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July 29, 1992

92-120

SBC's ACTS to share channel
with interfaith cable network

By Art Toalston

DENVER (BP)--Southern Baptists' ACTS (American Christian Television System) and the Vision Interfaith Satellite Network signed agreements July 28 to share a single channel reaching some 21 million households.

The two networks will maintain their own identities and separate program times on the channel, to be launched Oct. 1 as "VISN-ACTS, The Faith and Values Channel."

ACTS' prime-time slots will be from 10 p.m. to midnight Eastern Standard Time. Also included in its eight hours on the air are slots from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; 5-6 p.m.; and 4-6 a.m. VISN programming will occupy the remaining 16 hours of the day.

The eight-member ACTS executive committee approved the agreement July 24 in a meeting at the Dallas-Fort Worth airport. Neither that action nor the RTVC's negotiations with VISN were reported through official Southern Baptist Convention news media. The RTVC had encouraged Baptist Press not to report the negotiations because of their sensitivity.

The agreement will help ACTS avoid a major deficit during the coming year from increased satellite costs, RTVC officials confirmed.

ACTS' currently pays \$135,000 per month for use of a satellite but because the cable industry's use of that satellite is declining the network needed to move to a new satellite which would have required up to a \$1 million initial fee and at least \$200,000 a month, said Doug Dillard, RTVC vice president for external relations.

Under the agreement, ACTS will be able to transmit via a satellite currently used by VISN.

Programming currently produced by local ACTS boards of church representatives in some 150 communities will remain intact for at least two years under the agreement, RTVC officials said. By 1994, a new agreement will be negotiated for preemption rights by local groups over network programming, which ACTS currently allows: One RTVC official said he hopes the preemption policy will remain intact and that VISN may increase its options for locally produced programs.

"The shared channel will bring together the 54 faith groups related to VISN with the largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptists, to offer the widest scope of religious programming on a single channel," Daniel P. Matthews, chairman of the nonprofit National Interfaith Cable Coalition, Inc., which owns and operates VISN, said at the joint announcement in Denver.

The new channel "will help all of the faith groups on the two networks to reach the greatest number of people in America with faith and values programs," said Jack B. Johnson, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission which owns and operates ACTS.

"The result could be better understanding between faiths and a tremendous influence for good in communities all over the nation," Johnson said. "I am pleased that ACTS can have a part in this exciting venture."

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A news release after the announcement, however, emphasized: "This is a channel-sharing agreement -- not a merger."

Currently ACTS is available in 8.2 million households and VISN currently reaches 12.8 million households.

ACTS was launched in 1984 and features Baptist as well as Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Seventh-day Adventist and Church of Christ productions.

The National Interfaith Cable Coalition, Inc., which owns and operates VISN, is a consortium of 28 members representing 54 traditions, including Protestant, Jewish, Catholic and Eastern Orthodox. Launched in 1988, the network is headquartered in New York City.

Officials of both networks said they will continue to adhere to a policy prohibiting proselytizing, fund-raising and maligning of other faiths.

Advertising sales, marketing and satellite support services for the shared network will be provided by VISN Group, Inc., a cable operator-supported corporation currently providing such services for VISN.

A formula, with yet-to-be-determined dollar amounts, will be used for dividing income from advertising and fees charged to local cable systems for the network. ACTS has been available to cable systems at no charge and, under the agreement, will continue to be free during the transition period for six months to one year.

According to the signing's news release, the shared channel "is expected to attract substantial interest from advertisers seeking a wider audience for commercial spots that appeal to viewers interested in religious, faith and values programming."

News reports about the shared channel have noted that VISN will help ACTS increase its audience in the northern and western United States, where VISN is stronger, while ACTS will help VISN with viewership in the South and Southwest.

Despite its 21 million households, VISN-ACTS will not be the nation's largest religious network. Currently the Eternal World Television Network, a Roman Catholic venture, counts 23-27 million households.

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Pamela Avery, a Denver-based writer, and RTVC writer Steve Gregory contributed to this report.

AAUP warns of possible action
over faculty released at DBU

By Ken Camp

Baptist Press
7/29/92

DALLAS (BP)--Dallas Baptist University either should demonstrate the adequacy of its cause for releasing two non-tenured faculty members or lift their suspension and allow the pair to resume teaching immediately, according to the American Association of University Professors.

In a July 13 letter to DBU President Gary Cook, the AAUP also urged that an appeal before an elected body of faculty peers be granted to an anti-feminist sociology teacher and the dean who refused to investigate complaints against him.

If the university does not respond adequately, the AAUP could launch a formal investigation and publish findings in its nationally distributed bulletin, AAUP Associate Secretary B. Robert Kreiser told Baptist Press. The university ultimately could face censure by the organization, he said.

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David Ayers, assistant professor of sociology and criminal justice, and John Jeffrey, dean of DBU's college of humanities and social science, were notified May 22 of the university's intention not to reappoint them for 1993-94.

The two were released immediately from responsibilities for 1992-93 without stated cause, were told their contracts were being paid up and were given until 11 p.m. the next working day to vacate their offices.

According to DBU administrators, Ayers and Jeffrey were terminated by non-reappointment due to their unwillingness to cooperate with a simple investigation. Ayers, on the other hand, claimed the administration was carrying out a "vendetta" against "politically incorrect" conservative ideology.

Conflict began after Ayers spoke at an April 1 DBU faculty luncheon, asserting that feminism is based on indefensible presuppositions and is destructive to society. Due to interest generated by Ayers' presentation, a follow-up luncheon was scheduled April 29, where Deborah McCollister, assistant professor of English at DBU, presented an alternative viewpoint.

In one of his sociology classes, Ayers distributed photocopies of McCollister's paper to his students and placed on reserve in the university library the tapes of her luncheon address and his own.

Soon afterwards, Ayers was instructed to appear before an eight-member ad hoc committee named by DBU's president to respond to questions regarding defamatory comments he allegedly made in class concerning McCollister's presentation, as well as releasing tapes to students of a "private" faculty meeting and distributing copies of a colleague's paper without her permission.

Ayers responded that he was guilty of no wrongdoing and that his actions were within guidelines for academic freedom as outlined by the AAUP and stipulated in the university's faculty handbook.

After Ayers said that he felt questions should be asked by a ranking faculty member rather than an ad hoc committee, the DBU administration cancelled the May 18 committee meeting and instructed Jeffrey, as Ayers' dean, to investigate the complaints and report his findings.

According to Edward H. Pauley, DBU academic vice president, Jeffrey initially greeted the proposal warmly, terming it a "substantive move" on the university's part. However, the next day, he refused to participate in the investigation, alleging Ayers' rights to due process and academic freedom had been violated, and he advised Ayers to seek legal counsel from a Christian attorney.

After Ayers and Jeffrey were released May 22, they sought the assistance of the AAUP. The organization's associate secretary wrote to DBU July 13, stating that it appeared the two former faculty members had been denied academic due process.

"The enforced separation of a teacher from his or her classroom is a severe sanction, with significant potential damage to the individual's future academic career," Kreiser wrote.

He continued, "On the basis of our current knowledge of their respective cases, we urge that the administration either demonstrate adequacy of stated cause for its action against them through appropriate proceedings, or that it lift the suspension and permit them to return immediately to campus, carry out any academic duties they would normally conduct during the summer, and teach the courses they were assigned to teach in the coming year.

"We further urge that they be afforded opportunity to pursue an intramural appeal, before an elected body of faculty peers, of the decisions to deny them reappointment -- decisions, they allege, that were based in significant measure on considerations violative of academic freedom."

When the university responded to the AAUP by letter July 24, Pauley said, "We simply stated that we do not think it is appropriate to take the steps they recommend."

He noted DBU officials felt they were acting within the guidelines for the employment of non-tenured faculty as stated in the university policy handbook. Ayers and Jeffrey were dismissed for failing to comply with university procedures and for no other reason, he emphasized.

"An administrative impasse had been reached and that was the basis for the action that was taken," Pauley said.

However, Kreiser said the cases were not simply non-renewal of appointment. They appeared to be, he claimed, summary dismissals in violation of academic due process.

Of the more than 1,100 cases brought to the AAUP annually, fewer than 10 percent would be considered as serious as the DBU situation, Kreiser said.

"The AAUP considers these two cases a matter of grave concern," he said.

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Preschool kiss, BSU worker
nudge students toward altar

By Charles Allbright

Baptist Press
7/29/92

CONWAY, Ark. (BP)--Her freshman year at the University of Central Arkansas, Becki Nicholes joined the Baptist Student Union.

A student-to-student worker, Nancy Patterson, welcomed her. Patterson knew well how to get new students talking about themselves. She said as they visited, "Becki, tell me about your first kiss."

Becki thought about it. She said all right, yes, she remembered it.

"My family was living in Batesville (Ark.). I was in church preschool. A boy ran over and kissed me."

Not long after that, the Nicholes family moved away from Batesville.

The counselor said now wait a minute. "You were living in Batesville. Going to preschool. And a little boy ran over and kissed you?"

Becki said yes.

Patterson said, "Becki, I've got someone you just HAVE to meet."

Go back two weeks before that ...

A UCA sophomore named Randy Whiteaker walked into the Baptist Student Union. The counselor on duty was Nancy Patterson. She welcomed Randy and they began an informal visit.

"Tell me something, Randy. What about your first kiss? Do you remember it?"

Randy said yes. He remembered it very well.

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He lived in Batesville. At the time of the momentous occurrence, he was going to church preschool.

"There was this cute little girl. Somebody dared me to go over and kiss her. I did. That was my first-ever kiss."

He never saw that cute little girl again. Her family must have moved away.

Becki lives in Batesville again -- Becki Nicholes Whiteaker. She's an agent for White River Insurance Agency. Her husband, Randy, is an analyst in the water lab at Arkansas Eastman.

What happened was, Nancy Patterson, counselor extraordinaire, saw what the Fates had in mind. She arranged for the grown-up preschoolers to meet, there on the UCA campus.

That was back in 1985. This month Becki and Randy will celebrate their sixth wedding anniversary. They met, dated for 10 months, got married and haven't kissed anybody else since.

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Reprinted by permission from the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Albright is a longtime columnist for the newspaper. Patterson now is a teacher at a state vocational technical school in Morrelton, Ark.

Youth workers must provide
example of spiritual growth

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
7/29/92

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Youth workers must develop their own spiritual lives because they can't lead teens in a direction they are not going themselves, according to a youth consultant.

If a youth worker is not involved in Bible study, memorization and personal quiet time, it is difficult to encourage youth to do those things, Chuck Gartman, youth Sunday school consultant at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, told participants in a session during the Sunday School Leadership Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, July 25-Aug. 1.

In addition to providing an example, a youth leader's quiet time is a hedge against burnout, Gartman said.

"Many Christians get burned out for common reasons of being in a rut, doing too much or being too busy," Gartman said. "Most times, burnout can be cured by meeting with God daily, keeping on with a spiritual journey and maintaining worship."

A quiet time is an essential element of the cures for burnout, he said.

"As a youth Sunday school leader, it is more important that you have a quiet time than when, where or how you do it," Gartman said.

The tools for his own early morning Bible study are a Bible; WorData 2 youth notebook; "encounter!" devotional guide; a pencil; ... and a cup of coffee, Gartman quipped.

No one else in his family is a morning person, he noted. He has often been concerned about teens who can't get moving earlier for Bible study when he hears people insist a morning quiet time is essential.

"It's good to spend time in the morning. The beginning of your day with God may be at night. I can't think of a better way than ending the day in quiet time with God," he said.

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Some teens can't spend time in the morning or at night but may have a time in the day that works for them," he said.

Gartman offered a plan for quiet time, beginning with prayer; reading Scripture from the encounter! devotional guide for youth; writing insights from the Scripture; writing a prayer and a plan of action for any insights; reading the devotional thought in the devotional guide; and saying a final prayer to ask help to put into practice the insights gained from the quiet time.

The quiet time will take about seven minutes, Gartman said. "If you do seven minutes of exercise a day, it won't make you physically fit. Seven minutes of Bible study won't make you spiritually fit either," he said.

The plan for quiet time is only the beginning point of daily Bible study. "I hope you will be doing more," he said.

WorData2, a youth Sunday school notebook supplement to youth Sunday school materials, provides suggestions for prayer lists. Gartman uses that prayer list guide as a structure for day-of-the-week prayer items and everyday prayer items.

"An ongoing prayer list helps me keep spiritually fit," he said. Having prayer concerns for other people on the list is a way to develop one's own spiritual life.

Becoming spiritually fit also leads to witnessing and stewardship of time, money and talents -- other areas where youth leaders can set examples for youth, Gartman said.

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Youth ministers to gather
for national conference

By Chip Alford

Baptist Press
7/29/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--Youth ministers attending the Youth Ministry National Conference 4 will be able to choose from more than 100 seminars and workshops on everything from impacting the school campus to training parents of youth in sex education.

The Aug. 19-23, 1993, conference is jointly sponsored by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Home Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union and Brotherhood Commission. Meetings will be at three locations in downtown Nashville -- the board's Nashville headquarters, Nashville Convention Center and First Baptist Church of Nashville.

Morning Bible studies during the week will be led by Dan Yeary, pastor of University Baptist Church in Coral Gables, Fla., and each of the evening worship celebrations will feature a different ethnic influence.

A luncheon at Opryland also is planned followed by a "Christian Artist Showcase" at one of the theme park's theaters. Several nationally recognized contemporary Christian recording artists will perform and then participate in a dialogue session with youth ministers.

For a conference brochure and registration information, write Richard Ross, Church Administration Department, Baptist Sunday School Board, MSN 158, 127 Ninth Ave. N., Nashville, TN 37234.

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Developing child's self-control
produces long-term behavior

By Frank Wm. White

Baptist Press
7/29/92

NASHVILLE (BP)--When a children's Sunday school teacher is faced with a classroom of children out of control -- or just one disruptive child -- the first concern is regaining control of the situation.

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However, teachers should work on helping children develop self-control that will shape their behavior for longer than the one hour in Sunday school, according to Linda Collins, children's division director at First Baptist Church of Ferguson in St. Louis, Mo.

"Control is what we are trying to achieve but outer control might not be the best option," Collins told participants in a session on guiding behavior in children's Sunday school during the Sunday School Leadership Conference at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, July 25-Aug. 1.

While maintaining control for the moment may seem important, children's workers should be motivated by what is best for the child, Collins said.

"We need to focus on children's feelings more than their behavior. Usually, their feelings parallel their actions. The focus should be away from what they are doing and on what they are feeling," she said.

Understanding a child's feelings provides an opportunity for ministry as the worker finds why the child is angry or upset. Often, problems at home or at school can be responsible for a child's behavior, she explained.

Without understanding the reason for those feelings, the worker will not be able to seize the opportunity to minister to the child and his family, she said.

"Children need to believe that Sunday school is a good place to be -- a great place where they feel loved and accepted," she said. "The unruly child may be disruptive but that child is a person that Christ died for."

Rather than correcting a behavior problem in front of other children, workers should think about dealing with the problem individually.

"Deal with the child first. Make sure the child knows what he has done that is considered unacceptable," she said.

Only after efforts to deal directly with the child have been exhausted should the worker address the parent with the behavior problem, she said.

Collins offered guidelines for children's Sunday school which she said should help limit behavior problems.

Teachers should create meaningful activities that the children are interested in. "Don't try to pour Bible study down their throats. Use the material and suggested activities to make it fun," she said.

Creating choices will give a child a feeling of control. "The more choices we can give them, the more response we will get from them," she said. A choice may be between colored pencils or markers, but it involves the child in deciding what he is going to do or how he will do it.

By focusing on positive behavior, a teacher can reinforce the things a child is doing that are acceptable and draw attention away from the unacceptable behavior.

Many times, a teacher may be able to ignore unacceptable behavior. "If it is an action that can be ignored, ignore it," she said. "Respond to actions that need immediate attention. Others can be dealt with later, privately or through other teaching methods."

Children deal with requirements for proper behavior at school and in other situations, Collins pointed out. While they should be expected to have self-control in Sunday school as they do in school, "we should be able to deal with them better in Sunday school. Whatever they are dealing with at school, we should be able to deal with it better at Sunday school," Collins said.