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CLC's Whitehead: Court helped  
freedom of religious speech

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press  
7/11/95

WASHINGTON (BP)--A Supreme Court which many observers described as asserting its conservatism actually undergirded the freedom of religious expression during the recently completed 1994-95 term, a Southern Baptist religious liberty specialist said.

"This term had major victories for the principle of freedom of speech in the public forum, without discrimination against the religious viewpoint," said Michael Whitehead, general counsel of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Whitehead cited as examples three opinions handed down in the last two weeks of the term, which ended June 29:

-- Rosenberger v. University of Virginia: In a 5-4 decision, the court ruled a state university allocating student activity fees cannot discriminatorily refuse to pay printing costs for a student newspaper just because of its religious viewpoint.

-- Capitol Square Review v. Pinette: The court decided in a 7-2 vote a state government could not prohibit a privately sponsored religious display on public land where other private displays are allowed.

-- Hurley v. Irish-American Gay: The justices unanimously ruled as a violation of the First Amendment a government requirement that private organizers of a parade must include marchers conveying a message they desire to exclude. In the case, the organizers of the Boston St. Patrick's Day Parade had sought to exclude the Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston.

"Rosenberger treated student activity funds as a type of forum made generally available to student groups, and so religious viewpoints could not be discriminatorily excluded by the state," Whitehead said. "Capitol Square said the public square outside the state capitol was generally available to private groups for displays, and thus religious or political viewpoints, even by the KKK, whose bigotry we deplore, cannot be discriminatorily excluded by the state.

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"Hurley said that a parade route is a public forum where holders of a parade permit have freedom of private speech and association, and anti-discrimination laws cannot justify government discrimination against the religious or moral viewpoints of the parade sponsors or force them to be inclusive of speakers touting the government's preferred message."

While the court's rulings in those three cases signaled it favors equal treatment of the expression of religious views, the justices failed to clarify confusion on a couple of other church-state issues. The court denied appeals in a graduation prayer case and a case involving the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

In *Joint School District No. 241 v. Harris* and a companion case, the court vacated a ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals against student-led, student-initiated graduation prayer and ordered the cases dismissed as moot, apparently because the student filing the suit had graduated. The court of appeals had overturned a federal court decision by ruling student-determined, student-led prayer at a Grangeville, Idaho, high school graduation was a violation of the First Amendment's establishment clause.

Differing opinions have followed the Supreme Court's 1992 *Lee v. Weisman* opinion, which struck down school-controlled graduation prayer. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals later ruled in favor of student-initiated, student-led graduation prayer, declaring the *Lee* opinion did not apply. In 1993, the Supreme Court chose not to review the decision, leaving the lower court opinion binding in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

In *Swanner v. Anchorage Equal Rights Commission*, the court left standing an Alaska Supreme Court ruling against a landlord who refused to rent to unmarried couples based on his religious beliefs. Though he argued his convictions were protected by the First Amendment and RFRA, the Alaska court ruled the state had a compelling interest in eliminating marital status discrimination which overrode his religious beliefs. Associate Justice Clarence Thomas dissented, arguing the court should clarify the confusion caused by conflicting lower court decisions involving RFRA.

While strict separationist organizations such as Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the Baptist Joint Committee decried the *Rosenberger* decision, others who favored the ruling in the term's most significant church-state case said it still fell short of what is needed.

"It's a win, which certainly beats losing," said Forest Montgomery, the National Association of Evangelicals' general counsel, "but it's a discouragement to me that four justices are wedded to the proposition that the Constitution works at cross purposes ... that the establishment clause trumps free religious speech.

"We don't take much comfort in the fact that our most precious freedom rests on one vote."

This term's cases demonstrate again the need for the court to do radical surgery on its understanding of the First Amendment's establishment of religion clause, Montgomery said.

He sees no willingness by a majority of the justices "to follow the lead of the chief justice (William Rehnquist), who has said they should examine their establishment clause jurisprudence," Montgomery said. "Until they do, they're not going to get it right.

"And why they don't understand" the founding fathers did not set the establishment and free exercise clauses against each other "is beyond me," he said.

Both Whitehead and Montgomery said the court's 1994-95 religion decisions underscore the need for a constitutional amendment protecting religious expression in the public square.

"The principle of religious equality is too important to be left to the vagaries of swing votes by presidentially appointed judges," Whitehead said. "It should be stated, simply and clearly, in a constitutional amendment beyond the power of the next presidential appointee to the court to discard with a single vote."

Both lawyers disagreed with the assertion of some analysts and reporters that the court took a rightward swing this term. They agreed the court is divided into a conservative wing of Chief Justice Rehnquist and Associate Justices Thomas and Antonin Scalia and a left-of-center grouping of Associate Justices John Paul Stevens, David Souter, Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer. The justices whose votes can swing either direction are Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy.

O'Connor and Kennedy "voted sometimes with the left wing and sometimes with the right wing, but whichever wing they favor in a case, that side wins," Whitehead said. "Thus, the Rehnquist court is being described by some lawyers as the Kennedy/O'Connor court, due to the decisive role of their swing votes."

Montgomery said, "Where we come out on religious liberty depends on the views of those two justices."

For the third consecutive year, the court heard arguments in fewer cases. Continuing the decline from 127 cases in 1991-92, the justices heard arguments in only 94 this term out of 8,100 on their docket.

One of the decisions the court refused to review produced a victory against child pornography. In refusing to hear an appeal in *Knox v. U.S.*, the court upheld a conviction for possession of child pornography under a 1984 law which President Clinton's Department of Justice reinterpreted before reversing itself in the face of congressional pressure and returning to a previous interpretation under which Knox was convicted.

A major case to be heard in the 1995-96 term, which begins in October, may address directly the issue of civil rights for homosexuals. In *Romer v. Evans*, the Colorado Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling against Amendment 2, the first state provision against homosexual rights. The amendment, which passed with 54 percent of the vote in 1992, overturned homosexual rights ordinances already in force in some Colorado cities and prohibited future laws granting civil rights status to homosexuals. While the Supreme Court may rule on the issue of homosexual rights, it could determine the case without deciding whether homosexuals make up a class deserving of legal protection. Voters' rights also constitute an important issue in the case.

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Summary of Supreme Court cases  
on religious liberty, moral issues

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WASHINGTON (BP)--Here is a summary of the Supreme Court's actions during the 1994-95 term in significant cases dealing with religious liberty and moral issues:

*Rosenberger v. University of Virginia*: In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled a state university allocating student activity fees cannot discriminatorily refuse to pay printing costs for a student newspaper just because of its religious viewpoint. The University of Virginia had rejected a request from an approved Christian student organization to pay the printer of its publication, *Wide Awake*, because the group was religious. Using fees assessed from all full-time students, the university funded 118 groups, including Jewish and Muslim ones, and 16 publications. Both lower courts sided with the school. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the school's action violated free speech rights but said the discrimination was justified in order to maintain separation of church and state. In the majority opinion, Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy said the university's action was a "denial of the right of free speech and would risk fostering a pervasive bias or hostility to religion, which could undermine the very neutrality the Establishment Clause requires. There is no difference in logic or principle, and no difference of constitutional significance, between a school using its funds to operate a facility to which students have access, and a school paying a third-party contractor to operate the facility on its behalf."

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**Capitol Square Review v. Pinette:** The court decided in a 7-2 vote a state government could not prohibit a privately sponsored religious display on public land where other private displays are allowed. The Ku Klux Klan applied for a permit to place a 10-foot cross alongside a Christmas tree and a Jewish menorah, a candelabrum used to celebrate Hanukkah, in front of the Ohio capitol in Columbus. The state agency, Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board, refused to grant a permit. In his majority opinion upholding lower court rulings, Associate Justice Antonin Scalia said, "Religious expression cannot violate the Establishment Clause where it (1) is purely private and (2) occurs in a traditional or designated public forum, publicly announced and open to all on equal terms. If Ohio is concerned about misperceptions, nothing prevents it from requiring all private displays in the Square to be identified as such. But the State may not, on the claim of misperception of official endorsement, ban all private religious speech from the public square, or discriminate against it by requiring religious speech alone to disclaim public sponsorship."

**Hurley v. Irish-American Gay:** The justices unanimously ruled as a violation of the First Amendment a government requirement that private parade organizers must include among marchers a group conveying a message they desire to exclude. Lower courts had ruled the South Boston Allied War Veterans Council, sponsors of Boston's St. Patrick's Day Parade, violated a Massachusetts law forbidding discrimination based on "sexual orientation" by prohibiting the Irish-American Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual Group of Boston (GLIB) from marching in the event. The speaker "has the right to tailor the speech," said Associate Justice David Souter in the court's opinion. The law "is not free to interfere with speech for no better reason than promoting an approved message or discouraging a disfavored one, however enlightened either purpose may strike the government."

**U.S. v. X-Citement Video:** Voting 7-2, the court overturned a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision which struck down a federal law against distributing or receiving pornographic material including minors. The Ninth Circuit ruled the 1977 law was unconstitutional because it does not require the distributors to know minors were involved. Chief Justice William Rehnquist said the law, as interpreted by the majority, does require knowledge of minors' involvement, even though it is not the "most natural grammatical reading." In a dissenting opinion joined by Associate Justice Clarence Thomas, Scalia said the court's action preserves a "single conviction by putting in place a relatively toothless child-pornography law that Congress did not enact, and by rendering congressional strengthening of that new law more difficult."

**Romer v. Evans:** The court accepted the case and will hear arguments in its 1995-96 term on a ruling against a state amendment prohibiting the granting of civil rights to homosexuals and bisexuals. In a 6-1 vote announced last October, the Colorado Supreme Court upheld a lower court ruling against Amendment 2, the first state provision against homosexual rights. The court said the amendment denied homosexuals and bisexuals an equal opportunity to participate in the political process. The amendment, which passed with 54 percent of the vote in 1992, overturned homosexual rights ordinances already in force and prohibited future laws granting civil rights status to homosexuals. While the court may rule on the issue of homosexual rights, it could determine the case without deciding whether homosexuals make up a class deserving of legal protection. Voters' rights also constitute an important issue in the case.

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**Knox v. U.S.:** The court refused to grant a review of a Third Circuit Court of Appeals decision upholding the conviction of Stephen Knox for possession of child pornography. The court's action ended a case which found the Clinton administration's Department of Justice tangling with Congress. In 1993, the Department of Justice reversed a previous interpretation and argued against Knox's conviction. As a result, the Supreme Court returned the case to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. Congress strongly opposed Justice's new interpretation, with the Senate passing by a 100-0 vote a non-binding resolution saying Justice's brief "did not accurately reflect the intent of Congress" in enacting child pornography legislation. The appeals court again upheld the conviction. After the appeals court upheld the conviction for the second time, Attorney General Janet Reno announced Justice had changed its position and was opposed to Knox's appeal. The 1984 law's interpretation argued by the Department of Justice under President Bush and upheld by the court of appeals focused on the intention of the adults producing the photos or videos. It did not require nudity in the child models but the lascivious exhibition of their genitals.

**Joint School District No. 241 v. Harris and Citizens Preserving America's Heritage v. Harris:** The court denied the appeals. It vacated a ruling by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals against student-led, student-initiated graduation prayer and ordered the cases dismissed as moot, apparently because the student filing the suit had graduated. The court of appeals had overturned a federal court decision by ruling student-determined, student-led prayer at a high school graduation was a violation of the First Amendment's establishment clause. A Grangeville, Idaho, high school had allowed senior students to make decisions about their graduation ceremony. The class voted to have an invocation and benediction. The Supreme Court's action dismisses a ruling which was binding on the nine western states which compose the Ninth Circuit, but it has no effect on the rest of the country. A mixture of decisions has followed the Supreme Court's 1992 *Lee v. Weisman* opinion, which struck down school-controlled graduation prayer. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals later ruled in favor of student-initiated, student-led graduation prayer, declaring the *Lee* opinion did not apply. In 1993, the Supreme Court chose not to review the decision, leaving the lower court opinion binding in Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

**Good News/Good Sports Club v. Ladue School District:** The justices refused to accept the case, which left standing an Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals opinion allowing a student religious club to meet on a St. Louis junior high campus after school. The junior high effectively denied the club access to school facilities when it closed its campus from 3 to 6 p.m. each day. The school made exceptions to this rule for the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. The Eighth Circuit said the only difference between the club and the organizations allowed to meet was its religious viewpoint.

**Bloomington Public Schools v. Washegesic:** The court denied the appeal, which left standing a Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals decision upholding a federal judge's order for the removal of a portrait of Jesus displayed on the wall of a Michigan high school for 30 years. The appeals court said the portrait violated all three prongs of the 1971 *Lemon* test: It had a religious, rather than secular, purpose; promoted religion; and resulted in an excessive government entanglement with religion.

**San Diego v. Paulson:** The justices declined to review a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision upholding a prohibition on a permanent cross on public land. A federal judge declared as unconstitutional a 43-foot-tall Latin cross standing on public land on Mount Soledad, which overlooks the city of San Diego. If the land on which it stands were privately owned or were the cross raised only periodically for religious observance, the case would be different, the judge said.

**Swanner v. Anchorage Equal Rights Commission:** The court refused to grant the appeal, which left standing an Alaska Supreme Court ruling against a landlord who refused to rent to unmarried couples based on his religious beliefs. Although Tom Swanner, a Christian and an elder in his church, argued his convictions were protected by the First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the Alaska court ruled the state had a compelling interest in eliminating marital status discrimination which overrode his religious beliefs. Associate Justice Clarence Thomas dissented, arguing the court should clarify the confusion caused by conflicting lower court decisions involving RFRA.

**Lawson v. Murray:** The court refused to review an opinion restricting peaceful protests outside an abortion doctor's house. The action let stand a New Jersey Supreme Court decision banning picketing within 100 feet of the abortionist's residence. The lower court ruling also limited the number of people participating and the frequency of the protests. In a dissenting opinion, Scalia objected to the restraint of free speech when a crime is not being committed.

**Kevorkian v. Michigan and Hobbins v. Kelley:** The court declined to accept appeals in separate cases, which let stand a Michigan Supreme Court decision against assisted suicide. One of the petitioners, physician Jack Kevorkian, has assisted in more than 20 suicides since 1990.

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Flexibility key to newest  
witness training process

By Sarah Zimmerman

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Flexibility is the key characteristic of the newest witness training process developed by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Titled "People Sharing Jesus," the process teaches a number of witnessing approaches, said Jerry Pipes, HMB associate director of personal evangelism. It can be taught in a variety of settings, and the materials can be adapted for churches with smaller budgets.

"Seventy-three percent of Southern Baptist churches are not doing anything to equip people in personal evangelism," Pipes said. "With People Sharing Jesus, we've tried to give them what they've asked for and something that will fit into their existing church structure.

"People Sharing Jesus equips congregations to share Christ where they live, work and play," Pipes said. "Christians learn to sense where the other person is and share Christ at their point of need."

Based on a newly published book by Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism, the process is relational and intentional. Participants are taught to develop relationships with non-Christians and to make a point of sharing Christ with them.

"This is a tool to help you witness according to your own giftedness and personality type and the need of the person with whom you're sharing," Robinson said.

The process can be taught in small-group discussions, retreat settings, worship services, a seminar series or individual studies.

Participants learn to share Christ by using evangelistic tracts, an illustration that demonstrates how sin separates people from God, Scripture from John 3 and their personal testimony. They also are taught the importance of an intimate walk with Christ and that sharing Christ is the natural result of that relationship.

"People Sharing Jesus" resources include:

- 1) "People Sharing Jesus" book written by Robinson. It includes study questions with each of the 12 chapters.
- 2) leaders' guide which includes teaching outlines, listener guides for small-group discussions, art for use with overhead projectors and suggested order of service for use in worship settings.

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3) a special New Testament with 31 devotions written by Calvin Miller, author and professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas. The devotions encourage Christians to fulfill the biblical command to be fishers of men.

The New Testaments include Psalms, Proverbs and outlines of Scripture references on 10 issues ranging from failure to self-image. They also are marked with Scripture references for four methods of sharing the gospel.

4) abridged audio version. The two 60-minute tapes are a condensed version of the book.

5) audio seminar of four 90-minute tapes. Twelve noted speakers including Zig Ziglar, Marge Caldwell, Bill Bright, Steve Camp and Roy Fish share insights on each chapter of the book. The tapes could be used as resource for leaders preparing to teach the material or they could be played during a teaching session.

6) media kit with the book, leader's guide, two posters, a bulletin insert and press release. It also includes two video tapes which feature 12 10-minute sessions with humorous vignettes, interviews and demonstrations of the book's principles.

Pipes said People Sharing Jesus could be taught if the leader only had the book and the leader's guide.

Pricing information about People Sharing Jesus materials can be obtained through HMB customer services, 1-800-634-2462. After Aug. 1, the materials also can be purchased in Baptist Book Stores and other Christian bookstores.

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Witnessing to New Age adherents  
requires creativity, patience By Sarah Zimmerman

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RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Witnessing to people involved in New Age movements requires creativity and patience, said a Southern Baptist Home Mission Board specialist in world religions.

"New Agers are some of the hardest people to witness to because of their beliefs. They believe they are God and there is no such thing as sin," said Bill Gordon, associate director of the HMB interfaith witness department. "On the other hand, they're open to spiritual things and willing to talk."

During Home Missions Week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center, Gordon told of a Christian who asked a New Age participant a typical witnessing question: "If you were to die tonight and God asked you why he should let you into heaven, what would you say?"

The man thought for a minute before replying: "I am God and I can't imagine asking myself that question."

New Age movements have no central headquarters that define their beliefs, but those involved in New Age movements typically believe that all reality -- everything from animals to space -- is God.

Reincarnation is another common New Age belief. Consequently, New Age adherents are likely to say they have eternal life, but they don't mean they believe they will spend eternity in heaven with Christ. Instead, they believe they will come back to earth in another life form.

Gordon's advice about witnessing to people in New Age movements is to "point out inconsistencies between what they claim to believe and how they live. Our life experiences give credibility to the Bible."

For example, ask the person who claims to be God about his life. If he admits to having a few problems, ask, "Have you ever wondered why you're having these problems if you're God?"

Another New Age belief is that sin does not exist. Ask the person espousing that theory why he carries keys and locks doors if sin does not exist, Gordon suggested.

Patience is another key to witnessing to New Age believers. "View it as seed-planting," Gordon said. "It may take several years, but they can be reached."

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Manila's upper class walks  
through 'eye of the needle'

By David Williard

MANILA, Philippines (BP)--If it's easier for a camel to walk through the eye of a needle than a rich man to come to Christ, the ministry of Southern Baptist missionaries Gerald and Glenda Davis is blatantly futile.

But the Davises, from Carrollton, Ala., and Batesville, Miss., respectively, don't pretend to lead the camel. They entrust that to God -- and God is working.

For years Southern Baptist mission leaders in the Philippines have held that the Asian nation can't be won to Christ without reaching the upper class. Yet the Foreign Mission Board had no one working among them. That changed only a couple of years ago when the Davises followed God's call to make themselves available.

Availability has turned out to be a tall order. Essentially they have opened both their home and their lives in service to a wide web of business owners and corporate professionals they have cultivated, investing each new relationship with the depth necessary to forge it into friendship.

"High maintenance" is how one colleague describes their work. Their house seems continually occupied by those attending one of the seven Bible studies or Christian "care" groups they host. Unannounced visitors come through their door without ringing the bell. Their telephone is likely to ring at any hour, including 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning.

The Davises wouldn't have it any other way. "What many people don't understand is that if you want to reach people, you have to become part of their culture, part of their family," Gerald explains. "It's not like a business; it must be a relationship."

"Your ministry is limited to how much you can give of yourself," Glenda adds. "If you're not willing to be available at these times, then you might as well not be here. God will send somebody else."

The constant disruptions seem easier on Glenda than on Gerald. She thrives on relationships, on being with people. "Have you heard about the coconut tree?" Gerald asks. "Anyone can talk to a coconut tree. ... Glenda is one of those few people who can get the tree to talk back."

He's the opposite. He thrives on quiet time: time to prepare notes for his ministry at Lord's Christian Fellowship, or prayer and study guides for the various groups.

"The interruptions can be frustrating at times," he admits. "If you have a sermon to prepare, it's not like you can say, 'Excuse me,' and leave the room." But the intrusions have not become a burden. Friends are merely treating the missionaries like they treat other friends; the Davises rejoice that they have fit in. It's through such family-like relationships that they can ensure their testimony gets a hearing.

Among their ministries, they've been particularly successful with Bible studies based on the "Experiencing God" materials widely touted by Southern Baptists around the world.

Typical is the Friday-evening Bible study, TGIF. It starts as people wander in after closing their businesses in Makati, Manila's high-rise financial district whose borders extend to within a couple of blocks of the Davises' modest subdivision home. Outside the motor vehicle traffic builds, becoming snarled as it circles the major shopping district on a nearby corner. Many business executives choose not to fight the traffic, opting instead to sit it out at one of the convenient bars. Many who attend the Davises' groups used to do just that. The Bible studies have become a positive replacement.

The group has used "Experiencing God" for a year. After the dozen participants eat a light dinner, Gerald leads them through a personalized prayer list completed minutes before on his computer. As they enter the evening's lesson, Gerald encourages them to lead the discussion, to share their experiences and to learn from each other. When discussion bogs down, Glenda instinctively pulls it along by sharing examples from her own life.

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"People are more interested if they can participate," Gerald explains. "If they're interested they learn more, and they learn more if they're looking into Scripture themselves instead of just me telling them."

Experiencing God has proven a good tool to get people to look into Scripture and into their own lives. "We use it for the same reason we spend so much effort stressing the praise and prayer time," Gerald says. "It's important for people here to see that God does answer prayer, that he can hear them and respond. It's important for them to see they don't need the Catholic Church or even myself to mediate their relationship with the Lord."

All but a few of the hundred or so people involved in one of the three churches the Davises have helped start or in any of the other groups they lead come from Roman Catholic backgrounds. Unlike members of other economic classes, they have a generally sophisticated view of religion. Indeed, most have been educated in exclusive Roman Catholic schools.

Just as the Davises teach that people can join God where he's at work, they believe God preceded them in their ministry. There's a spiritual awakening among the upper class in the Philippines, Gerald says. Some say it started a decade ago when the Catholic Church endorsed publication of vernacular Bibles; others relate it to the expulsion in 1986 of Ferdinand Marcos, who had assumed nearly dictatorial powers. Still others cite the Philippines' recent litany of natural disasters, including the eruption of Mount Pinatubo, followed by the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel in 1992.

The awakening is manifest, says Gerald, in the ability to easily get people involved in Bible study and in the fact that more people than ever describe themselves as Christian or born again as opposed to Catholic.

As they develop a direct relationship with God, many consciously move toward an evangelical point of view. "I allow the Holy Spirit to come and work in their lives, to change them," Gerald says. "Our experience is that the Lord is always the one who leads them through it."

Many have gone on to become active in one of the area Baptist churches. Others continue to attend the Bible studies while maintaining their relationship with the Roman Catholic Church.

Gerald and Glenda believe that will change, although they aren't judgmental about it. After all, they're merely making themselves available. God is leading.

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed 7/7/95 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Cutline available in SBCNet News Room.

Filipino who 'shot' God  
has become his witness

By David Williard

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MANILA, Philippines (BP)--When his second child died in the womb, Filipino Edgardo Pesayco took his 9mm semiautomatic pistol out to a Manila-area shooting range to "shoot" God.

As the explosions screeched from the weapon, Pesayco screamed at the target standing 25 yards away.

"I was cursing God," he says. "I kept asking, 'Why did you do that? If you were a man I'd shoot you.' I looked at that target imagining it was him."

God is not dead. Pesayco didn't kill him on that day in 1989, but he did manage to put God behind him for awhile.

He returned to his old lifestyle -- "drinking, womanizing, partying with friends" -- in short, enjoying the fruits of being a successful businessman in Manila's live-while-you-can professional society. The appearance was that life was under control. In reality, the wound remained unhealed.

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Like many of his peers, Pesayco was introduced to God early in life. Born in a Roman Catholic family, baptized in the Catholic Church, educated in exclusive Catholic schools, he was familiar with God. He knew the tenets of faith and the structure of the church. He thought he was a "good" person and that promoting good works was the best that Christianity demanded. But he had not developed a personal relationship with his Creator.

At the time it was improbable that Southern Baptists would reach him. For years they didn't have a strategy for reaching the upper class. That changed when missionaries Gerald and Glenda Davis, from Carrollton, Ala., and Batesville, Miss., respectively, began such a ministry.

One of the first things Gerald did, in making contacts with Manila's business community, was to join the local Rotary Club, where he met Pesayco.

In 1992 Pesayco's shoe manufacturing venture failed. As he attempted to salvage his career by subcontracting, his personal life was further shaken by his father's death. The only possession he inherited was his father's Bible. His mother gave it to him.

"When she handed it to me she was crying," Pesayco recalls. "She said, 'This is the only precious thing your father can give you.'"

The Bible was very old and tattered from use. It intrigued Pesayco. Lying in bed at night he would read it, waiting until his wife was asleep to do so because he did not want to be caught in an "unmanly" act.

The words began raising questions, but he had no one to answer them. He wasn't comfortable approaching priests he knew. But he had become acquainted with Davis, then serving as Rotary Club vice chairman. From observing Davis, Pesayco had pegged the missionary as a "religious sort." During the club's Christmas meeting, he made sure to sit next to him. "I needed someone to help me understand what I was reading," he explains. "I had to go to Gerry."

Their first meeting led to an ongoing relationship. By January Pesayco was becoming a regular attender at one of the several Bible studies the missionaries held in their home. There he discovered other professionals who were asking the same questions -- some were finding answers.

As his involvement continued, his frequent trips to the bars and clubs were replaced by trips to the Davises' home, where Bible studies and care groups were routinely under way.

One time he showed up at 4 a.m., he admits, and Gerald, a former pastor in Alabama, Missouri and Kansas, was there to minister to him.

Other changes occurred. Pesayco quit smoking cigarettes. He started regularly attending Mass with his wife. The real breakthrough came, however, when the Friday evening Bible study began working through the "Experiencing God" curriculum developed by Southern Baptists.

Pesayco learned he could have a direct relationship with God -- and that it didn't have to be facilitated through others. "The main thing I learned is that your relationship with God is personal; it's one day at a time," he says.

Today Pesayco has recovered from the business downturn he experienced in 1992. He runs a shoe factory employing 15 people and has a contract to supply shoes to the largest retailer in the Philippines.

But his new life intersects the old. He holds prayer and devotions for his employees and has found himself witnessing to friends and others.

"I'm not here to tell you what I believe but to tell you what I've experienced," he tells those with whom he seeks to share his testimony. "Sometimes God guides me what to say."

Like a few of the hundred or so people the Davises have drawn into their ministry, Pesayco has not sought baptism. In fact, he has strengthened his ties to the Catholic Church.

"God works in strange ways," Pesayco explains. "He has different ways of getting people to him."

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(BP) photo (horizontal) mailed 7/7/95 to state Baptist newspapers by Richmond bureau of Baptist Press. Outline available on SBCN to News Room.

World Missions Conferences  
still key after 51 years

By Jim Johnston

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--For 51 years, World Missions Conferences have succeeded in putting faces on the worldwide ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention.

But the best is yet to come for the WMC concept, predicts Myra Book, director of deputation services for the Home Mission Board.

"It continues to be the best tool Southern Baptists have in telling our missions story," Book said. "WMCs show how Southern Baptists are working together in taking the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world."

World Missions Conferences were held in 161 associations in 1994, with 3,344 churches and more than 824,000 people participating in the program, which originated as Schools of Missions in 1944. Last year's WMCs also produced 228 professions of faith and 322 commitments to missions involvement at home and abroad.

World Missions Conferences were instituted by the SBC with eight primary goals: allowing personal contact with Southern Baptist missionaries; stressing the biblical basis of missions; expanding local missions involvement; increasing giving to missions through the SBC Cooperative Program and special offerings; inspiring prayer for missions and missionaries; accelerating missions awareness through the Brotherhood Commission and the Woman's Missionary Union; securing life commitments in response to God's call; and teaching more about the Southern Baptist way of being a missionary and doing missions.

In an effort to invite even more churches and associations to participate in WMCs, the Brotherhood Commission, Home Mission Board, Woman's Missionary Union and Foreign Mission Board will begin a new emphasis in the spring of 1996 featuring a greater flexibility in the WMCs' format. The "Missions Alert" program encourages churches to choose either a two-, three-, four- or eight-day emphasis. Each church plans its own program, in consultation with WMC national staff and associational staff, in order to best fill the needs of its members.

World Missions Conference national director Kenny Rains encourages churches to make an initial investment in the program. Its importance is larger than the future structural changes that will occur in SBC agencies before the turn of the century, he stated.

"I am confident World Missions Conferences will continue to impact missions awareness and involvement in years to come," Rains said. "World Missions Conferences will most likely face changes. In the last five years, state WMC directors have been catalysts in making important improvements in how WMCs are conducted. As the needs of Southern Baptist churches have changed, WMCs have provided a variety of different formats to be used. Format options allow Baptist associations and their churches to customize their approaches in holding World Missions Conferences."

Will Hodges, an associational missions director in Birmingham, Ala., has been a believer in the WMC concept since viewing the results in his own association. Now, he's convinced the changes will allow even more churches to get involved in missions.

"They are absolutely essential," Hodges said. "WMCs are an excellent way for church members to learn what missionaries do and how the Lord protects and blesses in extraordinary ways."

For more information on World Missions Conferences, contact the WMC national office at the Brotherhood Commission at (901) 272-2461.

**Brotherhood 'fully functioning'  
in transition, Williams says**

**By Steve Barber**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)--While the details of the Brotherhood Commission's proposed merger into a new North American Mission Board are cloudy at best, the agency's president wants to clear the air about this much: For now, Brotherhood and its programs remain very much alive.

"We are fully functioning in our role of helping churches involve Southern Baptists in missions," said President James D. Williams. "All of our current products will continue to be available and new materials will continue to be developed."

Williams' remarks came in response to questions he has received in recent weeks about how the agency's work will be affected during a transition period expected to take several years.

"In the meantime, we will still offer missions education and involvement opportunities, just as we always have," Williams said. "This means we will still offer resources for programs for Royal Ambassadors, Challengers and Baptist Men, and we will still go forward with the transition from Baptist Men to Men's Ministries in October. And it means that our volunteer recruitment, our disaster relief work, and all the rest will continue as well."

Williams indicated the agency also will go forward with the launch of its newest programs and ministries. These include The Carpenter Shop mobile construction unit introduced at the 1995 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta, a "World Tour" concept for youth combining features of World Changers and urban ministry set to begin in 1996, and Legacy Builders weekend retreats for men.

He added there are no changes in how churches will order their products from the Brotherhood Commission.

While reassuring its varied constituencies about the availability of its programs and products, the agency has been preparing itself since March for a positive vote by SBC messengers on the report of the Program and Structure Study Committee. A transition team was appointed involving Brotherhood trustees, staff and state convention leadership, with the last two additions, trustees Kenneth King of Texas and Bill Prince of Georgia, announced last month.

Williams said the group will begin work in August and is committed to coordinating its activity with the SBC Executive Committee's transition team.

"Our goal during this transition process will be to maximize our opportunities while minimizing any loss of momentum," he said. "We want our ministries to move forward and continue to grow in the midst of changing program directions in the SBC."

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**New degree program brings  
psychologist to Southeastern**

**By Dwayne Hastings**

**Baptist Press  
7/11/95**

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--A clinical psychologist who affirms the preeminence of Jesus Christ has been appointed to the faculty of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. The announcement was made in anticipation of the start of the counseling track in the master of divinity degree program at the school this fall.

James Porowski, who holds a doctor of psychology from George Fox College, Newberg, Ore., was named assistant professor of pastoral care at the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary July 7.

Noting Porowski's credentials and his experience in psychology and counseling in particular, L. Russ Bush, dean of Southeastern's faculty, said, "It is his open commitment to Christ and to biblically based ministries that are especially important to me.

"He has a genuine heart for the pastoral ministry," Bush continued. "Jim Porowski will help us train ministers who can offer real help to meet the real needs of the people in their congregations."

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Acknowledging those in the church are often suspicious of the field of psychology, South astern President Paige Patterson said Porowski's commitment to God's power revealed in Christ should set those concerned at ease.

Porowski, who has a professional practice in Raleigh, N.C., couched his endorsement of psychology-at-large in terms of the value of counseling techniques for pastors: "Though it is not through psychology and psychological research you are going to find God, the field of psychology does offer certain ideas and counseling techniques useful for the church.

"I am always aware of what the Bible has to say," said Porowski, who earned a master of theology degree at Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas. "Scripture is clearly at the foundation of my calling as a Christian psychologist."

Admitting there is a lot of "junk" in traditional psychology, Porowski said, "Students can come to my classes confident their focus on the Word of God will not be minimized in any way. The more training we can give to pastors in counseling skills the better equipped they will be to fulfill God's calling in the local church."

Prior to pursuing his education in psychology, Porowski served two years with an independent mission's organization in Nigeria, Africa, at Kagoro College as a teacher of English and Bible.

Porowski and his wife, Virginia, are the parents of four children: Stephanie, 10; Jody, 8; Corinne, 7; Bridget, 5.

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Long-term music ministry entails  
professional, personal focus

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
7/11/95

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Having a ministry tenure that exceeds a decade in one church requires focus on a variety of professional and personal issues, a veteran music minister told colleagues during Church Music Leadership Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center.

Merril Smoak, minister of music at Trinity Baptist Church, Livermore, Calif., for 17 years, said while the trend of music ministers changing churches every 18 months seems to have shifted in favor of longer tenure, having an effective, long-term ministry requires discipline.

Effectiveness, he observed, can be measured in a variety of ways, through relationships, evangelistic emphasis or simply in bringing up children's choir participants who become productive church leaders as adults.

And ministry, he said, requires work that is grounded in God's Word. The Great Commission and other Scriptures that instruct leaders to disciple, teach and prepare others can serve as guides to career direction, he said.

Professionally, insisting on quality in musical presentations, providing musical experiences for all ages and effectively communicating musical and spiritual goals for all music activities are important. As music director, the minister should strive to be "the best choral conductor that I can be, resulting in a choir that is vibrant, alive and expressive of their music."

A focus on worship, more than in the past, can contribute to an effective, long-term ministry, Smoak observed. More churches are realizing worship is the primary outreach tool, he said, where non-believers and Christians looking for a new church home first visit.

At Trinity Baptist Church, he said, worship must "point individuals to God, be contemporary and musically upbeat, not drag or be boring, have an evangelistic opportunity at the end."

Worship requirements should be developed for specific bodies of believers, taking into account community and congregational needs, he emphasized.

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"We looked at the northern California culture of the non-believer," Smoak said of the Livermore congregation, "how we welcome them in a worship service, what music/preaching style would reach them, how that person observes us as they drive up to the church, who greets them on the parking lot and what we provide for preschoolers and children."

Smoak acknowledged he devotes "a majority of my time to worship," planning and coordinating worship plans with the pastor and other staff, as well as maintaining a special music schedule.

And he said he feels he has learned how to find "the best" of the praise choruses and how to weave them into effective medleys, while "still knowing how to effectively use hymns."

Other areas of attention Smoak cited for an effective, long-term ministry included keeping spiritually focused; staying focused through times of discouragement; focusing on one's family, pastoral duties and the vision/mission of the church; learning from mistakes; being aware of pressure and stress; and focusing on "the joy" of long-term, effective ministry.

Church Music Leadership Week, July 8-14 at Glorieta, was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's music department.

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Music's 'dialects' infused  
with common 'truth language'

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press  
7/11/95

GLORIETA, N.M. (BP)--Though worship and musical "dialects" vary among Southern Baptist congregations, common ground for the denomination is in theological "truth language," church musicians were told during Church Music Leadership Week, July 8 - 14.

"No two worshipers view Christ in exactly the same way," observed Terry York, a manager in the Baptist Sunday School Board's music department.

"Is it any wonder that Southern Baptists are using as many as five discernable, definable worship styles? Is it any wonder that at your church, members of your congregation, at once, think you're right on target and a mile off? Is it any wonder that your '91 Baptist Hymnal had to be expanded to 625 hymns to handle Southern Baptists' musical and worship diversity?"

That diversity, York said, takes the form of five worship styles, which he defines as:

-- Seeker-oriented, creating an atmosphere comfortable for the unchurched to listen, learn and, perhaps, participate. Elements of worship foreign to those who know nothing about church, including choirs, hymnals, suits and ties, pews and organs, are removed.

-- Praise and Worship, offering the largest choirs plus an orchestra. Praise music may be piped in before the service, and the service itself is a vigorously paced celebration, including contemporary music.

-- Traditional, offering a sense of familiarity, is the style in which many Southern Baptists were reared and which York maintains needs no definition. Still effective in many churches, others maintain it no longer meets their needs.

-- Liturgical, providing decorum, thoughtfulness and introspection, accompanied by pipe organ. Clergy, in robes, are careful to observe the Christian calendar. A choir, though not large, is a part of the form of the service, which is itself a part of the message of the service.

-- Blended, mixing the thoughtfulness of the liturgical style and the forward leaning of praise and worship. A select gathering of elements from some or all of the other styles makes this style adaptable for a variety of congregations.

But York said an important factor about all the styles and the persons who use them is that they are all worshipping God.

Some styles focus on God as Father, some on God as Son and others on God as Holy Spirit.

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While York sees God as the focus of worship and the most important "common ground" for Southern Baptists, he observed worship leaders "cannot go for a common ground book or resource kit. What we can do is talk and share with each other, going home knowing we have common ground."

Harold Best, dean of the conservatory of music at Wheaton (Ill.) College, said he believes the concept of "common ground is a symptom of today's more open arms" than there used to be.

"The debate over how many worship styles exist is really confusion over the difference in language and dialect. Western music has no more than 12 pitches. Therefore, we have one language with an inventory of 12 pitches that can be used in countless ways. The different musical styles are dialects. When we call a dialect a language, we lock that dialect up so it is assumed not to be able to connect with other dialects.

"There is one other language we speak, the language of truth: God is sovereign, God created, people ruin the creation, God saves his creation, Jesus shed his blood, the only way we get back to God is through Jesus, and if we don't get back, we will pay for it.

"We would do well," Best cautioned, "to quit talking as though there are theological implications of a musical dialect. There is nothing that is inherently religious or nonreligious in music. The struggle is to produce quality within the dialect.

"Our truth language cannot be reduced and is something for which we should be prepared to die," he continued. "A dialect does not water down a language. Common ground is a concept based in deep linguistic principle: the revealed Word of God."

Best said while the world is not going to adopt the church's point of view, "the church is good at adopting the world's ways of doing things. Not one musical style is more worldly nor more holy than the other, but we can use a worldly approach to make a holy effort flourish. Any one of these media can become fallow ground to make whatever I do more attractive to the world.

"We have to be sure we are driven by the cause of Jesus Christ. It's not the other guy who is going to do the worldly thing. It is me. What is wrong with the world and what is right with the church lies right here."

Church Music Leadership Week at Glorieta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center was sponsored by the Baptist Sunday School Board's music department.

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Home mission leaders  
honored at Ridgecrest

By Sarah Zimmerman

Baptist Press  
7/11/95

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP)--Six Southern Baptists were given awards for missions leadership during Home Missions Week at Ridgecrest (N.C.) Baptist Conference Center.

Three of the presentations were made to South Carolinians: Jim Herron, director of missions for the Greenville Baptist Association; Stewart Lane, director of seminary extension, Santee Baptist Association; and Bernice Popham, director of the state convention's missions development and new church growth team.

The other three awards went to Dan and Elaine Jenkins of Graceland Baptist Church, New Albany, Ind.; Bob Schmeltekopf, director of missions for two Texas associations; and Ed Gilman, director of missions, Sun Coast Baptist Association, St. Petersburg, Fla.

Herron was named metropolitan director of missions of the year for the eastern United States. Herron is "more than an administrator, he's a minister," said Bob Moore, director of the Home Mission Board's metropolitan missions office. "He's vitally involved in the community."

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Herron has worked for the Greenville association nine years. During that time, associational churches have become involved in the Empowering Kingdom Growth state convention strategy, begun ethnic congregations, started multihousing ministries and supported a fund-raising campaign for an associational camp.

Herron has served on state convention committees and advisory groups, and he is currently vice president of the South Carolina Baptist Directors of Missions Fellowship.

Lane received the seminary extension director of the year award. Lane took seminary extension classes in Maryland's Prince George Baptist Association in the early 1980s, earned his diploma and began to teach the Book of Luke. When he retired from IBM, he moved to South Carolina and developed the seminary extension program in Santee association. In three years, the program has grown from one to nine classes.

In addition to directing the association's seminary extension program, Lane is a state consultant for seminary extension.

Popham received a leadership award from the Southern Baptist Multihousing Association. She has been involved in multihousing ministries since 1989 when she took a sabbatical to study the process.

Vivian Hite, home missionary and president of the multihousing association, said Popham was given the award because she "sets the pace" in multihousing ministry leadership among state conventions.

Multihousing includes ministries in apartment complexes, high-rise condominiums and manufactured housing communities. National surveys indicate 96 percent of multihousing residents do not attend church.

The Jenkins were recognized by the Multihousing Association for their work in Indiana. The couple has been members of the New Albany church more than 27 years, and he has been on the church staff as the outreach ministries director four years. The church now has 46 "outreach mission points."

Schmeltekopf was named town and country director of missions for the year for the western United States. He has been director of missions for Burnet-Llano and Medina River Baptist associations in Texas seven years.

In the last two years, the associations have grown from 48 to 58 churches and missions. The new churches include ethnic congregations and churches attracting people who have moved from cities to the country.

The associations also have been involved in partnership missions with Colorado's Continental Divide Baptist Association.

"This kind of recognition is not possible because of the work of one person," Schmeltekopf said. He credited the associational pastors and staff leadership as well as his wife's support for the associations' growth.

Gilman was recognized for his work in the Mega Focus Cities process of developing ministries in the nation's largest cities. Gilman has worked with the Florida association 13 years and been the director of missions there seven years.

Under Gilman's leadership, the association has started 14 congregations, increased annual baptisms by more than 300 people and reported a 4,000-person increase in Sunday school attendance.

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(BP) photos mailed to state Baptist newspapers of those receiving awards by the Home Mission Board bureau of Baptist Press.

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