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**IN THIS ISSUE:**

- American family moving away from 'Ozzie-and-Harriet' model
- Religious broadcasters, lawmakers criticize new FCC guidance
- Interfaith Alliance to place ads about candidates' civility pledge
- Americans oppose unfair campaigning, poll reports
- Play set in Baptist church growing in popularity

**American family moving away  
from 'Ozzie-and-Harriet' model**

By Bob Allen and Sarah Griffith

CHICAGO (ABP) -- The American family is moving away from the traditional model of a stay-at-home mother and working father with children, according to a recent survey.

Dual-income and single-parent families are replacing the "Ozzie-and-Harriet family," said Tom Smith, author of "The Emerging 21st Century American Family," a report by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago.

Women in the work place, redefinition of the roles of husbands and wives, smaller families and changing mores about marriage and sex are "fundamental changes" affecting American families, Smith said.

"Both family structure and family values have been changing and as a result of these changes, the American family is a much-altered institution," Smith said.

Among the most profound changes taking place in the last generation are the increased role of women in the work place and redefinition of gender roles by married couples, the study said.

"Women have greatly increased their participation in the paid labor force outside the home," the study said. In 1960, 42 percent of women ages 25-64 worked outside the home. That percentage grew to 49 percent in 1970, 59 percent in 1980, 69 percent in 1990 and 71 percent in 1995.

Women are bringing in a greater share of the family's joint income. By 1994, women had a higher income than their husbands in 22 percent dual-earner families.

That has contributed to a change in gender roles.

"Among the most fundamental changes affecting American society over the last generation has been the redefinition of the roles of men and women and husbands and wives," the study said.

"A traditional perspective in which women were occupied in the private sphere of life centering around running a home and raising a family while men engaged in the public sphere of earning a living and participating in civic and political events has been rapidly replaced by a modern perspective in which there is

much less gender-role specialization and women have increasingly been entering the labor force as well as other areas of public life."

Less than one fourth (21 percent) of American families contained an employed father and stay-at-home mother in 1998, compared to over half (53 percent) of families in 1972, according to the report.

While gender roles are becoming less traditional, Smith said, stay-at-home fathers in "Mr. Mom" households are still "a rarity."

The acceptance of women in politics has increased substantially over the last 25 years. In 1972, 74 percent of the population said they would vote a woman into presidency and in 1998, 94 percent accepted female candidates, according to the report.

Declining marriage and childbirth rates will mean fewer households will contain children in the future, Smith predicted. Also, fewer children will be living with their original two parents.

A Baptist ethicist said churches ought to minister to the needs of families as they exist today, not as they once existed.

"The changing structure of the American family requires churches to meet real needs that support dual-income families and single-parents, not political statements of faith that prioritize the husband as breadwinner and wife as household manager," said Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics.

Parham encouraged church leaders to "teach authentic biblical values, instead of baptizing the cultural model of Ozzie and Harriet as the normative Christian model for family structure."

Other factors cited in the study include changing attitudes about:

-- Marriage. "While still a central institution in American society, marriage plays a less dominant role than it once did," the study says. More people are delaying marriage, divorces have increased and people are slower to remarry than before. More people are also living together without being married. In a 1994 study, 28 percent of married couples said they lived with their present spouse before marriage. Another 1994 study found nearly two-thirds of young men (65.7 percent) and women (64 percent) said their first union was cohabitation.

-- Children. Childbearing has declined, from a peak fertility rate of 3.65 children per woman at the height of the Baby Boom to a rate of 1.75 children in 1975. This is below the level needed for the population to replace itself. People prefer smaller families than in the past. In the early 1970s a majority felt the ideal number of children in a family was three or more. Today, most say the ideal number is two.

-- Sexual mores and practices. Attitudes toward premarital sex have become more permissive. The percent saying unmarried sex is always wrong declined from 36 percent in 1972 to 24 percent in 1996. More than two thirds, however, say premarital sex between teenagers under 17 is wrong.

Approval of homosexual activity has never been higher. As recently as 1991, 77 percent said homosexual sex is always wrong. By 1998, only 58 percent said so.

Disapproval of extra-marital sex, meanwhile, has increased over the last generation. In 1976, 69 percent said it is always wrong. In 1998, 81 percent said extramarital sex is always wrong.

-- Neighborhoods. One hallmark of the traditional family, rootedness in local communities and neighborhoods, has weakened over the last three decades. Social contact with neighbors has declined from 30 percent reporting spending a social evening with neighbors at least several times a week in 1974 to 20 percent in 1998.

"The American family has undergone a series of fundamental changes over the last generation," Smith said. "Many of the changes have undermined the traditional family, as Sociologist Norval Glenn notes, 'If you watch what Americans do, traditional family relationships are in trouble.'"

## Religious broadcasters, lawmakers criticize new FCC guidance

By Larry Chesser

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- House Republicans said they will introduce legislation to reverse new Federal Communications Commission rules that critics charge will restrict religious broadcasting.

Rep. Michael Oxley, R-Ohio, who announced the new legislation, said the FCC action "is wrong, and it cannot stand."

The FCC issued the guidelines in December when it approved a station swap in Pittsburgh that will allow Cornerstone TeleVision Inc., a religious broadcaster, to move from Channel 40 to Channel 16, a channel reserved for noncommercial educational programming.

Since 1952, the FCC has reserved a limited number of television channels for educational broadcasters, including Pittsburgh's Channel 16.

Longstanding FCC policies have required that such stations "be used primarily to serve the educational needs of the community."

In approving the channel switch, the FCC voted 3-2 to adopt "additional guidance" regarding programming on educational channels.

The new guidance requires that more than half of the programming on such channels "primarily serve an educational, instructional or cultural purpose in the station's community."

The commission left it up to broadcasters to decide which programs serve such purposes, unless the broadcaster's judgment "appears to be arbitrary or unreasonable."

But specific FCC guidance on what qualifies as educational programming drew sharp criticism. Leading the charge were the two FCC commissioners who dissented from the additional guidance, GOP lawmakers and the National Religious Broadcasters.

The guidelines state that programs primarily devoted to "religious exhortation, proselytizing, or statements of personally-held religious views and beliefs generally would not qualify as 'general educational' programming."

A church service that is part of a historic event, such as the funeral of a national leader would apply, however, as long as its primary purpose were educational, instructional or cultural.

FCC Commissioners Michael Powell and Harold Furchtgott-Roth asked why church services "might not qualify as cultural programming just as a presentation of an opera might? It would be very hard to brush either type of programming as having no intrinsic cultural value."

NRB President, Brandt Gustavson said the FCC is trying to draw a line between programs that teach about religion and programs devoted to religious exhortation or statements of religious beliefs.

The new guidance contains "a disquieting implication that the government may restrict certain strains of religious speech," he said.

Susan Ness, the only commissioner who voted both to approve Cornerstone's application and to add the additional guidance, said certain eligibility rules are necessary to preserve the mission of noncommercial educational stations.

Ness rejected the notion that religion is singled out for adverse treatment.

"Programs primarily devoted to exhortation and proselytizing and other types of incitement and recruitment should not qualify as educational programming regardless of whether they are religiously oriented, or are oriented toward other social and cultural issues," she said.

Republican lawmakers said in a letter to FCC Chairman William Kennard the regulatory agency "has no business -- no business whatsoever -- singling out religious programming for special scrutiny."

Kennard responded that the FCC approved Cornerstone's move to Channel 16 and denied the petitions of those who sought to block the move based on the religious nature of Cornerstone's programming.

Kennard also emphasized that the new guidance adopted by the FCC does not apply to most religious broadcasters, because they use commercial channels rather than those reserved for noncommercial educational stations.

The FCC "did not single out religious broadcasters," Kennard said, but clarified standards that apply to all noncommercial educational broadcasters.

Religious programming "of any nature" may be aired on noncommercial educational channels, Kennard said, but not all such programming counts toward the primarily educational benchmark.

Critics of the new guidance also faulted the FCC for issuing new rules without first opening the matter to public comment.

The lawmakers said they would introduce legislation to overturn the guidelines when Congress reconvenes Jan. 24.

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## **Interfaith Alliance to place ads about candidates' civility pledge**

By Kenny Byrd

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Five presidential hopefuls have signed a pledge to conduct their campaigns with civility.

Signing the "Framework of Civility for Political Candidates" were Democratic presidential rivals Al Gore and Bill Bradley and GOP contenders George W. Bush, Orrin Hatch and John McCain.

The pledge was created by the Interfaith Alliance, a group established in 1994 to counter the Religious Right and oppose the manipulative use of religion in public life.

"Political campaigns function as major arteries to the heart of our democracy contributing to health or hurt," said Welton Gaddy, the Interfaith Alliance's executive director.

Civil debate on issues can spur voter participation, Gaddy said. "Take away civility, however, and political campaigns can instill prejudices in individuals, disrupt communities, and spew poison into the democratic process."

The pledge calls on candidates to show integrity in making their case to voters, fairness in addressing opponents, respect for the dignity of others and to take responsibility for words and actions.

Some of the pledge's specific pleas to candidates are:

-- Endeavor to present clear, accurate proposals regarding issues that are based on the facts as you understand them without attempting to mislead voters regarding your public record.

-- Refrain from using deception, half-truths, falsification or innuendo in describing your opponents.

-- Immediately and unilaterally repudiate any such actions conducted to your benefit by other individuals or organizations.

-- Assume full responsibility for the words and actions of your campaign staff, volunteers, surrogates and other individuals and organizations working on your behalf or seeking to influence the election in your favor.

-- Refrain from using the rhetoric of civility merely for political effect, opting instead to incorporate the meaning and goals of civil discourse into your actions and statements.

The Interfaith Alliance plans to run newspaper ads in early presidential primary states to make voters aware of the pledge signed by five of the eight candidates in the Republican and Democratic parties.

An Interfaith Alliance spokeswoman told Associated Baptist Press Jan. 12 that the alliance would not determine whether campaigns had violated the pledge or not. We are not going to become the "civility police," said Rives Moore.

But she added, "We do want the public and voters to hold candidates and campaigns responsible."

Moore said the group is placing a half-page advertisement in the Des Moines Register on Jan. 23, the day before Iowa's presidential caucus. A similar ad will be placed in a major New Hampshire paper shortly before the New Hampshire primary.

"A pledge to civility is not a pledge to mediocrity in campaigning or to silencing debates, just the opposite," Gaddy said.

"We really believe that rigorous political debates around crucial issues is absolutely essential, and if someone tried to use a pledge of civility as an excuse for not getting into a controversial debate that would be a gross misunderstanding of what civility is all about."

Asked about whether presidential candidates should discuss their faith in campaign debates, Gaddy said talking about religion is natural but faith statements are no substitute for addressing major issues facing the nation.

Gaddy said problems arise if a candidate identifies "his religious position as the primary reason people should support him."

"If you see religion as a part of the profile, that's healthy," Gaddy said. "If you see religion dominating the profile, that can become both unhealthy and a potential contributor to incivility."

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## **Americans oppose unfair campaigning, poll reports**

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- Most Americans believe negative, attack-style campaigning is wrong, and three fourths would be more likely to vote for a candidate who signs and abides by a code of campaign conduct, according to a recent poll.

Lake Snell Perry and Associates and John Deardourff/The Media Company conducted the poll for The Project on Campaign Conduct/The Institute for Global Ethics.

Among its findings:

-- Americans strongly agree negative, attack-oriented campaigning is "wrong" (67 percent), "unethical" (61 percent) and "is undermining democracy" (59 percent).

-- 53 percent believe campaign values and ethics have gotten at least somewhat worse over the last 20 years.

-- 43 percent believe most or all candidates deliberately make unfair personal attacks on their opponents, and another 45 percent believe some candidates make unfair attacks.

-- 39 percent believe all or most candidates deliberately lie to voters, while a nearly equal number (42 percent) think some candidates lie.

-- 72 percent would have more respect for candidates who signed and abided by a code of conduct; 74 percent would be more likely to vote for candidates who signed a code and abided by it.

-- 71 percent say they would be more likely to vote in an election where the candidates signed and abided by a code of conduct.

-- 63 percent of non-registered voters say a campaign code of conduct would make them want to vote more.

-- 72 percent of Americans are very concerned about candidates saying one thing as a candidate and doing another when elected.

-- On a scale of one to five, voters say candidates' positions on issues (4.3) and voting record (4.1) are far more important to know than personal information about, for example, marital fidelity while in office (2.5), sexual orientation (2.3), and their children's problems (1.8).

-- On the fairness of attacks, voters say criticizing an opponent for talking one way and voting another way (68 percent) or for his or her voting record (57 percent) is fair. But, voters do not believe it is fair to criticize an opponent for the behavior of family members (84 percent), lack of military service (72 percent), past personal financial problems (71 percent), and past troubles such as alcoholism or smoking marijuana (63 percent).

The poll was conducted Nov. 4-9 with a sample size of 800 American adults age 18 and older, including 500 who identified themselves as likely voters. The poll has a margin of error plus or minus 3.5 percent.

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-- By Kenny Byrd

## **Play set in Baptist church growing in popularity**

By Stacey Hamby

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (ABP) -- Mix the style of a Broadway musical with the story of a Saturday-night gospel sing in a rural church and the result is the hit production "Smoke on the Mountain."

After a year-and-a-half run Off-Broadway in The Lamb's Theatre in New York, Smoke on the Mountain has been performed on about 250 stages across the nation -- making it the second most-performed play in regional theaters.

The musical is set in 1938 in a rural Baptist church in North Carolina. Connie Ray, a North Carolina native who stars in the Disney sitcom "The Torkelsons," wrote the play conceived and directed by Alan Bailey.

"When it played in New York, most of the audience had never been to a church like this," said Bailey, who grew up in Bradley Baptist Church near Macon, Ga. He now lives in Los Angeles. "One thing I've learned is that a guarantee of success in New York is to do something new or in a different way. They saw this as something new because they never had any experience with this setting.

"Whereas now, the primary appeal is to people most like the audience in that church would be."

Ruth Pollard, a member of First Baptist Church in Lathrop, Mo., is one such person. She recently organized an outing for several church members to see Smoke on the Mountain at the New Theatre Restaurant in Overland Park, Kan. "My dad was a fiddle player, and the music was reminiscent of old times," Pollard said. "It's fun and wholesome."

Lisandro Gonzalez, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lathrop, Mo., said the play appeals especially to senior adults. "They can remember this type of singing 40 and 50 years ago."

He added, "It's a very effective way to present the gospel outside the four walls of the church."

Smoke on the Mountain centers around the Sanders family. The setting is a Saturday-night gospel sing in Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Mount Pleasant, N.C.

The Sanders family performs several bluegrass gospel songs. Sprinkled throughout the musical is each family member's testimony.

The family interaction -- with each other and the audience (which plays the church congregation) -- is what makes the play entertaining.

"People are able to see something of themselves in one of the characters up there on stage," said New Theatre actress Lori Blalock, who has played the part of June Sanders four times.

"It's about forgiveness and all the simple things in life; it's about getting along with your family. That's the beauty and charm of it."

Blalock, a member of Prairie Baptist Church in Prairie Village, Kan., added: "It's about life's lessons. It's uplifting. People can relate to the family. And while there's lots of the Bible [throughout the play], it's not pushed or forced. It's dealt with honestly. Truly, I've never heard of any complaints."

The musical, though strongly Christian-based, also appeals to non-Christians. Bailey said non-Christians discover they have things in common with people like the Sanders family.

"We're all really alike in terms that we learn to listen and accept other people without judgment," he said. "That's why they feel uplifted when they leave; it's about people with real faults, and ultimately, the characters learn that what they need most in life is to learn to listen."

When Bailey and Ray wrote the musical, their goals were to create a play that highlights what is funny about being Southern without making fun of it and to share the message of God's love.

"Our intention was to do a piece about a church home," Bailey recalled. "People see their church as another home, their church family as another family. And we wanted to re-create the love and closeness that many churches have."

"It was important to us to paint a picture of a loving God ... it went along with the message of people struggling to be good Christians and family members because of the rewards of love that you find."

Bailey's idea for a singing in Mount Pleasant Baptist Church was based on memories of a church from his childhood. "I was inspired by the little church in North Carolina where my grandparents were members. They would have gospel sings, and everybody up there always seemed so perfect."

"I knew that they must be like any other family -- fuss and argue on the way home. So I wanted to explore a family and what it would be like to have to appear perfect, but not be -- thus, the Sanders family."

The idea continues to grow. Bailey said a play's performances usually peak two or three years after appearing in New York. Not so with Smoke on the Mountain. It continues to be in high demand. It is second only to "Pump Boys and Dinettes" in regional performances.

"I think one reason people keep coming back for more is because they discover just how great this music is," Bailey said. Characters play instruments such as the fiddle, mandolin, ukulele, banjo and harmonica.

"Particularly in musical theater, you never hear this kind of music. Southern gospel and bluegrass gospel have really been a revelation to a lot of people who have produced this play."

The reasons New Theatre producer and director Richard Carrothers, who grew up Southern Baptist, continues to schedule Smoke on the Mountain is both business and personal. One, people keep requesting to see it. Two, "Every time I direct Smoke on the Mountain, I feel it's giving me the opportunity to witness, and I never get tired of that."

Carrothers plans to run the sequel in his theater later this year. The sequel, "Sanders Family Christmas," opened in 30 theaters in 1999. With the same setting and characters, the musical is set in 1941. "It's been long enough (since 1938) that the Sanders can have developed a new set of problems," Bailey said. "But also it's December 1941, and the country has just gone to war, so there's a real reason everybody wants to huddle together... why family members are leaving home -- as Dennis Sanders is."

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