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91-151

Texas high school allowed to perform religious music in state competition

DENTON, Texas (BP)--The Denton (Texas) High School marching band will be permitted to perform some religious music in state competition and at halftime shows through the 1991 football season, according to an agreement reached Oct. 3.

However, school-sponsored prayers and future programs of predominantly religious music will be forbidden and the band must drop a marching formation in the shape of a cross from its routine, the Dallas Morning News reported.

The agreement, announced by state district Judge David White, prohibits Denton school personnel from directing, leading or supervising prayers, Bible readings or religious ceremonies on school premises or at school functions and bars school personnel from encouraging any student to do so.

The agreement settles a lawsuit filed Sept. 13 by the American Civil Liberties Union and the American Jewish Congress, accusing band director Don Hanna of promoting Christianity with a halftime show of religious music and the cross formation.

The agreement does not preclude "study of the Bible or religion for literature or historic qualities when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education," but prohibits "teaching, proselytizing, lecturing, witnessing or otherwise attempting to promote through music or words religious doctrines, beliefs, experiences or thoughts" to students at school or at school functions.

The Denton case is one of two that have been before Texas courts in recent weeks. The second, on which a ruling is expected within the next few days, involves a lawsuit brought against the Duncanville Independent School District over the issue of prayers at basketball games.

A suit filed in May in U.S. District Court in Dallas by an unnamed 14-year-old girl and her father said the district unconstitutionally encourages prayer at sports events and other school activities.

The suit arose over the practice of the Duncanville High School girls basketball team who gather at midcourt following games to recite the Lord's Prayer. The district has banned organized prayer during school hours.

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CORRECTION: In (BP) story "WMU and Brotherhood announce joint publishing venture" dated 10/3/91, please change the title of the new missions resource kit to Express Missions, not Missions Express as reported. This change will affect paragraphs 3, 4, 7, and 11.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

NFBE's BookLink
expands services

By Jim Burton

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--The National Fellowship of Baptist Educators is expanding its BookLink ministry, said Bob Salley, director of the National Fellowship of Baptist Men.

"BookLink has been one of the most successful fellowship ministries," said Salley. The educator's fellowship is one of 14 under the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission's NFBM umbrella.

Beginning Nov. 1, 1991, James E. Powell, a New Testament theology professor at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, will become BookLink's executive director.

"I see that this is a day of great opportunity to get the Word of God out to religious people who need it," Powell said. "I can't always go overseas but through this I can invest some time in meeting needs. It will help me sense the heartbeat of the world as requests come in."

Powell accepted the BookLink leadership after his church, First Baptist of Collierville, Tenn., offered a room for shipping. Instead of shipping from one office in the Central time zone, Powell said volunteers will be recruited in the Eastern, Mountain and Pacific time zones for regional shipping offices.

BookLink ships Bibles and other Christian literature to Christian leaders around the world. Southern Baptist missionaries validate the requests.

Since its inception more than three years ago, BookLink has shipped 47,613 books and items weighing 8.9 tons to five states and 51 countries. The estimated value of all items shipped is \$102,413. The postage has cost nearly \$13,000. Books for the World, a non-profit organization in Yazoo City, Miss., works in alliance with NFBE's BookLink and pays most of the postage.

Hal and Dot Buchanan, retired educators living in Tupelo, Miss., have spearheaded BookLink since its inception. Working from their home, they literally have ministered around the world.

"The Buchanan's BookLink ministry represents the finest in volunteer missions commitment," said James D. Williams, Brotherhood Commission president. "It demonstrates one of the creative ways that lay people can reach the world for Christ."

Southern Baptist layman Owen Cooper is credited with first envisioning a ministry of textbook and Christian literature distribution, said Don McGregor, former editor of the Mississippi Baptist Record, newsjournal of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, who is writing a book on Cooper.

Cooper, who died in 1986, was a Mississippi businessman who started two corporations, Mississippi Chemical and First Mississippi Corporation. Working primarily in the manufacture and distribution of fertilizer, Cooper's business took him to India. While there he discovered that the Indians needed help with education. His burden for textbook distribution led to the formation of Books for the World.

Books for the World, which primarily collects and ships secular textbooks, was incorporated in Yazoo City in 1983, said Barbara Ricks, who has been president of Books for the World since 1986. Cooper also issued a challenge to Buchanan and NFBM to do the same with Christian literature, leading to the formation of BookLink.

Through the Baptist World Alliance in McLean, Va., Cooper initiated another book distribution ministry called Share Your Books. When BWA receives letters requesting books, they are forwarded to local Baptist churches to be filled, said Tony Cupit, BWA director of evangelism and education.

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NFBM enlists volunteers for missions according to one's skills, interests or vocation. Besides BookLink, the educator's fellowship actively seeks volunteers for Foreign Mission Board assignments. Recently, they helped in the recruitment of 62 educators for China.

People wishing to donate Christian literature to BookLink should send it to: Dr. James E. Powell, Executive Director, BFTW-BookLink, c/o First Baptist Church, Collierville, TN 38017.

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Alcoholism increases
chances of divorce

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
10/4/91

WASHINGTON (BP)--Exposure to alcoholism appears to contribute significantly to the breakdown of marriages in the United States, according to a report released recently by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The results of a survey released Sept. 30 showed:

-- Separated or divorced men and women were more than three times as likely as married men and women to have been married to an alcoholic or problem drinker (27.6 percent to 7.6 percent);

-- Exposure to alcoholism in the family at some point in life was higher among divorced or separated persons (55.5 percent) than among married persons (43 percent);

-- Separated or divorced women were three times as likely as married women to have been married to an alcoholic (37.6 percent to 12.1 percent);

-- Exposure to alcoholism in the family was much higher among divorced or separated women (61.3 percent) than among married women (46.5 percent).

The data also showed nearly twice as many widows or widowers had been married to an alcoholic as had married persons (14.9 percent to 7.6 percent).

"The marital status findings suggest that a significant number of divorces, as well as considerable premature widowhood may be the result, at least in part, of the effects of alcoholism," the report said. "Although many marriages survive the effects of alcoholism, either because the alcoholic seeks help or because the family accommodates to the alcoholic drinking, it is clear that a large number of marriages dissolve in the face of alcoholism."

"We are pleased that an empirical study has once again proven what Baptists have known for a long time -- alcohol destroys families," said James A. Smith, director of government relations for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"This study seems to validate our concerns that Americans are truly ill-informed about the dangers which alcohol consumption pose," Smith said. "We believe this study points to the need for more alcohol education efforts by the government."

Such an effort the Christian Life Commission supports is legislation in both the House of Representatives and Senate requiring health and safety warning messages in all print and broadcast advertisements of alcohol. The CLC is urging Southern Baptists to contact their representative and senators to ask them to support H.R. 1443, The Sensible Advertising and Family Education Act, and S. 664, The Alcoholic Beverage Advertisement Act of 1991, said Smith, who represents the CLC on the steering committee of the coalition supporting the bills.

The HHS report, "Exposure to Alcoholism in the Family: United States, 1988," was based on the 1988 National Health Interview Survey on Alcohol. The survey consisted of household interviews with nearly 44,000 adults ages 18 years and older.

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Data released included information by sex, education, income, race, marital status and age grouping in the following categories: Percentage of adults who lived with an alcoholic or problem drinker at some time during the first 18 years; percentage who ever have been married to an alcoholic, and percentage who have a blood relative who ever was an alcoholic. The survey found:

Of American adults, 42.8 percent (76 million) have been exposed to alcoholism in the family through at least one of the three categories;

- 18.1 percent lived with an alcoholic sometime while growing up;
- 9.2 percent have been married to, or lived with as if married to, an alcoholic;
- 37.9 percent have a blood relative who ever was an alcoholic.

It also disclosed women were more likely to be married to men who are alcoholics than men are to be married to women who are alcoholics by 14.3 percent to 3.6 percent.

"Our strategies to prevent and treat alcohol abuse must consider the needs of the family as well as the alcoholic," said Assistant Secretary of Health James Mason in a statement released with the report.

The survey was done by the National Center for Health Statistics and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, both agencies of the Public Health Service, a division of HHS headed by Mason.

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Warren says various
types of churches needed

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
10/4/91

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Congregations of varying styles and differing strengths are needed to reach the unchurched in America, said the pastor of one of Southern Baptists' fastest growing churches.

"It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people," said Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif. "That is the value of our (Southern Baptist) convention. We've got nearly 40,000 churches and missions. I can take you into 15 different ones all over the country and they would be as different as night and day."

Warren, whose 11-year-old congregation averages from 4,000 to 5,000 in attendance each Sunday, addressed the ninth Congress on Evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

"You need real formal churches and you need real informal churches," said Warren. "You need big churches and you need little churches. You need urban churches and you need rural churches. You need them all to reach everybody."

Churches must find innovative evangelistic methods but not change the message of the gospel, Warren said. "As we move into the 1990s, you have to ask not did it work but does it work now?" stressed Warren. "I'll never change the message, never change the gospel, but I'll change the methods in a minute if it'll just help me reach one person quicker."

Warren warned against "criticizing what God is blessing." Churches with diverse methods and worship styles are "doing a tremendous job of reaching people for Christ ...," he said. "If ultimately lives are being changed by Jesus Christ, I like the way you are doing it in your church because the bottom line is going and making disciples."

Skilled pastoral leadership is essential for church growth, said Warren. Leadership that is dedicated but unskilled usually is not successful, he said. "It's skill that brings success. You have to use the appropriate tools for your cultural context and your particular area."

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The strength a church is best measured by its "sending capacity" rather than the number of people who attend on Sunday, said Warren. "You don't judge the strength of an army by how many people sit in mess halls," he said, noting Saddleback has started 16 other churches and has a goal of sending out 2,000 missionaries by the year 2000.

In another address, Taylor Field, pastor/director of East Seventh Baptist Ministries in New York City, said pastors in inner city situations must find the "genius of that particular people" and "focus on their strengths instead of their weaknesses."

Field, whose church on the Lower East Side of Manhattan is surrounded by poverty and drug abuse, said social ministries and evangelism can't be separated. Both are necessary to "do the gospel," he said.

Innecity programs should serve all persons from children through adults, said Field. "The love of Christ takes time," said Field, adding inner city ministers must "think in terms of generations."

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Lutheran theologian brings
Southeastern lecture series

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Lutheran theologian Terence E. Fretheim delivered two addresses at the annual Page Lectures series at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and emphasized the need for the church to begin stressing the relationship between God and creation.

"It's not enough to say you believe in God," said Fretheim, from Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary. "What matters finally is the kind of God in whom you believe."

Fretheim gave two addresses during the series: "Where in the World is God?" and "What if Adam had Chosen the Animals?"

"All too often, the focus of the ministry of the church has been whether one believes in God, and insufficient attention has been given to the kind of God in whom we believe, often with disastrous results," said Fretheim.

The understanding of God held by many within the church is actually a false perception of who he is and fosters a dysfunctional relationship with him, said Fretheim.

"The parishes of the church are filled with what have been called 'practical atheists'," said Fretheim. "Very few people in the church, let alone those outside the church or on the edges of the church, have a sense for the presence and the activity of God in their daily lives."

Fretheim is a native of Decorah, Iowa. Since 1968, Fretheim has taught Old Testament at Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

The Page Lectures, named for Mr. and Mrs. George A. Page, active Baptists in Plainfield, Ind., bring theologians to the Southeastern campus each fall to deliver two lectures on a subject of concern to the Christian community.

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