

APRIL 5, 1994 VOL. 168, NO. 14

FOR THE RECORD

Leavell to retire
Landrum Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, has reached an agreement with trustees whereby he will step down as president sometime before December 1996.
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More on firing
Trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary are mailing a letter to every Southern Baptist Convention church in an attempt to explain why they fired President Russell Dilday.
See page 2.

Small churches
Small churches can grow if they will set realistic goals and involve as many people as possible, a consultant told 744 Kentuckians on a recent tour of the state.
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Editorial
If conservative Southern Baptists and conservative Catholics can get along, why can't all Southern Baptists work together despite their differences?
See page 5.

Court hearings
The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments last week in a much-publicized case of church-state separation.
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Notice: The Western Recorder's fax and modem phone numbers have changed. The new fax number is (502) 244-6474. The new modem number is (502) 244-6475.

Evangelicals & Catholics outline new cooperation

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

In a move described by some as symbolic of America's changing religious alignments, two Southern Baptist leaders joined 38 representatives of Catholic and evangelical Protestant groups in signing an unprecedented pledge of cooperation March 29.

"I feel like evangelicals have a lot more in common today with conservative Catholics than we do with liberal Protestants who deny the cardinal doctrines of our faith," explained Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"Some of us feel like we're fighting for our life to keep Judeo-Christian values intact in America today. It's going to take all the strength we can muster to fight against this onslaught of secular humanism," Lewis added.

Lewis and Richard Land, executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, were among initial signers of the 25-page document titled "Evangelicals and Catholics Together."

The four key instigators of the statement were Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship, Avery Dulles of Fordham University, Kent Hill of Eastern Nazarene College and Richard John Neuhaus of the Institute on Religion and Public Life.

"As evangelicals and Catholics, we pray that our unity in the love of Christ will become ever more evident as a sign to the world of God's reconciling power," the statement declares. "Our communal and ecclesial separations are deep and long-standing.

"We do not deny, but clearly as-

□ *See Document signals ..., page 7*

Baptists
&
Catholics
Together



REFUGEES Holocaust-like atrocities are not relegated to the history of World War II. Wholesale murder of tribal, ethnic and religious groups still occurs from Africa to Bosnia to Asia. Many refugees from war and persecution in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos—like these Vietnamese in a camp in the Philippines—never have found a new home. After an initial burst of compassion and aid for the "boat people" and other fleeing Indochina, much of the world lost interest in their plight. Many of the remaining refugees still languish in camps or have been forcibly returned to their homelands. They include survivors of the Khmer Rouge communists' reign of terror in Cambodia. Southern Baptists assist refugees through ministries of their Foreign Mission Board. Through the denomination's Home Mission Board, local congregations may get personally involved through refugee resettlement. For information on refugee resettlement opportunities, contact Tony Hough at the Kentucky Baptist Convention, (502) 245-4101. (BP photo by Joanna Pinneo)

Poll: If you pray, you're in the majority

PRINCETON, N.J. (RNS)—If you've ever been angry because it seems your prayers aren't answered, you're not alone.

According to a new Gallup Poll, 22 percent of Americans have been angered on at least one occasion because it seemed their prayers went unanswered.

But a much larger number of Americans who pray believe their prayers are heard (97 percent) and answered (95 percent).

Nine out of 10 Americans say they pray. Here's what Americans told Gallup they pray for:

■ 90 percent of those who pray do so to seek their family's well-being, to give thanks, to have strength

in meeting the challenges of life, and to ask forgiveness.

■ 80 percent pray in praise of God, to achieve personal or world peace, to ask forgiveness of others, to seek aid for personal health, for safe travel, for relief of personal burdens, for loved ones who have died, for their own salvation, and when they are afraid.

■ 75 percent say they pray for their country or when making important lifetime decisions such as marriage or a new career.

■ A slight majority have prayed for the Second Coming of Christ.

■ Nearly half have prayed on behalf of the president or other government leaders.

■ 30 percent have prayed for overcome addictions such as drinking or smoking.

However, a majority of Americans told Gallup they believe it is wrong to pray for something bad to happen to someone, for a winning lottery ticket, a raise or a new car. About 44 percent believe it is wrong to pray for victory in an athletic contest, but 23 percent admit having done it.

The findings are based on a national telephone survey of a representative sample of American adults ages 18 and older in December 1993. Findings are considered reliable within plus or minus four percentage points.

The cost of churchgoing has gone up, Schaller reports

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. (BP)—While the price of some things—like radios, auto tires and ballpoint pens—has gone down over the years, the price of churchgoing has gone up, according to analyst Lyle Schaller.

The cost of maintaining churches—along with schools, hospitals and other helping institutions—is increasing faster than per capita income, said Schaller, a consultant with Yokefellow Institute and a Methodist minister.

At a recent Baptist conference in Missouri, he said people expect more from churches today than they used to. So churches are spending more to provide staff for specialized minis-

tries, off-street parking, air conditioning and other modern necessities.

The typical church today needs to take in about \$15 per worshiper each Sunday to maintain its ministries, Schaller said. For some churches, the cost is as high as \$30-\$40.

But many worshipers still think dropping \$1 or \$5 in the offering plate is enough, he said.

"We haven't done a good job of communicating what the cost of church is," Schaller said. "One of the reasons ... is we're reluctant to talk about it."

Schaller said if churches try to cope with the issue just by educating people about the cost, however, the

probable result will be a focus on reducing costs.

Television evangelists and charitable organizations, meanwhile, will continue competing for their church members' money, he warned. "If you don't ask people for occasional extra money, somebody else will."

Among other questions Schaller addressed:

■ What do people want in pastors today? In smaller churches, the main thing they want is a pastor who cares for them, Schaller said. But as churches become larger, the emphasis shifts to functions such as preaching or administration, he said.

■ What has been the impact of au-

tomobiles on churches? "Probably the most common characteristic of churches represented in this room is, your parking lot's too small," Schaller said. And because people can drive a distance more easily, many churches are becoming regional rather than neighborhood churches, he added.

■ Why can't my church develop a better youth group? What people really want to know is, "How can we build a youth program that is the same as it was when I was a teen-ager?" Schaller said. The answer, he quipped, is to recruit teens who were born in the 1920s. "What I hear is, 'How do we turn back the clock?' And the answer is, 'Beats me.'"

BAPTISTS

Leavell negotiates retirement plan with trustees

NEW ORLEANS (ABP)—Lan-drum Leavell, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, will retire by the end of 1996 but leave the presidency to become chancellor at some point before then.

Leavell, 67, reached an agreement with the school's trustees to retire when he turns 70 in December 1996. The trustees unanimously approved the agreement during their March meeting, according to the board chairman, but no announcement was made.

Instead, a news release from the seminary reported that trustees passed a resolution praising Leavell "for his dynamic and creative leadership" during his 20-year tenure as president.

Chairman Ed Johnson, pastor of First Baptist Church in Ocala, Fla.,

said Leavell will move to the chancellor's post to assist the school in fund-raising. Leavell will choose when to make the move, Johnson said, adding, "He did not give us a time when he expected that to happen."

When the move is announced, a search committee can begin looking for Leavell's successor, Johnson said. Leavell "did not feel any pressure from our board" to schedule his retirement, Johnson said.

Leavell agreed. "In fact, they had a committee talk with me (several years ago) and told me to think in terms of 70, then to go year by year," he said. "It's been real loose."

While other Baptist seminary presidents have had contentious relationships with their trustees, Leavell and New Orleans' board have been spared

any major flare-ups over the years.

"There has been no pressure on me to compromise any conviction I've got," the president said.

The Southern Baptist Convention's six seminaries have been at the heart of the 15-year struggle for control of the denomination. Since conservatives gained the upper hand in the battle in 1979, they have been able to remove or replace presidents at four of the SBC's six seminaries.

The recent firing of President Russell Dilday at Southwestern Seminary has raised questions about the security of the remaining two presidents—at New Orleans and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo.

The Midwestern campus has been rife with rumors that trustees would

try to fire or force the retirement of President Milton Ferguson, who has been at odds with his more conservative board members for several years. Both Ferguson, 65, and trustee chairman James Jones of Waterford, Mich., said they are unaware of any organized move against the president, however.

The Dilday firing may deter Ferguson's critics, seminary sources said. The SBC's conservatives, stung by charges of heavy-handedness in the Southwestern situation, will be reluctant to add fuel to the fire, according to this line of reasoning.

However, some trustees expect Ferguson to take the initiative and offer his own plans for retirement to trustees when they meet April 18-19.

Tolar named acting president at Southwestern Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas—Bill Tolar was named acting president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary last week, as trustees prepared to mail about 40,000 letters nationwide to explain the March 9 firing of President Russell Dilday.

Tolar, 65, is the seminary's vice president for academic affairs. He has taught biblical backgrounds at the seminary since 1965 and previously was dean of the theology school.

Tolar said his acceptance of the interim position should not be construed as support for Dilday's firing.

Meanwhile, in an effort to get "the whole story" about Dilday's firing to Southern Baptists, trustee officers prepared a four-page letter, which they planned to mail to pastors and directors of missions nationwide at a cost of about \$11,000.

The letter reiterates some arguments in previous statements and adds "some other observations," said

Ralph Pulley, trustee chairman. It affirms that trustees "had no choice" but to require a change in leadership.

For the first time, the trustee leaders cite Dilday's 1982 book, "The Doctrine of Biblical Authority," published by the Baptist Sunday School Board.

"Dr. Dilday demonstrates a commitment to the principles of higher criticism, which spawned theological liberalism (modernism), neo-orthodoxy, the death of God, situational ethics, etc. From a decidedly biased position, Dr. Dilday is dedicated to berate, misrepresent and assail those who hold the Bible to be God's inerrant, infallible and authoritative Word," the letter says.

But Dilday said the criticism is "an absolute misreading of my book."

"I don't see how anyone reading the book could draw these conclusions," he said. "My total commitment has been, is and will be that the

Bible is the inerrant, infallible and authoritative word of God."

Dilday disputed the other points of the officers' letter as well. "I am appalled and stunned by the inaccuracy and misrepresentations and untruths in this letter from some of the leaders of the board of trustees," he said.

In other matters related to Dilday's firing, moderate Texas Baptists outraged by the trustee action met with leaders of the state Baptist convention March 26 to discuss ways to voice their displeasure.

Some Texas Baptists have talked about starting another seminary, withholding contributions from the Fort Worth school or even leading the state convention to secede from the national Southern Baptist Convention.

But the estimated 50 moderate leaders who attended the March 26 meeting in Dallas eschewed those options for a more traditional approach, said Daniel Vestal, pastor of Tal-

lowood Baptist Church in Houston.

"The overall consensus was to make our influence felt through official channels," said Vestal.

That could include a call for the state convention to reduce the portion of church contributions passed on to the national Cooperative Program in protest of the conservative domination of SBC agencies. That portion—now 35 percent—likely will drop, said Phil Lineberger, a former state convention president and pastor of First Baptist Church of Tyler.

The largest state convention affiliated with the SBC, with an annual budget of \$63 million, the Baptist General Convention of Texas holds significant sway in the national body. Despite the gains made by conservatives nationally, moderates in Texas remain in firm control of their state convention.

Compiled from Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press reports

BAPTIST BITS

■ **Volunteers needed.** Woman's Missionary Union is looking for volunteers interested in mission projects slated for Orlando, Fla., prior to this summer's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. For information on the June 6-10 projects, call (205) 991-4083 or write Pat Ferguson, WMU, Box 830010, Birmingham, Ala. 35283-0010.

■ **Southern alumni to meet.** Alumni of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary plan a reunion during the spring meeting of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, despite a trustee prohibition against seminary sponsorship of such meetings. The informal reunion is scheduled for 9 p.m. May 6 at the Greensboro Coliseum Complex in Greensboro, N.C.

■ **Beckmann to speak.** David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, will speak at the Southern Baptist Convocation on World Hunger May 13-15 at Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center near Asheville, N.C. For information about the convocation, contact the Christian Life Commission at 901 Commerce, Suite 550, Nashville, Tenn. 37203.

■ **Women in ministry to meet.** The annual worship and planning meeting of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry is scheduled for 10 a.m. May 5 in Greensboro, N.C. Amy Mears from Huntington, W. Va., will deliver the sermon. For registration information, call (502) 896-4425 by April 15.

■ **Chandler elected.** Ron Chandler was named president-elect of the Southern Baptist Stewardship Commission March 24 on a 22-3 vote. Chandler, 61, has been director of stewardship for the California Southern Baptist Convention the past 20 years. At the same meeting, commissioners heard a report that the organization faces severe financial problems and could run out of money within three years.

■ **N.C. changes giving.** Scholarship funds designated by churches for Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary now may be counted as Cooperative Program giving if channeled through the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. The change was approved by the executive committee of the convention's general board. Mid-America is a conservative, independent seminary based in Memphis, Tenn.

■ **Baptist churches hit.** The tornado which took the lives of 19 United Methodist worshippers March 27 at Piedmont, Ala., also destroyed two Baptist church buildings nearby. The storm, which struck the Ten Island and Mount Gilead Baptist churches while worshippers sang, left several Baptists with minor injuries.

■ **Refugees start churches.** Refugees in America started 65 Southern Baptist churches in 1993, according to Bill Fulkerson of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. Southern Baptists helped resettle 866 refugees in 1993.



"Now, turn your focus on Jesus ..."

Small churches can grow, Jackson tells Kentuckians

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

Smaller churches can grow if they will set realistic goals and involve as many members as possible in attempting to reach them, according to Neil Jackson.

Jackson, a Sunday school and church growth consultant from Nashville, delivered this challenge to 744 Kentuckians at nine stops on the Small-Church Growth Tour last month. The annual tour is sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Sunday school department.

Jackson spoke in Leitchfield, Henderson, Princeton, Covington, Crittenden, Corbin, Berea and twice in Lexington.

At every stop, he asked pastors and Sunday school leaders to consider how many people their church realistically could baptize each month for the remainder of the church year. To any who replied that they couldn't set a specific goal because the whole town is ripe unto harvest, Jackson replied, "I know, but you're not going to harvest it."

Churches only accomplish what

they plan to accomplish, he said.

More realistic goals are set when calculated on a monthly basis than on an annual basis, Jackson advised. After the monthly goals are established, they can be added to arrive at an annual goal.

In every case examined during the Kentucky conferences, the total of class or department baptism goals set by teachers from a church exceeded the overall goal suggested by the pastor, Jackson noted.

This, he said, is evidence that lay-people can catch a vision for outreach if given encouragement.

Once a baptism goal is set, Jackson said, some simple math can give direction on how to meet the goal. "We know this statistically: If we enroll three people, one will come to know Christ within 12 months."

So, to baptize 10 people, Sunday school workers should strive to enroll 40 new members.

And the key to enrolling new Sunday school members is a good prospect file, Jackson continued. "The church should have a prospect file that equals the total Sunday school enrollment. For example, if you have

100 people enrolled in Sunday school, you should have a file of 100 current prospects."

Prospect information may be gathered in a variety of ways, he said, including something as simple as asking every member to list the names of neighbors, relatives, friends and co-workers who are unchurched.

A key to working the prospect file is to involve as many people as possible, Jackson said. "The more people you have involved, the more successful your program is going to be."

Outreach also must be seen as a broad-based effort, he added. "The broad base is telephone calls, postcards, lifestyle evangelism. It doesn't have to be with a pulpit Bible under my arm knocking on your door on Monday night."

The pastor must continue to generate enthusiasm about outreach among members, Jackson declared. "People only do what you expect and inspect."

Jackson recommended making simple signs to place throughout the church building to remind members of the baptism goal.

"You have to visualize, visualize,

visualize what you plan to accomplish," he said. "On every swinging door, you ought to have a sign that says 'Baptize 12,' or whatever your goal is. The business world knows if we penetrate your brain enough times, we can get you to do what we want you to do. The church ought to do the same thing."

Further, every Sunday school class ought to live in expectation of meeting their goal, Jackson continued.

"Furniture talks," he said. "If I really believed in outreach growth, I'd have 26 chairs set up if I had 25 people enrolled. The building controls the program. If I can't put enough chairs in there, I can't grow."

Jackson's message apparently inspired the Kentuckians who heard him.

If goals set by the 198 churches represented at the nine Kentucky conferences are met, the state could have a banner year for baptisms, noted Jeff Hicks, Sunday school department associate. These churches from 36 associations set goals to baptize 1,677 people in the remainder of this church year and enroll 4,895 new members in Sunday school.

Book highlights obscure biblical women

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Remember the biblical stories of Huldah, Hagar, Shiphrah and Puah?

Although not "regulars" in Sunday school curriculum or weekly sermons, they still have important lessons for today's Christians, a Kentucky Baptist author believes.

Huldah, Shiphrah and 21 other biblical women are featured in a new book by Mary Zimmer called "Sister Images."

In this collection of guided meditations and commentaries, Zimmer uncovers the stories of obscure, even nameless, women of the Bible, while also offering new perspectives on traditionally recognized heroines such as Deborah, Ruth and Mary.

Zimmer is assistant to the dean at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Christian education school in Louisville, where she also is a member of Crescent Hill Baptist Church.

"It was the case of writing my first book because I couldn't find it," Zimmer said. She had searched unsuccessfully for careful scholarship of biblical women's stories, with practical, contemporary relevance.

She said she tried to bridge the gap between academic theology and biblical interpretation and "the women in the pew."

"It's a miracle we even have these stories of biblical women," she said, given the low status of women in the culture during biblical times.

But Zimmer discovered that the stories of biblical women got told because of what they did and what they said.

And today's Christian women have much to learn from their biblical counterparts, she added. The meditations "are intended to be empowering to women."



SISTER IMAGES Kentucky author Mary Zimmer prepares for a book signing. Her new book, "Sister Images," features biblical stories of often-overlooked women.

In "Sister Images," published by Abingdon Press in 1993, the women's stories are organized into groups representing sisters of wisdom, strife, faith, woe and courage.

Each chapter includes the reprinted Scripture passage; a brief commentary providing connections between biblical women and today's Christian women; a guided imagery meditation; and a closing prayer.

"It's designed so that people could pick up one story (as a devotional) or use a set for a theme interpretation," Zimmer explained.

Several factors contributed to Zimmer's six-year endeavor to write her first book.

With a master's degree in social work, a master of divinity degree in Christian education and leadership roles in the Southern Baptist Women in Ministry organization, Zimmer has been a close observer of matters in the Southern Baptist Convention. Living through this era caused her to question her role as a woman in the SBC, she said.

Meanwhile, personal retreats and careful readings of women theologians offered new insights into Scripture, she explained. "I started seeing

things I'd never heard in Sunday school or worship before."

Then in 1985, when she was asked to prepare theme interpretations for a women's retreat through her church, Zimmer said, she chose to focus on three biblical women. That laid the groundwork for "Sister Images."

By the time she submitted her work to Abingdon Press in 1991, most of the meditations had been honed and edited from multiple uses in retreats and homilies.

Zimmer said her personal favorites include the Canaanite woman of Matthew 15, because "she was the first assertive woman," and Deborah, the Old Testament prophetess and judge, for her strength and ability to bring "peace for decades."

This book isn't just for women, the author said. She hopes men who preach about women in the Bible will use "Sister Images" to take a second look at the stories and "not just say what's always been said."

Zimmer plans for her next book, also geared toward women, to focus on prayer: It will be oriented toward the Christian year and will include quotes from various women writers, she said.

BLUEGRASS BURGEOO

■ **Agriculture lecture.** Larry Cox, an agricultural missionary who has served in West Africa, will lecture on "Cultural Values and Appropriate Technology: Lessons Learned from a Practitioner" at Georgetown College April 19 at 7:30 p.m. in Asher Science Center 112. He is the last of four speakers in a lecture series on environmental ethics and agricultural technologies.

■ **Musical slated.** "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" will be staged by Campbellsville College April 21, 22 and 23, with all performances beginning at 8 p.m. Tickets, which cost \$5, may be reserved by calling (502) 789-5266.

■ **Deaton honored.** Andrea Deaton, forward for the Campbellsville College Lady Tigers basketball team, has been named "First Team NAIA All-American." Deaton also is the only Kentuckian named to the 1994 Kodak Women's All-American basketball teams. Meanwhile, Lady Tigers coach Donna Wise was named 1994 Converse NAIA District 7 Coach of the Year.

■ **Open house.** Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children's Cornerstone Counseling and western region foster care ministries will host an open house at their Hopkinsville facilities May 15. Guests may learn more about the work of the Kentucky Baptist Convention agency in the region. The open house will be from 1:30-4:30 p.m. at the Christian County Baptist Association building, 101 W. 18th St. in Hopkinsville.

■ **COM rally set.** Kentucky's Campers on Mission group has set their spring rally and work project for April 22-24 at Bullitsburg Baptist Assembly in Burlington. For information, contact June and Gil Chard at (606) 223-2591.

■ **Reid honored.** Jim Reid, who guided Georgetown College to the No. 1 ranking in the final NAIA Division I men's basketball regular season, has been named 1994 Division I Men's Basketball National Coach of the Year.

■ **Correction:** The March issue of the "Events" insert produced by the Kentucky Baptist Convention wrongly listed First Baptist Church in Winchester as site for the Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting. The April 22-23 meeting will be held at Central Baptist Church in Winchester.

OPINION

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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Feminist outrage

I am outraged at the promotion of the so-called feminist Christian movement in your paper. Feminists hate men and anything men do. They especially hate the fact Jesus was a man and are trying to feminize the Trinity. They can pray to "Sophia" if they want, but their feminine god will not answer. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life: No man cometh to the Father but by me" (John 14:6).

God did not "punish" Jesus when he was hanging on the cross. Your sins were put on Jesus on that cross. You and I were the ones who caused his suffering. Jesus willingly took our sins upon himself.

The "spirit of wisdom" who they have named "Sophia" is not just another name for Jesus. Job 28:28 says, "And unto man he said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.'" These women need to read the Bible for themselves.

The destruction of anything Christian in this society has accelerated in recent years. From the public schools to the media, Christ and anyone who calls himself a Christian has been silenced or ridiculed. Now this movement is attacking the church, seeking, in their own words, to "destroy" it.

I am amazed that mainline denominations are financing the lies being told at these conferences. I urge pastors and church executives to investigate any conference sponsored by anyone who denies the saving grace of Jesus.

Gail Griffey
Hopkinsville

What about alcohol?

I have been watching the new legislation on tobacco and gun control. I

feel we have left out something more important. I am referring to alcohol.

I know we had prohibition, and it didn't work. Today we don't talk about morals and sin. But if we are talking about keeping everyone safe and well, how can we not talk about alcohol?

It causes people to lose their ability to reason. The result is many assaults, murders, robberies, child and spouse abuse, days lost from work with no money for rent and food, words said that ruin friendships and, of course, many vehicular accidents.

It would be interesting to know how many crimes were committed under the influence of alcohol.

I am not advocating the use of tobacco, but isn't it interesting that on an airplane you can't smoke the cigarettes you've bought and paid for, but in first class they give you free alcohol? When you get off the plane, you can then drive your car.

Does this make sense? Not to me it doesn't.

Carolyn Stewart
Williamsburg

Drop the labels

We have been guilty of sitting back and judging who is right and wrong: Liberals, moderates or conservatives.

My question is this: What is the criteria to be one of these three labels? When I was converted, I wasn't converted to be a conservative (which I am). I was converted by God's grace for God's glory to serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us all drop the labels of liberal, moderate and conservative. Let us call ourselves Christians. What a wonderful idea!

Dennis Starkey
Jackson

April

In the volume by Jesse Stuart, "A Jesse Stuart Reader," is a brief story titled "Wild Plums."

As I look east from my office window across the greening grass which lies between our building and Spring Meadows, I have the same urge that the author manifests in his introduction to his story.

"I've written a lot of stories about April, and I've published a book of poems called Hold April. It's my favorite month; to me there is no month as fascinating for everyone. Everything seems young in April, and especially in Kentucky.

"The particular day in this story was filled with the romance of April, with the dogwoods, redbuds, wild crab apples and plums all white and pink blossoms blown by the wind in the valleys and on the slopes of the high Kentucky hills. I was 26 years old, and I was principal of McKell High School. I was happy to be a high school principal; I liked all the teachers on my faculty, and I was proud of our school. I liked the teen-agers in the school, and I enjoyed working

with them. I always have, for young people are a challenge and an education.

"But this day was so beautiful it was hard to think of anything except the hills outside my office window. I wanted more than anything else in the world to be outdoors. And I found a

good excuse to get away; 41 students were absent that day. They couldn't all be sick. That would be too much of a coincidence. I knew why those 41 students were absent; they were playing hooky from school. They hadn't been able to resist the invitation of that April day to be outside to see the glory of the blossoms and to smell the fragrance. I decided to go

out looking for the truants. I didn't have to do that, but it was a handy way to get out of that office.

"So I was playing hooky too. As soon as I was out of sight of the school, I headed straight for the wild plum grove by the Tygart River—one of the most beautiful wild plum groves I had ever seen. I thought to myself that grove is a good place for a student to hide from the principal, and

Mixed message

I wonder sometimes what Jesus would be like if he were around today.

Would he wear a three-piece suit and high-priced shoes (assuming he returned as a man)? Would he be a high-profile, upwardly mobile preacher or denominationalist? Would he be the kind of person who dwells on points of theology and fires those who disagree? Maybe he would collect old books and work behind expensive office furniture.

Somehow, I believe we tell the world about Jesus on the one hand and show the world a different kind of Jesus on the other.

Pete Sinclair
Louisville

Wake-up call

It should be no surprise to any of us that Dr. Russell Dilday could be fired so summarily in such a high-handed manner.

It has been said, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Dr. Dilday's ouster coming a day after he was praised for his good work should supply the wake-up call for Southern Baptists.

Where are truth and honesty, not to mention Christian character, in such actions?

The audacious words of the chairman of the board of trustees at Southwestern Seminary should burn in our hearts: "We don't need a reason; we can do it. We have the votes, and we will."

This action just brings to fruition the power crop that has been growing these years since the takeover of the convention. We should be grateful for our editor who is not afraid to speak the truth.

Betty Cook
Louisville

also a good place for a principal to hide from a student.

"When I got to the grove, I found a student all right. I ran right smack into him after I had crawled on my hands and knees to get under low-hanging branches. He was embarrassed. He thought someone had told me where to find him. I didn't tell him that no one had told me. I let him think that I had come to get him. But my reason for coming was the same as his: to be out in that April day."

As I reflect on Stuart's experience, I find myself compelled from within to put everything aside, head down to the lake in my old pick-up truck; find a "sitting place" near the redbuds and dogwoods, waiting for the first blossoms to appear; listen for the sound of a big bass, stretching his powerful body in midair, before returning to the water with a noisy slap; feeling the sun of spring warm my neck and back, while doves, jays, cardinals and chickadees scavenge alongside each other for the remaining sunflower seeds beneath the feeders.

Yes, I want to mingle again with April, for I remember her to be delightful.

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



Children's sermons

By Jewell Nelson

Q. I am responsible for "Moments with Children," or the children's sermon. Can you give me some help?

A. In preparing for the time with children, don't be led to believe you need to make a show for adults.

Think children. Young children are literal-minded. Therefore, symbolism, object lessons and magic tricks are understood better by adults than the children. Say what you mean and mean what you say.

■ Keep the sermon simple and short. Five to eight minutes.

■ Do not talk down to children, but do use vocabulary children understand.

■ A good "sermon" does not need to be over explained or moralized.

■ Base the sermon on a Bible verse, Bible character or a story in the Bible.

■ Sit on the children's level so you can maintain easy eye contact. Sit facing the congregation with the children facing you.

■ Use the Bible during the time with the children. Hold it in your lap. Open it to the story or verse. Or read from it.

■ Do not talk fantasy. Mixing fantasy with theology is confusing. It brings Jesus down with Mother Goose or lifts Mother Goose up to Jesus.

■ If you ask questions, plan carefully. You may get too many answers. You may get wrong or humorous answers creating laughter among adults. Adults laughing at an answer may cause the child to feel stupid.

■ You may use a teaching picture or an object to catch attention. Be sure the object stands only for what it really is. A nature item: God made the flower; a fruit or vegetable; he provides good food; or an article that might relate to what a Bible character may have used or eaten.

■ So: Get attention.

Tell a story. (A good storyteller stimulates the five senses.)

Or share items and tell how or why you have them and how they relate to the Bible teaching.

Close with a prayer or an appropriate children's song (no fantasy or symbolism, please).

Jewell Nelson is associate director of the KBC's Sunday school department.

■ Send your questions about children, teens, marriage, singles or aging to "Family Forum," Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

EDITORIALS

'Evangelicals & Catholics Together': Ironic hope

Holy Week 1994 felt holier than usual for millions of Christians. New hope and irony gave it rich texture.

Five days before Easter, an informal coalition of Catholic and evangelical leaders released a landmark document pledging to reduce conflicts and increase cooperation between these Christian traditions.

"Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium" cites doctrinal positions the two groups hold in common, delineates areas of disagreement and outlines a conservative social agenda for reforming the nation. (For details, see articles beginning on page 1 of this week's paper.)

The statement marks a milestone in the history of Christian faith in America. Numerous historians and observers of religion and society have begun to describe a realignment of religious groups. They claim many Christians are coalescing according to social/political causes rather than classic denominational boundaries. And they cite this document as the latest, and most concrete, illustration of that new religious configuration.

For example, the 40 signers of the Catholic-evangelical statement agreed to disagree about doctrinal differences, such as the authority of the church. But they agreed to cooperate on social/political issues, such as parental choice in education. The bond of the political cause has provided a new "glue" that holds some Christians together, even across traditional denominational borders. Before, groups gathered around their own versions of "right thinking." Now, they team up to work on "right action."

The document was signed by two Southern Baptists—Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission, and Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board—who have stood at the forefront

of the convention's conservative movement. In addition to parental choice in education, the document pledges cooperation on a range of issues held in common by many Catholics, Baptists and other conservative Christians—abortion, euthanasia, public education, pornography, religious "acceptance, understanding and cooperation," support for families and churches, "a free society with a vibrant market economy" and "a realistic and responsible understanding of America's part in world affairs."

The document presents Southern Baptists with a hopeful irony. Isn't it ironic that this agreement between divergent strains of faith has been formed even as brothers and sisters within the same Southern Baptist denomination continue to bludgeon each other? Can we find hope in the recognition that, while they still hold serious doctrinal differences, fervent Christian believers can accentuate common beliefs and rally around common concerns so they can work together for the common good?

Maybe the polar tugs of social causes are stronger than denominational beliefs and identity. Maybe the lines drawn by conservative, moderate and liberal ideology are sharper than common doctrine and church practice. Maybe the blood of politics is thicker than the water of baptism. But is not the cause of Christ more important than them all? If conservative Baptists can embrace Catholics over the cause of school choice, can they "widen the denominational tent" for the sake of evangelism? And if moderate Baptists can applaud this newfound ecumenism for the sake of interfaith dialogue, can they shake off political division for the sake of missions?

God only knows.

Marv Knox

If Baptists and other evangelicals can bridge doctrinal differences in order to work on common social concerns, can Southern Baptists overcome their internal differences in order to work on evangelism and missions?

Make America safer; urge support for alcohol-warning bill

You can help make America safer by picking up a pen.

Citizen support is needed to convince the Senate Commerce Committee to approve the Sensible Advertising and Family Education Act when Congress reconvenes April 11. The SAFE Act would require all broadcast and printed alcohol ads to carry health and safety warnings.

A law requiring similar warnings on alcohol containers was passed in the late 1980s. The proposed broadcast warnings would state:

■ **SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING:** If you are pregnant, don't drink alcohol. Alcohol may cause mental retardation and other birth defects.

■ **WARNING:** If you are under the age of 21, it's illegal to buy alcoholic beverages.

■ **WARNING:** Alcohol is a drug and may be addictive.

■ **WARNING:** Don't drink and drive or operate heavy machinery.

■ **WARNING:** Don't mix alcohol with medications and other drugs.

■ **WARNING:** Alcohol poisoning can kill you. Don't drink too much too fast.

■ **WARNING:** Drinking increases your risk of high blood pressure,

liver disease and cancer.

As expected, the alcohol and broadcasting industries, fearing losses in their incomes, have been putting pressure on lawmakers to kill the bill, according to a report from the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

"We believe we have a chance to pass the bill in the Commerce Committee, but this will only happen if concerned citizens are involved," said Jim Smith, the commission's director of government relations. "The well-heeled interests which oppose the SAFE Act are formidable foes."

That's especially true for any lawmaker from Kentucky, where alcohol is a major industry. And that's why Kentucky's member of the Senate Commerce Committee, Sen. Wendell Ford, needs strong encouragement to support the SAFE Act, labeled S. 674 in the Senate.

Kentucky Baptists who want to curtail many of the dangers of drinking and make the nation's homes and highways safer should write to Ford and urge him to support the SAFE Act.

His address is United States Senate, Washington, D.C. 20510.

Marv Knox

The SAFE Act provides a reasonable response to the dangers of alcoholic consumption.

A letter to Molly: 'You'll never regret becoming a Christian'

Dear Molly,

As you stepped into our church's baptismal pool Easter Sunday, my mind raced back to the cool November morning when you were born. That doesn't seem so very long ago, and yet it was forever in light of the decision you have made to be a Christian.

The day you popped into this world, you were pink and wrinkled, and you wailed as that first breath of air filled your lungs. I'll never forget how tiny and fragile you felt the first time I cuddled you in my arms, as if you would break if I squeezed you only a little too tightly.

Even in that moment, your Mom and I knew we could never care for you and raise you by ourselves. We knew we needed

help, and we turned to God. We asked the One who is perfect Love to surround you with love that never quits. We asked the One who is the perfect Parent to guide you every minute.

We came by that decision quite naturally. Generations of Knoxes and Jarchows and other family have turned to the Lord for help in raising their kids, doing their jobs and living their lives.

So, your decision to follow Christ came naturally too. In a sense, you were born into this family of faith. Every

member of your family is a Christian. Most of the other important people in your life have been members of our church, and it seemed natural that you also would follow Christ.

But you had to make that decision for yourself. Neither Mom nor I could make it for you. Not even Granddaddy, a preacher, could do it. You had to decide for yourself, and you did.

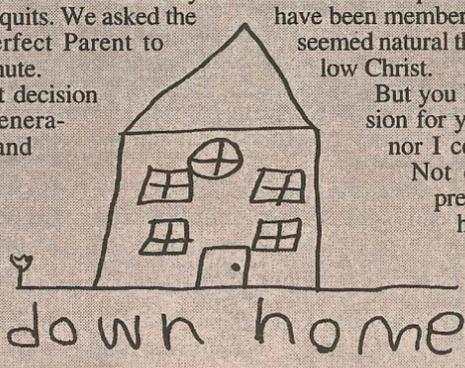
As you get older, you'll understand that's part of what being a Baptist means. You have the tremendous opportunity to approach God for yourself, but you

also have the awesome responsibility to approach God by yourself. You have the fantastic freedom to interpret what God wants you to do with your life, but you must answer for the way you use your life.

You can do it. You'll keep on discovering something you already know—God loves you and never will let you down. You'll realize that following Jesus gets tougher and even more complicated at times, but it's better to do really hard things with Jesus than to take it easy all by yourself.

Your Mom and I are delighted you decided to be a Christian. You'll never regret it. I love you.
Daddy

Marv Knox



Reaction to Baptist leaders' action not so typical

Document excerpts

"We together, evangelicals and Catholics, confess our sins against the unity that Christ intends for all his disciples."

"The shameful reality is that, in many places around the world, the scandal of conflict between Christians obscures the scandal of the cross, thus crippling the one mission of the one Christ."

"As evangelicals and Catholics, we dare not by needless and loveless conflict between ourselves give aid and comfort to the enemies of the cause of Christ."

"Jesus Christ is Lord. That is the first and final affirmation that Christians make about all reality."

"All who accept Christ as Lord and Savior are brothers and sisters in Christ. Evangelicals and Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ. ... He has chosen us, and he has chosen us to be his together."

"We do not presume to suggest that we can resolve the deep and long-standing differences between evangelicals and Catholics. Indeed these differences may never be resolved short of the Kingdom Come."

"Religion, which was privileged and foundational in our legal order, has in recent years been penalized and made marginal. We contend together for a renewal of the constituting vision of the place of religion in the American experiment."

"The pattern of convergence and cooperation between evangelicals and Catholics is, in large part, a result of common effort to protect human life, especially the lives of the most vulnerable among us. ... The statement that the unborn child is a human life that—barring natural misfortune or lethal intervention—will become what everyone recognizes as a human baby is not a religious assertion. It is a statement of simple biological fact."

"That we are all to be one does not mean that we are all to be identical in our way of following the one Christ."

"In considering the many corruptions of Christian witness, we, evangelicals and Catholics, confess that we have sinned, against one another and against God. We most earnestly ask the forgiveness of God and one another and pray for the grace to amend our own lives and that of our communities."

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

A landmark document outlining agreement between prominent evangelical and Catholic leaders has drawn less-than-typical reactions from Southern Baptists.

Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board, and Richard Land, executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission, are among 40 signers of the document titled "Evangelicals and Catholics Together."

Land and Lewis, who represent the most conservative side of Southern Baptists, drew immediate criticism from some of their conservative brethren and praise from some of their usual critics.

Stan Hastey, executive director of the Alliance of Baptists, a mainly East Coast group of more liberal Southern Baptists, lauded the document for enriching the dialogue between Protestants and Catholics.

"The Alliance of Baptists applauds any effort to bridge gaps between and among groups of Christians," Hastey said. "I personally feel that the increasing signs of ecumenism all along the spectrum of Southern Baptist life are encouraging and helpful. It helps give witness to the essential oneness of Christians."

But Ben Rogers, a vocational evangelist from Longview, Texas, criticized Lewis and Land for not being conservative enough.

"Are we to accept Catholicism as biblical Christianity rather than the perversion of Christianity that it is?" Rogers asked in a letter to Lewis March 30. "Catholicism is still pro-pope, pro-Mary and pro-sacrament. No renewal movement in Catholicism has ever corrected errors in Catholic doctrine."

Rogers noted that signers of the document condemn any "needless and loveless conflicts between ourselves." Then he asked, "Was the Reformation a 'needless and loveless conflict'?"

He specifically criticized a portion

of the document that calls on evangelicals and Catholics to stop proselytizing or "sheep stealing" from each other's folds.

The document states: "In view of the number of non-Christians in the world and the enormous challenge of our common evangelistic task, it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytize among active adherents of another Christian community."

"It is one thing to unite against hunger, crime and abortion issues, and quite another to become a victim of compromise by worshipping with any apostate group," Rogers wrote. "Although there are born again individuals in Catholicism, the theological system is not biblical Christianity."

The joint document will highlight different streams within conservative evangelicalism, predicted a sociologist and professor of world religions.

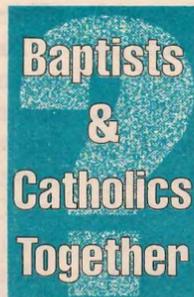
Nancy Ammerman, a Southern Baptist who teaches sociology of religion at Emory University, said those who are likely to join Rogers in denouncing the document are the "traditional southern Southern Baptists." Those who are likely to applaud it are the "politicized conservatives."

"The people who've been in the trenches on abortion and gay rights are probably not going to be upset by this in the same way as people who are in the traditional Southern Baptist mold," she explained.

James Chancellor, professor of Christian missions and world religions at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said Baptist conservatives are driven by two different agendas, one concerned with social issues and the other concerned with missions and evangelism.

Sometimes the two overlap, but sometimes they do not, he said. "Here's a demonstration of how these two can lead to disparity."

In this case, the pledge of non-proselytizing "demonstrates the dominance of the social agenda over against the evangelism agenda," he suggested.



Catholics will embrace most of document, liaison says

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

NASHVILLE—Roman Catholics largely will receive the "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" document with appreciation, predicted Frank Ruff, Catholic liaison with Southern Baptists.

The 25-page document outlining areas of agreement between evangelical Christians and Catholics was released last week by a coalition of 40 signers, including Southern Baptists Larry Lewis and Richard Land.

Ruff noted that Catholics who signed the document, like Southern Baptists who signed it, were expressing their own opinions and not any official stance of the church. While wholly within the Roman Catholic

church, these signers represent a specific mindset within the church, he said.

"I think with minimal exception, sections one, two, three and five will be affirmed on the Catholic side," he said. Those sections deal largely with identifying areas of doctrinal agreement and disagreement and a call for better relations between Catholics and evangelicals.

"When they get to section four, the social issues section, some Catholics will find themselves there. But it will not speak for a lot of Catholics," Ruff said. That section outlines positions on issues such as abortion, pornography, education, economics and church-state relations.

Ruff said he personally was "thrilled" with parts of the document

"because this was the first time I can remember reading in evangelical literature the call of John 17:21, 'that all may be one,' and the theology that there is one church because there is one Christ."

Ruff said the document complements dialogues between Southern Baptists and Catholics that have been ongoing since 1971. However, these dialogues sponsored by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Conference of Catholic Bishops have no direct link to the document.

"I think what it means is that now the two groups, the Catholics and Baptists, in our regular structures need to respond to it," Ruff said. "That's the way I think it will be a sustaining document."

While the document's signers in-

In response to criticism from fellow conservatives, Lewis and Land drew a distinction between proselytizing and evangelism.

"We do evangelism, not proselytizing," Lewis said in a statement released through Baptist Press. "Understand that Southern Baptist witnessing efforts are not directed at proselytizing anyone, but to bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, which is the responsibility of all Christians."

The idea that Baptists who affirm conservative evangelical theology can find common ground with Catholics is supported by Al Mohler, president of Southern Seminary.

"This statement does not indicate that evangelicals and Roman Catholics have shifted where their differences remain on important issues such as the relative authority of Scripture and tradition, the claims of the papacy and other historic theological controversies," he said.

"The restructuring of the American religious landscape has left evangelicals and conservative Roman Catholics perhaps the last two groups who can share an honest disagreement on theological issues," he explained. "These two groups are among the few in American society who affirm the objectivity of truth. This has allowed honest disagreement and the ability to speak honestly about common concerns on the moral front."

There's a danger in making too much of this document by suggesting that evangelicals and Catholics have minimized their theological differences, Mohler said.

But there also is danger in underestimating the importance of this document "by missing the intense sense of common concern and urgency" that has brought evangelicals and Roman Catholics into a coalition despite those differences, he added.

"The most important issue of this document is its attention to basic world view issues," Mohler declared. "Historians of late 20th century America are certain to indicate the remarkable sense of cultural crisis which has pushed evangelicals and Roman Catholics into unprecedented cooperation."

clude people assembled with a like mind on social issues, Ruff said he would like to see further dialogue between Catholics and evangelicals with different commonalities.

"I would like to assemble a group of people who have a like mind on the lordship of Jesus and the inspiration of Scripture and the affirmation of the Apostles Creed," he explained.

There is a danger in "separating ourselves out as though the social issues are the key thing," Ruff added. "If the social issues are the key things, then you form coalitions around those social issues you agree on. So you say from the beginning, 'Those are the most important things in my life.'

"I think we should be saying, 'The most important thing in my life is Jesus Christ.'"

TRENDS

Document signals changing religious alignments

Continued from page 1

sert, that there are disagreements between us," it continues. "Misunderstandings, misrepresentations and caricatures of one another, however, are not disagreements. These distortions must be cleared away if we are to search through our honest differences in a manner consistent with what we affirm and hope together on the basis of God's word."

The statement carries no official sanction from the Southern Baptist Convention or any religious body, but is identified as the opinion only of the signers.

However, the statement notes the discovery of "common convictions about Christian faith and mission" between evangelicals and Catholics. Some of the areas of agreement cited include:

- Jesus Christ is Lord.
- Justification by grace through faith because of Christ.
- The authority of the "divinely inspired" and "infallible" Bible.
- A hope that all people will come to faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The document hones in on the social issues both conservative Protestants and conservative Catholics have been fighting for in what has been called America's "cultural war." The signers declare their united opposition to abortion and pornography, their desire for "parental choice" in education and their belief that Christian perspectives often are trampled by too-strict interpretations of the First Amendment.

The statement asserts that "politics, law and culture must be secured by moral truth."

Declaration of such a common agreement isn't surprising to sociolo-

gist Nancy Ammerman, a Southern Baptist who teaches at Emory University in Atlanta.

"What we have seen over the last decade and a half has been the realization that conservatives across the religious spectrum have a lot of things in common," she said. "They probably discovered they have a lot of things in common by engaging in political combat."

"The most common thing conservatives share across the board is a feeling that the larger culture has become too secular and that it's important for people of faith to band together in the face of a secular culture," she added.

Nor was the document surprising to James Chancellor, associate professor of Christian missions and world religions at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Chancellor has been studying the emerging alliance between evangelicals and conservative Catholics.

Agreement between evangelicals and Catholics on such a document would have been unthinkable in the 1950s and 1960s, he said. But social changes in America in the 1970s brought a new climate.

"What happened pretty clearly to me is that evangelical Christianity as a whole drew a line in the sand between the broader culture and themselves over this issue of abortion. When they looked down the line, they saw the Catholics on the same side of that line."

Differences between Catholics and evangelicals were compounded in the 19th century and early 20th century because the two groups found them-

selves with opposing views on the social issues of that day, he explained. Those issues included Sunday Sabbath and alcohol.

"But now the social issues are homosexuality and abortion, basically what you call 'family values.' And now the Catholics and evangelical Protestants are on the same side. In defensiveness against the society at large, they are finding unity."

While the signers have found agreement on these social issues, they admit differences still exist on some doctrinal issues. The document cites differences on issues such as:

■ Whether the church is a visible communion or invisible fellowship of true believers.

■ Whether Scripture is authoritative on its own or only as interpreted by the church.

■ Whether Christians have soul freedom or must submit to the teaching authority of the church.

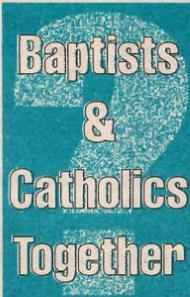
■ Whether the sacraments and ordinances of the church are merely symbols of grace or a means of grace.

■ The role of baptism.

■ Devotion to Mary.

Yet the statement calls for an end to "proselytizing" members from each other's folds while affirming the need of all people to be converted to Christianity.

"In view of the large number of non-Christians in the world and the enormous challenge of our common evangelistic task, it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytize among active adherents of another Christian commu-



nity," the statement says.

That is a landmark statement, according to Chancellor.

"This would have been unimaginable in the 1960s—from either side," he said. "This theological transition is a direct result of a common moral and social agenda over against the secular and anti-religious drives of the broader society."

This once-impossible coalition is evidence of the changing landscape of American religion, according to Bill O'Brien and Bill Leonard of Samford University.

"We've already moved into the era of trans-denominationalism," said O'Brien, director of Samford's Global Center. "Those lines which used to divide us were vertical—between Protestant and Catholic. Now the axis has shifted to be horizontal. You don't hear people asking if you're Baptist or Catholic, but where you stand on AIDS, abortion, and other issues of special interest."

"People from all religious backgrounds are finding common ground on social issues," O'Brien said.

"This really is an evidence of new alignments, this time over social issues and a broad theological conservatism," added Leonard, a church historian who heads Samford's religion department.

And though Baptists in the past have railed against the ecumenical movement, this new trend is a form of ecumenism, O'Brien said.

"Whether this turns out to be the greatest thing that came along really is not the issue," he explained. "If you're standing on the outside looking in, it's another indicator of ecumenicity of spirit. That really represents a sea change from where we were 35 or 40 years ago."

"This would have been unimaginable in the 1960s—from either side. This theological transition is a direct result of a common moral and social agenda over against the secular and anti-religious drives of the broader society."

James Chancellor, professor of Christian missions and world religions at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Foreign reaction predicted to vary

While Baptists in the United States may marvel at the newfound cooperation outlined last week between evangelicals and Roman Catholics, reaction outside the U.S. is predicted to vary widely.

In some countries where Baptists and Catholics already get along, the agreement will be well-received, predicted Bill O'Brien of Samford University's Global Center. But in other regions—such as Latin America—the document will be received negatively, he added.

Don Kammerdiener, executive vice president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and a former missionary to Latin America, confirmed the negative reaction.

"If this is an attack on witnessing among the Latin American peoples or among the nominally Christian—but basically secular—peoples of Western Europe or the United States, I would heartily disagree," he told Baptist Press.

Kammerdiener said many Roman Catholics he witnessed to in Latin America were "not committed Christians. They are nominal folks who don't have any idea of what the gospel is all about."

PEOPLE

First Baptist church in northern Kentucky turns 200

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

BURLINGTON—The "mother church of northern Kentucky" celebrates its 200th anniversary this year with local dignitaries, guest speakers and dinner on the grounds.

Bullittsburg Baptist Church in Burlington, founded in 1794, was the first Baptist church established in the northernmost region of the bluegrass state.

In turn, Bullittsburg helped start many other Baptist churches in the area, thereby earning the title "mother church of northern Kentucky."

"According to our records, we were instrumental in establishing ... at least 14 churches from 1800-1915,"

Pastor Donald Quance explained. "That's remarkable for the church."

And those records likely don't include some of the churches in Ohio and Indiana that owe their start to Bullittsburg, added Norma Hennigen, chairwoman of the church's history committee.

"Looking Forward Through the Past" is the theme of the anniversary year, which began last June and has continued throughout the year with church and community-wide events.

Other activities included a country fair July 4 and hosting a community-wide Thanksgiving service, a Northern Kentucky Baptist Association meeting and a meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Historical Commission. All of these events will culminate

with a celebration service June 5, Hennigen said. Two men ordained by Bullittsburg Church will serve as guest speakers. Also, local dignitaries and a community choir are being organized to participate.

Although east and west wings have been added, the church still worships in its original sanctuary, built in 1819, Hennigen said. And some people still chose to be baptized in the 1873 blue limestone outdoor baptistry.

Long tenures have characterized Bullittsburg's pastorate. In its 200 years of existence, the congregation has called only 19 pastors.

The church is smaller now than it has been in the past, but the potential for growth and continued ministry is

great, Quance said.

Bullittsburg is still a "community church" that averages about 70 on Sunday mornings, "but it's ideally located right on a Highway 275 exit," he explained.

This location just outside Cincinnati allows the congregation to draw from a large and developing area.

Living in one of Kentucky's fastest-growing regions mandates that "we be actively in touch with the community," Quance said. "We want our community to know we're here."

The anniversary theme "is our goal," Hennigen added. "We don't want to rest on just history. Buildings and artifacts are not the most important thing; ... we realize it's people we've got to look to."

Pikeville church takes its life of Christ drama outdoors



PIKEVILLE—Eastern Kentuckians will find Jesus in an unusual place this spring, as First Baptist Church of Pikeville mounts a life of Christ drama at the Jenny Wiley State Park amphitheater.

For the first time, the church will move its traditional Easter pageant outside the walls of the church building, in an effort to reach people who won't come to church.

The free performances are slated for April 22, 23, 24, 29 and 30, all starting at 7 p.m.

"The real burden and vision was to get the story of the Lord outside the church walls," said Rebecca Martin,

education and youth director. Many people who need to see the pageant simply refuse to enter a church house, she explained.

By presenting the drama in a neutral setting, more people will attend and the church's witness will be expanded, Martin said.

Already, distribution of the free tickets has surpassed expectations, said Adrienne Justice, church secretary and drama participant.

The amphitheater has permanent seating for 500 people. Tickets for those 500 seats for four performances were taken quickly, Justice said.

So the church printed extra tickets

for each performance for the 300 spaces available for carry-in seating and added a fifth performance, Justice said.

The program, titled "The Deliverer," has been compiled by Martin and Yvonne Clark, music director.

The story begins with the announcement to Mary of Jesus' birth and concludes with the resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

The cast involves about 100 people from First Baptist Church and other area churches. Volunteers also have created the set and costuming.

For information on free tickets, call the church at (606) 432-8113.

LIFE OF CHRIST First Baptist Church of Pikeville will take its annual Easter pageant outside the church walls this year, with five performances at Jenny Wiley State Park amphitheater.

**Come
Join
The
Fun!**



Saturday, April 16

Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children is celebrating 125 years of caring for children and you're invited to the birthday party! Bring a van load! Bring a bus load! There'll be plenty of food, fellowship, and live entertainment for the entire church family!

Baptist Youth Ranch

854 Tunnel Hill Church Road
Elizabethtown, Kentucky
10 a.m. - 2 p.m.



Learning from life

Our guest author this month is chaplain Wayne Sibley. He is the director of pastoral care at Baptist Regional Medical Center, Corbin.

Jesus used ordinary stories to teach eternal truths. He taught about lost coins, sowing seeds, laborers in the vineyard. I decided that if Jesus used such stories to teach, surely I could learn something significant from the winter of '94.

My mind went to one day in particular. It was the first big snow storm we had, and much to my chagrin, I got stuck twice driving home from work.

I attempted to drive up a hill that I knew was too much for me. I got almost to the top, but I just couldn't make it. I sat there trying to go either forward or backward, but going nowhere. Soon, a man I did not know had pity on me and helped me get turned around and headed in the right direction.

I made it home and decided to back into my driveway. I reasoned that since I have front-wheel drive that I would make grooves in the snow with my rear wheels and let my front wheels push me back. I got halfway into the driveway and noticed that dreadful feeling of tires spinning but the car going nowhere.

There I sat, halfway in the drive-

way and halfway in the street going nowhere fast.

A friend drove up in his four-wheel-drive vehicle and asked if I needed help. Swallowing my pride, I said yes. He pulled me into my driveway.

These experiences serve as a reminder that we need each other. As we journey through life, sometimes

we get stuck and need help from fellow pilgrims. We must be willing to allow others to help us bear our burdens.

Paul states that, in bearing one another's burdens we fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2). One way we can help others and ourselves is through organizations such as Baptist Healthcare Foundation.

Finally, I was reminded not always to take life so seriously. It is good to take time and see the humor in life. I can look back and laugh at getting stuck twice in the same day—once in my own driveway. I have at times boasted of my skill and ability to drive in the snow (so much for machismo). Take time to find humor in life.

Any questions or comments concerning this article, Baptist Healthcare System or Baptist Healthcare Foundation should be directed to Charles W. Cox Jr., president of Baptist Healthcare Foundation, 4007 Kresge Way, Louisville, Ky. 40207 (502) 896-5003.

Court hears arguments in term's main church-state case

WASHINGTON (ABP)—If the U.S. Supreme Court is about to change its stance requiring governmental neutrality toward religion, the justices weren't tipping their hands March 30 as they heard oral arguments in their only significant church-state case this term.

At issue in the case Board of Education of Kiryas Joel Village School District vs. Grumet is whether the New York legislature violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment by creating a separate public school district for handicapped children living in a community of Hasidic Jews.

A larger question before the court was whether it would abandon its long-held but much-criticized Lemon

test for church-state separation.

Lemon requires governmental actions to have a secular purpose, neither advance nor inhibit religion and avoid excessive entanglement between religion and government.

But surprisingly, the Lemon standard was barely mentioned during arguments.

"The utter absence of questions about Lemon is probably a good sign, but not necessarily," said Brent Walker, general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee, which supports the Lemon test. "It may mean they have already made up their minds."

"My best guess is we have at least five, maybe six, votes to uphold Lemon's essential core," Walker said.

Although Lemon was barely men-

tioned, Walker said, that doesn't mean the nine justices are not interested in the case. "Every justice, except for Justice (Clarence) Thomas, asked a lot of questions," he said. "They are obviously intrigued by this case."

Michael Whitehead, general counsel for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, expressed some hope that the court would be sympathetic to his agency's position. The CLC has taken a stance opposite the Joint Committee's, in support of the special district and in favor of overturning Lemon.

"Several justices noted that the purpose of the New York legislature and (Gov.) Mario Cuomo was to help disabled children, not to help religion," Whitehead said. "The law is religion-neutral and responded to the secular needs of these children by providing a secular public school within the friendly setting of the municipality."

The court's one-hour argument was devoted to questions and answers about the background facts.

The New York legislature created the special school district encompassing the all-Hasidic village of Kiryas Joel in Orange County to resolve a conflict over providing special education services to disabled students in the village.

The state supreme court said creating the district violated Lemon by advancing religion, since the special services were available to disabled Hasidic students in nearby public schools.

Nathan Lewin, representing the school board, argued the district did not unconstitutionally advance religion because the state created the entity as a secular solution to a local problem. The motivation was secular, not religious, in nature, he said.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor responded that she was troubled by Lewin's suggestion that a narrow law that does not extend to all New Yorkers is somehow neutral.

Justice David Souter asked Lewin if the community was established for religious reasons. Lewin responded that the village was founded out of a "zoning dispute" and that all the residents "happen to be" part of one religion.

Jay Worona, arguing against the school district, told the justices the statute clearly violates the establishment clause because it set up "political constituencies defined along religious lines."

Worona said by looking at the context in which the law was enacted that the action clearly violated the establishment clause on its face—even without application of the Lemon test.

Actor urges letters to support "Christy"

LOS ANGELES (BP)—A veteran actor has called on fellow Baptists to let Hollywood executives know if they liked the Easter night premiere of "Christy" on CBS.

Tom Lester, best known for his role as "Eb" on "Green Acres," said Christians should write letters to CBS voicing appreciation for the show and encouraging Hollywood to offer more family entertainment.

Lester is a member of Shepherd of the Hills Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Porter Ranch, Calif.

"CBS has given us an incredibly good time slot" on Easter Sunday, said Ken Wales, veteran Hollywood producer whose 17-year dream to see "Christy" on film is finally being realized. But, he said, "It's a critical kind of test case" for whether network TV will decide to open up to other family oriented shows.

"CBS indicated to Mr. Wales that they want to produce a show with family values," Lester added. "However, if it is not supported by those households seeking family entertainment, they will be forced to take it off the air."

"This is our chance to truly have an effect on television," Lester said. "We must not just do nothing. It is easy for us to complain and well we should, when appropriate. Now we have an opportunity to do something positive."

Letters should be addressed to: Jeff Sagansky, president, CBS Entertainment c/o CBS TV CITY, Los Angeles, Calif. 90036.

More About the KENTUCKY BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

Some continue to criticize the presence of the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Not surprisingly, these critics have suggested the Fellowship organizations are sources of great problems to Baptists. We disagree. We are not the problem, but we exist because there is a problem.

The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship began from two sources: (1) Baptists in authority in the Southern Baptist Convention told dissenting Baptists that they were not welcome. They were told to go to the back of the bus, sit down, be quiet, but keep sending the money. (2) These dissenting Baptists, described as moderates, decided to no longer fight for the direction and control of the Southern Baptist Convention. Instead, they formed in 1990 an organization of Southern Baptists that focused on doing missions. They would not duplicate existing Southern Baptist Convention efforts. They meet annually for fellowship, gathering with other Southern Baptists who have been disenfranchised.

The Kentucky Baptist Fellowship was constituted in 1991 in response to similar circumstances. Some Southern Baptist leaders proclaimed that since the takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention was complete, they should now take over the state conventions. The Kentucky Baptist Fellowship is not interested in taking over anything, but we took their statements at face value. We will resist anyone bringing to Kentucky the methods and purposes of Southern Baptist

takeover politics.

The Kentucky Baptist Fellowship is not threatened by people who have some doctrinal differences. Since the New Testament appreciates diversity, we can too. We also recognize that we have so many common beliefs and interests. We will join hands with any Kentucky Baptist who wants to walk in Christian love to strengthen the Kentucky Baptist Convention. But, we will not sit idly by while others attack our state Baptist leaders, spread rumors and untruths, or attempt to take over our convention for partisan political purposes. We will "speak the truth in love," but we will not be intimidated by what Dr. Ed. Young called "hard-nosed fundamentalism," which seeks to define, dominate, and control.

The Kentucky Baptist Fellowship does not have to recruit followers. We are just a few people, loyal to traditional Baptist family values, who exist to enhance the life of the Kentucky Baptist Convention and to do missions around the world. Most of us support the mission work of the SBC and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Our future is determined by need. Our future may change as needs change, but presently we exist to promote the common good of Kentucky Baptist life and encourage Baptist mission efforts globally. Our annual meeting will be on April 16 in Erlanger, KY. We invite all Kentucky Baptists to participate with us as we focus on the Baptist distinctive of religious liberty. That distinctive is near the heart of our heritage as free and faithful Baptists.

PAID ADVERTISEMENT FROM KENTUCKY BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP

CLASSIFIED ADS

NEEDED: Part-time minister of youth/children. Prefer someone in the Frankfort area to disciple youth and coordinate children's ministries. Send resumé to Youth Committee, St. John Baptist Church, 720 Harvieland Rd., Frankfort, KY 40601, or call (502) 875-7771 for information.

SEEKING: Casas Adobes Baptist Church announces search for a principal/minister for our day school of grades K-8. Our school is 23 years old with 320 children. Call Pat Thompson at (602) 297-7238 or write 2131 W. Ina Rd., Tucson, AZ 85741-2699 for additional information. Starting date will be July 1, 1994.

FOR SALE: Portable sound system, includes four SM-58 microphones with cables; 12-channel EV board with travel case; two Bose 802 speakers and speaker stands; QSC 325-watt-per-channel power amp.; Alesis MEQ 230 graphic equalizer; travel case; speaker cables; and ProCo 20-4 100-foot snake. Call Tony at (502) 636-5576.

WANTED: Youth minister, 20 hours/week average. Contact Mark Johnson, pastor, Midway Baptist Church (606) 846-4514.

FOR SALE: Used, unpadding church pews, excellent condition, seating capacity approx. 300. Calvary Christian Center, Mt. Washington, KY 40047. (502) 955-9886.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and education. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Springfield Baptist Church, P.O. Box 286, Springfield, KY 40069. (606) 336-3544.

SBC TOUR: Orlando, Fla., June 12-16, 1994. Airfare, room and shuttle as low as \$449/person. Extensions available. Ray Hayes (502) 477-2379.

RETREATS: Bud's Lake, I-65, exit 81, Sonora, Ky. (502) 324-3036. Dormitories, kitchen, gym, swimming and campground. Year-round Christian fun.

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PEOPLE

KENTUCKY KERNELS

Kentucky ranks below the national average for the percentage of never-married women who are mothers. Nationally, 25 percent of never-married women are mothers, compared to 19.6 percent of never-married women in Kentucky. Source: *Population Today*, November 1993

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **BEDFORD**—Mount Hermon Church called **Kevin Head** as pastor March 20. He currently is a student at Southern Seminary.
 ■ **CARROLLTON**—Whites Run Association called **Charles M. Stephens** of Frankfort as director of missions March 27.
 ■ **HARRODSBURG**—Bruners Chapel Church ordained **Harold Logue, Donald Logue, Clinton Peavler** and **Richard Smith** as deacons March 13.
 ■ **LAGRANGE**—LaGrange Heights Church called **Ray Smiley** as volunteer associate pastor.
 ■ **LOUISVILLE**—Ninth & O Church called **David Fletcher** of Marion as minister of youth.

■ **PADUCAH**—Bellview Church called **Greg O'Guinn** of Dyersburg, Tenn., as minister of music and youth. Oaklawn Church called **Thomas Williams** of Ashland as pastor.
 ■ **PINEVILLE**—More than 500 people attended Missionsfest at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College March 19. Several Baptist leaders conducted conferences. Missionsfest concluded with a missionary message by **Sam James**, vice president of creative leadership development of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.
 ■ **SPRINGFIELD**—New Hope Church will hold revival April 24-28 with Evangelist **Boyce Evans** of Lubbock, Texas.
 ■ **WHITLEY CITY**—First Church

broke ground for a new worship center and education/office wing March 13. Also, **Terry Lawson** and **John Sandidge** were ordained as deacons.
 ■ **WINCHESTER**—**Ron Shaw** resigned as pastor of Corinth Church.
 ■ **WINDY**—Gap Creek Church ordained **David Flagler** to the ministry March 20.

MISSIONARY UPDATE

■ **David and Sonya Coppedge**, missionaries to Uruguay, are on the field at Av. Agraciada, 3452, Montevideo, Uruguay 11700. She considers Artemus her hometown.
 ■ **Paul and Diane Davidson**, missionaries to Nigeria, are in the States at 808 Huntington, Louisville, Ky. 40207. She is from Louisville.
 ■ **Mary Sue Meuth**, missionary to Hong Kong, is in the States at Box 116, Smith Mills, Ky. 42457. She is a native of Henderson County.

FMB to enlist stateside volunteers

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—As part of its effort to increase the use of volunteers worldwide, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board will begin using Mission Service Corps volunteers to fill positions on its U.S. staff.

The FMB has five MSC assignments open in its Richmond, Va., office now:

- Research project assistant.
- Secretarial assistant to help process short-term mission candidates and overseas assignments.

- Word processing specialist to transcribe FMB trustee meeting minutes from hard copy into an electronic database.

- Indexer to index The Commission, the board's magazine, news and feature stories, photo resources and audio-visual materials into an electronic database.

- Data entry specialist to assist with processing enlistment information on volunteer applicants.

People interested in the new program may call Jim Edwards at (800) 999-3113.

Bill Wells, Gasper River DOM, died Nov. 16

Editor's Note: We have made a mistake and are attempting to rectify it belatedly. Bill Wells died during the annual meeting of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and the Western Recorder did not receive an obituary on him at that time. However, due to a mix-up of our own, publication of the obituary was further delayed. We regret this omission.

ROCHESTER—Bill Wells, director of missions for the Gasper River Association of Baptists since 1980, died Nov. 16. He was 56.

A native of Earlington, Wells was a graduate of Earlington High School and earned two degrees from Western Kentucky University. He also studied with Luther Rice Seminary.

During most of his ministry, Wells worked bivocationally. Prior to becoming director of missions for Gasper River Association, he was pastor of Sandy Creek Baptist Church near Morgantown, Clearfork Baptist Church in Bowling Green and Monticello Baptist Church in Provo.

Wells also was a counselor with public schools in Muhlenberg and

Butler counties.

He was chaplain of the Butler County Sheriff's Department and a Mason.

He was a member of several counseling associations and was certified in counseling by the Kentucky Department of Education.

Survivors include his wife, Ann, of Rochester; a daughter, Joy Wells, of Rochester; a son, Shane Wells, of Rochester; and three sisters, June Stodghill and Peggy Thomason of Paducah and Sandy Snowdon of Dickson, Tenn.

A very special place and a unique group of people

A casual review of the contents of this column over the past few weeks will reveal redily my desire to let you hear from other people on our staff here at Oneida Baptist Institute.

Some of the writers have been here for a decade or longer. Others have been here half as long as they.

Today I want you to read the observations of a fine young substitute teacher, Edmund Shelby, who has been with us a short time, but long enough to have caught the true spirit of Oneida.

The tenor of this article points to the fact that he is not speaking for himself, but rather reflecting the attitude of most people who are on staff. These people speak the truth which they live day by day. Differences of opinion and methods may vary from person to person and from time to time, but the spirit of our workers remains constant.

A good self-test of a person's Christianity is to imagine that Jesus did not live 2,000 years ago, but now. Would we listen to his message and follow two of his great commandments? Would we sell our possessions and give the money to the poor?

Our faith would have to be very strong to believe that a man we could see and touch was the Son of God.

Indeed, the perspective provided by two millennia is a blessing. And yet, many modern Christians are uncomfortable with the demands of Christianity.

Not so at Oneida Baptist Institute.

The Oneida faculty and staff are made up of dedicated Christian workers who give their time, wealth and love for serving God. The degree of commitment becomes more amazing the better one knows these people.

Oneida is not a 9-to-5 operation. Most of the students live on campus, and their needs have to be met 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The

faculty and staff, while often stretched thin, are always there to meet those needs. It could be an eighth-grader with tonsillitis, a freshman with emotional problems or a senior with trouble in English. It doesn't matter; there is always someone to help.

Further, their dedication is matched by their talent. There are people on staff who could work anywhere in the country, at any level, and command top pay. Yet they choose to serve here.

Also, there are those who have sold their possessions, have given much of the proceeds to Oneida and have given their lives to serving the Lord here.

Cynicism abounds in today's world, and the causal onlooker could cast a jaundiced eye at our people. Are they afraid to face reality? Is this apparent dedication a cover for insecurity? A close look reveals the absurdity of both questions. What could be more real for an educator, or anyone, than to deal with not one but many young people who have been thrown out of their former schools or abandoned by parents? They trust no one and see no

hope for the future. For many, however, that changes after a short time here.

The question of insecurity is easily dismissed. Is someone insecure who can challenge a room full of bright, college-bound people to not only do their best but to be the best? It obviously takes a special kind of person to work at OBI.

For everyone who doubts this miracle of the mountains, we are easy to find. For everyone who wants to see Christ's lessons being taught and his example being followed, Oneida is their destination.

A.B. Colvin is administrator of Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky. 40972

THIS IS ONEIDA



A.B. Colvin

Grace in a trustee's life

Ron Morgan first came to Clear Creek in 1990 as part of a volunteer work team from Franklin Association. In 1991 the KBC elected him a trustee. He serves on the executive committee. When the school needed additional student housing, Ron and Michele gave a mobile home. His testimony in chapel reminded the campus family of God's grace through difficult times.

"I grew up poor and worked hard on the farm. At UK I met Michele. I thought I made an astute choice, but the Lord directed us together." Army ROTC resulted in a commission. Ron graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College. He returned from active duty with three goals: a good marriage, a good home and a good job. "At age 26 all three goals were met, but I still didn't have a satisfying life."

Army Reserve became a driving force with the intention to move up the promotion ladder until he received a general's star. Health problems changed those plans. In 1970 he lost a kidney, and four years later heart problems began.

"The doctor told me to give up something or die. I resigned from the Reserves, but was still not fully

yielded." In 1981 Ron suffered a perforated ulcer, removal of his stomach and surgery to remove a pancreatic tumor. "God's grace brought me through five months of hospitalization. The support from my church family and wife sustained me. Medical bills were paid and I never missed a paycheck. God convinced me there was something else to do."

For many years Ron had avoided serving as a deacon. "I didn't want the responsibility. Compared to the cross, I was ashamed. Nothing is as difficult as what Christ did for me."

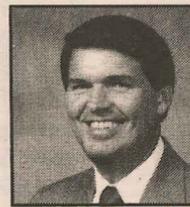
Ron also teaches a men's Bible class at Immanuel Church in Frankfort. "I can't change the past nor reclaim the time I wasted. God has so much for all

of us to do. I continue to allow him to be Lord."

Ron would like to see Clear Creek continue to be financially strong with expanded faculty and facilities to support a larger student body. "Above all, I pray that Clear Creek will never lose its dedication to following the course of unswerving adherence to the teachings of Christ."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Pastors advised to face own problems

By Chip Alford
SBC Sunday School Board

EULESS, Texas (BP)—Before he began dealing with the problems from his past, Texas pastor Tim Sledge said he sometimes used his weekly sermons as an opportunity to “dump” his own shame on his congregation.

“The surprising thing is, people would come up to me afterward and thank me. It was as if they were saying: ‘Thank you, I haven’t had a good dose of shame all week. I was about to run out,’” said Sledge, pastor of Kingsland Baptist Church in Katy, Texas.

He is the author of “Making Peace With Your Past,” a popular study course produced by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

The son of an alcoholic father, Sledge grew up in a dysfunctional family where the expression of emotions and feelings were squelched, he said. Discussing the sometimes-embarrassing actions of his father was not an option and, as a result, Sledge developed an unhealthy sense of shame which impacted his own feelings of self-worth and his relationships with others.

It also impacted his ministry.

“I started preaching when I was 16,” Sledge told participants in a

March 18 seminar in Euless, Texas. “I was the ‘hero,’ and everybody told me how mature I was for my age.

“But my maturity was premature, and it wasn’t healthy,” he said, adding one of the signs of dysfunction in families is when children begin acting like adults and adults begin acting like children.

As an adult, Sledge began to have panic attacks. He then reached out for help and began a lifelong journey toward recovery.

When it comes to pain caused by traumatic events from the past, Sledge knows he is not alone in the ministry.

“I believe a very high percentage of ministers come from dysfunctional families,” he said, adding many suffer from a “repetition compulsion.”

“They say to themselves, ‘I couldn’t fix my family, but I can help fix yours.’ They carry their (emotional baggage) into their vocation,” Sledge explained.

“The church gave me a place to be a hero, but that’s not my job,” he said. “My job is to be a minister, a shepherd.”

Failing to face issues from the past, whether they relate to a minister’s own actions or addictions or those of family members, can wreak havoc on a ministry, Sledge said.

One manifestation of unresolved

anger or hurt from the past is an unhealthy need for control, Sledge said.

“This is often expressed by a pastor’s refusal to release lay people to do all they can do. The minister has to be in charge of everything himself,” he said.

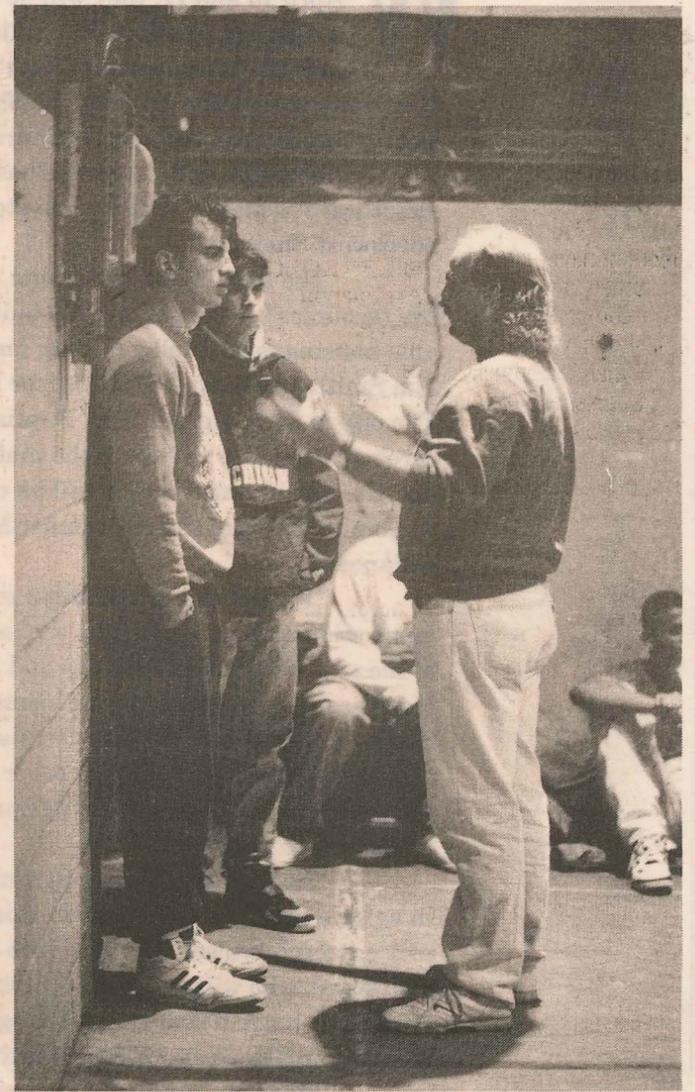
Another common problem, Sledge said, is perfectionism and its frequent visiting “cousin,” procrastination.

“There is often a connection between the two,” he said, “because people don’t want to invest the energy to do something perfectly so they just decide to wait and do it later.”

Other common problems resulting from unresolved conflict from the past include a preoccupation with job security caused by feelings of low self-worth, the development of a shame-based identity which robs the joy that comes from helping others, and a tendency toward defensiveness and overreacting to criticism.

“In a church business or committee meeting, sometimes it would feel to me that people were dropping bombs, when in fact they were only throwing darts. I tended to overreact and be confrontational when it wasn’t necessary,” Sledge admitted.

Recovery came, he said, after he admitted the problem, recognized God as the ultimate source for healing and reached out for help.



Missionaries reach teens in Baltimore

BALTIMORE (BP)—The doorbell rang after midnight at Brian and Carol Zimmerman’s house. A teenage girl running from home sought help.

The Zimmermans, Southern Baptist home missionaries at Baltimore’s Mallory Center, talked to the girl and later to her parents. As they drove the girl home at 3 a.m., they were shocked to see youth playing dodgeball on the streets as if it were the middle of a summer afternoon.

That experience birthed an early morning ministry for the Zimmermans and the center’s volunteer staff.

“On several nights a week we go out there and just meet the people where they are and talk to them about their situations, their needs and try to introduce them to the gospel of Jesus Christ,” Zimmerman says.

“We encounter many kids who can be away from home two and three nights and their parents not even question where they have been.”

Last summer the Mallory Center staff created a program of music, drama, comedy and a message to take to the streets. On two occasions they performed on the parking lot of a public school and used the electrical outlet from a nearby bar.

Through the summer programs, 75 youths made professions of faith in Jesus Christ. More than 300 have become Christians in the last three years through the center’s activities.

YOUTH MINISTER Brian Zimmerman (right), a Southern Baptist home missionary, talks to youths at Mallory Baptist Center in Baltimore, where he and his wife attempt to reach neighborhood teens through creative means. More than 2,000 teens live within a five-minute walk of the center.

Woman testifies to pull of eating disorders

By Terri Lackey
SBC Sunday School Board

EULESS, Texas (BP)—Nancy Huebner faced death four times during her 26-year battle against eating disorders. In fact, twice she solicited death.

A manuscript assistant at the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Huebner said death would have been a welcomed relief.

But the mother of four believes God had other plans in mind for her, part of which include telling her story in hopes of helping others who are anorexic or bulimic.

Huebner spoke to participants in a national conference on recovery and spiritual awakening in Euless, Texas. She led a workshop on the “Conquering Eating Disorders” course published by the Sunday School Board.

Huebner’s anorexia began when she was 12, the result of a violent rape from an unknown assailant. She buried the incident deep within, never telling anyone. She said she did not recall it until years later while in a treatment hospital for her eating disorders.

According to Huebner, “80 percent of those with eating disorders have sexual abuse in their backgrounds, and all have some sort of abuse. Some have over-controlling parents or over-religious parents.”

Anorexia stems from an unyielding need to control at least one aspect of one’s life, she said.

“You can’t control what happens on the outside, so you at least try to control what food you put in your body,” Huebner explained. “You feel in control of your life because you can control your food.”

In the late 1960s, when Huebner’s anorexia first hit hard, no one in her family really noticed.

“I had always been a skinny kid, and in those days, nobody knew about anorexia or bulimia,” Huebner told conference participants.

Huebner was an active teen, spending a lot of time at school and church, so her parents weren’t aware of her eating habits.

In her sophomore and senior years of high school, she survived on one orange a day. At five foot eight, she weighed 95 pounds.

To test if she was an “adequate” size, Huebner said she made a circle of her thumb and forefinger. If it slipped up and down her arm easily, she was OK.

On her legs, she was more lenient. She made a circle using both hands. If any part of her hand brushed against her thigh during the test, she would eat less or nothing.

Eventually, Huebner married a man in the ministry.

But her illness grew worse, and she learned to survive on 200 calories a day.

“That is six McDonald’s french fries a day—not that I would have ever touched McDonald’s french fries,” she said.

That is, until her anorexia turned into bulimia. At that time of her life, she would go on binges that included drives to five consecutive fast food restaurants. She would order enough for two people and eat it all before she arrived at the next restaurant.

“Then when I would get home, I would have a pizza waiting for me.”

After she finished eating all she could possibly put into her body, she

vomited it all up.

Huebner and her family finally admitted she had a serious problem. She began intensive treatment for her disorder, and in a two-year period was hospitalized for more than 10 months.

After the second stay in a treatment hospital, Huebner began to realize her disorder was tearing her family apart.

“My life meant nothing to me, but my family was dying. They had been watching me die, and now I was watching them die,” said Huebner, who noted her husband’s commitment to her and their family was a source of intense encouragement.

Finally, Huebner prayed a prayer that stuck.

“In December 1990, I prayed to God that I would get well for my family. At that point, God showed me that my family was more important than my eating disorder.”

Huebner said she never has skipped a meal or binged or purged since the prayer.

While Huebner acknowledged God was the source of her healing, she said she was able to beat her dependency because of the knowledge she had gathered through the treatment hospitals.

“I went through a long journey, and everything I learned went into play to keep me in recovery,” she said.

“I had not gone through all those years of counseling and study for nothing. God had his process.”

The “Conquering Eating Disorders” course follows a 12-step process and is for anyone who uses food as a relief from emotional pain or suffers from anorexia, bulimia or compulsive overeating.

When the Shelbyville Habitat for Humanity hammers go to work on April 16 and 17, they will be driven by a cooperative effort. In a unique partnership arrangement, Habitat for Humanity is teaming up with the Shelby County Ministerial Alliance of Churches, the city of Shelbyville and Louisville-based Baptist Healthcare System to build a one-story home in northwest Shelbyville.

The two-day building blitz will "pool the resources" of the partners to build affordable housing for a Shelby County family, said Jim Smith, president of Habitat for Humanity. The city is donating the land; Baptist Healthcare's sponsorship will cover the material costs; and the actual construction will be coordinated by volunteers from the 20-member Ministerial Alliance.

"We feel this partnership will be a real inspiration and are excited by the involvement of the city, Ministerial Alliance and Baptist Healthcare, our first corporate sponsor in Shelby County," said Smith. "We plan to use this in the future to challenge other groups and corporations. We hope this is the springboard to get others involved."

"Baptist Healthcare System is pleased to be able to play a small role in this community outreach project and we salute all the volunteers who will make this Habitat for Humanity home a reality," said Edgar D. Vaughn, president and chief executive officer.

Since its establishment in late 1990, the Habitat for Humanity affiliate in Shelbyville has built three homes. As with all Habitat building projects, the goal of the local affiliate's mid-April blitz is to relocate individuals out of substandard housing. Typically, such homes have inadequate heating and plumbing, poor insulation and are in general disrepair.

It's a goal in tune with the international Habitat for Humanity organization, said J. Howard Griffith, senior pastor, First Christian Church of Shelbyville and member of the Ministerial Alliance.

"One house at a time, we look to do it in a way that provides dignity for the new homeowner. It's not a handout, it's a hand up," Dr. Griffith said.

The helping hands for the April blitz will be coordinated by a Ministerial Alliance task force chaired by the Rev. Ray Farrow, pastor of Waddy Baptist Church in Waddy. The task force will serve as general contractor and then look within the churches represented by the Ministerial Alliance for subcontractors, including plumbers, electricians and painters, to finish the home. With the congregations of the churches heavily involved, along with the expected participation of other Habitat affiliates across the Commonwealth, Dr. Griffith anticipates the blitz will draw hundreds of volunteers.

Cooperative effort drives Shelbyville Habitat for Humanity hammers



Habitat for Humanity partners (left to right) J. Howard Griffith, senior pastor, First Christian Church of Shelbyville; Mayor Neil Hackworth; Jim Smith, president of Habitat; and Alan McLaughlin, Baptist Healthcare System, review plans for the April 16 and 17 building blitz.

"It all comes together in a miraculous sort of way. There's a hurdle and the right person steps forward with the know-how and it gets done," Dr. Griffith said.

Habitat for Humanity also involves the future homeowner. Homeowners must qualify for their loans and make the interest-free mortgage payments over a fixed period. In addition, they must contribute 500 hours of "sweat equity" working on Habitat homes.

For the community as a whole, Habitat for Humanity is an "uplifting experience," said Shelbyville Mayor Neil Hackworth. "It's an opportunity for the community to pull together on a project that fulfills a real need."

BAPTIST HEALTHCARE SYSTEM