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BSSB total revenue up;
Draper praises employees

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
11/20/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Total revenue for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's fiscal year ending Sept. 30 was up \$5.75 million from 1990-91, employees of the church programs and publishing agency were told Nov. 17 in an employee assembly.

President James T. Draper Jr., speaking to a packed audience of Nashville-based personnel, said while revenues were \$1.5 million short of a goal of \$203,877,000, product sales, "an area where employees have direct influence over results, exceeded target by \$1.5 million."

With a total revenue of \$202,373,000, Draper said revenue remaining, after deductions for product and operational expenses and contributions for SBC and state convention support, exceeded a goal of \$6,678,000 by almost \$800,000.

"All of this was achieved in the middle of a distracting transition," Draper said. "It shows the quality and dedication of our employees."

The reporting period included a time of massive reorganization for the 101-year-old Southern Baptist agency. Recent retirements of 159 long-tenured employees were part of the effort to streamline processes and reduce top-heavy management.

The two financial goals were approved last year by board trustees as targets for an incentive bonus for employees for the fiscal year. While total revenue fell short of the goal by 0.7 percent, Draper said the most positive results for the year "were those most directly influenced by the performance of our employees."

"As we looked, not only at the bottom line, but also analyzed factors which contributed to them, we concluded that you have done your job well in difficult, abnormal times. For that, you deserve not only commendation but compensation."

Draper said he and the board's vice presidents, with support of trustee officers, decided to make an exception to the requirements and grant the bonus. Employees will receive a percentage of their earnings for the fiscal year 1991-92 based on each individual's level of performance. Draper emphasized that no incentive bonus has been included in the 1992-93 budget. He said an employee task force is working on a different kind of reward system.

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"This is a well-earned reward for outstanding work this year," he told employees. "With all of our uncertainty, all of our frustration, all of the anxiety, you gave a tremendous effort in areas that you affected by your work. You performed at the highest level, and I am very grateful to you for that."

The board, which receives no funds from the Cooperative Program, made direct contributions to SBC support of \$3,011,000, including \$649,000 to the SBC and \$2,362,000 to state Baptist conventions.

Product sales were 2.7 percent above last year, with increases in church literature, Baptist Book Stores and Broadman Press more than offsetting declines in Holman Bibles and Church Information System, the church computer technology-producing component.

Product highlights for the fiscal year included:

- Nearly 835,000 copies of "The Baptist Hymnal" pew edition were sold during 1991-92.
- Sales of LifeWay products, a new line introduced in July 1992, exceeded projections by \$10,000 in three months.
- More than 36,000 copies of the "New American Commentary" were sold during the fiscal year.
- "A New Day," a book by Anita Bryant released in March 1992, sold almost 44,000 copies during the remainder of the fiscal year.
- The "Holman Bible Dictionary" sold more than 35,000 copies during the year.
- Holman's New International Version "Family Worship Bible" sold more than 28,000 copies.

Draper said for the current fiscal year the board needs to generate more sales and cost savings and to turn around declining sales trends in some products and services.

"I am very, very optimistic about our future," Draper observed. "These last months have been difficult for all of us. The departure of 159 co-workers has been a shock to this institution and to our networks of relationships. It's changed things; it's created some anxiety. It's also given many of you new assignments, many of you are learning new jobs and others feel like you are still in limbo."

He said employees should remember the resources available to move through transition include faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the total of 19,322 years of Sunday School Board experience among current employees, "an incredibly loyal" customer base and "the sense of urgency we feel about reaching this world with the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"The future could not be brighter," he said, "because of what God has done in putting us together and in giving us this incredible opportunity to serve Southern Baptists."

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Coalition launches campaign
to reduce sexual violence

By Christine Lehmann

Baptist Press
11/20/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--A coalition of women from diverse ideological backgrounds announced Nov. 19 its "Enough is Enough!" national campaign to eliminate illegal, hard-core and child pornography, to reduce sexual violence and to prevent men, women and children from becoming its victims.

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"We need to educate America about the type of pervasive illegal pornographic materials that are available today, and that it is a public health and safety issue," said campaign director Dee Jepsen. Studies have shown that sexual violence is increasing in America and that pornography shapes destructive attitudes toward women and children and contributes to rape and child molestation.

"One out of three American girls can expect to be sexually molested by age 18, every 46 seconds at least one woman is reported being raped and there are more outlets for hard-core pornography than McDonald's restaurants in this country. It is high time that American women say enough is enough!" Jepsen said.

To dispel the myth that pornography is benign, reporters were shown graphic slides of women and children engaged in obscene acts and being exploited through sexual bondage, torture and mutilation, incest and bestiality or sex with animals. "Although we support the First Amendment's protection of free speech, these degrading acts are not the type of expression we feel should be covered," Jepsen said.

Pornography often becomes addictive and is used as a sex instruction manual. Julie Schondel, a victim of incest and child abuse said, "My stepfather and mother used illegal and child pornography to educate me starting when I was 5 for 10 years. I am here today to say that this is wrong, and I am fighting back with the help of campaigns to say enough is enough!" she told reporters.

Another victim, Dianne, recounted how her 3-year-old daughter was raped and sexually abused by a 12-year-old boy in her small community after he was exposed to pornographic materials at a youth camp. "Pornography is not a victimless crime. My family has been shattered by this experience, but so has the family of this young man who is also a victim. Something is terribly wrong in this country when we protect the rights of a handful of men to make billions of dollars from pornography at the expense of women and children," she said.

Pornography is estimated to be an \$8-10 billion-a-year industry and the third-highest profit industry in organized crime after narcotics and gambling, according to the FBI.

"I think it is critically important that women be informed and energized to action on the pornography issue. They are dehumanized and victimized viciously both in the making of pornography and as a result of the crimes committed by those exposed to it," said Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and an executive member of the Religious Alliance against Pornography.

"I believe that the 'Enough is Enough!' women's anti-pornography campaign has the potential to break through to the consciousness of the American public on this issue in a totally new and unprecedented way. Many Americans will be motivated to action as they hear more and more from women victimized by pornography," Land said.

Jepsen said the coalition supports pending federal legislation that would require uniform laws in all 50 states making possession of child pornography illegal; possession is now legal in 21 states. Other pending legislation would require mandatory computerized registration of sex offenders and would prohibit international sex trafficking.

"But our primary focus is on strengthening and enforcing state laws," said Jan LaRue, attorney for the National Law Center for Children and Families and campaign advisor. "Our center assists law enforcement officers in sex offense cases and trains them to look for pornography at the scene. One of the obstacles we face is that many prosecutors don't realize the link between pornography and sexual crimes including rape.

"But we point to the Oklahoma City case which saw a 26 percent decrease in rape when the obscenity laws were enforced for a six-year period, shutting down 150 pornography outlets," she said.

"But the battle is not just for the legislators but for the hearts and minds of the American people," said Eileen Lindner, associate general secretary for ecumenical relations for the National Council of Churches of Christ. "We must recognize that hard-core, illegal and child pornography is the cultural toxic waste of our society and bring that conviction that it must be removed from our society so people can live with dignity," she said.

This campaign has been endorsed by first lady-elect Hillary Clinton and first lady Barbara Bush. Its national committee of support includes Mary O. Ross, president of the women's department of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. and women representing Presbyterian and United Methodist denominations.

The coalition also offers counseling referrals to both those who are addicted to pornography and to victims of sexual abuse. A "What Can One Woman Do?" action manual and other educational resources are available from the "Enough is Enough!" campaign headquarters at P.O. Box 888, Fairfax, VA 22030, (703) 278-8843.

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Lehmann is a free-lance writer in the Washington area.

'World A' needs top new
missionary request list

By Mary E. Speidel

Baptist Press
11/20/92

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Missionaries to the world's unreached people groups head the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's "help wanted" list for 1993.

The list of 38 top requests for missionaries is "almost entirely World A," said Harlan Spurgeon, vice president for mission personnel.

"World A" -- so named by mission strategists -- encompasses vast regions of the globe where people live and die with little or no knowledge of Jesus Christ. Most of World A's 1.2 billion people live in an area stretching from northern Africa to southeast Asia.

The 1993 priority requests "emphasize much more clearly our commitment to the unreached peoples than any previous list we've ever worked with," added Lewis Myers, board vice president. Myers heads Cooperative Services International, the Southern Baptist organization relating to areas where traditional missionaries do not work. Thirteen openings on the new list are for CSI assignments.

The list also includes requests for missionaries among World A-type peoples living in countries considered traditional mission fields. Priority requests in Nigeria, for example, include workers among the Kanuri and Fulani people there.

The list reveals two basic goals, said Myers:

1. "Accelerate the harvest" in responsive areas.
2. Expand efforts among the unreached peoples of the world, "many of whom are quite resistant to the gospel."

The requests divide into three tiers -- a change from last year's list, which numbered 33 requests in priority order.

Tier I contains 16 of the most urgent global needs.

"We're treating them all as if each is the No. 1 request in the world," explained personnel selection director Lloyd Atkinson. "Tier I has such urgent needs that it's hard to differentiate which one is most important."

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Tier I priorities include requests for:

- workers among unreached peoples in Africa and Asia.
- a church developer in the former Soviet republic of Belarus.
- a church planter in Albania.
- a religious education consultant in Bulgaria.
- an agriculturist and several church planters for Bangladesh, a request that topped last year's list but went unfilled.

The overall list includes additional openings in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, some representing "emerging mission fields and needs we didn't have the opportunity to address before," Spurgeon said. They include a church planter in Kyrgyzstan, a church developer in Russia and a student and youth worker in Hungary.

Nineteen priority requests call for missionaries to work in church planting, general evangelism and church development. Two seek missionaries to work in church planting and health care in Nepal (one requests a physician whose spouse is a church planter; the other asks for a dentist and church planter team). A church planter/English teacher is needed in Cambodia. Needs for church planters in Angola, Macao, Sri Lanka and Uganda also made the list.

Other key requests call for a worker to coordinate evangelism among the Vietnamese and several evangelists in the Middle East.

Last year the Foreign Mission board filled less than half of its 33 priority requests. Several remain on the 1993 list.

Many unfilled openings, said Atkinson, include jobs in church planting, general evangelism and church development. They encompass such areas as theological education, student ministries, women's ministries and religious education.

The 1993 priorities were chosen from about 515 total requests. Each year mission administrators list missionary positions needed to achieve long-term goals. The mission board's Global Strategy Group chooses the top priorities.

The priority requests are used in the missionary selection process. "We try to keep these top requests before people," Spurgeon said. But he added that missionary candidates are free to consider any of the hundreds of other requests on file at the Foreign Mission Board.

Overall, the 1993 list, Spurgeon said, indicates the Foreign Mission Board is moving "increasingly toward the unreached world. It's a recognition that Southern Baptists can't do everything. It seems so unfair for some people to hear the gospel many times ... while others live and die and never hear at all."

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(BP) graphic mailed Nov. 20 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCNet Newsroom.

'World's most wanted':
you can help catch them

Baptist Press
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-- Order brochures from the Foreign Mission Board listing "1993 priority requests" and post in visible spots in your church.

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- Include priority missionary requests in your church bulletins or newsletters.
- Give the priority list to leaders of your church's mission organizations.
- Pray about the specific requests listed, asking God to call Southern Baptists qualified to meet these needs.
- Pray for the unreached people groups named on the priority list.
- If you feel God might be calling you to explore missionary service, contact Faith Bryan at the board's initial contact desk. Call toll-free (800) 999-2889, ext. 635, or write the Foreign Mission Board, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230-0767.

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Southern Baptist volunteers
still working in Florida

By David Winfrey

Baptist Press
11/20/92

FLORIDA CITY, Fla. (BP)--Disaster feeding units have gone home, but Southern Baptist volunteers still are rebuilding houses in southern Florida more than three months after Hurricane Andrew blew much of this area off the map.

Between 40 and 70 volunteers arrive weekly, as the emphasis has shifted from food to reconstruction, said Gary Roberts, disaster relief coordinator for the Florida Baptist Convention.

The Aug. 23 storm, with winds raging as high as 175 mph, damaged 27 church buildings in the Florida Baptist Convention, and construction teams are working on them as well.

Convention employees surveyed communities near the churches after the storm and found 366 uninsured or underinsured homeowners in need of assistance, Roberts said.

The convention is scheduled to coordinate volunteer construction teams for those homes until March 1993, but it may take longer, he said. "The monies are still coming in, and we'll probably stay here as long as we're needed."

Meanwhile, work teams continue to contact the Home Mission Board offering help, said Hugh Roberts, a Home Mission Board volunteer construction coordinator assisting the Florida convention.

"I'm getting calls each day from major construction teams that want to go into south Florida as their annual summer missions trip," said Roberts, who is no relation to Gary. "There will be a continued need for rebuilding houses for years to come."

Many volunteers come for a weekend, Hugh Roberts said. "We've had people that would arrive at 11 and 12 o'clock Friday night and would work over the weekend and then leave out at 6 to 10 o'clock Sunday evening to return home."

Construction teams are encouraged to call ahead so skills and supplies can be paired with the needs.

"I just want people to feel like they're welcome down here, but we really need to hear from them first," said Gary Roberts. "There is no cooking; no food or clothing distribution. Only construction work, and we need skilled people."

Roberts' headquarters is at First Baptist Church of Florida City, one of the hardest-hit communities. Volunteers report to the church and then go to the communities of one of the 27 churches, he said.

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Mission Service Corps volunteers and Campers on Mission are needed to coordinate work at each church site for three months, Hugh Roberts said.

All volunteers should be self-contained, with food, toiletries and camping gear or an RV, Gary Roberts said.

Some of the work has slowed recently because of long lines for building permits and tougher building codes, such as the requirement of heavier roofing materials and longer nails, he said. "Even the contractors I've spoken to don't understand why the building department is changing the code so often."

While much of the work is physical, it often makes a difference spiritually, they said.

"We're visiting a lot of people who are not churched and the SBC has made an impact on the community by the fact that we're showing we care and we're there to help them," Gary Roberts said.

Volunteers are encouraged to take "Eternal Life" booklets for witnessing, he said.

Those seeking more information or wanting to volunteer can contact the Florida Baptist Convention at 1-800-226-8584, ext. 478, or the Home Mission Board's volunteer hotline at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

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Baptists help couple overcome
\$60,000 home repair estimate

By Barbara Denman

Baptist Press
11/20/92

MIAMI (BP)--Ten weeks after Hurricane Andrew, Carlos and Mercedes Molamayo stood in their renovated home, making final touches before moving back. To look at the scene, it's hard to imagine that, weeks before, the entire house was devastated -- with estimates to rebuild totaling more than \$60,000.

But with less than \$10,000 and volunteer labor supplied by a local Southern Baptist church, the Molamayos stand ready to return to their home and begin a new life, as new creations in Christ.

Several weeks ago, the Molamayos walked down the aisle at Naranja Park Baptist Church and accepted Jesus Christ as Savior.

Mercedes Molamayo said they were led to the Lord by "the unselfish acts of kindness of the Baptist men and women who came around to my house and the love they poured out on us during those first weeks. They showed me what Christianity was all about."

"Certainly from now on my life will be different. I will raise my children to be different and my future will be different," said Mercedes Molamayo. "I think this hurricane was needed to bring people to Christ."

Immediately after the hurricane, Mercedes, three months pregnant with their sixth child, was told that Naranja Park church was distributing water and ice. She began frequenting the site. Soon volunteers came out into her neighborhood distributing food and offered to rebuild their home.

The Molamayos said they had quickly learned that renovating their home was a bigger task than they could do alone and jumped at the offer.

"I told them I wasn't Baptist, that I was Catholic, but they said it didn't matter what you are."

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Mercedes recalled one woman particularly ministered to her when "all I could do was cry. This woman from Atlanta kept telling me that 'God loves you. This can all be rebuilt.'"

"This has been a major lesson for us. We've acquired new friends and new faith from the Baptist church. They have given us meaning in life."

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Florida Baptists find
wealth of unmet needs

By Barbara Denman

Baptist Press
11/20/92

MIAMI (BP)--"They know the name 'Baptist,'" said Aletha Moore.

During October, Moore and her husband, Billy Bob, and other Baptist volunteers searched for Hurricane Andrew victims still in need in the Cutler Ridge area. Florida Baptist disaster relief volunteers, based at Cutler Ridge Baptist Church, fed 5,000 meals to the hard-hit south Florida community each day.

"We have been invited into every home we have visited, with open doors and open arms," said Moore, who with her husband serves Florida Baptist Convention church extension department workers. "The people in this community know the ministry this church has done."

One of the families the Moores met was the Molinas, who immigrated to the United States from Costa Rica four years ago.

During the storm Andy and Mercedes Molina and their four sons hid in a front closet in their home. When the wind started tearing through the Sheetrock, they moved from room to room, finding trees and branches piercing walls and the ceiling, until they found safety in a back closet.

At the height of the storm, a piece of plywood slashed across their 3-year-old son's right eye, leaving a gash from his forehead to his cheek and peeling around his eye like an onion. "We thought he had lost his eye," Andy Molina said.

Unable to navigate their car through the fallen trees on the street, Molina called 911 from a neighbor's home. An emergency rescue helicopter airlifted the child and his mother to a unknown hospital.

"That was the worst day of my life," Andy Molina said. "I didn't know where they were. I could not travel to meet them and I knew my wife could only speak Spanish. I'll never forget that day," he said.

"But something else I'll never forget," he added, "is when the Moores came to my house and what the church has done for me."

After three surgeries, the little boy's face only shows a trace of a two-inch scar. And even though Molina has taken a leave of absence to rebuild their home, after 10 weeks the house still is uninhabitable.

"This job is entirely too big for him to handle alone. He is overwhelmed," said Aletha Moore. "And he's one of the hardest working guys I have seen."

Federal funds helped the family rent an apartment for two months, but time is running out for them. "I want to finish one bedroom so my family can move back here," Molin said.

Southern Baptist volunteers helped Molina, who has no insurance, purchase doors and put a roof on the home. They intend to continue helping him rebuild the house.

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"Now I feel like a different person," Molina said. "Now I have hope."

After surveying the Cutler Ridge community, volunteers discovered Ruth Kraynik, a widow whose only living companion is her blind cocker spaniel. A recluse since the death of her husband, Kraynik said she could not afford insurance before the storm hit.

During the storm, the widow recalled seeing the contents of her home being sucked out with the wind. Her doors were blown off and the kitchen wall was wedged against her garage, rendering the water heater useless.

Federal money was used to purchase doors and pay a contractor whose repairs were done without the proper permit and failed to meet building codes.

After learning of the need, the Moores paid a visit to Kraynik. The visit and offer of help came as a "surprise" to her. "It was an answer to my prayer," she said. "I kept asking the Lord, 'What am I going to do?'"

According to Aletha Moore, Kraynik at first was reluctant to visit with them except through a cracked window. Her doors are nailed shut. "I spent hours with her," Moore said, "sharing the good things that the Lord has done and how she needed to reach out to people."

Ten weeks after the hurricane, volunteers from the Tuckseegee and Truett Baptist associations in North Carolina replaced the roof on her home. Kraynik spoke to the group through the cracked window, still reluctant to visit in person. "I'm ever so grateful for their work," she said.

"I was raised a Christian," Kraynik said. "But I have had trouble with my faith since my husband was murdered in a hospital accident. Now I feel like the Lord is trying to get through to me again. Now I may go visit the church."

During the next four months, Florida Baptists will use disaster relief funds, volunteer labor and donated materials to help rebuild the homes of families like Kraynik and the Molinas who are uninsured or underinsured in property or contents. Most of these families were discovered through door-to-door surveys that asked people questions about their needs, insurance coverages and spiritual lives. The volunteers were looking for 250 needy families. They found 365.

State convention personnel admit that they could have found thousands of people who needed similar financial assistance. "We have to work within the given resources," said Charles Goen, director of the convention facilities department who has the responsibility of providing supplies and materials. "It's going to be real hard, if not impossible, to extract ourselves delicately when the resources are gone."

Included in the 365 families are dozens who have lost the contents of their homes. An agreement between the Florida Baptist Convention and Badcock Home Furniture Center was arranged to help these families by providing each with \$1,000 to purchase furniture. In return, the furniture store will give the patrons a 20 percent discount on their purchases.

Letters with news of this arrangement were hand delivered to the hurricane victims by local pastors. Within hours several families had taken advantage of the offer.

Pastor Joe Coates of Glendale Baptist Church predicts Southern Baptists' pro-active stance of ministry after the hurricane will bring "a great evangelism explosion" to the area. "God always brings good out of bad. I see a great growth of souls being saved."

Volunteer boost expected
after Hurricane Andrew

By David Winfrey

ATLANTA (BP)--Work in hurricane-struck areas and promotion by the annual Home Mission Study should boost volunteer awareness and participation in 1993, coordinators predict.

Planners had originally feared volunteers going to Florida and Louisiana would deplete the supply of workers for other ministry and evangelism projects, said Mike Robertson, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's short-term volunteer department.

"In fact, I think what it has done is raise consciousness nationally that volunteers are needed for this kind of thing as well as other mission projects," Robertson said.

Hurricane relief in Miami has been a gateway for many Southern Baptists' first involvement in volunteerism, said Ken Taylor, director of volunteers for the Florida Baptist Convention. "I'm talking to so many people who are saying, 'Yeah, we're going to keep doing this, whether it's coming back here or not.'"

Volunteerism could also get a boost by being the focus of the 1993 Home Mission Study, Roberts said. The study is used by many churches each spring to educate members about the work of missionaries and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for Home Missions.

This summer, coordinators filled a lower percentage of short-term volunteer requests, such as church construction workers and Vacation Bible School helpers in newer work areas, Roberts said. The department, which usually fills about 70 percent of its requests for help, only filled about 60 percent this summer, he said.

Those wanting more information about volunteer opportunities can contact their state Baptist convention or the Home Mission Board at 1-800-HMB-VOLS.

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Winery halts health claims
after CLC, others protest

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
11/20/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--A winery has suspended a government-approved promotion touting the alleged health benefits of its product after other federal agencies challenged the practice.

Beringer Vineyards announced it has withdrawn the distribution of "neckhangers" claiming a link between the drinking of red wine to a decreased incidence in heart disease. Beringer's voluntary action followed complaints by Surgeon General Antonia Novello, the Federal Trade Commission and the Food and Drug Administration about promoting the alleged health benefits.

In mid-October, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms approved Beringer's use of such a label.

After BATF's action, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission joined eight other organizations in signing a letter by the Center for Science in the Public Interest asking Louis Sullivan, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, to overrule the agency's approval of the promotion. The challenges by Novello, whose office is in HHS the FTC and the FDA influenced the winery to act voluntarily.

"We are pleased that, at least for now, the federal government will not be sending out mixed messages on the purported health benefits of wine consumption," said James A. Smith, the Christian Life Commission's director of government relations. "BATF acted improperly by giving the green light to Beringer, especially since no consideration was given to the signal this would have sent to at-risk consumers, such as pregnant women and people on medications.

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"We do not intend to allow the federal government to become a marketing agent for the alcohol industry. We will continue to monitor the government regulatory agencies associated with this issue and urge them to reject future similar appeals from Beringer and other companies."

CSPI's Patricia Taylor said in a press release, "We believe that BATF's action, taken without any consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, demonstrates the agency's inability to regulate a product responsible for over 100,000 deaths each year. The Food and Drug Administration is the proper agency to control health claims."

In a Nov. 9 memorandum, Wine Institute president John DeLuca said his organization will work with Beringer and appropriate federal agencies "to achieve clear rules on our ability to disseminate balanced information to the public."

In their letter, CSPI, the CLC and the other organizations said BATF's approval of the health-claim label around the necks of wine bottles contradicted federal policies, including a law requiring the secretary of HHS to authorize health claims and a law mandating warnings on alcohol containers, which would be "overpowered" by the "neckhangers."

The content of the "neckhangers" is from a Nov. 17, 1991, segment of the CBS television series "60 Minutes." That program reported on the claim that consumption of red wine reduces the incidence of heart disease.

Included with the CLC and CSPI on the letter were the American Academy of Family Physicians, the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, the National PTA and the United Methodist Church's General Board of Church and Society and Standing Committee on Alcohol and Other Drugs.

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CLC, others ask Supreme Court
to revise religious clause test

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
11/20/92

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has joined with nine other organizations in asking the Supreme Court to revise its test for deciding if a government activity violates the U.S. Constitution by establishing religion.

In a brief filed Nov. 19, the Christian Legal Society, joined by the CLC and others, asked the court to find the religious liberty of a hearing-impaired student attending a parochial school is violated unless he is provided a government-funded interpreter like deaf children are in public and non-religious private schools. The brief also requests the justices to modify the two-decade-old Lemon test, which governs establishment clause cases.

The Baptist Joint Committee signed onto a brief filed by the American Jewish Congress asking the court to find the government aid does not violate the establishment clause. The brief does not ask the court to overturn Lemon, however.

In another church-state case, the CLC and BJC both signed onto a brief, also filed Nov. 19, requesting the court to find a New York school district in violation of the First Amendment by its refusal to allow a church to use its facilities when use by other groups was permitted.

"These cases raise the most fundamental issue in interpreting the religion clause," said Michael Whitehead, the CLC's general counsel. "How do the free exercise clause and non-establishment principles interact? Are the two clauses contradictory or complementary? Does the establishment clause require discrimination against religion while the free exercise clause forbids religious discrimination?"

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"These cases provide the court with another opportunity to modify or clarify the Lemon test, and to give clearer 'signals' to direct the traffic at the intersection of establishment clause and free exercise," Whitehead said.

In *Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills School District*, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled earlier this year a school district would be establishing religion if it paid for an interpreter for James Zobrest, a student at a Catholic high school in Arizona. The appeals court said although the free-exercise-of-religion rights of Zobrest and his parents were infringed upon, the government's interest in preventing an establishment of religion overrode their religious liberty.

A proper interpretation of the First Amendment would make *Zobrest* a simple case, the brief signed onto by the CLC says, but current interpretation makes it complex. The establishment and free-exercise clauses of the First Amendment should complement, not contradict, each other, the brief says.

"Allowing Jimmy to use the interpreter at an accredited school of his choice does not advance but is neutral toward religion ...," the brief says. "Conversely, to forbid the use of the interpreter at a religious school is not neutral toward religion but discriminatory against religion... ."

The brief asks the court to revise *Lemon*, thereby reconciling the religion clauses of the First Amendment "around the overriding principle of religious liberty."

"The decision facing this Court is not whether to depart from settled precedent, but how to reconcile a mass of inconsistent cases and interpretations of unsettled doctrine," the brief says.

The *Lemon* test says a government activity must have a secular purpose, neither promote nor restrain religion and avoid excessive entanglement with religion. In its own 1991 brief, the CLC asked the court to change the standard but it refused to in this year's *Lee v. Weisman* ruling.

"*Zobrest* is not a 'parochial case,' but a religious discrimination case," the CLC's Whitehead said. "Our brief does not assert that private school students have a right to funds or services provided to public school students. But if state officials decide to aid private school students, they cannot single out religious private school students for discrimination."

The brief signed onto by the BJC contends the aid "is not prohibited by the establishment clause ... even though it's not required by the free exercise clause," said Brent Walker, the organization's associate general counsel. "The state can do it but it is not required."

Joining the CLC and CLS on the brief were the Family Research Council, National Association of Evangelicals, National Council of Churches, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Association of Christian Schools International, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joni and Friends and Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

In the New York case, *Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free School District*, the school district rejected requests by an evangelical church to rent space at a high school first to hold services and then to show a film series produced by James Dobson's Focus on the Family organization. The school district cited a state law permitting the exclusion of religious bodies from school facilities and a local ordinance banning use "by any group for religious purposes."

The second circuit court of appeals agreed with a lower court's ruling which said a school's facilities are "limited public forums" not required to be open for religious uses.

The decision violates the constitutional requirement in both the free exercise and establishment causes that the government treat religion neutrally, the brief endorsed by the CLC and BJC says. It also violates free speech rights, the brief contends.

"A facially discriminatory policy necessarily has the effect of inhibiting religion and, indeed, conveys a message of hostility toward religious persons who are excluded from an expressive forum solely because their speech is religious," the brief says.

"If allowed to stand, the (appeals court decision) signals "open season" for the suppression of religious speech on virtually any public property by any federal, state, or local official."

The CLC's Whitehead said, "Lamb's Chapel also involves religious discrimination, based on mistaken notions of separation of church and state. Our brief urges the court to hold that schools who rent space to community groups must give equal access to religious groups."

"Equal access is neutral toward religion, as the court held in both Widmar and Mergens."

"It's a classic case of discrimination against religious speech," the BJC's Walker said. "There's no reason in the world why the church should not be able to use the facilities for the purpose of showing the films."

Joining the CLC and BJC on the brief filed by CLS were the Family Research Council, National Association of Evangelicals, United States Catholic Conference, Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights, Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and Home School Legal Defense Association.

Oral arguments in both cases will not be heard until at least January.

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Former New Mexico newsman hired
by Missouri Baptists' Word & Way

Baptist Press
11/20/92

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (BP)--Tim Palmer has been named managing editor of the Missouri Baptist newsjournal Word & Way.

He has been assistant to the vice president for academic affairs at Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., the past year and has taught a reporting course in the department of communications.

Prior to working at SBU, Palmer worked for five years as editor of the Artesia Daily Press in Artesia, N.M., a five-day-a-week paper. He also was editor of the Ruidoso News, a twice-weekly paper in Ruidoso, N.M., for four years and a reporter for the El Paso Times in El Paso, Texas.

Palmer holds a bachelor of arts degree from SBU and a master of international journalism degree from Baylor University in Texas. Presently, he is enrolled in the doctor of philosophy program in journalism at the University of Missouri at Columbia.

He has won writing awards in editorial, sports, columns and features and in photography from the New Mexico Press Association and the New Mexico Associated Press Managing Editors.

Palmer is married to the former Catherine Cummins, daughter of Harold and Betty Cummins, recently retired Southern Baptist missionaries to Kenya who now live in Springfield, Mo. The Palmers have a son, Geoffrey, 7.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Please replace the last paragraph in (BP) story titled "Analysis: States struggle with giving plans, oppose homosexuality," dated 11/19/92, with the following paragraph:

Although most states did not have moderate- versus conservative-identified candidates, several were contested. Moderate candidates won in Texas, Tennessee, Florida, Alabama, Missouri, Virginia and Maryland/Delaware. Conservative-backed candidates won in Georgia, Kentucky and South Carolina.

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Folly House, (BP) editorial assistant in the Nashville office, contributed to this story.

Thanks,
Baptist Press
