

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Nashville, Tennessee

**Associated Baptist Press**

OCT 22 2003

October 14, 2003 Volume: 03-93

**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- Supreme Court agrees to hear Pledge of Allegiance case
- Church bus accident leaves 8 dead, 7 hurt, and a Texas town grieving
- Parents should begin early to deal with empty nest, counselor says
- Counselor: Empty nest may reveal 'empty places' in marriage
- Enrollment drop prompts budget cuts at Baylor
- Churches cut missions disproportionately, study says, but larger churches do better
- Congress members introduce bills designed to limit courts' authority
- Conservative Episcopalians denounce church leaders
- CORRECTION:
- News briefs from Associated Baptist Press

**Supreme Court agrees to hear  
Pledge of Allegiance case**

By Robert Marus

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- In a move that surprised some observers, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed Oct. 14 to hear a case involving the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The justices decided to review the "under God" ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, but will do so without the participation of one of the court's most conservative justices.

Last year, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit declared a California school district's policy of teacher-led recitation of the pledge a violation of the Constitution's ban on government establishment of religion. A majority of the 9th Circuit's full 24-member panel later reaffirmed the decision.

In announcing their intention to hear the case, the Supreme Court noted that it will be considered and decided without the participation of Justice Antonin Scalia. Scalia recused himself presumably because of questions about his impartiality, stemming from public comments the justice made in January. At a speech commemorating Religious Freedom Day in Fredericksburg, Va., Scalia criticized the 9th Circuit's ruling on the pledge case.

In the original 2-1 decision, father Michael Newdow, an atheist, argued -- and the panel agreed -- that his rights to raise his then-8-year-old daughter were violated by her suburban Sacramento school district's policy of teacher-led pledge recitation.

10/15/2003

Although the pledge has been around in forms similar to its present one since the late 1800s, Congress added the phrase "under God" to the oath in 1954. Federal records show that congressmen made the move partially in a reaction to the perceived atheistic threat of communism.

The judges said that both Congress' action to add the phrase and the Elk Grove Unified School District's policy of teachers leading recitation of the pledge were unconstitutional.

The decision caused a national firestorm of controversy when it was announced in June 2002. A large majority in Congress, as well as President George W. Bush and California Gov. Gray Davis, condemned the ruling and reaffirmed the addition of "under God" to the pledge.

After the public outcry, the same panel later amended their ruling, rescinding the portion declaring the addition of the words themselves unconstitutional but reiterating that the recitation of the pledge in public schools is illegal. That ruling also delayed implementation of the ruling pending the Supreme Court's action in the case.

In accepting the case Oct. 14, the high court declined to review Newdow's argument that the words themselves were unconstitutional and should be removed from the pledge. However, they did agree to hear arguments on two other aspects of the case: Whether teacher-led recitation of the pledge was constitutional and whether Newdow had standing to file the case.

The standing issue arose last year after the child's mother, Sandra Banning, told the press that she and her daughter were practicing Christians and not offended by the pledge. She also said the fact Newdow - to whom she was never married -- did not have custody of the child at the time he filed the suit meant that he lacked standing to file the lawsuit.

A California court recently granted Newdow partial custody of the girl, whose name has not been included in court papers to protect her privacy.

In their Dec. 4 ruling, the same three-judge panel that made the original ruling said Banning's argument didn't hold up regardless of the child's custody situation. In an accompanying opinion written by Judge Alfred Goodwin, the court reaffirmed its original decision in strong language.

"The pledge to a nation 'under God,' with its imprimatur of governmental sanction, provides the message to Newdow's young daughter not only that non-believers, or believers in non-Judeo-Christian religions, are outsiders, but more specifically that her father's beliefs are those of an outsider, and necessarily inferior to what she is exposed to in the classroom," Goodwin wrote.

The Supreme Court has previously ruled that children may not be forced to recite the Pledge of Allegiance but has never ruled on whether teachers should be required to lead it.

Many court observers believe the justices will reverse the 9th Circuit's decision. Previous court opinions have suggested that a category of generalized government religious endorsements, often called "ceremonial deism," does not violate the First Amendment because they have little actual religious meaning. Such endorsements include phrases like the national motto, "In God We Trust," or the announcement that the Supreme Court itself uses when opening its sessions: "God save the United States and this honorable court."

The Supreme Court invited the Bush administration to file a brief in the case. Although White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan declined to say what Bush's intentions were in his Oct. 14 daily press

briefing, he did say the White House believed the original decision was wrong.

"[Y]ou have a Declaration of Independence that refers to God or the Creator four different times. You have sessions of Congress each day that begin with prayer. And, of course, if you look on our own currency, it says, 'In God We Trust.' So we believe the Pledge of Allegiance is an important right that ought to be upheld by the Supreme Court."

However, the head of a Baptist church-state agency in Washington said that, although ceremonial deism may be legal, it isn't necessarily advisable for Christians to advocate.

"What is constitutional is not always helpful or conducive to a spirit of robust religious liberty," said Brent Walker, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. "The vitality of religion in America is diminished by blurring the allegiance to government with our ultimate allegiance to God. Are we any more religious today than we were before 'under God' was put into the pledge in 1954?"

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, called the 9th Circuit Court's decision "outrageous even for the looniest of all the federal appeals courts in the land."

"If the Supreme Court were to uphold the 9th Circuit's ruling that the pledge is unconstitutional, it will have a full-scale revolt on its hands, which will in short order result in either a constitutional amendment or a removing of this area from the court's jurisdiction by Congress," Land said in a statement.

The case is Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow. The court will hear oral arguments in the case in early 2004 and likely will render a decision by the time it ends its 2003-2004 term in July.

-30-

## **Church bus accident leaves 8 dead,**

### **7 hurt, and Texas town grieving**

By Ken Camp

ELDORADO, Texas (ABP) -- A church bus accident in eastern Louisiana claimed eight lives, left seven passengers hospitalized and broke 2,000 hearts.

The bus -- taking 12 senior adults from First Baptist Church of Eldorado, Texas, and three of their friends on a tour of historic sites -- slammed into the back of a parked tractor-trailer rig near Tallulah, Miss., just before noon Oct. 13.

The impact of the crash was felt 500 miles to the west in Eldorado, a town of 2,000 residents about 40 miles south of San Angelo.

Kenneth Thomas, 66, was driving the church-owned bus at the time of the accident. Thomas told police he fell asleep, according to a police spokesperson.

Thomas received a misdemeanor citation for careless operation, according to a statement by Schleicher

10/15/2003

County (Texas) Sheriff David Doran. No criminal charges were filed and no arrests were made. The National Transportation Safety Board will investigate, he said.

Thomas, treasurer and past chairman of deacons at First Baptist Church of Eldorado, was hospitalized at River Regional Medical Center in Vicksburg, Miss., following surgery on a broken leg.

The accident left First Baptist Church mourning the immeasurable loss of a deacon, a choir member, an all-around handyman, a missions-minded registered nurse and a "grandmother to all the kids in the church," according to Pastor Andy Anderson.

And it rallied the church in prayer for the seriously injured survivors who remained hospitalized in four widely scattered medical centers in Louisiana and Mississippi.

"The folks on that trip are the reason this church has been so great all these years," Anderson said. "They are the backbone of the church."

The five deceased church members included two couples -- Kenneth and Betty Richardson, both 81; Delia Pina, 72, and Domingo Pina, 65 -- as well as Mary Ruth Robinson, 63, and three non-members, Jean Demere, Laverne Shannon and Jimmie Teel.

"The Richardsons were so devoted to each other," Anderson said. "After all these years, he still opened the door for her."

Kennith Richardson was a deacon, known in the community for being willing to read to children in his unmistakably resonant voice. "He had this one-of-a-kind voice, kind of like James Earl Jones," said Syllas Politte, youth minister at First Baptist Church. Betty Richardson was an active member of the choir.

Domingo Pina was a volunteer firefighter who also gave his time as a general handyman and mechanic at First Baptist Church. Delia Pina was a retired nurse who served on the local hospital board. Both volunteered in missions along the Rio Grande in the Mexican towns of Piedras Negras and Acuna.

Mary Ruth Robinson was "the church's grandmother. All the kids loved her," Anderson said.

In addition to Thomas, other hospitalized church member were:

-- Billy Frank Blaylock, 78, in critical/guarded condition at University Medical Center in Jackson, Miss. He was reported to be "in and out" of consciousness, suffering a brain hemorrhage and broken arm.

-- Mabel Blaylock, 76, in critical condition at the surgical trauma unit of LSU Hospital in Shreveport, La. She suffered a pelvic fracture and broken arm, and she sustained considerable blood loss.

-- Mary Barton Robinson, 75, who suffered multiple lacerations, was transferred to a hospital in Monroe, La., from Rayville, La. She was expected to be released within a couple of days to be near her daughter, Kathy Hillman of Waco, president of Woman's Missionary Union of Texas.

-- Oleon Stricklan, age not available, was in Regional Medical Center, Vicksburg, Miss., with a broken ankle, broken ribs and gashes.

-- Dana Owens, 75, was in stable condition at River Regional Medical Center, Vicksburg, Miss. She

damaged a recent knee replacement and was awaiting surgery.

-- Jim Robinson, 70, was transferred from Rayville, La., to North Monroe, La. He had surgery, and was expected to be released, possibly by Oct. 15. His wife, Mary Ruth Robinson, lost her life in the accident.

When the accident took place, the "Senior Ambassadors" group was on the second day of a planned 16-day tour that was supposed to take them to Colonial Williamsburg, Valley Forge, Philadelphia, Gettysburg and through the Pennsylvania Amish countryside.

On the day after the wreck, Pastor Anderson was struggling to find time to prepare for three funerals of accident victims scheduled at his church on Friday, Oct. 17. The Richardsons' service was slated for 11 a.m., Mary Ruth Robinson at 2 p.m., and the Pinas at 4:30 p.m. He wasn't yet sure what he would say.

"I'll attempt to preach a message of comfort to the families, based on the hope we have in Jesus Christ," Anderson said.

"Of course, this is as much of a shock for us as it would be for anyone," the pastor added. "The big difference is our faith in Christ and our hope of a future beyond this life. We don't understand tragedy, but we know the Lord is with us. We can't understand and can't see his hand in this, but we know his heart. And that makes it possible to get through it."

Anderson expressed appreciation for the support offered by churches of all denominations in his community, from the Baptist General Convention of Texas, and particularly to Roger English, director of missions for the Concho Valley Baptist Association.

"It's going to take a long time even to discover all that we lost. But we will rally, and through it all, we pray the Lord will be glorified," he said.

- Photos available from Associated Baptist Press

-30-

### **Parents should begin early to deal with empty nest, counselor says**

By Kima Jude

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (ABP) -- As Martha Smith drove away from the Auburn University campus after helping her youngest daughter settle in as a freshman, she burst into tears. "I was surprised because I wasn't expecting it," she said.

For Pat Pickett of Montgomery, the empty nest meant more than the absence of her only son, now at college. His moving out of the family home highlighted another problem she'd been aware of for some time -- the distance in her marriage. "I'm experiencing the empty nest by myself," she said.

Kathie White dreaded the departure of her youngest, Cheryl, who joined the military. "It just wasn't what I had planned for her life," said White of Montgomery, Ala., who also has a 24-year-old son. "It's not only that they're gone ... but where they've gone to."

For virtually all parents, the empty nest represents a huge life transition, according to Jerry White,

10/15/2003

Kathie's husband and director of Counseling Care, a ministry of First Baptist Church of Montgomery. "When your kids leave home, it's like the role that you had for 20-something years has ended," he said.

The empty nest can affect a family's health, White told the Alabama Baptist newspaper. "You have to change, and a lot of people have a hard time changing."

Mothers in particular feel vulnerable to an empty nest because their identity often becomes entwined with their children's, he explained. Not only do their children's friends see them as "Susie's mother" or "Matt's mom," the mothers begin to identify themselves that way. Many women put aside careers and other activities to raise kids, only to realize with something akin to shock that they've worked themselves out of a job.

Therefore, preparation for the empty nest should begin in a child's adolescence, according to Jerry White. "Mom and Dad have to start letting go even before [the kids] leave home."

That means gradually letting adolescents make more decisions, as well as mistakes, and then allowing them to experience consequences without rescuing them. "We've got to give them space to discover who God wants them to be. I believe that's God's plan," White said. "The adolescent tends to want to rush it. The parent tends to want to slow it down."

Although most parents interviewed anticipated sending their kids off to college with excitement, most also admitted suffering empty nest symptoms.

"You go through a time of grieving your losses," White said. "You grieve roles of parent-protector and loss of the relationship. You'll have a relationship, but it will never be the same."

Pat Pickett said she looked forward to her son's move to college. "I knew he was experiencing a new part of life he didn't know about." But after the excitement of helping him settle in on campus passed, she said, "it suddenly hit me one night that he was never coming home again. His living with us is over."

Parents coping with an empty nest often experience depression, boredom and irritability, which can direct itself at a spouse. Jerry White recommends counseling when "it becomes a health issue" and it starts to affect relationships, including one's relationship to God.

Meanwhile, he recommends that parents confronting an empty nest start coping with it through prayer. "What other areas of ministry does God want us to be involved in now that we have more time?" he suggested. "What other ways can God use us?"

Kathie White said she was determined to re-invest her life. As her children grew up, she took a part-time job and then a full-time one. "I can't imagine dealing with the empty nest and not having something else to do," she said.

While coping with an empty nest, relationships in general become critical for parents. "They have to have other relationships they can depend on," Jerry White said. One's relationship with God is most important, but new ones also should be formed, he said. "We're all created for relationships with God and others, and we need both."

Parents struggling with their empty nest also need to realize it is temporary, he said. "This is a change, but God's not through with me. I've got to discover his plan for my life and, whatever it is, it will be good."

Kathie White found her full-time job not only filled her time but, because she works around young adults, helped fill the void her children left. "I involve myself in their lives," she said. It doesn't matter "how many friends you have your own age," she said, you still need to be around young people.

She also has become an avid scrapbooker. As she deals with pictures of her children and writes down their histories, she still feels close to them, she said. "That has been one of my biggest therapies."

- Kima Jude is a correspondent for the Alabama Baptist, newsjournal of the Alabama Baptist Convention.

-30-

### **Counselor: Empty nest may reveal 'empty places' in marriage**

By Kima Jude

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (ABP) -- As children grow up and leave home, husbands and wives find themselves reverting to family life that revolves around marriage rather than child rearing. But exploring an empty nest often uncovers empty places in a marriage, according to counselor Jerry White.

"Husbands and wives find out so many times they aren't as close as they used to be," said White, director of Counseling Care, a ministry of First Baptist Church of Montgomery, Ala.

"Even those parents who dated regularly over the years may have used those nights out to discuss the kids. So once children are grown and gone, spouses often find themselves facing each other and wondering: Who is this person? People find out how good their marriages really are," he said.

Extreme difficulty coping with an empty nest also may be a signal that a parent has been using a child to meet emotional needs that probably should have been met through other relationships, especially marriage, according to White.

So before the kids ever leave home, White suggests parents spend time together regularly "developing and cultivating and doing maintenance on their intimacy." That includes talking not just about children but about personal hopes and dreams for their lives together. Once children are gone, expand that time, he advised.

Spending more time together was one of the advantages that Martha and Tommy Smith discovered. Smith is a counselor and army chaplain, and Martha is now able to travel with him.

"It's a good part of the empty nest," she said.

-30-

### **Enrollment drop prompts budget cuts at Baylor**

10/15/2003

By Mark Wingfield

WACO, Texas (ABP) -- A second year of missed enrollment goals has led to a \$9 million cut in operating expenses at Baylor University.

The projected reductions represent about 3 percent of Baylor's \$320 million budget, said David Brooks, chief financial officer. Operating budgets do not include personnel costs but rather such items as travel, library materials, consulting fees and marketing, Brooks explained.

During the seven months remaining in Baylor's fiscal year, unspent operating expenses will be cut by 25 percent and unspent capital budgets will be cut by 75 percent. A partial hiring freeze also was imposed.

Fall enrollment at Baylor is 13,937, a drop of 1.6 percent from last fall. Freshman enrollment missed the budget goal by 97 students, and transfer student enrollment fell short of goal by 80.

Even with the cutback, this year's budget still represents a 10 percent increase over the previous year, Brooks noted. That 10 percent increase has funded additional financial aid and scholarships, new faculty and staff positions and academic program enhancements.

"In an environment where many of our peer institutions -- public and private -- are having to deal with actual year-over-year budget reductions and have had to lay off faculty and staff, we are very grateful that we are able to meet these challenges by reducing the rate of increase in our operating budget," said Brooks, vice president for finance and administration.

Since the Baylor 2012 vision was launched in 2001, Baylor has added nearly 200 new faculty and staff positions, funded creation of an Honors College and begun construction of a \$100 million science facility, the first student housing built on campus in 40 years and additional parking and office space.

-30-

### **Churches cut missions disproportionately, study says, but larger churches do better**

By Mark Wingfield

ROCK HILL, S.C. (ABP) -- While Protestant churches often encourage their members to tithe 10 percent of their income to the church, few churches apply the concept of proportional giving to their own missions giving, says researcher Robert Stonebraker.

When churches lose members, for instance, giving to benevolent causes usually takes a disproportionate hit in budget cutting, according to a new study by Stonebraker. "Instead of paying an off-the-top percent of local revenues as benevolence, congregations often pass along only what local programs and committees cannot grab first," he wrote.

Stonebraker, associate professor of business administration at Winthrop University, published his study in a recent issue of the journal *Review of Religious Research*. His report cited previous studies documenting a decline in benevolence -- or missions giving -- as a percentage of church income.

10/15/2003

The trend crosses denominational lines, the report says.

A recent study found that while giving to Southern Baptist churches has increased 112 percent in the last 15 years, the amount of money those churches give to missions causes has increased at only half that rate. An SBC task force recently issued a warning that the convention will face a funding crisis if this trend continues.

Researchers suggest a variety of factors contribute to the trend, including declining interest in denominational programs, lack of vision, lack of understanding of worldwide needs, discontent with denominational leadership and direction, and increasing costs to pay and provide benefits for church personnel.

Stonebraker's study suggested church size also is a factor. He examined a random sample of 2,085 congregations affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Like most other mainline Protestant denominations, the ELCA has experienced membership loss -- from an average of 275 members in 1990 to 265 in 1996.

At the same time, the real value of average benevolence giving -- what Baptists would call missions giving -- from ELCA congregations dropped from \$17,674 to \$16,091, and the share of church income going to benevolence fell from 12 percent to 10.3 percent.

Stonebraker's detailed analysis of the Lutheran data proved his hypothesis true: Smaller congregations give less per member to benevolence than larger congregations. And changes in benevolence giving correlate to changes in church membership, he found.

"When congregations lose members, revenues fall, and they fall faster than expenses," the study said. "A loss of members means leaner offering plates with few offsetting drops in cost. The pastor must still be paid, the church must still be heated, and the organ must still be repaired. The resulting financial squeeze raises the opportunity cost of sending benevolence dollars on to the larger church."

When churches grow, their benevolence giving per member tends to increase because of better economies of scale, Stonebraker noted. This is true despite documentation that larger churches tend to receive less income per capita than smaller churches.

The latter trend is known as the "free-rider" effect. Stonebraker explains it this way: "The larger the group, the easier it is to hide. Shirking one's proportionate responsibilities is tough in a group of two but easy in a group of 2,000. For those seeking only marginal commitment, large congregations are the places of choice."

Free riders raise the costs of operation for more committed members because while they don't give, they tend to demand services at high levels.

On the flip-side, the larger the church, the less expensive it is to deliver services on a per-person basis, Stonebraker added. For example, building and maintaining a structure to house 1,000 worshippers is not twice as expensive as building and maintaining one to house 500.

Therefore, the larger the congregation, the larger the percentage of budget made available for discretionary use.

Stonebraker's study documented the actual impact of size on benevolent giving: "A congregation with

twice as many members as another devoted about a 21 percent larger share of its receipts to benevolence than did its smaller counterpart in 1990 and 17 percent more in 1996. In other words, if a small congregational allocated 10 percent of its receipts to benevolence, a congregation twice as large, on average, would have been sending about 12 percent of receipts into benevolence."

But even larger congregations have demonstrated the same drop in benevolence giving as a percent of total income.

"Ultimately, it is a matter of priorities," Stonebraker said. "Denominational loyalties have declined, and with few parishioners directly affected by benevolence, benevolence is rarely the priority. The self-interest of congregations is often to keep their own staff and committees happy."

However, exceptions do exist, and those exceptions often relate to pastoral leadership, he added. "One mainline church official commented privately that pastors held the key to benevolence; that he could trace the movement of pastors from congregation to congregation merely by looking at shifts in congregational benevolence payments. Different people do have different priorities and, in the end, people determine budget allocations."

-30-

### **Congress members introduce bills designed to limit courts' authority**

By Robert Marus

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- A senator and a House member have introduced two bills designed to limit the federal courts' authority in church-state cases.

In response to recent "disputes and doubts...with respect to public displays of the Ten Commandments and to other public expression of religious faith," Sen. Wayne Allard (R-Colo.) and Rep. Chip Pickering (R-Miss.) have introduced legislation that would use a constitutional formula to limit the judges' ability to enforce the First Amendment's ban on government establishment of religion.

Pickering's bill, called the "Safeguarding our Religious Liberties Act," and Allard's bill, the "Religious Liberties Restoration Act," are virtually identical. They attempt to employ a complex interpretation of the First, 10th and 14th Amendments as well as Article III, Section 2 of the Constitution itself to prevent federal courts below the Supreme Court from declaring governmental displays of religion as violations of the First Amendment.

The bills specifically proscribe the lower federal courts from: -- Outlawing displays of the Ten Commandments on state government property, -- Outlawing the display or recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance, including the words "under God," in state institutions, or -- Banning of the display or recitation of the national motto "In God we trust" on state property or with state backing.

Some Religious Right leaders are supporting the so-called "court-stripping" legislation. "This bill is an important step in our efforts to rein in secularist, autocratic federal judges who are determined to subvert the will of the people, erase our history and ride roughshod over the states to achieve their own misguided goals," said Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty

10/15/2003

Commission, according to Baptist Press.

But the head of another Baptist church-state agency said supporters of governmental religious displays have tried this tactic before and failed. "These kinds of court-stripping efforts have never passed," said Brent Walker, executive director of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

"I'd be very surprised if even this Congress would adopt such a measure," Walker continued. "If it did, the Supreme Court would most likely strike it down as a violation of the separation-of-powers doctrine."

The Senate bill, introduced in August, is S. 1558. The House version, H.R. 3190, was introduced in September. Both have been referred to their respective chambers' judiciary committees.

-30-

### **Conservative Episcopalians denounce church leaders**

By Robert Marus

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- In a further sign that the Episcopal Church may be descending into schism, conservative Episcopalians concluded a three-day meeting in Dallas Oct. 9 by issuing a scathing indictment of the denomination's national leaders.

At the conclusion of the Oct. 7-9 meeting at Christ Episcopal Church in Plano, a Dallas suburb, 2,700 priests and laypeople issued a statement entitled "A Call to Action."

The document decries two actions by leaders of the national Episcopal Church USA. Meeting in their General Convention this summer, the leaders affirmed the election of an openly gay, non-celibate priest to be bishop of the Diocese of New Hampshire. In the same meeting, the church also voted to allow its regional dioceses to create liturgies for the blessing of same-sex unions in Episcopal churches.

Both actions enraged conservative and evangelical members of the denomination. The American Anglican Council, an umbrella group for conservatives in the church, called the Dallas meeting to respond to the votes.

"These actions have broken fellowship with the larger body of Christ and have brought the Episcopal Church under God's judgment," the Oct. 9 statement said. It also called for "the leadership of the Episcopal Church to repent of and reverse the unbiblical and schismatic actions of the General Convention."

In addition, those approving the statement vowed to "redirect our financial resources, to the fullest extent possible, toward biblically orthodox mission and ministry, and away from those structures that support the unrighteous actions of the General Convention" -- essentially de-funding the national denomination.

Finally, the statement called on worldwide Anglican leaders to rebuke and discipline the American church. The heads of the 38 national and regional churches that make up the worldwide Anglican Communion will have their own special meeting next week to deal with the fallout from both the

10/15/2003

American church's action and similar actions by Anglican dioceses in Canada.

Many of the communion's largest and fastest-growing member denominations are in Asia and Africa, where Anglicans tend to be much more conservative on sexual-orientation issues than their siblings in North America.

Frank Griswold, presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church, reacted to the Dallas statement by saying it "concerns me deeply when Christians use inflammatory rhetoric when speaking of one another or issue ultimatums. In such a climate, mutual pursuit of ways to build up rather than tear down is made more difficult, and the vast deposit of faith upon which we all agree is obscured."

However, Griswold also said that "we must acknowledge and respect our brothers and sisters who feel alienated by certain actions of the recent General Convention. We must take seriously their grief and anger and seek as best we can to stand with them."

-30-

#### **CORRECTION:**

By ABP Staff

In the Oct. 6 ABP story, "Religious Right groups rally as court begins new session," a quotation is incorrectly attributed. In the 14th paragraph, two quotations were attributed to Rob Schenck, organizer of the Save the Commandments Caravan that culminated with an Oct. 6 rally in front of the Supreme Court. The quotations should have been attributed to Flip Benham, head of Operation Save America, and were made at a rally in the same location immediately following Schenck's.

-30-

#### **News briefs from Associated Baptist Press**

By ABP staff

Missions leader Charles Bryan dies at 80

RICHMOND, Va. -- Praised as a visionary leader by colleagues, retired missionary administrator Charles Willis Bryan died Oct. 11 at the age of 80.

Bryan joined the home-office staff of the International Mission Board in Richmond, Va., in 1980 as senior vice president for overseas operations. His emphasis on research-based strategic planning ushered the IMB into a new era of strategic missions, President Jerry Rankin said in a statement. "He was a visionary who brought a unique mix of relationship skills and administrative ability in leading our overseas efforts for almost eight years."

Bryan helped initiate church-growth studies in 1968 that "went beyond just saying we've got to increase another 10 percent or something," said longtime colleague Clark Scanlon. "It said there are factors that

10/15/2003

hamper church growth and factors that seem to contribute."

A native of Whitesboro, Texas, Bryan and his wife, Martha, were appointed by the Foreign (now International) Mission Board in 1950. He served as missionary to Costa Rica, Peru and Colombia and in 1968 was elected area director for the 25 countries of Middle America and the Caribbean.

Bryan was preceded in death by his first wife, the former Martha Christian of East Point, Ga., and his second wife, the former Lois Blackburn of Waynesboro, Va. He is survived by his wife, the former Patricia Morgan Deaton of Wilmington, N.C.; two daughters; two stepdaughters; and four granddaughters. (ABP)

- By ABP staff from reports by Erich Bridges and Mark Kelly

Former seminary music instructor Burton dies at 78

FORT WORTH, Texas -- Robert Burton, longtime professor of choral conducting at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, died Oct. 8 of cancer. He was 78.

Burton, who taught at the seminary for 34 years, "was a strong man," his wife, Rosemary Burton, told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. "He was 6 foot, 2 1/2 inches. A conductor has to have a certain presence -- strength and leadership. I think he had both."

After serving in World War II, Burton earned three degrees in music from Louisiana State University and a doctor of music degree from Indiana University. He was hired by Southwestern Seminary in 1956, serving as the chairman of the music education department and later the conducting department. He retired in 1990.

A native of Little Rock, Ark., Burton is survived by his wife and daughter, Meredith Burton Madsen, both of Fort Worth, and sons Steve Burton of Euless, Texas, and John Burton of Flagstaff, Ariz.

"He had a wonderful philosophy," said David Keith, the seminary's current professor of conducting and a former student of Burton's. He encouraged everyone to do their best. He felt that only the highest quality of music should be offered to God." (ABP)

Tennessee CBF names first missions coordinator

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. -- Michael Young of Tullahoma, Tenn., has been hired as the first missions coordinator for the Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. He will help churches conduct missions work and mission partnerships and will assist in starting new congregations.

Young is the third full-time employee of the Tennessee CBF. A fourth is part-time.

A resident of Tullahoma, Tenn., and member of Highland Baptist Church there, Young most recently served as collegiate ministry specialist at Motlow State Community College and the University of the South in Sewanee, Tenn. He previously was collegiate minister at Louisiana College in Pineville for 10 years.

A graduate of Louisiana State University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Young and his wife, Susan, have three children. (ABP)

10/15/2003

-30-

10/15/2003