



# WESTERN RECORDER

February 28, 1995  
Vol. 169, No. 9

## FOR THE RECORD

### Week of prayer

Next week is the week of prayer for home missions and the time many churches begin collecting the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions. See pages 1, 6 & 7.

### Success story

Flat Rock Baptist Church in Whitley City reached out to the community and people starting coming into the church. See page 3.

### Family Forum

How can I prepare my children for our family's upcoming move? See page 4.

### Editorial

The good, the bad and the questionable in the proposed reorganization of Southern Baptist Convention structures. See page 5.

### Backsliders

Any Christian can "backslide," according to evangelist Junior Hill. See page 12.

### Top baptisms

The issue includes a listing of the top Kentucky Baptist churches in total baptisms and per capita baptisms last year. See page 13.

## Major overhaul of SBC agencies proposed

By Mark Wingfield  
News Director

NASHVILLE—The Southern Baptist Convention will reduce its agencies from 19 to 12 in the most massive restructuring of its 150-year history, if the report of a special study committee is approved over the next two years.

The proposal would consolidate the SBC's Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio & Television Commission into a new entity called the North American Mission Board, to be based in Atlanta.

It also would remove from Woman's Missionary Union the SBC assignment for missions education and raising money for the two mission boards.

The proposal would eliminate the SBC's Education Commission, Stewardship Commission, Historical Commission, the Southern Baptist

Foundation and the Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary, assigning some of their work to other agencies.

Significant cost-savings would result from combining and eliminating some of these agencies, each of which now has its own trustee board and management staff.

The downsizing will create a more efficient structure for the 21st century and channel "more money, more personnel and more prayer into reaching the world for Christ," Mark Brister told the SBC Executive Committee Feb. 20.

Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La., is chairman of a program and structure study committee appointed by the Executive Committee chairman

two years ago. Brister's committee was charged with evaluating the entire structure of the SBC's agencies and recommending changes.

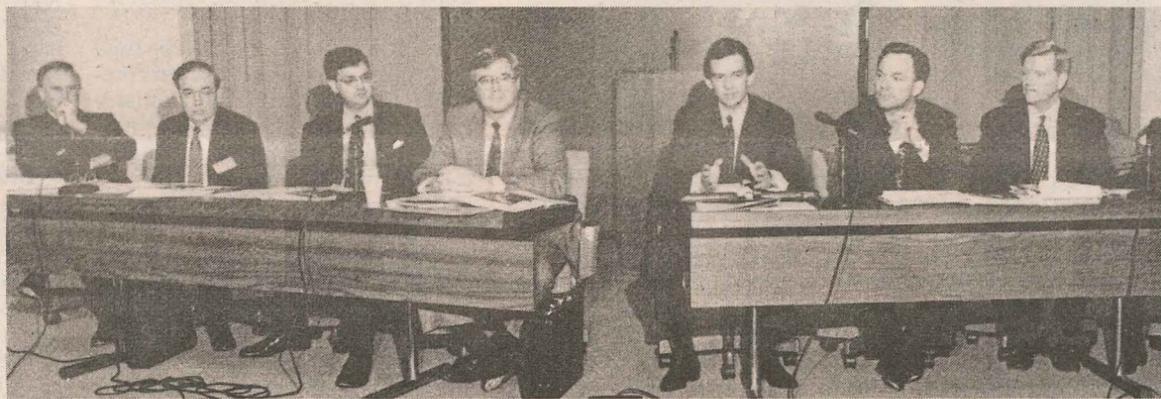
The Executive Committee approved the study committee's report Feb. 21 on a 64-3 vote. Most opposition expressed

about the report was due not to its content so much as the short time Executive Committee members had to study it.

Executive Committee members and officials with the SBC's 19 current agencies got their first glimpse of the committee's report at the same time Feb. 20. The heads of agencies impacted by the proposed changes received notification from the committee as little as three hours prior to the public meeting.

See Major reconfiguration ..., page 10

REDEFINING  
Southern  
Baptists  
REALIGNING



REPORT UNVEILED Members of the program and structure study committee explain their proposals for restructuring the Southern Baptist Convention's agencies during a Feb. 21 news conference in Nashville. Committee Chairman Mark Brister is seated third from the right. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)

## 'Here's Hope' mission leads 30 to Christ

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

MANCHESTER—A special "Here's Hope" outreach to the rural hollers surrounding Manchester has resulted in more than 30 people professing faith in Jesus Christ.

For the 60 days of witnessing called for in the "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" campaign, Horse Creek Baptist Church established a storefront mission across the road from the churchhouse. During the first six weeks, 26 children made public professions of faith at the mission.

"I remembered the Scripture where Jesus said 'I came not to call the righteous to repentance but sinners,'" said Eddie Gregory, the coal miner who preaches at the mission. "The lost aren't coming to church. It's simpler to get them in this building than it is the church."

Once home to such diverse businesses as a pool hall, a fruit stand and a sandwich shop, the block building is located at the mouth of Gregory's Branch. That is just one of many densely-populated hollers carved into rural Clay County.

The distance between the church and mission may not appear far to an outsider, but to Pastor Kenneth Felty the road running between the two buildings looks like the Red Sea.

"That highway is a big barrier," said Felty, who is also a student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. "The (storefront) See Rural church ..., page 9

## Season of Home Missions highlights creative evangelism

By David Winfrey  
SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—With the theme "Win All," this year's Season of Home Missions highlights a variety of Southern Baptist evangelism efforts.

The season, from mid-February to mid-March, includes the week of prayer for home missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, the home missions study and Sunday school emphasis day.

From block parties to truck stop chaplaincy, Southern Baptists are using creativity and common sense to take the gospel to people who might never enter a church, said Joe Westbury, author of the home mission study, titled "All Things to All People."

"Our missionaries have learned that you don't do evangelism the same way in Boston that you do in Mississippi," he said. "As they have adapted to the locations where they are assigned, they have also adapted the gos-

pel presentation to the people there."

In addition to profiling the work of home missionaries, this year's study offers tips from the missionaries that individuals or churches can use to be a better witness.

Woman's Missionary Union has adopted an unprecedented \$50 million goal for the 1995 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions. WMU Executive Director/Treasurer Dellanna O'Brien said the goal is ambitious but reachable. "It's far beyond anything we've ever done before, but it's definitely not beyond the realm of possibility," she said.

The previous highest offering received was \$37.6 million in 1992. WMU adopted the \$50 million Annie Armstrong goal and December's foreign missions offering goal of \$100 million in recognition of the denomination's 150th anniversary.

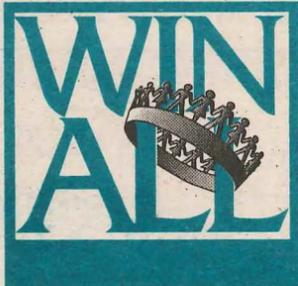
Reaching the goal will require that offering supporters both give and be advocates for the offering in their

churches, she said.

"It's going to take all of us making a decided effort. It's not going to happen without additional and sacrificial efforts," she said.

O'Brien also stressed the importance of prayer for missions work.

"While we put emphasis on the dollars that go into an offering, what we feel is more significant is the prayer that accompanies the giving," she said. "Dollars without prayer support can never be as effective as those that are spent in the power of Christ."



DRIVEN MISSIONARY Home missionary Ramon Aleman drives more than 20,000 miles each year helping start churches in northwest Oklahoma and throughout the state. (BP photo by Mark Sandlin)

Moving? See page 4 (0228)

# BAPTISTS

## SBC leaders pass budget and affirm Southwestern

### Baylor names Sloan president

WACO, Texas (ABP)—Baylor University has chosen the dean of its new seminary, Robert Sloan, as the university's next president. Sloan, 46, was elected by Baylor's board of regents Feb. 24. He will succeed Herbert Reynolds, who will retire and become Baylor's chancellor June 1. Sloan's election culminates a tumultuous 18-month search for Reynolds' successor. Last November the regents were poised to elect Samford University President Thomas Corts to the post but voted down the recommendation of their search committee. Sloan's election brought no such drama. The 36 regents, deeply divided three months ago, met "harmoniously" Feb. 23-24 to interview five finalists and quickly agreed on Sloan, Reynolds reported. Unlike Corts, Sloan is well-known to Texas Baptists and Baylor graduates. A native of Coleman, Texas, he holds a bachelor's degree from Baylor and taught theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 90 miles north in Fort Worth, before helping launch Baylor's George W. Truett Theological Seminary last year. Sloan also earned a master of divinity degree from Princeton Theological Seminary and doctorate in theology from the University of Basel, Switzerland. Sloan said he is humbled by his selection to lead the 12,000-student school, the world's largest Baptist university. He will be the 12th president of the 150-year-old school.

NASHVILLE (BP)—Although members of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee spent a large share of their Feb. 20-22 meeting with a proposed new structure for SBC agencies, they also approved a record \$141 million SBC budget and conducted other business.

The 80-member committee affirmed trustees of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, which has been placed on probation by an accrediting agency primarily because of the way trustees fired President Russell Dilday.

The committee also accepted action by SBC Annuity Board trustees regarding abortion-related investments and urged that board to find other providers of retirement and insurance benefits for the moderate Baptist group, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The \$141.6 million SBC budget, with varying increases for each agency, was approved to be offered to messengers at the SBC annual meeting in June. The proposed budget gives the largest increase to the six SBC seminaries, 4.37 percent.

Under the proposed budget, the Foreign Mission Board's portion of the total budget remains at 50 percent and the Home Mission Board's at 19.56 percent. The seminaries' portion, divided to each seminary by a complex funding formula, increases from 20.27 percent to 20.40 percent.

The resolution affirming Southwestern Seminary commended the seminary's trustees and new president and their "commitment to maintain ... a genuinely evangelical seminary no matter what the cost."

The committee also approved a resolution of appreciation for Barry McCarty, chief parliamentarian for SBC annual meetings from 1986 to 1994.

In other business, the Executive Committee changed the way it accounts for gifts. Returning to a previous policy, any funds received by the Executive Committee without restriction will be considered "Cooperative Program" while gifts with a restriction will be considered "designated."

The committee voted to continue paying most of the meeting hall expenses for the SBC Pastor's Conference, even though it is a separate group. The Pastors' Conference traditionally uses the same meeting hall as the SBC annual meeting.

In recent years, the Pastors' Conference has reimbursed the SBC for from one-half to one-third of the cost their use of the meeting hall generates. For example, last year's Pastors' Conference in Orlando, Fla., cost the SBC \$57,280, of which the Pastors' Conference reimbursed \$38,000.

This continues a significant increase by the Pastors' Conference since 1991. Before that year, the Pastors' Conference paid as little as \$8,000 toward expenses of \$64,700.

## Two SBC officials denounce Foster nomination

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (ABP)—Top Southern Baptist leaders announced Feb. 22 they will oppose the nomination of Henry Foster as U.S. surgeon general because of Foster's record on abortion.

Jim Henry, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Richard Land, executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission, addressed a news conference at the SBC headquarters building in Nashville, Foster's hometown.

Even before the news conference, word of the leaders' opposition attracted the attention of the national media, including NBC News and USA Today.

Land pledged "vigorous opposition" to the nomination of Foster,

who was selected by President Bill Clinton to replace the controversial Joycelyn Elders, who resigned the post under pressure. Foster's embattled nomination must be approved by the U.S. Senate.

Foster is an obstetrician and dean of the Meharry Medical College in Nashville. He attracted national attention for his efforts to combat teen pregnancy through his "I Have a Future" campaign, which advocates sexual abstinence and contraception.

But critics, including Land, say Foster should be disqualified as surgeon general because he has performed at least 39 abortions and supervised abortion research. Land also criticized Foster's leadership in

Planned Parenthood Federation, which he called "one of the leading abortion providers in America."

"We have come to the inescapable conclusion that any doctor who is willing to deny the Hippocratic oath and extinguish human life, rather than protect it, is an individual whose moral vision for America is fatally flawed," Land said.

Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., said Foster "deserves to be heard" by the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee, which will consider his nomination. But Henry added, "I also believe that close scrutiny by that committee should lead it and the full Senate to reject his nomination."

## Fellowship passes budget & reorganization

WESTLAKE, Texas (ABP)—Leaders of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship approved a mission statement for their 4-year-old organization, a reorganization plan, a \$10 million budget and 12 new missionaries during meetings Feb. 16-18.

The Fellowship's 79-member Coordinating Council met near Fort Worth, Texas, which will host the organization's annual meeting in July.

The Fellowship is an Atlanta-based organization of Baptist moderates displeased with the current conservative direction of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The mission statement, which has been in development for several months, embraces global missions, Baptist principles, diversity and non-traditional ways of working together. The four-page document begins with these words: "We are a fellowship of Baptist Christians and churches who share a passion for the Great Commission of Jesus Christ and a commitment to Baptist principles of faith and practice. Our mission is to network, empower and mobilize Baptist Christians and churches for effective missions and ministry in the name of Christ."

The mission statement now goes to the Fellowship's annual general assembly July 20-22 for final approval.

The council and its committees spent the largest portion of their time

discussing a "transitional" reorganization plan proposed by Coordinator Cecil Sherman and an ad hoc committee. The plan, adopted without opposition, divides the Fellowship's work into four ministry areas—global missions, Baptist principles, church resources and administration.

Each ministry area, except missions, takes in the work of several previous committees and ministry groups. The reorganization was necessary to keep the organization flexible and minimize the growth of the Fellowship staff, council members were told.

Under the plan, a staff coordinator will lead each of the four ministry areas. The council later authorized the hiring of six staff members—the coordinator for Baptist principles and five support positions in various areas.

Leaders noted the new structure is "transitional" and is expected to change again in a few years as needs and personnel change. A strategic-planning committee was authorized to continue the evaluation process.

The \$10 million budget for 1995-96 is a 12 percent increase over 1994 revenue. It allocates more than half the Fellowship's income (59 percent) to global missions, down slightly from 62 percent previously allocated for missions.

Officials said missions accounts for about 68 percent of all Fellowship

expenditures when the annual global missions offering is included.

Baptist principles will receive 23.62 percent of the budget. This will provide funds to Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond; Truett Theological Seminary at Baylor University; Central Baptist Theological Seminary, an American Baptist school in Kansas City, Kan.; a proposed theology school at Mercer University; Baptist studies programs at Duke and Emory universities; the Baptist Joint Committee; Associated Baptist Press; and Baptists Today newspaper.

The church resources portion of the budget will allot 4 percent of the Fellowship's money to work in ethics and public policy, Christian education, ministry to ministers and equipping the laity.

Administration will take 13 percent of the budget, including money for the new Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Foundation, communications, the annual general assembly, networking, personnel and administration, and other responsibilities.

With the 12 new missionary appointments, the Fellowship now supports 64 missionaries worldwide. The new appointees—five couples and two single women—will serve in Albania, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Russia, among the Kurds of northern Iraq, as Wycliffe Bible Translators in Asia, and among Arab immigrants in Dearborn, Mich.



"We're sorry, Pastor Evans, but our pulpit committee decided a Mac user is just not compatible in an IBM-based church."

## Flat Rock Church reached out and people came in

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

WHITLEY CITY—When bivocational pastor Danny Staley took over the pulpit at Flat Rock Baptist Church, the congregation had been giving less than \$400 a year to missions.

Today, the church gives more than \$10,000 to the Kentucky Cooperative Program and individual mission projects. And the church has grown so much, plans are underway to expand the 150-seat sanctuary.

The change has come because as this country congregation reached out, God brought people in the doors, Staley said. Over the past five years, Sunday school attendance has tripled from 30 to 90.

"It's really exciting to see what's

happened at Flat Rock," said David Aker, director of missions for Pulaski Baptist Association. Aker called Flat Rock "an excellent example" of what happens when a church gets involved in missions.

The most visible sign of growth is the church's pending expansion. But the project that stirs the most excitement among members is their outreach in Green Grove, a community eight miles away.

Built in the 1880s, Green Grove Missionary Baptist Church had been closed for years. The building's physical condition mirrored its lack of spiritual life.

Thanks to donations of money and labor from members of Flat Rock—and \$500 from the Kentucky Baptist Convention—in 1993 the church got a new roof. That made it possible for

Flat Rock members to hold Saturday night services there once a month.

Last summer, two boys professed faith in Jesus as Savior at Green Grove's first vacation Bible school in nearly 40 years.

A revival last fall attracted 27 participants from the community, which is seeing new growth as natives who once followed out-of-state jobs are returning in retirement.

That isn't the only way in which Flat Rock has reached out:

Last summer it joined with four other congregations to send 69 children to summer camp. During that week there were nine professions of faith and 17 rededications.

In December, member Rachel Wilson went to Russia with the KBC partnership missions program. The night of her commissioning service,

Staley baptized a woman whom Wilson led to Christ 10 days earlier. The woman's husband also became a Christian soon afterward.

The church continues to focus on helping people come to know Jesus. Staley, who works for the Norfolk & Southern Railroad, encouraged members to list three people they wanted to see become Christians during 1995. He then circulated the names on a churchwide prayer list.

The results have been noticeable, he said. During the first four months of this church year, Flat Rock baptized five people, compared to nine baptisms during all of the previous church year.

"We're seeing a lot of families coming to church," the pastor said. "It's a unique situation, but it's sure been good being in the middle of it."

## Missions didn't scare her, just getting there

By Joyce Sweeney Martin  
Staff Writer

CAMPBELLSVILLE—Fear of flying almost cost Elaine Koch one of the most unforgettable experiences of her life.

Not that she has wanted for unforgettable experiences. Using her training as a nurse, she has served on the Kentucky Brotherhood's disaster team nine times since 1989. She saw action in a Kentucky tornado, the Illinois floods and Hurricanes Hugo and Andrew.

But she had avoided getting involved overseas. "My husband Larry went on a mission to Nigeria a few years ago. He came back telling me I would love going overseas. I said, 'No, thank you.' You, see, I was afraid of flying."

When Larry Koch saw an article in the Western Recorder asking Kentuckians to volunteer for an emergency relief ministry in Zaire, he nudged his wife to apply.

"I said, 'If it's the Lord's will, I'll go,' but secretly I thought I wouldn't have to," Koch said.

Then one day as she and her husband were returning home to Campbellsville from Louisville, "suddenly my fear of flying left," she said.

She didn't understand why until later that evening when she saw a pastor friend at a sporting event. The pastor said the night before, his church

had prayed that she would lose her fear of flying.

"After that I had no doubt I would go to Zaire in October," she said.

On the 20-hour flight to Goma, Zaire, Koch thought about what she would be doing when she arrived, not about flying. "I could focus on my excitement at being on a mission field."

And once in Zaire, there was no dearth of experiences to fill her mind. In a place often called a "waking-nightmare of disease and death," she and four other volunteers administered much-needed medical aid to refugees from neighboring Rwanda.

The team worked in a tent city for unaccompanied children who had fled the Rwandan civil war. More than 350 children ranging in age from a few months to 18 years lived in the 42 tents set up in early August by Southern Baptist missionaries Stan and Marlene Lee. The Lees themselves had been evacuated from Rwanda.

"We treated the children for scabies, worms and a vitamin deficiency which affected their eyes. We saw cases of malaria, chicken pox, mumps and general dehydration. Malnutrition was rampant," she said.

As many as 2 million people fled to Goma and other border towns because they feared being slaughtered in revenge attacks by forces of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, the Tutsi-



ALL SMILES Nurse Elaine Koch finds joy in helping Rwandan refugees.

dominated rebel army that has declared victory in the Rwandan civil war.

Since Koch left, the Lees have been moved from Zaire and the Ugandan Baptist Mission is overseeing the relief work. The Southern Baptist Rwandan refugee project will be phased out by May, at which time all children should have been placed.

"I will never forget the sight of so many, many people with no place to go, no place to call home," Koch said. "For as far as one could see, thatch and cardboard shacks covered with tarpaulins dotted the hillsides."

And it all was a sight she would have missed—if she had succumbed to her fear of flying.

### BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Cedarmore changes opposed.** The executive board of Ohio Valley Baptist Association voted Feb. 6 to express opposition to the Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board's decision to move away from ownership of Cedarmore Assembly.

■ **Georgetown presents "Miracle Worker."** The Maskrafters of Georgetown College will present William Gibson's "The Miracle Worker" March 2-6. Tickets are \$4 for adults and \$3 for students and are available at the door. For ticket information and performance times, call (502) 863-8162.

■ **Beaty to lecture.** Michael Beaty, associate professor of philosophy at Baylor University, will deliver the annual Staley Distinguished Christian Scholar lecture series at Cumberland College March 27-28.

■ **Anderson chair at Georgetown.** James Anderson, a Lexington physician, has been re-elected chairman of the trustee board at Georgetown College.

■ **Campbellsville featured.** Campbellsville College is featured in the February issue of "Admissions Marketing Report." The newspaper highlights the college's "family" atmosphere and successful student-recruitment efforts.

■ **Allen gets diploma.** Gregory Allen of Elkton has earned the diploma in pastoral ministries from the Seminary Extension Independent Study Institute, an arm of Southern Baptists' Seminary Extension program. Allen is pastor of West Union Baptist Church in Elkton.

■ **Cheerleaders win.** Campbellsville College's cheerleaders won the first-place trophy at the COA Collegiate Championships in Columbus, Ohio.

## Five Kentuckians appointed missionaries at home & abroad

Five people with Kentucky ties were appointed this month to mission service with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board.

Jason and Elizabeth Graves will live in east Asia, where they will develop outreach projects for developing nations.

Since 1993, he has been pastor of Hemphridge Baptist Church in Waddy. She has been a therapist with Seven Counties Services and Bluegrass Comprehensive Care.

Graves previously was associate pastor of Evergreen Baptist Church in Frankfort. He holds the master of divinity degree from Southern Bap-

tist Theological Seminary. Mrs. Graves is graduate of the University of Louisville.

Anthony Gilbert will live in north Brazil, where he will lead the state Baptist department of religious education and develop a program for training leadership.



Graveses



Gilbert



Carter



Stephens

Gilbert, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Gilbert of Middlesboro, has been interim pastor and associate pastor of Thixton Lane Baptist Church in Louisville. He earned the master of divinity and master of arts degrees from Southern Seminary.

John Carter will live in Mozam-

bique, where he will start and develop churches. Carter, who earned the master of arts degree from Southern Seminary, previously was recreation director at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville.

Brina Stephens was appointed by the HMB as a missionary associate to continue her service at the Baptist Fellowship Center in Louisville.

A graduate of Southern Seminary, Stephens is director of weekday ministries at the center, where she began working in 1993 as an intern and most recently has been interim director of weekday ministries. She is a member of Green Hills Baptist Church in Fisherville.

## WESTERN RECORDER

P.O. Box 43969  
Louisville, Ky. 40253  
(ISSN 0043-4132)

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

Western Recorder is published weekly by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253, except for one week in July and December. For general information, call (502) 244-6470. Fax: (502) 244-6474. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

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## Support others

"June action sent more funds to Fellowship, cut off SBC" (WR, Feb. 7) began, "The Southern Baptist Convention succeeded in slowing the financial growth of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. ..."

When I voted for separation in Orlando, Fla., last summer, for my part I had no intention to do damage to the CBF, nor to enhance the SBC financial status. I voted to ensure integrity of our own program.

Kentucky Baptists in general have the well-being of all Baptist bodies deep in their hearts. Kentucky Baptists love, support, pray for all evangelical groups. Horrors to think I (we) intend to oppose other Christians.

## BAPTIST FORUM

*Ed Burgher*  
Clay City

## 'Controversy blind'

I agree with Bill Marshall that the Kentucky Baptist Convention leadership is "controversy blind" (WR, Feb. 14). I had the pleasure and honor of serving on the Church Annuity Plan workgroup, which established the new guidelines for participation in the plan this past fall. Besides the members of the Executive Board on the workgroup, Dr. Marshall, Barry Allen, Guy Futral and Don Spencer served as ex-officio members.

I was impressed with the compassion of these men for Kentucky Baptists. They helped guide us to formulate a plan that would be inclusive of all Kentucky Baptists, no matter the size of the church, the theological slant, whether full-time or bivocational minister, ordained or non-ordained church staff.

Many times in our efforts to defend our own theological perspectives, we lash out at the public leadership when we read or hear about something which is different from our own thoughts or convictions. If each

of us who are Kentucky Baptists had an opportunity to know what beats within the hearts of our KBC leadership, we would be less likely to use them as our own personal whipping boys.

I am proud to be a Kentucky Baptist, and I am proud of our heritage with an emphasis on the priesthood of the believer and our unity which embraces diversity. May we never lose sight of the fact that these are the truths that make Baptists unique from many of the other Christian denominations in the world today.

*M. Keith Tingle*  
Owingsville

## Blame the devil

I think it was Adam who first blamed God for his fallen condition. "This woman that you gave me, gave the food to me and I did eat." Today I hear it again. "Homosexuality is a condition you have no control over, much like the color of your eyes or hair."

If we indeed have no control over our bodies, why did Moses and Paul go to such lengths condemning such practices? Heterosexuality is also a condition we are born with, yet many people have lived out lives of celibacy or have not succumbed to adultery or fornication.

If we take the premise that some are born with homosexual tendencies, and therefore should not be held accountable for such actions, consider: What about the molesters of small children? Can they plead, "I can't help myself; God made me that way?" Or the necrophile; a few years ago a mortician was convicted of molesting the dead. Recently a male nurse pleaded guilty to raping unconscious female patients. Or maybe the sadist who gets kicks out of rape and torture?

Granted, people have different inclinations, but each has a choice, a

free will. We can choose to obey our appetites or obey our consciences.

Instead of blaming God (for our inherited nature) I would rather quote Flip Wilson, "The devil made me do it!"

*J.B. Crawley*  
Campbellsville

## Christ, not Boyce

Articles concerning Calvinism and the Abstract of Principles of Southern Seminary are interesting. Efforts are made to find the intent of James Boyce. Wouldn't it be better to seek the mind of Christ and the word of the New Testament rather than stopping with a fallible but devoted 19th century man?

In the New Testament, two verses are difficult to reconcile with Calvinism: "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13) and the Lord is "not wishing that any should perish" (II Peter 3:9). There also is the commissioning word of Jesus to make disciples of "all" people.

Article 16 of the Abstract teaches wine is to be used in the Lord's Supper. Do we insist that all faculty belong to churches that use wine in the supper? What criteria is used to insist on absolute fidelity to one article and reinterpreting another?

Also, the Abstract itself defies consistency. For instance, Article 18 on "liberty of conscience" states, "God alone is the Lord of conscience; and he hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men." Permitting "liberty of conscience" is hard for some Baptists. Similarly, Baptists have often confessed that "the Bible is our sole authority for faith and practice." We often add qualifications to these confessions, for we easily stumble into the sin Jesus saw in the Pharisees, "teaching the precepts of men as doctrines of God."

*W. Robert DeFoor*  
Harrodsburg

## Returning

I had a call last week from someone who asked the person who received the call not to give me his name; that he was an old college friend and wanted to surprise me.

I took the call and immediately was greeted by: "Bull Moose! Do you know who this is?"

His voice was enough like my old buddy Joe Mason that I guessed "Joe!"

"Nope," he said, and went on to tell me his name.

He was in Louisville for a meeting and would be returning to Austin, Texas where he now lives, having early-retired from a major federal agency a few years ago.

His home borders a golf course, he said, but playing golf everyday got old. Bored with his few years of retired life, he had gotten back into things as a "consultant," which was why he was in Louisville.

We had not seen each other since 1953, but he had remembered some "stuff" from our college days and had

known me during my "uncommitted" days. He had been surprised, he admitted, when he had heard, years ago, that I had "gone into missions."

His first marriage dissolved; he has been married to his present wife for 21 years. There were children and grandchildren through his former marriage, whom he would later visit in Indianapolis.

## ON MISSION TOGETHER



William W. Marshall

After extended reminiscing, he leaned the conversation in a more serious direction. "Do you remember Homer Martin-etz?" he asked. I acknowledged that I did and that he had a positive influence on my life several years before my call to preach while at Georgetown College.

"Well," he began, "I used to be his 'punching bag' when he was a golden gloves boxer." He had sparred with Homer on numerous occasions and in the process of that relationship had been led to become a believer.

Things had changed for this old college buddy; his life, as he described it, had become one of "distance from God and the church" for many years.



## FAMILY FORUM: CHILDREN

### Moving experience

By Jewell Nelson

**Q** We are moving. How can we help our 5-year-old and 9-year-old have a good experience?

**A** You know by now how easy or difficult it is for each of your children to adapt to new situations. One child may need much more reassurance than the other.

A child's outbursts of anger may be a part of the frustrations of moving. Be patient.

The 9-year-old may understand what moving means more easily than the 5-year-old. Give the 9-year-old some specific responsibilities in helping the 5-year-old become aware of what a move means. In doing this, the 9-year-old will be helped in gearing up for the move.

For example: The older child can use a camera and take pictures of rooms, things as they are in the present house and the yard. Pictures taken of their rooms at church and other favorite places in the community will give the older child something to focus on as the move is anticipated.

As parents, try to be as positive about the move as possible.

Visit the library and select children's books about moving.

Get as much information about the new location as you can. Find out about the church, the school, the parks, the favorite fast-food restaurant and any special attraction in the new community.

The 5-year-old needs to know that all of her favorite things will go with her to the new location. In packing, be sure your children help pack their things. Keep out the very favorites—blanket, doll, games and clothing.

If the whole family can visit the new location, it will help wipe away the fears. As you visit the new community:

■ Take pictures, or make a video.

■ Meet neighbors.

■ Visit the school.

■ Visit the church.

■ If the house is selected, let the children give ideas for placing their things in their rooms.

Before you move, leave new-address stamped envelopes with your children's friends' parents. Encourage keeping in touch.

*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

## Reorganization: The good, the bad & the questionable

The Southern Baptist Convention will make history during its 150th anniversary this summer. Messengers to the SBC annual meeting will consider the most comprehensive change the convention has confronted since 1845.

They'll vote on a revolutionary reorganization proposal. (Stories on the proposal begin on page 1 of this paper.) If it is approved this summer and next, it will define the convention well into the next millennium.

Some of the changes, in sync with the latest management principles, will bring improvements. Some will create confusion. And some will be harmful. Even if the latter weren't provoked by overt political intent, they at least reflect the political climate of the SBC.

An analysis of every ramification of all the changes would fill volumes. But for starters, here are some of the most obvious contributions, questions and concerns:

### ■ Contributions.

■ The first contribution is the development of an SBC mission statement: "The Southern Baptist Convention exists to facilitate, extend and enlarge the Great Commission ministries of Southern Baptist churches, under the lordship of Jesus Christ, upon the authority of holy Scripture, and by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit."

The mission statement clearly defines the purpose of the convention. It expresses theological truth that can be embraced by all Southern Baptists. It places the church, not the denomination, at the center of our common relationship. It focuses on high principles of missions and evangelism. It provides a beacon for future work.

■ The reorganization plan also promises to streamline convention operations. If implemented properly, the plan ought to save hundreds of thousands of dollars.

For example, consider the dissolution of some of the smaller agencies, such as the Stewardship Commission. Responsibility for implementing the commission's assignments will be absorbed by the Executive Committee (Cooperative Program promotion) and the Sunday School Board (general stewardship promotion and capital fund-raising). Even if the Executive Committee and Sunday School Board hire every commission staff member who works in these areas, the SBC will save an incredible amount of money. The consolidation eliminates one board of directors and the costs of its meetings. It also eliminates a management component and support services, since the larger agencies can absorb the new assignments under existing structures.

### ■ Questions.

■ The toughest questions are illustrated by the reorganization plan's most radical reconfiguration. It consolidates three agencies into one new board. The Home Mission Board, Radio & Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission will become three divisions of the North American Mission Board.

Trustees and staffs of these agencies—as well as those of other agencies affected by smaller absorptions—are left with the ominous task of developing new structures and strategies. Much is at stake, as assignments change and people accommodate. Will all the work still get done, or will important ministries get lost in the shuffle? Can agencies merge and integrate staffs and tasks without brutal turf wars and wasted effort?

■ Another important question, practically unasked by the study committee, revolves around the new relationships between SBC agencies and the Baptist state conventions.

Most state staff configurations reflect SBC organizational structures, with state assignments arranged to connect state workers with appropriate national agencies. But changing agency assignments throws that into limbo. Furthermore, the overhaul represented by the new North American Mission Board will pose major relational questions to the states, whose work with the Home Mission Board has been negotiated through cooperative agreements between the states and the board. Sorting this out will be something akin to filtering through the block-grant programs linking federal and state government.

### ■ Concerns.

■ One of the most serious concerns is the welfare of Woman's Missionary Union. For more than a century, WMU has been the SBC's pacemaker. WMU launched and promoted the offerings that provide more than half the convention's missions money. WMU tirelessly educated Southern Baptists about missions. And WMU provided women with a solid organization for missions action and local-church involvement.

But the reorganization plan—devised entirely by men—assigns offering promotion and missions education to the mission boards and directs the Sunday School Board to create a women's ministry. These shifts seem designed to break the back of WMU by removing its lifeblood tasks and creating an organization that will compete with WMU for the time and attention of women. Protests to the contrary, this is thinly veiled retribution for WMU's refusal to let the new SBC power structure select its board of directors. The study committee said to WMU what the SBC said to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship: "If we can't control you, we don't want to relate to you."

■ The integrity of fund management is at stake. For 48 years, the Southern Baptist Foundation has been a bastion of honesty and credibility as it has managed SBC assets. It has built a board of financial experts—bankers, stock brokers, risk managers and planners. And it has stood for sound management and trustworthiness. The Executive Committee, which will take over the Foundation's assignment, does not have a board professionally and technically equipped to make those decisions. Furthermore, it has shown a propensity for making political, rather than principled, decisions. This decision poses a serious threat and should cause potential donors to be alarmed.

■ The integrity of historical preservation is at stake. The reorganization plan calls for the Sunday School Board, along with the seminaries, to play a significant role in preserving Baptist history and heritage. That's a dubious assignment, considering the Sunday School Board's track record. When the board celebrated its 100th anniversary, trustees killed a professional, scholarly centennial history project because it did not put a public relations spin on recent controversy. That's not a good sign for an agency responsible for helping record history.

Despite several obvious benefits, the reorganization plan is hampered by serious questions and major flaws. When the plan came before the Executive Committee, it was presented in an all-or-nothing format. For the sake of the convention, the study committee and the Executive Committee should divide the proposal into component parts and allow messengers to the annual meeting to vote on it piece by piece. That would give grassroots Southern Baptists an opportunity to approve the good and eliminate the bad in this historic proposal.

Marv Knox

**Some elements of the Southern Baptist Convention's proposed reorganization plan are long-overdue and could have a positive impact. But some proposals would have a detrimental effect on the convention and affiliated churches. SBC messengers should vote on the reorganization plan piece by piece. This is the only way to approve the positive and eliminate the negative.**

## 'Extended session' is making wimps out of tomorrow's church leaders

If you were to survey your typical church on your typical Sunday morning, you'd learn some frightful things about your typical church leaders of tomorrow.

For starters, most aren't even in the sanctuary during the worship hour.

Somewhere, church-going adults got the notion small children should be kept in the nursery while everybody else sings, prays and listens to the sermon. (The preachers' union lobbied for this "extended session," estimating that if they didn't wear out their voices shouting over crying kids, they could extend their careers 5.3 years.)

So, what we've got is glorified nursery for kids up to about 6 years old. Instead of sitting in the service like real sinners, they

go off and drink apple juice, eat crackers and ruin their appetites for Sunday dinner.

Unfortunately, they're not prepared for full-time "big church." They're like convicts thrown out of prison on shock probation—happy for the change of scenery, but not sure what to do next.

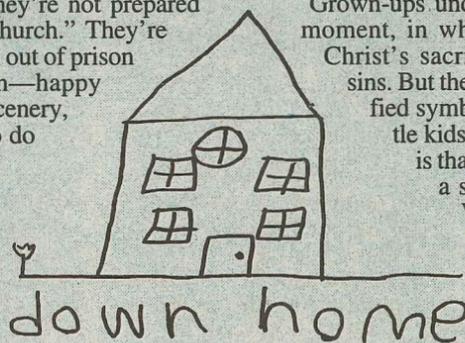
The most obvious occasion of this not-ready-for-prime-time experience is communion Sunday, when deacons share the elements of the Lord's Supper with the congregation. In Baptist churches, that means

they pass out little Chicklet-looking crackers and plastic thimbles of grape juice.

Grown-ups understand this is a holy moment, in which Christians recall Christ's sacrificial death for their sins. But the significance of sanctified symbols goes right over little kids' heads. All they know is that big people are getting a snack, and they're not.

Which explains why the biblical practice of "wailing and gnashing of teeth" increases by 63 percent.

Today's kids have it kushy for many other reasons. I'll share two.



No. 1: Revival meetings. Today's affairs last from Sunday through Wednesday or Wednesday through Sunday. How wimpy! Back in the old days, revivals lasted a full week, maybe two. Seemed like they lasted forever, and all that church-going built character in 8-year-olds.

No. 2: Long invitations. When old-time preachers gave an altar call, they meant it. We might sing 247 verses of "Just As I Am," even if the roast was burning or "Bonanza" was half over. Kids learned patience, perseverance and bladder control.

I'm just not sure if today's children, born in extended session and bred on one-hour services, will have the stamina to be tomorrow's church leaders.

Marv Knox

# MISSIONS

## Missionaries seek to 'Win All' in creative outreach



FRANKLIN, Mass.—It only stands to reason that before Southern Baptists can "Win All"—the theme of this year's Season of Home Missions—they first have to reach all.

That's exactly what home missionaries Charles and Laura Lea Chamblee are doing in Franklin, Mass., not far from Boston. In what used to be the largest county in the United States without a Southern Baptist church, the Chamblees seem to be everywhere.

They constantly look for ways to "take the story to the streets."

In recent months, their brainstorming has resulted in a neighborhood pasta party, a deli and dessert party—a variation on the potluck theme.

"We can share our faith more effectively when we're aware of the opportunities," Mrs. Chamblee said. "And our pasta party, as non-traditional as it seems, was used by God to help us meet people in our community, allowing us to have the opportunity to share Christ with them."

"It's all about getting out and meeting people where they are, developing relationships, and from those relationships, sharing Christ, added her husband, a church planter.

He serves on the Franklin Youth Services committee, which allows him to "tie into the town hall" and get a better view of the needs of youth in

the area. He also is president of the town's interfaith council and just completed a term on the board of the local food pantry.

The Baptist ministry expands dramatically during summers.

"We do special emphasis camps, outreaches, and backyard Bible clubs," he explained. "We had 63 kids involved in a drama camp this past summer, and 52 more involved in a sports camp."

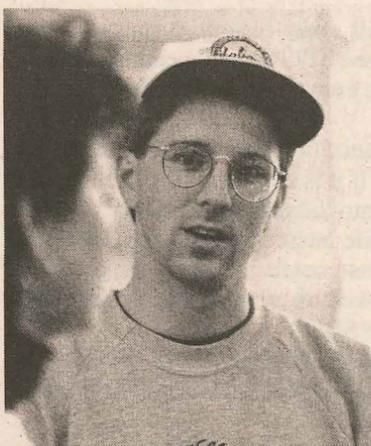
Mrs. Chamblee is front and center in these outreach efforts during the summer, and she branches out all over, all year long. She finds and uses opportunities to witness just about anywhere.

She recalled the times she spent on her front porch talking with an unchurched neighbor couple.

"Those precious times that God carved out for me to just sit on that porch and talk to them is what brought them to a point where they felt bonded enough to me to risk," she said.

As a result, when the Chamblees were ready to open their first worship facility last October, the couple told her, "We want to come and support you."

They weren't alone. On the first Sunday, 80 people attended worship services in an area where Baptists are anything but predominant.



**CREATIVE OUTREACH** Charles and Laura Lea Chamblee serve as Southern Baptist home missionaries in New England, where they seek to introduce people to Jesus Christ through a wide array of events and programs.

The missionaries began church services in a former interdenominational chapel on the town's main street. The chapel was given to Baptists as a gift.

The Chamblee's neighbors "were just humming" about the new-to-them church building, Mrs. Chamblee recalled. "Our neighbors were as excited as we were. It was everywhere."

"They were telling everyone: 'It's a God thing! It's a God thing!'"

She, in turn, was thrilled to have the children of her neighbors in the nursery for the inaugural Sunday.

"I taught them how to sing 'Jesus Loves Me' because I knew two-thirds of the kids I had that morning didn't know Jesus," she said. "They sang it as they walked out the door to meet their parents. What an opportunity! And it never would have happened without that pasta party in the neighborhood, just to build relationships."

### RAMON ALEMAN

HENNESSEY, Okla.—On Ramon Aleman's first visit to Guymon, Okla., he found 13 inches of snow and no one who spoke Spanish. Not a likely setting for a Cuban who felt called to minister to Hispanics.

Members of Guymon's First Baptist Church, however, convinced Aleman that the community had Hispanics who needed to be reached for Christ. And they promised Aleman that if he became pastor of their Hispanic mission, they would keep him dry in the winter and cool in the summer.

In 1980, 20 years after leaving Cuba and a year after graduating from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Aleman accepted the challenge.

When Aleman moved to Oklahoma, the state had one Hispanic church and two Hispanic mis-

sions. Now Oklahoma has 85 Hispanic congregations and a goal of 100 by 2000. As one of four catalytic missionaries serving in the state through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Aleman helped start 18 of the state's Hispanic congregations.

Aleman's job is to "make things happen," he said. "I spot places where we need churches and put resources together for them."

Support usually comes from a combination of resources such as established churches, local associations, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and the HMB.

To start a church, Aleman typically preaches in an area until enough people become Christians to serve as the foundation for a new church.



Ramon Aleman

### CHARLES & DAISY JOYNER

SEATTLE—In a region where it is more common for people not to go to church than to go, Charles and Daisy Joyner are taking church to the people.

As Southern Baptist home missionaries to the Seattle-Tacoma area, the Joyners start apartment ministries—ranging from children's activities to Bible studies—with the intention of starting house churches.

"You're dealing with almost a totally unsaved population," Joyner said, citing surveys that estimate 95 percent of multi-housing residents are unchurched.

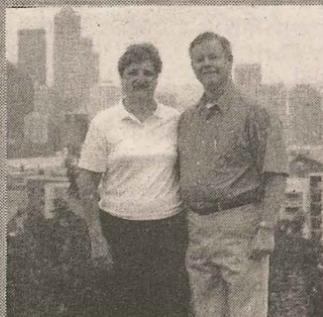
Since the Joyners began this work in 1990, a dozen churches have started more than 20 multi-housing ministries.

Joyner promotes house churches as an effective way to reach unchurched people in the Pacific Northwest's largest city. "Rather than trying to get them to come into our church, let's build house churches around the people that we reach," he said.

A poll of area residents five years ago found 75 percent said they would rather attend a religious meeting in a home than in a church.

"Most of the people didn't have the foggiest idea what a Baptist was," Joyner added. "They're not interested in going to church or church programs, but they know they have needs,

and most of them are going to have to be reached one-on-one."



Charles and Daisy Joyner

### KEN & BELVA WEATHERSBY

JACKSON, Tenn.—"Win All," the theme of this year's Season of Home Missions, has special significance for Southern Baptist missionaries Ken and Belva Weathersby.

As a black church extension missionary, Weathersby helps Southern Baptists look beyond their traditional Anglo base and see the need to reach out to the nation's African-Americans.

For example, he recently led Madison-Chester Baptist Association in West Tennessee to begin its first African-American church.

Greater Hope Baptist Church serves the east side of Jackson, Tenn.

"My role with Greater Hope began when the Madison-Chester Association began praying about starting an African-American church here in Jackson," Weathersby said. "Because the population of Jackson is about 44 percent African-American, they felt like they should start reaching all people."

That's when Weathersby moved into action. He preached to the associational pastors' conference about the need, which drew the interest of Englewood Baptist Church, an Anglo congregation.

"It was a long road, helping the church come to understand what was involved, but they felt called to reach other people who are different," Weathersby said.

Greater Hope occupies a building vacated four years ago by an Anglo Southern Baptist congregation in a transitional neighborhood.

But Weathersby has a vision for something more than just an African-American church. He envisions a multi-cultural church to serve a multi-cultural community.

"Our purpose is to reach all people in the community," he said. "If this church can provide love in the community and ministry and can meet some of their needs, it has the potential to be a multi-cultural church. I really believe that."

He said God is at work in the African-American community throughout West Tennessee. "We just have to go and present the gospel. God is going to do his part."



**CHURCH STARTER** Home missionary Ken Weathersby helps Southern Baptists look beyond their traditional Anglo base to see the need for starting new churches in predominantly black communities.

# MISSIONS

## Annie Armstrong unified Baptists around missions theme

By Susan Doyle  
SBC Woman's Missionary Union

ATLANTA—When you want to get something done, sometimes it is easier to do it yourself.

But are the results the same?

Annie Armstrong, early Southern Baptist promoter of missions and the first corresponding secretary of Woman's Missionary Union, struggled with this question, according to accounts from her biography, "Annie Armstrong: Dreamer in Action," by Bobbie Sorrill.

"Annie often agonized over Southern Baptists' lack of giving to missions," Sorrill wrote. "Once, she stated that when she saw how difficult it was to secure money, she thought about giving up trying to interest others in giving and using her own abilities to make money and contribute it personally to missions."

But Armstrong's persistence to motivate other Southern Baptists to give and become personally involved in missions paid off. Many of her efforts are pillars of the denomination's home missions program today.

As a direct result of Armstrong's efforts, the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board appointed a home missionary to work with German immigrants in Baltimore. The work grew to

the point that Armstrong successfully lobbied the board a second time to secure additional missionaries for the work among immigrants.

By the 1960s, the HMB's language work had grown to be the agency's largest program in terms of budget and personnel.

Armstrong also pioneered missions work with African-American women in her hometown of Baltimore. She helped women from across the country organize a mission-supporting organization for the National Baptist Convention.

Today, both the HMB and WMU work extensively with African-American churches. More than 1,600 African-American congregations are aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention, and more than 130 of the HMB's missionaries are assigned through its black church extension division.

Oklahoma Indian territory also held a special place in Armstrong's heart. She made several trips to the area to encourage and teach women and to bring back reports of the work. Thanks to her efforts, barrels of provi-

sions were sent regularly to home missionaries working in the territory.

Armstrong also helped women in Oklahoma territory organize to be mission supporters. At the turn of the century, the territory, previously giving allegiance to two rival conventions—Northern and Southern Baptists, decided to move toward unification. Armstrong was on hand to ensure Southern Baptists held firm stakes in the area.

Today, the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma includes more than 1,620 Southern Baptist churches and missions with 475,577 resident members.

Armstrong may be best remembered for her tireless campaign to establish a "week of self-denial" to benefit home missions. This effort continued as the week of prayer for home missions and today is part of a "Season of Home Missions," which includes the week of prayer and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

This year, the offering celebrates the 100th anniversary of its first observance. During the past century, Southern Baptists have given more than \$575 million to support home

missions through the offering bearing Armstrong's name. This year the offering's national goal is \$50 million.

Armstrong believed the Holy Spirit guided her thoughts and decisions, according to Sorrill. "She believed if she were faithful and persevered in doing God's will and the work which he gave her to do, she could leave the results to him."

About her own work, Armstrong said: "I am more and more persuaded that all that is required of those who have the work in charge is faithful seed sowing. The harvest is bound to follow."



Annie Armstrong



### Offering facts

- 1995 goal: \$50 million.
- Cost of operating Home Mission Board: \$237,672 per day or \$165 per minute.
- Number of HMB missionaries: 4,913.
- Top offering allocations: \$9.4 million to language church extension, \$8.8 million to new church extension, \$4.9 million to church and community ministries, \$4.7 million to associational missions, \$3.7 million to evangelism, \$1.6 million to black church extension, \$662,440 to special ministries, \$449,540 to volunteer ministries and \$345,800 to chaplaincy ministries.

### DUB & IMOGENE BRYANT

RAPID CITY, S.D.—Dub Bryant's title is "regional missionary for evangelism," but a more accurate job description might be encourager and friend.

Based in Rapid City, S.D., Bryant works to spread the Christian gospel in Montana and the Dakotas.

He typically works behind the scenes, perhaps encouraging a pastor over a cup of coffee or on the golf course. Conversation topics range from practical—how to develop evangelism approaches in a predominantly Catholic and Lutheran area—to therapeutic.

"I try to help our pastors keep from getting frustrated," he said. "They are so far away from resources like seminaries and Baptist colleges, which offer personnel with expertise."

"I tell pastors that if they're where God has called them, they need to hang on. They will see the hand of God."

Bryant's wife, Imogene, is an essential part of this ministry of encouragement. Together they travel across the three states, making a point to visit pastors and their families on their way to associational meetings or witnessing workshops.

For pastors far from extended families, Mrs. Bryant often fills the roles of confidant to the pastor's wife and grandmother to their children. She's the kind of woman who remembers prayer requests and gladly offers a listening ear.

Through a partnership agreement, the Florida Baptist Convention undergirds Southern Baptist

work in Montana and the Dakotas with physical and personnel resources. But Bryant likes to think all Southern Baptists are part of his ministry team through the Cooperative Program, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and personal involvement in missions.

"The best thing God has given us outside of Jesus Christ is each other," Bryant said.



**ENCOURAGER** Dub Bryant's work as a home missionary often includes encouraging other missionaries. Baptist pastors in the new-work areas of Montana and the Dakotas may not regularly see other pastors and often get discouraged in their pioneering work. Bryant travels the three-state area, visiting pastors and missionaries and encouraging them to keep on with God's work.

### RICHARD HARRIS

WHEELING, W.Va.—West Virginia's rocky ground landscape isn't good for growing much, but home missionary Richard Harris toils tirelessly in the region to raise up a harvest of souls.

Harris returned to his native state from Kentucky in 1990 to help Southern Baptist churches in the six northern-most counties.

As a missionary, this coal miner's son wears more hats than a Stetson inspector: from preacher, chaplain and church planter to administrator, recruiter and troubleshooter.

"It's a great adventure," he said from his "green office," the car in which he logs an average 36,000 miles per year. "I see each day like a new page."

Harris sees himself as "a cheerleader for the churches, encouraging them to do more."

While it's hard to measure results in such a job, Harris does get some positive feedback, he said.

When the association started its 10th congregation, seven were growing. That's the reverse of the national scene, where about 70 percent of Southern Baptist churches are plateaued or declining.

"When we came here, there was not a church in this association averaging 50 in Sunday attendance," he said. "Now we've had two average 100 and others that are running 80."

Despite the low percentage of Southern Baptists in the area, Harris has successfully started mission works for truck drivers and workers at a nearby horse track.

Harris estimates 600 truckers come to the worship services each year, resulting in 25 professions of faith in Jesus Christ. He credits the program's success to simply being available.

"I just wonder how many places in America would give us an office if we just checked into it," Harris said.

### BILL SIMS

LIVERMONT, Calif.—Home missionary Bill Sims could forever be remembered as the man who made parties an evangelistic tool for Southern Baptist churches.

The former policeman led an Oakland, Calif., church in 1988 to host an evangelistic block party, birthing a movement that is helping inner-city churches reach changing neighborhoods.

As an evangelism consultant with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Sims works with more than 300 urban churches in San Francisco, Oakland, San Jose and Sacramento, Calif.

Sims helps congregations recapture their evangelistic zeal.

"I have to convince them by actually doing it," he said. "They're not going to believe me if I come with a program. They want to see me actually lead someone to Christ and to show them that they can reach people in their field."

Sims regularly preaches revivals to motivate a

congregation. He then invites members to let him train them to reach their community. His classroom may be anywhere from the beaches to mobile home parks.

"When they see it done, they say: 'Well, hey! As ugly as that guy is, if he can do it, I can too.'"

The training often culminates with a church-hosted block party. Evangelistic block parties are outdoor celebrations with food and entertainment sponsored by the church. The parties introduce congregations to local residents and give churches opportunities to share the gospel.

One such event last year was in an upper middle-class neighborhood, he said.

"We went around and targeted 10,000 homes. Somewhere between 1,000 and 1,500 people showed up on a Sunday evening," he said. "Out of that we found hundreds of good prospects, and 54 people were saved. That's a pretty good Sunday evening service, isn't it?"

# Here's Hope TODAY



## 'Here's Hope' flying high in Lexington

**"HERE'S HOPE TODAY"** is a joint effort of the Western Recorder and the Kentucky Baptist Convention evangelism office. This supplement will appear in the Recorder through the end of March to support the "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" campaign. The supplement is produced by the Recorder staff and State Correspondent Ken Walker. If you have a "Here's Hope" success story to share, please tell us about it by calling (502) 244-6470.

LEXINGTON—This Sunday, Southern Heights Baptist Church in Lexington will take its "Here's Hope" outreach to new heights.

During its monthly Sunday school rally, members will release approximately 750 helium-filled balloons carrying cards with the church's name and phone number.

Each of the 150 Sunday school students also will sign five cards for placement in the balloons. A note asks whoever finds them to call the church.

On the first Sunday of April, those who attend in response to the balloon messages will be recognized during the Sunday school hour.

"We had hoped to include the Roman Road tract but the balloons cost more than we expected," said Devonna Hisel, Sunday school director. "But our outreach committee will have someone contact the people who call."

Outreach committee chairman John Hunt said either someone from his five-member committee or from the deacons' ministry group will follow up immediately with those individuals to "share the hope" found in Jesus Christ.

Interim Pastor Bill Cubine said Southern Heights' participation in the "Here's Hope. Share Jesus Now" campaign has been hurt by the absence of a full-time pastor—although he has been preaching regularly on witnessing.

Nevertheless, Hunt is excited by what he has seen so far.

"It's exciting because many more members are stepping forward in their daily lives to encourage others and share Christ," he said. "We haven't seen an outpouring of harvest, but little things are happening."

Several people have professed faith in Jesus Christ and other new members have joined, he added.

One of the new believers is a teenager who trusted Christ during Sunday evening Bible drills.

Jerri Sherow, discipleship training director, said the sixth-grader kept asking questions about her sin and how a person may reach perfection.

At first the teacher kept trying to steer the discussion back to the Bible verses, she said, "and then I thought, 'Whoa! What are we here for?'"

The girl's mother called Sherow two days later to say her daughter felt like the weight of the world had been lifted off her shoulders by putting her trust in Christ.

"It's what happens when we all pray for salvation," Sherow said. "You never know what's going to happen. There's nothing like (leading someone to Christ.) You feel so inadequate some times, but it's really simple."

## WHERE'S HOPE?

### Hope motivates modern saints

Baptists have long recounted that hope is one of the three great Christian virtues. The apostle Paul surrounded it with "faith" and "love" in 1 Corinthians 13:13.

A chapel speaker at Cumberland College recently spoke on "What the World Needs Now." Of course, we all expected him to say "love." But his message came as a surprise. "What the world needs now," he said, "is saints."

True saints are not those who attempt to live stained-glass lives, but those who have been set free to live and serve because their faith has mixed with God's love to produce hope.

So many of today's problems seem hopeless to those whose lives have not been touched deeply by love—human or divine.

And to experience love requires a measure of faith. The love of a spouse, a friend, a neighbor, a church—even of God himself—requires us to believe, to trust, to risk.

A world caught in the grip of AIDS, poverty, violence, loneliness, illiteracy and greed can look hopeless.

It is precisely to this kind of world that the apostle Paul said, "But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

This message of hope is verified every day in places like Cumberland College.

Our school has been described as "a bright and shining city set on a hill." This accolade is no doubt

due to the strong Christian identity which is such a vital part of our heritage.

The Mountain Outreach program offers hope in the name of Christ to those in need in the hills and hollers of Appalachia.

The message of hope is carried by Baptist Student Union revival teams to communities large and small throughout Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio and surrounding states.

Christian professors stand before classes of eager students and demonstrate the difference hope can make in formulating a philosophy of life.

Students and faculty travel to China and England as part of the international studies program—carrying with them the message that it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." (Colossians 1:27)

The dynamic at work in the life of Cumberland College is the same as that found in churches and individual Christians the world over. For those described as "without God and having no hope in the world" (Ephesians 2:12), we have good news: Christ can and does make a difference.

— Jim Taylor, president of Cumberland College

■ For more information about how to become a Christian, or for spiritual assistance, please contact a Baptist church in your community or call the Western Recorder collect at (502) 244-6470.

## Students share hope on EKU's campus

RICHMOND—Eastern Kentucky University's Baptist Student Union sponsored a concert this week to celebrate the success of its "Here's Hope" rally Feb. 20-22.

But BSU director Rick Trexler said the eight first-time decisions for Christ and 70 rededications recorded during last week's rally only mark the beginning of the campus "Here's Hope" outreach.

"We've just begun to scratch the surface," Trexler said. "We couldn't give an overly enthusiastic invitation, but we'll see things happening the rest of the semester."

Planning for the three-day event began last spring when the BSU met with the student committee of Bates Creek Baptist Association. The two groups voted to kick off the interdenominational event on President's Day.

The rally was held on campus and featured messages from Ken Smith, staff evangelist at First Baptist Church in Newnan, Ga. Smith, who also is chaplain for the University of South Carolina football team, stressed the importance of being an authentic Christian.

Believers need to be "doers" of the word, not just "hearers," he told the students. That will make a radical difference in their lives, causing them to take action, he said.

School restrictions limited Smith's freedom to appeal for students to come forward to make spiritual decisions. So students were asked to respond with a form on the back of programs distributed each night.

"We couldn't give a formal, walk-down-the-aisle, Baptist invitation," Trexler said. "But we've already contacted people who have accepted Christ and will be contacting the others."

Not only were various denomina-



**STUDENT TALK** Ken Smith, a vocational Bible teacher from Newnan, Ga., leads a "Here's Hope" rally in classroom at Eastern Kentucky University last week. The rally was organized by EKU's Baptist Student Union and others.

tions involved, the event also drew support from athletes as well as fraternities and sororities.

Ten Christian student organizations also were invited to set up booths to distribute their literature.

The most fervent response during the three services came the night 300 students packed a classroom to hear testimonies and music from Christian athletes.

One of the featured singers was freshman football player Augie Marks. A member of Erlanger Baptist Church, Marks rapped to the tune, "Do Not Pass Me By."

Because the spring semester began

in mid-January, the BSU got a late start on its "Here's Hope" participation. But the group won't halt efforts after March 9, either.

At a Jan. 17 commitment service, 80 students pledged to witness regularly during the semester. Another 60 said they would pray regularly for the outreach, and 39 agreed to participate in weekly "prayer triads."

"Here's Hope" has injected new life into what we're doing," Trexler said. "We've always been active, but students are seeing it's not what they do for Jesus that makes the difference. It's how they relate to him so they can relate to others."

# Here's Hope TODAY



## Rural church crosses the road to witness

Continued from page 1

is where the people are. It looks like the Lord is using this and blessing it, so we're going to reach our county in even greater numbers than we thought."

In fact, the mission has generated so much excitement it has overshadowed the fact that half a dozen adults have become Christians across the road at Horse Creek Baptist Church this year.

The mission began after Gregory and his wife, Lula, asked if they could set up services. They wanted a meeting place where rural children would feel more comfortable.

To generate interest, they threw a pizza party on the Saturday before the first meetings. The next day, 11 children made public professions of faith in Christ. Except for one Sunday, decisions for Christ have been a weekly occurrence at the mission.

On Wednesday nights the children

have joined missions activity groups at the church. Now the church is beginning discipleship training for new converts.

The church also plans to establish Sunday school classes specifically for new Christians to help develop their spiritual walk.



**Here's Hope.  
Share Jesus Now.**

"We want to do everything we can to prevent those kids from falling through the cracks," Felty said. "We're trying to focus on them because we

know we'll lose them if we don't."

While he realizes not all may choose to, the pastor looks for at least 25 to be baptized at the March 12 service that follows the conclusion of the "Here's Hope" campaign.

The Gregories will disciple the children at church for awhile once the short-term mission ends. But they already are planning to begin another outreach at nearby Crawfish Branch.

"Most of these people have never been to church in their lives," said

Mrs. Gregory, a singer who provides the mission's music. "We knew the people at Horse Creek would make them feel comfortable if we could just get them coming. The Lord is touching many lives. We give him all the praise."

"Our folks are just bubbling about it," Felty added. "Where it's going to end up, we don't have any idea. If we're going to take these hollers we have to go in and do things like this."

Bill Nichols, associational director of missions, said the project is an example of Horse Creek's aggressive, outgoing nature.

He said Felty and his wife have been ministering in Grannies Branch every Thursday night for nearly three years, since a summer team started a Big A-type club in that holler. He hopes similar missions will become commonplace.

"My dream is that we get concerned enough to go up the hollers and reach the people with home Bible studies, backyard Bible clubs and Big A clubs," Nichols said. "We've got to go where the people are, and that's what Horse Creek is doing."

## Texas church talking about 'Here's Hope'

ODESSA, Texas (BP)—Members of First Baptist Church in Odessa, Texas, talk about the "Here's Hope" campaign every time they get together.

The church has incorporated 60-second testimonies into every worship service for members to talk about their witnessing encounters, said Pastor Ernest Easley. "We have updates Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night. We're using it as a way of keeping it in front of our folks in a positive way of showing what God's doing through our people."

A recent Sunday spotlighted teenagers in the church who had led classmates to Christ. Easley says he wanted their testimonies to inspire adults. "I'm sure that inside their hearts they were thinking, 'If our kids can do it, surely I can do it,'" he explained.

# YouthFest '95

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Youthfest '95 is a weekend of high energy, challenge, motivation and decision designed for Kentucky's youth. The two-day conference is specifically planned to minister to youth and youth leaders. The event is sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Office for Evangelism. Today's youth face many challenges and fears.

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Frankfort Civic Center, Frankfort Kentucky

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Doors open at 5:30 p.m., June 9, and the conference begins at 7:00 p.m.

# BAPTISTS

## Major reconfiguration of SBC agencies proposed

Continued from page 1

### How to learn more

The program and structure study committee's report, "Covenant for a New Century," is being mailed to every Southern Baptist Convention church in a special edition of the "SBC Life" magazine. A video also has been prepared to highlight the committee's report. For additional copies of the committee's report or for information about the video, contact Mark Coppenger at the SBC Executive Committee, 901 Commerce St. #750, Nashville, Tenn. 37203, or call (615) 244-2355. The complete text of the study committee's report is posted in the news room of SBCNet on the CompuServe computer bulletin board.

About 24 hours after the first public presentation of the sweeping report, Executive Committee members were asked to vote on the document. A motion to postpone the vote until September was soundly defeated.

The proposal now moves to the SBC annual meeting in Atlanta next June. The SBC's bylaws require changes of such magnitude to be approved in two consecutive annual sessions, although full implementation is projected to take five years.

The report, called "A Covenant for a New Century," begins with a mission statement, which Brister said would be the first-ever such statement for the SBC.

The mission statement says: "The Southern Baptist Convention exists to facilitate, extend and enlarge the Great Commission ministries of the Southern Baptist churches, under the lordship of Jesus Christ, upon the authority of Holy Scripture and by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit."

The committee proposes changing the SBC's focus from agency program assignments to ministry assignments.

Based on this mission statement, the study committee projects five basic ministries the SBC ought to perform: world missions, church enrichment, theological education, Christian ethics and religious liberty, and facilitating ministries.

■ **Mission ministries.** Mission ministries would include two agencies, the new North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board, a new name for the Foreign Mission Board.

These two boards would be linked by a Great Commission Council, a 14-member body composed of the two mission board presidents, three vice presidents and three trustees from each board. The Great Commission Council would not be a new agency, merely a means of coordination, Brister said.

The Foreign Mission Board's work would be largely unchanged by the proposal. The Home Mission Board's work, however, would be

radically changed.

In addition to merging the Home Mission Board with the Radio & Television Commission and the Brotherhood Commission, the proposal would move several existing assignments away from the Home Mission Board and change the way the mission board relates to state conventions.

The North American Mission Board would focus on "direct mission strategies" of evangelism and church planting, giving stronger state conventions "primary responsibility for developing and funding mission strategies within their state boundaries."

The Home Mission Board's current work in church growth would be transferred to the Sunday School Board, although the Sunday School Board would not become a missions agency and would receive no Cooperative Program funding for the additional effort, the committee said.

The committee's report carefully avoids any directives to Woman's Missionary Union, the SBC auxiliary that promotes missions but elects its own board. However, the WMU assignment of promoting the annual Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong mission offerings would be transferred to the respective mission boards under the plan. Those offerings raise roughly half the annual budgets of the home and foreign mission boards.

Members of the study committee said WMU was not given assignments because it does not have trustees elected by the SBC. WMU reportedly chose to remain an auxiliary rather than accept trustee control by the SBC. This has been an issue of major contention in recent years as the SBC's new conservative leaders have appeared frustrated by their inability to bring WMU in line with their philosophy.

■ **Church enrichment.** The ministry of church enrichment would be as-

signed exclusively to the Sunday School Board, which would gain several additional areas under the proposal: men's ministries, women's ministries, stewardship education and capital fund-raising.

This portends a major change in men's and women's ministries, which traditionally have been missions oriented and directed by Woman's Missionary Union and the Brotherhood Commission.

The Sunday School Board also would assume responsibility for stewardship education and capital fund-raising programs with the dissolution of the Stewardship Commission.

The study committee further proposes giving the Sunday School Board an entirely new responsibility for assisting churches with Christian schools and home-schooling ministries.

The Sunday School Board would be responsible for generating revenue to fund these additional ministries, committee members said.

■ **Theological education.** The SBC's six seminaries are mostly unchanged by the report.

The six seminary presidents would form a new council which will coordinate theological education. The seminaries also would take over the library and archives of the SBC Historical Commission, which would be dissolved.

The committee recommends dissolving the Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary, a black Baptist school in Nashville. Support for that school would be handed over to the National Baptist Convention.

■ **Ethics and religious liberty.** The SBC Christian Life Commission would be renamed the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, but its work would remain the same.

■ **Facilitating ministries.** The SBC Executive Committee and the Annuity Board would receive the remaining ministry assignments.

The Annuity Board's work would remain the same as currently defined, except the study committee emphasized a strict definition for whom the Annuity Board may serve. Adopting this guideline would eliminate a concern of the SBC's most conservative leaders that the Annuity Board should not serve moderate spin-off organizations such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The Executive Committee would pick up the work currently done by the Southern Baptist Foundation, which would be eliminated, and the Cooperative Program promotion assignment currently done by the Stewardship Commission, which also would be eliminated.

The SBC Education Commission would be eliminated and its work not reassigned to any other agency. "The need for the Education Commission is no longer what it was in 1915," Brister said.

Initial reaction to the plan was mixed but limited, as agency heads sought to assess the future of their agencies.

The harshest reaction came from Lynn May, executive director of the SBC Historical Commission. May said he "cannot and will not support" a recommendation to dismantle the Historical Commission.

"I fear that the discontinuation of an agency with the single assignment and focus of meeting the history needs of Southern Baptists will ultimately result in the loss of what has been accomplished ... in the past 44 years," he said.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis took a more cautious tone, saying he sees "the potential for improved efficiency and effectiveness" in the proposal.

Jack Johnson, president of the Radio & Television Commission, put on one of the happiest faces, even though he said he had many unanswered questions about his agency's proposed merger and move to Atlanta.

"If Southern Baptists approve this, we're going to do it," he said. "And we're going to do it with a smile on our face."



### SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

"The Southern Baptist Convention exists to facilitate, extend and enlarge the Great Commission ministries of Southern Baptist churches, under the lordship of Jesus Christ, upon the authority of holy Scripture and by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit."

#### WORLD MISSION MINISTRIES

- International Mission Board
- North American Mission Board (including elements of current Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio & Television Commission)
- (Great Commission Council)

#### CHURCH ENRICHMENT MINISTRIES

- Sunday School Board (with added responsibilities for Christian schools, men's and women's ministries, home schooling, stewardship education, capital fund-raising for churches and church history resources)

#### THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION MINISTRIES

- Golden Gate Seminary
- Midwestern Seminary
- New Orleans Seminary
- Southeastern Seminary
- Southern Seminary
- Southwestern Seminary
- (Council of Seminary Presidents)
- SBC historical library and archives

#### CHRISTIAN ETHICS & RELIGIOUS LIBERTY MINISTRIES

- Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission

#### FACILITATING MINISTRIES

- Annuity Board
- Executive Committee (with added responsibilities for Cooperative Program promotion, estate planning and investment management funds)

# BAPTISTS

## States offered more control of home missions work

By Mark Wingfield  
News Director

NASHVILLE—Some state Baptist conventions could be encouraged to take on complete funding and management of mission work within their borders—a dramatic shift in the way Southern Baptists do home missions—if the proposal of a special study committee is approved.

This is one facet of a major overhaul of Southern Baptist Convention agency assignments proposed by an SBC program and structure study committee.

Making the more-established state conventions less entangled with the SBC in home missions work would be a major shift from the current structure. Currently, the SBC Home Mission Board works jointly with every state or regional Baptist convention to administer mission work in the states.

These relationships are spelled out in carefully negotiated documents called "cooperative agreements" which also stipulate how much funding missionaries and mission projects in each state get from the HMB and how much they get from the state convention.

For example, most home missions projects in Kentucky are funded 40 percent by the HMB and 60 percent by the Kentucky Baptist Convention. In states outside the Deep South, however, that split could provide 90 percent of all funding from the HMB.

The SBC program and structure study committee has opened a window of opportunity for this practice to change. But the suggestion is not entirely new.

"In 1959, the Southern Baptist

Convention adopted a denominational strategy which encouraged the state conventions to assume primary responsibility for developing and funding mission strategies within their state boundaries, thus avoiding duplication and confusion of strategy and resources," the study committee's report says. "This principle, though never fully implemented, remains valid and should be reflected in the cooperative agreements adopted by the North American Mission Board and the state conventions."

The North American Mission Board is a new domestic-missions agency proposed by the study committee. It would incorporate elements of the current Home Mission Board, Radio & Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission.

The report notes that state conventions with total church membership equal to 10 percent or more of their state populations "have resources adequate to fund their evangelism and mission staff and programs." The new North American Mission Board would "encourage these state conventions to fund their internal mission strategies while continuing to support the national and international ministries" of the SBC through gifts to the Cooperative Program unified budget.

The committee's goal is for larger state conventions to take responsibility for totally funding their own home missions work without reducing their contributions to the SBC's national and international missions program, committee members said.

However, state conventions will be tempted to tap some of the money they currently send the Home Mission Board in order to fund their increased responsibilities at home. That would leave less money for HMB missions in less-established conventions.

For example, Kentucky this year will send \$1.29 million to the HMB through the Cooperative Program and the HMB in turn will spend \$381,708 on missions programs in Kentucky. If

Kentucky were to assume full responsibility for missions work within its borders, the HMB no longer would send that \$381,708 to Kentucky. And the Kentucky Baptist Convention could be tempted to fund this state mission program by deducting a similar amount from what it forwards to the HMB.

"Obviously there will be a significant impact for the missions and evangelism division," said Larry Martin, director of the KBC's missions and evangelism division. "Our staff is carefully studying the proposal. However, at this time, it would be premature to reach final conclusions as to the ramifications for us."

In addition to Kentucky, state conventions which fall above the 10 percent threshold suggested by the study committee include Oklahoma, Texas, Missouri, Arkansas, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Georgia. Most of them send more money to out-of-state missions than they receive from the Home Mission Board.

One state convention that does not fall above the 10 percent threshold but is interested in making the change is the Florida Baptist Convention. In fact, an earlier request by the Florida Baptist Convention appears to have given impetus to the study committee's proposal.

Last year, Florida officials proposed funding and administering mission work within their borders entirely without support from the HMB. This was proposed largely out of concern that the HMB process was becoming too bureaucratic and susceptible to funding cuts, officials said.

John Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, said he was pleased with the study committee's recommendation. However, he said Florida and the HMB already had begun working out a way to meet his concerns anyway.

Exactly how Florida or any other state convention will respond to the potential new freedom allowed by the study committee report remains to be seen. First, the committee's report must be approved at two consecutive SBC annual meetings.

In a dialogue session between the study committee and state convention executives Feb. 21, a number of concerns surfaced.

In a related matter, members of the study committee encouraged state executives to consider re-evaluating their state structures in light of the proposed changes in SBC structures.

"It is incumbent upon you to assume some kind of analysis ... on the state level," said committee member Bob Sorrell, associate pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn.

### Brister committee members

■ **Mark Brister**, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La. Brister is a trustee of Louisiana College and served on the SBC committee on committees in 1983.

■ **Ronnie Floyd**, pastor of First Baptist Church of Springdale, Ark. Floyd is preacher for the "Invitation to Life" program on the ACTS network, serves on the Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, is a member of the Criswell College board of regents and serves on the Rapha Foundation board.

■ **Bill Hall**, a financial strategist for corporate executives from San Clemente, Calif. Hall is a member of Capistrano Valley Baptist Church. He has served on the SBC Executive Committee since 1987, is chairman of the California Baptist Foundation and serves on the development boards of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and California Baptist College.

■ **Greg Horton**, founding partner of Quincy's and Ryan's Family Steakhouse chains. Horton is a member of Temple Baptist Church in Simpsonville, S.C. He currently serves as a trustee of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and Charleston Southern University.

■ **Al Mohler**, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and a member of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville. Mohler served as chairman of the SBC resolutions committee in 1991.

■ **Bob Sorrell**, associate pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. He currently serves on the SBC Executive Committee.

■ **Rex Terry**, an attorney and layman in First Baptist Church of Fort Smith, Ark. Terry currently serves on the SBC Executive Committee and previously was a trustee of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas. He served on the SBC nominations committee in 1987.

## Report omits WMU, but links to SBC could continue

NASHVILLE—Woman's Missionary Union will continue its traditional work, even though a proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention apparently strips WMU of its primary assignments, said Dellanna O'Brien, WMU executive director.

The restructuring plan, which calls for consolidation or elimination of several denominational entities, includes no recommendation related to WMU.

The three primary tasks traditionally performed by WMU are assigned to other SBC agencies. The Sunday School Board is given the assignment of developing women's ministries, and the two mission boards are assigned responsibility for missions education and managing the two annual missions offerings.

The seven-member study committee, also known as the Brister committee, offered neither praise nor condemnation of WMU while explaining their proposals to the SBC Executive Committee Feb. 20-21.

The most they would say is that WMU chose to retain its auxiliary status—free from direct control by the convention—and thereby was not within the scope of the committee's work.

"We chose not to give any minis-

try assignment to the WMU, because WMU is an auxiliary," said the committee's chairman, Mark Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La.

"There's no way anyone can be held responsible to the SBC if they're not accountable to the SBC," added another committee member, Bob Sorrell, associate pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn. "If there's responsibility, there has to be accountability."

In recent years, WMU's role as an auxiliary has been a point of major contention with the SBC's new conservative leaders, frustrated by their inability to bring WMU in line with the conservative agenda.

Sorrell's pastor, Adrian Rogers, created a storm of protest several years ago when he told a group of visiting missionaries WMU ought to be "hard-wired" to the SBC.

WMU's board of directors is composed of WMU presidents and executive directors from every state Baptist convention. Rogers and other conservative leaders have wanted WMU to let the SBC elect its trustees.

Such a process would open WMU's board to the same type of conservative-only appointments that have radically changed the face of every SBC agency since 1979.

Short of achieving that, the study committee apparently found another way to marginalize WMU, charged O'Brien.

"It is the appearance of the report that you have stripped us of all of our work," she observed in a Feb. 21 discussion between current SBC agency heads and the Brister committee.

Committee members responded that their recommendation would not preclude the SBC's two restructured mission boards from continuing to seek WMU's help.

"The mission boards are free to partner with whomever they wish in terms of missions education," said committee member Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

The current heads of the two mission boards said the changes would not affect how they would relate to WMU.

"Home missions has had no greater friend through the years than Woman's Missionary Union," said Larry Lewis, president of the Home Mission Board. "They have been the feet and legs of much of what we have done in fund-raising. We would hope and pray they would continue in that role."

Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin said it would be hard to

improve on WMU's record of voluntary support for Southern Baptist missions.

"We've got to have the support to carry out our missions mandate," Rankin said. "This is really no significant change," he said, adding the FMB staff already augments WMU promotion of the annual Lottie Moon Offering and week of prayer for foreign missions.

But support from Lewis and Rankin may not be sufficient to guarantee WMU's future relationship with the mission boards. Neither man has any guarantee he will have a job in the restructured SBC.

"I have no concern immediately about what might happen" to WMU's role in missions education and promotion, O'Brien said. But "as time goes by" that relationship might be weakened, she suggested.

Nevertheless, WMU will attempt to continue the work it has done for 107 years, O'Brien said.

"Throughout the history of the SBC, women have fulfilled unique places of leadership in mission action and education. The need for women's involvement and participation is no less important in today's world."

Written by News Director Mark Wingfield with additional reporting by Bob Allen of Associated Baptist Press

REDEFINING  
Southern  
Baptists  
REALIGNING

# PEOPLE

## Any Christian can 'backslide,' Junior Hill tells students

**"The devil takes a monstrous sin that is clearly defined in the word of God, and he rubs off the rough edges of it until he distorts it. He holds it up to us, and it's not as bad as we thought it was."**

*Evangelist Junior Hill*

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Any Christian can "backslide," evangelist Junior Hill told students and faculty at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during a recent campus revival.

"Most of the time, when a child of God backslides, he never drops out of church; he never stops giving his tithe; he never really stops reading the Bible; he never falls into overt sin; he never turns his back on his call into ministry," said Hill, first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1989.

"Backsliding, in the word of God, is nothing more than when Jesus becomes less than first place in a believer's life," he explained. "And that is

really what has happened to a large segment of our church membership today."

Even pastors, seminary professors and students can backslide, if "you get so engrossed in the word of God that you forget the God of the word," Hill said.

He suggested Christians can know whether they have backslidden if they find any of three "unmistakable symptoms" in their lives.

The first symptom is being unembarrassed about sin, Hill said. "The devil takes a monstrous sin that is clearly defined in the word of God, and he rubs off the rough edges of it until he distorts it. He holds it up to us, and it's not as bad as we thought it

was.

"We are debating moral issues today that have been settled thousands of years ago in the word of God," he said. "What is there to debate about adultery? The Bible says, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' What is there to debate about abortion? The Bible says, 'Thou shalt not kill.'"

Second, the backslidden Christian has an unhappy spirit, Hill said.

"While you may not always feel like you're on top of the mountain, there should always be an abiding, sweet peace in your heart in fellowship with the Lord Jesus. If you don't have it, you've backslidden on God," he said.

Third, the backslidden Christian is

"uncaring about the lost," Hill said.

The evangelist challenged Christians to look within their hearts, confess the sin that God shows them, spend time with God so they can be filled with joy in their ministry and care enough about those who have not accepted Christ to go out of their way to take the time to meet them with the gospel at their point of need.

"How long has it been since just you and Jesus got off in a quiet place—without your study Bible, without a sermon outline, without your class notes—just to have a sweet, quiet, personal talk together?" Hill asked. "You'll never be any better than what you are in your quiet commitment to Jesus."

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## Special memories

There has been a long tradition of giving gifts to Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children to honor the memory of a loved one or special friend.

Many churches have plaques supplied by Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children that are placed at the funeral home to show that gifts are being sent to help children.

I always send a letter to the family or special friends of the deceased telling them when memorial gifts have been received. Included in that letter is a pamphlet entitled "Out of the Darkness" by Dr. Wayne E. Oates.

Dr. Oates shares Scripture and compassionate insight with those who are grieving. I have had a number of individuals tell me that Dr. Oates' words have meant a great deal to them in the long period of pain following the loss of a special person.

In honor of those memorialized, we publish the name of each person for whom we receive a gift along with the name of the donor in our Children's Messenger.

If you would like a supply of memorial envelopes for yourself or for your church, please call us

toll-free at 1-800-456-1386.

If your church needs a plaque we will be happy to supply one. If you are associated with a funeral home and would like to have this option available for those you serve we will also be happy to supply you with a plaque.

Not all gifts in recognition of others are memorial gifts. We also

are blessed to receive a number of gifts each year in honor of living persons. I write to each of the honorees as well as to the donors to express our appreciation.

Again, we publish the gift in the Children's Messenger.

We are tremendously grateful to those who give to our children through these special gifts as well as to those

who give through other means whether directly or through their church.

We are here to help hurting children and families because your gifts make it possible. Thank you Kentucky Baptists for truly caring for children and families.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Curtis C. Mooney

Curtis Mooney is president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Rd., Middletown, Ky. 40243.

# BAPTISM LEADERS

## Top KBC churches in total baptisms

CHURCH	LOCATION	BAPT.	RES.	CHURCH	LOCATION	BAPT.	RES.	CHURCH	LOCATION	BAPT.	RES.
HIGHVIEW	LOUISVILLE	113	5,254	FRANKLIN CROSSROADS	CECILIA	39	631	HILLTOP MSNRY	STEARNS	28	221
LITTLE FLOCK	LOUISVILLE	97	1,656	CONCORD	HOPKINSVILLE	37	667	BELLEVUE	OWENSBORO	27	744
SOUTHSIDE	PRINCETON	87	969	GREEN RIDGE	LEWISBURG	37	278	LAWRENCEBURG FIRST	LAWRENCEBURG	27	1,015
BINGHAMTOWN	MIDDLESBORO	78	1,898	BUCK RUN	FRANKFORT	36	729	MORGANFIELD FIRST	MORGANFIELD	27	525
MILL CREEK	RADCLIFF	72	771	CAMPBELLSVILLE	CAMPBELLSVILLE	36	1,651	BIG BONE	UNION	27	452
FLORENCE	FLORENCE	68	1,490	MOUNT ZION	WEST PADUCAH	36	1,218	ELKTON	ELKTON	26	476
GLENDALE	BOWLING GREEN	66	2,286	UNITY	ASHLAND	35	1,639	EVERGREEN	FRANKFORT	26	597
ZION	HENDERSON	61	926	BELLEVIEW	BURLINGTON	35	465	SWALLOWFIELD	FRANKFORT	26	143
CAMP PLEASANT	FRANKFORT	59	800	PLEASANT HILL	SOMERSET	34	673	WING AVENUE	OWENSBORO	26	578
LONE OAK FIRST	PADUCAH	59	1,951	CALVARY SOUTHERN	BETSY LAYNE	34	170	FORT MITCHELL	FORT MITCHELL	26	601
PORTER MEMORIAL	LEXINGTON	57	2,286	CLEAR SPRINGS	RUSSELL SPRINGS	34	219	KINGS	TAYLORSVILLE	26	600
NINTH & O	LOUISVILLE	56	2,155	CENTRAL	WINCHESTER	33	1,422	ORMSBY HEIGHTS	LOUISVILLE	26	1,364
SEVERNS VALLEY	ELIZABETHTOWN	53	2,766	BIG CREEK	HAZARD	33	280	MT WASHINGTON FIRST	MT WASHINGTON	26	1,035
UNION	MARION	53	226	HICKORY GROVE	INDEPENDENCE	32	1,276	VINE GROVE	VINE GROVE	26	807
LIVING HOPE	BOWLING GREEN	53	1,155	HOPEWELL	HARRODSBURG	32	439	IMMANUEL	PIKEVILLE	26	428
EASTSIDE	RUSSELLVILLE	52	127	WALNUT STREET	LOUISVILLE	32	4,154	RED HOUSE	RICHMOND	26	796
STITHTON	RADCLIFF	52	711	WHITESBURG FIRST	WHITESBURG	32	744	CALVARY	LEXINGTON	25	900
MOUNTAIN ASH	WILLIAMSBURG	50	735	MURRAY FIRST	MURRAY	31	1,287	BROADWAY	LEXINGTON	25	564
IMMANUEL	LEXINGTON	49	2,808	SPRINGDALE	LOUISVILLE	31	310	CENTRAL	CORBIN	25	1,809
SHIVELY	LOUISVILLE	49	2,063	SOMERSET FIRST	SOMERSET	31	1,261	BARDWELL	BARDWELL	25	472
MT ELMIRA	BROOKS	49	328	MOUNT MORIAH	PADUCAH	31	338	RICH POND	BOWLING GREEN	25	627
NEW HOPE MSNRY	RADCLIFF	48	419	ERLANGER	ERLANGER	30	1,575	WESTSIDE	MURRAY	24	577
EASTWOOD	BOWLING GREEN	48	1,141	HOPKINSVILLE SECOND	HOPKINSVILLE	29	1,585	PELLVILLE	PELLVILLE	24	218
CUMBERLAND	CUMBERLAND	46	379	SOUTHSIDE	MANCHESTER	29	90	IMMANUEL	GLASGOW	24	387
HENDERSON FIRST	HENDERSON	45	1,369	YELLOW CREEK	OWENSBORO	29	985	LIBERTY	HICKORY	24	359
OAK GROVE FIRST	OAK GROVE	44	320	WHITLEY CITY FIRST	WHITLEY CITY	29	312	BARDSTOWN	BARDSTOWN	24	746
ONEIDA	ONEIDA	44	200	CARLISLE AVENUE	LOUISVILLE	29	2,104	GRACE	DRY RIDGE	24	65
BELFRY FIRST	BELFRY	44	453	PIKEVILLE FIRST	PIKEVILLE	29	828	CALVARY	MANCHESTER	23	45
FAIRVIEW	ASHLAND	41	755	KEVIL	KEVIL	29	245	EMINENCE	EMINENCE	23	426
COLD SPRING FIRST	COLD SPRING	41	732	HARDIN MSNRY	HARDIN	28	712	GARDENSIDE	LEXINGTON	23	1,130
VALLEY CREEK	ELIZABETHTOWN	41	485	OWENSBORO FIRST	OWENSBORO	28	1,881				
UPPER SILVER CREEK	BEREA	41	427	NEW BETHEL	BENTON	28	277				
CLOVERLEAF	LOUISVILLE	40	510	AUDUBON	HENDERSON	28	752				
MAIN STREET	WILLIAMSBURG	40	685	EAST CADIZ	CADIZ	28	412				
VALLEY VIEW	LOUISVILLE	39	1,898	PLEASANT VIEW	WAYNESBURG	28	922				

Kentucky Baptist Convention baptism statistics are compiled and released by the KBC evangelism office. "Top KBC churches in total baptisms" represents the congregations that baptized the most new Christians in 1994.

# BAPTISM LEADERS

## Top KBC churches in per-capita baptisms

CHURCH	LOCATION	BAP	RES	PCAP	CHURCH	LOCATION	BAP	RES	PCAP	CHURCH	LOCATION	BAP	RES	PCAP
HARVEST	CUSTER	12	19	1.6	NEW BEGINNINGS	BARDSTOWN	5	31	6.2	KENTON	KENTON	6	50	8.3
SEVENTH STREET	LEXINGTON	13	23	1.8	SOUTHSIDE	CORBIN	5	31	6.2	GILEAD	RICHMOND	6	50	8.3
CALVARY	MANCHESTER	23	45	2.0	UNITY CHAPEL	ELIZABETHTOWN	12	76	6.3	KEVIL	KEVIL	29	245	8.4
EASTSIDE	RUSSELLVILLE	52	127	2.4	DEMOSSVILLE	DEMOSSVILLE	6	38	6.3	BIG CREEK	HAZARD	33	280	8.5
GRACE	DRY RIDGE	24	65	2.7	MT BEULAH	WARFIELD	4	25	6.3	DEER STABLE MSNRY	MCKEE	14	119	8.5
MT HAVEN	MAYFIELD	9	25	2.8	KIRK MEMORIAL	GRAHN	3	19	6.3	FIRST KOREAN	RADCLIFF	11	93	8.5
SOUTHSIDE	MANCHESTER	29	90	3.1	CLEAR SPRINGS	RUSSELL SPRINGS	34	219	6.4	BRANHAM GROVE	BOW	8	68	8.5
BRUSHY FORK MSNRY	SALYERSVILLE	15	46	3.1	SUGAR CREEK	GRAND RIVERS	13	83	6.4	NEW VICTORY	RUSSELL SPRINGS	6	51	8.5
FRIENDSHIP	FORDSVILLE	20	65	3.3	WHICKERVILLE	HARDYVILLE	20	129	6.5	EDMONTON WRSHIP CTR.	EDMONTON	19	164	8.6
KNOB LICK	IRVINE	19	75	3.9	MILLTOWN CHAPEL	TOMPKINSVILLE	4	26	6.5	NEW HOPE MSNRY	RADCLIFF	48	419	8.7
TOMAHAWK	TOMAHAWK	7	27	3.9	MT ELMIRA	BROOKS	49	328	6.7	DEANE	NEON	11	96	8.7
NEW HOPE	JACKSON	19	78	4.1	FEDS CREEK	STEELE	20	133	6.7	HORSE CREEK	CORBIN	14	123	8.8
UNION	MARION	53	226	4.3	SAXTON	WILLIAMSBURG	12	80	6.7	UNION	VANCEBURG	9	79	8.8
LEROSE	LEROSE	12	52	4.3	AGES	AGES	6	40	6.7	PENROD	PENROD	9	80	8.9
CHERRY HILL	ROBARDS	11	48	4.4	LIBERTY	GOSHEN	3	20	6.7	ST JOHN	FRANKFORT	8	72	9.0
IRVINGSVILLE	CARLISLE	10	44	4.4	VICTORY	FLORENCE	10	68	6.8	PIKEVIEW	ALBANY	6	54	9.0
ONEIDA	ONEIDA	44	200	4.5	CROSSROADS	CALHOUN	6	42	7.0	FLOYD SWITCH	EUBANK	5	45	9.0
VICTORY	HOPKINSVILLE	10	45	4.5	GLENCOE	GLENCOE	19	134	7.1	MEMORY LANE	LOUISVILLE	4	36	9.0
WEST PROVIDENCE	MCHENRY	4	18	4.5	PLUM SPRINGS	BOWLING GREEN	16	113	7.1	COPPER CREEK	MOUNT VERNON	4	36	9.0
FREEDOM	STANFORD	9	44	4.9	OAK GROVE FIRST	OAK GROVE	44	320	7.3	GREATER ST PAUL	MAYFIELD	1	9	9.0
CALVARY SOUTHERN	BETSY LAYNE	34	170	5.0	MISSOURI HOLLOW	MONTICELLO	11	80	7.3	PELLVILLE	PELLVILLE	24	218	9.1
PEAKS MILL	FRANKFORT	17	85	5.0	PINE KNOT	PINE KNOT	9	66	7.3	SOUTHEAST	OWENSBORO	14	127	9.1
SINKING VALLEY	SOMERSET	16	83	5.2	WOODLAND AVENUE	LEXINGTON	8	58	7.3	EAST FRANKFORT	FRANKFORT	20	183	9.2
FAITH	DORTON	16	84	5.3	GREEN RIDGE	LEWISBURG	37	278	7.5	MEADOW CREEK	ROCKHOLDS	6	55	9.2
GRACE	GRAND RIVERS	11	58	5.3	CONCORD	WARSAW	15	2	7.5	BETHANY	WILLIAMSTOWN	9	84	9.3
SWALLOWFIELD	FRANKFORT	26	143	5.5	DUPEY	HENDERSON	7	53	7.6	FAITH FIRST	REGINA	19	178	9.4
MACEDONIA MSNRY	COVINGTON	9	50	5.6	GOLDBUG	WILLIAMSBURG	15	115	7.7	EDDYVILLE SECOND	EDDYVILLE	9	85	9.4
FREEDOM	MOUNT VERNON	22	125	5.7	NEW HARVEST	CANEYVILLE	7	54	7.7	ALLEN FIRST	ALLEN	22	210	9.5
BERLIN	BROOKSVILLE	9	54	6.0	HILLTOP MSNRY	STEARNS	28	221	7.9	GARNER MSNRY	RUSH	8	77	9.6
LAWRENCE CHAPEL	SMITHS GROVE	2	12	6.0	GILEAD	GLENDALE	19	154	8.1					
SHARPSBURG	SHARPSBURG	1	6	6.0	FELLOWSHIP	BEREA	8	65	8.1					
MINERVA	MAYSVILLE	20	121	6.1	CUMBERLAND	CUMBERLAND	46	379	8.2					
MADISON AVENUE	COVINGTON	13	79	6.1	MT OLIVET	LONDON	18	148	8.2					
CEDAR GAP	WOODBINE	12	73	6.1	YOCUM CREEK	EVARTS	9	74	8.2					
LINEFORK MISSION	WHITESBURG	6	37	6.2	BETHEL	ELIZABETHTOWN	7	58	8.3					

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# PEOPLE

## KENTUCKY KERNELS

An estimated 1.2 billion people worldwide never have been exposed to the Christian gospel. These people primarily live in an area designated as World A, which spans across parts of the Middle East and Asia. Three-fourths of World A's people are illiterate or functionally illiterate. Source: SBC Foreign Mission Board

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

- **BEAVER DAM**—Beaver Dam Church ordained **Tim Karn** as a deacon.
- **BURNSIDE**—Neeleys Creek Church called **Cathy McKee** as youth director.
- **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Elk Horn Church called **Jason Clark** as ministries coordinator. Clark is a student at Campbellsville College.
- **CROMWELL**—Mount Zion Church called **Chris Dortch** as pastor. He was licensed to the gospel ministry at Beaver Dam Church.
- **ERLANGER**—The Baptist Village of Northern Kentucky will hold a cornerstone setting ceremony March 26 at 2:30 p.m. The 48-unit facility designated to offer safe, affordable housing for senior adults is scheduled to open by May 1.
- **EVARTS**—Locust Grove Church honored Pastor **Paul White** on his 10th anniversary as pastor Feb. 19. White also serves as moderator of Upper Cumberland Association.
- **FINCHVILLE**—Finchville Church called **Steve McGinnis** as associate minister to youth. He is a student at Southern Seminary.
- **GREENSBURG**—Trammell Creek Church ordained **Todd Young** as deacon Feb. 19.
- **LEXINGTON**—Immanuel Church called **Steven James** as asso-

- ciate pastor/deaf Feb. 8. Also, **Barbara Walker** was called as director of preschool ministries Feb. 1.
- **LOUISVILLE**—Evangelist Jerry Ford, native of Illinois, will be guest speaker at Auburndale Church March 19-23 at 7-8:30 p.m. Music by **Rick and Paulette Thomasson**. Call (502) 366-5681 for more information.
- Upon request of the church body, **Lee Warf** has agreed to continue as pastor of Lakewood Church. Warf previously had announced his resignation, with plans to further his education.
- **PADUCAH**—Washington Street Church celebrated its 140th anniversary Feb. 12.
- **RICHMOND**—Harris Memorial Church called **Todd Middleton** as pastor. Middleton is a student at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College.
- **SCIENCE HILL**—**Claude Mincey** resigned as interim pastor of McKinney Church Jan. 29.
- **SHELBYVILLE**—First Church ordained Youth Minister **John Mitchell** to the gospel ministry Jan. 21.
- **WADDY**—Waddy Church called **Marshall Phillips** as interim pastor.
- **WICKLIFFE**—Faith Church called **Don Presley** as pastor. Presley previously was pastor at Trinity Church in Paducah.

## CLASSIFIED ADS

**FOR SALE:** 1980 Ford bus, 48-passenger, good condition, low mileage, (502) 898-8754, pastor's phone.

**NEEDED:** Charitable organization needs clerical aids—typing, computer, filing, telephone, misc. Part/full time. Call Lu (502) 368-9093.

**SEEKING:** Interim or part-time minister of youth. If interested, send resumé to FBC, 200 S. Lincoln Blvd., Hodgenville, KY 42748-1414, or call (502) 358-3910, or after 5 p.m. 358-3746 or 737-4657.

**TOUR:** 12-day Holy Land pilgrimage into Egypt, Israel and Jordan. Sept. 12-23, only \$1,995 from Louisville, Nashville, Memphis areas. Call Pastor Jack R. Studie for a color brochure and more information (502) 247-8331. Experience you can trust!

**FOR SALE:** From our home we are still selling (since 1970) Schulmerich handbells, accessories, parts, repairing, cleaning. Also, Suzuki tonechimes and musical instruments. Write: Berrien and Elizabeth Minter, 2817 Brookdale Ave., Louisville, KY 40220-1118.

**SEEKING:** First Baptist Church of Mason, Ohio, is looking for a full-time youth and music minister. The church is medium-sized (200-250) and located near Cincinnati. Please send resumé to First Baptist Church, 735 Reading Rd., Mason, OH 45040, or call (513) 398-5816.

**SEEKING:** Young, growing SBC church (30 miles south of Charlotte, NC) is seeking a full-time minister of music and worship. Send resumé to: Covenant Baptist Church, Music/Worship Search Committee, P.O. Box 578, Lancaster, SC 29721-0578.

**SEEKING:** Central Baptist Church, Maysville, promoting Sunday school growth and missions, is seeking a pastor. Send resumé to Pastor Search Committee, 437 Central Ave., Maysville, KY 41056. For additional information call (606) 564-5939 evenings.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music for Sundays only. Please send resumé to First Baptist Church, 2910 Howard Dr., Jasper, IN.

**SEEKING:** Camp director for 1995 GA/Acteens summer camp at Cedar Crest, Bagdad, Ky. Send resumé to Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, P.O. Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433.

**TOUR:** Baptist heritage tour, Britain; July 26-Aug. 8. Cost: \$1,800. Contact Bill Leonard, Samford University, Birmingham, AL 35229. Phone (205) 870-2839.

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

## Good ground: Part I

In my last article I shared my thoughts on the parable of the "sower." (Matthew 13:1-23.)

While some of the young people who come to Oneida do not allow God's work to take root in their lives, sometimes the seed falls on "good ground." We rejoice when our efforts produce good fruit, bearing a "hundredfold."

I recently reviewed the files of some of our seniors. Over the next few weeks I want to introduce you to some of our young people who will graduate in May; some who have been "good ground." I think you will be blessed by hearing of their progress at Oneida.

The first young person (I prefer not to reveal the gender) came to us in middle school. This youth had just failed the sixth grade and had not been doing well prior to that. There had also been a history of behavioral problems in school and at home.

On the application form we had noted "all of the above" in the spot where we code personality/behavioral traits. This included rebellion, anger, belligerence, defiance, and violence.

We were also told that the young person had low self esteem and needed to find something to do that would be a source of pride.

Apparently there were no learning difficulties causing the poor grades. We were told that choosing "wrong peers" was a factor in the behavior.

At the end of the first year in our middle school, the report card showed one "D", ten "C's", 11 "B's" and nine "A's". The end of the second year brought this; one "D", seven "C's", 13 "B's", and ten "A's". As this student entered high school we continued to see progress, though there was a leveling off in some areas.

We saw an interest and involvement in some

of the many activities we offer. We also saw the potential for some of the historical problems, but we always felt good progress was being made.

For varying reasons this young person did not return to Oneida the fourth year, but re-enrolled in the former school. There were no dramatic changes in grades at first, but some of the "old" problems did begin to reappear.

Finally, after just over a year, the student returned to Oneida. By this time grades had dramatically fallen. The transcript revealed seven "D's", one "C", two "B's" and two "A's".

Some young people make good progress at Oneida but then withdraw. Some of those students do well after leaving us, but for many it is a tragedy. Often we receive frantic phone calls from parents who have withdrawn a child, wanting to re-enroll him immediately. They explain that things have fallen apart and he/she needs to return.

Fortunately for the youth in this story, the progress that had been made here quickly resumed. Involvement in extra-curricular activities has once again become a critical part of the success.

Many people have invested in this student's life.

Parents have invested finances, and have made the sacrifice of not having this youth at home.

Oneida faculty and staff have invested time, love and patience.

You also have made an investment. You support us financially, and your prayers are a constant blessing. Because of your interest, we are partners in "sowing" and "harvesting".

W.F. "Bud" Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky. 40972

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## A privilege to give

"The Lord has blessed us with a very fine life. We want to give back. By laying this gift on the altar, I trust the Lord that it may grow." With that testimony, Ralph and Mary Ann Coffman presented a charitable remainder unitrust with Clear Creek as a beneficiary.

For 15 years, Ralph helped lead Res-Care, a multimillion dollar national service agency providing care for the mentally retarded and developmentally disadvantaged. The company is in several states and at federal job corps centers. His initial investment in the company grew 10-fold. "It made good sense financially with the capital gains tax to transfer our stock to a charitable trust," Coffman said. They will receive interest from the trust until their deaths.

Clear Creek was not initially included in the trust, but providential leadership changed their minds. "We receive regular mailings from Clear Creek and had talked some about the school. We went to Lynch, Ky., to visit a friend and decided to eat lunch at Pine Mountain Lodge. We had not set out to find the school. I did not know it was on the road. The Lord does work in mysterious ways. After getting a tour of the school, we decided for sure to include Clear Creek in the trust."

Coffman's father was a painter and preacher. "With 10 children, he spent most of his time trying to feed us. Mother was a God-fearing woman who brought us up in the admonition of the Lord. My father was uneducated, but a deep thinker. When I came back from the service, he tried to get me to go to Clear Creek. I decided instead for Western Kentucky University."

Mary Ann also is a Western graduate.

As a ministerial student, Coffman anticipated a life of pastoral ministry, but the Lord led him into politics and healthcare ministry. He worked in President Johnson's War on Poverty. In Wendell Ford's administration, he was executive director of management services and on the state reorganization team. "The Lord has been a meaningful part of my life since I was converted at age 14. I've seen good results each time we've faced different challenges."

The highest accolade of his career came at his retirement. A colleague said, "The conscience of the company is leaving."

I appreciate Ralph and Mary Ann Coffmans' willingness to share their decision as an encouragement to others.

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

## Whatever happened to the understanding of sin?

By Joan Connell  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—There is an upsurge of interest in religion these days, but the market for morality appears to be flat.

Self-congratulatory spirituality and celebrations of personal salvation are in. Guilt is a sickness to be cured. And on the subject of sin, very little is said.

"Sinful" is a word more likely to describe desserts on a restaurant menu than to be applied to human behavior. And heinous crime has become entertainment, the subject of a blockbuster movie or a televised trial.

But sooner or later, theologians say, the pendulum of public consciousness will swing away from the upbeat religiosity of the moment and toward a deeper consciousness of sin. Already, religious leaders and theologians are framing new questions about the nature and consequences of sin—radical evil in society and the self.

If evil is always with us, do sins change with the times? Are nations and corporations as capable of sin as individuals?

Who is more responsible for genocide: Those who do the killing or those who stand and watch? In a political environment that seeks to limit teen pregnancy by refusing young mothers public assistance, who bears more responsibility for abortion: the pregnant child or the politician who denied her aid?

"We are stuck in sin. There is no way to extricate ourselves, even if we're essentially virtuous in our personal lives," said Lutheran theologian Ted Peters, author of "Sin: Radical Evil in Soul and Society," one of a number of new books on the subject.

"We live in a world in which people are getting hurt with a high degree of regularity," Peters said. "Whether they're religious or not, people need to attend to the nature of human sinfulness, understand it. They should not be surprised by genocide when they read about it in the paper. Sin is built into what humans do."

Each religious tradition has its own images and ideas about sin.

In Christian belief, sin slithered into a once-perfect world in the belly of a snake.

As the story is told in the Book of Genesis, Adam and Eve were tempted into transgression by Satan, who was disguised as a serpent. For most Christians, this original sin permanently flawed humankind and set up the circumstances for divine redemption by Jesus.

Islam and Judaism reject the notion of original sin, emphasizing instead the unique relationship between God and his people and the necessity of remaining faithful to Abraham's covenant. And though Christians and Muslims tend to view Satan as a source of sin, for Jews, sin is a human invention and humans alone bear the responsibility for atonement.

Christianity is founded on the notion of forgiveness, but in some traditions, there are sins that cannot be absolved.

To Muslims, denying the oneness of God is unforgivable.

Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel expressed the feeling of many Jews recently with a prayer at ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

"God of forgiveness, do not forgive those who created this place," Wiesel said. "God of mercy, have no mercy on those who killed here Jewish children."

For Buddhists, the roots of sin are ignorance and an overabundance of human desire, which create suffering in the world.

And though the tribal peoples of North America had no formal concept of sin, native culture defined as evil any willful action that violated the harmony of the natural world.

"The world is God and the natural world is a manifestation of the Great Spirit. And if there is a concept of sin

for native peoples, it is akin to the principle of karma in Asian religions," said Cornell University's Jose Barreiro, an expert on Indian culture.

In the Christian tradition, as well as in other traditions, sins change with the times, according to Calvinist theologian Cornelius Plantinga Jr., author of the new book "Not the Way It's Supposed to Be: A Breviary of Sin."

"There are things we know today that we didn't know before. It was always wrong to be anti-Semitic. To say the things about Jews that Martin Luther said was wrong. But for Christians on this side of the Holocaust, anti-Semitism is even more sinful, but not more wrong.

"As our knowledge of wrongfulness increases, so does our blameworthiness. Thus racism and ecological violence are some of the sins of our era, because our degree of culpability increases with knowledge."

Current research on possible genetic links to violent behavior, addictions and sexual orientation are raising new questions about how freely people choose behaviors that some religious traditions consider sinful.

"This is the kind of issue that will increasingly be forced upon us in theology, ethics and law," said Peters, the Lutheran theologian. "At the mo-

ment, the courts don't buy the argument that peoples' genes make them commit crimes. The larger philosophical and theological issue is, if my genes determine my behavior, at what point am I responsible or free to choose it?"

These genetic links also raise questions of new, institutional sins, according to Jesuit theologian Thomas Reese.

"If we find a genetic trait that causes people to be compulsively violent, will this enable the military to make that gene stronger? If we find out there's a gay gene, do we do genetic engineering to make sure we have no gay people?"

To questions such as these, the theologians, ethicists and legal scholars are still searching for answers. They are searching, too, for reasons why, in a world filled with desperate situations, people remain blind to their own sins and their responsibility for the sins of others.

For Marjorie Suchocki, dean of the School of Theology at Claremont, Calif., a revelation about the nature of sin occurred as she sat in a jury box and contemplated the fate of a young man facing drug charges.

"The sorry world of the crack house with its vials and white powders and guns had seemed so distant from my world," she recalled, after the jury unanimously voted the suspect guilty on all counts. "But in truth, where did that world stop and my world start? ... Where does sin and guilt start and where does it stop?"

"How is it that so many webs of violence and violation are woven into our social structures, and if they are so woven, then do they not affect all who share in society? Am I not also a participant, even through my passivity?"

### ANALYSIS

## Eve's temptation may have been an apricot

By Julia Martin  
Religious News Service

KENNEBUNK, Maine (RNS)—The "apple" in the biblical Garden of Eden may have gotten a bad rap. The fruit that God forbade Adam and Eve to eat is more likely the apricot.

That's the conclusion of Allan Swenson of Kennebunk, Maine, author of "Plants of the Bible and How to Grow Them."

The apple tree was never native to the Holy Land, Swenson said. Apples need cool temperatures and can't tolerate constantly torrid conditions.

"Considering the heat and lack of moisture in much of the Holy Land, it's most likely that the apple of the Scriptures was really the abundantly grown apricot," he said.

Swenson has published 44 books on gardening and nature, including a series for children. "Plants of the Bible" combines historical fact and scriptural references with gardening advice.

You may be passing biblical plants on your way to work or be growing them in your back yard, indoor pots or windows boxes, not realizing their heritage is deeply root-

ed in Scripture, Swenson said.

If you're not interested in testing your green thumb but want to see the blooming things of biblical reference, Swenson tells where to go all over the country.

"I got to reading the Bible one night," Swenson said in an interview, "and I began noticing the reference to plants, and I realized there could be a whole book about flowers, fruits and trees. A lot of them we don't think of as plants of the Bible—like crocus, daffodil, tulip, lily, cyclamen, hyacinth."

The Bible Swenson was reading that night had been given to him when he was a nine-year-old in a Baptist Sunday school. For his research, he read various translations of the Bible, including the King James, Douay, Moffett, Goodspeed and Jastrow.

He found they don't all agree on which plant is which. For example, one translation might call a certain plant a lily, another translation an anemone.

So Swenson went to religious colleges, botanists and biblical scholars. He discovered that no botanical names existed when the original works were translated.

"The people who did the early translations were thinking in terms of that with which they were familiar and what plant the biblical reference sounded like," Swenson said. "Some original translators said, 'It could be a lily,' and others said 'an anemone.' So in my book, I describe how to grow each."

Vegetables, however, had very specific names.

For example, cucumber, onion, leek, and garlic were all basic crops in biblical times.

Also very specific were herbs (such as dill, coriander, sage and marjoram) and trees (fig, olive, willow, walnut, poplar, oak, cedar, mulberry).

In his book, Swenson quotes the biblical passage in which each plant appears, then gives easy-to-follow advice for both the novice and experienced gardener.

Swenson's goal is to provide practical gardening knowledge, while reminding the reader of horticulture's spiritual dimension.

"As you sow your seeds and plant your trees, you, too, are a part of the continuing creation of life and beauty," he said. "We are all, in fact, gardening with God."

**"Sinful" is a word more likely to describe desserts on a restaurant menu than to be applied to human behavior.**

## Italian weddings get new rules

ROME (RNS)—First came the Ten Commandments; now a group of Catholic pastors have come up with the 18 suggestions.

The priests, all pastors of parishes in the northern diocese of Padova, were concerned about the way marriages in church had begun to resemble three-ring circuses, with photographers, video camera operators and their assistants all running around the altar to get the best angles.

Not only weddings but also baptisms, confirmations and first communion ceremonies should be filled with respect for God and the liturgy, the pastors said.

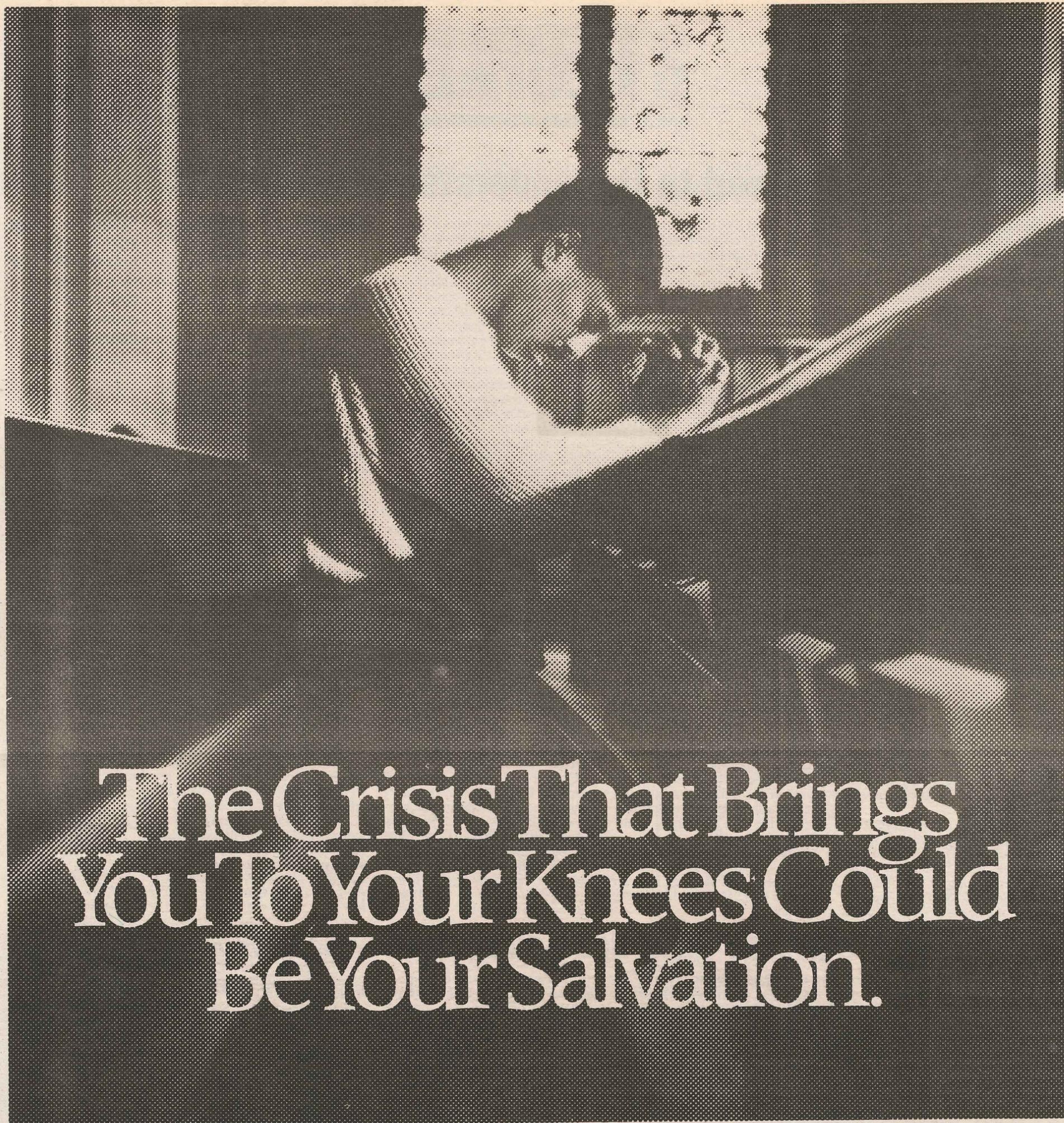
"The churches were at times being turned into a kind of theater," said Don Quintino Creuso, who drew up the 18 norms that were approved by his fellow pastors.

The regulations are valid for one area of the diocese of Padova, although Creuso said he believes they will be accepted elsewhere.

The suggestions range from the pious—participants should demonstrate a proper understanding of the Catholic faith, for example—to the practical: no garish camera lights, gaudy floral arrangements, low-cut dresses or crude wedding jokes at the church door.

Not only that, the excessive throwing of rice after the marriage ceremony runs "contrary to common sense."

"We decided that there was just too much confusion, when these should be spiritual encounters," said Don Riccardo Poletto, pastor at the church of St. Giorgio delle Pertiche.

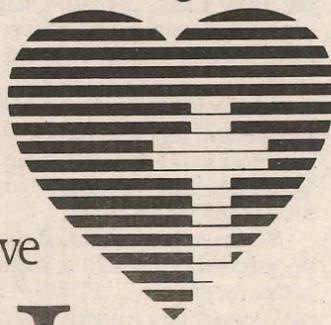


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