



# Associated Baptist Press

Editor: Bob Allen  
Executive editor: Greg Warner

Phone: 800.340.6626  
Fax: 904.262.7745  
E-mail: bob@abpnews.com

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

(02-66)

Nashville, Tennessee

AUG 6 8 2002

July 22, 2002

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- IMB criticized by Bangladesh Baptists**
- Senate leaders urge passage of 'faith-based' compromise bill**
- Mother's revelation throws pledge case into question**
- Grenz joins Truett Seminary faculty**

## **IMB criticized by Bangladesh Baptists**

By Biblical Recorder Staff

A member of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) berated International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries during a recent BWA General Council meeting, a Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) official said.

Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, said in a statement released to Baptist Press that the BWA member made the comments during public discussion at the BWA meeting. He did not elaborate.

Wendy Ryan, BWA communications director, said Samson Chowdhury, a member of the General Council from the Bangladesh Baptist Fellowship (BBF), made comments about problems with SBC missionaries and policy. According to her, Chowdhury said Bangladesh Baptists had held meetings with IMB officials over the issue. She said she believes similar meetings were held in Latin America, Europe and Africa.

IMB spokesman Mark Kelly said the comments at the meeting do not represent the official position or attitude of Baptists in Bangladesh, who have a "very cooperative partnership" with the IMB.

"The issue is centered around the fact that in the past the IMB provided large financial subsidies to the BBF, including support of pastors, evangelists and social projects," Kelly said in a written response to questions about the comments. "Much of that has been phased out as the BBF has grown stronger and is able to appropriately assume responsibility for their own work.

"This individual represents those who want our missionaries to come and work for the BBF and totally under their supervision to serve their churches and convention programs."

The comments came during a discussion about the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's application for admission in the BWA. SBC officials oppose the application.

"On the floor we cannot tell people what to say and what not to say," said Ryan. "What they say doesn't necessarily reflect the feelings of the BWA."

The comments were the second negative statements made about the SBC by Bangladesh Baptists in recent years. Associated Baptist Press reported that Chowdhury and Denis Dilip Datta surprised a January

2000 meeting of the BWA General Council by asking the group to take up slack because, they said, new strategies by Southern Baptist missionaries neglect existing churches.

Datta did not mention the IMB by name when he complained about a missions group "dumping its institutions on us."

Chowdhury was more explicit, saying Southern Baptists were withdrawing from their work with the Baptist Christians of his country and focusing instead on unreached people groups.

Over the last several years, the IMB has focused on starting "church planting movements" with small "cell" churches that are intended to duplicate themselves.

At the time, a high-ranking IMB official said he was surprised the issue came up in the General Council meeting but that other groups of Baptists had expressed similar feelings.

Kelly said IMB President Jerry Rankin and Avery Willis, senior vice president for overseas operations, met with Baptist officials in Bangladesh twice since the January 2000 meeting to discuss their concerns.

The IMB maintains a close working relationship with the BBF, said Kelly.

-30-

## **Senate leaders urge passage of 'faith-based' compromise bill**

By Robert Marus

WASHINGTON (ABP) – Two prominent Senators and a broad coalition of charitable groups are urging the Senate to consider a version of President Bush's "faith-based initiatives" legislation before the chamber's August recess.

"I feel as if we're approaching Mt. Nebo, and we can see the Promised Land," said Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.).

Lieberman appeared with Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) and the heads of some of America's most prominent charitable organizations in a July 18 press conference at the Capitol to urge Senate leadership to place the legislation on the Senate calendar. Santorum and Lieberman are co-sponsors of the CARE (Charity, Aid, Recovery and Empowerment) Act, which is a much-watered-down version of Bush's proposal to aid charities by, among other things, expanding the ability of government to give grants to sectarian religious organizations.

A "faith-based" bill – the "Community Solutions Act," also known as H.R. 7 – that incorporated most of Bush's desires was passed by the House of Representatives last year after contentious debate. However, concerns over church-state separation and employment discrimination forced Bush to compromise in the Democratically-controlled Senate, withdrawing the most controversial parts of the legislation.

The CARE Act that emerged did not contain an expansion of government grants to sectarian groups, but did include several incentives designed to increase charitable giving. Some of the incentives are considered more generous than the House version. The proposed legislation also has provisions designed to make it clearer to government agencies that some religious organizations would not have to alter certain aspects their religious character in order to be eligible for government grants. It also contained provisions that would make it easier for religious organizations to set up separate groups organized under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Service codes in order to apply for government grants without raising church-state concerns.

Despite concerns about the tax cost of its charitable-giving incentives, the Senate Finance Committee approved much of the CARE Act July 17. Now, it becomes a matter of getting it on the Senate's full calendar.

With homeland security and prescription drugs on the schedule to deal with before the Senate's summer vacation begins on Aug. 5, Santorum and Lieberman nonetheless expressed optimism that the Senate's

leadership would get the bill placed on the calendar for swift action. Santorum said he was hoping for action on the bill “in the next few days” and that both Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) and Minority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) support the bill.

But Lieberman acknowledged that the press conference itself was proof that they were trying to drum up attention for the bill. “It would help, if you run into Tom Daschle and Trent Lott, to tell them we’re doing the Lord’s work,” Lieberman joked. One-quarter of all Senators – 25 – have signed on as sponsors of the CARE Act.

If the full Senate passes the bill, it may be sent to a conference committee to hammer out differences with the House version. If that is the case, many supporters of church-state separation are worried that the expansion of so-called “charitable choice” may be re-included in the final legislation.

However, a representative of one Baptist group that supports expansion of charitable choice said her organization is not angling for that right now. “Our hope is that it not be conferenced, and that the House just take [the Senate bill] up,” said Shannon Royce, a lobbyist with the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Although her group supported the House’s Community Solutions Act, Royce said that getting a bill passed to help boost charitable giving is more urgent right now than expansion of government grants to sectarian organizations. “Next year, we can come back and deal with” H.R. 7, she said.

The CARE Act is S. 1924.

-30-

## **Mother’s revelation throws pledge case into question**

By Robert Marus

ELK GROVE, Calif. (ABP) -- Recent revelations may create future problems for the lawsuit that caused a federal court to rule the words “under God” in the Pledge of Allegiance unconstitutional. The young girl who was the subject of the case attends church and has a Christian mother.

Many legal experts anticipate that the recent decision by a majority of a three-judge panel from the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will be overturned anyway, but the mother’s revelation may seal the fate of the lawsuit.

At issue is whether professed atheist Michael Newdow had standing to file the lawsuit that precipitated the decision.

Newdow, who represented himself in the case, claimed in the lawsuit that his elementary school-aged daughter suffered when a California school district forced her listen to her teacher and classmates reciting the pledge.

Though the Pledge of Allegiance was first penned in 1892, it has contained the words “under God” since Congress added them in 1954.

Newdow also argued that Congress had a clearly religious intent in adding the words and that forcing his daughter to listen to a ceremony reciting the words in her public school interfered with his ability as a parent to direct his child’s religious upbringing.

The court agreed with Newdow and agreed that he had standing to bring the case because of his role in her religious training.

But in a surprising announcement on July 11, the child’s mother, Sandra Banning, said that she was an active Christian and that the child attended church with her and was not offended by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

In a July 16 appearance on NBC's "Today Show", Banning said her daughter even led her class in saying the pledge earlier this school year.

Banning is a member of Calvary Chapel, a charismatic church in the Sacramento suburb of Elk Grove. She said she and her daughter both attend services there regularly. Banning also has full custody of the child, although Newdow is challenging that in court, according to several media reports. Banning and Newdow were never married.

The legal news website Law.com reported that family law experts believe the constitutional issue would become moot if a court finds that Banning has an equally legitimate claim on her daughter's religious upbringing and does not agree with Newdow's position in the suit.

In interviews, Newdow has repeatedly refused to discuss his daughter's role in the case. According to Law.com, he said, "I don't want to say anything about my daughter because it's not her case, it's my case."

The federal government has asked the full 11-judge 9th Circuit panel to review the case. Even if they uphold the previous ruling, most observers expect the U.S. Supreme Court ultimately to reverse the decision.

Banning has not indicated whether she will attempt to challenge Newdow's standing in the suit, although she has established a legal fund for court costs related to the case.

-30-

## **Grenz joins Truett Seminary faculty**

By ABP Staff

WACO, TEXAS -- Stanley J. Grenz, considered one of the top evangelical theologians and scholars in North America, has been named distinguished professor of theology at Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary. He also will work with Baylor's religion department and its doctoral program.

"Without a doubt, Stan Grenz is one of the very top Baptist theologians today. Indeed, he is a top theologian period," said Baylor Provost Donald D. Schmeltkopf in announcing Grenz's appointment, which begins this fall.

Most recently, Grenz has been a professor at Carey Theological College and Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. He has degrees from the University of Colorado, Denver Theological Seminary and Ludwig-Maximilians-Universitat in Munich, Germany.

Grenz is author or co-author of 23 books, including "A Primer on Postmodernism" and "Beyond Foundationalism" and has written for every major evangelical journal in North America. He is an editorial advisor for FaithWorks magazine and a consulting editor of Christianity Today magazine.

-30-

**END**

---