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90-9

High court accepts
child witness cases

By Kathy Palen

N-BJC

WASHINGTON (BP)--The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear two cases involving testimony given by child witnesses. Both cases involve victims of sexual abuse.

At issue in Maryland v. Craig is whether the Sixth Amendment requires a face-to-face meeting between witnesses and the person accused of the crime before a one-way, closed-circuit television procedure may be invoked. Some states have adopted such procedures in an effort to protect child witnesses who are subjected to cross-examination during trials.

Sandra Ann Craig, who operated a preschool in Howard County, Md., was convicted of sexually abusing four children who had been enrolled in her school.

In keeping with a procedure allowed in Maryland, all four children testified against Craig by means of one-way, closed-circuit television. Prior to each child's testimony, the judge conducted a competency evaluation in his chamber. In addition, two experts testified that forcing the children to appear in the courtroom with Craig could have harmful effects on the children.

The trial court rejected Craig's claim that her Sixth Amendment right to confrontation of the witnesses had been violated. The Maryland Court of Special Appeals affirmed that judgment, but the Maryland Court of Appeals reversed Craig's convictions.

In appealing to the Supreme Court, Gary E. Bair, Maryland assistant attorney general, wrote that unless the high court "resolves the conflict that exists among the state courts, child abuse will remain difficult to prosecute."

The second case, Idaho v. Wright, calls into question hearsay statements of very young victims of sexual abuse.

The Idaho Supreme Court ruled in the case that a statement made by a child to an examining pediatrician should be excluded unless the interview was audiotaped or videotaped, no leading questions were used and the pediatrician conducting the interview did not have any preconceived idea of what the child should be disclosing.

The case involves the conviction of Laura Lee Wright and Robert L. Giles on two counts of lewd conduct committed on Wright's two daughters, one who was 5 1/2 and the other 2 1/2.

The trial court found sufficient "indicia of reliability," as required by the Sixth Amendment, for admission of a statement made by Wright's younger daughter to the examining pediatrician.

Although the state supreme court also found sufficient indicia, it ruled that admission of the statement violated Wright's right to confrontation of the witnesses.

Reporter Bill Bangham and photographer Mark Sandlin of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board returned Jan. 15 from a visit to Panama.

Relief efforts continue
following Panama invasion

By Bill Bangham

N-AMB

PANAMA CITY, Panama (BP)--In an upper room at their convention building, Panamanian Baptists sack foodstuffs for people affected by the American invasion in December.

Nine volunteers from four churches spend a Saturday morning parceling packages of rice, beans, coffee, oil, salt, sugar, milk, tuna and flour into family allotments. This is Baptists' fourth food distribution since the military operation began Dec. 20. When completed, the relief effort will have aided more than 3,500 families.

The volunteers will need two weeks to break bulk-packaged goods into 1,300 family-size bundles, said Roberto Brunneau, a Baptist pastor and relief coordinator for Panama Metro Baptist Association.

The packages are small, enough to last a couple of days. But for families with little, the food means a lot. "And if more bulk food comes in, we'll distribute more," said Brunneau.

Only one family among the Baptist association's 46 churches and mission congregations lost a home in the fighting and the looting that followed the invasion. One life was lost among church members. The need for relief stems from the loss of jobs and income. The invasion and its aftermath devastated the already-crumbling Panamanian economy.

"We are trying to reach about 10 of the most needy families in each church and mission," said Alicia Ibanez, treasurer for the convention emergency committee. Each church decides which families receive the aid.

Baptist relief efforts began Dec. 23, the Saturday following the invasion. American troops found warehouse after warehouse filled with food, stashed during Manuel Noriega's rule, and released it to Panamanian churches and relief organizations for distribution.

Additional food was purchased with \$11,600 that Southern Baptist foreign missionaries had in reserve from previous crises, \$4,000 from Metro Association accounts and \$15,000 in hunger relief funds from the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Food first was distributed from Redemption Baptist Church, on the edge of Panama City, while fighting continued in the city. It went to churches across the country. The second, third and fourth distributions have been coordinated from the Baptist convention offices and have gone primarily to people in Panama City.

"That's where the need is now," said Ibanez.

Beyond food, most needs continue to be economic. Other than the one death and the loss of a home, Panamanian Baptists have suffered relatively little physically. One church was looted twice.

The biggest changes have been spiritual, observers said. Many Panamanians now have a feeling of possibility and hope for the future, they have told reporters.

As Panamanians pull their country back together, Southern Baptist missionary Wayne Wheeler hopes relief efforts will continue until people are back to work and can care for themselves. And he hopes other innovative efforts will be developed during this period. Among them are potential plans to offer small business loans to Baptist families.

Wheeler also believes now is a prime time for evangelism. Even before the invasion, Panamanian Baptists had planned simultaneous evangelistic crusades for Feb. 28-March 12. They will hold the crusades, with assistance from Southern Baptist volunteers and Brazilian Baptist evangelist Nilson Fanini.

Baptists also hope to mount a national evangelistic crusade in 1992 during the centennial celebration of the Panama Baptist convention.

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Panamanian Baptists have been making rapid strides toward autonomy, said Wheeler: "As Baptists we should not let this slip. We need to use the new situation to accelerate it."

For a long time, any failure was blamed on "La Crisis" of life in Panama under Noriega's dictatorship, Wheeler said. "It got to be something of a joke," he noted. "But we're going to show our real mettle now. All our excuses have been eliminated."

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

Missionary was in midst
of Panamanian fighting

By Bill Bangham

F-AMB

Baptist Press
1/18/90

PANAMA CITY, Panama (BP)--The first explosion brought Mary Mangrum to her feet. The second shoved her to her knees.

When American forces invaded Panama Dec. 20, Mangrum, a Southern Baptist missionary from Nashville, found herself in the midst of some of the heaviest fighting in Panama City.

"At first I thought it was my alarm," said Mangrum, whose home is close to three Panamanian military installations attacked by the Americans. "Then another bomb went off. All the news accounts said it started at 1 a.m, but it started much earlier," about midnight.

Mangrum's home is eight houses down from the building that served as headquarters for Panama's secret police under Manuel Noriega; two blocks from Fort Amador, a joint American-Panamanian military complex; and five blocks from the Comendancia, Noriega's military headquarters and site of October's abortive coup. Fighting occurred around all three sites.

She was awakened when Americans attacked the police headquarters with air gunships and ground forces. Fighting went on for several hours; firefights and sporadic shooting for several days.

The gunships pounded the headquarters with cannon fire through the roof, while soldiers peppered it with small-arms fire. Yet a private residence next door was not hit. Neither was the Southern Baptist mission office across the street.

At one point early in the invasion, Mangrum crawled to a window and saw soldiers everywhere. She could hear them talking, but in the din of battle she could not tell whether they were American or Panamanian. "That was the one time I was really frightened," she said.

Mangrum, who is single, usually stays alone in her apartment. But the evening before, Yadira de Rodriguez, a pastor's wife, had returned with her from an evening meeting at the Panama Baptist convention building. Rather than attempt a two-hour trip home, Rodriguez planned on spending the night.

She stayed four days.

"I was really glad she was here," said Mangrum. "I don't know how I would have handled it if I had been alone."

They sat on the floor through most of the fighting, praying and singing verses from Psalm 125, which tells of God surrounding Jerusalem. "It's a popular song here, one we use in worship," Mangrum said. "We felt if he could surround Jerusalem, he could surround us."

They sensed others were praying for them, the missionary recalled, and that made a difference in their ability to cope with the situation. Mangrum was one of the missionaries featured in promotion for Southern Baptists' Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions in December.

Two squads of American troops searched her home for Panamanian soldiers Dec. 22. "They were very nice," Mangrum noted. "They talked with Yadira, told her they were very sorry about what was happening, sorry she was separated from her husband, and that they were as concerned for her safety as they were for mine."

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A lull occurred in the fighting that day, so Mangrum and Rodriguez walked to the house of Larry and Charlot McCoy, Southern Baptist missionaries who live nearby. Telephone service had been disrupted, and Mangrum had lost contact with them and other missionaries in the country. She had to know if they were all right and if they had heard from anyone else.

A firefight broke out while they were with the McCoy's, and two hours passed before they could get back to Mangrum's apartment. But by Christmas Eve, Rodriguez was able to go home. And on Christmas Day, missionaries Ed and Kathy Steele arrived with their children to celebrate the holiday.

The invasion of Panama, where Mangrum has worked as a religious education consultant for five years, is not an experience she wants to repeat. "It was just like a nightmare," she said. "It was a week before I could sleep again."

Another refugee from the war continues to share Mangrum's home -- a small dog she coaxed into her apartment during the fighting. She calls him Justy, after Just Cause, the American code name for the military operation.

The dog apparently was separated from his owners sometime before the invasion. A hole in his neck Mangrum thought was a bullet wound turned out to be an infection. She had the hole treated and stitched and the dog's hair shaved so she could medicate the sores that covered his body. A veterinarian told her he is less than a year old.

"He's had a hard life for someone so young, but he's a sweet puppy," she said. "It's been 14 years since I've had a dog, so we're trying to get used to each other."

"I guess we'll make it."

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

Leaders say missionaries
can aid S. Africa harmony

By Craig Bird

AL-FMB

Baptist Press
1/18/90

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (BP)--Southern Baptist missionaries have an opportunity to help unite Baptists from all races and economic levels of South Africa, according to black and white South African Baptist leaders.

The opportunity stems from a new dynamic: the Baptist Convention of Southern Africa, which the Baptist World Alliance accepted as a member in 1988.

Since Southern Baptist missionaries work in cooperation with recognized national Baptist groups, they related only to the long-established Baptist Union of South Africa until 1988. Now they work with both Baptist groups.

Previously most churches were affiliated with the Baptist Union. But now the convention is overwhelmingly black and the union predominantly white -- although each group has both white and black congregations as members.

"Sure, there's a degree of tension between the convention and the union," acknowledged Trevor Swart, general secretary of the union. "But there are great opportunities for evangelism. It used to be a situation of whites evangelizing blacks, but now it's total membership reaching out to everyone."

Swart, who seconded the motion approving the convention's membership in the Baptist World Alliance, said he believes the convention will strengthen united Baptist witness in South Africa as it develops its own identity.

Gideon Makhanya, former executive secretary of the convention, also expressed optimism.

"We have tempos and cultures (in the churches) that are miles apart, but I believe our tempos can reach each other, and our cultural differences can enrich each other," he said. "The convention will work with Southern Baptists without recognizing racial boundaries. By working closer we can present testimonies that the gospel does break barriers."

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The 27 Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to South Africa are a key to effective cooperation between the groups, Swart said. "They're accepted in a way white South Africans are not," he explained. "They can move between groups and promote understanding where a white South African and a black South African might not listen to one another."

A prime example of the new era is the Baptist Institute of Theological Education, a Southern Baptist-funded school in Debe Mek, Ciskei.

"Ten years ago we would have had one training college for white students in Johannesburg, a school for coloreds (mixed-race) in Capetown and another one for blacks," Swart said. "But now the institute can train blacks at pre-matriculation level and then those graduates can go to either of the union's two seminaries," which were officially opened to all ethnic groups Jan. 1, 1989.

Makhanya also welcomed the institute: "For the first time we (whites and blacks) can live together. We look forward to working with the union as a partner."

The barriers are high between the two groups, but the lure of a common cause also is great.

"Blacks have a built-in mistrust of whites," Swart admitted. "And most whites were raised to think of blacks as subhuman; I was. If we had started moving together, doing what we're doing now 30 years ago, then things would be so much better now. We wouldn't be fragmented. But give our history, to look at us now -- blacks and whites sitting down as Baptist brothers with the same rights -- that's the grace of God."

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'Equal' partners dedicate
Caribbean facility in Florida

By Jack Brymer

N- CO
(Fla.)

Baptist Press
1/18/90

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (BP)--Although the funds for the new \$1.5 million Caribbean Communications Centre were provided by Southern Baptists, the new facility was dedicated by "equal partners" in the task of sharing the gospel of Christ in the Caribbean.

The facility, located in Hollywood, Fla., houses two agencies of the Caribbean Baptist Fellowship: the CBF Media Centre, previously located in Nassau, Bahamas, and the Caribbean Christian Publications, previously located in El Paso, Texas.

Don Kammerdiener, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, told representatives of several Baptist bodies attending the dedication ceremony Jan. 16 that the new facility proves that Baptists can and must work together.

"The missionary family of Southern Baptists is alive and well," Kammerdiener told the gathering, which included local church, associational, state and national convention representatives.

"The Foreign Mission Board is not a senior partner but an equal partner in this venture," he said, adding that the facility had the best location, the best equipment and the most competent staff available.

The Caribbean Baptist Fellowship, a regional fellowship of the Baptist World Alliance serving 22 countries and four language groups, was organized in 1970 during a meeting at the Florida Baptist Convention's Lake Yale Baptist Assembly. Production of indigenous culturally suitable Bible study materials was begun in 1975 in Jamaica but relocated to El Paso, in 1980.

In 1979, a media center was opened in the Bahamas to produce electronic audio and visual materials and programs. Recognizing the advantages of a South Florida base of operations, the fellowship decided on 1987 to establish a single communications center in the Greater Miami area.

Land for the facility was purchased from Sheridan Hills Baptist Church in Hollywood.

In the dedicatory address, V. Anthony Cadette, CBF president and chairman of trustees of the media center, called for a rededication of the task of sharing the gospel.

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"Despite all the technology and state-of-the-art equipment, we are still called to be personal proclaimers of the message," he said.

"The Berlin Wall did not fall because of technology," he told the crowd of 165 guests. And he warned that other walls such as apartheid and racial bigotry will fall "only by personal commitment of those who will sacrificially give their lives to the call of God."

Calling the new facility a "bridgehead for Caribbean Baptists to reach South Florida, the Caribbean and Latin American for Christ," the Jamaican pastor expressed a dream that some day the facility would be located in the Caribbean.

Referring to the "desert in El Paso" and now "this tent in the Everglades," Cadette said, "We are not home yet. We may be far removed from our roots here today, but don't let distance be a barrier. Technology can shorten the distance. This year we are 20 years closer to our dream."

Azariah McKenzie, CBF executive secretary-treasurer, expressed appreciation to the Foreign Mission Board and others who had assisted in the project, but added, "It is God himself who has led us to this day and place."

Six Southern Baptist missionaries and one journeyman work at the center. Missionary Mickey Searcy is director of the CBF Media Center. Arthur Edgar is director of Caribbean Christian Publications.

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Former editor Pair
dies following fall

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(Ariz.)

Baptist Press
1/18/90

PHOENIX, Ariz. (BP)--Charles Luther (C.L.) Pair, editor of the Baptist Beacon newspaper and director of communications for the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention from 1973 to 1980 died Jan. 16 in Greenup, Ky. He was 76.

Pair died in a hospital near his home following complications from a fall. He was hospitalized with a broken leg, then suffered a heart attack during his hospital stay and died shortly thereafter.

Pair moved to Greenup from Arizona about a year ago. He wrote a book, "A History of the Arizona Southern Baptist Convention." Commissioned by the Arizona convention to write the history, Pair spent five years on the project. Plagued with failing eyesight soon after beginning work on the book, he enlisted the help of his wife, Marie, in the research and writing.

During his 35-year ministry, Pair was pastor of four Arizona churches. Prior to moving to Arizona in 1962, the Texas native was pastor of three Texas churches.

Before entering the ministry, Pair taught accounting and business law, was business manager for a Texas hospital and served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. Although not a lawyer himself, as a hearings officer for the state of Texas, he worked for 10 years with 14 lawyers in adjudicating claims before the Texas Employment Commission.

Services were held Jan. 19 at First Baptist Church of Greenup.

Pair is survived by his wife, Marie Daniel; two sons, Don C. Pair of Greenup and Ronald E. Pair of Roseland, N.J.; one sister, Jena Mae Robinson of Sherman, Texas; and four grandchildren.

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