

# Associated Baptist Press

Editor: Greg Warner  
Associate Editor: Bob Allen  
Phone: (904) 262-6626  
Fax: (904) 262-7745

May 12, 1998

(98-34)

## In this issue:

- Article on 'family' proposed to SBC statement of faith
- Bible verses cited in family article
- Ethicist takes issue with family statement
- Memorial services held for slain Baptist missionary
- Alabama conservative group names steering committee
- South Carolina CBF hires first coordinator
- CBF assigns first personnel to ethnic minorities in China

## Article on 'family' proposed to SBC statement of faith

By Bob Allen

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- Southern Baptists will consider next month adding a section on family to their official confession of faith.

The statement, being proposed at the June 9-11 Southern Baptist Convention in Salt Lake City, limits sexual expression to marriage, which it defines as a lifelong commitment between a man and woman. It also encourages wives to submit to their husband's authority and holds parents responsible for their children's upbringing "from the moment of conception."

If approved, the article, drafted by a special committee named by SBC President Tom Elliff, will be added to the "Baptist Faith and Message," a 35-year-old statement of Baptist beliefs. Suggested last year by Charles Lawson, a layman from Linthicum Heights, Md., it would be the first amendment to the statement since its adoption in 1963.

Anthony Jordan, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and chairman of the committee, said there has been a growing attack on family values over the years.

"Divorce, homosexuality, abortion and abuse all tear at the fabric of family," he said. "While there has been a barrage of books from every perspective on family, we have failed to give a clear call to biblical principles of family life."

Jordan said the proposed article sets out "in unequivocal terms the clear teaching of Scripture" on families. "Baptists -- and indeed any family -- will be blessed by following the teaching of God's word on family relationships," he said.

The complete proposed addition, released May 8 in Baptist Press, is:

"God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

"Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel for sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

"The husband and wife are of equal worth before God. Both bear God's image but each in differing ways. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to his people.

"A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family.

"A wife is to submit graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being 'in the image of God' as her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his 'helper' in managing her household and nurturing the next generation.

"Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents."

Mary Mohler, a member of the committee, said critics will likely take the statement's description of the roles of husbands, wives and children as a "male-female" issue. "But it's a biblical issue and I'm proud of the work we've done," said Mohler, wife of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Albert Mohler and a stay-at-home mother in Louisville, Ky. "It is a strong statement and one that may be viewed with disdain by the world, but we stand by it," she said.

The committee's other female member, Dorothy Patterson, a Bible scholar who is married to Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, also defended the statement. "I'm very pleased at this time, when the family is under such an assault and attack from every quarter, that Southern Baptists have decided to go back to their biblical roots, determine what God says about the family and include that in their statement to the world that this is what we as Baptists believe," said Patterson, of Wake Forest, N.C.

But Becca Gurney, president of Baptist Women in Ministry and an ordained minister in Austin, Texas, criticized the statement as an effort to "more narrowly define God's love" and to "dictate an unrealistic family model for all to follow."

Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville, Tenn., complained the committee drafting the statement "forgot Jesus" in their reading of what the Bible says about family relationships and "made June Cleaver a biblical model for motherhood."

Parham said Jesus defined family "first in terms of loyalty to God, not blood ties" and "emphasized family turned Godward, not inward."

The statement also implies that wives are not to work outside the home, Parham said, noting that dual-career couples represent 45 percent of the nation's labor force and 60 percent of all marriages.

In addition to Jordan, Mohler and Patterson, other members of the committee are Damon Shook, pastor of Champion Forest Baptist Church in Houston; Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission; Bill Elliff, pastor of First Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., and John Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention.

The committee listed the following Bible passages as the basis for the proposed article:

Gen. 1:26-28; 2:18-25; 3:1-20; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Josh. 24:15; 1 Sam. 1:26-28; Ps. 78: 1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Prov. 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Eccl. 4:9-12; 9:9; Mal. 2:14-16; Matt. 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Rom. 1:18-32; 1 Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Col. 3:18-21; 1 Tim. 5:14; 2 Tim. 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Heb. 13:4; 1 Pet. 3:1-7."

The committee will also present a commentary expanding on the article, Jordan said, to "enhance understanding" for "those outside our faith who seek to comprehend Baptist beliefs regarding family."

The "Baptist Faith and Message," revised in 1963 from an earlier 1925 version, is not officially a creed since it is not binding on churches or individual believers. Southern Baptist seminaries and other agencies, however, require denominational employees to accept its 17 tenets. The statement's first article, titled "The Scriptures," was used as a litmus test by conservatives who won control of the nation's largest non-Catholic faith group from moderates during the 1980s.

The statement's other articles are on "God," "Man," "Salvation," "God's Purpose of Grace," "The Church," "Baptism and the Lord's Supper," "The Lord's Day," "The Kingdom," "Last Things," "Evangelism and Missions," "Education," "Stewardship," "Cooperation," "The Christian and the Social Order," "Peace and War," and "Religious Liberty."

-30-

-- Dana Williamson contributed to this story.

### **Bible verses cited in family article**

(ABP) -- Following are some of the Bible verses cited by a committee proposing a new article on "Family" as an amendment to the 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message" doctrinal statement. They are quoted from the New American Standard Bible.

Gen. 1:27 -- And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Gen. 3:16 -- To the woman (God) said, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth, in pain you shall bring forth children; yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you."

Prov. 5:15-20 -- Drink water from your own cistern, and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone, and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love. For why should you, my son, be exhilarated with an adulteress, and embrace the bosom of a foreigner?

Prov. 13:24 -- He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

Prov. 22:15 -- Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

Prov. 23:13 -- Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you beat him with the rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from Sheol.

Prov. 29:15 -- The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

Mal 2:16 -- "For I hate divorce," says the God of Israel ... .

Matt. 5:31-32 -- "And it was said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of dismissal,' but I say to you that every one who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

Rom 1:26-27 -- For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire towards one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

Eph. 5:22-25 -- Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is also the head of the church. ... Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Eph. 6:1-4 -- Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother" (which is the first commandment with a promise) "that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth." And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Heb. 13:4 -- Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

I Peter 3:1-7 -- In the same way, you, wives, be submissive to your own husbands, so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. And let not your adornment be merely external -- braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, and putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. ... Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. ... You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman ... .

Prov. 31:10-31 -- An excellent wife, who can find? For her worth is far above jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain. She does him good and not evil all the days of her life. She looks for wool and flax, and works with her hands in delight. She is like merchant ships: she brings her food from afar. She rises also while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens. She considers a field and buys it; for her earnings she plants a vineyard. She girds herself with strength, and makes her arms strong. She senses that her gain is good; her lamp does not go out at night. She stretches out her hands to the distaff [a staff for holding flax or wool while spinning] and her hands grasp the spindle. She extends her hands to the poor; and she stretches out her hands to the needy. She is not afraid of the snow for her household, for all her household are clothed with scarlet. She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies belts to the tradesmen. Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she smiles at the future. She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying: "Many daughters have done nobly, but you excel them all." Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised. Give her the product of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates.

-30-

-- By ABP staff

## **Ethicist takes issue with family statement**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP) -- A moderate Baptist ethicist who emphasizes family issues disagreed with a Southern Baptist committee's interpretation of what the Bible teaches about families.

"They forgot Jesus," said Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville, Tenn., in criticizing the group which drafted an article on family being proposed as an amendment to the "Baptist Faith and Message" doctrinal statement.

The statement, drafted by a special committee named by SBC President Tom Elliff, defines a family as "persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption," while referencing numerous Old and New Testament Bible passages.

But Parham said the committee overlooked other relevant passages.

"A Christian definition of family should be grounded in Jesus' definition of family," Parham said. "Jesus defined family first in terms of loyalty to God, not blood ties."

Parham cited Luke 8:19-21, where Jesus, when told his mother and brothers were waiting outside to see him, responded, "My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

"At first blush, Jesus' definition of family as 'those who hear ... and do' may sound anti-family," Parham said, "yet we know that Jesus told a parable about family (Luke 15:11-32), talked about the salvation of a household (Luke 19:9) and cared about his mother's placement (John 19:26-27)."

Parham said Jesus "emphasized family turned God-ward, not inward." Jesus spoke "against the self-centered family," Parham said, when in Matt. 20:20-23 he rebuked the mother of James and John for wanting to see her sons seated on his left and right.

Jesus spoke "for the outwardly focused family" in Luke 11:27-28, Parham said, where a woman utters a blessing for Jesus' mother and he replies, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God, and observe it."

"The statement forgot Jesus and made June Cleaver a biblical model for motherhood," Parham said.

-30-

-- By Bob Allen

## **Memorial services held for slain Baptist missionary**

ASH GROVE, Mo. (ABP) -- Mourners gathered in memorial services in Missouri and Colombia to pay tribute to a Southern Baptist missionary slain April 21 in Bogota.

Mourners filled First Baptist Church of Ash Grove, Mo., April 27 to celebrate the life of Charley Hood Jr., an 11-year missionary shot in the chest while he sat in the driver's seat of his truck in front of his home in Bogota. He died on the way to a hospital. Two men were seen fleeing the scene. The motive for the attack was unclear.

Hood, 44, served as a pastor and a minister of education, youth and evangelism at Baptist churches in Missouri before being appointed as a missionary by the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in 1987.

Missouri Baptist Convention president Wendell Page said he was "shocked and sort of numb" when he learned of Hood's death. Page is pastor of First Baptist Church in Lee Summit, where Hood once served on staff. Page remembered Hood as an outgoing staff member who had a good rapport with the congregation.

Jim Hill, executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention, was a college classmate and friend to Hood. "Charley was a warm-hearted, likable guy," Hill said. "He was just a good friend to everybody."

Two memorial services -- one in English and one in Spanish -- were conducted April 23 in Bogota.

John Magyar, a 29-year missionary to Colombia, estimated 130 people attended the English-language service, including many of Hood's daughter's high-school classmates and fellow missionaries. Another 350-400 attended Spanish services led by leaders of the Colombia Baptist Convention.

"Both services celebrated Charley's life and the impact of his ministry in Colombia in very positive ways," Magyar said. "This tragic human event is already being used of God to bring nationals and missionaries closer together to share the gospel with even more urgency to this strife-torn country."

Colombia, with its infamous drug industry and an undeclared civil war, is one of the world's most violent nations, with a murder rate nine times that of the United States. According to Christianity Today magazine, at least 120 evangelical church leaders in Colombia have been murdered since 1995.

Hood is the 14th member of a Southern Baptist missionary family to be murdered in the 153-year history of the International Mission Board and the first in seven years.

Page, a former missionary, said he hoped safety concerns raised by Hood's death would not deter people who feel called to international missions. "My reaction is it's unsafe not to serve where the Lord wants you to go," he said.

Hood was born March 8, 1954, in Miami, Okla. He was a graduate of Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Mo., and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

Survivors include his wife, Becky; a daughter, Rebecca Dawn, an 11th grader who lives at home; a son, Aaron Charles, a student at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ark.; his parents, Charles and Ruth Hood of Ash Grove, Mo., and two brothers.

Hood's body was returned to the United States for burial in Kansas City.

-30-

-- By Tim Palmer and Bob Allen

### **Alabama conservative group names steering committee**

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP) -- Southern Baptist Conservatives of Alabama elected a steering committee April 20 at a meeting in Birmingham, Ala.

The group, which currently claims 101 members, is in a membership drive with a goal of 500 in order to be "taken seriously by Alabama Baptists," said interim moderator Steve Loggins.

Loggins, director of missions for North Jefferson Baptist Association, denied rumors that the organization formed last year is a "splinter" group or that it wants to control the million-member Alabama Baptist State Convention. "We don't want to take over, just be heard and to keep our state convention firmly attached to the SBC; that's all," he said.

With a decade-long struggle in the 1980s between moderates and conservatives for control in the Southern Baptist Convention fading into history, and conservatives firmly in charge of the national convention, similar skirmishes have filtered down to the states.

Some conservative state groups have formed in recent years, partly to counter the presence of state chapters of the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Conservative groups in two states -- Virginia and Texas -- eventually split off to form separate conventions in their moderate-led states.

-30-

-- By Johnie Sentell and Bob Allen

## **South Carolina CBF hires first coordinator**

COLUMBIA, S.C. (ABP) -- The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of South Carolina has hired veteran pastor Marion Aldridge as its first coordinator.

Aldridge, 51, has been pastor of Greenlawn Baptist Church in Columbia since 1984.

He was elected by the group's coordinating council at a May 7-8 meeting. He will begin work June 1, with a salary of \$50,000 plus benefits.

The state group is affiliated with the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a moderate Baptist organization based in Atlanta.

-30-

-- By Sue Poss

## **CBF assigns first personnel to ethnic minorities in China**

By Robert O'Brien

ATLANTA (ABP) -- The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship has assigned its first career personnel to China to identify and focus on an unevangelized ethnic minority.

David and Esther Hardee Abney, who have been CBF missionaries working with ethnic groups in Dallas since 1995, will transfer in mid-August to the city of Nanning in Guangxi, a southern province bordering Vietnam.

After completing language study at Guangxi University, the Abneys will begin to work as international coordinators for the Atlanta-based Fellowship, said Ron and Ina Winstead, who coordinate CBF ministries in China in cooperation with the China Christian Council (CCC) and Chinese churches.

The Winsteads will shift their base of operations from Hong Kong to Nanning in June. They will add teaching at Guangxi University to their other responsibilities.

"China's government recognizes more than 50 separate 'nationalities' or ethnic minorities within its borders," said Gary Baldrige, CBF associate global missions coordinator. "Some are evangelized. Others remain neglected, although increasingly in the 1990s, various mission groups and churches have taken a strong interest in identifying and engaging them."

The Fellowship initially will focus on the most neglected minorities in two provinces -- Guanxgi for now and eventually Yunnan -- using career personnel, volunteers and persons engaged in its Envoy (tentmaker) program. Three envoy teachers, who earn their own support, now work in China. CBF leaders hope to have four more of them in place there this fall, said Tom Prevost, associate global missions coordinator.

Baldrige and CBF Global Missions Coordinator Keith Parks said CBF will conduct all its work in China openly. The China Christian Council, China's official Protestant organization, has refused to cooperate with missionary organizations which operate separate "tracks" in China -- using some personnel in positions which relate to the CCC while sending others to work with unregistered house churches without communicating with official church leaders or the government.

The CCC, which claims to represent 10 million to 14 million Chinese Christians, recently broke off relations with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board over that issue, accusing the Richmond, Va.,-based agency with "clandestine" and "illegal" missionary work in China.

IMB President Jerry Rankin denied that charge, saying: "We would not consider [what] we are doing as secretive, deceptive or clandestine simply because it is not channeled through the China Christian Council." The IMB defended the two-track approach as necessary to preach the gospel to China's unreached masses.

But Parks, Baldrige and the Winsteads disagree that working openly will limit the spread of the gospel as some have contended.

"The China Christian Council wants to see the gospel spread and churches started in China as much as we do," Baldrige said.

Ron Winstead said CBF can "work openly in China because we're seeking to show proper respect to both the China Christian Council and government regulations regarding foreign religious workers in China."

"Cooperation with the CCC is the most effective means to use CBF resources in China, and any government restrictions are negligible when we work openly," he said.

"The CCC leaders are the experts on both the church and the context for evangelism in China, and we want to learn from them and work with them and they have given us an open door to do just that," Winstead said. "The Chinese church leaders are committed to reaching their nation for Christ and they are showing us how we can assist them."

"Foreigners may not gather Chinese for Bible study or worship, but foreigners can assist local Chinese church leaders in gathering people together and leading Bible study and worship," said Winstead, who has taught and ministered for 27 years in Taiwan and China. "One of the greatest thrills we have experienced is to hear 'our' sermons preached by young Chinese pastors to thousands of people who come to worship each Sunday. We share ideas with the young church workers and they go out and try them."

Winstead said the Chinese government places no restrictions on the number of baptisms in a Chinese church. "Chinese profess their faith just as any person in the U.S. [after] personal and often private counseling with another Christian and then a public identification with the church through baptism."

Winstead said lifestyle evangelism has been the "key to the unprecedented church growth in China in recent years" and noted that "CBF personnel assigned to China will utilize this as their most effective means of witness."

For example, he said: "CBF envoy and volunteer Christian teachers in the classroom stand before hundreds of young Chinese each day who are seeking answers to life's problems. If the teachers have their lives together, the students will notice and ask about the secret to the teachers' joy and positive attitude. Teachers are free to answer any question and share their testimony with those who inquire."

The Fellowship will have many opportunities to cooperate, not only with the CCC and Christian churches, but also with the Amity Foundation, the CCC's social service agency involved in development projects to relieve poverty and in the printing of Bibles.

"We will also work with the provincial CCC to seek out neglected pockets of ethnic minorities in Guangxi and Yunnan.," Winstead said. "We will cooperate with individual churches who want to reach out to their communities with programs which minister to the neglected people in society, especially the minorities.

"For example, Pastor Yu, the CCC leader for Guangxi Province, recently took us to a remote Zhuang village in northern Guangxi to explore the possibility of CBF assisting with bringing electricity to the 3000 people there. There's no church in this village and Pastor Yu hopes, as do we, that our cooperating with government agencies to bring electricity to that village will open doors for a meeting point to begin there."

Baldrige said the Fellowship also expects to launch future work in a large unevangelized city to be named in central China.

Before appointment by the Fellowship in 1995, the Abneys worked in counseling, mental health and chaplaincy ministries in South Carolina in the Columbia and Spartanburg areas.

He was born in Macon, Ga., and is a graduate of Mercer University there. She was born in Raleigh, N.C., and is a graduate of the University of West Florida in Pensacola. Both are graduates of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.