

Associated Baptist Press

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Wrapup:

**Conference speakers debunk
missions/evangelism dichotomy**

By Bob Allen

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- Jesus' command to make disciples applies both across the ocean and across the street, said speakers at a missions-and-evangelism conference sponsored by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Baptist churches often tend to emphasize either global missions or local evangelism, noted Texas pastor Allen Walworth.

"For some people it's a lot easier to pray for people over there they will never have to meet," said Walworth, pastor of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas. Other churches, meanwhile, are aggressive in evangelism, but give proportionally less to missions, he added.

Churches sometimes behave as if "there is a dichotomy or a choice between those who share the gospel with thousands or one-on-one, face-to-face," Walworth said. "You don't find that kind of dichotomy in the Bible."

About 400 people attended sessions of the first-ever conference on evangelism and missions, sponsored by the Fellowship, a moderate group offering alternatives to programs of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Nov. 30-Dec. 2 conference, at Samford University's Beeson School of Divinity in Birmingham, Ala., was the first in a series of events focusing on issues relevant to churches, said Jack Snell, chairman of the Fellowship's Global Missions Ministry Group. Missions was the natural subject for the opening meeting, he said.

"At the heart of who we are at CBF is our commitment to missions and evangelism," said Snell, pastor of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla.

At the conference, the four-year-old Fellowship appointed its 100th missionary.

The Atlanta-based Fellowship, formed in 1991 by moderates unhappy with the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention, named its first missionary in 1992. With the appointment of 19 new missionaries at a Dec. 1 appointment service, the organization's missions force now numbers 100.

"Tonight CBF is about her first work. This is our primary mission," Fellowship Coordinator Cecil Sherman said. He noted that 76 cents out of every dollar given to the Fellowship is invested in global missions.

Speakers at the conference touched on a variety of missions-related topics.

The cities of the United States and the world should replace traditional foreign fields as the focus of Christian missions, urban ministry expert Ray Bakke said.

"The challenge of missions is on all six continents," Bakke, senior associate of International Urban Associates, said during a theme interpretation opening the conference.

In the 19th century, evangelical Christians focused on sending missionaries to foreign lands to learn about and minister to a particular culture. At the close of this century, however, the world's rapidly growing urban centers are bringing many cultures within reach.

"Today we don't cross the ocean to find the nations, we cross the street," Bakke said.

Bill O'Brien, director of the Global Center at the Beeson School of Divinity, said Christian missions must change if it is to survive in the postmodern age.

Describing a model from futurist Alvin Toffler's book, "The Third Wave," O'Brien noted three major shifts in civilization: the agricultural age, the industrial age and -- now -- the information age.

A product of the second wave, the Southern Baptist Convention grew a large, centralized bureaucracy to serve a "rather homogeneous" denomination. Through this homogeneous plan the SBC was able to "grow better 'crops' of missionaries, put them further afield and keep them longer" than other agencies, O'Brien said.

That model will not survive in the future, he predicted.

"Demassification is the characteristic of the third wave," O'Brien said. "In the old wave we built monoliths. ... In the third wave it flattens out, it is decentralized. The game is changed, the playing field is changed and the rules have changed."

"The local church is retaking the initiative in missions -- no more blind loyalty or allegiances," O'Brien said. "No more 'give us your money, we're your friends, trust us.'"

Tillie Burgin, director of Mission Arlington, a ministry to low-income apartment dwellers in Arlington, Texas, said Christians ignore missions opportunities every day.

"How many of you today thought about bringing an unsaved, unchurched, person with you," she asked. "Probably no one."

Jesus looked on the masses with compassion, she said, but most Christians don't.

"We see people and usually think of people as a crowd of folks who are in our way. When was the last time you were in a grocery store waiting in a long line and had compassion on the people in front of you? We don't think that way."

"Could it be that there are a whole lot of folks all around us who, if they understood, would rush into the Kingdom of God?" she asked.

Dan Vestal, pastor of Tallowood Baptist Church in Houston, described meeting recently in India with Mother Teresa of Calcutta. During a 20-minute meeting she advised him: "Any time you touch a person who has needs and love them -- Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Christian -- anytime you touch another person you are doing it to Jesus."

"I read all the literature about ministry," Vestal said. "But there is a pattern of ministry that is Jesus' pattern."

"I don't know how it's going to fit where you live and where you go and into your place, but there is a Jesus pattern."

"Does CBF really believe Muslims can be reached for Christ. The answer is 'yes,'" said Nomie Derani, director of the Arab-American Friendship Center in Dearborn, Mich.

Derani, a native of Lebanon and a convert from Islam, said the center seeks to overcome negative stereotypes that Arabs believe about Christians and to share Christ's love through ministry.

"It is very important to help them understand that God loves them, but we can never take the Bible and hit them over the heads," she said. "We can share with them the love of God. We can have the meeting of needs. It is not easy but it is challenging. It's rewarding, because God Almighty is at work."

Kevin Rutledge, missionary to the Czech Republic, identified eight qualities needed for missionaries in "a world without borders."

The Fellowship needs missionaries who will learn languages, go to "hard, unreachable places," have a "deep, spiritual relationship" with Jesus, can tolerate "isolation and loneliness," and are willing to serve others, live simply and risk.

"Finally we need the best, and I think CBF is appointing the best," Rutledge said. "We need no less than the best to go to the places where the gospel has never been shared."

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-- Photos of this conference are available from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Call Dawn Richerson at 1-800-352-8741.

Fellowship sends 100th missionary in Alabama appointment service

By Bob Allen

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- The four-year-old Cooperative Baptist Fellowship appointed its 100th missionary in a service Dec. 1.

The Atlanta-based Fellowship, formed in 1991 by moderates unhappy with the direction of the Southern Baptist Convention, named its first missionary, T. Thomas, in 1992. With the appointment of 19 new missionaries at a missions-and-evangelism conference in Birmingham, Ala., the organization's missions force now numbers 100.

"Tonight CBF is about her first work. This is our primary mission," Fellowship Coordinator Cecil Sherman said at the missionary appointment service held at the Beeson Divinity School at Samford University. He noted that 76 cents out of every dollar given to the Fellowship is invested in global missions.

Among the new missionaries are Kent and Erika Parks, who recently resigned after eight years with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, saying they could no longer represent the SBC's conservative leaders with integrity.

The Parkses, who have been working with an unreached people group in Asia, will return to Asia to work with a new ethnolinguistic group with 80 million people classified as very difficult to reach with the gospel.

"Am I scared? Yes, I'm scared to death," Kent Parks said. "But I'd rather be thrust through that door with all my fears than to stand at the door and wonder what might have been."

Parks' father, Keith Parks, is the Fellowship's global missions coordinator. Keith Parks was president of the SBC Foreign Mission Board until resigning over disagreements with conservative trustees in 1991. Kent and Erika Parks have two children: Katy, 10, and Lindsay, 7.

Also among the new missionaries are David and Ana D'Amico, who will be assigned to the United Nations in New York City as part of the Fellowship's International Diplomatic Team.

David D'Amico is a native of Argentina and currently Billy Graham Professor of Evangelism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. He noted that for much of their career, he and his wife have lived

and worked "with the rainbow peoples of the world."

As executive director of Metropolitan New York Baptist Association 1985-89, D'Amico said he had "limited contact" with the diplomatic community. "Many are lonely, misunderstood and seeking God," he said.

"Now as we go as your missionaries to New York we will be instruments of a different global missions strategy," D'Amico said.

The D'Amicos will work with one missionary couple in Washington, D.C., and another in Brussels, Belgium, in a team approach to the international diplomatic community, missions coordinator Keith Parks said. Those three cities comprise the world's largest diplomatic community, he said.

"Our goal is to minister to the individual needs of the families of those international diplomats with the hope we can win them to Christ or at least create a favorable impression of Christianity," Parks said.

Parks said outreach to diplomats is focused on countries that are closed to traditional Christian missionaries.

The D'Amicos have four adult children.

Also appointed were Bob and Dorothy Potts of Columbus, Ga. They will work in pastoral ministry in Kazakstan. A former member of the Fellowship's Coordinating Council who served on the Global Missions Ministry Group, Bob Potts said at age 62 he felt the call to missions.

"Be careful what you preach. Someday God may convict you to practice what you preach," quipped Potts, pastor of First Baptist Church of Columbus. "God's will is open-ended," he added. "You can never put a period to it."

Potts said he and his wife felt called to missions at an appointment service at last summer's Fellowship General Assembly in Fort Worth. They have two grown children: Robert Joe Jr. and Katherine.

The other new missionaries are:

-- David and Esther Abney, who will direct the Ross Avenue Center in Dallas. Both are graduates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was born in Macon, Ga., and currently is director of programs and services at New Day, Inc., a non-profit rehabilitation program in Spartanburg, S.C. She, the former Esther Hardee, is a native of Raleigh, N.C. She works as a self-employed pastoral counselor and mental health consultant. They have a son, Garrison Carter Abney, 4.

-- Jonathan and Tina Bailey, who will work two years with an unreached people group in Asia. He is a native of Greenville, S.C., and a 1995 graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth, Texas. She was born in Savannah, Ga., and is a 1994 graduate of Southwestern Seminary who worked on campus as an audio-visual assistant and graphic artist.

-- Kelly Bilderback of Nashville, Tenn., who will work with internationals in a two-year assignment at the Arab-American Friendship Center in Dearborn, Mich. A native of Sweetwater, Tenn., and graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, she currently is assistant librarian at the Historical Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.

-- Elizabeth and Steve Johnson of Livonia, Mich., who will work with an unreached people group. Both are graduates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a native of Frankfort, Mich., and is currently minister of music and education at Livonia Baptist Church. She, the former Elizabeth Arnold, was born in Houston, Texas, and has worked as a church planter in Michigan. They have two children: Ashley, born in 1989, and Jeremiah, born in 1991.

-- Cindy and Les Redfern of Richmond, Va., who will work with an unreached people group. He is a native of Nashville, Tenn., a graduate of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond and minister at Barboursville (Va.) Baptist Church. She, the former Cindy Whitlow, is a native of Richmond and co-owner and president of Pets By Cindy, Inc., in Richmond. They have a son, Christian Scott Redfern, age 19 months.

-- Darrell and Kathy Smith of Dickinson, Texas, who will work as agricultural missionaries with the Albanian people. He, a native of New Iberia, La., currently is an aquatic ecologist. She, the former Katherine Martin, was born in Goldsboro, N.C. She recently taught in a mother's day out program at First Baptist Church of Dickinson. They have two children: Melissa, born in 1985, and Alexander, born in 1990.

-- John and Christine Smith, recently Southern Baptist missionary associates in Tanzania. They have been working as volunteers at Open House Ministries in Miami and will continue to work there as Fellowship missionaries. He is native of Magnolia, N.C. She was born in Dupin County, N.C. They have four children.

Fellowship missionaries assigned to unreached people groups often work in areas hostile to a Christian witness. In those cases, it is the organization's policy not to publicly announce the specific people group to which missionaries are assigned.

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-- Photos of missionaries are available from the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Call Dawn Richerson at 1-800-352-8741.

Fellowship offers 'distinctive' missions program, Parks says

By Bob Allen

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- Through a "distinctive" missions program which treats missions globally and focuses on unreached people groups, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is taking the gospel message to people who have been neglected by traditional missionaries, according to Keith Parks.

Parks, missions coordinator for the Atlanta-based Fellowship, described the group's global missions philosophy in a breakout session at a Nov. 30-Dec. 2 "Global Missions and Evangelism Conference" held at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala.

Fellowship missionaries are assigned to "ethnolinguistic" people groups -- groups which share a language and culture -- rather than nations, because "the gospel spreads along those lines," Parks said.

By looking at missions in a new light, Parks said, the Fellowship is making inroads with peoples overlooked by other missions programs.

"We are finding people who have been neglected through the years by focusing on peoples," said Parks, former president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, who left that job in 1991 to head the Fellowship's fledgling global missions operation.

Parks said when he was at the Foreign Mission Board, there was a practice of coloring in on a map the nations where Southern Baptists have missionaries. That practice created a misleading impression that those nations were "reached" by the gospel, he said.

"You can have a missionary in a nation speaking one language and ministering to one people but you have not reached the peoples of that nation by doing that," Parks said.

Many nations are home to several distinct peoples with different languages and cultures and very little interaction between groups, he said.

One example is the Gypsy, or Romani, people, estimated to number 46 million, Parks said.

"There are Christians in every country where Gypsies live and there are Christians among them," Parks said. However, when Fellowship leaders met with a Gypsy pastor to offer to send a missionary to his people, he told them, "No non-Gypsy Christian mission group has ever sent anybody to share the gospel with the Gypsies."

People groups commonly spill beyond national borders, Parks said.

"We are sending people to the Albanian people," he said. "Some of the missionaries we are sending are going to Albania. One couple we are sending is going to Macedonia, because there are more Albanians living outside the country than in Albania."

While modern communications and transportation make it possible to "literally touch the world," Parks said, "We have not done that as Christians."

"The most unbelievable fact to me is that 24 percent of the people of the world do not have an opportunity to hear the gospel," he said.

"They live in a people group in circumstances where the Bible is not in their language, where there are not churches, where there are not Christians. They could not become Christians if they set out to do it."

There are an estimated 2,500 such groups, Parks said, "without a clear witness of the gospel." Many live in "hard" settings, traditionally closed to the gospel.

"All countries open to missionaries have them, thousands of them," Parks said.

Most of the Fellowship's missions focus is in areas where governments forbid missionaries or outlaw proselytization or where conversion to Christianity is discouraged by culture or law.

"One of the reasons a fourth of the world doesn't have a clear witness is because this is the hard part of the world, resistant -- the hostile, the dangerous part of the world," Parks said.

Parks said he began talking about focusing on unreached peoples about 10 years ago, and it was not always popular. Some critics advised him to invest resources where they bear the most results in terms of professions of faith and baptisms.

"I haven't found that in the scriptures yet," Parks said. "I haven't found the Bible saying go to the parts of the world that are responsive and don't go to the parts of the world that are hard and resistant," he said.

The history of missions reveals that places initially resistant to mission efforts can subsequently become quite open, Parks added. "Suppose no one ever goes to a resistant field. How will they become responsive?"

The Fellowship has a single global missions strategy that does not delineate between "foreign" and "home" missions, Parks said.

"When I was at the Foreign Mission Board, we could work with anyone in the world until they crossed the boundary of the United States. Then we couldn't work with them any more," he said.

In the Southern Baptist Convention, work with internationals living in the U.S. is assigned to the Home Mission Board, except for students from other nations, which is the responsibility of the Baptist Sunday School Board, he explained.

With the "masses of people moving so rapidly" between nations, the distinction between home and foreign missions is "totally inappropriate today," Parks said.

Parks said the Fellowship's missions program shares characteristics with other organizations, but none other has exactly the same focus and emphasis.

"I don't like the word unique because it is misused and overused," Parks said. "I say we have a distinctive missions program rather than unique."

Other distinctives the organization uses to describe its missions approach are cooperation with other "Great Commission" Christians, partnerships with local churches in developing effective missions strategies in their communities, a team approach to missionary assignments, supplementing career missions with short-term volunteers and providing "channel for an increasing number of Southern Baptists who see the Fellowship as their best option for missions service."

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Missions strategy must change in information era, O'Brien says

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- The Cooperative Program -- the unified budgeting plan commonly credited for growing the Southern Baptist Convention into the nation's largest non-Catholic religious group -- could not be replicated today, according to a missions strategist at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

Bill O'Brien, director of the Global Center at Samford University's Beeson School of Divinity, said Christian missions must change if it is to survive in the postmodern age.

Describing a model adopted by futurist Alvin Toffler's book, "The Third Wave," O'Brien noted three major shifts in civilization: the agricultural age, the industrial age and -- now -- the information age.

The second, or industrial wave, emphasized mass production and centralization, he noted. The SBC's Cooperative Program unified budget, introduced in 1925, was a product of its times, O'Brien said.

"I think the Cooperative Program could only have been born in the second wave. If we were waiting for something like that now that we're in the third wave, it's not going to happen," O'Brien said.

A product of the second wave, the Southern Baptist Convention grew a large, centralized bureaucracy to serve a "rather homogeneous" denomination. "We could grow better 'crops' of missionaries, we could put them further afield and we could keep them longer through this homogeneous plan of doing it this way," O'Brien said.

That model will not survive in the future, he predicted.

"Demassification is the characteristic of the third wave," O'Brien said. "In the old wave we built monoliths. ... In the third wave it flattens out, it is decentralized. The game is changed, the playing field is changed and the rules have changed."

O'Brien spoke at a conference on missions and evangelism sponsored by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of moderate Southern Baptists. The Nov. 30-Dec. 2 conference was held at Samford University's Beeson School of Divinity in Birmingham, Ala.

O'Brien said changing times mean that if missions is to survive, it must change.

"We are not undergoing transition; we are undergoing the birth of a new civilization," O'Brien said.

In the future, denominations will take a back seat to churches in missions ventures, he said.

"The local church is retaking the initiative in missions -- no more blind loyalty or allegiances," O'Brien said. "No more 'give us your money, we're your friends, trust us.' "

O'Brien said evangelical Christians are "already late" in addressing concerns about the 21st century.

"Often in our churches we're still in that insulated, isolated mode out of fear, suspicion, anger and what's happening all around us so we get into holy huddles, praise Jesus and get our 100-percent attendance pins," he said.

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-- By Bob Allen

Former SBC interfaith witness expert offers tips on witnessing to Muslims

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- Missionaries and evangelists hoping to reach America's cities should be prepared to confront Islam, an interfaith witness expert told a small group attending a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship conference.

Islam is establishing itself as the religion of choice for growing numbers of urban African-American males, said Gary Leazer, former director of the Interfaith Witness Department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"God desires that all people come to him," Leazer said. "We have to see the Muslim as one of the people groups and faith groups we want to reach."

Leazer was fired by the Home Mission Board after authoring a controversial study on Freemasonry. He formed his own ministry, the Atlanta-based Center for Interfaith Studies, in October 1993. He is currently working in association with the Fellowship as an associate director for religions with the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games.

Leazer led a breakout session on how to witness to Muslims at a missions-and-evangelism conference sponsored by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. The Nov. 30-Dec. 2 conference was held at the Beeson School of Divinity on the campus of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala.

The U.S. Muslim population is estimated at 4.3 million and is growing rapidly, Leazer said. Islam is expected to surpass Judaism as America's largest non-Christian religion in the next four years, he added.

However, Leazer estimated that in America "only about 10 percent are what I would call devout Muslims." Others "would be Muslim if you ask them" but do not regularly observe the regular prayers and fastings observed by devout followers, he said.

About 42 percent of U.S. Muslims are African-Americans, most of whom have at some point converted from at least a nominal Christianity, Leazer said.

Any missions strategies focused on America's cities should involve a witness to Muslims, he added. "One of the things we want to do as Christians is be an effective witness in the part of the world where we live and Muslims are certainly a part of that world," Leazer said.

Many Muslims are interested in learning about Christianity and in studying the Bible, Leazer said. Islam shares many Christian traditions, but frequently views them differently, he added.

Muslims accept Jesus as a prophet, as well as his virgin birth, miracles and second coming. However, they reject the crucifixion and do not describe Jesus as the Son of God. "I personally would not call Jesus the Son of God if I were talking to a Muslim," Leazer said. "I would call him messiah because the Koran calls him Messiah Jesus."

Muslims reject the cross because they believe the prophets are "infallible persons" who would not suffer a sinner's death and that it is impossible for one person to die for the sins of another.

"One of the ways I would propose we talk to a Muslim about the crucifixion is to say the crucifixion shows how much God loves us," he said.

Leazer recommended using teachings common to Islam and Christianity as a "window of opportunity" to witness to Muslims. He urged Christians witnessing to Muslims not to "teach them what they're supposed to believe." While not trying to mislead prospects about Christianity, a witness should "state in a different way" teachings that Muslims would find objectional, he added.

"Be ready to answer objections when they come up, in simple terms, but don't bring them up yourself," he said.

He suggested involving Muslim prospects in Bible study, beginning with the gospel of John or the book of Galatians. "I would recommend you not use the King James Version," Leazer said, because of its identity with the history of Christianity, which most Muslims associate with the Crusades.

In many countries, Leazer noted, it is against the law to convert from the Muslim faith. "We don't face those kind of things in the U.S. but there still is a lot of cultural pressure," he said.

It is common, he said, for people from a Muslim background to respond to a gospel presentation privately but refuse a public baptism. "You are just going to have to recognize that and let the Holy Spirit deal with that person," Leazer said.

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-- By Bob Allen

Fellowship approves relief funds for Bosnia

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship is sending \$91,000 in relief funds to the former Yugoslavia.

The Atlanta-based Fellowship's Global Missions Ministry Group approved the appropriations in a meeting Nov. 30 in Birmingham, Ala. The group also approved other relief funds for use in northern Iraq, the Causasus region in the former Soviet Union and south Georgia for cleanup after Hurricane Opal.

About \$30,500 will buy five 24-ton truckloads of potatoes to be delivered into Bosnia by a Croatian Baptist group that works closely with a Canadian missionary. Another five truckloads of potatoes will be sent to refugee-camp destinations in Croatia, where they will be used to feed Bosnian refugees and displaced Croats and Serbs.

An additional two 20-ton containers of corn seed will be delivered to Croatia through Croatian Baptist Aid, in cooperation with Baptist World Aid, the Baptist World Alliance relief arm. The cost is \$15,000.

Another \$15,000 was set aside to purchase medicine, clothes, mattresses, blankets and hygiene and sanitary goods to be distributed in Serbia by the Union of Baptist Churches in Serbia and the Evangelical Baptist Churches in Yugoslavia, also in cooperation with the Baptist World Alliance.

A total of \$9,681 was approved for supplies and food for 150 refugees at the Zawita Camp in northern Iraq.

Another \$10,000 will be used to get relief goods including blankets, warm clothing and selected medical items to the Caucasus people group.

The group approved expenditures of \$14,626 for cleanup after Hurricane Opal. The Georgia Cooperative Baptist Fellowship provided a cellular phone for surveying damage in south Georgia. Florida's state Fellowship sent a truckload of food, ice, chainsaws, generators and other supplies.

Other funds paid for tools, food and lodging for a group of college students from First Baptist Church in Clemson, S.C., that traveled to assist with cleanup. Fellowship contacts in Texas asked for \$5,000 to be contributed to the Baptist General Convention of Texas' Baptist Men's disaster response.

The relief funds totaled about \$125,000, according to a Fellowship official.

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-- By ABP staff

Maston Colloquium encourages virtues and values in public life

By Orville Scott

DALLAS (ABP) -- Ethicists in a Maston Colloquium on "Virtues and Values: What Christians Can Do" issued a letter to America, urging the nation to uphold values of wisdom, courage, temperance, justice, righteousness, peace, faith, hope, love and freedom.

Colloquium participants cited recent polls emphasizing that most Americans are virtuous people. Ninety-five percent of Americans never use illegal drugs, 88 percent drink moderately or not at all, 95 percent do not cheat on their taxes, 85 percent have never cheated on a spouse, 96 percent believe in God and 55 percent attend church regularly, they noted.

However, the letter said, America could be better if certain "virtues and values" were "preached, taught and practiced throughout the land."

"These habits of the heart, these strengths of character, these virtues and values are important to our personal lives and to our common well-being. We diminish them if we try to privatize them and miss their application to our life together as a people," the letter said.

Colloquium participants described these values as:

-- Wisdom, which "discerns between good and evil, between right and wrong. In difficult situations, wisdom knows how to weigh between competing goods or between competing evils."

-- Courage, "the moral grit to choose right, to reject wrong and to walk in the good way in the face of adversity."

-- Temperance, which means "bridling desire, rejecting greed and shunning excess."

-- Justice, defined as "love at a distance; it moves beyond the circle of personal likes and dislikes and gives to all their due."

-- Righteousness, or "doing the right thing without self-righteousness because God's righteousness sets the standard."

-- Peace, "the condition of being in right relationship to God, to others and to all creation."

-- Faith, "trust in God which frees us to accept ourselves and to serve others."

-- Hope, which "enlivens all the other virtues and values, for it accepts God's ultimate control of the future for the good of all his creation."

-- Love, which "delights in the goodness of God and actively seeks the good of others."

-- Freedom, "the God-given power of choice, constrained by the God-given power of love."

Participants in the Dallas colloquium included ethics professor William May of Southern Methodist University; former university professor Elizabeth Morgan of Richardson, Texas; Richard Pierard, professor of history at Indiana State University; Herbert Reynolds, chancellor of Baylor University; Frosty Troy, editor of "The Oklahoma Observer" in Oklahoma City; and Foy Valentine, president of the Dallas-based Center for Christian Ethics.

The letter acknowledged that: "We recognize that this focus on virtues and values is not the solution to all our personal and social ills. Indeed, both we ourselves and America itself are still works in progress."

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American Baptist ministry arm restores funding to peace group

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (ABP) -- The national ministry arm of the American Baptist Churches in the U.S.A. has voted to re-establish ties with the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America.

The ABC's Board of National Ministries voted in March to sever ties after the Baptist Peace Fellowship adopted a resolution expressing openness to homosexuals. At a meeting in November, the board voted 33-18 with three abstentions to reverse that decision, citing "historic ties" with the peacemaking group.

Ken Sehested, executive director of the Memphis, Tenn.-based Baptist Peace Fellowship reported the decision in a Dec. 5 news release. He said he was "obviously very pleased" by the vote, noting that "it puts a number of important relationships back on trustworthy grounds."

Sehested said it was never the Peace Fellowship's goal to win a debate over the issue of sexual orientation but to "urge congregations to put this matter on the table for discussion."

In a context of prayer, Bible study and discussion "the Spirit will help us rightly divide the word of truth" on the issue, he said.

Sehested also said he is encouraged by "signs" that the Peace Fellowship's relationship with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship might also be improving. The Fellowship's Coordinating Council deleted a budget line item for the group in July.

After that vote, however, Sehested said he was invited to submit a funding proposal for a specific project. Also, in a Nov. 9 column in Baptists Today, Carolyn Crumpler, immediate past moderator of the Fellowship, noted "there are many areas" in which the two organizations "can walk hand-in-hand."

"We have not excluded (the Peace Fellowship) from our number, nor from the possibility of future funding," Crumpler wrote.

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-- By ABP staff

Dean, associate dean named at Campbell divinity school

BUIES CREEK, N.C. (ABP) -- The dean and associate dean have been named for the newly created Campbell University Divinity School in Buies Creek, N.C.

Michael Cogdill, currently religion professor and chair of the university's department of religion and philosophy will be the divinity school's first dean, announced Campbell President Norman Wiggins.

Bruce Powers, currently professor of Christian education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., was named associate dean of the divinity school.

A recent news release from Southeastern Seminary reported that Powers had announced plans to "retire" after 18 years at the seminary.

Southeastern President Paige Patterson commended Powers, saying he "contributed significantly to the making of Southeastern" and through his teaching and books has "advanced knowledge in both Christian education and church administration."

Both administrators will begin Jan. 2. The school plans to offer a limited class schedule next fall, with its charter class to be admitted officially in the fall of 1997.

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-- By ABP staff

Supreme Court rejects abortion funding dispute

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Colorado has lost its bid to deny Medicaid-financed abortions for pregnancies resulting from rape and incest.

Without comment, the U.S. Supreme Court refused Dec. 4 to review lower court rulings that the state could not deny payment for such abortions as long as it chooses to participate in Medicaid, a jointly funded federal-state program that provides health care services for indigent Americans.

At issue in the dispute is a 1984 amendment to Colorado's Constitution that prohibits the state from funding abortions except to save the life of the expectant mother.

For a decade, Colorado's amendment was consistent with federal policy set by the Hyde Amendment. Named after its sponsor, Rep. Henry Hyde, R-Ill., the Hyde Amendment is regularly added to funding bills for federal health care programs. Until 1993, the Hyde measure prohibited the use of federal funds for abortions except when the life of the mother was endangered. But the 1993 version of the Hyde Amendment expanded the exceptions to include pregnancies resulting from rape or incest.

Colorado's policy was challenged after the new Hyde Amendment was enacted, and a federal district court ordered the state to stop enforcing its policy. That action was upheld by a federal appeals court, which said Colorado's abortion funding restriction "violates federal Medicaid law insofar as it denies funding to Medicaid-eligible women seeking to end pregnancies that are the result of rape or incest."

If Colorado chose not to participate in Medicaid, it would not be required to fund any abortions, the appeals court noted.

"But because Colorado has decided to participate and accept federal Medicaid funds, it must do so on terms established by Congress," the court said.

In asking justices to reverse the lower rulings, Colorado officials called on the nation's high court to resolve the question of whether states participating in Medicaid must fund all abortions for which federal funds are available.

The state's petition noted that the lower court decision could "jeopardize Colorado's continued participation in Medicaid."

Colorado's Medicaid program provides services to 300,000 people each year and is financed with \$700 million contributions from both the state and federal governments, according to the state officials.

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Lawsuit accuses church leader of misappropriating funds

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- A Texas Baptist church is suing its former business administrator, charging he misappropriated as much as \$600,000 in church funds.

Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth filed suit Dec. 1 in state district court against J. Douglas Leshner, who resigned from the church's staff last October after a large amount of money was found to be missing.

The suit alleges that Leshner abused his position of trust and "misappropriated said funds by fraud and theft."

In November, church officials reported that as much as \$600,000 was unaccounted for in financial statements. The church took a special offering Dec. 3 to replace about \$625,000 in designated funds. About \$250,000 was collected, church leaders said.

Leshner's attorney, Richard Henderson, told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram he will file a general denial of the allegations.

"We were disappointed to read about this lawsuit in the newspaper," Henderson said. "I certainly believe there was no criminal intent or activity by my client whatsoever."

Henderson said he believes the amount of missing funds claimed by the church is inflated.

"It's not possible for there to be \$600,000 missing," Henderson said.

The church's lawyer, Jonathan Nelson, would not discuss whether criminal charges are being considered.

Dennis Smith, chairman of deacons, issued a statement giving reasons for the suit.

"We believe this action is necessary to attempt to find out exactly what happened during the time Mr. Lester was administrator," he said. "Other comments would be inappropriate because the matter is best dealt with by the judicial system."

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-- By Jim Jones

CORRECTION: The Nov. 29 ABP story, "Dockery nominated to head Union University in Tennessee," lists an inaccurate enrollment figure in the first paragraph.

Actual enrollment at the school in Jackson, Tenn., is about 2,000.

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