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New law in Bulgaria
targets sects, cults

By Mike Creswell

Baptist Press
3/4/94

VARNA, Bulgaria (BP)--A new law passed by Bulgaria's parliament targets religious sects.

The law, passed in late February, will require groups such as the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and followers of Sun Myung Moon to re-register with the government within the next three months.

The measure apparently will not affect Baptists and other evangelicals, who already have been victims of a months-long campaign of hostility and propaganda. Some churches also have had problems renting public meeting rooms and constructing buildings. Southern Baptist mission workers have had trouble getting residency permits to remain in the country.

Baptist leaders have publicly denounced the law anyway, charging it violates human rights, said Boshidar Igoff, general secretary for Bulgarian Baptists.

"Everybody knows that nobody from these groups will receive a new registration," Igoff said.

Baptists and other church bodies affiliated with the Evangelical Alliance in Bulgaria already are registered with the government and are seemingly not affected by the new law, Igoff said. The other four evangelical groups in the alliance are Pentecostal, Church of God, Congregational and Methodist.

But the new law will affect many Christian para-church organizations, such as an independent evangelical Bible school in Varna, Igoff said. Foreign representatives of such groups may have trouble remaining in Bulgaria.

One result of the law, Igoff said, is that many independent workers and organizations now are trying to affiliate with Bulgarian Baptists to avoid having to leave the country.

"Now everybody is showing that he's a good Baptist," said Igoff.

**Baptists operate kitchens
on edge of combat zone**

By David Daniell

LAS MARGARITAS, Mexico (BP)--While Zapatista guerrillas and the Mexican government negotiated for peace in early March, Baptists continued feeding hundreds of refugees from earlier fighting who fled to relief centers on the edge of the combat zone.

The government provides most of the food, while Baptists set up food kitchens and supply volunteers to operate them until July. Baptists started setting up the kitchens in early February.

The Baptist Aid Committee of the National Baptist Convention of Mexico is one of the civilian relief organizations recognized by city officials in Las Margaritas and La Independencia -- and by the civil protection arm of the federal government.

The government estimates 8,000 hungry refugees have flooded into those two towns in Mexico's Chiapas state -- site of guerrilla-government battles over land reform, poverty and oppression of indigenous people. About 12,000 additional refugees are scattered in other parts of Chiapas. They fled guerrilla violence that swept down on their towns and villages in the early hours of Jan. 1.

In Las Margaritas, a town of 29,000 people, 12 relief centers and 40 private homes help to house and feed refugees. In the relief centers, refugees eat meals prepared by a central kitchen; at the homes, each refugee family prepares its own meals with firewood outside.

Besides feeding 135 people at relief center No. 3 in Las Margaritas, the Baptist kitchen there provides hot meals to groups or families in two other relief centers in town -- more than 450 additional people. The Baptist Aid Committee also opened another kitchen in Las Margaritas Feb. 25.

At another relief center in La Independencia, about 12 miles away, a Baptist kitchen feeds 246 people.

Baptist volunteers -- Mexicans as well as Southern Baptist workers -- are responding to an appeal recently distributed among all Mexican Baptist churches. The volunteers come from Mexico City, Guadalajara, Ciudad Juarez, Jalapa, Veracruz, Cintalapa and Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas. No volunteers from the United States have been requested so far.

The volunteers pay their own expenses. They eat in the kitchens where they work. The coordinator of the Baptist relief effort, Southern Baptist representative Phil Templin, encourages them to arrive on a Saturday and work one week each.

The Baptists work in buildings owned by the government, and they're being reminded they should talk about their faith only when a refugee asks. In spite of the limitation, they have given out Bibles and Gospels of John to many interested refugees and several have accepted Christ as Savior.

One paralyzed man, a Christian for 15 years, was given a Bible. His semiliterate daughter opened it to the story of Jesus' healing of the paralytic at the pool in Bethsaida. She haltingly read the story word by word.

"It was a thrilling experience," said Templin.

Once the logistical demands of the relief effort are met, Templin and his wife, Peggy, will start home Bible studies in Las Margaritas. The Templins, who normally serve in Jalapa, in Mexico's Veracruz state, will stay in Las Margaritas or nearby Comitán until late June, when the relief effort will end.

"We've prayed about how we can reach the people of the Sierra de Chiapas mountainous region," said Templin. "Now the Lord has brought them to us."

The refugees interviewed by Baptist Press said Zapatista guerrillas ran them out of their homes and took their animals. They said guerrillas either burned or confiscated their homes. Many fear returning home, even though the Mexican army announced a unilateral cease-fire in mid-January.

A cache of arms was found in an abandoned convent in La Independencia. Several refugees charged that Catholic priests in their areas have preached violence as a means of solving social injustices.

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The rugees are rural people who raise cattle and farm coffee r sugar cane. They have no experience doing anything else, but are s arching for jobs in Las Margaritas or Comitan to start a new life.

Las Margaritas was under control of the Zapatistas for five days until the Mexican army arrived. Five people died in the Zapatista attack on the town square Jan. 1 as they celebrated the new year.

Baptists will continue working in the area after the crisis ends. "Our goal is to plant at least two churches in towns where we are ministering in the kitchens," said Southern Baptist worker Larry Gay.

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(BP) photo (vertical) mailed March 3 by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available on SBCNet Newsroom. Daniell is press representative for Southern Baptist workers in Mexico.

Capital Baptists minister
amid paradox, mobility

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
3/4/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Washington, D.C., is a city of contrasts: power and poverty, virtue and violence, dignity and despair.

The city presents a challenge to minister among the lawmakers and the law breakers, those who idolize prestige as well as the homeless and disadvantaged.

High turnover rates among the 607,000 residents further complicate the sc nario. Government workers stay in town until their boss is voted out of office. University students are in the area until they graduate, and tourists stay until they run out of money.

Rather than being frustrated by the paradox and mobile lifestyles, the 97 congregations in the District of Columbia Baptist Convention see the possibility of impacting their neighborhoods and the world community.

Lawmakers are influenced through the Washington office of the Christian Life Commission and from the city's pulpits. The three-person CLC staff is charged with educating federal public policy makers on behalf of Southern Baptists.

Washington pastors have to be politically astute because their church members may be lobbyists or government employees who need a Christian perspective on issues, said Roy Godwin, Southern Baptist home missionary and director of missions and vangelism for the D.C. Baptist Convention.

To minister on the other end of the socio-economic ladder, Washington churches individually support ministry projects and jointly support the Johenning Center. The Baptist center offers an academy for preschoolers, tutoring for school children and extensive services for senior adults.

The Johenning Center neighborhood has been described by The Washington Post as the city's center of crime. That makes the job more challenging to home missionary Sammy Campbell who became the center's director last fall.

Campbell's goal is to "empower disadvantaged families to soar above their difficulties." He wants the center to offer additional programs, such as GED training and job networks, but he also wants residents to develop a sense of community.

University and college students create their own communities in the nation's capital. Ministers work at Howard, Georgetown, George Washington and American universities plus the University of Maryland. Together the schools have more than 75,000 students.

Campus ministries there resemble most university programs, said Cheryl Jones Whettstone, director of higher education ministries for the convention and chaplain at Howard University. Activities include weekly Bible studies, monthly mission projects, prayer times and evangelistic outreach events.

Whettstone's goals are for 50 students to actively participate in each campus ministry and for the ministry to xpand to area universities and community colleges with no Baptist ministry.

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Washington has benefitted from Louisiana State University students helping with ministries to tourists. During the summer, they perform evangelistic puppet shows on the outdoor mall between the capital and Lincoln memorial.

"We give away cups of water as fast as we can pump it," said Gloria Grogan, home missionary and director of special ministries and Baptist Women for the D.C. Convention. "We meet people from every country you can imagine and every state," Grogan said.

Her dream is to expand the ministry to other times of year, such as the April cherry blossom festival.

Finding people to participate in such ministries is the job of Homer Carter, retired area pastor who began work in January as volunteer coordinator for the convention.

His first project is renovation of a house for volunteers to live in while they work in Washington. With help from Forest Hills Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., the six-bedroom house should be ready by June.

The Baptist General Convention of Texas has agreed to work with the District of Columbia Baptist Convention through a state partnership. Carter said he will help local churches discover their ministry needs and help Texas Baptists find ways to meet those needs.

Another strategy Carter said he will use is connecting suburban churches with inner-city churches where the needs are overwhelming and the resources are more limited.

All of the churches in the D.C. Baptist Convention are metropolitan and many are inner-city congregations. It is one of the smallest state conventions, yet it faces one of the largest challenges in reaching its diverse, mobile community and thereby having a global impact.

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Guyana native responds
personally to world events

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press
3/4/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--Tonight's world news is tomorrow's job description for Cecil Mahendranath, home missionary who responds to global events as minister to diplomats in Washington.

Leading weekly Bible studies at the World Bank and planning special activities requires Mahendranath to develop trusting relationships with the diplomats.

As a former ambassador from Guyana, his experience is a "gateway to meet people," Mahendranath said. "It helps establish trust. They openly and freely express feelings to me."

A native of Guyana, South America, Mahendranath grew up in a Hindu community. He became curious about Christianity and went to Christian worship services, but stood outside at a distance. He wanted to be close enough to hear but far enough away to not be associated with the Christian meeting.

When he became a Christian, his parents did not disown him, but "they were quite embarrassed."

Mahendranath became a bivocational pastor in Guyana, working for the government while leading a church. In 1977, he became Guyana's ambassador to the United Nations.

Coming to New York City was scary, Mahendranath said. He didn't know anyone there, and the city was enormous compared to his native country where the entire population is less than 750,000.

In 1979, Mahendranath was transferred to the Guyana embassy in Washington where he and his family had to adjust to another big city. He worked as a diplomat until two years ago when he was appointed as a Southern Baptist home missionary.

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Washington is home to 162 embassies with more than 50,000 ambassadors, staff members and their dependents, Mahendranath said. Working in such an international community requires Mahendranath to stay abreast of constantly changing political activities.

"Now a country may be stable, but overnight there's a coup," he said. "Then you're stuck."

Ambassadors representing ousted governments have no guarantee that new rulers will honor their position or pay their salary. In the United States on a diplomatic visa, ambassadors cannot work at other jobs. It may not be safe for ambassadors to return to their home country where they would be viewed as sympathetic to the old regime.

In such cases, Mahendranath helps ambassadors and their families explore options. But more frequently he helps diplomats adjust to life in a foreign country.

One young man Mahendranath met worked at Kenya's embassy. The ambassador spoke English, but his wife did not. Mahendranath contacted a Southern Baptist church in Maryland. Church members took the man's wife to the grocery store and taught her more about the American way of life. The man's family and four other Kenyan families joined the church.

Mahendranath said he hopes more churches will minister to diplomats' families. Volunteers could help children and spouses learn English and sponsor field trips for the children. Churches benefit from the cultural gifts and talents Christians from other countries add to church life, he said.

When an ambassador arrives in Washington, Mahendranath writes a letter of introduction and follows up with a phone call. Often he delivers a Bible in the person's native language. One 50-year-old man hugged the Bible like a mother holds a child, he said.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the Atlanta bureau of Baptist Press. Outline is posted on SBCNet.

**Southern Seminary receives
\$1.5 million from donor**

**Baptist Press
3/4/94**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has received a gift in excess of \$1.5 million that will benefit the Louisville, Ky., school's extension center in the Northeast and other seminary programs.

Charlotte Hoover, a longtime seminary donor from Annandale, Va., designated more than \$900,000 of the gift for the establishment of the Hoover Endowment Fund. Income from the fund will provide scholarships and help meet other financial needs related to the seminary's Northeastern Baptist School of Ministry.

NEBSM conducts master's-level classes in Boston, New York, Baltimore and Silver Spring, Md. It receives support from the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and state conventions as well as the seminary.

In addition to the funds directed to NEBSM, \$277,000 of the Hoover gift will be used to complete funding for the Lawrence and Charlotte Hoover Chair of Pastoral Care and \$290,000 will go toward construction costs for the Honeycutt Campus Center.

"This gift is a tremendous boost to Southern Seminary's efforts to train Southern Baptist ministers in the Northeast and to our ongoing program of theological education in Louisville," said Thomas F. Mabe, vice president for institutional advancement at Southern. "Mrs. Hoover has been a generous friend to Southern Seminary, and we deeply appreciate her investment in the lives and ministries of our students."

Hoover's latest gifts brings her total contributions to Southern Seminary to more than \$3 million.

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**BSSB eliminates trade discount
for Lifeway, Convention Press**

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Baptist Sunday School Board's church growth group has announced Convention Press and Lifeway products will no longer be sold at discount to retail outlets other than Baptist Book Stores and Lifeway Christian Stores.

The effective date for Convention Press will be April 1; for Lifeway, May 1. The action marks a return to the sales policy Convention Press followed prior to 1988.

The change will not affect church literature, which will continue to be sold direct to churches and individuals. Broadman & Holman products, produced by the board's trade and retail markets group, will continue to be produced primarily for sale through trade stores.

The decision will affect approximately 9.5 percent or \$1.9 million of sales of the two product lines. In 1993, about 52 percent or \$10.2 million of the \$19.6 million annual sales of the two lines was generated through the board's 1-800 customer service center and about 38 percent or \$7.6 million through the 64-store Baptist Book Store chain.

"The primary reason for this very difficult decision is that Lifeway and Convention Press materials are priced to sell direct to customers, not at the percentages discount trade outlets customarily receive," said Gene Mims, vice president of the church growth group. "By selling to retail stores at discounts, we couldn't cover the cost of the material. Our other option would be to raise prices, but we don't believe this is in our best interest or that of the churches and individuals we serve."

For example, Mims said the popular Lifeway discipleship course book, "Experiencing God," sells for \$9.95. If priced to sell at discount through independent trade outlets, the price would need to be approximately \$15.00.

"Our continuing commitment is to provide the highest value in materials at the lowest possible cost," Mims said. "We regret any inconvenience caused by our need to make this change in sales policy."

Lifeway and Convention Press materials will continue to be available through the board's customer service center where customers may place orders by toll-free phone lines (1-800-458-2772), mail and computer. In addition, they will be available through Baptist Book Stores which also have a toll-free number (1-800-233-1123).

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EDITORS' NOTE: The following two stories deal with relations between Catholics and Baptists and other evangelicals.

**Priest sees Baptist-Catholic
'convergence' on social issues** By Terry Mattingly

Baptist Press
3/4/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Frank Ruff took his usual back-street shortcuts as he drove into the heart of the massive complex many call "the Baptist Vatican."

"Good morning, Father Frank," called out security guard Richard Bennett, himself a Catholic, as Ruff entered the Southern Baptist Convention's executive offices. Upstairs, Ruff mingled with members of the SBC elite, many of whom simply called him "Frank."

The priest's black clerical suit and Roman collar still stand out in a Southern Baptist crowd.

But no one does a double-take as Ruff goes about his work as the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' representative in the halls of Southern Baptist power. The big news, these days, is that cooperation between some leaders of America's 59 million Roman Catholics and 15 million Southern Baptists is becoming old news.

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"A major convergence is taking place between us on social issues after social issues -- such as abortion, pornography, education and many other things," said Ruff. "Obviously, we still have differences. ... But the channels of communication are wide open, right now. We're working together in ways that we have never worked together before."

Major signs of change include:

-- The National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry recently joined the Southern Baptist "True Love Waits" campaign against premarital sex. This could affect youth work in 180 dioceses.

-- Southern Baptist and Catholic activists stood together in debates on the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, insisting it should not be used to promote abortion rights. Similar issues loom in debates over health care reform.

-- For decades, Catholics and Baptists clashed over government support for parochial schools. But the current generation of Southern Baptist leaders is becoming more and more critical of public education trends.

-- The results of other talks will be aired in pamphlets co-published by Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., and the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. The first, called "The Environment: A Southern Baptist and Roman Catholic Perspective," will be followed by efforts on racism, poverty, health and pro-life issues.

Formal contacts between Southern Baptist and Catholic leaders began in the 1960s after the Second Vatican Council. Hardly anyone calls these efforts "ecumenism," because that word is anathema for most Southern Baptists. In the 1960s and '70s, Baptists who talked to Catholics risked being labeled "liberals." But in the '80s and '90s, many in the SBC's right-wing leadership see contacts with Rome as a way to push moral conservatism in public life.

Tensions remain. It's true that some Southern Baptists are passing around John Paul II's recent encyclical "The Splendor of Truth" and see the pope as a friend in an age of relativism.

Others -- perhaps more quietly, these days -- still describe the pope as a member of hell's hierarchy.

Ruff has seen the changes firsthand. He moved to Georgia in 1964 to represent the Glenmary Home Mission Society, which works in the rural South. He found seven Catholics in all of White County, Ga., and 30 Southern Baptist churches.

A member of the local ministerial association handed him a Southern Baptist pamphlet. Ruff remembers the first sentence: "The two greatest threats to American freedom today are atheistic communism and the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church."

It's important for Southern Baptists and Catholics to discuss ways to use their clout in public debates, said Ruff. But politics will only go so far. At some point, America's two largest religious groups must face critical issues such as biblical authority and role of the church.

"I don't want to see us try to ride this social-issues horse too much, because that horse could jump out from under us. Social issues change from year to year," said the priest, as he drove back to his simple office in a poor neighborhood. "My prayer is that Southern Baptists and Catholics will see that we have so much in common when it comes to faith. I see so much unity, even though the words we use often sound so different."

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Mattingly teaches communications at Milligan College in Tennessee and writes a weekly column for the Scripps Howard News Service. Used by permission of the author.

Catholic-Protestant tensions

now 'more complex,' author says By Terry Mattingly

MILLIGAN COLLEGE, Tenn. (BP)--It's easy to spot anti-Catholics when their posters scream that the pope is the Antichrist and that the Vatican controls all U.S. print media -- from Family Circle to Playboy.

But is it anti-Catholicism when talk show hosts blame Rome for sexual abuse in America? What about a gay rights group trashing consecrated bread and wine in a Mass? What about Protestants conducting an evangelistic crusade in Spanish?

"Anti-Catholicism is alive and well and, in some ways, we're seeing more of it than ever before. But things are getting more complex," said Karl Keating, a lawyer who is president of the Catholic Answers, a San Diego-based group that defends Catholic faith. "Some forms of anti-Catholicism are intensifying, while at the very same time other forms are relaxing. It can be confusing."

Today, there are signs of growing cooperation between Catholics and conservative Protestants. But some other Protestants have responded by increasing attacks on Rome and on those who choose to fellowship with Catholics.

Influential evangelical activist Charles Colson, a Southern Baptist church member in northern Virginia, addressed this controversy in his forward for the book "Evangelical Catholics," by Catholic Keith Fournier: "It's high time that all of us who are Christians come together regardless of the difference of our confessions and our traditions and make common cause to bring Christian values to bear in our society. When the barbarians are scaling the walls, there is no time for petty quarreling in the camp."

Meanwhile, said Keating, Catholic leaders are becoming more alarmed by signs of secular anti-Catholicism, especially in the news and entertainment media.

"TV programs run all the time that if they attacked Jews or blacks the way that they attacked Catholics then all kinds of people would be up in arms. But, hey, everyone knows Catholics are cruel and repressive."

Keating laughed, and added: "Of course it's also OK to attack evangelicals. In the media our priests are all pedophiles and the fundamentalists are all adulterers. ... Maybe more evangelicals and Catholics are talking to each other because they're being attacked by the same people."

Meanwhile, old-fashioned anti-Catholic work continues. Hundreds of groups operate nationwide and most are led by fundamentalist Protestants, including a few former Catholic priests or nuns. Anti-Catholics have the greatest impact among lapsed Catholics who know little or nothing about their own church, said Keating.

The most scandalous of these groups make headlines, such as the Jack Chick organization that publishes anti-Catholic comics with titles such as "The Godfathers" or "Double-Cross." Others paste lurid posters along city streets.

But the most effective groups are more interested in results than publicity. Very few of these groups are deliberately vicious, said Keating.

The hallmark of true anti-Catholicism is a lack of sympathy for the beliefs of Catholics and a lack of integrity in researching Catholic doctrines and traditions, said Keating. It's one thing to criticize Catholicism or any other faith. It's something else to attack someone's faith with arguments that are laced with errors.

"I have come across extremely few people in these anti-Catholic groups who I believe are actually guilty of bad faith," he said. "In most cases the mistakes that I see in their work are the result of them simply misunderstanding what the Catholic Church actually teaches. ... Time after time they accuse the church of believing things that we do not believe, or they do not understand why we believe what we believe."

Still, it is hard for Catholics to ignore the results. During the past two decades, Catholics have been joining Protestant churches at the rate of about 100,000 a year and some say that statistic may be closer to 500,000. Hispanic parishes have been hardest hit.

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At the same time, many Catholics have fled the fold for other reasons. Divisions and apathy in Catholic ranks have wounded the church, said Keating. It isn't fair for Catholics to try to pin an anti-Catholic label on all churches that attract converts.

"Here's a key question that we ask," said Keating. "Is a church phrasing its evangelistic appeals in a way that is negative and that attacks Catholicism, or is it truly making a positive statement about its own approach to the faith?"

"Obviously, we can't ask other churches to stop doing evangelism. Catholics need to get more active in reaching people, ourselves. ... It'll help if we continue to have more honest talks with evangelicals and fundamentalists. In this case, I believe familiarity will breed understanding, instead of contempt."

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Mattingly teaches communications at Milligan College in Tennessee and writes a weekly column for the Scripps Howard News Service. Used by permission of the author.

Sometimes it's wrong
to do good, Carter says

By Debbie Moore

Baptist Press
3/4/94

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--"The greatest enemy to the best is not the bad," Charles T. Carter told students and faculty at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. "It's the good."

Speaking during the seminary's annual campus revival, the pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala., said, "All my life, I was taught to be good, to do good. My parents taught me that, my school teachers taught me that, my Sunday school teachers taught me that."

Yet, "Is it ever wrong to do good?" he asked.

Pastors, church staff members, missionaries and chaplains have committed their lives and their ministries to doing good, he said; however, they must "recognize there are times in which it is wrong to do good."

First, it is wrong to do good "when things become more important to us than persons," Carter said.

"There is absolutely nothing more important ... than your personal relationship to your living Lord of glory. ... Second only to that is your personal relationship to your family.

"God forbid that we would starve our mates emotionally in the name of getting a theological education."

Many things will clamor for the minister's attention, said Carter, pastor of churches in Alabama and Kentucky for over 40 years and pastor of Shades Mountain Baptist Church since 1971. He was president of the Alabama Baptist State Convention in 1988 and 1989.

"Relationships," Carter said, "are what life is all about."

Referring to the gospel account of Martha's activity in the kitchen while Jesus was visiting in her home, Carter said Martha was not engaged in the wrong things when Jesus told her Mary had chosen the more important thing. "She was doing a good thing," he said, "but things were just more important to her than a personal moment with Jesus."

Second, it is wrong to do good "when we do the right thing in the wrong spirit," Carter said.

Jesus was not rebuking Martha for her practical kindness or for thinking of needs in the kitchen. "Her error was not in doing wrong things," Carter said. "Her error was in doing the right thing in the wrong spirit. She did it with an ugly, nasty attitude.

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"Martha was doing good things, minding her business, in her home, getting a meal f r the Lord. ... But what did it make her? It made her accusative of the Lord. She asked the Lord, 'Don't you care?' Can you imagine someone ever saying that to Jesus? This is how caught up, how tense, how under th pr ssure of the moment she was."

Third, it is wrong to do good "when I conclude that doing good makes m spiritual," Carter said.

"That is one of the greatest nemeses we as ministers will ever face. ... Ministers primarily will find themselves caught up in doing good: administrati n, counseling, studying, preaching, witnessing, praying, attending meetings. ...

"If we're not careful, as we do good we can conclude it makes us spiritual. In all of the New Testament you will not find any greater bunch of do-gooders than the ones whom Jesus had his strongest words of rebuke for: the Pharisees, ... people who prayed, tithed, went to church, were morally clean and pure. ...

"Doing good is no substitute for spirituality."

Fourth, it is wrong to do good "when the good I do becomes the standard for the good everybody else must do," Carter said.

"God forbid we would ever say, 'If you're going to be in the family of God you've got to think like me, talk like me, feel like I do.' ... God forbid we think that's what doing good is all about. ... There's room in the family of God for all of us to do our best under his lordship."

Finally, it is wrong to do good "when doing good diverts me from doing th best," Carter said.

"Martha's problem was not wrong deeds; her problem was a problem of priorities. ... Jesus was going to be there only a short time, and then he'd b going to Jerusalem soon to die for the sins of the world. Martha dissipated h r time and energy on good but secondary things. ...

"Your greatest enemy ... will not be the bad things of the world," he said. "Th re are some pastors, unfortunately, who will stumble over alcohol, immoral sex and other perversions and sins of the world, but relatively speaking that number is still minuscule. ... Our greatest nemesis will not be the bad things. Our greatest nemesis will be the good things that will become priority things to us. ...

"Time is too short," Carter said, quoting Elton Trueblood. "Don't waste your time on trivialities."

"That may be what Jesus had in mind when he said in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.'"

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(BP) photo available from New Orleans Seminary's office of public relations.

EDITORS' NOTE: The following story replaces one with the same headline in (BP) 3/2/94.

BJC joins brief opposing
school in Jewish village

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
3/4/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--The Baptist Joint Committee has joined in a brief asking the U.S. Supreme Court to rule a public school for disabled children in the village of an Orthodox Jewish sect is a violation of the separation of church and state, a BJC staff member said.

The brief, he said, also defends the Lemon test, the Supreme Court's standard in cases involving the First Amendment's clause concerning establishment of religion.

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The recent filing of the brief again places the BJC, the Southern Baptist Convention's former church-state representative, and the Christian Life Commission, the SBC agency now handling religious liberty issues, on opposite sides in a case involving the establishment clause.

Oral arguments in the case are scheduled March 30.

The case, Board of Education of the Kiryas Joel School District v. Grumet, involves the New York legislature's establishment of a school district for physically, mentally and emotionally impaired children in an Orange County municipality in which only Satmar Hasidic Jews live. The lower courts ruled the school is a violation of the establishment clause.

The New York Court of Appeals ruled the legislature's action primarily advanced religion, thereby violating the second prong of the Lemon test. The Lemon test, which was established in the 1971 Lemon v. Kurtzman opinion, requires a government activity to pass a three-part standard. In order to avoid being a violation of church-state separation, Lemon says an activity must: 1) Have a secular purpose; 2) not primarily advance or inhibit religion, and 3) not foster excessive entanglement with religion.

The brief filed by the BJC, American Jewish Congress, People for the American Way and others calls the school district a "union of church and state" which can be determined without applying the Lemon test, said Larry Chesser, the BJC's director of information services. It describes Lemon as "correctly decided" and "fully woven into the texture of the law," Chesser said.

The CLC filed a brief in January asking the Supreme Court to use the Kiryas Joel case to replace the Lemon test, the court's standard in establishment clause cases, with a test providing for accommodation of religious expression without establishing religion. It is the third time in four years the CLC has called for a new test.

The CLC brief criticized Lemon for requiring secular purposes and permitting only secular results. The brief recommends a test which the CLC says would promote neutrality by upholding government action which accommodates independent religious choices rather than provides preferential treatment for a religious practice.

Among other organizations filing briefs opposed to the school district were the National Council of Churches; Presbyterian Church, USA; People for the American Way; Americans United for Separation of Church and State; American Civil Liberties Union; National School Boards Association, and national and state teachers unions.

In addition to the CLC, others filing briefs siding with the school district included The Rutherford Institute, American Center for Law and Justice, Christian Legal Society, National Association of Evangelicals, Family Research Council, United States Catholic Conference, Knights of Columbus and Agudath Israel.

The residents of Kiryas Joel village, which became a municipality in 1977, practice cultural separation from the rest of society. The village has separate private schools for non-disabled boys and girls. The public school's superintendent is not Hasidic, though the school board's seven members are Hasidic Jews. The teachers, who are all from outside the village, are religiously diverse and teach only secular subjects.

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