

# Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1994

## Killing of abortion doctors deplored

By Tom Strobe

The murder of abortion doctors in order to protect unborn children is "not a morally justifiable or permissible Christian response," according to a ground-breaking statement recently produced by a panel of Southern Baptists.

The 12-page document affirms the sanctity of human life from conception and the moral obligation of Christians to oppose abortion actively, but it gives a variety of rea-

sons why lethal force to stop abortion is not consistent with the Bible. As a part of its reasons, the statement asserts divine moral law permits killing as an "unintended effect of the act of defending oneself or another" but not as a premeditated action.

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission organized a consultation to produce the document after three shooting incidents outside abortion clinics in 18 months resulted in the deaths of two doctors

and a bodyguard, as well as injuries to another physician. The violence dealt further setbacks to a pro-life movement already battling increasingly liberal policies by the federal government.

The Southern Baptist statement, the drafters said, was written to refute on Christian principles the arguments of some who support such acts as justifiable, much as defending a child or adult with lethal force to save a life.

*(Continued on Page 4)*

## Pro-lifer Sheila Massey reaches out to African-Americans

Three years after Sheila Massey sensed God calling her to a pro-life outreach to the black community, African-Americans for Life has experienced a breakthrough.

The reason? Prayer, says Massey.

"In December of 1993, we all sensed in our spirit that we needed to pray," Massey said recently by phone. "After the first month, everybody just unanimously said, 'We've got to continue this.'"

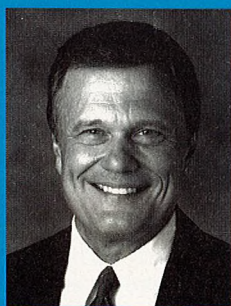
Massey and her leadership team did just that for the first four months of 1994. They set aside

their monthly meetings and other occasions to pray, especially for black pastors to join the battle against abortion.

"We have found that prayer is the key to unlocking this door," said Massey, a member of a Southern Baptist church in Columbia, S.C. "Our first mission at African-Americans for Life is to educate and inform people, but we also set aside regular times of intercessory prayer. . . . We know that God's Spirit has to change the hearts of people.

"In April, we sensed victory in our spirit."

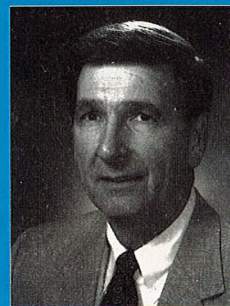
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Ed Young

### *Is debt a sin?*


Former SBC President H. Edwin Young and SBC Executive Committee Vice President Jack R. Wilkerson shed light on the issue of debt in Point/Counterpoint on Pages 8 - 9.



Jack Wilkerson



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Richard D. Land, Executive Director



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## PERSPECTIVE

### An Open Letter to Evangelical Leaders Visiting the White House

By Richard D. Land



Dear Evangelical Leader:

The agenda of the White House in meeting with you is political, first and foremost. This is not to suggest that the President is not sincerely interested in you or in spiritual matters. Neither do I suggest that it is particularly wrong for the White House to have political motives in holding such meetings. The President is a politician who must be reelected to maintain his office. Obviously, politics will play a role in many of his actions, policies and decisions. This is especially true for a President elected with a plurality of 43% of the vote and whose popularity has never been overwhelming.

There is a deep reservoir of distrust among evangelicals about this President. While the policies of this administration, especially the advocacy of abortion on demand and special homosexual rights are part of this level of distrust, it is both broader and deeper than that. The President's personal and financial life are a cause of grave concern for many evangelicals as well. Evangelicals want leaders who talk to the President about these issues.

Mother Teresa's speech at the Prayer Breakfast last February has given Christians a sterling example of what it means to be truly prophetic in the presence of Caesar. I pray that religious leaders will be inspired and instructed by her example. Why did her speech have such impact? First, she attacked policies, not persons. Second, she came not as a Democrat nor as a Republican, but as a person of faith who lives what she preaches. Third, Mother Teresa was neither impressed nor inhibited by the trappings of secular power and privilege. Fourth, she sought no favor and brought no endorsement to Caesar, but sought only to speak the truth as she saw it.

I don't agree with those who counsel against evangelicals meeting with the President. I can think of few things better for the nation than for the President to meet with as many Christian leaders as possible, if they follow Mother Teresa's example to speak the truth as they believe it. If, however, they agree beforehand to leave certain subjects unspoken, if they go seeking his favor or endorsement, if they go with partisan political motives, they do a disservice to the President and to the nation, and they dishonor themselves and the Gospel they have been commissioned to proclaim.

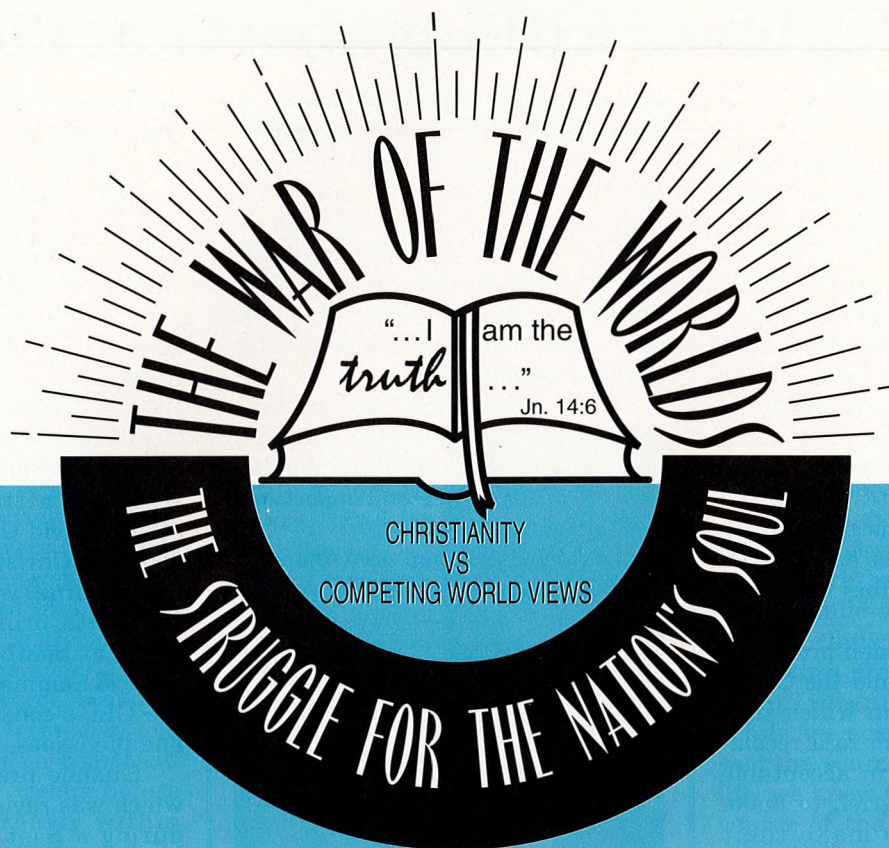
Chuck Colson gives the classic model of what *not* to do in *Kingdoms in Conflict*, describing his efforts to court Christian leaders for Nixon's agenda (pp. 306-312). Many religious leaders were easily co-opted by the White House strategy. Colson said that "Invariably, the lions of the waiting room became the lambs of the Oval Office. . . . none were more compliant than the religious leaders. Of all people, they should have been the most aware of the sinful nature of man and the least overwhelmed by pomp and protocol. But theological knowledge sometimes wilts in the face of worldly power" (p. 307). Be a lion, not a lamb. When meeting the President, speak the truth in love. Do not get bogged down in legislative details. You are dealing with a "policy wonk" President with a brilliant mind who loves policy details. Keep the discussion at the level of broad areas of policy disagreement, and focus on delivering a clear, prophetic message that you believe the President is pursuing an unbiblical agenda on many moral issues. Your impact will derive from the righteousness of your position, not your policy expertise.

The President may well respond with: "I'm not pro-abortion, I'm pro-choice. You cannot make everything illegal which you believe is immoral or wrong. I'm personally opposed to abortion, but I cannot impose my moral beliefs on a nation which is deeply divided on this issue. My policy is to make abortion legal and safe, but rare."

"I must be President of all the people, even homosexuals."

(Continued on Page 6)





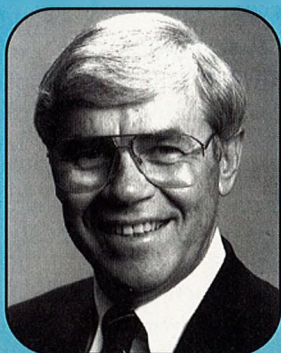
28TH ANNUAL NATIONAL SEMINAR OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION

**FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 1, 1995**

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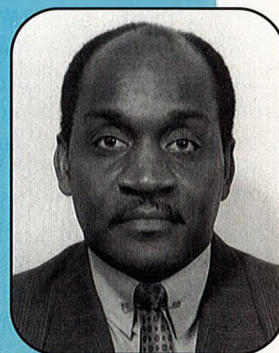
CHARLES COLSON



JIM HENRY



DOROTHY PATTERSON



GARY FROST

See page 16 for a complete listing of program personalities.

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or call (615) 244-2495

or FAX (615) 242-0065



# CLC deplores killing abortion doctors

(Continued from Page 1)

The drafting committee members said they hope the treatise, entitled "The Struggle Against Abortion: Why the Use of Lethal Force Is Not Morally Justifiable," not only will prevent some pro-lifers from embracing violence as acceptable but will prevent others from abandoning the pro-life cause in reaction to the killings. The document also combats the argument of some abortion advocates that those who believe abortion is the murder of a human being must endorse the killing of abortion doctors to be consistent, they said.

"We hope to embolden pro-lifers, to help them understand the Christian moral tradition in which they stand and to call them to a recommitment of working in acceptable ways to make their grief, to make their horror and to make their determination known," Christian Life Commission Executive Director Richard Land said upon release of the statement Sept. 20.

"We're trying to draw a fire-break between this violent fringe that has resorted to taking the law into its own hands and seeks to kill human beings in the defense of the sanctity of life, and the vast majority of the pro-life movement which has [rejected], does and will reject such actions. This is a gift from Southern Baptists to the larger Christian community."

In rejecting the arguments of those who defend killing abortion doctors, the statement says:

- Lethal force against abortion doctors is not an act of self-defense or defense of another, because it is premeditated. A "private citizen can intend to stop, but not to kill, an assailant regardless of the final result," according to the document.

- Killing an abortion doctor is not a justifiable form of capital punishment, because "whatever right there may be to execute a criminal is reserved exclusively to governing authorities."

- Such violence is not a necessary act of civil disobedience

attempting to achieve reform in a democracy but an act of revolution.

- Citizens are not free to resist the United States government by "any means necessary," because it has not lost its legitimacy. Legalized abortion on demand is a "failure of a legitimate democracy," not the "imposition or decree of an illegitimate regime."

- Individuals may not circumvent this country's government, because it has not lost the popular support of the people and opportunities for reform still exist.

Legalized abortion on demand is the "single gravest failure of Ameri-



**Richard Land speaking at press conference September 20.**

can democracy in our generation," the document says, but the Bible and history testify a "social movement's crossing over from nonviolence to violence is a most perilous, and almost always unjustifiable, step. One consequence of such a transition is that resistance to certain *deeds*, such as abortion, is often transformed into attacks on certain *persons*, such as those who perform abortions."

The statement calls on Christians to be even more faithful in opposing abortion. It encourages participation in such activities as supporting abstinence-based sex education, ministering to women with crisis pregnancies, and voting and lobbying for change. Public witness outside abortion clinics also is justifiable, it says.

On civil disobedience, the docu-

ment says, "On balance, we believe that *nonviolent* civil disobedience related to abortion, though not morally *obligatory* for Christians, may be seen as morally *permissible*. This is ultimately a matter of individual conscience before God."

In addition to Land, other members of the drafting committee were Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Mark Coppenger, vice president for convention relations of the SBC Executive Committee and a writer in ethics; David Gushee, assistant professor of Christian ethics at Southern Seminary; Daniel Heimbach, associate professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Ben Mitchell, the CLC's consultant on biomedical and life issues.

Gushee prepared a first draft, which was revised by the committee during a Sept. 17-18 consultation hosted by the CLC. Other members of the CLC staff also participated in the consultation.

The CLC plans to send the statement to other pro-life organizations and welcomes the endorsement of others.

The first killing of an abortion doctor came in March 1993, when David Gunn was shot fatally outside a Pensacola, Fla., clinic. Michael Griffin was convicted of first-degree murder.

Later in the year, George Tiller, an abortion clinic owner/doctor in Wichita, Kan., was shot but not seriously injured.

In July of this year, abortion doctor John Britton and escort James Barrett were shot and killed outside another Pensacola clinic. Paul Hill, an advocate of lethal violence against abortion doctors, was convicted of violating the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances Act but was going to trial for first-degree murder at this issue's deadline.

**To order this document, "Critical Issues: Why the Killing of Abortion Doctors Is Wrong," in its entirety in pamphlet form, see Page 12.**



## Rachel Weeping: A Personal Story

By David P. Gushee

*A voice is heard in Ramah,  
Lamentation and bitter weeping.  
Rachel is weeping for her children;  
She refuses to be comforted for her  
children, Because they are no more.  
(Jer. 31:15)*

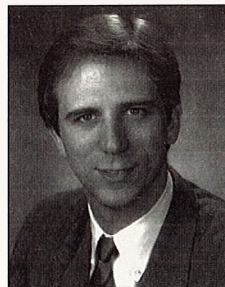
On July 26 of this year I accompanied my pregnant wife Jeanie to an appointment with her obstetrician. This was a special day. Through the miracle of ultrasound technology, we would view our baby in the womb for the very first time. Jeanie was 19 weeks pregnant.

As our baby moved into view on the screen we noted the location of the head, the feet, the spine and so on. But our excited words soon died in our throats as the technician told us that our baby had no heartbeat. Our baby, who only weeks before had moved so vigorously within Jeanie, was somehow dead.

Immediately we were plunged into the uncharted waters of a second-trimester stillbirth. In the midst of considerable shock and sorrow we were faced with many decisions. The first dealt with the critically important matter, for Jeanie's health, of delivering our now-dead baby. Our doctors told us that we could go to an abortion clinic and have the baby "delivered" (i.e., dismembered) by one of their doctors. Or, we could go to a hospital and have our own obstetrician induce labor and deliver our baby whole. Dead, but whole. We immediately chose to have the hospital delivery. We felt strongly that to have our baby dismembered by an abortion doctor would have been an offense against the dignity of our child's life.

This decision set the precedent for the others that followed. At each point, we struggled to make decisions that reflected the fact that this little human life deserved to be treated in as dignified and respectful a manner as possible. Even though she was dead, she still deserved such dignity and respect. Each decision for dignity then led to the next decision for dignity.

So we decided to name our child when she was delivered two days later, rather than to leave her unnamed. We called her Elizabeth Mary. We held her seemingly perfect little body and wept over her for several hours, rather than having her taken away from us. We chose to have her buried in a local cemetery, rather than cremated in the hospital. We had a small funeral for her, rather than not having a rite to note her death. And we purchased a grave marker, which is now in place, rather than burying her in an unmarked grave.



Gushee

My words are not written as some kind of prescription for how everyone should handle the death of an unborn child. A more personal matter can hardly be imagined. It is true that for us it was very important to proceed in the way we did. This was the way we grieved. And it was the way we recognized the God-given dignity of our daughter's life, even though Elizabeth never lived to see the light of day.

David wrote, "For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. . . . Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me" (Ps. 139:13-14, 16). Elizabeth did not experience many days of life. But like David and the rest of us, she was also fearfully and wonderfully made. Her "inward parts" were formed by God. Her life was sacred.

Elizabeth is buried in the "Holy Innocents" section of Calvary Cemetery here in Louisville. It is a part of the cemetery devoted exclusively to stillborn children and other little ones. At the entrance to this section is a statue of Rachel weeping. On the low, white marble wall behind the statue is the quotation

from Jeremiah that opens this article. Also found on the wall is this statement: "Memorial to the Unborn." Rachel weeps at Calvary Cemetery, then, not only for the children buried there, but for a great many other "Holy Innocents" who also "are no more." Rachel weeps for the aborted children of our nation.

When we held the tiny body of Elizabeth Mary Gushee in our hands, we could not help but think that elsewhere in our nation at that very moment the lives of other babies at the same stage of development were being ended—on purpose. While we grieved the loss of our precious little one, we knew that other precious little ones were being intentionally destroyed. While we acknowledged that God was the source of Elizabeth's short life, we knew that God was also the source of the lives of these other precious little ones.

Elizabeth's life was not sacred because David and Jeanie Gushee decided that it was. Elizabeth's life was sacred because God made her and conferred that sacredness on her. What we did was merely to recognize her God-given sacredness and treat her accordingly. In the same way, the lives of each of the 1.6 million children who are aborted each year in this nation are sacred because God has conferred that sacredness on each one. The sacredness of these lives is not contingent on anyone's opinion, not even that of the mothers and fathers of these children. And yet the laws of our nation have institutionalized the rejection of this great moral truth.

Having together experienced the God-given sacredness of our baby Elizabeth, Jeanie and I find this national reality not so much objectionable as nauseating. May our nation open its eyes and repent of its ways.

*David Gushee is assistant professor of Christian ethics at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.*

# Southern Baptists encouraged to join RU 486 boycott

By Tom Strode

The Christian Life Commission is encouraging Southern Baptists to support a boycott to protest the introduction of the French abortion technique, RU 486, into the U. S.

The boycott is of the products of Hoechst-Roussel Pharmaceuticals and Copley Pharmaceutical, which are American subsidiaries of Hoechst AG. Hoechst AG, a German company, owns Roussel Uclaf, the French manufacturer of RU 486 (see list on Page 7).

In May, after repeated urging by the Clinton administration, Roussel Uclaf donated its United States patent rights for mifepristone, commonly known as RU 486, to the Population Council Inc., a nonprofit corporation. The action cleared the way for the Population Council to pursue the manufacture, testing, licensing and marketing of the controversial drug in this country. RU 486 may be available for use in the United States by early 1996.

Roussel Uclaf, which has been lobbied fervently by both pro-life and pro-choice advocates in recent years, previously had refused to attempt introduction of the drug

into this country because of the controversy.

Although Roussel Uclaf is not marketing RU 486 in the United States, "we hold Roussel Uclaf and Hoechst AG, its parent company, responsible for bringing RU 486, the abortion drug, to our shores," said National Right to Life Committee President Wanda Franz at a Washington, D.C., news conference announcing the boycott products.

In addition to the NRLC and CLC, other organizations endorsing the boycott at the news conference were Focus on the Family, Concerned Women for America, Christian Coalition and Family Research Council.

The goal of the boycott is to convince Hoechst AG and Roussel to withdraw the patent from the Population Council and eventually to stop production of RU 486. The coalition plans to continue the boycott until the patent is withdrawn, Franz said.

"This assault on human life by the Clinton administration and the companies affiliated with Hoechst AG must be answered by the pro-life movement," said James A.

Smith, the CLC's director of government relations.

In its 1994 meeting at Orlando, the Southern Baptist Convention adopted a resolution opposing the introduction of RU 486 into the country and calling on Southern Baptists to support the boycott.

RU 486 can be used only through the seventh week of pregnancy. The procedure requires several visits to a medical facility, the use of two different drugs and close monitoring of the participants for complications.

More than 150,000 women have used RU 486 as an abortifacient in Europe. While RU 486 is being studied for other uses, it has been marketed as an abortion drug in France, Great Britain and Sweden.

Postcards to the heads of both companies, as well as cards listing the boycott items, are available from NRLC, 419 7th St. NW, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20004, (202) 626-8800, ext. 225.<sup>1</sup>

Cards may be ordered at the following quantities and prices: 10 for \$3; 25 for \$5.50; 50 for \$8.50; 100 for \$13; 500 for \$60; 1,000 for \$110.

## Open letter to Evangelical leaders

(Continued from Page 2)

My suggested response to such arguments would be: "Mr. President, Abraham Lincoln didn't wait for a consensus to tell the nation that slavery was wrong. He pursued an incremental strategy, but always with the ultimate goal of ending slavery. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson did not enjoy a consensus of support from Americans when they declared racism to be wrong and supported civil rights legislation to guarantee the rights of blacks." "Abortion and homosexual rights are not insignificant issues. These issues go to the very heart of whether America will be blessed or cursed by God." "Being 'President of all the people,' is one thing. Meeting with homosexual activists and condoning their immoral agenda is quite another.

You are President of Americans who belong to the Ku Klux Klan, but you wouldn't meet with them in the Oval Office. You must understand that homosexuality is as morally repugnant to us as racism."

While the President is a charming and persuasive man, his actions are the ultimate test of his sincerity. For example, on the very day (Sept. 8th) that he met with selected evangelical leaders, including the current SBC president, various federal agencies sponsored a "Diversity Day 1994 Training Event" at the direction of the Clinton administration. The Department of the Navy memo, (one of "Diversity Day's" sponsoring agencies) said, "This consortium is designed to solidify the members' commitment to promote the value of diversity, encourage cross cultural awareness and exchange ideas and

resources. This is the first undertaking of this type in the Federal sector." The memo ends by saying they expect "your active support of this endeavor." Workshops and video titles include: "On Being Gay," "Another Color of the Rainbow: Sexual Minorities in the Workplace," and "Flashpoint: When Values Collide." This last workshop will deal with "deep-seated values [which] are programmed in each of us at an early age and remain with us at a subconscious level. . . . The video may be highly sensitive to some viewers; the topics and diversity have strong emotional impact."

Respect the office of the presidency, but also respect the responsibilities of your pastoral office and speak the truth in love. And above all, remember whose servant and minister you are.



# RU 486 Consumer Boycott List

## Hoechst-Roussel Pharmaceuticals Prescription Drugs and Substitutes

Hoechst Product	Use	Possible Substitute
Altace (ramipril)	hypertension	Accupril Capoten Monopril Lotensin Vasotec Prinivil Zestril
A/T/S (erythromycin topical)	acne topical solution	*erythromycin topical (generics available) Metrogel Topicycline Meclan Cleocin T
Claforan (cefotaxime sodium)	anti-infection	Rocephin Cefizox Other cephalosporin antibiotics, depending on the organism being treated.
Lasix (furosemide)	diuretic	*furosemide (generics available)
Loprox (ciclopirox)	skin infections	Micatin Monistat Derm Spectazole Lotrimin Mycelex
Prokine (sargramostim)	bone marrow	*Leukine
Topicort (desoximetasone)	skin rash	*desoximetasone (generics available)

\*Indicates products that have the same active ingredient and can usually be substituted. Individual patient's health and safety take priority; in some cases, a physician may not wish to prescribe a substitute drug.

## Copley Pharmaceutical Drugs and Substitutes

Tell your pharmacist that you do not want to use any generics manufactured by Copley Pharmaceutical.

## Copley Pharmaceutical Over-the-Counter Drugs and Substitutes

Copley Product	Use	Substitute
Bromatapp tablets	decongestant/antihistamine	Bromphen (Schein) Dimaphen (Major) E.N.T. tablets (Ion) Dimetapp Extentabs (Robins)
Doxylamine Succinate	sedative	Unisom Nighttime Sleep-Aid (Pfizer)
Miconazole Nitrate 2% cream	vaginal fungal infection	Miconazole Nitrate (generics available) Monistat 7 (Advanced Care)
Tolnaftate 1% solution	fungal skin infection	Tolnaftate (generics available) NP 27 (Thompson Medical) Tinactin (Schering-Plough)

By H. Edwin Young

Much has been written from the Christian perspective on debt, because money—and how it is managed—can quickly become a divisive issue in the lives of individuals and churches. We are not without wise counsel in this important area. The Bible itself speaks often about the use of money. In fact, nearly 300 verses in the Gospels alone deal directly with the subject, and there are more than 2,000 verses concerning money and possessions in the Old and New Testaments. Jesus Himself spoke more about money than He did about Heaven and Hell combined!

While I believe it is permissible for Christians to assume a reasonable amount of debt, there are clear biblical principles that should shape any believer's decisions with regard to debt.

First, we should examine our *motivation* for taking on debt. For the church, there is no higher aim than to win the lost. If there is a

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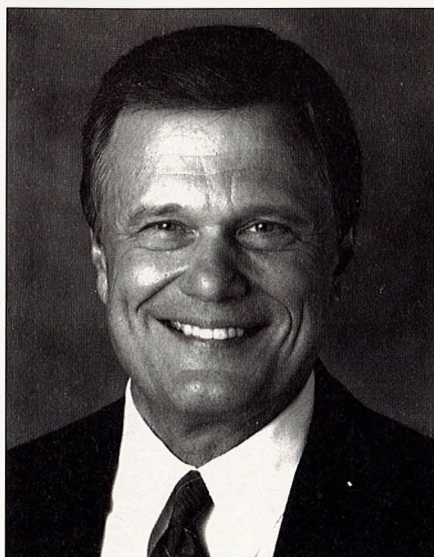
***There are clear biblical principles that should shape any believer's decisions with regard to debt.***

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choice to be made between bold evangelistic outreach and debt versus limited (or no) outreach and no debt, we should never be afraid to consider the risk.

When the facilities of the Second Baptist Church of Houston could no longer accommodate the new members who were coming to Christ and into the life of the church, we as a church family pledged \$34 million to construct a new worship center and family life facilities. Two years

## It's permissible for Christians to assume reasonable debt



H. Edwin Young

into construction, the Houston economy experienced a tremendous downturn related to the oil industry, and many who had pledged in faith were unable to meet those financial commitments.

Believing that God had placed His hand on our church and had called us to witness and minister in such a time, we went ahead with the help of interim financing. The debt incurred was considered reasonable and worthy in light of the call of God. The motivation was not to "be big" or even to grow our church—it was to reach out to our city in the name of Jesus Christ.

In the same way, individuals should consider their motivation for incurring debt. Instant gratification is not a reasonable motivation. Looking toward the future might be. Seeking to provide a secure, safe home for your family is certainly a reasonable goal.

Second, we must consider the *measure* of the debt. "The wicked borrows and does not pay back," the psalmist wrote, "but the righteous is gracious and gives" (Psalm 37:21). Incurring a debt so large that its payments represent financial

bondage is wrong. Many church-growth experts consider that a church can reasonably borrow an amount equal to three times its annual budget—but for very large or very small congregations, such a commitment might quickly become enslaving.

In the same way, an individual incurring a debt whose repayment represents a sizeable portion of his or her disposable income is not free to exercise good financial stewardship. If the motivation for debt is considered worthy, the next question should be, "What measure of debt will still allow me financial freedom?"

Third, the *means* of borrowing must be considered. Wise stewardship involves a careful plan of action. Is this the optimum time to incur the debt? Have I examined and weighed financing alternatives? Am I scheduled to repay the debt as quickly as possible? Even after a debt is incurred, the wise steward will continue to look for ways to restructure terms, or renegotiate interest rates if possible. Considering the means involves not only having a plan—but working that plan to save as much in interest as you possibly can.

Finally, Christians should strive for maturity in all matters of life—financial and spiritual. Many churches today face tremendous financial challenges because their congregations are spiritually immature with regard to stewardship.

Studies have shown that it may take up to two years for a new church member to become a giver—and even longer to understand and obey God's command with regard to the tithe! But during those two years, the church will continue to grow in size, regardless of whether or not its members par-

*(Continued on Page 10)*



By Jack R. Wilkerson

Debt is one of the most emotional and controversial subjects. For a point of reference, let's define it:

"Any borrowing that carries with it a contingent liability."

This simply means the agency that lends expects the money to be repaid. A debt is defined scripturally as "surety" or no certain way to pay.

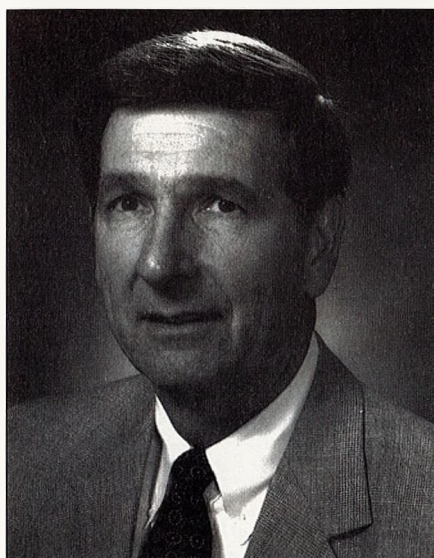
The use of debt today to build facilities and extend the ministry has become so common that to challenge the idea invites serious conflict. However, just because a practice is accepted in the world as "normal" certainly does not make it scriptural. The majority of church building programs today carries such high debt service that many struggle to meet monthly obligations. Outreach ministry, staff development and support often take second place to the building. I'm certainly not against beautiful buildings that honor our Lord Jesus and are built according to His will. I am opposed to any process that assumes that a bank loan is an automatic first choice, thus failing

***I am opposed to any process that assumes that a bank loan is an automatic first choice.***

to consider that God's people should have the opportunity to see and experience God's overwhelming provision (Phil. 4:19, 2 Cor. 9:10).

Scripture shows us that when God was ready to build a worship structure, or anything else for that matter, He did it without borrowing (1 Chron. 29:16, 1 Kings 6, 2 Kings 12, Neh. 2, 3). "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that

## Scripture discourages debt, notes bondage that goes with it



Jack R. Wilkerson

giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering" (Ex. 25:1-2).

Scripture does not prohibit borrowing; it only discourages it and points to the associated bondage that goes with it (Prov. 22:7). In my 12 years of teaching and financial counseling, I have never heard a personal testimony on the blessings of borrowing. I also find in Scripture that promises were never fulfilled through a loan (Ps. 37:5-7, Luke 6:38) and that God promised that by obedience His people would never have to borrow (Deut. 28:12).

The church today exists only for the purpose of glorifying God. It stands highly visible as God's best and should not subject itself to worldly compromise. We testify to a lost world that God is able to heal, provide needs and change a corrupt heart, bringing new life (2 Cor. 5:17), but often admit by our actions He is unable to supply the funding (in advance) to do it.

The church today uses the argument that if individual members borrow it is permissible for the church. But much of the individual borrowing violates scriptural principles (surety) and is driven by the wrong motive—a consumptive lifestyle. You only have to sit in a

financial counseling session to see the sad reality of excessive credit. I believe that Scripture lifts the standards for church leadership higher than the individual members (1 Tim. 3:1-2, Jas. 3:1). It therefore seems obvious that the standards of the church organization must be higher than those of its individual members.

I'm frequently asked "What is wrong if my church borrows the money and repays it in a timely manner?" I offer several points for personal thinking:

- In some instances, borrowing is against God's will. There are ministries that have borrowed funds to do things God never intended them to do.

- Borrowing is often a short circuit to the process of experiencing God's miraculous provision. Experiencing God's supply (in advance) is a testimony to those within the church as well as to those observing the church.

- Church borrowing restricts the ability of the church to serve. Church debt, rather than ministry needs, can control the decision process.

- Huge sums of money go to meet the interest portion of debt service rather than directly to ministry.

We live in a time when the voice of the average church has been diluted and the testimony to a lost community often goes unobserved. We are called to be salt and light (Matt. 5:13:14) to a world which desperately needs Christ. I'm convinced that nonbelievers will see nothing supernatural in a church loan. On the other hand, many will see, especially with our national debt problem, that there is at least something "unique" about a debt-free ministry.

My desire is to challenge individual church members and ministry leadership in the area of free-

*(Continued on Page 10)*



# Foreign Mission Board taps CLC's Louis Moore

By Tom Strode

Louis Moore, director of media and products for the Christian Life Commission since 1989, has been appointed as the Foreign Mission Board's new associate vice president for communications and director of news and information.

Moore joined the FMB staff in Richmond Nov. 15.

At the CLC, Moore has served as editor of *Light*, the Commission's ethics magazine; written for and supervised the agency's news information and media relations operations, and overseen the production of materials such as pamphlets, bulletin inserts, and video and audio cassettes. Product sales have broken CLC records the last two years.

He served as a consultant to the CLC for seven months before joining the staff full-time in June 1989.

"Of course, we're sorry to lose Louis," said CLC Executive Director Richard Land. "However, Louis and his wife have felt for some time now that God might be calling them to some form of foreign missions service. Both Louis and Kay feel that

this ministry opportunity at the Foreign Mission Board is a fulfillment of that call.

"We at the Christian Life Commission respect and accept that and express our appreciation for his years of service with us and wish him God-speed and God's blessings in his new place of ministry."

At the FMB, Moore will supervise five units in the communications office: print; audiovisual; news and information; *The Commission* magazine; and media services. As news and information director, he also will serve as chief of the Richmond bureau of Baptist Press, the news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The Moores have two children, Matthew, 18, a student at Baylor University, and Katie, 13. Kay was an editor at the Baptist Sunday



Louis A. Moore

School Board and will continue to work on projects for the BSSB from Richmond.

Before joining the CLC staff, Moore worked at two newspapers in Texas. He was religion editor of the *Houston Chronicle* from 1972 to 1986. He then served as editor of the *Plano Star-Courier* from 1986 to 1988.

While at the *Chronicle*, he served as president of the Religious Newswriters Association from 1984 to 1986. He also won numerous awards, including one in 1975 from the RNA for best religion section in the United States and Canada.

At the CLC, Moore co-edited two books with Land: *The Earth Is the Lord's* and *Citizen Christians: Their Rights and Responsibilities*. Both were published by Broadman and Holman. Previously, he co-authored three books.

Moore has a bachelor's of arts in journalism from Baylor and a master of divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

## Point

### It's permissible for Christians to assume reasonable debt

(Continued from Page 8)

ticipate in giving. For this reason, churches must educate and encourage biblical stewardship on an ongoing basis—not just once a year at budget time.

As we come to understand the Lordship of Jesus Christ, and His

call upon our lives, we mature in every area—including our finances. We take joy not in borrowing for short-term goals or gratification, but in giving for the eternal good of God's kingdom and His purposes. The mature believer is not afraid of debt—but neither is he or she a

slave to it. It is simply another aspect of life to be brought under His ultimate authority.

*Dr. H. Edwin Young is pastor of Second Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.*

## Counterpoint

### Scripture discourages debt, notes bondage that goes with it

(Continued from Page 9)

dom from debt. God has created the supply before the need exists, so search the Scriptures, get a word (Rhema) from God. "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and

doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

It is not a lack of funds from which the church suffers that drives it to borrow, but it is a lack of obedience and total commitment on the part of God's people to give,

trust and wait on Him (Ex. 36:6-7).

*Jack R. Wilkerson is vice president for business and finance for the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, Tenn.*



**By C. Ben Mitchell**

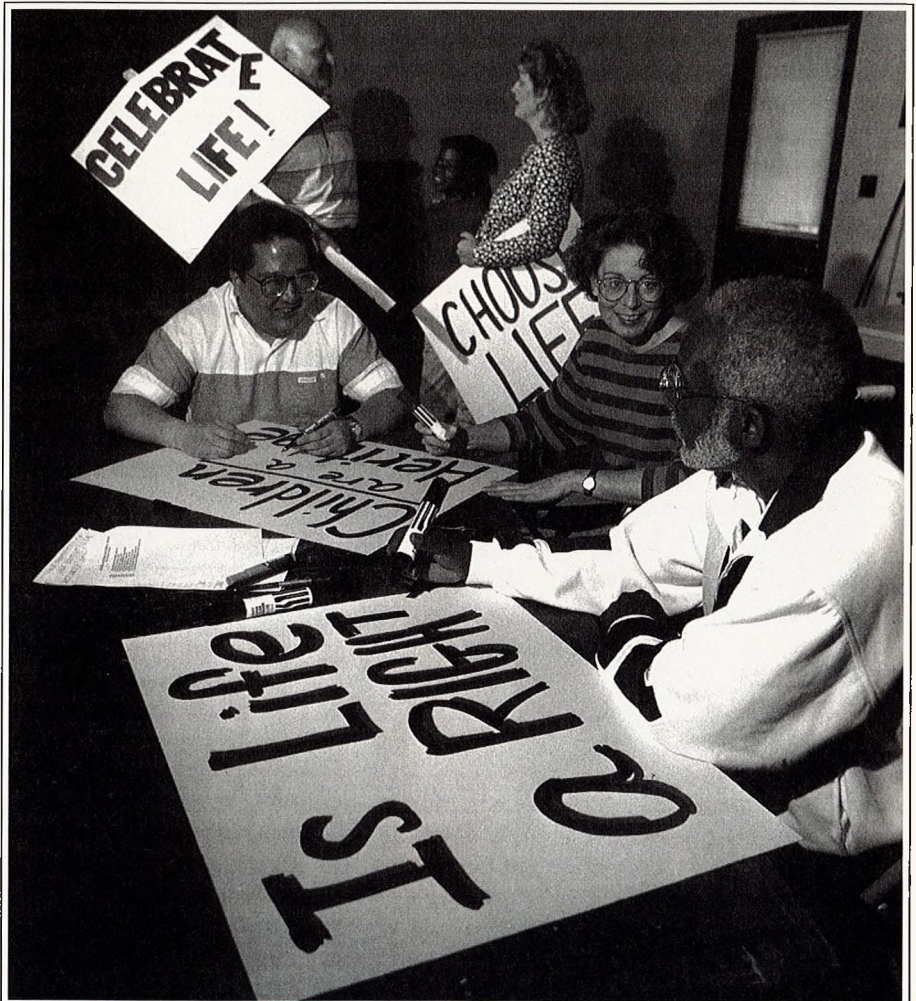
God's people have a moral obligation to speak up for those who have no voice of their own. The "speechless" in our society include, at least, those 1.6 million babies who are aborted each year in the United States. And on the other end of life are the tens of thousands who are liable to be murdered should active euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide become legal in America. The voiceless have no one to plead their case if we do not speak up on their behalf.

Several observations make this passage from Proverbs particularly relevant to Sanctity of Human Life Sunday. First, Solomon, the author of Proverbs, was the wisest man who ever lived (1 Kings 4:29ff). Much of Solomon's wisdom came from his own painful experiences. Second, these are the words of the godly mother of King Lemuel, not the musings of what abortion rights activists call "fascist men who oppose women's rights to reproductive choice." It is King Lemuel's mother who taught him to open his mouth "for those who cannot speak for themselves" or as one commentator translates the phrase, "for those on the brink of the abyss." Third, biblical justice requires that godly rulers "open their mouths" for those who would otherwise perish. King Lemuel was taught by his mother to "speak up and judge fairly." Clearly, an impartial judge will protect the rights of the unborn and infirm. From the womb to the tomb, from the nursery to the nursing home, the helpless, voiceless and vulnerable need protection. The blood of the innocent cries out from the land (Psa. 106:38). Godly rulers are called to echo their cry before God and the nation.

Examples of complicit silence are many. Legislation favoring abortion on demand makes Americans silent accomplices in the abortion holocaust. We cannot be silent, we must speak up! When physicians are given legal permission to give a lethal injection to dying patients or allowed to prescribe drugs to assist their patients in

## 'Open your mouth for the speechless'

(Proverbs 31:8)



**Observe Sanctity of Human Life Sunday  
January 15, 1995**

their own suicides, it is urgent that Christians cry out on behalf of those who are perishing behind the white curtains in the hospital room. If doctors are permitted to kill "those who cannot speak for themselves," those of us who are to be their voices will be indicted in the heavens if we do not speak up; their blood will be on our hands.

That the Redeemer identifies with the voiceless is sure. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7). The mocking crowd would not "speak for the

voiceless" man on Calvary's cross, but cried out "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matt. 27:25). Surely, the blood of millions will be upon us and our children if we choose silence over advocacy and complacency over activism.

If you are already a voice for the voiceless, persevere, knowing that in due season we will reap, if we do not give up (Gal. 6:9). If you have not used your voice, become involved and "open your mouth for the speechless."

*C. Ben Mitchell is a consultant for biomedical and life issues for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.*



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January 15, 1995

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	<b>New Poster:</b> Sanctity of Human Life Promotional Poster - (Color/undated)	.95	
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By Lamar E. Cooper, Sr

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26.

g is contrary to biblical  
; 2 Cor 8:1-9:7; Jn 13:29;  
3:7.

g appeals to "fate," "chan  
g violates biblical work eth  
g violates law of love, Mt 22  
g exploits poor, Am 5:6-7, 10  
g creates a stumbling block, 1

gling is harmless family enter  
g is a vice, like alcohol, drugs, pr  
g has no place for a believer, 1 Cor

gling a sound method to raise rev  
g money used as revenue, exploits cit  
g supplies no more than 3% of state bu

gling is a painless source of new reven  
g is regressive; the poor are hardest hit.  
g increases poverty, crime, loss of income,  
onal, physical trauma on citizens.

gling is a stable source of new revenue.  
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stable.

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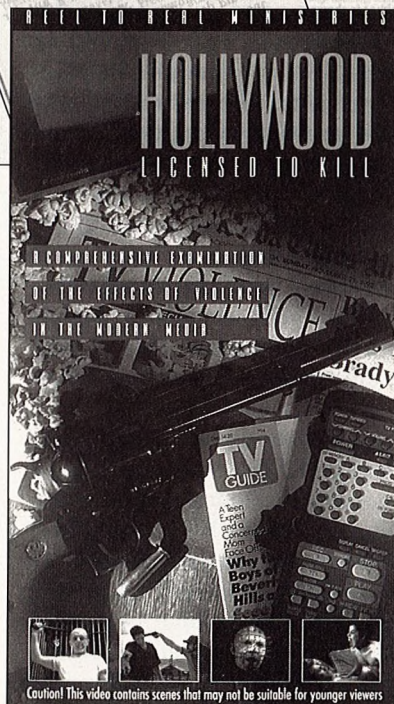
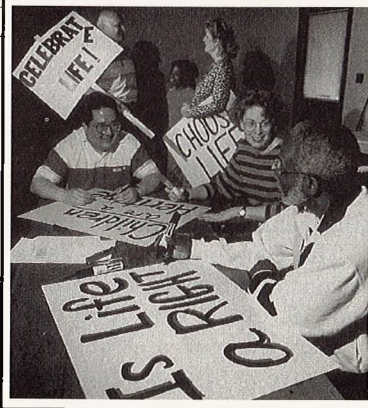
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# Light from the Capital

## SBC '71 abortion stand like his now, Clinton says

The Southern Baptist Convention's 1971 resolution on abortion nearly matches President Bill Clinton's position on the issue, he said recently before asking what in the Bible caused the country's largest non-Catholic denomination to reverse itself to a pro-life stance.

Speaking at a White House briefing arranged by the Baptist Joint Committee and attended by BJC trustees and some Baptist state editors, Clinton said the changed position of Southern Baptists underscores what he considers the Bible's lack of clarity on abortion.

In 1971, "the Southern Baptist Convention position on abortion is pretty much what mine is now," Clinton said. "So when these people come after me about this, I say, 'Well, did we learn something about the Bible in the last 23 years?'"

In response, James A. Smith of the Christian Life Commission said, "The reason Southern Baptist Convention resolutions have changed is not because we learned something about the Bible. Instead, we elected new leaders who believe the Bible. The former leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention—including the Christian Life Commission and Baptist Joint Committee—rejected the clear evidence of God's revealed Word, which holds human life to be sacred and worthy of protection."

The President is right about one thing, Smith said.

"His position on abortion is largely that of the 1971 SBC resolution," Smith said. "This is not something about which we should be proud. It is, in fact, disgraceful. The rhetoric of the resolution is shockingly similar to that of the Supreme Court's rationale in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton*, handed down some 18 months after the SBC meeting. In other words, Southern Baptist leaders were advancing the cause of abortion on demand in America."

The 1971 SBC resolution

affirmed the sanctity of human life but encouraged Southern Baptists to support legislation allowing "the possibility of abortion under such conditions as rape, incest, clear evidence of severe fetal deformity, and carefully ascertained evidence of the likelihood of damage to the emotional, mental, and physical health of the mother."

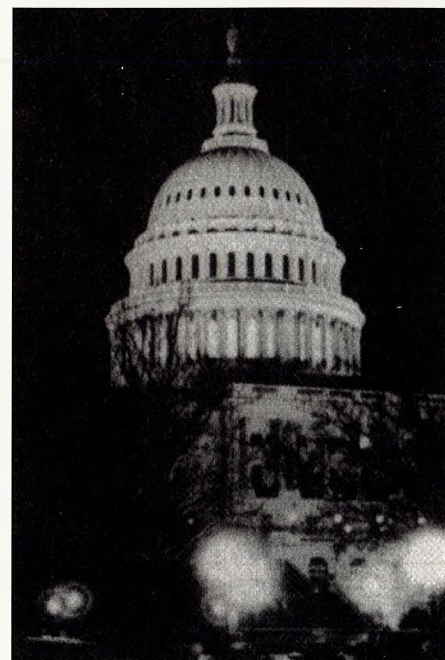
In January 1973, the Supreme Court legalized abortion in its *Roe v. Wade* opinion.

In *Roe*, the Court said a state could prohibit abortion in the third trimester except when the procedure is necessary to protect the health or life of the mother. In the companion *Doe v. Bolton* decision, however, the Court defined maternal health as "all factors—physical, emotional, psychological, familial and the woman's age—relevant to the well-being of the patient." As a result, the opinions had the practical effect of permitting abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy for any reason.

Messengers to the 1974 SBC meeting reaffirmed the '71 resolution. The Convention also passed resolutions on abortion in 1976, '77, '78 and '79, but it was 1980 before messengers adopted a strongly pro-life measure calling for legislation or a constitutional amendment banning abortion except to save the mother's life.

Clinton reiterated that he holds a pro-choice position, not a pro-abortion one, because he does not believe the Bible is clear on the subject. "I have read all the verses cited by people who say that it is self-evident that the Scripture condemns abortion. . . . And I simply don't believe they're so free of ambiguity that you can say, 'Well, the only answer to this is to overturn the decision by constitutional amendment,'" Clinton said.

"I have worked on this. I have read a lot of the pro-life literature, a lot of it. This is something I take very, very seriously. I think about this all the time. I revisit this every six months or so, personally. I labor



over this, because I think that no one can say that the number of abortions we have in this country is a good thing."

The CLC's Smith countered, calling the President pro-abortion rather than pro-choice.

"Bill Clinton has done more to make abortion on demand more commonplace and more acceptable in our society than any previous President," Smith said. "He has marched in step with the abortion lobby from his third day in office when he repealed by executive order five pro-life policies of the previous administrations."

The President's comments were provided in material from UPI Radio.

- Tom Strobe

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# Pro-life movement grows among African-Americans

(Continued from Page 1)

In May, she accepted an invitation to appear on a radio show hosted by a black pastor. Her appearance led to interviews on two secular stations. The ministry of African-Americans for Life also expanded outside the Columbia/Midlands area. At the invitation of chapter presidents for South Carolina Citizens for Life, she has spoken in three black churches in other regions.

The message remains basically the same as when African-Americans for Life was born in 1991: Black Christians, in particular, should actively oppose abortion, because it affects African-Americans disproportionately. While blacks constitute eight percent of the United States population, 37 percent of abortions are on African-American women, Massey said.

"In 2015, we will be dying at a faster rate than we are reproducing," Massey said. "The main message is that we have to be educated and informed about what is happening."

"As Christians, God will hold us accountable for not speaking out about this atrocity. I always say in my presentations that the Bible says judgment begins at the house of God."

For this genocide, "judgment is going to begin first in the African-American house of God," she said.

Massey said she is not discouraged because she is relying on God's strength, but she also has reasons to be hopeful.

"I think, more and more, we're seeing a change in our community," she said. "Within the black community, this message will spread. More and more blacks, after being educated and concerned, are saying, 'No more, no more can this happen.'"

Sheila and her husband, Oliver, became burdened about abortion as their church, Harbison Baptist Church, and pastor, Bob Shearer, became more involved in pro-life ministries. The Masseys, the first



Sheila Massey

black members of a church which is now 50 percent African-American, noticed only white people taking a stand in a pro-life video shown at Harbison.

Afterward, they discussed why more blacks were not involved in the pro-life movement. They also wondered why more black pastors were not speaking out against abortion. They learned of the high rate of black babies aborted, of the racial-cleansing philosophy of Planned Parenthood founder Margaret Sanger and that four of the five abortion clinics in Columbia were in predominantly African-American areas.

In April 1991, she believed God told her to "Go tell my people (African-American Christians) what's happening to the unborn babies."

"It was a big step to have to go into the black community and ask black pastors if they knew" what abortion was doing to unborn black children, she said.

Sheila began by mailing a letter of introduction to about 100 black pastors in Columbia and the surrounding area asking if she could visit with them. More than 80 agreed to a visit. She talked to the others on the telephone.

"After giving them the statistics, most of them were really astonished about what was happening," she said.

Although they were cordial, Sheila said, only three initially allowed her to address their churches. The response revealed how deep the Democratic Party, pro-choice tradition was in the black community, she said.

She sent two more letters to the pastors and has spoken in about seven other churches. She also has led three women's conferences in churches.

Following a national black pro-life leaders meeting in August, Sheila says God gave her the concept for what she calls "life parties." Similar to Tupperware parties, a hostess invites four or five people into her home to hear from African-Americans for Life.

"It seems as though this concept is going to be something to help us come into a smaller, more intimate setting where we'll be able to talk with blacks from this community, and in turn they can organize life parties," she said. "We feel as though the lay people are going to be the ones to reach the pastors, so we're trying to focus in on reaching the lay people."

African-Americans for Life not only seeks to involve black churches in opposing abortion but to encourage them to teach abstinence. Its leaders also are involved in post-abortion ministry and sidewalk counseling. The organization also plans to renovate a house near a high school to educate teenagers about abstinence and alternatives to abortion.

In all of this, her husband, church and pastor fully support Sheila, who has a 6-year-old daughter, four step-children and four step-grandchildren.

"The liberal movement is still trying to support the racial cleansing, and it's pathetic, and she recognizes that," said Shearer, whose church averages about 90 in attendance.

"I'm excited that people in the church would hear from God themselves and step out in faith and do something. I'm really excited that she steps out."



# War of the Worlds:

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