



Nashville, Tennessee  
**Associated**  
**Baptist Press**

Editor: Bob Allen  
Executive editor: Greg Warner

Phone: 800.340.6626  
Fax: 904.262.7745  
E-mail: bob@abpnews.com

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**Clinton links prosperity, responsibility  
at National Congressional Prayer Breakfast**

By Bob Allen

WASHINGTON (ABP) -- In his final annual national prayer breakfast for members of Congress Feb. 3, President Clinton urged Americans, in light of the nation's prosperity, to weigh their responsibility to others less fortunate.

Clinton said forces like globalization, science and technology have changed how people today must respond to the question posed in the Bible, "Who is my neighbor?" America is not only growing more diverse, but the Internet is making it possible for people to communicate and do business all over the world.

"The world is growing smaller and more interdependent," he said. "And I guess the point I would like to make to you today is, as time and space contract, the wisdom of the human heart must expand. We must be able to love our neighbors and accept our essential oneness."

Clinton said those who have benefited from America's strong economy ought not to disregard those who have been left behind.

"Many of us live on the cutting edge of a new economy while over a billion people live on the bare edge of survival," the president said. "And here in our own country there are still too many poor children and too many communities that have not participated in our prosperity."

"The Christian Bible says that Jesus warned us that even as we do it unto the least of these, we have done it unto our God," he said. "When times our tough, and all of our fellow citizens are having a hard time pulling together, we can be forgiven if we look at the welfare of the whole. Now the welfare of the whole is the strongest it has ever been, but people within our country and beyond our borders are still in trouble. People with good values, people with the values you have held up here today, people who would gladly work. We dare not turn away from them if we believe in our common humanity."

Clinton also cited concerns about lack of care for the environment and violence around the world.

"Here at home, we still see Asians, blacks, gays, even in one instance last year, children at a Jewish school, subject to attacks just because of who they are," he said.

Politicians in Washington, he continued, "are not blameless, for we too often forget in the heat of political battle our common humanity.

"We slip from honest difference, which is healthy, into dishonest demonization. We ignore, when we're all hyped and in a fight, all those biblical admonitions we profess to believe -- that we all see through a glass darkly; that, with St. Paul, we all do what we would not and we do not do what we would; that faith, hope and charity abide, but the greatest of these is charity; that God says to all of us, not just some, I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name, you are mine, all of you."

Clinton said living in "perhaps the greatest moment of prosperity and promise in the history of our nation" carries special responsibilities.

"In my lifetime, our nation has never had the chance we have now to build the future of our dreams for our children, to be good neighbors to the rest of the world, to live out the admonition of all our faiths. To do it, we will have to first conquer our own demons and embrace our common humanity with humility and gratitude."

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## **'Giant' among Southern Baptists in New Mexico dead at 101**

By John Loudat

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (ABP) -- Harry Stagg, 101, described as a "giant" among Southern Baptists in New Mexico, died Feb. 6 at his Albuquerque home.

Stagg was executive director of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico 30 years before retiring in 1968. After retiring, he retained the title of executive director emeritus.

Stagg was remembered for overseeing a period of tremendous growth for the state convention founded in 1912 and for persuading the Southern Baptist Convention to locate its Glorieta conference center, which is visited by 50,000 guests a year, in New Mexico in 1948.

Stagg's reputation for setting and achieving goals continued into his later years. He met a personal goal of reaching his 100th birthday on Oct. 1, 1998. He then told people how much he was looking forward to Jan. 1 of this year, when he would have lived in three centuries.

State Baptist historian Dan Carnett described Stagg as "the most important Southern Baptist in New Mexico history."

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## **Suspect arrested in year-old murder of missionary in India**

NEW DELHI, India (ABP) -- Police in India have arrested a suspect in the murders of Australian Baptist missionary Graham Staines and his two sons a year after the crime, according to Ecumenical News International.

The suspect, Dara Singh, is described as an extremist Hindu fundamentalist. He evaded a police dragnet for more than a year in dense forests of northern Orissa, assisted by tribal people, before being caught Feb. 1.

Singh, who also goes by the alias Rabindra Pal Singh, was charged in absentia with being the main culprit in the attack Jan. 23, 1999, that killed Staines, 58, and his sons, Philip, 10, and Timothy, 8. The three burned to death after extremists set fire to the Jeep in which they slept, the most vicious attack in a wave of anti-Christian violence in India.

Singh reportedly confessed to the crime, as well as to other major crimes including an incident last year in which a Muslim's hands were chopped off and a Catholic priest was shot dead with arrows.

Staines' widow, Gladys, who has continued her husband's work with lepers, told reporters she welcomed the arrest.

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-- By ABP staff

## **Churches need the Holy Spirit author tells Texas audience**

By Dan Martin

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Christianity doesn't need better methods or more political clout but an encounter with the third person of the Trinity, Jim Cymbala says.

"Christianity is hopeless without the Holy Ghost," the author of "Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire" told more than 9,000 participants at the 2000 Texas Baptist Evangelism Conference in Fort Worth.

"You can give the people the words, but unless they are anointed by the power of the Holy Spirit, they are powerless," said Cymbala, pastor of Brooklyn Tabernacle, a New York church famous for its multi-racial and multi-cultural blend.

The early church described in the New Testament got its power and leadership from God, Cymbala said. Many modern churches, he charged, rely instead on man-made efforts.

"If doctrinal sermons were all that was needed, we would have won the entire world by now, but we need the Holy Spirit. Revival will not happen by doing methods or programs. We need an invasion from heaven; we need the power and blessing and anointing of the Holy Spirit on our churches and our work," he said.

Cymbala said a Spirit-driven church doesn't need any help from politicians. "I don't care who is in the White House; if the Holy Spirit is moving on the church, we are going to win souls for the Lord Jesus Christ," he said.

"I don't trust the Democrats. I don't trust the Republicans," Cymbala said. "The Bible says we are not to put our trust in 'princes.' I have seen Republicans in the White House. I have seen Democrats in the White House. I don't know what newspaper you are reading, or where you live, but have you seen any great change in our country in the last 20 or 25 years?"

"We have had Reagan and Bush. We have had Carter and Clinton. Do you see any change in the country? It is going down the sewer.

"Why? Because political parties are not supposed to change America. The church is supposed to change America. We are the salt of the earth and the light of the world."

Cymbala pointed out that the New Testament church was able to evangelize without the aid of computers, committees or seminars on church growth. "They depended on their only source of strength, the Holy Spirit."

Today, he continued, churches choose leaders on the basis of job summaries and education instead of "validation" or "affirmation" from the Holy Spirit.

Too many churches and pastors say they believe the Bible, he said, but "when it comes to running the church or doing evangelism or calling leaders, they throw out the Bible and go by tradition or somebody's vision, or what somebody thinks the church should be like."

"When somebody tells me their 'vision' of the church, I wonder why I should care what their vision of the church is? It is not their church. The church belongs to Jesus."

The Holy Spirit "is the agent of God, the administrator of the church," he said.

Cymbala said the popular "church growth" movement is "destroying the church" by "giving principles which aren't even in the Bible."

"Church growth has proved to be a mirage," he said. "Over 90 percent of what we call church growth is just moving Christians from one building to another. We are not having water baptismal services for 80 or 90 or 100 people every other week. We are just moving people from one building to another; from First Nazarene to First Assembly, from First Presbyterian to First Methodist, to First Baptist."

Fine-tuned strategies of "stealing members from each other," he said, is one reason there is "so little love" among clergy. "They know what game they are playing."

"What a way to waste your life, moving Christians from one building to another," he said. "Aren't there enough sinners around for us to do God's work?"

Cymbala also criticized the church-growth movement's teaching that "homogenous units" grow fastest.

"Churches that don't want black people or brown people ... or even poor white people, are not Spirit-filled churches," he said. "That appeals to the prejudices of the people and makes a social club of the church. That is not what Jesus wants of his church."

Cymbala said today's religious establishment is so sophisticated that it is in danger of "crucifying" the Holy Spirit -- "grieving him right out of our churches" -- in the same way that the religious establishment two millennia ago crucified Jesus.

Cymbala noted that Christians are divided over the Holy Spirit, and "the devil is playing both sides."

"On one side, people are doing so many weird things that are not in the Bible and blaming it on the Holy Spirit," he said. "They are jerking, twitching, jerking, roaring like lions, tweeting like birds, acting like animals. Very few people in those circles have the guts to say, 'Stop! Wait a minute! That is not in the Bible. Can you imagine Jesus doing that, or Paul doing that?'"

"These people are adding to the word of God. They say he is doing a new thing, so new that it is not even in the Bible. If it is a new thing, I want to see the people in church, souls being won, people seeking the Lord.

"On the other side are those who have tossed the Spirit out the window. They have watched that foolishness on television ... those showoffs, those shysters, those con men and don't want any of it.

"But how are you going to run a church without the Holy Spirit? Trying to do so, results in little one-hour, packaged 'Protestant masses,' where there is no spontaneity, no spirit, no anointing."

Cymbala said people will sit through a three-hour football game but "get itchy" if church goes on longer than an hour. "Can you imagine Paul telling Peter he has only 18 minutes to preach because the chariot races are about to start and people need to get home to watch?"

"Something is wrong with the church today," Cymbala said. Divorce rates and the percentage of people who are taking drugs for depression is the same for Christians as for people who don't attend church, he said.

"Don't tell me it is the culture, the environment. It is the lack of the presence of the Holy Spirit and his power in our lives," he said.

"We are not going to change it by computers and committees or by fanaticism or foolishness or emotionalism or by throwing the Holy Spirit out of our churches," he said. "We need a revival. We need a Holy Ghost revival. We need the power of God in our lives."

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## **Minister calls creativity an underused 'gift from God'**

By Ken Camp

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- The intentional or non-intentional lack of creativity hinders worship in many churches, according to Texas Baptist pastor Roddy Clyde.

"Contrary to popular opinion, the ability to bore people is neither a gift nor a fruit of the Spirit," said Clyde, pastor of The Fellowship at Forest Creek in Round Rock, a "seeker-sensitive" congregation near Austin.

When Clyde preached a message on God as the architect of marriage, he had an actor playing the part of God interrupt his sermon and deliver a message of his own.

At another church that Clyde's congregation helped launch, the pastor preached a series of lifestyle sermons under the title: "Who Kidnapped Barney Fife? Recapturing the Spirit of Mayberry in Our Lives."

Church leaders ought to recognize creativity as "a precious gift from God, a primary tool for outreach, and a pathway into the conscience of believers," Clyde said in a seminar at the Texas Baptist evangelism conference in Fort Worth.

"Intentional non-creativity occurs when we see creativity as trivializing God, contradicting Scripture, breaking traditions or offending Christians," Clyde said. "Unintentional non-creativity occurs when we see creativity as an additional responsibility in which we have neither the time, talent, nor energy to invest."

Clyde offered eight keys to creativity:

-- Plan ahead. The paid and volunteer staff of Clyde's church meet together in a retreat each October to develop sermon themes for the year.

-- Use understandable terminology. "We need to define our terms," he said. A secular person's first impression of the phrase "washed in the blood" is probably an image from a horror movie, he said. "What unchurched people hear and what we hear are two different things."

-- Incorporate other media. Use music, drama, video and computer-projected images to enhance the service. "Media underscore the one central truth of the worship service," he said.

-- Season with humor. Preachers need to learn to speak in seven-minute segments, punctuated with genuine humor. "No one is going to listen to you for 20, 30, 45 or 55 minutes unless you do something every seven minutes to draw them back in," Clyde said.

-- Follow up events. After a sermon series on parenting, plan a weekend parenting seminar. After a sermon on marriage, schedule a marriage-enrichment retreat.

-- Don't reinvent the wheel. "There is nothing new. All there is is your spin on what's old," he said.

-- Advertise upcoming series. Use catchy titles and communicate them to the community outside the church.

-- Always scout for ideas. Clyde said he browses bookstores to find potential sermon titles. "What you call your messages will make a world of difference."

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## **Former drug addict, convict recounts salvation experience**

By Ken Camp

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Eighteen months ago, Jimmy LaQue walked into First Baptist Church of Palacios, Texas, as a dirty ex-convict addicted to heroin. Two hours later, he says, he walked out a new man.

LaQue says he lost his craving for drugs when he accepted an invitation to receive Christ on the Sunday morning in July 1998.

LaQue told his story at an annual evangelism conference sponsored by Texas Baptists. He was abandoned at 9, he said, because his mother's live-in boyfriend didn't want kids around. After living for a while with his heroin-addicted brother, he left to fend for himself on the streets.

He said he survived by learning to steal and by becoming a drug dealer's "mule" to transport heroin from Mexico to the United States.

LaQue spent time in prisons in California and Texas and had a \$250-a-day heroin habit for 30 years, he said.

Then, one Saturday afternoon, a young girl approached him as he was sitting by Palacios Bay on the Gulf Coast.

"She told me Jesus loved me. She said he could change my life," he recalled. "If she'd known who she was talking to, I don't think she would have come close to me. I was an ex-convict. I hadn't taken a bath for days. People didn't want to be close to me. They would walk the other way when they saw me."

LaQue said he accepted her gift of a Bible to get rid of her, even though he had only a third grade education and could barely read. When she urged him to go to church -- "any church" -- he agreed.

Walking the streets the next morning, LaQue approached First Baptist Church.

LaQue said he thought the church was too big for him, but he saw a smaller Christian life center annex, and thought it, too, was a church.

He approached a woman who was unloading supplies and asked her for food. "She gave me a burrito and a soda water, and she invited me to church," he said.

After some thought, he decided to accept the invitation. When he entered the church, two ushers approached him.

"They were coming towards me, and I said, 'Man, these guys are going to kick me out!' But to my surprise, they shook my hand and invited me in. They took me to a Sunday school class.

"And you know, those people shook my hand. They didn't care how I smelled. They didn't care how I was dressed."

After Sunday school, the class members invited LaQue to join them for the worship service.

"I went in to hear the message. After the preaching, at the altar call, something pushed me into the aisle, all the way to the front," he recalled. LaQue told the pastor he wanted to be saved.

"So we prayed there. I accepted Jesus into my heart," said LaQue, who has a job and is active in his church. "When I accepted Jesus, the craving for drugs was gone."

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