

# Associated Baptist Press

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## Missionary couple fired for charismatic practices

By Greg Warner

SINGAPORE (ABP) -- A Southern Baptist missionary couple in Singapore has been fired by the Foreign Mission Board for promoting charismatic practices.

Charles and Sharon Carroll, 13-year missionary veterans, were dismissed as missionaries for practices "not consistent with what Foreign Mission Board personnel should be encouraging and leading," according to their letter of termination.

The FMB has condoned charismatic practices -- including speaking in tongues, healing, laying on of hands and exorcism -- at the Community of Praise Baptist Church in Singapore since the Carrolls founded the church in 1990.

Jerry Rankin, who was area director for FMB mission work in the region before his election as FMB president in 1993, encouraged and supported Carroll's ministry at the time, according to both Carroll and Rankin. But recently the practices simply went too far, Rankin told Associated Baptist Press.

At issue is the experience of "falling under the Spirit," also called being slain in the Spirit, in which a worshiper falls to the floor apparently in an unconscious or semi-conscious state. The practice is not a major element in worship at the Singapore church, said Carroll, the church's pastor, but it has been seen more frequently in recent months.

Rankin said the charismatic practices at Community of Praise have caused "dissension and confusion" among Baptists in Singapore and that the Carrolls are guilty of insubordination. "All of that kind of worked together" to force the termination, Rankin said.

Carroll, 41, told ABP there is no evidence of dissension among Baptists in Singapore, where charismatic worship is common. And the couple insists they have not violated any FMB policy or the agency's doctrinal statement, "The Baptist Faith and Message."

The couple was asked to resign but refused, saying it would be unethical. They are appealing their termination, which takes effect Dec. 31.

"We don't want to leave the FMB," Charles Carroll said. "Southern Baptists have demonstrated that God has had his hand on this denomination. ... Although we worship in a different style now, this is who we are."

The couple has asked to present their side of the story to FMB trustees in person, but Rankin said no decision has been reached on that request.

Missionary terminations are not final until affirmed by FMB trustees, who could consider the case during their December or February meetings.

If the appeal fails, Carroll said he hopes to remain as pastor of the Singapore congregation, which sponsors an effective church-starting program in Southeast Asia. The church has agreed to take on the financial responsibility of paying his support.

Rankin, whose 1993 election as FMB president was threatened by his own private, infrequent practice of speaking in tongues, said the FMB allows "a great deal of latitude" for the spiritual experiences of missionaries. But missionaries cross the line, he said, when they teach that charismatic practices are "normative." Carroll crossed that line, Rankin said.

Carroll said he recently preached a sermon in which he encouraged worshipers to be open to the Holy Spirit's moving, including "falling down," but said it is "not normative for everybody."

"I told them I'm not impressed if you 'fall.' It's not a sign of [spiritual] maturity."

"It's not wrong to have a tangible manifestation of the Lord's presence," Carroll told ABP. "Who would not want that? What God is doing while they are on the floor is healing old hurts, convicting them of sin, giving them a burden for lost people."

The "falling down" experience, long a part of traditional Pentecostal worship, has drawn more public attention recently because of the "Toronto blessing" or "laughing revival," a charismatic revival based in Canada characterized by falling down and uncontrollable laughter, as well as roaring like lions and other animals.

The "Toronto blessing," which is showing up in charismatic circles worldwide, is causing confusion among churches of the Singapore Baptist Convention, wrote Clyde Meador, the FMB's Singapore-based area director for Southeast Asia and the Pacific, in the Carrolls' Nov. 27 letter of termination. The practices of Community of Praise Baptist Church are "contributing to causing dissension among the churches," Meador wrote.

Carroll said there is no connection between what is happening at Community of Praise and the Toronto revival. "I'm concerned about some things coming out of there."

Meador was traveling and unavailable for comment.

Carroll and Rankin agree charismatic practices -- and particularly "falling under the Spirit" -- are not part of traditional Southern Baptist worship.

"The first time we had somebody fall I almost came unglued," Carroll said. "It made me uncomfortable. But I knew the Lord was working."

While charismatic worship and "power evangelism" are foreign to the Western mindset and Baptist experience, Carroll said, they are increasingly important elements in successful missions work worldwide.

"Demonstrations of God's power," he said, "are prominent in virtually every culture where Christian revival and evangelism is occurring," particularly in Southeast Asia and the "10-40 window" -- the unevangelized region of the world that lies roughly between 10 degrees and 40 degrees north latitude, also referred to as "World A."

"In that part of the world, a demonstration of God's power is an awesome tool in evangelism," said Carroll, who will occasionally pray for individuals to be delivered from demons or miraculously healed.

"What we have done is to allow some experiences that are essentially incompatible with traditional Southern Baptist ministry styles or culture," Carroll told fellow Singapore missionaries when his firing was announced. "We do not believe that the unreached people of the '10-40 window' and elsewhere will ever be reached without God's miraculous intervention in their lives, which may include signs and wonders that have not been a normative part of Southern Baptist church life in the United States."

Southern Baptists are in danger of being left out of the movement of God by not being open to charismatic revival, said Carroll, whose church has sent missionaries to India, where they have started 21 churches and 42 mission points -- charismatic-style congregations that are counted among the FMB's annual statistics for church starts.

Because of its location and multinational character, Singapore is becoming a prominent missionary-sending center for Christians worldwide, Carroll said. "Billy Graham calls it the Antioch of Asia." Carroll said he hopes Community of Praise can be a launching pad for missions work throughout the region.

Ironically, Rankin himself was almost fired while serving in Southeast Asia, and later faced strong opposition to his election as president, because of his openness to charismatic practices on the mission field.

"I always felt my inerrant view of Scripture confirmed the validity of charismatic gifts," he told ABP. But, he added, he has conformed his views to fit "the context God has placed me in" as a Southern Baptist missionary.

The FMB supports missionaries who see charismatic gifts as valid, he said, "but when that moves into doctrinal matters, we have to have wisdom." Teaching that charismatic experiences are "normative" is theologically out of bounds, he explained.

Charles Carroll said he and his wife served a full term as FMB missionaries in the 1980s, starting churches in Singapore the "traditional" way, but felt "something was missing" in their ministry. They returned to the United States on furlough and leave so that Charles could complete a doctor of philosophy degree at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, studying about spiritual awakenings.

"What I could tell God was doing all over the world was a mighty worldwide revival of praise, intercession and Spirit-filled ministry," he said. "We didn't want to miss out on that. We had given our lives to missions. We wanted to avail ourselves of all the tools in the arsenal to win the battle."

Carroll, the son of Southern Baptist missionaries, said he opened himself to the Holy Spirit and experienced a "spiritual renewal" in 1989. Returning to Singapore, he started a church "where we wanted to just step out of the way and see what God could do." From a beginning of 24 people, the Community of Praise Baptist Church grew to 200 in weekly worship in first year -- large for a Baptist church in Singapore. Now averaging 400 worshipers a week, the church ministers to people from 20 different countries.

Rankin confirmed he supported Carroll's work initially. "In the past, I worked alongside him as a defender and advocate," Rankin said, "but I had to frequently admonish him and give guidance and alert him to the dangers of going too far."

The day Rankin was elected FMB president, Carroll said he prayed all night on his behalf. "I was elated. His election caused me to believe there was a real openness [to charismatic practices on the mission field]. We had hoped that the tent could be broadened."

Carroll said his firing is painful but he does not feel betrayed or bitter, even though Rankin supports his dismissal.

"I believe that Jerry has to work within certain limitations. If he were supporting me openly, he wouldn't be where he is today. ... I cannot help but believe he is doing what God wants to do."

## **Dockery nominated to head Union University in Tennessee**

By Mark Wingfield

JACKSON, Tenn. (ABP) -- David Dockery, vice president for academic administration at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been nominated to become president of Union University, a Baptist school of about 3,800 students located in Jackson, Tenn.

Dockery, 43, came to the seminary staff in 1992 as dean of the theology school and became the seminary's top academic officer in 1993. He has been widely credited as a cohesive force among the seminary faculty during three tumultuous years of transition on the Louisville, Ky., campus.

John Drinnon, a Memphis, Tenn., layman and chairman of Union University's trustees, confirmed that a special trustee meeting has been called for the first week of December for the purpose of hearing a recommendation from the presidential search committee, which he also chairs. However, he stopped short of identifying Dockery as the nominee.

Dockery likewise declined to comment on the situation at this time. However, several seminary sources have confirmed that Dockery is indeed the nominee.

"It's premature to say" until the full board meets, Drinnon said. "We've interviewed Dr. Dockery for the position of president, and the full board of trustees will be meeting sometime in December."

However, Drinnon offered a high evaluation of Dockery, calling him "a great man of conviction and vision."

"We've been very impressed with his philosophy of education, his theology and his understanding of Christian higher education," Drinnon said. "His leadership style seems to be one of a person who builds consensus. He's team-oriented, and we think would be the type person who could lead Union into the next century."

If elected to the post, Dockery would succeed Hyran Barefoot, who is retiring as university president May 31.

Dockery came to the seminary from Nashville, where he was general editor for Broadman Press. Prior to that, he taught New Testament at Southern Seminary and Criswell College in Dallas. He also was pastor of Metropolitan Baptist Church in Brooklyn, N.Y., from 1982 to 1984.

He holds the doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Texas at Arlington, master's degrees from Texas Christian University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Grace Theological Seminary, as well as a bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Dockery served as the first general editor of the New American Commentary series, currently being published by Broadman & Holman. He has edited or authored numerous books, the most recent of which is "Christian Scripture: An Evangelical Perspective on Inspiration, Authority and Interpretation."

He and his wife, Lanese, are the parents of three teenage boys.

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## **Baptist statesman Herschel Hobbs dies**

OKLAHOMA CITY (ABP) -- Longtime Baptist leader Herschel Hobbs died Nov. 28 at Baptist Medical Center in Oklahoma City. Doctors described the cause of death as a heart attack.

Hobbs, 88, was the Southern Baptist Convention's most prominent statesman in the last half-century. A popular theologian with mass appeal, Hobbs was commonly regarded as the denomination's leading expert on Baptist beliefs.

He chaired the committee in 1963 which wrote the Baptist Faith and Message statement. The statement, while not intended as a creed, describes common Baptist beliefs and is the official doctrinal position of the nation's largest non-Catholic faith group.

"This is what holds the Southern Baptist Convention together," Hobbs told a group in 1988, according to a file newspaper clipping. Southern Baptists are not a creedal people and the Baptist Faith in Message is not a creed, but a statement of what Baptists believe, he said.

Hobbs had been hospitalized three times in recent weeks with congestive heart failure.

Hobbs was longtime pastor of First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City and was named pastor emeritus after his retirement in 1972. He was SBC president in 1962-63 and from 1958 to 1976 was the featured preacher on the Baptist Hour radio program, reaching an estimated 50 million listeners a week.

Hobbs wrote 103 books, including a quarterly manual commonly used by adult Sunday school teachers as background material for weekly Bible study lessons.

He also was on the committee which issued the 1986 Peace Committee report, which was aimed at resolving conflict between moderates and conservatives in the 15 million-member SBC. The effort failed, and moderates formed the nucleus of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a splinter group that formed in 1991.

Hobbs maintained that the effort could have worked, had all parties lived up to the agreement. "I've never seen anything so ignored and misused as the Peace Committee report," he said.

Hobbs, the epitome of a denominational loyalist, refused to take sides during a decade-long battle between moderates and conservatives for control of the SBC during the 1980s. "If you take sides, your use as a mediator is done," he once said.

"Our Southern Baptist Zion has lost one of its greatest stalwarts, one of its greatest preachers, one of its greatest biblical commentators and one of its greatest church leaders and builders," said W.A. Criswell, pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church of Dallas and Hobbs' friend of 50 years.

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## **Stanley requests jury in divorce trial**

ATLANTA (ABP) -- Noted television preacher and Southern Baptist Convention leader Charles Stanley is asking for a jury trial in a divorce case brought by his wife, Anna.

The trial, originally scheduled for Nov. 27, has been postponed until Jan. 22, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. Observers expect another delay, however, and predict the case will not come to trial earlier than April or May.

Stanley filed papers Nov. 28 demanding a jury trial in the proceeding after a one-day effort to mediate the divorce failed, lawyers for Anna Stanley said.

Stanley, pastor of the 13,000-member First Baptist Church of Atlanta, is seen nationwide in through the In Touch television broadcasts of the church's services. He was president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1985-86.

Stanley and his wife have been separated since 1992. They have been married for 40 years. First Baptist Atlanta has historically refused to allow divorced men to serve as deacons or pastors.

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-- By ABP staff

## Ethicists divided over U.S. involvement in Bosnia

By Bob Allen

(ABP) -- Ethicists, like the American public, are divided over President Clinton's decision to send U.S. troops into Bosnia.

Clinton announced plans to deploy troops in a televised address Nov. 27. The U.S. will provide 20,000 troops for a 60,000-troop NATO peacekeeping operation, he said.

The mission will be limited and focused on implementing a peace plan recently initialed by leaders of Serbia, Croatia and the Bosnian Muslims, Clinton said. Deployment will begin after a ceremonial signing of the accord in Paris in mid-December.

"America's role will not be about fighting a war. It will be about helping the people of Bosnia to secure their own peace agreement," Clinton said.

"In the choice between peace and war, America must choose peace," he added.

A USA Today-CNN-Gallup Poll following Clinton's speech showed 46 percent of Americans favor the deployment while 40 percent oppose it.

Baptist ethicists contacted by Associated Baptist Press also differed over the morality of military intervention.

Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., lauded the peace agreement negotiated by leaders in the former Yugoslavia and supported the decision to use American troops to enforce it.

"Jesus commanded when there is something between you and your brother, go talk and be reconciled. The Dayton conference was a victory for Jesus' rule. Now we need to do our part to support the peace," Stassen said.

Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, meanwhile, said he has "profound discomfort with the nature of this intervention" and noted similarities with American involvement in Vietnam during the 1960s.

U.S. troops are going "into a situation where they are not going to be peacekeepers, they are going to be peacemakers," Land said. "The difference is they are coming in heavily armed, they are coming in to separate and stay between forces and implement and guarantee implementation of a peace agreement that a lot of people on the ground are unhappy with."

Land also said parts of Clinton's speech "sounded eerily familiar" due to similarities with rationale offered in the 1960s for American involvement in Vietnam.

American soldiers are likely to be targeted for hostile action, and while the president has given them authority to retaliate, they may not always be able to tell who is attacking them, Land said.

"I had a lot of friends who fought in Vietnam and one of their complaints is they never knew who the enemy was," Land said.

Land said another mistake of Vietnam was carrying out a prolonged military action without support of the American people. He said Clinton should not send troops without a joint declaration of Congress.

"I am absolutely committed that, if I have anything to do with it, we are not going to put our people at the long end of an uncertain tether without giving them sufficient support at home to do the job we've asked them to do," Land said.

Ken Sehested, executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America, said the war in Bosnia poses "a deeply complex issue." While America should have intervened "a long time ago," he said he would rather see military force avoided.

"I would say anyone who feels that the use of violence can be redemptive, I don't see how they can oppose sending U.S. troops there," Sehested said. "I happen not to feel violence can serve a redemptive purpose."

Other scholars contacted by Associated Baptist Press, however, said the use of troops is not supported by just-war principles, used by the Christian thinkers since the time of St. Augustine to determine if a conflict is moral.

"I am not at all clear that's the right thing to do," said Daniel Heimbach, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

"Speaking as a Christian ethicist out of the just-war tradition, there are a number of principles one has to consider when sending troops into a wartime situation," Heimbach said.

Heimbach said the case for just-war is "dubious," citing questions about just cause, the likelihood of success, whether armed conflict is a last resort and "proportionality," whether the harm caused by armed conflict outweighs the good.

Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, said the conflict in Bosnia "presents American Christians with their most significant moral dilemma on the global scene since the Gulf War."

While allowing the situation to continue unabated is "morally unacceptable," Parham said, he agreed intervention by troops fails to meet just-war criteria and is therefore "morally unjustifiable."

"Military intervention will not correct injustice, has little chance for success, is not the last resort for a just peace, offers little hope to immunize civilians from conflict and will not end the conflict," said Parham, of Nashville, Tenn.

Stassen said just-war principles are inappropriate in this case. "This is not a war," Stassen said. "This is about peacemaking, not about making war."

"I think this is a police action establishing the order they've agreed to," he said. "We hope that we don't shoot at anybody and nobody shoots at us."

Sehested, who has visited the edge of the war zone as part of a delegation, said Americans will be shocked when they learn the extent of atrocities in the war. "It is really hard to describe the level of bloodshed there and particularly to innocent people, to noncombatants. If these war tribunals do their work right, we will hear some of the most grisly stories of wartime atrocities that will at least approach the sheer quality of devastation as the Holocaust, though certainly not the quantity."

The intentional use of rape as a tactic of warfare has been employed in the conflict for the first time in human history, he said. "It's always been a reality of warfare, but in this situation I think it was used consciously as a wartime tactic for the first time."

Land said he urged intervention in Bosnia more than two years ago because of massive human rights abuses. "What we're looking at is the worst human rights since World War II in Europe," Land said.

Instead of ground forces, however, Land said he advocated air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs, allowing Bosnian Muslims to arm themselves for defense and forcing prosecution of war crimes with international supervision.

Complicating the discussion of intervention in Bosnia, Sehested said, is the fact that it comes in the context of a political election. "Unfortunately, one of the complications is the '96 presidential campaign is being played out here. That is an unfortunate reality," Sehested said.

Heimbach, however, downplayed talk of a political motive. Timing of the decision to deploy troops had more to do with the Dayton peace talks, he said, while admitting that politics might play a role in how the peacekeeping process is played out.

Stassen said the war in Bosnia has been fueled by repression of minority religions and he hopes any lasting resolution will recognize the right of all faiths to worship freely.

"The war shows the truth of our Baptist commitment to human rights and religious liberty as a crucial gift to peacemaking in the world," Stassen said. "I would like to see them achieve religious liberty and human rights so they don't have war in the future."

## Ethicists debate 'just-war' aspect of U.S. deployment

By Bob Allen

(ABP) -- According to the Bible, angels announcing Jesus' birth proclaimed "peace on earth, good will toward men."

Almost ever since, Christians have debated the morality of war in a fallen world.

Since the fifth century, many Christian thinkers have used the so-called "just-war theory" to determine if a conflict is acceptable. Beginning with St. Augustine and other early church leaders, scholars have acknowledged that while not ideal, war is inevitable in a world tainted by sin.

Sometimes, war can be a lesser of evils, they say, but to be moral a conflict must meet certain "just-war" criteria.

President Clinton's distinction that he is deploying U.S. troops to Bosnia not for war, but to enforce peace, is "classic just-war theory," said Ken Sehested, executive director of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.

"A limited, discreet amount of force to protect the life of an innocent neighbor from an aggressor -- that's classic just-war theory there (in Bosnia)," Sehested said.

But other ethicists contacted by Associated Baptist Press said the decision to deploy troops in Bosnia falls short of established just-war criteria.

"Speaking as a Christian ethicist out of the just war tradition, there are a number of principles one has to consider when sending troops into a wartime situation," said Daniel Heimbach, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C..

Heimbach raised questions about whether the intervention meets four of the seven historic criteria to determine a "just war:"

-- Just cause. To be moral, a war must be motivated by a "just cause," Heimbach said. In Bosnia, he said he considers the case for just cause "dubious."

Heimbach said international order is not at stake, no one has crossed borders for an invasion and that justice might be better served by giving both sides equal access to arms.

"The Serbs have been getting arms to fight their side of it, but the western world has been seeking to impose an arms embargo against the Bosnians," he said.

While agreeing that the situation in Bosnia has been deplorable, Heimbach said U.S. intervention is too late to prevent atrocities. "It looks as if the opposing forces are already at a standstill. Sending U.S. troops in there is not going to stop that; it's stopping itself," he said.

-- Probability of success.

"That was the principle reason why Bush did not send any troops in there when it was in the initial stages," Heimbach said. Bosnia "has all the markings of a situation where you might impose from the outside some kind of restraint but as soon as that is removed the tensions are the same as they always were."

-- Last resort. Just-war theory requires resorting to arms only after all other avenues of conflict resolution have failed.

"That to me is not at all clear, either," Heimbach said. "It seems to me the hostility there is pretty much coming to a standstill on its own."

-- Proportionality. A moral war must "cause more good than harm," Heimbach said.

In this case, he said, infusion of NATO and U.S. forces might backfire and exacerbate the tension because of anti-American sentiment in Bosnia.

"If it's a cause of further problems, that would raise questions about the proportionality," he said.

Heimbach, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and a Vietnam veteran, worked at the Pentagon as an adviser to President Bush during the period of the Persian Gulf War in 1990-91. He said that intervention by U.S. troops met just-war criteria.

The probability of success, the fact it was a last resort, the proportionality principle, the fact that it countered unjust aggression "were all very clear then," Heimbach said. "I think it was a much more clear situation than the Bosnian one."

But Glen Stassen, professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., saw it differently.

"That's backwards," Stassen said. "The Gulf War happened before we had tried the negotiation route seriously. Just-war theory says you go in as a last resort. It wasn't a last resort. We refused to talk.

"In this case we have done the talking and have gotten the result. This passes the criterion where the Gulf War didn't."

However, just-war criteria don't apply in Bosnia, Stassen said.

"There is a shift in ethics toward a new paradigm called just-peacemaking theory," Stassen said. He said U.S. intervention in Bosnia meets several just-peacemaking criteria.

In just peacemaking, "you affirm the valid interests of the parties," Stassen said. "Each of us -- the Serbs, the Bosnians, the Croats, and we the U.S., and NATO -- all have a valid interest in not shooting each other and not driving each other out into ethnic cleansing. Now they've agreed to do that, so we need to help enforce it."

"Another principle is that we are tied together internationally," he said. Part of the problem is that people in the region, isolated by communism, "lost their connection from the rest of Europe," Stassen said. "Now we need to reconnect them."

"A third principle is you need to restore justice and human rights if you're going to get peace," Stassen said. "This area of the world has lacked a commitment to human rights. We have to help them get it."

"A fourth is you need to reduce the arms buildup and that's just what this is about. This agreement is to reduce the arms buildup of the Serbs," Stassen continued.

Sehested said early Christians believed the Gospels teach non-violence and tried to follow that teaching literally.

"Most people don't know just-war theory was actually created out of the context of pacifism," Sehested said.

The starting point of early just-war thinkers was that an individual may not resort to violence to defend his or her own life but "what do you do when a neighbor is threatened?" he added.

Sehested said he opposes the use of violence, but rarely describes himself as a "pacifist" in part because the popular mind-set links the term with "passivity."

"I think biblical peacemakers will often cause trouble," Sehested said.

"The force of non-violent resistance is in fact a force. It is powerful," Sehested said. "Dr. King displayed it in our context better than anyone else."

He said discussions of pacifism tend to turn theoretical and it is difficult for one to claim he or she is a pacifist until faced with violence. Sehested said his typical short response to the question "are you a pacifist?" is "I'm willing to be tested."

But Stassen said military intervention in Bosnia is not necessarily a violent act.

"I think this is a police action establishing the order they've agreed to," he said. "We hope that we don't shoot at anybody and nobody shoots at us. It's not a military takeover. I don't see it, frankly, described as violence. I see it like the police in a local community. Supporters of nonviolence do support having police around."

## **High court won't hear dispute over religious research topic**

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- The U.S. Supreme Court refused Nov. 27 to hear arguments that a Tennessee student's free-speech rights were violated when a teacher refused to allow her to write a research paper on "The Life of Jesus Christ."

Brittney Settle sued ninth-grade teacher Dana Ramsey and Dickson County school officials after she declined to select another topic and received a zero on the research project.

A federal district court dismissed Settle's complaint, a judgment later upheld by the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Federal courts should exercise restraint in teacher-student conflicts "over matters falling within the ordinary authority of the teacher over curriculum and course content," the appeals court said.

As long as teacher decisions about topics and grades are based on learning goals and are not the pretext for punishing or rewarding students on the basis of race, gender, political ideology, courts should not interfere, the appeals court said.

"It is not for us to overrule the teacher's view that the student should learn to write research papers by beginning with a topic other than her own theology," the court said.

In asking the Supreme Court to review the case, lawyers for Settle argued that the appeals court decision "upholds viewpoint-based censorship of student expression."

In an unrelated action Nov. 27, the Supreme Court refused to review a lower court's award of nearly \$100,000 in legal fees to a Sacramento, Calif., clinic that mounted a successful legal challenge to anti-abortion picketing at the facility.

Defendants in the lawsuit argued unsuccessfully that the award of attorney fees would chill their free speech rights. A California appeals court rejected that argument and the nation's high court, without comment, declined to disturb the lower court ruling against the demonstrators.

The high court's refusal to hear the case was the third recent setback for anti-abortion demonstrators.

In October, justices left standing a California appeals court finding that San Jose's ban on demonstrations within 300 feet of a targeted residence did not violate the free speech rights of picketers.

Also in October, the Supreme Court refused to review lower court rulings that upheld the constitutionality of federal legislation protecting access to clinic entrances.

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-- By Larry Chesser

## **Fellowship foundation taps SBC agency administrator**

ATLANTA (ABP) -- An administrator at an agency eliminated in a recently approved restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention has been tapped to head a foundation for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Ruben Swint of Nashville, Tenn., begins Dec. 1 as president of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Foundation, according to a news release. Since 1987 Swint has been vice president for endowment and capital giving at the SBC Stewardship Commission.

The CBF Foundation was established in 1993 as a fund-raising and development arm of the Atlanta-based Fellowship. The Fellowship operates an alternative missions program for moderate churches disenfranchised by conservative leaders of the SBC and supports a variety of theological education and ethics and public policy ventures.

The Stewardship Commission is one of five SBC agencies eliminated in a streamlining of the nation's largest non-Catholic faith group to be implemented over the next five years. The restructuring was approved at this year's annual convention meeting in June. It will take effect after necessary bylaw changes are enacted next year.

Swint formerly was associate pastor and administrator at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky. He is a graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and Columbus College in Georgia.

Swint said the foundation "exists because of the mission integrity of the Fellowship and the trustworthiness of CBF global missions initiatives."

Immediate priorities for the foundation are to increase endowment funds and provide scholarships for children of missionaries, said Henry Huff, chairman of the foundation board.

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-- By ABP staff

## **Campolo takes on tobacco and politics in latest book**

By Mark Wingfield

ST. DAVIDS, Pa. (ABP) -- Heard any good sermons against smoking lately?

It's not likely, according to outspoken evangelical author and preacher Tony Campolo.

Campolo, professor of sociology at Eastern College in St. Davids, Pa., tackles the question "Do real Christians smoke?" in his latest book, which bears an equally provocative title: "Is Jesus a Republican or a Democrat?"

If the church is to be "pro-life," it ought to speak out against the dangers of smoking, Campolo argues. "It seems like the church has given up condemning smoking as a sin just when the reason to do so is indisputable and the urgent need for such sermons has become abundantly clear."

He quotes a critic of Christianity who said, "The problem with evangelical Christians is that they think life begins at conception and ends with birth. They act as though life should be protected up until a child is born, and then after that -- forget it."

The church ought to be consistent in its message, Campolo declares. "Smoking takes almost one-third as many lives as are wiped out by abortions, yet there is not even a suggestion that condemning smoking is about to become part of the pro-life agenda."

Campolo, an American Baptist, comes down especially hard on Christians and churches in tobacco-producing states. "One of the reasons why we say so little about smoking is that too many Christians make their living off of the tobacco industry," he says.

He further chides the conservative political candidates championed by the Christian Coalition, whom he charges "are not about to stand up to the tobacco industry" because the tobacco industry helps finance their campaigns.

"Another possible reason why almost nothing is said about smoking from the pulpit these days is because so many people in our congregations smoke," he continues. "Most preachers do their best preaching when they condemn the sins of people who do not attend church."

Tobacco is a drug, and the church ought to lead the way in calling for regulation of the tobacco industry, Campolo suggests.

"Last year, approximately 8,000 Americans died of overdoses of heroin, while more than 400,000 died from diseases related to smoking," he says. "Come on now! Which of these drugs -- heroin or tobacco -- ought to be considered the most dangerous for us and our children?"

The church also has failed in helping people to stop smoking, Campolo says. "Once we do recognize that cigarettes are drugs, our churches will be able to develop Christian ministries especially for smokers. To stop smoking, people need more than an admonition from the pulpit."

Other questions Campolo tackles in the book include:

-- "Do Christians promote gay-bashing?"

-- "Are Christian talk shows Christian?"

-- "What should we do with illegal aliens, or is Proposition 187 Christian?"

-- "Is television demonic?"

-- "Should Christians support gun control?"

Campolo classifies himself as neither a liberal or conservative on political issues. "When I am asked where I stand, I always ask in response, 'On what issue?'"

Evangelical Christians invented political correctness long before it became the national passion of the 1990s, Campolo says. "Ever since I can remember, I knew that being acceptable in the evangelical community meant not only believing in the doctrines of the Apostles' Creed and in the inerrancy of Scriptures ..., but also holding to all of those political and social views that evangelicals treated as having been ordained by God.

"Those views traditionally have been related more to the platforms of the conservative wing of the Republican Party than to the teachings of Scripture," he declares. "In fact, it comes as a shock to some people to learn they are not one and the same."

So, is Jesus a Republican or a Democrat?

He's neither, Campolo concludes.

For any political party to claim to have Jesus on their side is idolatry, Campolo charges. "God expects us never to let partisan loyalty tempt us into reading the platform ideas of any party into the Bible. If we are faithful to the true God, we must not allow the principles of any party to override what the Bible has to say to us."

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## **Study says giving decline precedes membership decline in churches**

By Mark Wingfield

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. (ABP) -- Declining giving patterns may forecast membership decline in the church, according to new research on church giving trends.

For example, one group of mainline Protestant denominations in the study has been losing membership since 1964 but began experiencing a decline in per-member giving in 1961.

"This data suggests that giving patterns may be a leading indicator for membership trends," reported the study's authors, John and Sylvia Ronsvalle of empty tomb inc., based in Champaign, Ill.

In contrast, increased giving patterns in the Assemblies of God church and the Southern Baptist Convention closely parallel periods of increased membership, the Ronsvalles said. For example, between 1972 and 1991, per-member giving to overseas missions efforts among Southern Baptists increased 21 percent, while membership increased 26 percent.

However, per-member giving to missions among Southern Baptists declined from 1987 to 1991, a period in which membership growth slowed considerably.

The Ronsvalles reported their latest findings in the fourth installment of a series called "The State of Church Giving," funded by the Lilly Endowment.

This year's report also examined differences in giving patterns between Protestants and Catholics.

Previous research has demonstrated that Roman Catholics give a smaller portion of their incomes to their churches than do Protestants. The Ronsvalles attempted to find out why.

In reality, Catholics may give less of their incomes to their churches, but their churches require less of their incomes to pay the bills, the researchers discovered.

"Building on a finding among Protestants that the most common attitude toward stewardship is paying the institution's bills, this report suggests that Catholics may be succeeding at stewardship at the same level as are Protestants," the Ronsvalles said. "The difference in giving levels may be due in large part to efficiencies in the way Catholic congregations are organized."

Put simply, when efficiencies in the way Catholic congregations are organized are taken into account, the adjusted level of Catholic giving comes into line with that of Protestants. Both Catholics and Protestants succeed in paying the church's bills; the Catholics merely pay the bills for less.

Factors cited in the greater Catholic efficiency include lower pay for Catholic clergy than Protestant clergy, a greater ratio of church members to clergy in the Catholic church and the Catholic church's ability to make multiple uses of one building.

"Catholics in the U.S. may have more in common with their Protestant counterparts in terms of stewardship than was previously thought," the Ronsvalles concluded. "It appears members of both Catholic and Protestant communions often define stewardship as paying the bills of the institution rather than as a spiritual discipline.

"If this is the case, then Catholic giving would be lower than Protestant giving at least in part because of efficiencies in Catholic congregational structure. These efficiencies allow Catholic church members to succeed at maintenance stewardship with a much lower contribution per member than among Protestants."

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## **Bible society offers 'hate-free' Bible version**

NEW YORK (ABP) -- A new Bible translation which removes anti-Semitic references from the New Testament has been released by the American Bible Society.

The new Contemporary English Version of the Old and New Testaments seeks to correct an anti-Jewish bias that has been carried down through Christian history, leading to atrocities including the Holocaust.

However, it was accuracy, not political correctness, that motivated the new translation, said Barclay Newman, the Bible Society's senior translation officer.

"Our concern was to produce a work as faithful to the original biblical text as possible ... that text should not do what it was not intended to do," Newman told Ecumenical News International.

"A truly faithful translation of the New Testament requires that the translator should constantly seek ways in which false impressions may be minimized and hatred overcome," he said. Translators were guided, he said, by a statement in the Bible by the apostle Paul that Jesus came to make peace between Jews and Gentiles.

The new Bible offers "a hate-free" translation of the 195 passages referring to a phrase translated in most English Bibles as "the Jews," said David Burke, who directs the ABS's Department of Translations and Scripture Resources.

The phrase was repeatedly used to refer to opponents of Jesus or his band of Jewish followers and describes a dispute not between Jew and Christian but rather a fraternal dispute between those Jews who thought Jesus was the Messiah and those who did not, Burke said.

The CEV often translates the phrase, "the Jews" as "all of our people" and the word synagogue as "the meeting place" or at times "the Jewish meeting place."

The King James Version of John 9:22, for example, reads: "These words spake his parents because they feared the Jews, for the Jews had agreed already that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue."

The new translation renders the passage: "The man's parents said this because they were afraid of their leaders. The leaders had already agreed that no one was to have anything to do with anyone who said Jesus was the Messiah."

A 100-member translating team turned to Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic manuscripts, seeking to produce a translation that is both precise and readable, Burke said.

"We did not change the text, add to it or subtract from it," he said.

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-- By ABP staff

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