education while there has been growth in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Detailed information about project findings will be interpreted and discussed with Christian education leaders in a national conference March 24-27, 1990, in St. Louis, Mo.

Numerous issues will be examined in the national conference. As an example, Williams said mainline denominations have been forced to take a fresh look at how to organize and schedule Christian education in local churches because of the time available by volunteer leaders.

Representatives from all the sponsoring denominations will participate in the national conference. For registration information, contact Kirk Hadaway, Research Services Department, 127 Ninth Avenue, North, Nashville, Tenn. 37234.

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Seminary student finds 'foreign mission field' in Fort Worth

By Pam Alewine

F-10  
(SWBTS)

Baptist Press  
11/16/89

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--Africa was on Kelly Broom's heart when she came to Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary two years ago.

Broom, a social work student from South Carolina, knew God had called her to a foreign mission field. But what she didn't know was that the "foreign" field was in Fort Worth, Texas.

Now, miles from Africa, Broom works with AIDS patients at John Peter Smith Hospital. "This is still a foreign mission field as far as many people are concerned," she said.

Broom became a volunteer chaplain last summer in the AIDS clinic at John Peter Smith. She visits the clinic once a week to talk with AIDS patients and to "be a friend."

Although Broom read extensively about AIDS, nothing prepared her for the emotions she has at the clinic, she recalled: "I felt a lot of emotions the first time I was there. I was excited about being there, and I was afraid. But afterwards, I had an immense sense of grief. I just wanted to cry."

Part of the process of learning to minister to AIDS patients was getting over what she called an "ignorant mindset" about the disease -- getting over the myths and fears, Broom noted.

"Some of them (AIDS patients) are just as afraid to come into the clinic as I am," she said.

But the newness and the foreign feeling soon wore off. Broom discovered that the men and women in the clinic had basic needs such as friendship, love and acceptance.

"They're becoming my friends," she said. "I do a lot of listening and ask a lot of open-ended questions. Most of the time they really want to talk."

Broom witnesses at the clinic mostly through lifestyle evangelism. It's the only thing that will communicate Christ's love for the patients, she said: "A lot of them have been in churches all their lives and have seen how the church has rejected them. I knew I needed to go in there with a non-judgmental attitude."

"The church is supposed to be a haven and a place where they're going to be able to heal and be loved and accepted.

"I feel like Christ would've been right in the midst of the AIDS problem. These are the unloved. I do pray that they would see Christ through me."

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



Baptists miss point  
of church, Pinson says

By Terry Barone

*N-Texas*

DALLAS (BP)--Texas and Southern Baptists are missing the point of what church is about -- that of world evangelization, according to William M. Pinson, Jr., executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

Speaking to more than 300 Texas Baptist youth ministers and workers at a statewide Youth Ministers Conclave at First Baptist Church of Euless, Pinson said much of the material and ministry projects for today's youth do not "key on world evangelization. I believe God holds us responsible for that. When we don't respond to doing it, he will find others who will."

Pinson said he also is concerned that young people don't know who Baptists are or about the Cooperative Program unified giving plan and cooperative missions.

He said Baptists don't know "who we are, what we do or what we are about. We are the largest mission-sending denomination in the world. But, if we don't educate our young people, we are one generation away from extinction."

He also said Baptists don't know that the Cooperative Program and cooperative missions is the "way we work together for the cause of Christ."

Pinson encouraged the youth ministers and workers to find ways to teach their young people about a lost world, world evangelization, who Baptists are, what Baptists believe and cooperative missions.

He encouraged the youth leaders to "Let God guide you ... to reach lost communities, the state, nation and world. The future of what I've been part of is in your hands, and I believe good days are ahead."

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Christians should forgive  
CLC head tells seminarian's

By Breena Kent Paine

*N-CO  
(NOBTS)*

Baptist Press  
11/16/89

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"We take entirely too much pride in the fact that we fight and fuss," Richard Land told students and faculty at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during a recent chapel service.

Instead, he added, Christians should forgive others.

The executive director-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission said: "An unforgiving heart provides an advantage for Satan, and it is a root of bitterness that binds the conscience. People that carry bitterness and grudges are literally wounding themselves.

"Whatever it is that anyone has said about you that is untrue or unfair or hurtful, ... it is not worth what it does to you to harbor that spiritual malignancy in your heart.

"Whatever it is, you forgive them. You seek to be reconciled to them, and if they will not be reconciled, you forgive them anyway. ... Whether there is reconciliation or not, we need to leave it to the Lord."

According to The Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6, Land said, Christians should be able to ask God to "forgive us of our debts as we forgive our debtors."

"Now, I don't know about you, but I've got to pray a lot some mornings and some evenings before I would want to pray that prayer: 'Father, forgive me the way I forgive my spouse ... my deacons ... my pastor ... my parents ... my children ... my Christian brothers and sisters.'"

Not having a forgiving heart does not mean God will not forgive a Christian as far as his salvation is concerned, Land said, "but it will affect our continuing, day-to-day walk with the Lord Jesus. If we are unforgiving in our spirit toward those who have wronged us, (we will) stifle our relationship with our heavenly Father in this life."

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He told ministers: "There are going to be people who are going to misunderstand you ... or be unfair to you in the ministry. You're going to try to help them, and they're not going to like it."

The reason, he said, is Christians are to be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." Therefore, "if someone has a cut, and salt is placed on it, it hurts. And if you've got things in your life that you don't want illuminated and somebody is a light that walks into the room and illuminates the darkness, it's disconcerting."

Christians who have been treated wrongly will have to make a basic decision on a continuing basis about how they are going to deal with such problems, Land said. The solution is "we are to confess our own sins, and out of our gratitude to the Lord for his forgiveness of us, we are to have forgiving hearts toward others."

"We have, placed in us," he continued, "love which perseveres in spite of hurt, in spite of wrong, in spite of betrayal. It is a fruit that is produced in the heart of a yielded believer; and so, as citizens of the kingdom of God, we are not to harbor bitterness and hostility in our hearts."

"We're going to have a difficult time bearing a witness to a lost and a dying world when our churches and our marriages and our families and our relationships don't look that much different from the world's. If we practice (forgiveness), our relationships will be different, and the world will notice."

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(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by New Orleans Seminary

NASA scientist plans  
foreign missions career

By Breena Kent Paine

F-10  
(NOBTS)

Baptist Press  
11/16/89

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--Deer graze quietly and alligators occasionally drift into the canal near the John C. Stennis Space Center in southern Mississippi, where Janes L. Smith works.

Most people with Smith's background would see his position as an aerospace engineer for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration as the goal of their careers, Smith sees it as preparation ground for what he really wants to do -- teach high school physics and plant churches in Taiwan.

Smith has been involved from the beginning in the engineering of the Galileo planetary probe, recently launched on the shuttle Atlantis and scheduled to arrive at Jupiter in December of 1995.

Smith, the first person in his family to obtain a college degree, received a bachelor's degree with four majors -- math, physics, secondary education and physical education -- and has his master's and Ph.D. degrees in engineering.

Now he is pursuing another degree -- a master of divinity at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

With a varied background -- including teaching and preaching, a master of biblical studies degree from a Bible college, and volunteer mission work among the Navaho Indians in New Mexico -- Smith said he always has wondered how God would pull together his diverse experiences. "But it's all coming together now," he said. "After beginning seminary studies, God reaffirmed my call to missions."

"My early teaching experience was for a purpose, so were the graduate degrees in mathematics and science," he explained. "Suddenly, I can see how God directed my paths ... to serve Him as a missionary! I look forward to bearing fruit for Christ on the foreign mission field after completing seminary studies."

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Smith was a rocket engineer at Marshall Space Center in Alabama, when he and his wife, Peggy, read a magazine article about a high school in Asia needing teachers. At that moment, they said they felt God calling them to foreign missions; and despite a slight hesitation about raising their three-year-old daughter, Anah, in a foreign country, contacted the Foreign Mission Board and began preparations to attend seminary.

In June, Smith was transferred to the Stennis Space Center (only 40 minutes from New Orleans Seminary), where he oversees the inspection of hardware, checking for problems in tolerance, size, shape, weight, and corrosion of shuttle materials. Engines are brought to the center for qualification and workmanship testing before being used in actual flights, and Smith's responsibility is to insure quality control.

Not only will his experience with NASA help him to build rapport with the young people he hopes to teach, but Smith is sharpening his skills in engineering, science and delivering presentations, as his job is a managerial position. In addition, he is learning how to deal with difficult personalities and share Christ in a variety of ways.

However, he feels his best preparation for the mission field comes from personal contact with the professors at New Orleans Seminary. "I feel like I could learn all the (book knowledge) on my own, but it's the intangibles, the people I come in contact with, ... (that have helped) to mature me as a Christian in the ways I needed."

And he feels the city of New Orleans has offered good training in dealing with cultural differences. As a faithful layman involved in the visitation program of Elysian Fields Avenue Baptist Church, Smith ministers to a variety of ethnic-minority groups.

Whether intelligent scientists, economically depressed minority groups, or teenagers in Taiwan, "people are pretty much the same; they're either lost or saved," he said, and "no matter where you go, people need Jesus."