



- - BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #71
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2311
Alvin C. Shackelford, Director
Dan Martin, News Editor
Marv Knox, Feature Editor

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Jim Newton, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 511 N. Akard, Dallas, Texas 75201
NASHVILLE (Baptist Sunday School Board) Lloyd T. Householder, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND (Foreign) Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

May 16, 1990

90-68

Parks urges end to conflict,
recommitment to missions

By Robert O'Brien

N - FMB

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--R. Keith Parks has issued a plea to Southern Baptists to rise above the denomination's continuing controversy or risk losing opportunities to reach 3.5 billion people for Christ worldwide.

Parks, president of the denomination's Foreign Mission Board, addressed his concerns in an open letter to Southern Baptists dated May 15.

He urged a spiritual solution to the theological/political controversy that has troubled the Southern Baptist Convention for a decade and, he said, has undercut the SBC's mission thrust.

"The only solution I see is spiritual," Parks said. "We must humble ourselves, pray, seek God's face and turn from our wicked ways. Hopefully, it is not too late for healing.

"For the sake of three and a half billion lost people, I plead with Southern Baptists to rise above our controversy and recommit to sharing Christ with the whole world.

Parks urged all people who are "concerned about Southern Baptists doing our part in reaching this lost world to commit to a regular day of prayer and fasting until our convention is reconciled."

Asked if his letter were aimed at candidates for president at the upcoming SBC annual meeting in New Orleans, Parks responded: "I'm not focusing on politics but on missions, and my assessment that the SBC controversy has damaged it. I'm focusing on calling Southern Baptists back to commitment to the mandate for missions which was the reason for the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention."

In his letter, Parks cited many opportunities around the world that may be lost if Southern Baptists do not put missions ahead of controversy.

"God has opened doors and broken down walls. He has entrusted us with enough spiritual, human, technical and financial resources to have a significant part in reaching all people," Parks said.

"The urgency of this 'fullness of time' moment demands immediate response. But many signs indicate we may forfeit our greatest challenge."

Foreign missionaries are experiencing the most results ever, he said, but conflict at home "is depriving us of the additional resources that are urgently needed to meet new openness and responsiveness" around the world.

"We were once known as a people of evangelism and missions," he said. "Now, even internationally, we are headlined as a people of controversy. Our witness of love and hope is less effective."

The controversy, Parks said, has taken the focus off missions and undercut mission support.

--more--

"We were on God's timetable starting in 1976 when, through Bold Mission Thrust (the SBC's global missions campaign), our convention repeatedly committed to larger missions budgets, great increases in missionaries and strengthening of missions through every part of denominational life," Parks said.

"As we enter what should be a climactic decade of global evangelization, God has opened many opportunities before us. Regrettably, the controversy has not only taken the focus off missions, but has hindered the fulfilling of our biblical mandate."

On the subject of mission support, he said, "the effort to control" the convention "has excluded many major supporters of cooperative missions. We are losing the wholesome balance that has been our convention's strength. Historically, we have always been a mixture of two major groups. We need full participation of both if we are serious about reaching the world for Christ.

"More and more churches and individuals are noting the controversy as a reason for withholding support.

"After this decade of controversy, we have not received the increased budgets necessary to fund Bold Mission Thrust. We have received a larger number of dollars, but this level of giving has hardly matched inflation, much less provided for growth. Buying power per missionary has steadily weakened."

Citing a downtrend in the foreign missionary force, Parks noted: "At our time of extraordinary need for missionaries, we have seen a decline of appointments for four years. Many missionary candidates are increasingly concerned about the direction of our convention and turmoil on seminary campuses."

The Foreign Mission Board president said Southern Baptists "can still impact the world" if they are "willing to pay the price" of self-sacrifice, "rise above the controversy" and "re-emphasize our world mandate as described in Bold Mission Thrust, which our convention has reaffirmed many times."

He urged Southern Baptists to end the 20th century "known again by the commitment of prayer, life and resources as a Bible-believing, missions-practicing people -- for the sake of three and a half billion lost persons."

--30--

Land urges Bush to veto
child-care legislation

By Louis Moore

N- (CO)
(CLC)

Baptist Press
5/16/90

NASHVILLE (BP)--President Bush should veto the child-care legislation approved by both the U.S. House and Senate and currently in a congressional conference committee, urged Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard Land.

"It now appears inevitable that you (Bush) will be forced to veto a child-care bill in spite of your desire to see this issue addressed," Land said in a letter to Bush dated May 14. to Bush.

"We regret that a veto will be necessary. Nonetheless, we are glad to know that you will not be intimidated into signing a bad piece of legislation simply because it has 'child care' in the title.

"Given the fact that both the Senate and House bills expand discrimination against 'stay-at-home moms,' create a new federal grant program and contain federal regulations and mandates, it does seem inevitable that the conference committee deliberations will produce legislation which we will find unacceptable."

Land said Southern Baptists have been clear about what type of legislation on child care they desire for the Congress to enact.

--more--

"At the 1988 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, a child-care resolution was overwhelmingly adopted without any apparent opposition," Land said while noting that the Christian Life Commission does not address church-state issues. "This resolution expressed the perspective that any child-care legislation adopted by Congress should emphasize tax credits, state and local as opposed to federal regulation, principal benefit to low-income families and the separation of church and state. This legislation, according to this resolution, must be sensitive to the needs of the 'stay-at-home-mom' and provide financial benefits that do not discriminate against parental home-based child care."

Copies of Land's letter to Bush also were sent to White House Chief of Staff John Sununu and Doug Wead, special assistant to the president for public liaison.

--30--

Louisiana Bible driller answers questions she never hears

By Gary W. Griffith

F-60
(L.A.)

Baptist Press
5/16/90

SHREVEPORT, La. (BP)--Eleven-year-old Allison Wilson never heard the Bible drill judge at the Louisiana Baptist rally this spring, but she did not miss a question and recorded a perfect score.

She did it by devoting many hours to Bible Church study, drilling and learning to read lips, says Allison, who has been legally deaf since she was two years old.

The sixth-grade Bible driller from Trinity Heights Baptist in Shreveport, La., lost her hearing after a critical bout with meningitis. "There were 36 hours there when we did not know if she would live or not," recalls Allison's father, Jim Wilson.

Allison won that battle and hasn't lost many since then, says her mother, Kathy Wilson. "I don't ever want her to meet a closed door, and she doesn't," she notes. "She wants to do everything, no matter what she has to overcome. And she always does."

During the state Bible drill rally in Pineville, Allison made no mistakes and was named a state winner, which is awarded to drillers who make four mistakes or less. She also was named a state winner in 1988 and 1989.

Bible drilling is possible for Allison because she is an "oral communicator," her father explains: "In other words, she reads lips and speaks remarkably well. So the only thing people have to be mindful of when they're speaking to her is that she must have eye contact.

Each year, Allison's Bible drill leader at Trinity Heights has judged her group in state competition, allowing her to be familiar with the judge's speech, he says. She also has stood directly in front of the judge in order to read the person's lips and understand the drill questions.

Allison started Bible drilling at the encouragement of friends and other Trinity Heights members, she says: "They kept telling me that it was a good experience. I just thought it would be a lot of fun learning the Bible verses and new things about God.

"Every time my friends and I hear those verses, we remember and nudge each other. I feel I need to learn the Bible more to make me a stronger person. It's really important."

Allison says she's a better Bible driller than her 10-year-old brother, Leighton, who also earned the state winner award at the rally.

But Leighton is quick to respond to the sibling challenge, "No, I'm better."

The Wilsons never have described their daughter's hearing loss as a handicap, but rather an "inconvenience," Wilson says.

--more--

"Allison uses hearing aids to distinguish between sounds, such as machinery and human voices, but she doesn't hear like you and I hear. It's more like garbled tones, and she can't hear words," he explains. "The hearing aids are just like glasses. It's something she has to have to help her hear, just like people need glasses to see better."

Dealing with her deafness as an inconvenience has helped Allison achieve goals normal for any sixth grader and to excel in many areas, says Lonnie Wascom, minister of education at Trinity Heights Church. "Allison is an incredible young lady who will not be deterred," he asserts. "To the person who doesn't know her, she only seems to have a slight speech impediment."

Last year, Allison was chosen elementary student of the year at Herndon Magnet School in Shreveport, where she is enrolled in the gifted program. She also performed in the school's dance line, but plans to drop out and join the yearbook staff this school year, she says. She has been a Girl Scout, taken piano and ballet classes and competed in a beauty pageant.

"Those were her ideas, along with Bible drill," Allison's mother notes.

Her father adds: "She's always wanted to be involved in everything. In fact, sometimes her Mom and Dad may not want her to participate in some things. But we don't discourage her, and she goes ahead and participates."

In addition to Bible drill, Allison is involved in Girls in Action, youth activities and even youth choir at Trinity Heights Church, where the Wilsons have been members since 1976. And the church members have been a source of encouragement for Allison, who made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and was baptized at age 7, Wilson says.

"It's a stable atmosphere for her, because she is around people who know, love and care for her," Wilson relates. "They've been around her since she was born, and she's comfortable with them, whereas a (deaf) child who is not in a church may not have that advantage."

Mrs. Wilson agrees that Trinity Heights Church members have played a major role in Allison's life: "They've treated Allison as she needs to be treated, as an equal with their children, and as we think of her, a sweet little girl that doesn't happen to hear. And her church friends think of her as just like themselves."

Allison is an active, social "people person," her father says. "That's unusual because many people who are deaf, or have some kind of hearing impairment, tend to shy away from (hearing) people and groups. There's usually a problem in communicating with others."

But Allison always has been a part of the hearing community and refuses to let deafness limit her relationships and opportunities, her parents say.

For example, a few years ago Allison quit taking piano lessons because it was "taking too much time," she says. "I decided I'd rather spend my time doing new things, especially with my friends."

Allison thrives in the hearing community, Wilson says. "If she would have had problems, yes, we would have introduced her to sign language or queued speech," a communication technique for the deaf, he maintains. "But she is a good oralist, and God has blessed her with a confidence and love for people that is warming."

"Allison loves the Lord, and Bible drill is just one more area where she can learn more about the Lord. She really shows her love for God in her genuine concern for lost people and putting the word of the Lord in her heart."

True to family and friends' descriptions, Allison is meeting a new challenge. "I'm going to be in a play, and I have a speaking role," she announces.

The Wilsons will be there to hear her performance, and Allison will see their applause.

William Jewell gets
Hall Family Foundations

N-CO

LIBERTY, Mo. (BP)--The Hall Family Foundations have awarded a major endowment grant of up to \$3 million to William Jewell College Liberty, Mo. The grant is to enhance the Baptist college's performance in areas related to the Oxbridge Alternative curricular program. Included are endowment faculty chairs that recognize excellence in teaching, support for scholarships and strengthening of library holdings.

The Oxbridge Alternative is an American adaptation of the tutorial learning styles employed at Oxford and Cambridge universities in England. It features one-to-one instruction by professors, reading in primary sources, weekly essays and papers, and comprehensive examinations. One year of study is in Oxford or Cambridge. Enrollment in the Oxbridge Alternative is limited to no more than 5 percent of the William Jewell student body.

An initial sum of \$1.5 million will be paid in equal amounts over three years. Additionally, \$1 million will be awarded when the college's current Leadership 2000 capital campaign meets its base goal of \$15 million. An additional \$500,000 will be awarded when the campaign's base goal is exceeded by \$5,300,000.

The Hall Family Foundations gift follows contributions to William Jewell's Leadership 2000 campaign from both individuals and philanthropic groups. The J.E. and L.E. Mabee Foundation of Tulsa, Okla., has made a \$1 million challenge grant designated toward construction of a proposed \$7.5 million Center for Basic Sciences and Computer Technology. An additional \$2 million has been pledged toward construction of the center from an alumnus who wishes to remain anonymous.

The Oxbridge Alternative program and William Jewell College have been recognized in U.S. News & World Report, Changing Times, Peterson's Guides to The Competitive Colleges and other profiles of "America's Best Colleges."