



# Associated Baptist Press

Editor: Bob Allen  
Executive editor: Greg Warner

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

August 6, 2002

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL  
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES  
Nashville, Tennessee

AUG 12 2002

(02-70)

## IN THIS ISSUE:

- Parish nurses bridge spiritual, physical healing in churches
- Pastoral authority source of many conflicts in churches
- Worship war 'silly' but harmful, speaker says
- News briefs from Associated Baptist Press

## Parish nurses bridge spiritual, physical healing in churches

By Marv Knox

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- Churches can build a bridge between physical and spiritual healing in their communities through a "parish nurse" ministry, says an Alabama Baptist minister.

Vaughn CroweTipton, pastor of Auburn Baptist Church in Auburn, Ala., described the concept of churches hiring a part-time healthcare professional to help members monitor wellness and prevent disease at a workshop during the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship annual meeting this summer in Fort Worth, Texas.

CroweTipton reminded workshop participants that the ministry of healing and wellness has roots in the Bible, particularly in stories about Jesus in the Gospels.

"'Salvation' comes from the Greek verb that means wholeness, restoration," he said. "In the Bible, to be diseased is to be an outcast from society."

CroweTipton said one third of the stories in the Gospels has something to do with health or healing. It's still part of the church's ministry for today, he added.

"We do have powers of healing and health and wholeness," he said. "Maybe not to make the lame walk, but I have seen churches bring people back to life."

CroweTipton's congregation sponsors a parish-nurse ministry in conjunction with the East Alabama Medical Center in Auburn.

The medical center received a grant to place parish nurses in five churches. The criteria for the program are that the nurse be a member of the church and the church provides a secure room for the medical office/consultation, a file cabinet and a telephone. The hospital provides basic medical equipment.

The nurse works eight hours per month -- two hours before the church's mid-week prayer service -- typically seeing about 25 people per shift. But he said those brief medical conversations, blood-pressure checks and referrals make a difference in church members' lives.

CroweTipton said some people solicit medical care in a non-threatening setting at church who might otherwise ignore a serious medical problem.

That potential impact could be significant, he said, when multiplied by the numbers of churches in communities across the country.

He said salary for an eight-hour-per-month nurse is nominal, but insurance costs more than salary.

Larger churches can afford to utilize more than one parish nurse, he said, while small churches could team up to provide the ministry.

Purely from a health standpoint, it's desperately needed, he said. "Solid evidence shows we're killing ourselves with lifestyle issues."

He cited the number of U.S. deaths per year attributable to bad lifestyle decisions: tobacco use, 400,000; bad diet, 300,000; alcohol abuse, 100,000; accidents, 92,000; AIDS, 25,000.

However, parish nurse ministries' impact extends beyond physical healing to spiritual health, he stressed.

"We're seeing a direct correlation: As people's physical health gets better, it's easier to help them heal emotionally and spiritually," he said.

-30-

## **Pastoral authority source of many conflicts in churches**

By Mark Wingfield

DALLAS (ABP) -- "Who runs the church?" is a question that divides many Baptist congregations.

In healthy churches, experts say, secure pastors and secure lay leaders share a common vision of mutual leadership. But when either the pastor or lay leaders attempt to tip the balance in their favor against the wishes of the other party, conflict often results.

Control issues are the No. 1 reason for forced terminations of Baptist pastors, according to research by LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The number of ministerial firings by Baptist churches has grown to alarming proportions, says Jan Daehnert, director of minister/church relations for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

In a majority of these cases, disputes over pastoral authority plays a significant role in the conflicts that led to termination, Daehnert said. And that doesn't even include the many other cases where ministers moved on to another church to keep the issue from coming to a head.

While it's easy to point fingers at either pastors or laity in conflict over authority issues, responsibility lies at the feet of both, Daehnert said. "The authority issue is primarily seen in the pastoral role, but it's also a layman's authority issue," he said.

Two scenarios are common, he said. In one, laymen accuse the pastor of being "too heavy-handed," "too authoritarian" or a "dictator." In the other, the pastor views lay leaders as thwarting his leadership with their controlling tactics.

Theological perspectives of some pastors, who believe they have a God-given mandate to run the church, compound the problem.

Authoritarian pastoral styles are commonly associated with a fundamentalist theology, but such tendencies affect non-fundamentalists as well, said Howard Batson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Amarillo, Texas. "It has nothing to do with Baptist politics," he said. "It really is an interpersonal skills problem."

"As a pastor develops a healthy self-esteem, he is less likely to be dictatorial and more likely to be a strong leader," Batson said. "When he's not sure of himself, he'll either hide in a corner or shout from the rooftop. When he's sure of himself, he'll do neither of those."

Bob Sheffield, a specialist in church-conflict mediation with LifeWay, agreed with Batson's assessment. "The more insecure a person is, sometimes the more authoritarian he has to be. If you're secure, you can allow people to be involved in decision making."

Daehnert said conflicts over pastoral authority stem from deeper, unresolved theological issues in

churches. "Pastoral authority is a piece of the picture that has been overemphasized because other parts of the picture are out of shape," he said.

He said he believes the problem is that Protestant churches "never completed the Reformation."

"We've never known how to reconcile the role of the pastor and the role of the layman in ministry," he said.

The fault sometimes lies with pastors who, even though Baptist, "have kept some of the old Catholic church tendencies" of clerical superiority, Daehnert said. That may be compounded when laity "turn over to the pastor authority that really belongs to Jesus."

At other times, amid a succession of short-term pastors, lay leaders become so accustomed to managing all the business of the church that they leave no room for pastoral leadership.

While another problem receives less attention, Batson said, some pastors give too little leadership. "On that end, they're withdrawn and apathetic and provide sporadic leadership. They lack initiative."

The best road to travel lies between these two ditches, he said.

"What most churches want is a healthy team-ship approach to leadership. You lead, but you do it as part of a team, including the committees and the congregation. It's not so much, 'God told me, and this is what we've got to do,' but, 'Here's what God has told us together.'"

Batson, Daehnert and others acknowledged that some Baptist churches want a pastor who will give strong direction. That's OK, they said, if the church hires a pastor who shares that vision of leadership.

"Problems usually arise when a congregation expects one type of pastoral authority and they get another," Batson noted. This requires the pastor-search committee to "really know the story of the church and match that with the story of the candidate."

Too often, Sheffield said, search committees don't adequately understand what the church wants in a pastor.

"If you get one pastor who has been a precipitative-type pastor, trying to develop a shared-ministry approach, followed by a person who is very autocratic, you're going to have problems," Sheffield said. "Congregations don't realize this. They don't take this into consideration in the pastor-search process."

"Sometimes what the congregation has been heard to say is, 'We need a strong leader.' But their definition of a strong leader and the pastor's definition are different," he said.

But more often, "the pastor-search committee will go on the basis of what they think," without surveying the congregation, Sheffield said.

That can be a problem because "most pastor-search committees don't represent the church as a whole; they represent the cutting edge of the church. Why are people put on the pastor-search committee in the first place? Because they're leaders and they want things to happen."

In reality, churches may need different styles of pastoral leadership at different stages of the congregation's life, Sheffield said.

He compares the situation to a parent's role in leading a child. "There are times, if you're pastoring a mission church, the pastor is going to have to be more hands-on and directive than he might need to be if he has developed his congregation properly."

But just as a parent cannot give direction to a grown child the same way he or she would to a toddler, a pastor must adjust the leadership role as a congregation matures, he added.

Sheffield and Daehnert both believe many pastors have bought into an incorrect definition of leadership, confusing it with management. Leaders are not managers, they insist, and authority is not the same as influence.

"If you take Ephesians 4 literally, our job as pastors is to equip the saints for a work of ministry," Sheffield said. "We will be leaders, which is a sphere of influence, not managers."

Daehnert pointed to a book, "The Servant," written by a corporate executive using biblical principles. The author, James Hunter, quotes sociologist Max Weber's distinction between power and authority.

Power, he said, is "the ability to force or coerce someone to do your will, even if they would choose not to, because of your position or might." Authority is "the skill of getting people to willingly do your will because of your personal influence."

So a person could be in a position of power but not have authority with people, Daehnert said. "Authority is based not on position but on influence."

A practical misapplication of authority happens when young pastors or pastors new to their churches look at older mentors with long tenures and attempt to duplicate their leadership styles, Sheffield explained.

The older, more tenured pastors have "gone through the fire" and earned the right of leadership, he said. "Yet we may think we can be there without earning the right to be the leader."

The problem of church conflict due to leadership issues is well-known, acknowledged Larry Ashlock, a professor of pastoral ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and former pastor. "We seem to know the reasons for the problems but have not taken proactive steps to correcting it."

Southern Baptists are attempting to address the problem nationwide through LifeWay's LeaderCare unit, which includes counseling and other resources for ministers. The BGCT addresses the problem through its minister/church relations office.

One practical solution is for pastors to learn better listening skills, Batson suggested. "We teach people in seminary how to talk, not how to listen. The greatest skill a pastor can have is his ability to listen."

The same can be said for lay leaders. "A healthy church is where people are submissive to the leadership of God in their lives and equally submissive to one another," Daehnert said.

In the ideal situation, he added: "The pastor has a role and responsibility and lay leaders also have a role and responsibility. Together, they determine what is God's will for the church."

The model that works best for a pastor, he suggested, is Jesus the Good Shepherd rather than the Old Testament model of religious leaders as "prophet, priest and king."

Yet while the New Testament offers principles for church leadership, it does not spell out a detailed plan of church administration, Batson said. "I don't think (first-century Christians) ever imagined the church being structured like it is now," he said.

-30-

## **Worship war 'silly' but harmful, speaker says**

By Marv Knox

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP) -- The battle over praise and worship raging in local churches is a "silly war," but it has dire consequences, Christian musical artist Kyle Matthews believes.

The worship war is "silly," because it's unnecessary and damaging, noted Matthews, a composer and performer from Nashville, Tenn., at a seminar during the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship General Assembly this summer. "If anybody wins, we all lose."

For example, he said, defenders of traditional worship can be guilty of failing to reach out to a non-churched culture. At the same time, however, advocates for contemporary worship might ignore the value of tradition and lessons of church history.

Matthews, who often leads worship in as many as three churches in a weekend, said too many churches are being torn apart over worship style.

"Worship conflict is creating career crises and church crises all over the country," he reported. "It is 'the' issue today of what makes or breaks a church. It is a travesty that the church would allow itself to denigrate to such a place where style would become the conflict."

Matthews said the worship war is "unwinnable." He cited religion researcher George Barna, who says culture "reinvents itself" every three to five years. That means that by the time a church or worship leader

decides that a particular style is best or most effective, it is already on the way to being out of date.

Matthews said churches can move beyond the worship war by recognizing four aspects of authentic worship, regardless of style.

-- Worship should be transformational.

"It needs to be about transforming personality," he said. "Not about idolizing Christ, but about following his kingdom."

He said people often misunderstand the goal of worship. Rather than exalting God, as many assume, the main purpose is to change the worshippers.

"Worship is not 'God gas,'" he explained. "God doesn't need it to go. We need it; God doesn't."

-- Worship needs to be intergenerational.

Church is the only place where most people can go to participate in regular multi-generational experiences, Matthews said. Schools and other institutions routinely segment people according to age.

But intergenerational relationships built at church -- particularly through common worship -- can be healing and educational, he said.

"We really need each other for worship," Matthews said. Unfortunately, he added, matters of worship style tend "to divide us up" demographically and by generation.

He said worship style need not divide along generational lines. He cited current trends of young people being attracted to highly liturgical Episcopal services and senior adults flocking to jazz worship.

-- Worship should be identity-revealing.

Worship provides people with "a time to remember who and whose we are," he said.

Christian worship is "distinct from culture," he said, but its values too often are allowed to "ape culture," particularly when they reflect a strong desire for money and security.

He said the larger culture outside the church actually is hungry for a modern reinterpretation of faith-inspired feelings and understandings that have been common to people through the centuries. "A church is to be a repository -- a place to hold on to the tenets of the faith -- until we're ready for them."

-- Worship ought to prepare people for missions.

"Rather than style-driven, worship needs to become content-driven," Matthews said. When Jesus talked about worship, he said, he quoted the Prophet Isaiah's linking of fasting and worship with feeding the poor, clothing the naked and bringing justice to the oppressed.

Citing research, Matthews said people are drawn to worship when they are given opportunities to do ministry, as opposed to being compelled to minister because they worship.

He said those opportunities will grow from understanding God's plans for people. "Worship should begin with the Word," he said. "We may give (worshippers) what they want and never give them what they need."

-30-

## **News briefs from Associated Baptist Press**

### **Florida judge strikes down state's voucher program**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. -- A Florida judge ruled Aug. 5 that the state's school-voucher plan is unconstitutional because it advances religion.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled recently that providing taxpayer-funded vouchers to parochial schools doesn't violate the U.S. Constitution's ban on establishment of religion as long as parents have a choice between religious and secular options in deciding where to cash in their scholarships.

But Circuit Judge Kevin Davey of Leon County said Florida's Constitution is more explicit in saying that tax dollars shall not "be taken from the public treasury directly or indirectly in aid of any church, sect or religious denomination or in aid of any sectarian institution."

In his opinion, Davey said "it cannot be logically, legally or persuasively argued that receipt of these funds does not aid or assist the institution in a meaningful way."

The decision could jeopardize Florida's 1999 voucher program. Gov. Jeb Bush said the state would appeal the ruling. (ABP)

### **Kentucky seminary elects first full-time faculty member**

LEXINGTON, Ky. -- Trustees of the Baptist Seminary of Kentucky have elected the school's first full-time faculty member.

Dalen Jackson, who since 1994 has taught at Truett-McConnell College in Cleveland, Ga., was named associate professor of biblical studies at the new seminary, which is scheduled to begin classes this fall.

Jackson, a graduate of Samford University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, previously taught at Judson College in Marion, Ala. President Greg Earwood said his election signals the seminary is "going to offer quality theological education this year and in the years ahead."

Earwood said he expects between 25 and 30 students to enroll in the seminary's inaugural class, which begins sessions Aug. 26 at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington, Ky.

Glenn Hinson, a former professor at Southern Seminary and Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, will serve part time as senior professor of church history and spirituality. Other faculty include Les Hill, part-time professor of evangelism and missions, and Rick Landon, adjunct professor of spiritual formation. (ABP)

### **Baylor to be host for President Bush's economic forum**

WACO, Texas -- Baptist-affiliated Baylor University is host for an Aug. 13 economic forum with President George W. Bush.

The president will attend the forum, which is part of a larger focus on boosting America's economy. It will bring together policy makers, business leaders, economists and ethicists.

Robert Sloan, president of the university in Waco, Texas, called it "a privilege and honor" for Baylor to serve as host for the event. "It is a great opportunity for our faculty and students to be involved in such a high-profile and important event and to participate in discussions about ways to stimulate our country's economy," he said. (ABP)

### **Campus minister named to lead BTSR program**

RICHMOND, Va. -- A Baptist campus minister from North Carolina has been tapped to head a new program at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond aimed at identifying and enlisting high-school students for careers in the ministry.

Paul Baxley, campus minister at Wingate University, moves to the Virginia seminary Sept. 1 as director of congregational ministries and vocational awareness. He will direct the "Samuel Project," a new program established with a \$2 million grant from the Lilly Endowment.

Baxley, a graduate of Wake Forest University with a master's degree from Duke, received a doctor-of-ministry degree from BTSR in May. (ABP)

### **Missouri newspaper reports six-month gift totals**

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. -- Six months through the year, the Missouri Baptist newspaper Word & Way made up just under 45 percent of funds held in escrow by the Missouri Baptist Convention in special gifts from individuals and churches.

The paper reported gifts totaling \$79,704 between January and June in its Aug. 1 issue. That compares to \$178,347 earmarked for the paper for the same period in the MBC budget but held in escrow over a leadership dispute.

While expressing gratitude for the gifts, Editor Bill Webb said the publication would still need to "make up some lost ground to guarantee continued service."

Word & Way is one of five MBC agencies to have funds held in escrow after they acted to move to self-perpetuating trustee boards, removing authority for electing trustees from the state convention. Lawyers said the move came out of concerns about ascending liability and a desire to protect the agencies from Baptist politics. Missouri Baptist leaders have indicated they might sue, if necessary, to regain control of the entities.

In the meantime, MBC leaders have established a new "official" state news journal to replace Word & Way, which has been published since 1896. (ABP)

### **Dallas pastor, N.C. layman to co-chair ABP fund-raising effort**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- A Dallas pastor and North Carolina layman will co-chair a fund-raising campaign for Associated Baptist Press slated to begin next year.

George Mason, pastor of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas, and Ed Vick, a member of First Baptist Church in Raleigh and retired chief executive officer of engineering firm Kimley-Horn, Inc., have been named co-chairs for the campaign, which is in planning stages and scheduled to be launched publicly in 2003.

Greg Warner, ABP's executive editor, said the campaign would seek to raise about \$2.5 million over three years in operation and endowment funds for the independent, national news service based in Jacksonville, Fla.

ABP, which also publishes FaithWorks magazine, has an annual operating budget of about \$635,000, said Executive Director Philip Poole. About 15 percent of that is raised by subscriptions and advertising revenues. Most of the remaining support comes from contributions by Baptist organizations and state conventions, individuals and churches. (ABP)

-30-

-- By ABP staff

**END**

---