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Girl's brain is incomplete,
but her life isn't, mother says

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP) -- Kimberly Flint has made an art of proving doctors wrong.

Born with anencephaly -- in which the brain does not develop fully -- the 3-year-old Jacksonville, Fla., girl was expected to live no more than two hours. Three weeks after her birth, Kimberly was at home with her parents, Paul and Laura Flint.

Doctors later told the Flints that even if Kimberly survived, she never would be removed from a respirator.

Weeks later, it was removed, and Kimberly has been breathing on her own since. She later was dedicated to God in a ceremony at Cedar Creek Baptist Church in Jacksonville.

Kimberly was born with part of the brain tissue outside the skull. The tissue was removed and the wound closed. Doctors offered little hope.

"But I told them if she is going to die, send her home to me and let me do what I have to do," the mother said.

Nearly three years later, although still severely handicapped, Kimberly seems to be a happy child, bringing joy to the lives of her parents and those who meet her.

Although Kimberly's skull is somewhat misshapen and has a soft spot near the top, her case of anencephaly is much less severe than that of Theresa Ann Campo Pearson, the nine-day-old infant whose short life in a Fort Lauderdale hospital sparked a national ethical debate.

The Pearson baby's parents asked the Florida Supreme Court March 30 to rule that infants with anencephaly can be declared legally dead so that their organs can be removed for donation. Pro-life groups protested. The baby died the same day before a ruling could be made.

Laura Flint told Associated Baptist Press she is opposed to changing the legal restrictions that keep doctors or parents from pronouncing death on babies with anencephaly, which reportedly affects one of every 5,000 births. "If that law was changed, I wouldn't have had the time I've had with my child," Flint said.

"I knew when I was three months pregnant that Kimberly was going to have problems," Flint said in an interview with the Florida Times-Union of Jacksonville. The child's doctors said Kimberly probably would not survive

outside the womb. They offered abortion as an option.

"We chose to give birth to Kimberly and figured that if she died two hours after she was born, then that was God's will, and we would just love her for as long as we had her," said Flint.

Kimberly's doctors said they are surprised by her progress but that they do not expect her ever to develop to a normal level.

In June, Kimberly had a tracheotomy and now wears a tube in her tiny throat for breathing. The tube must be drained by a motorized suction pump and replaced weekly at a cost of about \$65.

Kimberly is a client of the Murray Hill Developmental Day Care and Learning Center, a day-care facility for disabled children of all ages. At the center, which is operated by a local United Methodist church, Kimberly spends her days under the watchful care of a nurse, a therapist and center director Amy Addair, who monitor her progress and help her develop motor skills.

However, money might keep Kimberly from being the best that she can be, Flint said. Much of Kimberly's care comes through state funds. But when she turns 3 in April, the money ends.

Kimberly must then become part of the public school system, which will send a teacher to her home once a week, the mother said.

Kimberly might become confined to her home, where she could be cared for by her parents and 7-year-old brother, Matthew. He learned recently how to suction Kimberly's trachea tube and dial 911 in case of an emergency, Flint said.

Paul Flint was laid off from his job as a plumber's apprentice recently. The unemployment benefits that he collects are not enough to pay the \$400-a-month fee at the center, the mother said.

Laura Flint is trying to organize a support group for parents with children with Kimberly's condition. "We want to show parents that there is help and there is hope," she said.

"I'm not ashamed of my daughter," she said in an interview with Associated Baptist Press.

Laura Flint said her Christian faith persuaded her not to abort the child when the condition was discovered. It was a decision she said she hasn't regretted.

"I am proud of the accomplishments of my daughter," she told ABP. Kimberly can recognize the voices of her parents and teachers, Flint said, and she can work the switch on an electric toy when prompted. "When we tell her to push, she will push," the mother said.

Flint said she is uncertain how Kimberly's condition compares with the Pearson baby. Kimberly is among the estimated 2 percent of infants with anencephaly who live more than seven days.

Kimberly has "certain parts of the brain," Flint said, at least the brain stem, which controls involuntary body functions. But she lacks most or all of the rest of her brain.

Flint said Kimberly looks much better than at birth. "Her face was so smashed, so ugly, so deformed," recalled the mother, who said she helped reshape Kimberly's face and head by molding them with her hands.

At the time of Kimberly's birth, the Flints were members of Cedar Creek Baptist Church in Jacksonville, where Kimberly was dedicated. "They were real supportive of me at the time," Flint said of church members.

After the church split, the family moved to another Southern Baptist congregation, which also split. Although lifelong Baptists, last year they joined Murray Hill United Methodist Church, which sponsors Kimberly's day-care center.

-- This story, which is reprinted with permission from the March 31 issue of the Florida Times-Union, was written by staff writer Joseph Davis. It includes information from Associated Baptist Press.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Earth Day is April 22.

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Environmental crisis requires more than technology, diplomacy, ethicist says

By Susan Todd Doyle

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Some people say the environment can be cleaned up using diplomatic skill and technical ingenuity, but according to a Southern Baptist ethicist, those approaches will only scratch the world's polluted surface.

"Until we recognize the root cause of the environmental crisis, our analyses and initiatives will lack the realism they need to bring about substantive change," said Robert Parham, director of the Baptist Center for Ethics.

Parham is author of the recently released book, *Loving Neighbors Across Time: A Christian Guide to Protecting the Earth*, published by New Hope press.

"The things driving the environmental crisis are arrogance, man-centeredness, ignorance, greed and moral indifference," Parham charged.

But others don't necessarily agree with Parham's view. A recent headline in *Time* magazine asked, "How do you patch a hole in the sky that could be as big as Alaska?" In answering the question, the article prescribed a combination of technical ingenuity and diplomatic skill for "extricating the planet from the chemical burden of (the) high-tech lifestyle."

Such a solution ignores the cause of the environmental crisis, Parham charged.

"You won't see *Time* say the reason for the ozone depletion is human greed or moral indifference," Parham said. "Yet the truth of the matter is, the ozone layer depletion results from our greedy lifestyles and moral indifference about the well-being of God's creation."

Parham suggested *Time* should add one more element to its "how-to-fix-it" list: Christian concern and involvement.

"The Christian community must sound the warning about the environmental threat, articulate new values and model a lifestyle which is earth-friendly," he said.

But the Christian community is the one group which has been noticeably silent in addressing the environmental issue, he said.

"We lack a sound biblical ethic of earth-keeping," he said. A "misreading" of a passage in *Genesis*, in which God told humans to have dominion over the earth, has caused the Christian community to neglect its responsibility, he added.

"Too often we have interpreted the concept 'have dominion' to mean 'have domination,'" Parham said. "Dominion and domination may sound like the same concept, but they are two radically different ideas."

The old Christian ethic was 'domination' -- conquer creation, exploit creation, destroy creation to fulfill self-imposed passions, Parham said.

"The new ethic is 'dominion' -- or 'earth-keeping,'" he said. "Earth-keeping means we guard the earth and its inhabitants from endangerment. It means we seek peace and justice in such a way that all humans benefit from earth's bounty. Earth-keeping means we live without jeopardizing earth's

life-support system for all life forms, present-day neighbors and neighbors of the future."

Much of Christian ethics is defined in terms of "space," according to Parham. But "the looming environmental crisis" requires that Christian ethics be redefined in terms of "time" as well, he said.

"We must think about love for neighbor in terms of time.... We must see those who will live in the year 2050 as our neighbors, as real neighbors. Our unseen great-grandchildren and those of others are as much our neighbors as our present family members and the family living next door.

"Neighborhood is certainly more than geography," he said. "It encompasses the calendar. If we would embrace this larger definition of neighbor love, we would put into place concrete programs which demonstrate our genuine care for those of the future."

The only way to love neighbors across time is to leave them a decent place to live, he said.

National and international governmental initiatives to protect the earth will fail unless the Christian community is willing to lead the world to embrace this ethic, Parham said.

"We have a speed limit of 65 miles an hour. That's the law. But we have an ethic that says going 70 is OK. For laws to be effective and for governmental laws to succeed, there has to be an ethic which coincides with those laws."

Churches are slowly beginning to take an active role in caring for the environment, Parham said. But whether or not their response is one of a new ethic remains to be seen.

"Increasingly we will see churches become earth-friendly," he said. "The critical question will be: Are they becoming earth-keepers because they are caught up in a larger cultural flow? Or will they do it because they are transformed by Christ, guided by the Word, and led by the Spirit?"

Already, the peer pressure is on in many neighborhoods to participate in recycling programs, he said. Everybody knows who is recycling by looking to see if who places a recycling container at the curb.

"One of the components that's missing in the Christian community is a profound sense about what our Sunday-morning faith says about our daily activities," he said.

"Jumping on the cultural bandwagon should not be the motivating force," Parham said. "As the cultural fadishness of earth-keeping fades, Christians must step to the forefront, sounding the warning trumpet, calling for a new ethic, and taking fresh initiatives to care for God's creation.

"There is a legitimate role we can play if we have the courage as a people to do that."

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Division, discontent on the rise
among Southern Baptists, polls say

By Lacy Thompson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- The Southern Baptist Convention is moving toward increased divisiveness, and a growing number of persons are not happy about it, two recent polls indicate.

Both polls suggest an increased pessimism and dissatisfaction with the state of the 15 million-member denomination. The polls were recently released by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board corporate planning and research office.

Neither poll sought to identify reasons for the views. Both polls

involved a panel of some 1,500 persons from across the convention. The panel includes pastors, ministers of education, directors of missions, deacon chairpersons and church clerks.

In one poll, a group of panelists were asked to indicate if they felt the Southern Baptist Convention is moving toward peace and unity, moving toward increased divisiveness or maintaining its present makeup with no significant movement toward increased unity or divisiveness.

In all breakdowns, more people than four years ago said they felt the convention was moving toward increased divisiveness and fewer said the denomination was moving toward peace.

In a second poll, fewer members of all but one of the surveyed groups indicated they were satisfied with the way things currently are going in the convention.

The Sunday School Board has used a panel system of polling since 1969 and has confidence it is representative of the convention as a whole, research associate Ken Hayes noted. The current panel has been in place since 1988, he said.

The recently released polls were taken in August and asked the same questions of panelists as two polls in August 1987.

The poll on the direction of the convention reflects "considerable" and "significant" movement in the last four years, a board report notes. In fact, in the most recent survey, the majority of one group of panelists and the largest portion of the other groups said the denomination is moving toward increased divisiveness.

For instance, in 1987, immediately after the adoption of the SBC Peace Committee report, 46 percent of pastors on the panel said the convention was moving toward peace and unity, 20 percent said it was moving toward increased divisiveness and 19 percent said it was maintaining its present makeup.

Four years later, the percentage of pastors seeing movement toward peace had dropped to 36 percent. Meanwhile, those pastors seeing movement toward divisiveness has almost doubled to 37 percent. Nineteen percent said the convention was maintaining its status.

That trend is reflected in all four of the other groups -- directors of missions, ministers of education, deacon chairpersons and church clerks.

In the second recent poll, only one of the panel groups indicated increased satisfaction with the way things are going in the convention. As the board report notes, other groups showed "significant changes" from 1987, when panelists also were asked if they were satisfied with the way things were going in the denomination.

In 1987, the majority of each group on the panel indicated they were very satisfied or moderately satisfied with things.

In the 1991 poll, two of the groups dropped below the 50 percent level in satisfaction and two others showed decreases of 10 percentage points or more.

Only deacon chairpersons indicated increased satisfaction in the way things are going, from 54 percent to 57 percent. Directors of missions represented the largest drop, from 53 percent satisfaction in 1987 to 38 percent last year.

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Editors see political forces
behind Parks' retirement

(ABP) -- Baptist editors have been more inclined to see political rather than spiritual forces behind Keith Parks' surprise announcement March 20 that he will retire as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Of the Baptist newspapers that by March 31 had editorialized on Parks' retirement, all expressed regret for the executive's decision and the conditions that prompted it.

Parks, who described his decision as "God's will," said his reasons for retiring earlier than planned were outlined in a February speech, in which he charged trustees with causing a crisis in overseas missions by "expecting theological conformity from those who receive Southern Baptist money."

After a 13-hour, closed-door retreat with trustees, Parks emerged to say he will retire when he turns 65 in October. A statement released after the meeting said Parks' decision was made over the objections of trustees, who "emphatically urged" him to remain as president. The statement said the meeting was conducted "in a spiritual atmosphere of prayer, repentance and confession" and affirmed Parks' leadership.

But among Baptist editors there was widespread skepticism about the apparent cordiality with which Parks and his trustees parted ways.

"No amount of window dressing by the trustees or Parks concerning his 'prayer retreat' decision...can cover up the fact that he is yet another victim of the political-theological struggle within the Southern Baptist Convention," wrote Jack Brymer, editor-manager of the Florida Baptist Witness.

"Keith Parks' resignation as president of the Foreign Mission Board is a direct result of the moderate-conservative controversy in the Southern Baptist Convention," wrote John Roberts, editor and business manager of the Baptist Courier of South Carolina.

Julian Pentecost, editor of the Religious Herald of Virginia, said there are "glaring inconsistencies between past trustees' decisions of record and the statement adopted."

"Despite Parks' consistent and gracious efforts to work with all FMB trustees," Pentecost wrote, "the scheming and the strategy to take over the FMB presidency have been in process for several years. Now that the lamentable deed has been accomplished, words of love and appreciation by those responsible for it clang like a noisy cymbal."

The statement issued after the trustee meeting "strikes us as being carefully crafted to put a good face on a bad decision," Pentecost wrote.

In a column for Baptists Today, a national moderate-conservative publication, Stan Hastey wrote: "When a person of Parks' stature, whose personal integrity is unquestioned and whose credentials as a missions leader are impeccable, announces he no longer can work with trustees whose philosophy and theology of world missions is incompatible with his own, no amount of spin control can alter the fact that this was an ouster.

"Furthermore, the time has come for the fundamentalist overlords to have their hand called on their feigned surprise and shock," said Hastey, executive director of the Alliance of Baptists. "From the beginning of their movement, this crowd has engaged in the rankest kind of hypocrisy by assuring denominational leaders to their faces of a willingness to work with them, often accompanied by syrupy expressions of Christian love, only to engage behind the scenes in the kind of back-stabbing, cut-throat politics clearly designed to get rid of them."

In an interview with Marv Knox, editor of the Western Recorder of Kentucky, Parks denied that his decision was a product of "confrontation and bitterness" between him and his trustees. "But," Parks added, "it became clear they didn't want the repercussions of my leaving more than they wanted me to stay."

That was particularly true of a "strong influential minority" of trustees, Parks said. They are the ones who were silent when trustees affirmed Parks' leadership and begged him to stay, and they were the ones who protested when a trustee asked the board to vote for Parks to stay until 1995, Parks said.

Bobby Terry, editor of Word & Way of Missouri, said the turmoil over Parks' tenure centers on the issue of where the president's loyalty should lie. "If the president's role is primarily that of manager and implementer of decisions made by trustees, then Parks has erred," Terry wrote March 12, before Parks' retirement announcement.

"But if the president's loyalty is to be to the cause of foreign missions, then Parks has acted responsibly," Terry continued. "He has called trustee attention and Southern Baptist attention to changes taking place at the FMB." Those changes include trustees interfering in FMB administration and questioning the integrity of missionaries, Terry said.

Southern Baptists, in their response to Parks' dilemma, will ultimately determine if Parks put his loyalty in the right place, Terry said.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following story has been updated from its first release March 29.
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Shift at FMB costs agency
millions from Richmond donor

By Ed Briggs

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP) -- J. Harwood Cochrane, the Richmond trucking executive who has given \$9 million to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, has written the FMB out of his will because of the agency's direction under its fundamental-conservative trustees.

As a result, the agency can no longer bank on one day receiving the millions of dollars -- estimated by one source as \$30 million -- that would have gone to the agency on his and his wife's death.

Although the 79-year-old Cochrane told the FMB he decided to change his will "six to nine months ago," he only made his decision known after Keith Parks, the missionary agency's president, told FMB trustees March 20 he is retiring because he and the trustees can't see eye to eye on how the largest Protestant missionary agency should be run.

Parks declined to comment March 28 on Cochrane's decision.

Trustee chairman William Hancock, when contacted at his Louisville, Ky., home, praised Cochrane for Cochrane's generosity to the FMB over the years. "He's been an example of stewardship and giving," Hancock said. "I'm so grateful for that. But, just as we call God to call out missionaries, we must trust the Lord to provide the financial resources to provide the needs for this mission enterprise."

Cochrane, a member of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Richmond and chief executive officer of Highway Express, reportedly has given nearly \$8 million to the Richmond-based missionary agency and to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. The trucking executive, whose philanthropy reportedly included about \$2 million in world hunger relief, is a former trustee of the Foreign Mission Board.

But while he believes in supporting missionary work, Cochrane said, the change in direction of the agency under fundamental-conservative rule and Parks' retirement mean that he isn't interested any more in its future.

"They're in my will only for food to be distributed on foreign soils.... I might have even specified Africa," said Cochrane in an interview recently.

Previously, he said, "the bulk" of his estate was destined to go to

the mission agency. He said he now plans to leave it in other hands but he declined to identify them.

Cochrane and his wife, Louise, have lavished money and land on the missionary agency and its hunger fund over the years. But they have not given any major gifts to the agency since early 1987, when they gave an entire real estate company, Hanover Real Estate Corporation, complete with land holdings.

Previous gifts from the Cochranes to the missionary agency included a cash gift of \$1 million; several parcels of land including a downtown location; 160 acres between Raleigh and Durham, N.C.; and a 233-acre family site in the Rockville area that is now the site of the board's Missionary Learning Center, which Cochrane described as "my pride and joy."

"There's so much frustration out there (in the denomination) these days," Cochrane said. "The missionaries don't know what to do. So, they're just lying back."

In recent years as the fundamental-conservative movement spread its power over the Southern Baptist Convention and into the FMB board room, questions were raised by the new order about the theological correctness of missionaries and their leaders.

Now that the agency stands at the crossroads waiting for new leadership, Cochrane said, "I'm very, very disappointed. I've been hurt for four or five years, now."

Asked if his heart is still in support of missions, Cochrane said, "To a large extent, yes. But, not as much as it was at one time."

He said his attitudes have changed "since the fundamentalists tried to change so many things and tried to put the gag rule on so many people who can't say what they think or how things should be done."

"As I see it, they (fundamental-conservative trustees) are trying to recycle everyone and make a fundamentalist out of them. And I don't like it. I don't like it a bit."

He said he has been so jaded by the experience that he doesn't have any enthusiasm for supporting the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a group backed by the moderate-conservative faction that is building its own mission arm.

He added, however, he probably will give some support to the Fellowship, which is expected to try to enlist Parks' support for its missions initiative.

"I'm sure I'll be interested in any program if Keith Parks sees fit to join it," Cochrane said. "I'm sure I would see fit to take a good hard look at it."

"And certainly I think Keith Parks is the greatest leader of missionaries I've ever seen. And heaven knows they (FMB trustees) haven't got anybody to replace him with his character and ability. It just makes you pretty sick of the whole thing, really."

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-- Reprinted with permission from the Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Major law firm to assist
BJC's bid to recover funds

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The law firm of Powell, Goldstein, Frazer and Murphy has been retained by the Baptist Joint Committee to assist the agency in retrieving funds on deposit at the Southern Baptist Foundation.

Stuart Eizenstat, former chief domestic policy adviser in the Carter

administration and a partner in the law firm, notified James Guenther, attorney for the Southern Baptist Executive Committee, in a March 23 letter that the firm, based in Atlanta and Washington, had been retained by the BJC.

The dispute is over \$381,000 held for 25 years by the Foundation in the name of the Baptist Joint Committee. The Executive Committee voted in February to ask the Southern Baptist Convention, which originally allocated the funds, for permission to redistribute them now that the SBC has cut all funding for the BJC.

The BJC, a Washington-based religious-liberty organization, contends it is the rightful owner of the funds. Both sides have suggested the issue may go to court, but the BJC has not said if it will file a suit.

Eizenstat's letter instructed Guenther that all correspondence concerning the funds be directed to Eizenstat's partner, Jeffrey Watkiss, at the firm's Washington office.

Over the years, the BJC has been paid the interest on the account, which has a corpus of \$300,000. The foundation, acting on instructions of the Executive Committee, recently sent the BJC a check for \$81,036, the amount of accumulated interest currently in the account.

However, the foundation has not honored the BJC request to release the \$300,000 fund corpus, placed at the foundation after being allocated for Baptist Joint Committee by the SBC in 1967 and 1968. In September, the BJC requested all funds in the account to purchase a Capitol Hill office building, which was the original intent of the capital-needs allocation.

James Dunn, BJC executive director, said the law firm was retained "to give the Baptist Joint Committee the level of expertise that we know is required in a matter so important and sensitive."

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-- By Larry Chesser

***** END *****