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Creation

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**TO THE LAST DROP** Pastor Tommy Mitchell scrapes a pot of cherry cobbler filling held by Doug Neuspickle, minister of education and youth at First Baptist Church in Ludlow. Along with Gary Belcher, music minister, the staff members cook and serve a Wednesday evening family meal at the church. Offering the staff-cooked meals has dramatically increased attendance, both on Wednesdays and Sundays.

## Pastor cooks up recipe for church growth

By Mark Wingfield  
News Director

LUDLOW—The ministerial staff of First Baptist Church in Ludlow takes the biblical admonition to "feed my sheep" literally, and their flock is growing as a result.

Since beginning a staff-cooked and staff-served Wednesday evening dinner two months ago, the church has experienced significant growth—nearly tripling Wednesday night attendance as well as increasing Sunday attendance, baptisms and ministry participation.

Food is an essential ingredient to this success story, Pastor Tommy Mitchell said, but an emphasis on families has added to the mix.

The church has adopted a family ministry theme that offers help to individual families and brings people together into a larger church family.

Church members recently went door-to-door in their Northern Kentucky town to distribute 2,000 packets labeled "Here's Hope For Your Family: A Gift of Love from First Baptist Ludlow."

The packets contained family helps and an invitation to attend an inquirer's class called "First Look." The four-week cycle is offered on Sunday mornings for anyone who wants to learn more about the church with "no obligation to join anything."

Even the Wednesday evening meal and prayer time are billed as a family time.

Mitchell got the idea for the staff-cooked meals from Larry Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church in Cold Spring. Davis has been cooking for his church for three years with similar success.

Preparing the meals takes about six hours every week, a price Mitchell said is small compared to results

it produces. "Do you have time to double your crowd and your fellowship?" he often asks fellow pastors who can't understand why he does it.

He is joined in the kitchen by Doug Neuspickle, minister of education and youth, and Gary Belcher, minister of music. Church members call the staff cooks the "Three Brothers."

They have four basic menus which they rotate: oven-fried chicken, roast beef, baked ham and turkey and dressing. All meals are cooked country-style and served with trimmings such as mashed potatoes, cherry cobbler, Broccoli Normandy and hot rolls.

One of the intangible benefits of the meals is the modeling of servanthood for the congregation, Mitchell said. "People say, 'If the Three Brothers can do this, then we can' □ See Staff-baked meals ..., page 6

## Billy Graham preaches in North Korea

HONG KONG (BP)—Billy Graham has stormed one of the last bastions of communism—and had a friendly lunch with its general.

The evangelist visited North Korea March 31-April 4, discussed religion with President Kim Il Sung—the nation's absolute ruler for nearly half a century—and spoke about Christianity to leading scholars as well as the nation's tiny Christian community.

Graham, 73, was invited to the officially atheist nation by the Korean Christians Federation, the government-sanctioned organization for believers.

"I don't know why I was invited, but I'm often invited to countries where I don't why I was invited," Graham told reporters.

Graham and Kim discussed religion and philosophy during a private meeting and later over lunch.

Graham followed several foreign Christian delegations that have made less-publicized visits to North Korea in the last few years. But he claimed he was the first foreign evangelist allowed to preach the gospel there since World War II.

What is now North Korea once was the heart of Korean Christianity and one of the most vibrant Christian centers in Asia. Christianity was suppressed in the north after Korea was divided and communists led by Kim took over. Many believers fled south, died under persecution or were killed during the Korean War.

Graham preached in Pyongyang at the two officially sanctioned churches—one Protestant and one Catholic—and addressed pastors, seminarians and other church leaders. Preaching from John 3:16, he stressed the reality of God's love for every human being and urged his audience to follow Christ in their daily lives.

Graham also lectured to students at Pyongyang's Kim Il Sung University on what it means to be a Christian.

The evangelist said he saw young people in the churches—not just older believers who may have been Christians prior to communism's rise.

## Gregory will head search for Parks' successor at FMB

CLEMSON, S.C.—Texas pastor Joel Gregory will head the search committee to find a successor to Keith Parks as president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Gregory, pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, will work with a 15-member committee appointed by Bill Hancock, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville and outgoing chairman of FMB trustees.

The appointments were among Hancock's last actions as chairman, since his term ended after the board's April 6-8 meeting in Clemson, S.C. The new chairman elected by trustees is John Jackson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Fairfield, Calif.

Jackson was nominated by Paige Patterson of Dallas and elected by a

vote of 48-35 over John Greene, a businessman from West Palm Beach, Fla. Jackson's nomination was supported by the board's most conservative trustees, while Greene was supported by trustees seeking a middle-of-the-road candidate.

After his election, Jackson told reporters he believes the board is divided over whether the next FMB president should have experience as a missionary. "About half the board feels it's mandatory to have missionary experience. Another large bloc is looking for the man and his ability to lead and his missions heart."

Asked if the committee would have a candidate by Oct. 30, Jackson said the search could take a year if the committee "does its work right." He

said he believes trustees would be willing for Parks to serve until a successor is found, but Parks said he would stay no longer than Oct. 30.

Jackson said Parks will retain full authority as president until Oct. 30 "as far as I'm concerned."

Parks announced plans to retire during a "spiritual retreat" with trustees last month in Texas, citing philosophical differences and a lack of trust in his leadership as reasons.

The veteran missionary made his retirement plans official in a letter presented to trustees during their spring meeting last week.

The night before, Parks drew a standing ovation from about 11,000 people gathered at Clemson University for the appointment of 38 new for-

ign missionaries. After Parks gave a challenge to the missionaries and issued an invitation to the audience, 199 people made spiritual decisions, including 77 who committed to various types of foreign mission service.

The appointments bring the total SBC foreign mission force to 3,955 missionaries assigned to 125 countries. Hancock noted the FMB had achieved the 125-country figure eight years ahead of the target date set in the SBC's Bold Mission Thrust effort to proclaim the gospel to the world.

Parks' disagreements with trustees resurfaced both in his official letter of retirement and as a result of a motion from the floor which would have asked him to remain in his position □ See FMB trustees ..., page 2

# BAPTISTS

## BAPTIST BITS

■ **The alumni** associations of three Southern Baptist Convention seminaries will have exhibits and alumni functions at the general assembly of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship April 30-May 2 in Fort Worth, Texas, even though none of the six SBC schools will be officially represented at the meeting of Baptist moderates. Southern and Midwestern seminaries will hold alumni fellowships May 1 at the Ramada Inn, and Southwestern Seminary will host a continental breakfast May 2, also at the Ramada.

■ **In an apparent first**, the Southern Baptist Convention and the U.S. Catholic Conference have joined together in a friend-of-the-court brief submitted to the U.S. Supreme Court. The brief, filed April 6 by the Catholic Conference and the SBC Christian Life Commission, asks the court to reverse its 1973 decision legalizing abortion. The National Association of Evangelicals also joined in the brief. Together, the three religious bodies represent about 90 million Americans.

■ **Mississippi College** trustees voted to close Clarke College, a two-year institution they operate in Newton, Miss. They cited dwindling enrollment, decreased financial resources and loss of accreditation as reasons for the closure.

■ **Grand Canyon University's** faculty and staff have taken voluntary pay cuts of 1 percent to 10 percent to help the Arizona Baptist school move to a cash-based budget. Administrators said the one-time action would allow the school to avoid a deficit this year and begin restructuring for a stronger future.

## Baptist church licenses homosexual

CHAPEL HILL, N.C.—Members of Olin T. Binkley Memorial Baptist Church approved the licensing of a homosexual man to the ministry by a 57-42 percentage vote April 5.

The Chapel Hill, N.C., church is believed to be the first Southern Baptist congregation to open the ministry to homosexuals. The vote to license John Blevins, 25, a Duke University divinity student, was taken during a Sunday night meeting open only to church members.

The church adopted a seven-paragraph statement saying they would "disregard the sexual orientation of those under consideration" for pastoral leadership, licensing or ordination.

Binkley "has been committed in its history to inclusiveness," Linda Jordan, the church's pastor since May 1990, told Baptist Press, "and so this is not as foreign as it may look." The church was heavily involved in the civil rights movement, she said, and has been part of "the struggle for women to hold places of leadership in the church" and has adopted sexually inclusive language in its worship.

Blevins told the Raleigh News and Observer he heard the call to the gospel ministry during the summer after

the 11th grade. Five years later, as a freshman at Duke University's divinity school, he acknowledged his homosexuality.

"It's been a long process, a growing process for me as a person as well as for the congregation," Blevins said at a news conference after being licensed by the Binkley congregation.

At a series of congregational and small group meetings, Blevins countered Bible passages condemning homosexuality with his view that God's revelation to man doesn't stop with the Scripture. He talked about same-sex marriage and sexual intercourse outside of matrimony. He suggested gays and lesbians can be positive role models for children. He was even asked by one member whether he had been tested for HIV.

But Blevins said he does not resent the intrusion. "While my sexuality is intimate and personal, it also has social implications," he said.

Blevins' theological credentials "are as sound as those of anyone who has come through this church seeking licensure," said Dick Helwig, the church moderator and chief lay officer.

Conservative Baptist leaders—in

the Southern Baptist convention and the North Carolina Baptist State Convention—already have threatened to oust the church, which is dually aligned with American Baptist Churches.

In addition, a number of the congregation's longtime members have begun to vacate the pews in Binkley's modern sanctuary. Helwig said the same sort of exodus occurred when Jordan became the congregation's first female pastor.

In February, the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee initiated efforts to change the SBC constitution and bylaws to bar any church "affirming, approving or endorsing in any way the active practice of homosexuality."

The Executive Committee will meet prior to the SBC's June 9-11 meeting in Indianapolis to formulate any specific proposals. The committee also adopted a resolution in February stating, "Unrepentant homosexuality is repeatedly condemned in Scripture."

Reported by Art Toalston through Baptist Press and Ruth Sheehan of the Raleigh News and Observer through Associated Baptist Press.

## Midwestern trustees act on abortion, adjunct faculty

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary adopted a strongly-worded resolution on abortion and voted to increase their involvement in selecting adjunct faculty April 6-7.

The resolution says abortion on demand is "immoral, unethical and unbiblical." It "requests" that any Midwestern employee who does not share this view "refrain from publicly espousing the right of a woman to have an abortion on demand."

Before voting on the resolution, trustees allowed Hulitt Gloer, chairman of the seminary's faculty affairs committee, to address the board.

Among the faculty, response to the resolution could be characterized as "a deep sense of hurt," Gloer said. "In short, faculty members feel that the resolution reflects an attitude of suspicion toward the faculty which indicates an underlying lack of trust."

Although the faculty report was discussed at length during the board's instruction committee meeting, trustees made no response to a faculty request for dialogue. Instead, they adopted the resolution by a 17-9 vote.

Trustees also elected Robert Johnson of Fort Worth, Texas, as associate professor of church history, but not before several first-year trustees complained about the procedure.

Johnson's election was the first time a new method for faculty selection had been used that includes extensive trustee involvement through the instructional committee.

However, when Johnson's name was presented, trustee Timothy Harvey of Georgia objected, saying he was being asked to vote for a person he had never met, "recommended by trustees I barely know."

Instructional committee Chairman James Jones of Michigan said the committee made sure the candidate was a biblical inerrantist, that he believed Adam and Eve were real people, and that he believed in the miracles, the resurrection and the return of the Lord.

Johnson was elected by a 20-6 vote, but not before trustees learned that Johnson had been quizzed by conservative leader Paige Patterson of Dallas about his theological beliefs and his feeling about "the conservative resurgence."

Also during the meeting, trustees approved a change in procedure for securing adjunct professors, previously the responsibility of administration.

The change requires that names of prospective adjunct teachers be submitted to the instructional committee 30 days before appointment "for their

## Pastors propose giving up Furman

COLUMBIA, S.C. (ABP)—A bipartisan group of 34 South Carolina pastors has proposed that the South Carolina Baptist Convention sever all ties with Furman University rather than take the school to court.

The pastors, saying they represent "a diversity of theological beliefs" among South Carolina Baptists, asked for a special meeting of the state convention to end the 165-year relationship between the Greenville school and Baptists in the state.

Leaders on both sides said the proposal has a good chance of succeeding.

The dispute between the university and convention appeared headed to court April 1 after a committee reached an impasse in attempts to negotiate an out-of-court settlement. Neither party was willing to relinquish the power to elect trustees—a power the convention held until Furman's 25 trustees assumed that power for themselves in 1990.

## FMB trustees approve search committee, elect officers

Continued from page 1 until 1995.

L.H. McCollough of Bastrop, La., moved the trustees vote to support Parks as president and commit to his leadership through 1995.

However, during discussion of the motion, pointed questions were directed to Parks about views attributed to him in a Baptist Press story on an address he made to FMB staff after his return from the March retreat.

Trustee Bill Blanchard of Soddy Daisy, Tenn., read two paragraphs of the article which he said "caused me tremendous concern."

In those quotes, Parks said he was concerned about a trend toward considering individuals for service only if their theology and politics are "right" and they have endorsed the conservative political movement within the

SBC.

Blanchard asked Parks if the article quoted him correctly and to name "just one person" who has been ruled out for political reasons.

Before Parks could respond to Blanchard's question, Hancock interrupted and ruled Blanchard's motion out of order, saying the discussion was "moving in the wrong direction for a public forum."

In his presidential address that followed, Parks said he would have liked to answer Blanchard's question and noted there is a "trend" toward excluding people on the basis of denominational politics.

As a result of Hancock's ruling, the trustees, who already had decided not to vote by secret ballot on McCollough's motion, were spared having to vote publicly on whether they wanted

Parks to continue as president.

"I disagree with Dr. Parks," Jackson told reporters later. "I don't see the trends he sees."

The new chairman said he doesn't know of anyone rejected for missionary service and doesn't intend to institute a "creedal approach."

Also during last week's meeting, a seven-member subcommittee of trustees and staff was named to develop guidelines for handling press conferences and sensitive news releases. Trustees have been critical of news coverage provided in the past eight months, beginning with the trustees' decision to defund the Baptist seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland.

Other trustees named to the presidential search committee are Leon Hyatt, vice chairman, from Pineville, La.; Bob Oxford of Lakewood, Colo.;

information and input."

In the closing session, Jerry Dav-enport of Texas proposed a policy allowing students to tape all classroom and chapel lectures. President Ferguson asked why the policy was needed. He said the school had never had a policy prohibiting taping classroom lectures and that taping was done all the time at the discretion of each professor.

Trustee Ronnie Rogers of Arkansas said he favored the motion because it would provide the administration and trustees "a mechanism to substantiate allegations" concerning the orthodoxy of a professor's teachings.

The motion was referred to a committee for consideration.

Reported by Bob Terry of the Missouri Word & Way through Associated Baptist Press and Brenda Sanders of Midwestern Seminary through Baptist Press

Phyllis Randall of Blacksburg, Va.; Karol Wise of Harrisburg, Pa.; John Simms of Salem, Va.; Bruce Romoser of Ellicott, Md.; Terry Williams of Batesville, Miss.; Ted Moody of Warner Robins, Ga.; Reed Lynn of Shawnee, Okla.; Carol Gilbreath of Florence, Ala.; Terry Horton of Colleyville, Texas; Mike Goodwin of Festus, Mo.; Hoyt Savage of Las Vegas, Nev.; and John Greene.

Other trustee officers elected are Bonnie Westbrook, physician from Beaumont, Texas, first vice chairman; Mike Goodwin, second vice chairman; Karen Gilbert, a pastor's wife from Hampton, Va., recording secretary.

Reported by Greg Warner of Associated Baptist Press and Robert O'Brien and Donald Martin of the FMB through Baptist Press

## Sherman appeals for Fellowship's European venture

By Mark Wingfield  
News Director

LOUISVILLE—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will begin supporting 11 missionary couples in Europe next year, including some currently assigned to the seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

That was the message Cecil Sherman delivered to a group of Kentucky Baptists April 11 while asking them to fund a new Fellowship missions venture called Launch Europe.

Sherman was the keynote speaker at a meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship held at Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville. About 200 people attended the day-long meeting.

The Kentucky Baptist Fellowship is a state affiliate of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Both groups are composed of Baptist moderates disenchanted with the current conservative leadership of the SBC.

FMB trustees have abandoned the SBC's traditional European missions program like a baby left on a doorstep, said Sherman, newly elected coordinator of the national Fellowship and former pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

The Fellowship would be cruel to step over that baby while searching for other opportunities, he said.

FMB trustees unwittingly gave the Fellowship a reason for being, Sherman explained. Initially, people flocked to the Fellowship because they shared the common experience of having been traumatized by changes in the SBC, he said.

"But we needed a better reason for being than that," Sherman said. "We are a purpose people. Baptists get together to do missions."

Sherman said it is "ludicrous" to call the fledgling Fellowship a new denomination, but he also described the purpose of denominations to be "missions delivery systems."

From Sherman's own description, the Fellowship will become a missions delivery system next January,

when it begins supporting the European missionaries and possibly others.

The organization's total missions budget for 1993 is \$2.5 million, he said. Half will be spent in Europe and half in other domestic and foreign efforts yet to be determined.

Sherman said he has received a formal request from Ruschlikon seminary trustees for the Fellowship to assume support of the faculty and staff who no longer will be supported by the FMB. "We're headed toward doing this mission," he said.

He also indicated the Fellowship has received dozens of inquiries from SBC missionaries about Fellowship support. He declined to reveal the names of any missionaries under consideration for Fellowship support.

A decision by FMB trustees last fall to defund the Swiss seminary set in motion of storm of protest about how Baptists do missions in Europe.

Baptist moderates have charged that FMB trustees are moving from a

confessional and cooperative missions approach to a creedal and paternalistic approach. Baptist conservatives, on the other hand, argue that FMB trustees are purging liberalism from foreign missions.

This dispute ultimately led to the resignation of FMB President Keith Parks, who will step down in October due to "philosophical differences" with trustees.

Sherman said he believes Parks resigned because trustees asked him to do something he could not do in good conscience. FMB trustees, he said, want to make European Baptists "reflect the theology of SBC leaders."

Parks' resignation is the "last wake-up call" for Baptist moderates that new conservative SBC leaders will forever change the denomination's agencies, Sherman said. "If you're waiting for the other shoe to drop, it won't happen."

Instead, future changes will be made slowly as old leaders retire or

resign quietly, he predicted.

Sherman also asked the group just what it will take to wake up some Baptists. He cited a litany of changes in the denomination, including the resignations of a seminary president and Sunday School Board president and the firings of two editors.

"What has to happen before you'll go to your churches and do something?" he specifically asked pastors.

Sherman told pastors he did not want to divide their churches. However, he said the fair thing to do in churches where there are split opinions is to give members choices about their mission money. At the church he recently left as pastor, Sherman said, members were allowed to give their money through the traditional Cooperative Program or through one of the Fellowship's funding plans.

Allowing such a choice could keep churches from splitting, where as putting the issue to a vote one way or the other would be more divisive, he said.

Sherman charged that the SBC's current leadership wants to portray the decision as an either-or choice between the Cooperative Program and the Fellowship. But churches do not have to stop giving through the Cooperative Program to give through the Fellowship, he said.

"I'm not asking you to cut anybody off," Sherman said. Instead, he said, he hopes more churches will move some of their missions money to support Fellowship efforts, particularly the Launch Europe initiative.

Currently, about three-fourths of the money channeled through the Fellowship is designated for traditional SBC causes. For new ventures such as Launch Europe to be successful, churches must be willing to channel more unrestricted funds through the Fellowship, Sherman said.

Compared to the total budget of most churches, the amount of money that makes it to the Fellowship or the Cooperative Program is only a small percentage, he noted. "It's just the money with all the nerve endings. It's the emotional money."

### Like Elvis, old SBC is gone, speakers say

LOUISVILLE—The old Southern Baptist Convention is as dead as Elvis, and moderates who still believe in reported sightings of the convention they once knew are only dreaming, Robert Parham said.

Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics, spoke to about 200 people attending a meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship April 11. His sentiments were echoed by Rob Nash, pastor of Buechel Park Baptist Church in Louisville and a member of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's global missions committee.

Nash said conservative trustees of the SBC Foreign Mission Board have forever changed the course of SBC foreign missions.

"We no longer live in the 1970s, when cooperation was the main criteria for Southern Baptist missions," Nash said. "The old prag-

matic approach to foreign missions that built this denomination is dead. We can hold a funeral."

"It's time for thoughtful, cooperative Baptists to face the truth: the king of denominations is dead," Parham said. "It's time ... to get on with the kingdom business of the real king."

Parham said Baptist moderates have come to a fork in the road where they can choose either anger or joy. The road to joy is a "sunlight road" and a "pro-active road," he said.

Other speakers included June Whitlow of the national staff of Woman's Missionary Union; Stephen Shoemaker, pastor of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville; Carolyn Hale, associate pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Georgetown; and Don Mantooth, pastor of First Baptist Church in Morehead.

## State BSU sends missionaries, elects officers

GEORGETOWN—A commissioning service for 79 student summer missionaries highlighted the annual training conference for Kentucky Baptist Student Union leaders April 3-6.

"Leaders to Light the World" was the theme of the three-day conference held on the campus of Georgetown College.

Also during the meeting, new state BSU officers were elected. They are Lisa Clifton, president; David Caldwell, vice president; and Phillip Kays, secretary. All three are students at Morehead State University, an unusual coincidence in state elections.

The 79 student missionaries will serve in various capacities and locations this summer, including on the six Kentucky Baptist Convention Son Teams: Son Burst, Son Share, Son Bound, Son Praise, Son Celebration and Son Life.

The commissioning was held specifically for student missionaries who

will be supported by the state BSU offering and who are appointed through the KBC's student department. However, other students recognized will serve as summer missionaries through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and other sending agencies, bringing the total number of Kentucky student missionaries close to 200.

Pat Brunner, campus minister at Berea College, encouraged the students to be "letters of light" as they go out this summer. Quoting Mother Teresa, she also urged each student to be a "pencil in the hand of God."

During the service, each student missionary was recognized and asked to identify two special people in their lives. The students and their honorees then formed a circle that encompassed the chapel and ran down the aisles.

Special guests during the leadership training conference included Laura Clegg, state BSU president in Utah-Idaho, and Rob Lee, director of

student work for the Utah-Idaho Baptist Convention. Kentucky Baptists currently are engaged in a partnership missions venture with Utah-Idaho Baptists.

Clegg told about her Christian conversion, describing how relationships with caring Baptist friends helped her find a new relationship with Jesus Christ and leave Mormonism.

Georgetown College President William Crouch encouraged the student leaders to learn four things: to navigate life with a compass instead of a map, to be disciplined, to have integrity and to "dare to dare."

Also during the weekend, the student missionaries honed the tools of their trade, learning where not to drink the water, what to pack, what to expect where they are going, practicing unusual ways to sing "Jesus Loves Me" and studying how to counsel youth and children.

Reported by Elizabeth Baird of the University of Louisville BSU.

### BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Ross Figart**, longtime missionary in Eastern Kentucky, died of apparent heart failure April 10. Memorial services were held at Central Baptist Church in Winchester April 13. Complete coverage will appear in next week's Recorder.

■ **Eighty men and boys** gathered at the Greasy Creek Baptist Church in Greensburg April 4 for the annual brotherhood breakfast and R.A. track meet sponsored by the Russell Creek Baptist Association. Bill Reed, pastor of Beech Grove Baptist Church in Campbellsville, was keynote speaker. Macedonia Baptist Church in Greensburg had the most participants in the track meet. Associational winners will progress to the state competitions at Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek Baptist assemblies.

■ **Laypeople** are invited to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's annual lay Bible conference May 14-16, featuring seminars on the theme, "You, the Cross and the Resurrection." Speakers include professors James Blevins, Gerald Borchert, Charles Bugg, Molly Marshall and Tom Smothers. For information, call (502) 897-4142.

■ **Campbellsville College** will have a marching band for the first time next year. New maroon, white and silver uniforms for the band were unveiled during the spring trustee meeting. Recruitment is still underway for the band, and grants are available for band members. For enrollment information, contact the school at (800) 264-6014.

### WMU meeting set

PADUCAH—Missionary speakers, worship and recognition of the state's top mission-giving churches will highlight the April 24-25 annual meeting of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union at First Baptist Church in Paducah.

Speakers include Dorothy Sample, president of North American Baptist WMU, Carolyn Miller, national WMU president; Melody Graham, missionary to Dominica; Betty and Jim McKinley, longtime missionaries to Bangladesh; Susan Hatfield, missionary to Angola; Betty Jo Lewis, wife of Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis; Barbara Joiner, author and speaker from Colombiana, Ala.

The meeting also will include seminars on mission action, enlistment for WMU, teen-agers, senior adults and internationals.

## WESTERN RECORDER

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*Earnestly contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.—Jude 3*

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## Easter means life

When you think of Easter, what images come to your mind?

As I think of my childhood days, two images stand out for me: family and Easter egg hunts.

I never missed an Easter egg hunt if I could help it. The fun part about Easter eggs was that you could always hide them again. The best eggs were the plastic ones that had candy inside.

Most of our Easter egg hunts were centered around family. I remember one Easter in particular. We had driven 45 minutes to my great-grandmother's house. We were all dressed up to go to church with my great aunt. After church, it was time to eat. Or better yet in regards to my grandma's cooking, it was time to feast. Her homemade noodles were the best. It was a great time!

What about today? What does Easter mean for me now? It means grace. It means forgiveness. But most of all, it means life! The life I am able to live is a result of resurrection morning. It is an abundant life, and it is an eternal life. That is the message of Easter. It is the message that everyone needs to hear.

Have you invited someone to church on Easter? It will be an opportunity for them to hear about grace, forgiveness and life.

## MINISTERIALLY SPEAKING

ground. He describes the chilly wind from the northwest with the smell of pigs and sheep in it. He speaks his vision of children and parents. The parents buy corn dogs and lovingly hold their children's hands. The children hang on to their parent's legs with one hand and eat the corn dog with the other. Coming back to the ground, Keillor writes, "Thank you, dear God, for this good life and forgive us if we do not love it enough."

There are so many things to love about this life: growth, learning, vision, forgiveness, reunion, companionship, discovery, laughter and understanding. There are so many people with so many differences that enrich us all.

They bring us colorful ways of dress, new ways of seeing things that have been there all along, laughter and dancing, and music. They bring us so much opportunity to love like God loves. This life we are given is rich, indeed, if it is shared and if we love as does God, who loves us and our differences.

"Thank you, dear God, for this good life, and forgive us if we do not love it enough."

*Jim England, pastor  
Deer Park Baptist Church  
Louisville*

## Access to God

Do you examine the Scriptures, or do they examine you?

Are you a faithful reader of the Open Windows or study your Bible so that you know how to find a Scripture in just a few minutes? How many times have you read the Bible through from Genesis to Revelation?

Do you read early in the morning

lifestyle.

To suggest that convention polity (i.e. autonomy of the local church) be elevated to a position over that of Scripture is mind-boggling. And that does seem to be the editor's position.

Concluding that "private" sin in church members' lives and its sanction in the "public" worship of the

or late at night before you retire to bed?

We need to study the Bible:

■ Because it helps us cultivate an attitude of dependence upon the Lord.

■ It also helps us to spiritually discern things in their elements.

■ It's capable of building you up in the Lord and the truth and pointing out things in our lives that need to change.

■ The Holy Spirit illuminates us as we study and follow his teachings.

■ Its truths become a part of our lives.

If you only spend 20 minutes each day, the time you spend will show you what God did—and does—as well as offering you access to God's mind.

We use road maps, telephone books, recipes, TV guides, newspapers and magazines every day. Why not the Bible? Just 20 minutes will start your day off right and you will be surprised how well the day will go when you examine the Scriptures and they examine you.

We need to be receptive, to be dependent on the Holy Spirit to lead us.

"Lord, open your word to me, and open me to your world."

*Ty Clenney, pastor  
Greensburg Baptist Church  
Greensburg*

## The purpose

The Humana Corp. was in the news late last year. It seems that people like Sam Donaldson and others were calling in to question the amount of money the company is making. I realize the official question is about price mark-up on services and materials, but mark-up determines profit, and that is the bottom line.

I am somewhat amused that people are so surprised at the discoveries of Mr. Donaldson. Humana is a for-

profit company. The primary purpose of a for-profit company is to make money. The Humana Corp. is going to make decisions and enact procedures which will ensure that the company fulfills its purpose. In this case, its purpose is making money.

The real problem is that there is no clear consensus of understanding concerning the purpose of hospitals, and the issue is not only money. Humana sees hospitals as a way of making money. Doctors and other practitioners in the medical field see hospitals primarily as the place where they ply their trade. The public understands the purpose of a hospital as a place where the sick come for care and healing. Is it any wonder confusion reigns?

However, the same principle applies to the church. When there is no clear understanding of the purpose of the church, confusion reigns. Church staff often see the church as a place where they ply their trade—preaching sermons, planning religious activities and singing beautiful music. The members often see the church as their own private club where membership has its privileges. The public often understands the role of the church as being the moral voice of society. Is it any wonder confusion often reigns?

Jesus intended the purpose of the church to be that of providing the people opportunity to have a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. Sermons, prayers, hymns and teaching are all features of the church experience, but they are not the purpose. The mission of the church is to make believers of all people through a permanent, personal relationship with Jesus Christ that is both life-changing and life-giving.

*Wayne Hayes, pastor  
Beechmont Baptist Church  
Louisville*

## Thank you, God

Garrison Keillor describes his riding of the ferris wheel at the fair as soaring up to the stars and back to the

## No compromise

Shock, disappointment and frustration are all emotions that I felt, in part, upon reading the editor's comment regarding the SBC Executive Committee's response to two North Carolina churches who by their proposed action sanction the homosexual

## BAPTIST FORUM

lifestyle.

To suggest that convention polity (i.e. autonomy of the local church) be elevated to a position over that of Scripture is mind-boggling. And that does seem to be the editor's position.

## Small town at Easter time

More than 100 local and county newspapers publish daily, twice-weekly, and weekly across our commonwealth.

One is the Grayson County News-Gazette, published Monday and Thursday. The specialness of such publications is captured in the April 2 issue of this Leitchfield community newspaper.

Take, for example, page 8 which has a picture of the animal control officer holding a dog. The article reads: "Wet, cold and hungry, the dog welcomes shelter and food, but most of all friendly voices and gentle hands. She appears to be healthy, well-mannered, sweet-tempered and loving. She, like other animals at the shelter,

needs a home where she will be cared for."

Can you imagine an article like that in the Courier-Journal, Lexington Herald, or Cincinnati Post?

Or how about the community news:

"Angelene and Lester Young spent Tuesday night at Clarkson with Amanda and Lacey Vincent" or "In the birthday club, we have Amy Moore and Ellen Moore Hayes on April 6; Laci, granddaughter of Otis and Frankie Bryant, 1-year old on the seventh." My grandson, Marshall, was one year old

March 26. Did that appear in the Courier-Journal? No way!

Being a "conservationist" myself, I was impressed to note: "This news-

church are one in the same requires some convoluted mental gymnastics that most Southern Baptists find unacceptable. To cloak such action in such meaningful words as "compassion," "love" "autonomy," etc. is worse.

By all means, we must continue to proclaim God's love for all sinners. At the same time, we dare not flinch from the declaration that God hates sin. If

those twin truths seem contradictory, then we must appeal to the Holy Spirit to interpret them to honest seekers of truth. But as individual churches or as a denomination, compromise on such biblical principles as those under discussion simply must not be an option.

*Tim Alexander, pastor  
Florence Baptist Church  
Florence*

print is 100 percent recycled." I also noted that a local company will begin this summer to participate in the state-wide used-motor oil recycling program. The article revealed that "twelve million gallons of used motor oil are generated annually in Kentucky but only six million can be accounted for." It further claimed that "the state of Kentucky sustains an oil-spill every two years equal to that of the Exxon-Valdeze (spill)!"

I was glad to see that on the front page; never mind "Washington whispers." The motor-oil thing was something folks here can really do something specific about.

On page nine was this week's International Sunday school lesson. Whatever one's Christian affiliation, here was some help for all.

And it was on page nine that I noted the importance of religious life in the small community.

The paper clearly demonstrated the

tradition of many Kentucky churches at Easter time. That tradition which still holds in thousands of churches across this state is "revival."

I noticed: "A revival will begin at McGrew General Baptist Church on April 11. Everyone is welcome." And, "There will be revival services at the Caney Creek Church beginning Sunday, April 5."

I enjoy reading when I can the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times. They enlarge my world. But there's something about a small town newspaper that takes me to my roots.

It's Easter-time in Kentucky; revivals abound, especially in and around our small towns. Whether or not we participate in a "revival meeting," Easter should remind us that "He is risen." And that means I can be, too!

*William W. Marshall is executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.*

## Help save our planet; recycle this newspaper

Don't throw this newspaper away.  
Recycle it.

That's right. Stack it in your basement or garage, or pile it on your back porch. Store it with last week's Western Recorder, and next week's. Add your local newspapers. Then take them all to your nearest recycling center.

Do the same thing with your soft-drink cans and vegetable cans. Recycle your plastic bags and coat hangers. Don't forget milk cartons and glass bottles. Recycle everything you can. You'll feel better every time you take out the garbage, and you'll be doing your great-grandchildren a big favor.

You've seen the stories about environmental calamity: Overfilled landfills. Toxic waste. Spoiled waterways. Polluted air. An ozone hole. Bare forests. The greenhouse effect. Oil spills. Acid rain. Eroded farmland.

The reports sound more like scripts from horror movies than studies about the fate of our planet. Yet future generations may live in horror if ours does not curb the destruction being heaped upon our fragile eco-structure.

Despite the fright, Christians have had mixed emotions about the environment and the earth.

On the one hand, we worship the God of creation and praise God for all the blessings this planet affords us. On the other, we seem to get hung up about what it means to "have dominion" over the rest of creation. Some among us have quoted Scripture to encourage conservation and preservation; others of us have quoted the same verses to authorize aggressive development and profiteering. We've wound up talking past (sometimes even yelling at) each other, but not doing much together to make sure future generations inherit a home that will sustain them.

Christians also have been uncomfortable with the company they keep when they actually try to do something about the environment. In the

early days, that meant working with people who looked like hippies. More recently, it has meant risking a coalition with people whose religious beliefs are human-centered rather than God-centered. Shocked by these peripheral distractions, we've been shy about joining forces with all manner of folk in order to make progress on important environmental issues.

That's the beauty of recycling your garbage. And adjusting your thermostat down in winter and up in summer. And keeping your car tuned up, with the tires properly inflated. Not to mention planting trees, buying products that are not over-packaged, putting a brick in your toilet tank, turning the lights off when you leave the room, and a host of other everyday little actions that save energy, conserve natural resources and protect the environment.

These, you understand, are individual pursuits. You don't have to hold hands with an old hippy or see eye-to-eye with a New Ager to make a difference. And if you, and the members of your church, and the neighbors down the road all start to care for the planet a little bit more, you can make a difference.

Once you start that pattern, you might be inclined to learn how you can do even more to preserve and restore the environment. You can begin by reading. Newspapers and leading magazines often carry update articles. Your local library has information, as does your soil and water conservation district. Baptists have written several new books on the environment, so check your church library. And you can begin by turning to page 7 of this week's Western Recorder, where we've compiled a package of stories to help Kentucky Baptists commemorate Earth Day, April 18, and Soil and Water Stewardship Week, April 26-May 3.

Don't be put off by the enormity of the task. Ecology is indeed a global problem with enormous ramifications. But you can help, and you can begin—by recycling this newspaper.

Marv Knox

**You don't have to close the ozone hole all by yourself; just take the first step.**

## God's plan remains the only 'safe' expression of sex

Recent events have focused world attention on the scourge of AIDS and the idea of "safe sex."

I am not unmindful of the intense suffering caused by the modern-day plague called AIDS. I can feel the rage, the terror, the despair, the unbelief of those infected and those who love them.

But recent revelations have produced two giant misconceptions. The first relates to the idea that some devices—condoms, for example—can actually make sex safe. Such devices might make sex physically safer, but certainly not safe.

The more serious misconception

declares that sex, even if consummated outside the will of God, can be made acceptable if it can be made physically "safe." Sinful sex is never safe. Even if sinful sex could be rendered physically safe, it brings with it the tragedy of all sin.

Certain absolute values exist in God's created world. God made the world in such a way that practices outside his way bring consequences outside his plan for mankind. The divine plan for men and women remains sexual intercourse only between a husband and his wife and between a wife and her husband (Genesis 2:24).

There is no such thing as "casual sex" (1 Corinthians 6:12-20).

In biblical teachings, sexual intercourse should be experienced only between spouses. The primary purpose of sexual bonding is the binding of wife and husband into the "one flesh" union, enhancing that union through the expression of love, joy and servanthood, and the provision of children. Sex outside loving marriage always falls short of God's plan and constitutes sin.

God's best for humans does not tolerate sinful sex. We aim at achieving God's best, not simply avoiding sin's worst. Let us not suggest that sinful sex if rendered "safe" is good for

humans. Let us teach God's unquestioned purity rather than the world's uncertain "safety." Let us never suggest that should physical health-related factors be nullified, that any practice of sex outside of marriage is permissible.

God's plan for sexual relationship is clear. This plan builds up, ennobles, improves, blesses. Sinful sex tears down, depraves, destroys.

Is there a real choice? God's plan for sexual conduct remains the one and only proper, safe and acceptable expression of sexuality.

Ebbie Smith, associate  
Baptist Center for Ethics  
Fort Worth, Texas

**"We aim at achieving God's best, not simply avoiding sin's worst."**

### GUEST EDITORIAL

## Any (still) sane parent would gladly pay \$19.95 for a Truth-O-Meter

The package hospitals give parents of second-born children should include striped shirts and whistles.

Your first bundle of joy is no problem; an only child has no sibling to argue with. An older child and a baby aren't any trouble, either, since kids don't have any quarrel with barely-animate objects. But when the second child gets old enough to walk and talk, parenting gets tough.

Take our kiddoes, please. The other day, their fighting created enough noise to make rock musicians want to move to a quieter neighborhood.

"You give that back!" one screeched. "I had it first, and you can't take it away!" the other scratched back.

"But it's mine!"  
"So what? You left it in my room, and

you weren't playing with it!"  
"What's the matter here?" I asked in my best Bill Cosby/perfect father voice.

"She took / she wouldn't / my only / her fault / it's only / stupid toy / hurt my feelings!" They probably spoke in complete sentences, but I could only make out random words and phrases, shouted at 3 zillion decibels.

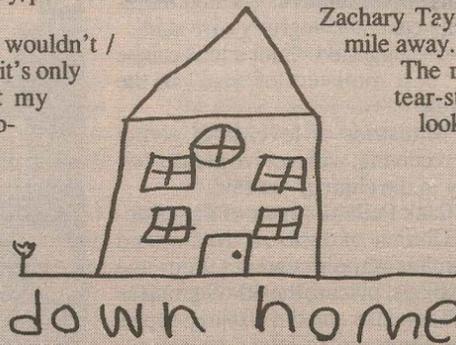
My lips started moving, but nobody—including me—could hear what I was saying. In desper-

ation, I took a deep breath and roared, "Quiet!" as loud as if I were trying to wake up the 140-something-year-old bones of Zachary Taylor, entombed about a mile away.

The room got still, and two tear-streamed, guilty faces looked up.

And there I was—for the bezillionth time—up to my handkerchief in crying kids, both with plausible stories, both seeking mercy for themselves and vengeance for the

sibling. No way to know who's right, who's wrong, who started it or why.



The people who sell stuff for \$19.95 on cable TV should come up with a Truth-O-Meter for raising kids. You could stick the Truth-O-Meter's suction-cup doohickies on the kids' foreheads, ask a few questions, check the print-out and get to the bottom of things. Fast.

No more interminable, intractable fights. No more grounding the wrong child. No more punishing both for the transgression of one. The art of parenting would be enhanced radically, and the aggregate noise-level of the planet would drop noticeably.

The Bible says parenting is just a faulty mirror-image of God's relationship to us. And you know what: God has a divine Truth-O-Meter and loves us anyway.

I'd call that grace. A miracle.

Marv Knox

## Staff-baked meals draw crowd to church

Continued from page 1  
find our place of service.”

Longtime member Gene Hellebush agreed the weekly illustration of servanthood isn't lost on church members: "You could have the meals prepared by the women of the church, and it wouldn't be the same."

Before the meals began, Wednesday evening attendance averaged 50 people, Mitchell said. The first night meals were offered, 86 people showed up, and the crowd hasn't dropped below 100 since. Average attendance now is 140, and the high was 200 one week.

On Mitchell's first Sunday as pastor in 1989, Sunday school attendance was 189. The average now is nearly 300, with most of that growth occurring in recent months.

One year ago, there was no 11th and 12th grade Sunday school class; today there is a class that averages 18 in attendance.

All this is a welcome change for the suburban Cincinnati church, which had been in decline from its peak in the 1950s.

"We finally have the brakes applied to the skid," Mitchell said. "We have it turned around to a growth

mode. It takes hard work to reach people."

And longtime members are excited about the changes they see.

Hellebush's brother, Earl, a TWA retiree who was married in the old sanctuary and has been attending the church at least 60 years, said he is glad to see the church "turned around and doing a lot better."



**THE THREE BROTHERS** Gary Belcher, Tommy Mitchell and Doug Neuspickle

Gene Hellebush added he believes the church turned around because members weren't afraid to take a few risks. "We've got a mission field right here, and we finally realized that," he said.

The kind of growth happening at First Baptist in Ludlow impacts every area of church life, including the frequent reassignment and sharing of classrooms. The door to every classroom

bears a clear vinyl pouch with an easily changed card telling who meets there and when.

Growth has been possible because church members are willing to make the sacrifices necessary, Mitchell said. To show appreciation for this openness, the pastor created the "Whatever it Takes" award, which was given for the first time to an older adult Sunday school class willing to move

rooms for the sake of growth.

Other ingredients in the Ludlow growth recipe include:

■ **Exciting worship.** "We've tried to make worship more appealing to people who don't go to church," Mitchell said. That includes a mix of choruses and traditional hymns, friendly greeting of visitors by members, and sermons with practical application.

■ **Personal concern.** "When people give me a name of someone to pray for on Sunday morning, I go up in the pulpit and mention that name. It lets them know they're important," he said.

■ **New units.** Five new classes have been started since last summer, and as many as 15 more could be started, Neuspickle said.

■ **Focus.** "Everything we do has to meet two criteria," Mitchell said. "We ask, does it glorify God in my life and does it point people to God?"

■ **Acceptance.** The church has adopted a theme of "love for all people" and tries to make every visitor feel at home. "I have a problem with churches saying, 'We're only going to focus on these type people,'" Mitchell said. "I think the gospel is for everyone."

"We try to de-emphasize dress and emphasize family," he said, explaining that whether a person wears a coat and tie or a dress isn't as important as what God is doing in their lives. "The gospel makes all people look better."

## Nursing home holds revival

LOUISVILLE—The revival held recently at Eastern Star Home in Louisville may not be the first in Louisville ever held in a nursing home, but the unusual event did get the attention of the home's residents.

Baptist chaplain Malinda Fillingim planned the revival as a natural extension of the weekly worship services she leads there.

"I treat this as my church," Fillingim explained. "Most churches have revivals in the spring, and I really felt led to have one here."

The revival began on a Sunday afternoon with a program by the Singing Seniors from Crescent Hill Baptist Church, followed by nightly services the next three days.

Resident Jane McCloskey said she appreciated the special services. "It just kind of gives you a good feeling, knowing we can have something like that, because usually at a nursing home you don't think of those kinds of things happening," she explained.

"Age is no barrier to being a productive Christian," Fillingim said, explaining that she hopes to develop some type of outreach ministry for residents.

## Recipe for a successful family meal program

■ **Cost.** At Ludlow, Wednesday evening meals cost \$2 per person with a maximum of \$6 per family. Mitchell keeps costs low by buying in large quantities and during sales.

■ **Quality.** People won't come for budget quality food, Mitchell said. "We serve nothing but good, class meals. You can't get a meal like we serve for \$2 anywhere."

■ **No RSVP.** Requiring people to make reservations for a weekly church dinner will "kill your crowd," Mitchell said, by excluding busy people who may not know what their Wednesday evening schedules will be like until late Wednesday afternoon. The purpose of a family meal at church should be to provide a help, not a hassle, he added.

## Church should reverse world's view of aging, researcher says

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)—It's time for Christians to question the world's view of aging, a researcher said.

"This country has a serious perception problem with aging. In a nutshell, the world views aging as not a very desirable thing," said Steve Taylor, an official with Age Wave Inc. of Emeryville, Calif.

Taylor's company studies the demographics of an aging population and the implications for churches. He spoke to a group of senior adult leaders during a conference in Las Vegas sponsored by the Nevada Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The world views older adults as angry, cranky, self-centered, complaining, dependent, vulnerable, selfish and a burden, he said. "One of the single most common complaints of older adults is that they are treated condescendingly."

The church could set a new agenda by paying attention to the resources found in senior adults and using them, he continued. "The older adult group is not just a group that needs to be ministered to. It is just as important they do the ministering."

"They need to be leaders in all facets of the church."

Taylor and Win Arn, director of a resource organization for church growth through senior adult ministry, agreed the word "retire" should not be a part of the Christian's vocabulary.

People "who don't have anything

productive to do after retirement usually die within seven years" after leaving work, Arn said.

This will increasingly become an issue for the church as America's Baby Boomers begin to age, they said.

Arn explained that 20 percent of today's church members are age 55 and older, while only 10 percent are ages 13-20. In 30 years, 33 percent of a church's congregation will be 55 and older, Arn projected.

In a recent survey in which Arn polled 500 churches, "two-thirds had youth directors, but less than 10 percent had senior adult directors," he said. "Soon the day will come when youth directors will be trained in (ministering to) both youth and senior adults."

A church with an effective senior adult ministry will provide older adult opportunities to use their retirement years meaningfully, Arn said.

Arn suggested senior adults can be the "best ministers of love" in the church.

"Ministries of love, both giving and receiving, will receive greater priority in the church," he said.

Frank Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., said churches should update their age groupings, placing the 40-60 group as median adults and the 60-80 group as older adults.

"A person doesn't get old until he loses his enthusiasm," Pollard said. "It has nothing to do with the accumulation of years."



**HOME BUILDERS** Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, put up a wall in a home under construction as part of a Habitat for Humanity project. Speaking at First Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., recently, Carter said, "The greatest discrimination on earth is rich people against the poor." (RNS photo)

# ENVIRONMENT

## Christians called to embrace environmental ethic

By Susan Todd Doyle  
Woman's Missionary Union

NASHVILLE (BP)—Churches must do more than observe "Earth Day" April 22 if they truly want to make a difference in the environmental crisis, according to a Southern Baptist ethicist.

Christians must embrace a new environmental ethic, said Robert Parham, director of the Baptist Center for Ethics and author of a new book about the environment.

"Too many Christians have studied the Bible for too many years without ever learning about the message of earth-keeping," Parham said. "We have simply missed it. Or perhaps we have heard it but chosen to ignore it. Our failure mandates a return to the Bible with open eyes for the ancient word about a modern-day problem."

Parham describes the environmental crisis in detail in his book, "Loving Neighbors Across Time: A Christian Guide to Protecting the Earth," published by New Hope press.

The issue of earth-keeping, Parham said, is evident in Scripture. "The Bible speaks about guarding the garden, letting the land rest, preserving fruit trees, protecting hens, knowing

that the creation belongs to the Creator, celebrating the beauty of God's created order, and recognizing that human sinfulness causes the earth's suffering," he said.

Too often, churches are not willing to recognize problems caused by social issues, much less to act on them, he said. "Unfortunately, the discipline of Christian ethics frequently ends where concrete action ought to begin."

The environment is one issue in which the Christian community has been largely silent, he said. But it is an issue in which the Christian community should be involved, he added.

Examples of the environmental crisis reviewed in Parham's book include:

■ America's garbage glut has filled the nation's landfills. More than 66 percent of landfills have been closed since 1970, and a significant portion of those remaining will be closed in the next several years.

■ The average American family of three tosses away 87.5 pounds of trash every week.

■ Compared to other nations, the

United States stands as "king" of the garbage mountain. Individually, Americans generate more garbage than citizens of every other nation.

■ Scientific evidence points toward a global warming trend. Six of the warmest years in recorded history have occurred since 1981.

■ In 1987, America's industries released 2.7 billion pounds of airborne toxic chemicals, including 235 million pounds of carcinogens, known cancer-causing agents.

■ A football-size field of rain forest is cleared every second. Scientists estimate that between 50 and 80 percent of all species live in these moist forests which cover only 7 percent of the earth's surface and cluster around the equator.

■ Earth's food supply is placed at risk by herbicides, antibiotics and growth hormones. Other animal drugs compound the problem. The real effect of long-term exposure to chemicals in the food chain remains unknown.

"We cannot all address every issue," Parham said. "But we can target some issues and take some initiatives.

CHRISTIANS  
&  
Creation

### Churches asked to plant a tree

Churches could make a positive contribution to the environment by planting a tree this year, according to the National Association of Conservation Districts.

The NACD's soil and water stewardship committee has adopted the theme "Our Treasured Trees" for this year's soil and water stewardship week, April 26-May 3.

Gary Farley, a Southern Baptist and staff member with the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, serves on the committee. He estimates about 10,000 Southern Baptist churches nationwide currently observe soil and water stewardship week.

This year's emphasis calls on churches to study the theological basis of conservation and then act by planting a tree.

"The massive root systems of trees help hold the soil in place, leaves and branches help protect bare blowing soil, and trees help recharge the atmospheric 'rain machine' so vital to food production," NACD promotional literature explains. "In addition to these conservation benefits, trees support our very lives by producing oxygen. It's no wonder that biblical, as well as modern-day authors, have penned the praises of trees."

Farley reminds Baptists planting a tree can be beneficial for both rural and urban churches.

A packet of promotional materials, including bulletin inserts, a litany and posters, is available from the NACD by calling (800) 825-5547.

## Don't be excluded from debate, Land urges

By Chip Alford  
SBC Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—That environmental issues will remain a point of public discussion throughout the 1990s is a foregone conclusion.

The question is whether evangelicals will take part in the debate.

At a time when almost everyone seems to be offering opinions on environmental concerns ranging from recycling to saving the Amazon rain forest, "the only ones who seem to be excluded from the debate are evangelical Christians, and too often it is a self-exclusion," said Richard Land, executive director of the Southern

Baptist Christian Life Commission.

Offended by what they see as a "New Age" philosophy of earth worship touted by many secular environmental groups, Land said some Christians are "overreacting" by turning a deaf ear to environmental concerns altogether.

"We need to remember that the earth is the Lord's. It isn't ours to do with as we please," Land explained. "He has called us to be good stewards of his creation."

The challenge for leaders in the SBC and other evangelical denominations, Land said, is providing church members with "an informed biblical response" to environmental concerns.

Papers presented at a 1991 CLC conference on the environment are being published in book form by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. "The Earth is the Lord's: Christians and the Environment" is scheduled for release in August.

### Sermon leads to garbage action

MONTEVALLO, Ala. (BP)—Garbage—that's what has become of a preacher's sermon and a church member's dream—68 tons of garbage each week.

Bob Albritton, pastor of University Baptist Church in Montevallo, Ala., preached a sermon on Christians and the environment and soon afterward the environmental organization Vision was formed. From its inception in 1988, Vision has

grown into the recycling organization for Montevallo and surrounding Shelby County handling 68 tons of newspaper, glass and aluminum weekly.

The founder of the group, Leigh Eason, was a member of Albritton's church. Having worked with secular environmental groups, she approached him about her dream of a Christian environmental group after his sermon.

## Kentucky author relates Bible to environment

By Pat Cole  
Southern Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP)—Christians have largely ignored biblical teachings that emphasize responsible stewardship of the earth, Kentucky author and poet Wendell Berry said in a message at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Berry, professor of English at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, said there are "discrepancies between biblical instruction and allegedly respectable Christian behavior" that often desecrate natural resources.

"Throughout the 500 years since Columbus' first landfall in the Bahamas, the evangelist has walked beside the conqueror and the merchant, too

often blandly assuming his cause was the same as theirs," he said. "Christian organizations, to this day, remain largely indifferent to the rape and plunder of the world and of its traditional cultures."

The Bible clearly describes God's love for the world he created, Berry said.

"People who quote John 3:16 as an easy formula for getting to heaven neglect to see the great difficulty implied in the statement that the advent of Christ was made possible by God's love for the world ... as it was and is. Belief in Christ is thus made dependent upon belief in the inherent goodness—the lovability—of the world."

People typically overlook the miracles evident in God's creation, Berry

noted, adding that those who appreciate the created order "will hardly balk at the turning of the water into wine."

That miracle, however, is "very small" when compared with "the continuing miracle by which water with soil and sunlight is turned into grapes," he said.

Berry said most conservation efforts have focused on major environmental disasters while neglecting widespread abuses that occur on a smaller scale.

"But a conservation effort that concentrates only on the extremes of industrial abuse tends to suggest that the only abuses are the extreme ones, when, in fact, the earth is suffering more from many small abuses than from a few large ones," he said.

### Get your church's house in order first

Does your church practice what it preaches about the environment? Take a closer look by examining:

■ The amount of styrofoam used in cups, plates and other disposable dishes. Also consider using washable dishes rather than paper for big events such as Wednesday night dinners.

■ The amount of paper wasted by multiple mailings when one multi-purpose mailing might serve the purpose.

■ The color of paper used for church publications. Most colored papers are not recyclable, but most white and natural color papers are.

■ The water level in toilets. Older models, especially, consume more water with each flush than necessary and can be adjusted by placing a brick inside the tank.

■ The condition of church vans and buses. Properly maintained vehicles pollute less.

■ The thermostat setting for church buildings, especially during low-use times.

■ The accessibility of recycling bins. Consider placing a paper recycling bin where people exiting from worship may dispose of unwanted paper and an aluminum recycling bin next to soft-drink machines.

■ The responsibility for environmental awareness. Some churches have created environmental stewardship committees or assigned similar tasks to existing committees.

# GIVING

## Undesignated CP receipts for March lowest since 1987

By Marv Knox  
Editor

### Southern Seminary tightens budget belt

LOUISVILLE—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville is bracing for another tight year financially, due largely to decreasing receipts to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program. The seminary anticipates receiving about \$25,000 less in fiscal year 1993 than the previous year from the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified giving plan. Adding to the seminary's budget dilemma next year is a projected decline in endowment income due to lower interest rates. The seminary has made internal budget cuts of about \$600,000 over the past three years in order to provide for salary increases and the rising cost of fringe benefits.

Weak March receipts pulled Kentucky Baptists' Cooperative Program budget further off the pace needed to reach its annual goal.

The Kentucky Cooperative Program received \$1,280,085 last month, the weakest March since 1987.

From September through March, the CP received \$9,602,469, an increase of \$162,377 (1.7 percent) over receipts for the first seven months of the 1990-91 fiscal year.

But that amount is \$835,967 (8 percent) below budget for the current fiscal year. A month ago, the CP was 7 percent below budget.

September-March receipts for the past six years have represented an average of 57 percent of the annual budget. If the seven-month receipts for this fiscal year reflect that level, the CP will finish the year \$1,048,025 below its \$17,894,462 annual budget.

However, funds available to the Kentucky Baptist Convention are not that far off the mark, due to contributions designated for KBC use only, reported Barry Allen, the convention's business manager.

The Cooperative Program is divid-

ed, with 62.058 percent staying in Kentucky and 37.942 percent going to Southern Baptist Convention uses.

Some churches, unhappy with the national convention, have bypassed parts of the national CP and provided contributions designated to stay in Kentucky. They are not counted as part of the CP.

KBC-designated funds totalled \$26,526 in March, pushing the seven-month total to \$194,070. That's a \$40,931 (26.7 percent) increase over the same period last year.

With the designated funds, Kentucky receipts are \$324,715 (5 percent) below budget. The current slump is part of a larger CP cycle, Allen added. "We spent the decade of the mid-'70s to the mid-'80s trying to get the CP up to the level of receipt. Now, we're spending the last half of

the '80s and the first half of the '90s trying to bring the budget down to the level of receipts.

"Denominations lag behind (giving) trends. We have to do with what the churches provide, and we don't know what that is until later," after budgets have been set.

As an illustration, Allen noted the

Kentucky CP has not received enough money to cover year-to-date budget needs since August 1987—55 months ago.

Despite that budget lag, recent Kentucky CP receipts stayed ahead of the Consumer Price Index—the primary guide for inflation—until the 1990-91 fiscal year.



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# RESEARCH

## Baptists more principle-oriented than adventurous

By Linda Lawson  
SBC Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—Southern Baptists include more self-respecting, self-disciplined, reflective adults than the general population of the United States but considerably fewer adventure-seeking types committed to fun and enjoyment.

Using eight types of American consumer behavior identified by Values and Lifestyles 2, a program of SRI International of Menlo Park, Calif., researchers at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board compared Southern Baptist adults to the general population. Southern Baptist data was derived from the 1,377 Southern Baptist respondents to the board's 1990 Constituency Study.

Southern Baptists differ most with the U.S. population in two categories, Fulfilleds, in which Southern Baptists exceed the national average, and Experiencers, in which they are under the national average.

Fulfilleds, one of two principle-oriented types, include 11 percent of

the U.S. population but 18 percent of Southern Baptist adults.

Fulfilleds tend to be 35 years of age or older, college graduates and have a higher-than-average income. Most are married; 39 percent work in professional/technical occupations. They are mature, satisfied and reflective people who tend to be politically active and informed. They feel comfortable with people of other racial and culture groups.

Experiencers, one of two action-oriented types, include 12 percent of adults in the U.S. but only 7 percent of Southern Baptist adults.

With a high priority on seeking adventure, Experiencers tend to be dissatisfied with their jobs and possess a lower-than-average confidence in organized religion. Most are under 35 years old and high school graduates, and 56 percent are single. They seek variety and excitement in exercise, sports, outdoor recreation and social activities.

Cliff Tharp, associate director of the board's corporate planning and research department, said some denominations do better than Southern Baptists at reaching Experiencers, primarily Episcopalians, Lutherans and Presbyterians.

The second-largest group among Southern Baptists is Believers. Between the two principle-oriented groups, Believers and Fulfilleds, 35 percent of the Southern Baptist population is represented.

Believers—often over 55 years of age and either homemakers or retired—are traditional and conservative people who value a well-established set of beliefs and rules. They hold to traditional ideas of home and family and find themselves uncomfortable with people they consider "different." They tend to be concerned about a strong national defense and

the environment.

Southern Baptists have somewhat fewer adults in the two status-oriented types, Achievers and Strivers, than found in the U.S. population.

Achievers are success- and career-oriented people in their late 20s to early 40s. They are well-educated, more likely to live in suburbs, and they structure their lives around family, church and business. Sixty percent are women. Achievers value image and the appearance of success.

Achievers might more typically be described as Yuppies, Tharp said. "Like other denominations, we're not reaching them to the level of their percentage of the population."

Strivers define success in terms of money, a commodity they are seeking in larger amounts than they possess. High school graduates, they work in clerical, sales and blue-collar positions. Most are married with dependent children. Easily bored and impulsive, Strivers generally seek what is beyond their reach.

Southern Baptists include slightly more Makers and Actualizers than the general population.

Makers are politically conservative, practical people who value self-sufficiency. They may build a house, repair a car or engage in other types of work with their hands. Generally in the 20 to 40s age range, they have average incomes and tend to work at blue-collar occupations.

Actualizers, the best-educated and wealthiest group, tend to be 35-44 years of age, highly educated and earn more than \$50,000 per year. They are confident, take-charge people who work in professional/technical and managerial occupations. Most are married with dependent children.

The one category in which Southern Baptists exactly parallel the general population is Strugglers.

### Values & lifestyles types

US	SBC	Type
8%	9%	<b>Actualizers:</b> Abundant resources, well-educated, confident, take-charge, want professional-quality church programs.
11%	18%	<b>Fulfilleds:</b> Principle-oriented, 35 and older, above-average income, professionals, seek to behave consistently with their world-view, practical.
16%	17%	<b>Believers:</b> Principle-oriented, traditional, conservative, professional/technical jobs, committed to church and family.
13%	10%	<b>Achievers:</b> Status-oriented, value career and success, conventional, late 20s to 40s, value structure and stability, not risk-takers.
13%	11%	<b>Strivers:</b> Status-oriented, seek money and success, mainly blue-collar jobs, not big givers, easily bored and impulsive.
12%	7%	<b>Experiencers:</b> Action-oriented, 35 and under, seek adventure, enthusiastic, impulsive, rebellious, low confidence in organized religion, disdain for authority.
13%	14%	<b>Makers:</b> Action-oriented, mid-20s to mid-40s, practical, value self-sufficiency, work with their hands, average income.
14%	14%	<b>Strugglers:</b> Minimal resources, current personal needs limit their vision, uneducated, receive.

Strugglers lack education, skills and income, and 71 percent are over 55 years old. Their lives are focused on meeting the needs of the moment. Mostly women, Strugglers are concerned about security and safety.

## Know types to understand church conflicts

NASHVILLE (BP)—Hal, a 39-year-old chief executive of a computer software firm, is immersed in his work and family but also finds time to chair the finance committee at his church and assist his wife in directing a children's Sunday school department.

Hal is outspoken at church in sup-

port of community ministries to the needy and gives money above his tithe to world missions.

On the other hand, Mildred, 77, is preoccupied with trying to make ends meet on a fixed income. She worries that the neighborhood where she has lived for 40 years is no longer safe. She fears a break-in or being robbed on the street.

A lifelong, faithful church attendee, Mildred wishes her church were more concerned about her needs and those of her fellow seniors.

Hal and Mildred, not real people, symbolize two types, Actualizers and Strugglers, commonly found in Southern Baptist churches. These two types are among eight identified by a program called Values and Lifestyles 2.

Understanding the different types of people commonly found in Baptist churches helps leaders understand why conflicts arise and what kinds of emphases will draw the groups together, said Cliff Tharp, associate director of corporate planning and research with the Sunday School Board.

Among these eight types, Tharp said certain conflicts are inevitable in churches.

For example, the Actualizers and Fulfilleds, who have more resources, also want church programs to be highly professional in quality. They are willing to spend money to achieve this.

Believers, Strivers, Makers and Strugglers are likely to oppose such expenditures as wastes of money.

At the same time, Tharp warned, churches "don't need to emphasize differences among the groups so much that they can't come together."

For example, he said Actualizers, Achievers, Believers, Makers and Strugglers can be united around family issues.

Because Actualizers and Fulfilleds tend to be in leadership positions, it falls to their lot to take the initiative in building bridges among the various groups, Tharp said.

At the same time, a Believer who happens to teach a Sunday school class must be attuned to the needs and interests of Achievers in the class.

"If you want to use a marketing term, keep in touch with your customer," Tharp said. "The customer may be someone inside the church or someone outside you are trying to reach."



Group transportation for messengers and visitors to the 1992 Southern Baptist Convention in Indianapolis is being arranged by CHRISTIAN TRAVELERS of Des Plaines, Illinois. A daily SHUTTLE BUS SERVICE will be available from most of the outlying hotels to and from the Hoosier Dome. Six bus routes will provide hourly service to 90% of the convention hotels. The shuttle bus service will begin on Sunday afternoon and will end after the final session on Thursday. A discount is offered to those who order their transportation arrangements in advance.

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## KENTUCKY KERNELS

For nearly two decades in the mid-1800s, two factions existed in many Kentucky Baptist churches: missionary and anti-missionary. Heated debate on the subject often occurred during associational meetings, and sometimes resulted in the splitting of associations into two bodies of nearly identical names. Little River Baptist Association was the first to divide in 1833. When anti-missions supporters walked out of the associational meeting at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church in Trigg County, they formed a new body called Original Little River Baptist Association. By 1850, a total of 25 anti-missions associations had been formed, representing 266 churches.

—Adapted from A History of Baptists in Kentucky by Frank M. Masters

## Mountains to the Mississippi

■ **ALLEN**—Frank Rowe is serving First Church in Allen as associate pastor. Dee Wayne White is serving as minister of music.

■ **BEDFORD**—Bill Blackwell is serving Union Grove Church as pastor.

■ **BIMBLE**—Ralph Duncan, pastor of Springfield Church, was admitted to Pineville Community Hospital April 6 after suffering a heart attack.

■ **BURLINGTON**—Z. Allen Abbott has resigned as pastor of East Bend Church to serve First Marion Church near Seymour, Ind.

■ **CLINTON**—New Harmony Church has called Billy Prince as pastor. He previously served as pastor of New Hope Church in La Center.

■ **CRESTWOOD**—Beverly Allen resigned as minister of education at Crestwood Church. Also, the church called Leslyn Miller as minister of children's work.

■ **GRAY**—Don Hammond resigned as minister of music at Grays Church.

■ **GOSHEN**—Bill Holifield is serving as pastor of Liberty Church.

■ **HUSTONVILLE**—Mt. Salem Church ordained Mike Miracle and Carl Wilder as deacons.

■ **LaGRANGE**—Eighteen Mile Church ordained Ray Smiley to the ministry.

■ **LEXINGTON**—South Elkhorn Church called Terrell Bradley as pastor. He previously served of Duke Memorial Church in Somerset.

Immanuel Church has called Steve

West as associate pastor and minister to youth. He previously served as youth and activities director at First Church, Richmond.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Third Avenue Church is holding revival services April 12-15. Ron Johnson, associate professor of evangelism at Southern Seminary, is the evangelist.

■ **MILTON**—Ray Ammons is pastor at Corn Church. The church recently dedicated its new steeple.

■ **MONTICELLO**—William Sloan has resigned as pastor of Meadow Creek Church.

■ **MORNING VIEW**—Oak Island Church will hold a Maundy Thursday service April 16, an Easter sunrise service and an Easter drama April 19, and revival services April 26-30.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Crabtree Avenue Church called Kenneth Williams as minister of music. He previously served as minister of music and youth at Whitesville Church in Whitesville.

■ **RUSSELL SPRINGS**—Henry Delk has resigned as pastor of First Church, Windsor.

■ **SIMPSONVILLE**—Stephen Boyd is pastor of Simpsonville Church. He previously served New Clover Creek Church in Hardinsburg.

■ **WESTPORT**—Jesse Stricker is serving as pastor of Covington Church.

■ **Correction**: James Watt Sr. is serving as interim pastor of Hawesville Church, not as pastor as stated in the March 31 issue of the Recorder.

## Blood River Association honors Sillses

**HARDIN**—Blood River Baptist Association is making up for lost time. The association honored Terry Sills for 12 years of service as director of missions March 24 at an appreciation banquet they said was long overdue.

"We realized we had never recognized our director of missions for his work, so we planned a big celebration to make up for all those years," said Terry Mathis, chairman of the associational personnel committee and pastor of First Baptist Church of Gilbertsville.

Sills and his wife, Dene, were the guests of honor at a catered dinner served in the fellowship hall at First Baptist Church in Murray.

Ralph Benningfield, director of

missions at Little River Baptist Association and a good friend of Sills, was the guest speaker.

Churches in the association had taken a love offering for the couple and presented a check to them at the banquet. In addition, Mathis presented a plaque to both of the Sillses. Mrs. Sills has served for 10 years as a secretary in the association.

When given an opportunity to express appreciation at the end of the banquet, many pastors commented on Sills' personal ministry to them.

"Pastors sometimes don't have a pastor we can turn to," Mathis said. "He has been a good friend and a strong support. He is a minister to ministers."



**HELPING HANDS** The Brotherhood group of Sinking Fork Baptist Church near Hopkinsville removes a tree from the home of a disabled church member. The group took on the mission action project after learning that the dead tree posed a threat to the house. Two people made public rededication of their faith as a result of the project.

## This is for all those born before World War II

I was born four months to the day before we entered World War II. I have some vivid memories of the last year of that war. I remember an uncle, who had been an honor student at Oneida, being killed in France. Sugar rationing, packed trains and many men in uniform, a grandmother weeping at the news of the death of Gen. George Patton are recalled.

The following thoughts are not original with me, but are worth reviewing. At the time I was born, "Made in Japan" meant "junk" and the term "making out" referred to how you did on your school exam. Instant coffee, pizza and McDonalds were unknown.

My generation hit the scene when there were 5-and-10-cent stores where you actually bought things for 5 or 10 cents. One could buy ice cream cones for a nickel or a dime. With a nickel one also could make a phone call, or buy a Coke at the Oneida Jot-em Down store. In those innocent days one could mail one letter and two postcards for 5 cents, and they arrived more quickly than today. It was also possible to buy a new Chevy Coupe for \$600, but who could afford one? Gasoline was only 11 cents a gallon.

I was born before TV. I first saw it in 1953 watching Queen Elizabeth being crowned in England with the film being flown to the U.S. for transmission. I was born two years before life-saving penicillin was discovered in 1943. Another 12 years would go by before the miracle of polio shots. Frozen foods, Xerox, plastic, frisbees, contact lenses and the Pill all would follow.

In those days of innocence, people got married first and then lived together. How quaint can you be? Closets were for clothes, not for "coming out of." Bunnies were small rabbits, and rab-

bits were not Volkswagens, Designer Jeans were scheming girls named Jean or Jeanne. Having a meaningful relationship meant getting along well with our cousins.

In those days, cigarette smoking was fashionable, grass was mowed, Coke was a cold drink and pot was something you cooked in. Rock music was a grandma's lullaby. AIDS were helpers in the principal's office.

I was before air-conditioners, electric blankets, dishwashers, clothes dryers, pantyhose, ball-point pens, credit cards, radar, split atoms and laser beams.

Being born in the 1940s put us ahead of house-husbands, gay rights, computer dating, dual careers and commuter marriages. We never heard of FM radios, tape decks, electric typewriters, artificial hearts, word processors, and guys wearing earrings.

My generation was certainly not before the difference between the sexes was discovered. But surely we were born before the sex-change operations. Folks made do with however God made them. We were the last generation to be so dumb as to think one needed a husband to have a baby!

Is there any wonder that we live in a time of confusion? Of course there is a generation gap! But how wonderful to remember the days "way back when" before all our "progress."

We survivors have much to celebrate. Being past the half-century mark, I can better identify with: "We older folks are privileged; we are allowed to be daring and bold. Everybody has been young at one time, but everybody hasn't been old."

Barkley Moore is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky. 40972

### ONEIDA JOURNAL



Barkley Moore

Paid Column

## Preschool teachers touch the future

On a recent preschool field trip, each teacher wore a sweatshirt with a handmade design stating "I Touch the Future; I Work with Children." The painted message circled the handprint of 2-year-old Ashley Cummings, daughter of Tom and Karla Cummings, second-year Kentucky students. The sweatshirts were donated by Wilma Loeser, member of Somerset First Baptist, whose daughter Debbie works in the center.

Rebecca Whittaker has directed the Clear Creek preschool since 1989. The program includes four major goals for the children. "We're involved in helping children learn socialization, build self-confidence, develop school skills and learn about God. We teach them about creation, God, Jesus, prayer and family. This developmental approach teaches things appropriate for each age group."

Mrs. Whittaker, who has a master's degree in early childhood development from Murray State University, directs a program that provides many opportunities for her co-workers to learn as they teach. On-the-job training includes guest lecturers who provide continuing education. During the current year topics have included nutrition,

child abuse and parenting. "Each teacher is required to have six to 12 hours of training each year. We also take them to Southern Seminary for a short-term course," Mrs. Whittaker stated. "By graduation a lady who has worked in our preschool should be able to get a job in any preschool."

Preschool workers are excited about progress on a new center ex-

pected to be opened in August. The facility will grow from four crowded rooms to a 2,600-square-foot facility with adequate space for activities, teachers' lounge, kitchen and director's office. The new center will have a newly designed play area. A nature trail also will be constructed in the hills behind the center.

Long-range plans include help for churches and preschool workers in the area. We want the center to be a resource for other college students majoring in preschool work to come and observe our classes. Preschool teachers Debra Settles, Debbie Stagg, Donna Morgan, Joy Whicker and substitutes Barbara Weldon and Amanda Richmond certainly "touch the future."

Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, Ky. 40977

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Paid Column

## Baptists pursue peace amid Serbian-Croatian war

By Mike Creswell  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

MOSCENICA, Croatia (BP)—“The enemy is right over there in those trees,” said Daniel Jekic, pointing to a stand of trees about a mile away.

Jekic, a Baptist layman, meant the Yugoslavian army, camped just across the Croatia-Serbia border.

Here at the front lines of the war, March gloom and winter-dead trees give the abandoned town an eerie look. Only camouflage-clad Croatian soldiers are visible, sticking close to sandbagged machine gun nests.

Today the town is quiet, but three artillery shells fell here yesterday. A small Roman Catholic church, hit by a shell, showed a gaping 10-foot hole in its wall. The chill wind chased dust across empty pews.

A nearby Baptist church was luckier; an exploding shell only broke out windows and pocked the outer walls with shrapnel.

Croatia, one of six regions in what was once Yugoslavia, declared its independence in 1991. Some 10,000 people have died in the ensuing war with dominant Serbia.

A shaky cease-fire—violated by frequent skirmishes—barely holds as Croatians await the arrival of 14,000 United Nations peacekeeping troops. In the capital city of Zagreb, new Croatian flags fly everywhere. No doubts about their future as a new nation are evident among the people.

Christians, like all other civilians, are caught in the middle. David Ogrizovic, pastor of a Baptist church in Petrinja on the Serbian side of the battle lines, fled the town with his family and 20,000 other citizens when shelling began.

“I have experienced the hell of Petrinja. No one who has not experienced this can really understand it,” he said.

“Thousands of bullets and artillery shells were flying all over. Street fighting was the most dangerous.”

Now a displaced person, Ogrizovic has baptized 11 people and plans to baptize 20 more soon. “For me this presents a great satisfaction. The Lord is blessing,” he said.

War has brought out the best in Baptists here. They have organized relief ministries, pushed ahead in evangelism and distributed Bibles and other Christian literature among refugees. Government sources say about 300,000 refugees crowd Zagreb, swelling its population to well over 1 million people.

Daniel Jekic and other Baptist laymen were at the front lines not as soldiers but as Christian witnesses. As rain began to fall, they passed out copies of a Billy Graham book, “Peace With God,” and spoke of Christian faith amid the horrors of war.

The interdenominational ministry group, Getsemani Mission, were originally intended to use the arts to communicate the gospel. In recent months, Getsemani workers have won military approval to minister to refugees right at the edges of the war zone.

In cooperation with the government, they have distributed food to thousands of families, currently 1,000 families twice a month. They have received help from a wide range of Christian and humanitarian groups but need more, said Baptist participant Zeliko Mraz.

They have not discriminated against Serbs living on the Croatian side of the border.

Getsemani has a weekly radio program and has organized public lectures to present a biblical view of the conflict. “We want to enter the Croatian soul,” said Josip Deak, who directs the radio work.

“The main point of our ministry now is humanitarian aid, but we

haven’t stopped proclaiming the gospel message,” Mraz added.

Back in Zagreb, the one Baptist church in the city is filled to capacity for Sunday services as refugees come to worship and pick up medicine, food or clothing. Pastor Josip Mikulic says the church’s ministry program, “My Neighbor,” has helped more than 1,000 families.

The ministry works in cooperation with the government and Croatian corporations. A storeroom behind the church building is packed with food and clothing. The Baptists have shipped food to 11 other cities hit by war.

Aid has come from a wide range of humanitarian agencies, but not much yet from world Baptists other than some help from Canadian Bap-

tists, Mikulic said. “We have gotten more help from the World Council of Churches,” he said.

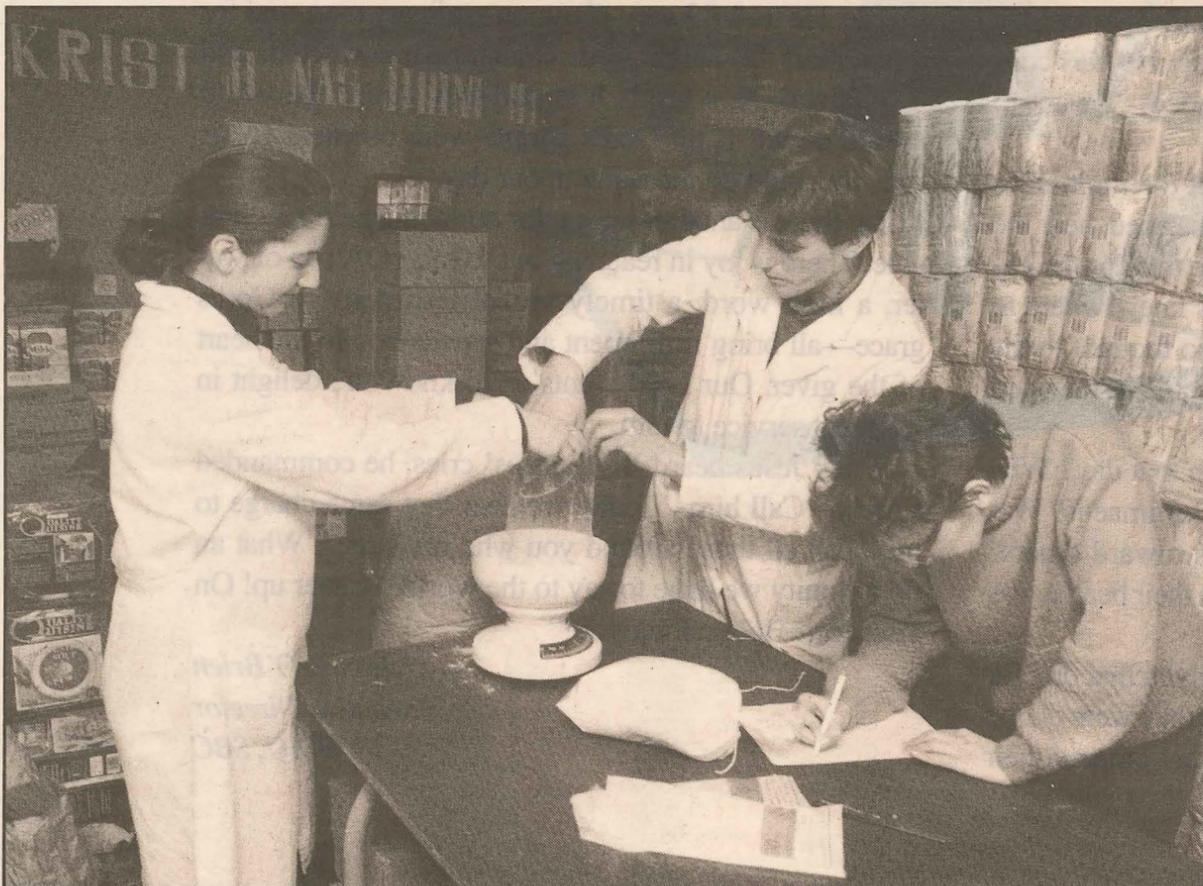
Baptists are reconciled to the breakup of their Yugoslavian national Baptist union, which had 117 churches and missions. Forty-three churches and missions with about 1,000 members are in Croatia.

Baptists in Croatia cannot call or even send letters to fellow Baptists across the war zone. “It’s not possible to talk about a Yugoslavian union now,” Mikulic said, although he suggested joint work could continue on an unofficial basis.

“The church must become supranational rather than be related to a nationality,” one Baptist leader said. “That’s one important contribution we have to make.”



**CLOCKWISE** ■ Southern Baptist missionary Nela Williams (right) translates Croatia for Serbian Baptist pastor David Ogrizovic at Betel Baptist Church in Sisak, Croatia, where the pastor was asked to conduct the wedding of two soldiers. ■ Baptist layman Daniel Jekic distributes Christian literature to Croatian soldiers in front of a bombed-out Catholic church about a mile from the front lines of Croatia’s war with Serbia. ■ Three Baptists weigh flour for distribution to war refugees in Croatia as part of the ministry of Betel Baptist Church. (BP photos by Mike Creswell)



## *Called and Accountable*

We meet blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46-52. Very likely, he positioned himself by the road to Jerusalem each day, for it would be a strategic place from which to give one last appeal for mercy to those pilgrims on their way to the Holy City. Today, however, he hoped for more than a few coins; he had heard Jesus was to pass by and he knew what he wanted!

Bartimaeus heard the change in the crowd response long before the others were aware of the approach of Jesus and his disciples, for his ears had developed a heightened sense of perception to compensate for his inability to see. As Jesus drew near and the atmosphere became charged, Bartimaeus asked, "Who is it?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," he was told.

With this, Bartimaeus began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

"Hush, old man! We're trying to hear what the teacher is saying!"

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet. But he shouted all the more. "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then Jesus heard him, stopped, and said simply: "Call him."

Now the crowd's attitude toward the beggar changed. "Cheer up!" they called. "On your feet! He's calling you." When we know of Jesus' compassion and willingness to save, our attitude changes from "Be quiet!" to "Cheer up!"

Bartimaeus could hardly believe his ears. Only in his wildest dreams had he ever heard this offer before. He had practiced saying the words all his life. He was consumed by his need. "Rabbi," he responded, "I want to see."

Bartimaeus serves as an illustration of the multitudes of people who, in the midst of tremendous need, hear the call to salvation. In the heart of everyone there is the cry for life, joy, purpose, peace. Bartimaeus knew where to find help—the source of life. He gave no thought to the restraint of the crowd; he would be heard. His reward was sight—both physical and spiritual.

But what of the followers of Christ on that day? Why were they not responsive to the cries of Bartimaeus? Was there no accountability for their actions toward others? Having received the message of Christ in their hearts, was there no compulsion to tell others?

There were probably many excuses given that day for overlooking Bartimaeus' need. After all, they were on the way to Jerusalem. Their religious duty pre-empted their

acts of mercy. Victims of the "call of the calendar," we, too, are often prevented from reaching out to others with the Good News because of "prior commitments." God forgive us for putting perfunctory service ahead of personal sacrifice!

The followers of Christ were thinking that day, too, of their own places in Jesus' plans. It was apparent that his leadership was directed toward something really great. Of course, he had never indicated this, but his power in healing and restoring certainly resulted in much speculation as the establishment of an earthly kingdom. Just moments before the healing of Bartimaeus, James and John had approached Jesus with the request that they each sit by his side when he came into his glory. This vying for position must have broken Christ's heart. "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servants," he responded.

Unfortunately, this same pride emerges in our hearts today and dulls our ears to the cries of the world. Only pleading forgiveness and refocusing on the mercy of Christ in our own lives can restore us to the position of servant, accountable to God for sharing his word.

Having freely received of God's salvation, our responsibility now is to present that same gospel to others. "How then can they call on the one they have not believed in?...And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?" (Romans 10:14 NIV)

Christ's plan for winning the world was astonishingly simple. He took 12 very common, ordinary men, and for three years he taught, led, challenged, corrected, and loved them. As a result, it is said they turned the world upside down! If all God's people were obedient to his call, we could do the same in our day.

But there is another reason for our being held accountable. There is joy in reaching out to others. A cup of water, a kind word, a timely verbal testimony to God's grace—all bring fulfillment and satisfaction to the heart of the giver. Our Lord wants us to know the delight in obedient service to him.

When Jesus heard Bartimaeus' cries, he commanded simply, "Call him." Today we hear that same charge to us. "Call all those around you who need me." What an opportunity we have to say to the world, "Cheer up! On your feet! He's calling you!"

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