

(BP)

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
-- **BAPTIST PRESS**
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE
SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

February 15, 1994

94-26

NASHVILLE -- Baptist colleges face threat in upcoming federal guidelines.
TEXAS -- Baptist scholars dismiss Jesus Seminar conclusions.
YEMEN -- Yemen newspaper praises Baptists' Jibla hospital.
DALLAS -- Most community ministries yield professions of faith, survey says
ALABAMA -- Athlete jumps into ministry every trampoline he mounts.
DALLAS -- 81-year-old wins gold in memory of his son.

**Baptist colleges face threat
in upcoming federal guidelines**

By Tim Fields

**Baptist Press
2/15/94**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--Strict federal guidelines now being formulated to oversee colleges with students receiving federal loans and grants pose serious hazards for independent higher education, a Southern Baptist executive has warned.

Stephen P. Carleton, executive director of the Southern Baptist Education Commission, said regulations for implementing Title IV, Part H of the Higher Education Amendments of 1992 will radically alter the relationship between the independent college sector and federal and state government.

"Under regulations published in late January in the Federal Register and open for comment until March 21, 1994, our Southern Baptist-related colleges and universities are now in danger of being forced into a compliance which may well be at cross purposes with their mission statements," Carleton said.

"Our mission statements contain concerns for morals, values and spiritual life that often run counter to the public agenda of both the federal and state governments.

"Our diversity is vital in providing options and alternatives for students interested in Baptist-related schools. Voluntary accreditation has long recognized the value of this diversity."

Carleton said the viewpoint of an entrenched government bureaucracy would be far different. "The sad fact is, none of our Southern Baptist-related colleges could operate in an age of high tuition without the financial assistance our students receive from the government," he explained.

"The Higher Education Act Amendments of 1992 are law," Carleton said, "but what's still pending is how the regulations are applied and what criteria trigger a review by governmental agencies.

"Because some for-profit schools have badly abused the system in past years, proposed guidelines are much tougher and much more intrusive than is warranted for nonprofit independent colleges," he asserted.

"In essence, the new regulations set the stage for the encroachment of a triad of entities into the day-to-day life of our faith-related colleges and universities."

The three entities include state government through agencies called State Post-Secondary Review Entities (Spree's); accreditation bodies now in the process of reorganization; and a federal eligibility and certification process in the U.S. Department of Education.

--more--

Carlton said a college could undergo a review when any of 12 complicated and often-redundant trigger criteria are in question.

"These triggers include such issues as rates on student loans, failure of the institution to meet standards of financial responsibility or stability, measurement of academic performance of students, compliance with health and safety standards and a student's potential earning power versus tuition costs.

"According to some who have studied the plan, the first regulations proposed would have triggered even Harvard University on the financial issues," Carleton said.

"Dr. David Warren, the new president of the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, said at the annual meeting of NAICU in Washington, D.C., Feb. 2, 1994, that this set of regulations represented the greatest change and challenge to independent higher education in the 25 years he has worked in this area, and I agree with the seriousness of this issue," Carleton said.

In response to letters from college and university presidents in October and November, some changes were made in the regulations, Carleton said.

Carleton is urging Southern Baptist educators and others interested in independent higher education to continue the letter-writing campaigns before the comment period ends March 21.

Letters should be addressed to senators and congressmen and to Secretary of Education Richard Riley or Assistant Secretary David A. Longanecker.

"These letters should detail your concern over the extent to which the regulations go beyond the law. The burden of additional, lengthy reporting and costly site visits will be a drain on the resources of our educational institutions and should be challenged," Carleton said.

--30--

**Baptist scholars dismiss
Jesus Seminar conclusions** By Scott Collins

Baptist Press
2/15/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--The battle for the Bible is on and, this time, Baptists are not fighting themselves.

Instead, the target is a group of scholars known as the Jesus Seminar which is attempting to rewrite the New Testament and correct what they say are centuries-old lies promoted by the church about the words of Jesus. The result of the Jesus Seminar is the book, "The Five Gospels."

Jesus Seminar scholars believe Jesus never said 82 percent of what is attributed to him in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They also say Jesus never preached about salvation through his death, never worked any miracles and never rose from the dead.

Furthermore, members of the Jesus Seminar rely on the Gospel of Thomas, a book conservative scholars say is heretical, and a collection of sayings known as "Q," or Quelle, which means "source" in German.

The results of the Jesus Seminar, along with other books released in the past year, have drawn the attention of the secular media. TIME magazine featured the seminar's work in January and U.S. News & World Report also reported about the group's conclusions.

In December, a Texas businessman donated \$1.5 million to fund continued research by proponents of the Jesus Seminar movement, prompting one Baptist scholar to call for people who disagree with the group's findings to stand up for their beliefs.

"It's important that people fund similar research projects for the other side of the coin," said Bruce Corley, dean of the school of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

Corley and other scholars are mounting an effort to challenge the conclusions of the Jesus Seminar.

--more--

Alan Brehm, assistant professor of New Testament at Southwestern and a former Fulbright scholar, said it is important that Bible-believing Baptists hold to the doctrine of inspiration and scriptural authority to answer questions posed by the Jesus Seminar and other groups.

"An understanding of the origin of the Gospels, combined with the belief in their inspiration, helps answer unsettling questions and confirms the confidence we place in the Gospels as authentic accounts of Jesus' ministry and teaching," Brehm said.

Brehm and other conservative scholars question the research methods of the Jesus Seminar.

To determine which passages of Scripture should be considered authentic, the 74 scholars in the Jesus Seminar meet twice a year and vote on portions of Jesus' words, casting color-coded beads into a box to indicate which words of Christ are more authentic.

Under the system of the Jesus Seminar, a red bead means Jesus undoubtedly said this or something like it; pink means Jesus probably said something like this; gray means Jesus did not say this, but the ideas contained in it are close to his own; black means Jesus did not say this, but the saying represents the perspective or content of a later or different tradition.

In its new translation of the Gospels, the Jesus Seminar credits Jesus with only the first two words of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father."

E. Earle Ellis, research professor of theology at Southwestern Seminary, said the conclusions of the seminar "have little or no historical credibility. It is a simplistic notion to suppose that a collection of nondescript New Testament scholars, who are by no means representative of contemporary scholarship, can determine by majority vote with colored beads the historical probability of a given saying or teaching of Jesus in the Gospels."

Ellis, one of the founders of the Institute for Biblical Research, a think-tank of conservative scholars, said the Jesus Seminar's methods are based on "flawed 19th century historical models" and outdated assumptions by scholars from the 1920s.

Ellis said those scholars assumed that the Gospels were transmitted like folk traditions of a pre-literate society.

But that assumption has been proven to be false by the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and by more recent literary studies, Ellis said.

Ellis and other scholars also dismiss the Jesus Seminar's use of the Gospel of Thomas. According to Ellis, the Gospel of Thomas was discovered in Egypt in 1946 and is dated at 350 to 400 years after the time of Jesus. The book is the product of a cultic form of Christianity known as Gnosticism, which placed a premium on knowledge rather than faith.

Among the teachings in the Gospel of Thomas is the belief that a woman must become a male in order to be saved, an idea Ellis said is "cultic and fanciful."

"To use the Gospel of Thomas to understand the historical Jesus is like using the Book of Mormon to understand the origins of Christianity," Ellis said.

Brehm, Ellis and other scholars say it is important for Baptists to hold to their beliefs about the reliability, authority and inspiration of the Gospels.

"Christians have good reason to rely on the Gospels as authentic accounts of Jesus' ministry and teaching and as true interpretations of his identity and mission," Brehm said.

"The Gospels are portraits, not photographs," Ellis said. "Like a good portrait, each Gospel has its special perspective and its unique insight into the person of Jesus.

"The question is which 'historical Jesus' gives the best portrait of the life and teaching of Jesus of Nazareth, the Jesus Seminar or the four evangelists' Jesus?" Ellis said. "The answer should not be difficult."

**Yemen newspaper praises
Baptists' Jibla hospital**

By Marty Croll

SANAA, Yemen (BP)--Yemen's English-language newspaper has profiled the success of Southern Baptists' Jibla hospital in the wake of a highly publicized court case that threatened to close the hospital.

"The nation (should) be more than appreciative of Baptists and their help," the Yemen Times concluded after an interview with Southern Baptist representative William Koehn of Cimarron, Kan., the hospital administrator.

"The Jibla Baptist Hospital has been serving Yemen for almost three decades. By any standard at all, the Christians at the hospital are ... religious and live by high ... moral values."

The Times is a weekly newspaper read primarily by the business community in the Mideast nation. It emerged after Yemen declared a multiparty system and loosened reins on free speech about three years ago. The newspaper reportedly won a recent Supreme Court case in which it was accused of launching personal attacks against Yemen's president.

It is published by Abdulaziz Al-Saqqaf, a professor at the University of Sanaa, according to a Yemeni government spokesman in Washington, D.C. Al-Saqqaf conducted the interview with Koehn, who was pictured.

As a result of the court case last year, a judge ordered Koehn to close the hospital and leave the country. But the decision has not yet been enforced, and hospital officials have filed an appeal. The hospital remains open.

The case against the hospital stems from accusations 14 months ago that two men tore up the Koran -- Islam's holy book -- and threw it in the toilet because a doctor in the hospital told them to do so. Accusers said hospital workers were trying to force people to abandon Islam and believe in Christianity.

Accusers produced a videotape of the Koran incident, which Southern Baptist officials say was staged.

Judge Ali Al-Baadani heard the case just before he won a seat in Yemen's legislature. Campaigning, he vowed to protect Yemen from foreigners, according to the Times.

"I was questioned by investigators for five hours," Koehn was quoted as saying. "I always told them that we were not doing any such thing.

"I was called to appear in court. But we realized it was not a real trial. It was like a show. The courtroom was full of media people, TV cameras, tape recorders. It was clear that everything was planned and prepared."

The hospital opened in 1968 under the leadership of Southern Baptist representative James Young, a physician. He and his wife, June, a nurse, originally came to Yemen in 1964 to start a medical service.

But the government asked the Youngs, who retired in 1987, to build a hospital, and the people of Jibla provided a 99-year lease for a 22-acre hillside. The hillside is the site of a compound for the hospital, an outpatient clinic and residences for about 60 people, including about 30 Southern Baptists. Nearly 200 Yemenis work there, too, the article said.

"People continue to come in large numbers for our services," Koehn told Al-Saqqaf. "The people trust us because they have known us for a long time."

--30--

**Most community ministries yield
professions of faith, survey says** By Ken Camp

**Baptist Press
2/15/94**

DALLAS (BP)--Four out of five Southern Baptist churches in Texas sponsor community ministries, and most of the programs result in professions of faith, according to a statewide survey.

Community ministries produced professions of faith in 62 percent of the churches responding to a 1993 survey conducted by the Baylor Center for Community Research.

--more--

Of the 5,431 churches receiving the survey -- conducted at the request of the Church Ministries Department, Baptist General Convention of Texas -- 1,396 (26 percent) responded.

About 80 percent of Texas Baptist churches reported at least one community ministry, below the 92 percent nationwide rate in Southern Baptist churches.

But with the "average" Texas Baptist church providing more than six community ministries, the survey indicates that a projected 4,300 Texas Baptist churches are sponsoring more than 28,000 community ministries, according to Lester Meriwether, church and community ministries associate, BGCT church ministries department.

About one church in 10 reported using community ministries to start a church-type mission.

The most common community ministry programs among Texas Baptist churches are those meeting basic human needs and those ministering to senior adults.

About two-thirds of the churches reported operating a food pantry, and three out of five provide financial assistance to people in need.

Nearly half of the churches -- 47 percent -- reported nursing home ministries and 41 percent said they maintain emergency clothing closets. About three churches in 10 provide transportation for needy people.

The most popular family ministry is a program for senior adults, with two out of five churches reporting such a ministry. Fifteen percent of the churches reported delivering meals to homes.

Thirteen percent of the churches reported preschool education programs, 18 percent reported "Parents Day Out" ministries, 15 percent operate children's clubs, 11 percent provide child day care and 10 percent sponsor teen clubs.

While one church out of five operates a jail or prison ministry, only six percent reported any specialized ministry for the families of prisoners.

About one church in five sponsors an exercise class, but other programs related to physical health are not as popular. Six percent of the reporting churches sponsor crisis pregnancy ministries. Two percent report medical clinics, AIDS ministries, health education programs or ministries to unwed parents and 1 percent report dental clinics.

Only 1 percent of the churches indicated they sponsor a foster family program or an adult day care ministry. Ministry to victims of family violence also ranked low, with 2 percent reporting child abuse ministries and 3 percent reporting ministries to abused spouses.

More than 300 churches requested "how-to" program information from the church ministries department when they returned their surveys. The greatest number of requests concerned programs to meet the needs of "non-traditional" families, including support groups for single parents and ministries for divorced persons.

--30--

Athlete jumps into ministry
every trampoline he mounts

By Kathy Dean

Baptist Press
2/15/94

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)--With one mighty jump, Max Dempsey shoots skyward. At the height of his leap, with the tip of his crewcut only inches from the gym ceiling, Dempsey defies gravity, hovering between heaven and earth. Suddenly nature's forces regain their hold, and he's crashing downward, flipping and tumbling and spinning and rolling with wild abandon until -- SLAM! -- he dives deep into the middle of the trampoline.

When the 21-year-old University of Mobile student pops up again, he's wearing a wide grin. Max Dempsey is doing what he loves -- bouncing and flipping and leaping for the Lord.

--more--

"I know the Lord has called me into full-time evangelism," said Dempsey, a junior majoring in religion. "Everyone has to have a platform, some way of earning the right to be heard by teen-agers. The Lord has given me my platform, the gift of trampolining."

It's a gift Dempsey demonstrated to thousands on Jan. 30, when he was among a dozen trampolinists to appear at the Super Bowl pregame show in Atlanta. Dempsey was one of four Alabama Baptists invited by the American Trampoline and Tumbling Association to perform routines.

Other team members were: Phil Newberry, 25, of Shiloh Baptist Church in Mobile; Kevin Beard, 17, of First Baptist Church of Dawes; and Jennifer Reynolds, 16, of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile.

"I'm pretty selective about who I have on my team. Character is important," explained coach Ron Smith, also a Baptist. Smith, an activity specialist with the City of Mobile Parks and Recreation Department, has coached Dempsey the past 14 years. He saw Dempsey change from a 6-year-old with promise into one of the top four trampoline athletes in the United States.

"What makes Max good is he developed his talent at an early age and he stuck with it," Smith said. "He's dedicated to the sport. Every time he makes a team or accomplishes a goal, he works that much harder to reach the next goal."

Dempsey's primary goal, however, became clear six years ago, during a competition in then-communist Czechoslovakia.

"We were there during the celebration of Lenin's birthday," Dempsey recounted. "There were Soviet flags everywhere. There was even a Soviet flag on a Catholic church. It was so symbolic of what took precedence over religion and God there."

Dempsey, then 15, asked his 16-year-old translator if he attended church. The young man said he didn't and that church was only for the very old or very young.

"Jan was the first atheist I had ever met," Dempsey said.

Smith was at Dempsey's side during that pivotal conversation.

"When our translator told Max there is no God, it just blew his mind," the coach said. "Right there, I saw that Max had a mission in life. I could tell he was genuinely called at that moment into the ministry."

What evolved is a sports ministry that keeps Dempsey jumping. With a mixture of showmanship and humor, Dempsey performs the twists, turns and flips that have made him a world-class trampolinist. When he has the attention of the audience, he talks about good and bad choices in life, setting goals, avoiding drugs and following God.

He focuses his message toward young people because "they are the most influential people around. They are going to be the radicals. If you can get them on fire for Christ, they can shape their world like no one else can. Young people are God's catalysts to move a church, to move a country."

Friends say Dempsey is an effective ambassador for his faith.

"Max is very well liked throughout the trampoline world. He's got friends and admirers in all types of countries, but he's a very humble person," Smith said.

"Christians try to emulate the life that Jesus lived. Most people fail, or aren't even anywhere close. But Max lives the closest life I've seen -- the purity, the genuineness. There's nothing false about him. I guess that's what people like about him."

With wife Donya at his side, Dempsey also serves as minister of youth at Bayou Sara Baptist Church in Saraland, Ala. On a broader scale from Mobile -- from Brazil to New Zealand -- he continues his witness via trampolining. Last year, Dempsey received a Christmas card from Czechoslovakia with a handwritten note. "May the peace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ be with you at Christmas," the note said.

It was signed "Jan."

--30--

Dean is director of public relations at the University of Mobile in Alabama.

81-year-old wins gold
in memory of his son

By Darrell W. Wood

Baptist Press
2/15/94

DALLAS (BP)--With a "burning in his bones" to run for the gold, retired Baptist professor Fred A. White, 81, has won more than 370 medals -- about 300 of them gold -- in more than 20 years of competing in local, state, regional, national and world seniors' meets.

White, retired distinguished professor of Christian faith at Dallas Baptist University, brought home three medals from last fall's 10th World Veterans' Track and Field Championships in Miyazaki, Japan. Competing in the 80-84 age group, he received gold, silver and bronze medals.

White, who retired in 1984 as dean of DBU's Mary C. Crowley College of Christian Faith after 19 years at the university, has been running most of his life.

His motivation? At 5 ft. 5 in. and 130 lbs., the optimistic octogenarian said, "I compete because I always have -- physical fitness has always been a way of life for me." And, White quipped, "And running was one way I could usually out-do the 'big boys.'"

But White runs for another profoundly personal reason: in memory of his son, Fred A. White Jr., who died of muscular dystrophy in 1962 at age 20.

Freddie had a passion for sports, especially football, basketball and baseball. "His spirit was willing but his flesh was weak" and MD kept him sidelined all his life -- confined to a wheelchair from the age of 10, White said of his son.

White empathized deeply for his disabled son. Today he said, "I run for those who cannot run for themselves -- handicapped children, invalids and older people. I run for Freddie and others like him; I win for them."

White pointed out competing also has been a successful way to open doors for sharing Christ with athletes who do not know him. "Athletes respect and accept other athletes," he said.

He recounted a witnessing opportunity with another senior sprinter at a national Masters track and field meet in White Plains, N.Y. They had just finished the 200-meter dash (which White won and his friend had not placed). As they were sitting in a wheelbarrow on the side of the track the successful businessman from New Jersey, who owned a company with 300 employees, began telling White of his labor troubles.

White said, "I'm not an employer, but I can tell you someone who can help you." Learning of the man's lostness and lack of biblical understanding, White went on to explain who Jesus was -- not only the greatest teacher that ever lived but the Son of God who came and died on the cross for sins. The businessman-responded in child-like wonder to White, "I've never heard a story like that," and broke down and cried, confessing his faith in the Lord.

White, who has been sprinting the past 22 years in Masters track and field competition, and with the Dallas Masters Track Club since 1980, was among five competitors representing the club in Japan; he and the others are national and world champions in their respective events and age categories.

In the Miyazaki meet, White earned his gold as anchor man on the 4x400-meter relay team with a time of 82.12 seconds; his silver on the 4x100-meter relay team; and his bronze in the 400-meter dash with a time of 84.5 seconds.

--more--

He competed in Japan with 12,000 middle-aged and senior adults (men and women, ages 40 to 94) from 77 nations, the largest ever. "This was my fourth world championship meet and the biggest and toughest," White said. "I have won three golds, two silver and two bronze medals in those meets and hope to compete for years to come." His first world meet was in Goteberg, Sweden, in 1978; he also ran in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1982 and in Rome in 1985.

The holder of four world records and two national records for seniors, White's world records include the 100-yard dash, 12.0 sec., 1973; long jump, 15 ft. 4 in., 1978; American Sprint Relay Team, 52.0 sec., 1985; and 60-meter dash, 9.7 sec., 1993. His national records are triple jump, 26 ft. 2 in., 1988, and 400-meter dash, 84.5 sec., 1993.

White's track record began as a four-year track letterman in high school in east Texas. He also lettered in track at College of Marshall (a junior college and forerunner of East Texas Baptist University) and Baylor University in 1936-37. White earned master and doctor of theology degrees from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

He still teaches part-time at DBU, and he and his wife, Mary Lou, are active members of First Baptist Church of Oak Cliff in Dallas where their son, William, is pastor. The Whites' daughter, Mary Helen Atkins, is accompanist and coordinator of graded choirs at First Baptist Church of Euless.

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37203

Southern Baptist Library and
Archives