



WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

Immigration debate intersects missionary ideals

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

Jesus commanded his disciples to "go and teach all nations," but what if the nations come to you instead?

Does Jesus' Great Commission require Christians to roll out the welcome mat for immigrants?

More than 8 million immigrants from around the world have appeared on America's doorstep in the last decade. And, under current immigration laws, 1.1 million will continue to come knocking at the nation's door each year.

Many Southern Baptists are among a growing chorus of Americans who want to shut that door, or at least be more selective about who walks through it.

But Southern Baptist missiologists see danger in this attitude.

"We have been hypocritical," said Justice Anderson, professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "We have been anxious to send missionaries to other countries, but not as willing to minister to the immigrants among us."

Southern Baptists' entire theology of missions is on the line, he said.

Thus, it is easy for Christians individually and the church collectively to

get caught up in the "web of anger" against immigrants sweeping the country, said Bill O'Brien, director of the church is "a part of and not separate and isolated from our culture," he explained. This puts Southern Baptists in the

Are they precious in our sight?

Red, brown, yellow, black & white

mode of reflecting the culture rather than being reconciling agents, said Bill Fulkerson, assistant

Global Center at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. The problem is that the

director of language church extension with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

For example, Fulkerson recounted a conversation with a Southern Baptist woman after a he spoke on immigration in her church. She told him what he had said was "well and good but I don't want 'them' to take my husband's job."

When Fulkerson asked her if her husband's job was in jeopardy, she said it wasn't. She said she meant American jobs were in jeopardy. When he asked what jobs were threatened, she couldn't name any.

"She was repeating what she had heard," without checking the facts, he said.

It's not just the economic issues cited by popular political figures that scare Southern Baptists, but the changing face of America's religious community as well, Fulkerson said.

The increasing plurality of religions brought by immigrants is especially threatening to Baptists who don't know much about their own faith, he said.

Anderson concurred: "We're afraid of upsetting the balance-of-religions basket."

Whether Southern Baptists approve of immigrants coming to

See Immigration debate ..., page 8

Immigration
Baptists offer a unique perspective in the nation's current debate over immigration because of the connection between immigration, missions and the Bible. See pages 1, 6, 7 & 8.

Happy birthday!
Baptist Hospital East in Louisville celebrated its 20th birthday last week. See page 3.

Family Forum
Puff the Magic Dragon is so cute on the wall of the preschool suite, but is that what we want to teach at church? See page 4.

Editorial
The challenges of immigration present Christians with hard questions. See page 5.

Carver School
Students in the Carver School of Church Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary say they're caught in limbo while a decision is made about the school's future. See page 10.

Losing the South
Southern Baptists are losing ground in the South, the denominational heartland, according to a new Home Mission Board study. See page 9.



IN STITCHES Mary Dell Thompson (left) and Harriett Conn of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville work on quilts to be given away to infants and children. See story on page 3.

Child poverty in U.S. reaches highest level in 30 years

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Child poverty reached its highest level in 30 years during 1994, with one in four youngsters living below the poverty line, a children's advocacy group said March 28.

Moreover, said the Children's Defense Fund, a Washington-based private, non-profit lobbying group, one in three children can expect to fall below the federal poverty line

at some time before age 16. The poverty line for a family of three is an annual income of less than \$12,590, according to the federal Health and Human Services Department.

"These shameful numbers have small, individual faces and feelings and suffering," said Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund. In discussing

the report, she charged that Congressional efforts to dismantle existing welfare safety nets will make the problem worse.

The Children's Defense Fund study said the number of children reported abused or neglected in 1993 was almost 3 million—triple that of 1980—and that one in four homeless people in 1994 was a child under age 18.

60 percent of baptisms are rebaptisms

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

ATLANTA—More than 60 percent of adults baptized in Southern Baptist Convention churches in 1993 had been baptized before, according to a nationwide scientific survey by the SBC Home Mission Board.

Further, of those who were rebaptized, 35.8 percent were receiving their second immersion in a Southern Baptist church. Overall, rebaptism of Southern Baptists accounted for one of every five baptisms reported in the 1993 church year.

The research, reported in "A Study of Adults Baptized in Southern Baptist Churches 1993," was conducted by the HMB research division in cooperation with the HMB evangelism section. The primary purpose of the study was "to examine those influences that lead a person to a decision to follow Jesus Christ."

The survey indicates Southern Baptists may not be reaching as many "lost" adults each year as baptism statistics would indicate, the report's summary notes. "Projecting to the population, this means that of the approximately 150,000 adults baptized, only 60,000 represented conversions of the lost to Christ."

The study should "challenge any assumption that most adults baptized are recent converts," the researchers

See 60 percent ..., page 9

Moving? See page 4 (0404)

BAPTISTS

Revival comes to Illinois conference

O'FALLON, Ill. (BP)—An extended service of public confession and repentance climaxed the annual Illinois Evangelism Conference at First Baptist Church of O'Fallon, Ill., March 13-14.

What happened was similar to reports of revival coming out of Brownwood, Texas, where Sunday morning worship several weeks ago turned into an extended period of confession and repentance.

The preaching program for the final evening session of the conference was scrapped at midday, clearing the way for Brownwood pastor John Avant to tell the story of spiritual awakening that began at his church—Coggin Avenue Baptist in Brownwood.

Avant is scheduled to speak in chapel at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville April 13 at 10 a.m. He also will visit the campus of Asbury College in Wilmore, where the famous Asbury Revival

occurred in 1970.

At the Illinois meeting, Avant concluded his story by saying: "As I've said everywhere I've gone, 'Do whatever God tells you to do.' James 5:16 is a hard verse. It says, 'Confess your sins one to another that you may be healed.'"

"The microphone is open," he said as he stepped away from the pulpit. "It may be that the key in your life to revival is putting away the pride. Do what God wants you to do. The altar is open."

Immediately, people began weeping; many knelt at the altar to pray. Others made their way to the platform to confess sin, ask forgiveness and request prayer. Still others clustered in small prayer groups in other parts of the auditorium.

Adults and teens confessed to specific sins of adultery, premarital sexual activity, homosexual behavior and addiction to pornography. Others sought forgiveness for bitter-

ness in personal relationships—in families and in churches.

A director of missions apologized for criticizing members of the Illinois Baptist State Association staff: A pastor confessed that in more than 20 years of marriage, he had failed to be the spiritual leader of his home. Another committed himself to try to salvage a troubled marriage. All asked for prayer.

The pastor of a church that started nearly 25 years ago when members split from another church said God had convicted him that the two churches needed reconciliation to erase longstanding bitterness. Members of the other church joined him at the microphone and prayed with him.

Nearly five hours into the session, Avant invited the audience—many standing around the altar—to briefly voice matters of confession from the floor. After several did so, a benediction closed the service.

Fellowship to quit using Annuity Board

ATLANTA (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship announced March 27 it will transfer retirement and insurance plans for its employees and 62 missionaries from the Southern Baptist Annuity Board to the Minister and Ministries Benefit Board of the American Baptist Churches in the USA.

The move was negotiated because of growing concern that the Dallas-based Annuity Board would be pressured by Southern Baptist Convention leaders to drop coverage for the Fellowship, an alternative missions-delivery agency for moderate Southern Baptists, said Fellowship Coordinator Cecil Sherman.

SBC leaders have "resolutely sought to force those of us in CBF from every nook and cranny of the Southern Baptist house we helped build," Sherman said. Recent actions by the SBC Executive Committee, Sherman continued, "have made it clear that a decision to exclude us from participation in the Annuity Board is not a matter of 'if' but 'when.'"

The American Baptist "M & M Board," as it is commonly called, will offer employee benefits to the Fellowship "in response to the critical needs of our Baptist colleagues in the ministry of Jesus Christ," said Daniel Weiss, ABC general secretary. The benefits are offered with no stipulation about organizational ties to the 1.5 million-member ABC.

The decision "is consistent" with a tradition of providing benefits to staff members of "recognized Baptist organizations" including the Alliance of Baptists, the Baptist Joint Committee, the Progressive National Baptist Convention and the Baptist World Alliance, Weiss said.

Sherman said he has written Annuity Board President Paul Powell to inform him the Fellowship will end its relationship with the Annuity Board by July 1.

Thomas Miller, senior vice president for public relations at the Annuity Board, said he had no comment about the change.

The offer by American Baptists to open their program to the Fellowship extends only to the Fellowship's staff and missionaries, and not to the churches that support its work, said Gary Skeen, the Fellowship's financial coordinator. However, current ABC policies do permit participation by churches which are dually aligned with the ABC, he said.

Foundation's work would be 'transferred'

NASHVILLE (BP)—While the Southern Baptist Foundation would be among seven agencies eliminated in a proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, "transferred" is a more applicable description, according to a member of the committee recommending the SBC-wide changes. The foundation could be transferred to, or become a subsidiary corporation of, the SBC Executive Committee, said Bill Hall, one of seven members of the study committee recommending the structural changes. Hall is a registered investment adviser from San Clemente, Calif. The Foundation would cease to be a separate SBC agency with its own SBC-elected trustees, Hall said, but its work otherwise would continue, perhaps under the supervision of an Executive Committee subgroup. The Foundation provides investment and trust services for Baptist agencies, institutions, foundations and individuals. Current assets are approximately \$176 million. The Executive Committee subgroup would not manage funds or make stock purchases and other specific investments, Hall noted. Rather, they would decide on policy and money managers, based on appropriate input they gather, he said.

Charles Stanley's wife refiles for divorce

ATLANTA (BP)—Anna Stanley has re-filed for divorce from Charles Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta and president of the Southern Baptist Convention president in 1985-86.

According to a complaint filed March 20, Mrs. Stanley is seeking a jury trial for the divorce, alimony, division of their assets and possession of their north Atlanta home.

An April 24 hearing date in Cobb County Superior Court has been set, according to an order by Clerk of Court Jay Stephenson.

Mrs. Stanley's complaint for divorce states, "There is no reasonable hope of reconciliation despite plaintiff (Mrs. Stanley) having made every effort to effect one."

A statement from an "accountability team," formed of First Baptist Church members to work with the Stanleys, reported Mrs. Stanley

withdrew from the reconciliation process and contact with the team in August 1994, "shortly before joint counseling sessions were to begin."

Team member and Chairman of Deacons Guy Mosier announced Mrs. Stanley's actions to the church March 29. "We are grieved by the content of this report and ask for your earnest prayers on a daily basis for Dr. and Mrs. Stanley and the reconciliation of their marriage to the glory of God," he said.

Stanley also made a brief statement before the congregation spent more than 45 minutes in prayer for reconciliation.

"I continue to oppose this action as I have from the beginning," he said. "It is my desire that Anna and I be reconciled."

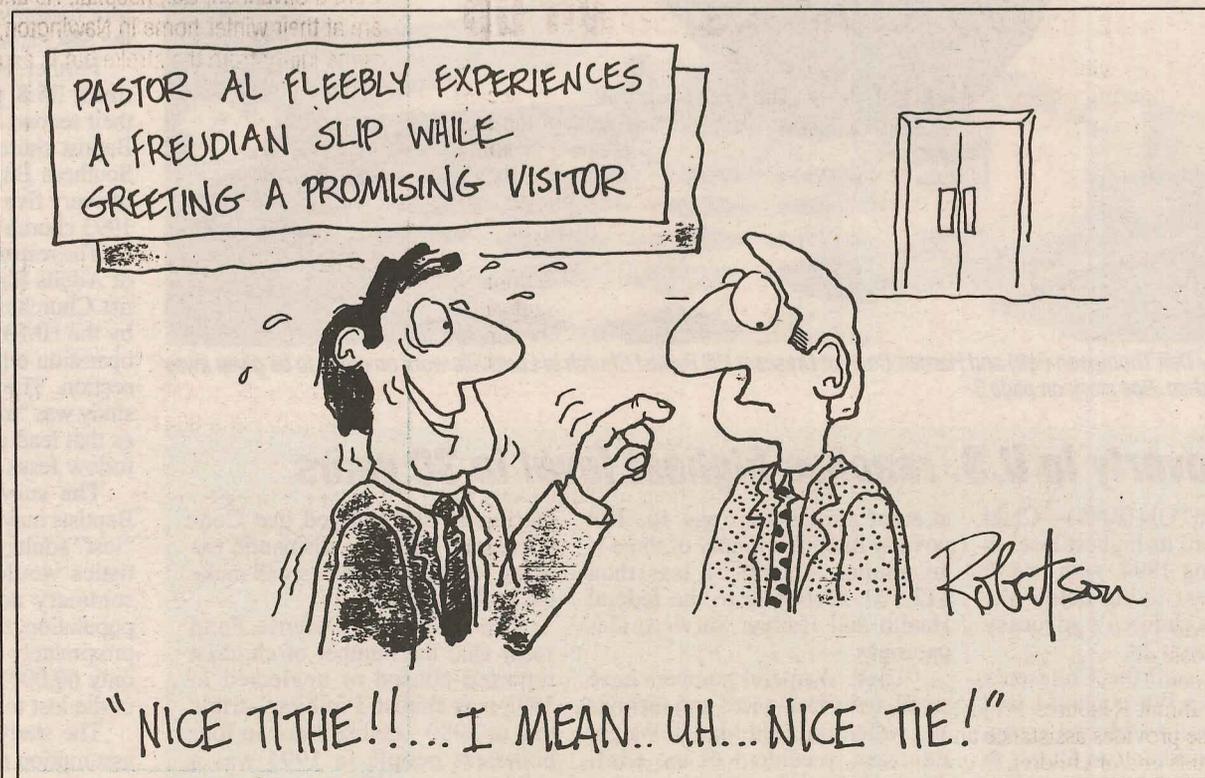
The accountability team's statement reports Stanley will continue as senior pastor of First Baptist Church

and maintain his responsibilities for In Touch Ministries, a separate entity that broadcasts Stanley's sermons on television and radio.

In a statement released through her attorney March 30, Mrs. Stanley said she "deeply" regrets the marriage has failed.

"Over the past two years, I have worked hard to save my marriage with Charles," the statement said. "During this time I knew reconciliation would be possible only if Charles made some significant changes in his life and valued the changes that I was making in mine. Unfortunately neither has happened."

Mrs. Stanley originally filed for divorce in June 1993. Within three weeks, however, that was withdrawn and a new complaint filed support payments while the two were separated.



KENTUCKY

Baptist Hospital East celebrates 20th birthday

LOUISVILLE—Baptist Hospital East in Louisville celebrated its 20th anniversary last week.

The first patient was admitted to the hospital March 31, 1975. The \$17 million facility subsequently replaced the old Kentucky Baptist Hospital in downtown Louisville.

The health-care enterprise has grown from 121 beds on opening day to 407 beds today, making Baptist East the area's third-largest hospital.

Today, Baptist Hospital East employs 2,250 people, making it the Louisville area's 13th-largest employer, with a \$53 million payroll.

The hospital offers a wide range of services, including emergency care, general medical care, cardiac care and rehabilitation, a cancer center, outpatient services, WomanCare plaza and physical therapy program.

The anniversary celebration evoked many memories of the hospital's early days.

For example, maternity services were moved from Kentucky Baptist Hospital to Baptist Hospital East when it opened. But that transition couldn't happen in just one day.

"We had to maintain staff at both

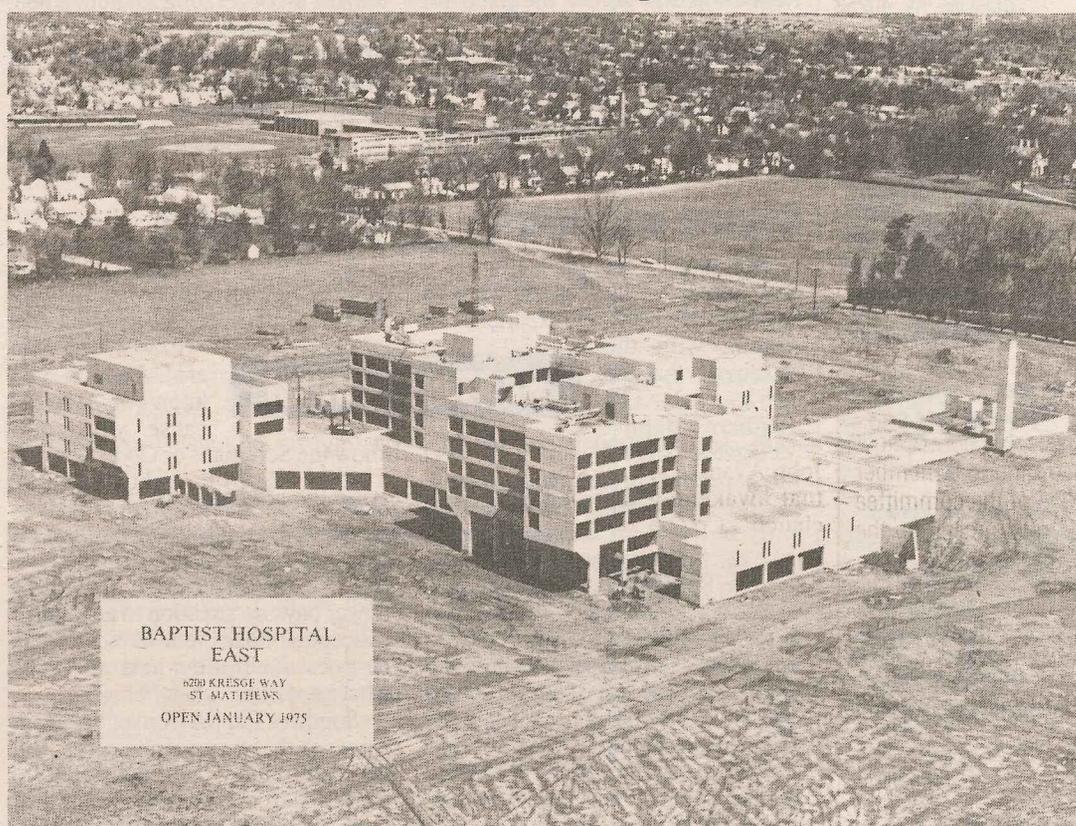
places for a couple of days until patients were either discharged or admitted to Baptist East," recalled Shirley Blanton, a nurse recruiter who at that time was postpartum nurse manager. "In those days, new mothers stayed in the hospital about five or six days after a normal delivery and longer for a C-section."

Even without quick transfers of patients from the old hospital to the new, it didn't take long for Baptist Hospital East to fill up its new maternity ward. "By 48 hours after we opened, we had 34 babies—a full house," Blanton said.

Baptist Hospital East was built on the J. Graham Brown horse farm in the St. Matthews community of eastern Jefferson County. Major donors for the project include Brown, a Louisville entrepreneur, and S.A. Kresge of Birmingham, Mich.

Baptist Hospital East is one of five hospitals in the Baptist Healthcare System family. Others are located in LaGrange, Corbin, Paducah and Lexington.

LOOKING BACK The new Baptist Hospital East facility under construction 20 years ago.



Publication of 1994 KBC Annual delayed

Publication of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's 1994 Annual has been delayed due to the re-engineering of the way churches report their year-end statistics.

The Annual, which includes vast amounts of statistical data from Kentucky Baptist churches, normally is mailed statewide in early April. But this year it probably won't be mailed until mid-summer, said Jim Hawkins, KBC executive associate.

This is a one-time change and not a permanent result of the new way statistics are gathered from churches, he said.

The Annual Church Profile has replaced the old Uniform Church Letter as the primary statistical reporting device of Southern Baptist churches to

their associations, state conventions and the national convention. The first year of the new form has created some unexpected delays, Hawkins said.

The new reporting process—from church to association to KBC to Sunday School Board—requires checking reports at church and associational levels since accuracy can best be verified by those closest to the original information, he explained.

"Since the 1994 statistics will establish a new baseline for future comparisons, we want to be sure the churches and associations have a final review before we go to press," Hawkins said.

Also, a number of Kentucky churches have not submitted an An-

nual Church Profile for 1994, he said.

Because this year's data will be used to establish a new baseline, estimates of those churches' data based on previous years are not desired, Hawkins added.

"When churches do not report, the totals are decreased and actual baptisms, for example, are reported lower than they really are. That fact alone should motivate us to get complete reports," he said.

Hawkins said he hopes the review process will be completed by May 8, so the annuals can be printed and mailed during the summer.

For additional information about the Annual Church Profile form or publication of the KBC Annual, call Hawkins at (502) 245-4101.

Crescent Hill women have missions sewn up

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—A Kentucky Baptist church women's group is keeping its mission activities under wraps.

In less than two years, 20 women from Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville have cut, pieced, sewn, tied and given away about 80 quilts to infants and children in the area.

Most of the women are members of the Gaventa Circle—a Woman's Missionary Union group at Crescent Hill named after a missionary to Nigeria. The circle meets regularly for missions education, prayer, fellowship and ministry.

Louise Goff, a retired nurse and longtime member of the church, coordinates the group's quilting activities.

She first got the idea during the spring of 1992. "A lady gave me quite a few yards of material and said, 'Here, Louise, take this and see what

you can do with it,'" Goff explained.

"I got a brainstorm looking at it," and realized the potential to turn it into a ministry opportunity, she said.

Although she had sewn most of her life, she never had quilted before, she said. "So I went to the library and started reading."

That was 80 quilts ago. She began with seven crib-size quilts for newborns—cutting the squares and piecing them together. Then she took them to the circle meeting, and the other women assisted by tying together the "sandwich" of two outer layers of pieced squares with an inner lining.

It didn't take long for the women to streamline the process so they could work simultaneously on several quilts in various stages of completion.

Most of the quilts have been given to local agencies: Baptist Fellowship Center, Home of the Innocents and the Infant Resource Project. Each of these provides assistance and care for infants and/or children in crisis situa-

tions.

The sizes of the quilts vary according to the need, and most of them are a combination of prints and solids, Goff explained. "We generally use dark colors for older children, and prettier, lighter colors for infants," she said.

Almost all the material is donated. A box with collected sewing material and lining seems never to be empty, she said. "The more we pull out of it, the more that seems to be in there."

The Gaventa group meets regularly to study about and pray for mission work around the world. Whenever they have a group of quilts ready for the next step, they'll make time in their program for that, too, Goff said. Naturally, good food and fellowship are part of each gathering, as well.

"Our mission is to keep the babies warm," she said of the two-year project. "We hope they tell them where the quilts are coming from," so families will know they were sewn out of Christian love and concern.

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Urgent needs.** Volunteers are needed urgently for two partnership missions projects in Utah and Idaho this summer. One need is for vacation Bible school teams to work with Pine Ridge Baptist Church in Komiah, Idaho, any time between June and August. Another need is for workers at New Beginning Baptist Church in Panquitch, Utah, July 24-28. For details, call the Kentucky Baptist Convention partnership missions office at (502) 245-4101.

■ **Lewis to speak.** Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, will speak at First Baptist Church of LaCenter April 23 at 10:50 a.m.

■ **Daley recovering from stroke.** C.R. Daley, editor emeritus of the Western Recorder, is recovering from a stroke suffered in early March. Daley was released last week from a Savannah, Ga., hospital. He and his wife, Christine, are at their winter home in Newington, Ga. Daley suffered some injury from the stroke but is expected to regain most of his mobility. No date has been set for the Daleys to return to their home in Louisville. Correspondence may be addressed to 416 Hudson Ferry Rd. Newington, Ga. 30446-9700.

■ **Pitino at Georgetown.** Rick Pitino, head basketball coach at the University of Kentucky, will speak on "Building High-Performance Temporary Teams" at Georgetown College April 17. The 8 p.m. lecture is a fundraising event for the Baptist college. Tickets are \$20 and may be purchased by calling (502) 863-8041.

■ **Church ministry conference set.** Campbellsville College will offer a conference on "Creating New Models of Ministry for the Third Millennium" April 27 at 11 a.m. Presenters include Dan Hunt, pastor of Elk Horn Baptist Church in Campbellsville; David Henderson, minister of education at Campbellsville Baptist Church; and Ted Taylor, assistant professor of Christian studies at the college. For registration information, call (502) 789-5190.

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

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Real choice

Real "choice" is not after-the-fact. Real choice is before the need for abortion.

We may hide from people, but as true Christians, we cannot hide from God, who has final judgment.

Wallace Arterburn
Scottsville

Baptist principles

Bill Moyers' comments on a recent network news program were on target. It has been my experience in dealing with the "takeover" that the rank-and-file Southern Baptist "delegates" were "ignorant of what was happening or just did not care."

Michael Morrow says, "The majority in Southern Baptist churches have elected delegates to the convention" (WR, March 14). That comment proves what I am saying. Baptist polity is not supposed to be a democracy. We don't elect delegates, but messengers. These messengers do not vote the will of the church that sends them, but are supposed to vote as they feel led of the Holy Spirit after hearing the debate on the floor. The Baptist principle is consensus.

Let me change gears, please! I am deeply disturbed by the reconstructing of the Southern Baptist Convention. It looks like the fundamentalists are finally imposing on the convention the Methodist/Presbyterian form of denominational headquarters. This is the first step in the destruction of the autonomy of the local church. We

will have to believe what the headquarters sends down and implement the programs from headquarters if we remain a cooperating church. Then, whatever pronouncement Christian Life Commission head Richard Land makes personally will truly be what Southern Baptists say. Not for me!

Rodger D. Eakin
Fulton

Is it too late?

It was only the other day that my Sunday school class was reading Jesus' remark to the Sadducees: "How wrong you are! And do you know why? It is because you don't know the Scriptures or God's power."

John Calvin thought to capture God's power in his box of five statements. Dr. Al Mohler also has his box, called an Abstract of Principles. But if I understand John 3:8, God's power pays no attention to any man's conceptual boxes, but like the wind, he goes where he wants and does what he wishes, when he wishes.

Southern Baptist Convention leaders write that they plan to serve. But they talk mainly of responsibility to them, and from many past events they intend hard usage for those not cooperating with them. Also, their actions are focused presently on political, not church, goals. Is all this better described by Matthew 23:8-12, or by secular politics?

Have we decided to name a creed, or a statement of "principles," or an organization, master beyond the Holy Spirit? Then have we become only

one more cult; and our ancestors and children will be our accusers. Is it too late to relearn Revelation 22:18-19, John 3:8, Matthew 23:8-12, and even Exodus 19:5-6, Scriptures that describe God's power?

Lewis V. Spencer
Hopkinsville

Equal protection

Al Mohler's forced resignation of Diana Garland illustrates injustice arising from power unchecked. U.S. citizens, via the Constitution, are protected from such injustice. Employees at religious institutions are not.

If Mohler were operating in a business setting, his oppressive tactic of forced resignation would be checked by the employee's 14th Amendment rights to equal protection of the laws.

As for freedom of conscience, Justice Thurgood Marshall said it best in the Supreme Court decision Rankin vs. McPherson: "Vigilance is necessary to ensure that public employers do not use authority over employees to silence discourse, not because it hampers public functions, but simply because superiors disagree with the content of employees' speech."

I believe in the separation of church and state, and yet, while this Supreme Court decision was directed toward public employers, I wonder why Al Mohler does not voluntarily affirm the human dignity of free conscience for his employees.

Mohler ought to heed Marshall's wisdom, and citizens ought not take liberty for granted.

Jeff Chandler
Louisville

No longer alone

With thoughts of Easter and Resurrection just before us, Dr. Larry Martin shared with me the following editorial published March 1 by the editor and publisher of The Cherokee Citizen of Canon, Ga.

"For a long time—indeed most of my life—I've felt the work I do is more important than who I am. It didn't matter what that work was—my days in the Marine Corps, or working for newspapers, or working for printing companies, or other activities I have been involved in—I derived my self-worth from my work. If it meant working 10 or 12 or 15 or even 18 hours a day, it didn't matter much to me. I simply wanted to be known as one of the best at what I did.

"Events in the past few weeks, however, have finally made me realize that what I was doing was hiding behind a mask. If 'they' looked at the work, perhaps they wouldn't notice me. Now I find my work being attacked. So, I've had to take a look at myself and finally admit I've never really liked myself that much.

"I've never been particularly religious. I've always known there was a God, but usually I (deliberately) didn't try to think too much about it. I felt, and acted, that as long as I did the right thing, didn't go out of my way to hurt anyone, and as long as I tried to help people, it would be enough.

"I've managed to go through most

of my life as being someone who is generally liked (I hope), but with very few friends. As I have found out though, there has been something missing from my life. I didn't know what that something was.

"My wife had finally given up hope of my ever turning to God. Several months ago, we agreed (or I told her) there didn't appear to be much hope for our marriage. We had grown so far apart, it didn't seem anything could ever bring us back together again.

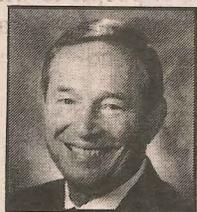
"With events of the past few weeks though, in desperation, I turned to her. To my amazement, she didn't turn away. (To be honest, if our positions were reversed, I doubt I could have supported her as she has supported me.) We engaged in the first conversation of more than a few

minutes in years. She handed me a Bible, and pointed out some passages. I have avoided reading from the Bible as much as I could. Yet I found myself being strangely drawn to those words.

"That first night, I read Matthew. That first night, we prayed together for the first time in our 14-year relationship and 10 years of marriage. Actually she did the praying because I didn't know how to pray.

"I also called our former pastor, Sanford Williard, who is now pastor at Maple Avenue Methodist Church in Marietta. I probably had not been to our old church to hear Sanford more than a few times, but he did not

ON MISSION TOGETHER



William W. Marshall



FAMILY FORUM: CHILDREN

Fantasy vs. theology

By Jewell Nelson

Puff the Magic Dragon is so cute on the wall of the preschool suite, but is that what we want to teach at church?

Mickey Mouse napkins are so cute for snack time, but is that what we want to teach at church?

Christmas is Santa time, so why not bring in the Santa motif? Is that what we really want to teach at church?

The Easter Bunny and Easter eggs are certainly part of Easter and childhood, but is that what we want to teach about spring and new beginnings at church?

Fairy tale pictures and books are so cute, but can young children separate Mother Goose fantasy from the theology of Jesus?

Teaching theology to anyone is not easy. Teaching theology, or spiritual and religious beliefs, to children is an awesome responsibility. Mixing in fantasy can only weaken the seriousness of theology.

Preschoolers and children spend so little time in the church building. But away from church, they are excessively exposed to promotions of make-believe and fantasy.

But who will teach the Bible? Make every minute at church count for Christ:

■ Remove "make-believe" characters from the walls and other places in the preschool and children's areas. TV, the mall, grandparents and others will educate in make-believe. But who will teach the Bible?

■ The Southern Baptist curriculum uses eight content areas in teaching young children about the Bible. Those areas are God, Jesus, Bible, church, natural world, family, self and others. Pictures from these areas enhance what teachers are to teach about the Bible. Fantasy pictures do not.

■ Young children are literal-minded. To mix fantasy and theology only adds to the difficulty of learning Bible truths.

Easter is near. At church celebrate the beauty of spring, and not the Easter Bunny. The Easter Bunny will be everywhere. Preschoolers are not ready for Christ on the Cross and Resurrection. They are ready to learn about and enjoy the newness of spring, and God's beautiful world.

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.

Challenges of immigration present hard questions

California's Proposition 187 signalled seething undercurrents of resentment in our nation. The new law would clamp down on the limited number of public benefits available to illegal immigrants in the Golden State. Beyond mere legalities, it scapegoats society's woes upon the backs of a single class of people.

Of course, the problems of immigration, legal or otherwise, do not impact the nation evenly. The majority of immigrants settle in only four states—California, Florida, New York and Texas. The intensity of immigration in these states creates challenges that are more acute than those felt in inland states, such as Kentucky, Kansas or Wyoming. Nevertheless, proposals in Congress suggest immigration is a national issue.

But beyond mere legalities, immigration is an issue of profound consequences for Christian citizens. Staff Writer Joyce Sweeney Martin has prepared a package of articles (beginning on page 1 of this Western Recorder) that define the challenges and opportunities of immigration today.

Immigration is not a new occurrence. Abraham and Sarah, the father and mother of Judeo-Christian religion, were immigrants into Canaan. Their grandson Jacob and his offspring migrated to Egypt seeking food during famine. Four centuries later, their offspring migrated back into the Promised Land. Small wonder that Old Testament ethics brims with concern for the wayfarer or stranger. Centuries later, Jesus put a face on the law. When asked, "Who is my neighbor?" he told a tale of ethnic strife overcome by uncommon compassion. He also said his followers would show their love for him by helping "the least of these" among them—the poor, the abandoned, the strangers.

So, issues important to immigration transcend mere legalities. Martin's research on immigration indicates Christians must answer hard questions if we're going to make a positive impact. Among them:

■ Who is "different" in America today?

We're a nation of immigrants, with the exception of a tiny and shrinking minority of Native Americans. At one point or another, the rest of us came from someplace else. That fact has been obscured by intermarriage among the majority white-skinned people from Europe. But as we become a nation of minorities—with no race or ethnic group in the clear majority—we must come to terms with the reality that we're all "different" yet equal.

■ Can Christianity withstand an increasing plurality of religions?

This question is not merely speculative. The courts are dealing with an increasing number of cases which pit a majoritarian "Christian" perspective over against minority religious practices. Unfortunately, legal restraint on minority religion ultimately strangles all religion. Rather than seeking solutions in courtrooms, Christians must find them among the people. We can look to our past for guidance. In the late 1800s, Baptist "saint" Annie Armstrong started women's ministries among the throngs of immigrants into Baltimore. Baptists eased the physical suffering of newcomers as they demonstrated the compelling Christian love of their faith.

Those challenges are magnified today. Immigrants settle across the country, bringing many more religious faiths to these shores than did

their European predecessors of Annie Armstrong's day. Still, the compelling love of Christ is the best response to challenges of new people with unique beliefs. Some will be converted by experiencing Christian love. That's why ethnic congregations are the fastest-growing segment of the Southern Baptist Convention. And even immigrants who will not embrace Christianity deserve protection to freely practice their faith.

■ Is "us vs. them" a Christian notion?

A key tenet of the Christian understanding of our world is that all people are created in the image of God. So, while we may acknowledge our observable differences—skin color, language, culture and even religious belief—we must realize each individual person is a reflection of the image of God. That makes hate crime, bigotry, intolerance and discrimination sins against God. And sin in any form certainly isn't a Christian virtue.

■ Can Christians sympathize with immigrants and still support cuts in immigration rates and benefits for immigrants?

Competing values pull at us. On one hand, news reports have demonstrated the crippling burden immigration has placed upon the stress points—southern Florida and the borders Texas and California share with Mexico. On the other hand, we also have seen the contrasts between the United States' relative wealth and bountiful freedom and the poverty and repression of many Third World nations. Christians and other people of compassion have a hard time looking at suffering without wanting to help. Perhaps solutions should focus on both sides of national borders. Can we help immigrant nations alleviate the forces that push their people toward our borders? And can we as a nation of 50 states lend support to the three or four whose immigrant burden is harshest?

■ What is the challenge of being "geographically close but culturally different"?

Missions strategist Bill O'Brien poses this question, which is particularly difficult in a home-grown state like Kentucky. Most of us are not accustomed to ethnic and cultural differences. Our first crisis with newcomers is communication—getting past language and, more importantly, cultural barriers that keep us from understanding each other. Communication requires time, as well as intentional effort to explain perspectives and values. Since many immigrants come from cultures which value family and community, perhaps a good place to start is by building upon our common ties to those important commitments. Compared to those, the differences between skin color and taste in food are almost insignificant.

■ Do our churches have existing ministries that could assist immigrants? If not, why?

Remember the Old Testament's commands to welcome the stranger. And recall Jesus' many acts of mercy toward the needy, the unfortunate, the outsiders. By establishing ministries to immigrants, our churches can meet the real, tangible needs of people to whom Jesus would minister. We can demonstrate Christian love and compassion to people who might never accept our verbal witness. And we can be beacons of loving acceptance to our entire communities.

Marv Knox

Political rhetoric seems to dominate the issue of immigration in America. Beyond the debate, however, are people—hundreds of thousands of them. The commands of the Old Testament and the example of Christ dictate that Christians focus on those people and their needs, whatever the outcome of the political battles.

You won't need ESPN to keep up with 'real' baseball this season

No matter what the weatherperson brings upon us this week, spring finally has sprung.

March enjoyed its madness, leaving all but the chosen few dreaming of better hoops next year. Just last weekend, daylight savings time pulled the sun into the evening, where it belongs. And baseball season arrived, just weeks behind schedule.

All across this land of ours, the harbingers of spring are pouring neatfoot compound into the palms of dry leather gloves. They're digging bats out of the backs of closets. And they're checking the laces of countless cleats.

But I must confess spring sprung in consternation rather than elation this year. With mortgages due on their mansions, yachts

and Mercedes, the owners and players of major league baseball decided they'd grace us lowly fans with another season. Their greed and pettiness caused this season to start out flatter than last year's soda pop.

Some say baseball's a game for boys who refuse to grow up, and I believe they're exactly right. The strike, negotiations and settlement remind me of a forestalled game a group of guys tried to play they owned the only ball on the block, and it was Sunday, and the store was closed, the

We gathered on the vacant lot at the corner of Grinnell and North First streets.

Jimmy Deutchendorff, the Parkers, the Scotts, and the Lunceford kid all showed up. As we chose up sides, a dispute arose between the oldest Scott and the oldest Parker. I think it was over who had to take the Lunceford kid, who was younger—and slower—than everybody else.

At any rate, the Scotts got mad, took their ball and went home. And since

game ended before it started. So, nobody had fun that beautiful spring afternoon.

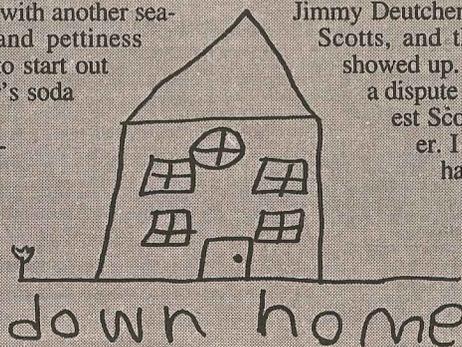
That's sort of how the baseball strike went, except the "ball" these players and owners took home from August until April was worth more than the gross national product of most Third World countries.

But those guys are just dandelions on the green grass of life, as far as this spring goes.

Really beautiful baseball will be played on kid-sized diamonds and high school parks all across the country.

I'm going to root for youngsters who play the game for the fun of feeling a ball ricochet off a bat, whose only pay is a snow-cone after the game.

Marv Knox



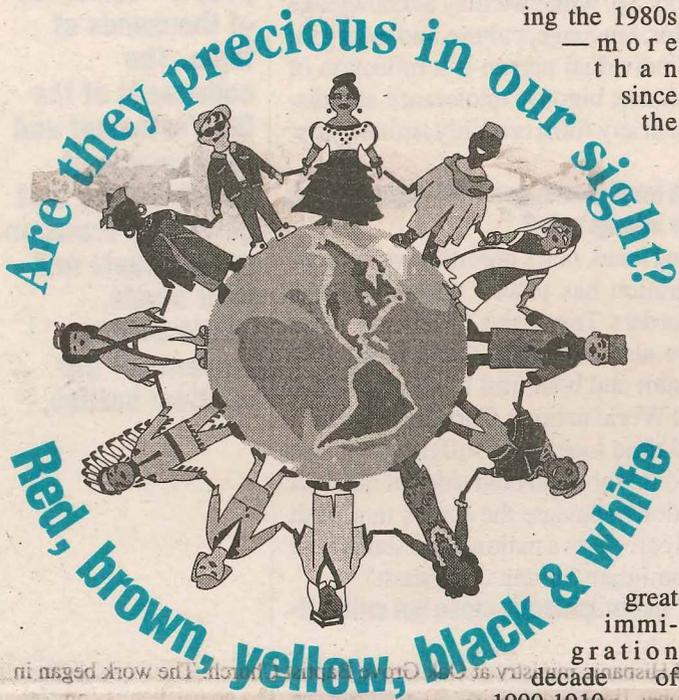
Immigrants caught in Americans' 'web of anger'

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

Immigration has been identified as the most important trend shaping the future of the United States, just as a time many Americans believe immigrants are wearing out their welcome.

More than 8.7 million people from all over the world poured into the United States during the 1980s

— more than since the



great immigration decade of 1900-1910.

But 61 percent of Americans see that level of immigration as bad for the country, according to a 1993 New York Times/CBS News poll. In 1986, when the same question was asked, 46 percent favored a decrease in immigration. In 1965, only 33 percent favored a decrease.

Although Kentucky has not felt the full force of this influx, pockets of ethnicity now can be found from the city streets of Louisville to the county seat towns of Eastern Kentucky and the factories of West Kentucky, said Tony Hough, the Kentucky Baptist Convention's language church extension director.

Even in a state which is the second-least ethnically diverse in the country, pockets of resistance to immigration can be found as well, Hough said. As an example, he cited tensions in south Louisville late last year over an increasing number of Vietnamese, Iraqi, Somalias and Bosnians in the area.

Xenophobia—the fear or hatred of strangers—lies just below the surface in many Kentucky communities, he said.

Pat Howard, international ministries director for Warren Baptist Association, agreed that many Kentuckians resent ethnics moving into their towns. However, she does see evidence of positive change.

"Immigrants are accepted more readily into our community" more than in any of the previous 20 years she has worked with ethnics, Howard said.

In spite of isolated cases of open hostility to immigrants, "Kentucky is friendly to newcomers," said Eduardo Mansilla, director of World Neighbors of Louisville and Hispanic pastor at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville. Mansilla, who came from Argentina four years ago to attend the Carver School of Church Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has found that in general, the "mindset is open and the attitude good."

Jesus Pacheco, a KBC language consultant who works with migrant farm workers in Shelby and Henry counties, agreed with Mansilla's assessment.

"We are welcome and appreciated here," Pacheco said. Relationships between farmers and workers are "excellent," he said.

And in West Kentucky, retired missionary Dottie Lane of Hopkinsville, who works with spouses of Japanese executives, said her community "welcomes" the Japanese. And in turn, the Japanese "really like" and appreciate Christian County.

Historically, every wave of immigration has presented challenges and

has had its backlash. However, several new factors have been added this time around, according to three Southern Baptists who are knowledgeable on immigration issues.

"We are in a general retrenchment period in our country," said Justice Anderson, professor of missions at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"There is a revival of isolationism. Many people just don't want to deal with the complex problems of living in the world arena," Anderson said.

"We seem to be sending a strong message that democracy and security and freedom are only for us and not for the rest of the world," added Bill Fulkerson, director of the Home Mission Board's refugee resettlement office.

Bill O'Brien, director of the Global Center at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., senses "a lot of frustration about the social and economic problems in the United States."

Immigrants are getting caught in a "web of anger" as the American-born increasingly blame foreigners for any problem which seems too overwhelming to solve, O'Brien said. A whole body of myths and false information has developed as immigrants have become "easy targets to beat up on," he said.

Further, this wave of immigrants has been primarily Asian and Hispanic and not European, Fulkerson said. "They are more easily singled out."

In addition, Fulkerson said events of the last few years have fueled the fire:

■ The bombing of the World Trade Center and the arrest of Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman in New York City in 1993.

■ The grounding of the Golden Venture, an alien-smuggling ship filled with nearly 300 Chinese immigrants, in June 1993.

■ The large number of Cuban and Haitian boat people who have come to Florida in recent years.

■ The continuing flow of Hispanics across the border from Mexico.

Like many national trends, this anti-immigration backlash began and has been most intense in California. Last November, Californians passed Proposition 187, which would prohibit undocumented immigrants from receiving education, social services and non-emergency medical care, and would require public officials to report anyone they suspect of being illegal.

Although Proposition 187 is now tied up in the courts, it has sparked a national debate. Seven states currently are considering similar measures, and Congress is considering denying welfare benefits to most legal immigrants as well.

At the core of the anti-immigration mood is a re-emerging racism, Fulkerson, Anderson and O'Brien said.

"As a nation we haven't dealt with black/white racist attitudes, so our prejudices are emerging in new forms," Fulkerson said.

He fears the anti-immigration spirit is "starting out the same way as the anti-Jewish movement began in Nazi Germany. 'Blame for economic conditions, racial pride with certain groups being considered 'less than desirable, less than American' and the move to stop all immigration" have a familiar ring, he said.

Today, more than 200 years after the first immigrants came to her shores, America faces the crisis of a "still-emerging nationhood with a puzzle of cultural diversities," Oscar Romo said in the book "American Mosaic: Ethnic Church Planting in America."

The migration which began with the Conquistadors was followed by the Pilgrims, then by Latin Americans, and now by those from the Pacific Rim nations, said Romo, who recently retired after leading Southern Baptists' language missions work for 30 years.

"It would be well for us, as we continue to move through the 1990s, to remember once again that the United States is a nation of immigrants, a tapestry of cultures and traditions and languages," Romo said.

■ Since 1975, Southern Baptists have resettled more than 20,000 refugees from Afghanistan, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Cuba, Laos, Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Romania, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Bosnia, Somalia and Liberia.

■ In 1994, Southern Baptists started 112 churches and missions among refugees. As a result of refugee resettlement and ministry, more than 500 churches and missions have begun since 1975.

■ A new Korean Southern Baptist church is begun every five days; there are more than 800 in the United States.

■ The Southern Baptist Convention is the largest Spanish-speaking evangelical religious group in the world.

■ In 1993, Southern Baptist ethnic congregations gave more than \$20 million to missions.

■ In 1993, Southern Baptist language-culture congregations reported 24,004 professions of faith in Jesus Christ.

FACTS & MYTHS

Myth: Immigrants end up on welfare.

Fact: Immigrants do not receive welfare.

Refugees qualify for federal financial aid only for their first eight months in the United States.

However, because many refugees have American sponsors, they don't apply for aid.

About 95 percent are working within three months. Fully 80 percent are self-supporting within two to five years.

Undocumented cannot receive welfare, unemployment or Social Security. They do receive emergency medical care and access to public education.

Myth: Immigrants use services without paying for them.

Fact: Immigrants, refugees and undocumented pay more in sales taxes, income taxes and Social Security

taxes than they receive in benefits. However, about two-thirds of the taxes they pay are federal while most health, education and social service costs are state and local.

Myth: Immigrants come to the United States to live off the United States.

Fact: For the most part, people from other countries come to work, not to sponge.

Myth: Immigrants are overrunning the country.

Fact: As of 1990, about 8 percent of the U.S. population was foreign born. Annually, 1.1 million immigrants come to the United States. This includes 700,000 legal immigrants, 120,000 refugees and 300,000 undocumented.

One reason immigration may seem out of control is that immigrants settle primarily in four states:

California, New York, Florida and Texas.

Fully one-third of immigrants eventually return to their native lands to live.

Myth: Most immigrants come into the United States illegally.

Fact: Eight of 11 immigrants arrive legally. Among the undocumented, 50 percent enter on legal visas as students or tourists and stay beyond the expiration date.

Myth: Immigrants resist learning English and integrating into American society.

Fact: Demand for English classes far outstrips the supply.

Sources: Southern Baptist Home Mission Board language church extension division; Church World Service; World Monitor.

Remembering strangers in a strange land

I've never been an immigrant living in a foreign country, but I have been a Kentuckian living in a land of immigrants. Funny thing. Many of them were Kentuckians too.

They had followed their dreams across the Mason-Dixon line—that great divide—to Detroit.

And even though more than 25 years had passed by the time my husband and I came on the scene, these Kentuckians still loved to tell stories about their early days as strangers in what for them was a strange land.

It was a land driven by autos and steel, not agriculture.

It was a land where Kentucky English didn't sound at all like what the natives spoke.

It was a land where cooks put sugar in cornbread and ate crunchy greenbeans. And they hadn't even heard of grits.

One Kentuckian came, and then another and another until little enclaves of Kentuckians cropped up all around Detroit.

Not only did Kentuckians congregate in "little Kentuckys," but they also started churches just like the churches back home. Along with transplanted theology came their social and cultural understanding of church.

These "immigrants" from Kentucky shared a common language, culture and religious experience. Problem was, it was a different version than that of Michigianians.

Some Michigianians warmly accepted these different people from south of the border. But some didn't know quite what to make of them. And so, they made jokes and repeated anecdotes as they tried to figure out how to live together.

"Look, that one wears shoes," a grocery store owner said of a 10-year-old-boy.

"What kind of person would wear bibbed overalls or a feed-sack dress?"

"I can't understand a thing they say. Can't they at least learn to speak English?"

"They make excellent workers, but..."

And now Kentucky, which has seen so many of her sons and daughters emigrate to other states, is on the receiving end of immigration.

Granted, the newcomers to the Bluegrass State are not native-born Americans. But—red, brown, yellow, black and white—they are precious in God's sight. For their sakes and ours, let's hope we've learned something about being strangers in a strange land.

—Joyce Sweeney Martin

FIRST PERSON

Immigration impacting Kentucky more

Although only one in 100 people living in Kentucky is foreign-born, Kentucky Baptists cannot afford to lag behind in reaching out to the ethnics in their midst, according to Renato Santos.

"Kentuckians must become aware of state and national trends which will carry us into the 21st century," said Santos, a native Brazilian who is language missions consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"Face the fact that there are language-culture people in your midst and learn about them," added Edgardo Mansilla, Hispanic pastor at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville.

Inevitably, ethnics will become more and more a part of Kentucky's agenda, Santos said. Therefore, Kentucky Baptists will have to deal with the attendant issues whether they are ready or not.

Today, although the KBC includes more than 35 language-culture ministries, "we are just scratching the surface," Santos said.

Baptists have work with fewer than 10 of the 67 language-culture groups the University of Louisville has identified in Kentucky.

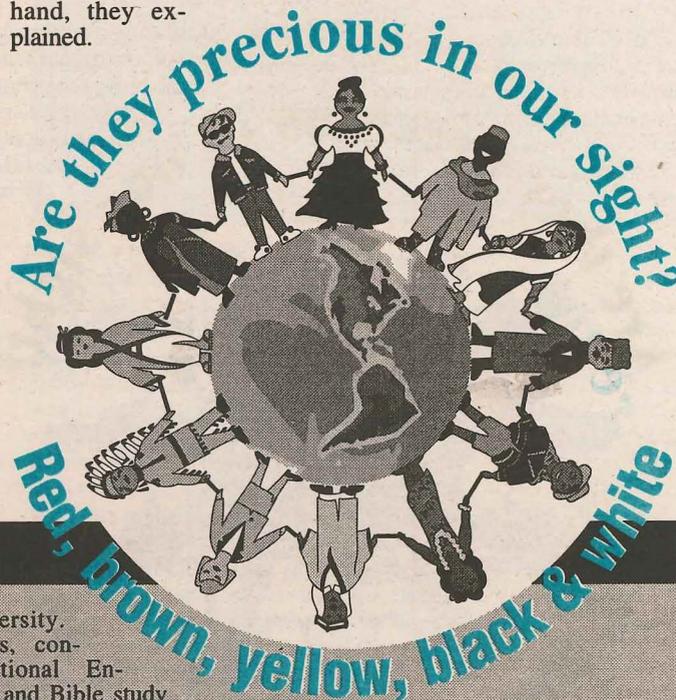
Since 90 percent of immigrants settle in urban areas, ministry to language-culture groups other than migrants is concentrated in Kentucky's larger cities.

There are ministries which could begin immediately if trained language workers could be found. In West Kentucky alone, 20 ministries with migrants could be started this summer if leaders and funds become available.

"Pray that God will send workers, and allocate more funds" for language-culture work, Santos asked.

Additionally, Baptists must work to change the stereotype that they are

interested only in souls and not in holistic ministry, both Santos and Mansilla said. Following the pattern set by Jesus, evangelism and social involvement must go hand in hand, they explained.



What Kentucky Baptists are doing

Although not an exhaustive list, here's an overview of what Kentucky Baptists already are doing in ministry with immigrants, internationals and migrants:

■ Louisville area

■ Friendship International. Walnut Street Baptist has hosted this ministry for 20 years. It is sponsored by Long Run Baptist Association Woman's Missionary Union and the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

■ Nine ethnic/language congregations: First Korean Baptist Church, Somang Korean Baptist Church (formerly Shively Korean, which meets at Shively Baptist), Chinese mission at Third Avenue Baptist Church, Japanese mission at Lyndon Baptist Church, Mainland Chinese mission at Walnut Street Baptist Church, Latin American mission at St. Matthews Baptist, Hispanic ministry at Highland Baptist Church, International mission reaching Cambodians and Vietnamese at Victory Memorial Baptist Church, Haitian mission at Lynn Acres Baptist Church.

■ Bible studies, conversational English classes, social ministries at Lyndon Baptist Church (Filipino), Highview Baptist Church (Russian), Buechel Park Baptist Church (Russian) and Beechmont Baptist Church (Vietnamese).

■ Lexington area

■ Friendship International. Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington hosts this ministry which is directed by Elkhorn Baptist Association's Woman's Missionary Union. More than 250 women from 50 countries participate in the weekly Thursday program which began in 1993. Student spouses, refugees and permanent U.S. residents study English and participate in citizenship, craft and other special interest classes taught by members from 11 churches.

■ Two ethnic congregations: Japanese at Immanuel Baptist Church and Hispanic at Northview Baptist Church.

■ International Sunday school classes at Immanuel Baptist Church.

■ English as Second Language classes at Immanuel Baptist Church, Northview Baptist Church, Porter Memorial Baptist Church.

■ Migrant ministry. Last summer Georgetown Baptists joined area churches in an interdenominational ministry which reached 100 migrants from mid-July through September. The Sunday afternoon ministry included English as Second Language classes, a worship service in Spanish, a home-cooked meal and recreation. Health care kits and clothing were provided as well.

■ Bowling Green area

■ English as Second Language classes at First Baptist Church (Cambodians, Russians, Bosnians, Slavs and Czechoslovakians), Eastwood Baptist Church (Japanese) and Hillview Heights Baptist Church (Korean and Vietnamese).

■ Two ethnic congregations: Mision Hispania at Glen Lily Baptist Church and multi-cultural internationals program at First Baptist Church.

■ Blood River Baptist Association

■ Migrant ministry. Over the last six years the number of Mexican farm workers has increased from 12 to 300. Each Sunday a former Southern Baptist missionary to Mexico who lives near Nashville comes to Blood River Association to direct the ministry. Farmers provide transportation for the migrants to participate in worship, Sunday school and religious videos in Spanish from 9 a.m. until noon. Churches in the association provide a noon lunch which is followed by conversational English classes.

■ Internationals: Every Wednesday during the school year Blood River Association sponsors a ministry to international women at Murray State

University.

Crafts, conversational English and Bible study are provided at First Baptist Church in Murray while their preschool children attend a weekday "Sunday" school.

■ Christian County area

■ Hispanic ministry at Oak Grove Baptist Church. The work began in October 1993 and now has 50 in attendance. The association is completing a Multi-Ministries Center.

■ Korean ministry at Oak Grove Baptist Church. Japanese women's Bible study and ESL classes, led by retired missionary to Japan Dottie Lane. The women are spouses of Japanese business executives in Hopkinsville.

■ Migrant ministry.

■ Davis-McLean Baptist Association

■ Migrant ministry. The association is renovating a house to use as a dental clinic.

■ Henry County area

■ Migrant ministry. This is a joint venture between Henry County and Shelby County associations.

■ Mercer County

■ Japanese ministry at Harrodsburg Baptist Church.

■ Nelson County

■ Hispanic migrant mission at Chaplain Baptist Church.

■ Northern Kentucky

■ Race track ministry. The association participates in an interdenominational ministry to migrants who work at Turfway Racetrack in Florence. Southern Baptist Mission Service Corps volunteer Anita Roberts ministers to the migrant "backsiders" who do behind-the-scenes maintenance at the track.

■ Airport ministry. The association participates in the Interfaith Chapel ministry at Greater Cincinnati International Airport. Volunteers often are asked to assist international travelers.

■ Elizabethtown area

■ First Korean Baptist Church of Radcliff.

■ Shelbyville area

■ Japanese ministry at Clayvillage Baptist Church. Wives of business executives attend Bible studies and English classes led by retired Southern Baptist missionary Dorsey Phillips.

■ Migrant ministry at Burk's Branch Baptist Church. Kentucky Baptist Convention language consultant Jesus Pacheco leads this work which averages 60 in attendance in the winter months and 90 in the summer months.

■ West Union Baptist Association

■ Literacy classes at Immanuel Baptist Church in Paducah.

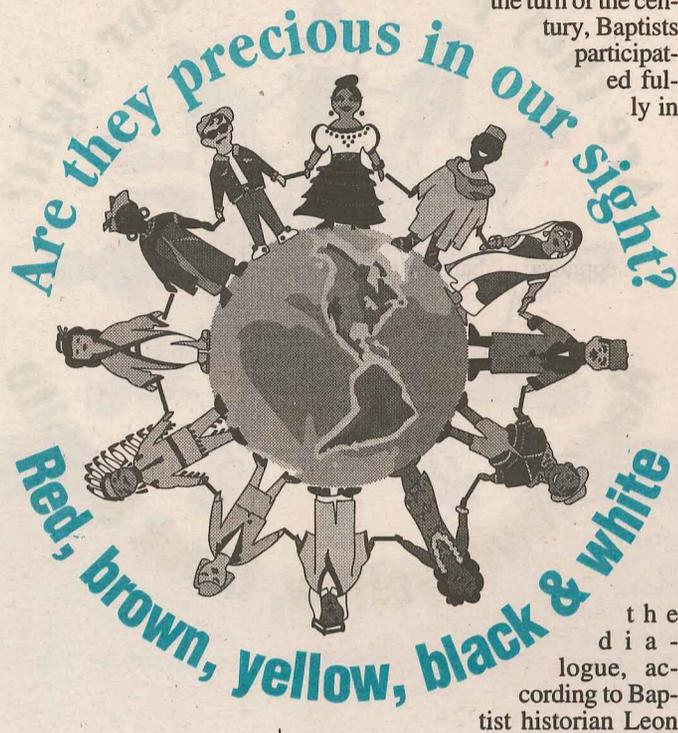
■ Migrant ministry led by Oscar Baptist Church and New Hope Baptist Church. More than 40 people participate in Sunday Bible study and lunch. Fifteen West Union churches provide supplies. Last summer, a Hispanic student at Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College led the ministry.

Immigration debate dates back to Annie Armstrong

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

Mission or menace? Which is immigration?

When this question arose during the first great epoch of immigration at the turn of the century, Baptists participated fully in



the dialogue, according to Baptist historian Leon

McBeth.

Between 1880 and 1900 about 20 million immigrants arrived in the United States. Because most points of entry were in the northeast, Northern Baptists led the way in ministry, McBeth wrote in "The Baptist Heritage."

Since most of the immigrants came from non-evangelical backgrounds, they were resistant to con-

version and assimilation into prevailing American life.

Some Baptists were among those who called for a limit to immigration and who blamed immigrants for the social unrest and violent labor disputes of the late 19th century. Epithets such as "European refuse," "sabbath-breakers," "beer-guzzling" people, "infidels, Catholics, Formalists and all other classes of gospel-haters" labeled the newcomers.

The Home Mission Society of the Northern Baptist Convention warned in 1900 that unless converted and assimilated, the new immigrants would radically change the soul of America.

But, no matter what Baptists thought of immigration policies, they made valiant efforts to convert the newcomers, McBeth said.

Baptists assisted in funding ethnic pastors and starting ethnic churches. They provided literature in various languages, but at times debated whether such ministries should be conducted in English or the immigrant tongues. They provided training for ethnic pastors, mostly by forming "language departments" in existing seminaries.

At their peak, Northern Baptists sponsored work in at least 25 languages. By 1939 more than 1,000 churches related to the NBC as an outgrowth of ministry to immigrants.

It was a woman who first helped Southern Baptists to institutionalize ministry to immigrants, according to Woman's Missionary Union historian Catherine Allen. And it was a border-state city that became her laboratory.

The woman was Annie Armstrong. The city was Baltimore.

"Men and means were not forthcoming fast enough for the great work of foreign missions, so God turned the stream this way and sent great masses of the unevangelized to come in contact with Christian civilizations," she said.

"Is not God sending this message to us—'Here are these people; I have taken them from the crowded countries where they were living, and sent them to you that you may mass your forces and lend a hand to them,'" she wrote in 1898.

And so she mobilized the women of Baltimore to minister through what the women called "Christian Americanization" to the German, Irish, Russian and black immigrants flooding into the port.

Soon classes and clubs for the poor, the black and the foreign-born sprang up all over the city.

The Southern Baptist Convention felt the influence of those Baltimore women, since many of them also sat on the national WMU executive committee. They carried their concerns with them to that assignment as they organized subcommittees on work with Chinese, German, blacks, Italians and children, according to Armstrong's biographer, Bobbie Sorrell Patterson.

And as a direct result of Armstrong's efforts, the Home Mission Board appointed Marie Buhlmaier as a home missionary to work with German immigrants—many of whom were Jews—in Baltimore in 1890.

"As far as I have been able to ascertain, she was the first missionary appointed by Southern Baptists to work with immigrants," Allen said.

The work grew to the point that

Armstrong successfully lobbied the board a second time to appoint additional missionaries to work among immigrants.

By 1910, leaflets were available from WMU in German, Italian and Spanish.

By 1916, when the immigrant population had grown to 4 million in SBC territory, ministry had begun with Germans in Baltimore, Mexicans in Texas, Cubans in Florida and Chinese in Georgia.

But it was not without opposition. Because some Southern Baptists feared the social gospel espoused by Walter Rauschenbusch, the 1900 home mission report at the SBC annual meeting noted that "personal service of this character is not popular, but we trust the time is coming, when for Jesus' sake, many other Baptist women besides these now laboring in Baltimore and other sections will be willing to overcome all prejudice and minister to the lowliest in our midst."

From those beginnings, Southern Baptists have become the most ethnically diverse denomination in the country. By the mid-1980s ethnic-minority membership in the SBC was growing at the fastest rate of any American denomination, according to a United Methodist survey.

Southern Baptists also led the nation's denominations in establishing new ethnic-minority congregations during the 1975-1984 period, the survey showed.

Today, Southern Baptists across the nation worship in 101 languages and dialects. The SBC includes more than 8,000 non-Anglo language/culture churches and missions with more than 500,000 members.

Ethnic congregations responsible for SBC's recent growth

Without the increase in ethnic congregations over the last decade and a half, the Southern Baptist Convention would be a declining denomination, according to Bill Fulkerson.

"The SBC would show a negative 3 percent growth rate in number of congregations," said Fulkerson, assistant director of language church extension at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

By the mid-1980s, SBC ethnic-

minority membership was growing at the fastest rate of any American denomination, according to a United Methodist survey. Southern Baptists led the nation's denominations in establishing new ethnic-minority congregations during the 1975-1984 period, the survey also showed.

The trend has continued so that today Southern Baptists across the nation worship in 101 languages and dialects in more than 8,000 non-Anglo

language/culture churches with more than 500,000 members.

Hispanic congregations comprise the single largest SBC language/culture group with 3,487 churches and missions with more than 236,000 members. Asian, Caribbean, European and Middle Eastern congregations are among Southern Baptists' fastest-growing.

Today, the second-largest Southern Baptist Sunday school in Califor-

nia is at First Chinese Baptist Church in Los Angeles. Two of the three largest Southern Baptist churches in New England are Haitian. New York's largest Southern Baptist church is the French Speaking Baptist (Haitian) Church in Brooklyn.

More than 40 ethnic Baptist fellowships meet during the SBC annual meeting. And in 1994, an African-American and an Asian were elected SBC vice presidents.

Immigration debate intersects missionary ideals

Continued from page 1

America or not, they must live out the gospel in such a way as to attract immigrants to Christ, Fulkerson agreed.

"Many immigrants come with many misconceptions about America and about Christians. They have heard that America is a 'Christian' nation, yet when they arrive they see the breakdown in morals and in family life," he said. They wonder why they should align themselves with what appears to be a "failed religion."

So churches must be pro-active, O'Brien suggested. Churches must take the initiative to see immigrants as those who need 'agape' love and who could positively affect their places of origin for the gospel, he explained.

While Southern Baptists may hold different views on immigration poli-

cy, O'Brien, Anderson and Fulkerson suggested Christians can at least minister to immigrants by:

■ Getting the facts. "Immigration issues are laden with emotion," O'Brien said. "Do your homework. Dispel myths. Defuse deception. Correct false information."

■ Determining to be "light and not heat," O'Brien said. Even if an individual or a church is involved only distantly in the immigration issue, they can have an influence on governmental and denominational immigration policies.

■ Creating links to the larger world. With more transnational business and educational opportunities and with tourism as the world's No. 1 business, "there will be an endless flow of immigrants" in the future, O'Brien said. "The issue is not going

to go away."

■ Getting to know immigrants. "Suspicion creates invisible barriers," O'Brien said. "Personal contacts allay fears," Anderson added.

■ Treating immigrant employees fairly. Christian employers must ask themselves if they are exploiting immigrants, O'Brien said.

■ Analyzing existing church programs and ministries to determine if there are places available for immigrants to plug in, if a church has immigrants in its community, O'Brien said.

Southern Baptists are being called back to a biblical posture, O'Brien said. "The promise of God to Abraham was to bless all ethnic groups. The church as extension of Israel is to live for the glory of God and to be as inclusive as God."

■ In the last five years, the number of foreign visitors touring Louisville's City Hall each year has grown from 500 to 2,500.

■ More than 17,000 Asians live in Kentucky—a number nearly equal to the population of Elizabethtown. Only four counties have no Asian residents.

■ Four Kentucky counties each have more than 1,000 residents who are neither white nor black: Christian, Fayette, Hardin and Jefferson.

■ Kentucky has six refugee resettlement agencies—three in Louisville, two in Lexington and one in Bowling Green.

■ Less than 1 percent of Kentucky's population is foreign-born, according to the 1990 census.

BAPTISTS

60 percent of SBC baptisms are second baptisms

Continued from page 1

say in their concluding remarks. "Based on the research, the majority of baptisms do not represent recent conversions. Thus, baptisms are not an accurate count of conversions."

This should cause Southern Baptists to question the use of baptism statistics as a measure of evangelism effectiveness, the authors say.

To conduct the survey, HMB researchers isolated a representative national sampling of adults age 18 and older who had been baptized in Southern Baptist churches during the 1993 church year. Telephone interviews were conducted in English, Korean, Spanish and Japanese with 1,350 adults during July and August of 1994.

Of those interviewed, only 40.5 percent said their recent baptism was the result of a first-time commitment to Jesus Christ as Savior.

Another 40.4 percent said their recent baptism was the result of a rededication to Christ, and 13.7 percent said it was the result of moving their membership from a non-Southern Baptist church. Another 5.2 percent gave other reasons for their baptisms.

Many Southern Baptist churches require individuals who have been baptized in non-Baptist churches to be

rebaptized to join the Baptist church. In many cases this includes not only converts from Catholicism, who may have been sprinkled as infants, but also converts from other evangelical churches which practice immersion of believers only.

Of adults receiving their second baptism in this study, only one in five had been baptized as infants. That means four of five adults rebaptized had experienced a previous baptism at their own request, presumably in relation to a profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

However, 42.4 percent of those who said their recent baptism in an SBC church was the result of a first-time commitment to Christ also said they had been baptized somewhere before.

While 30.9 percent of this group had been baptized previously in a Catholic church, more than half had been baptized previously in a church that practices "believer's baptism."

The HMB study also asked people to name the single most-important influence "other than the work of the Holy Spirit" on their decisions to be baptized.

The two most common responses were the influence of people (33.9 percent) and internal factors (31.4

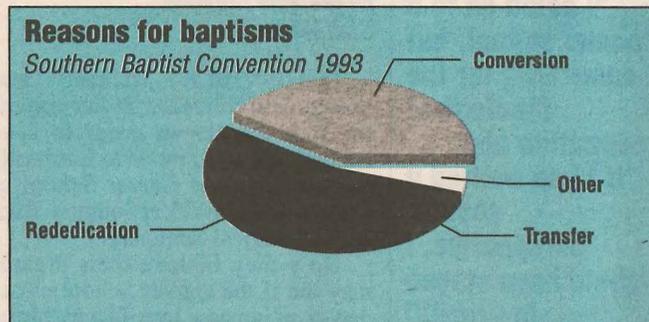
percent). The people category includes all references to some specific person who provided a verbal or lifestyle witness. The internal factors category includes responses such as "I just knew it was something I had to do" or "I realized I needed God."

Other influences cited included life crises (13 percent), church-related religious activities (11.6 percent) and a variety of miscellaneous things ranging from watching a Billy Graham show to being motivated by signs in a church's front lawn.

The researchers conclude that "people are the most influential in bringing other people to Christ. These persons were often family members—the spouse being the most important."

The survey also asked people to choose from a list of additional influences on their decisions to profess faith in Christ.

Three-fourths of all respondents said attending church worship services influenced their decision. More than half cited reading the Bible, someone sharing the plan of salvation or watching the way a person lives as a Christian. Nearly half cited someone telling about a personal experience with Christ, attending Bible study or Sunday school and experi-



encing a personal crisis.

"Relationships are important in people coming to Christ," the researchers note. "Christians should be encouraged to share their faith—especially with those with whom they already have established relationships."

Getting non-Christian people into church activities also has a positive influence, the authors report. "While the church should always look for those opportunities to minister outside the walls of the church building, inviting the lost to come in and participate should not be minimized. There is substantial evidence that the environment of worship, Bible study, fellowship and activities that take place inside church buildings provides a significant influence in people accepting Christ."

Southern Baptists losing ground in Southern states

By David Winfrey
SBC Home Mission Board

ATLANTA (BP)—Southern Baptists are losing the metropolitan South.

That's one conclusion from a newly released report by Charles Chaney, the Home Mission Board vice president responsible for church starting. Chaney has urged greater church planting efforts in Southern cities and suburbs.

"There is a massive unfinished task in the South, and it is getting more unfinished every year," wrote Chaney, who compared the number of Southern Baptist churches and their membership with state populations in 1970 and 1993, the latest available figures.

The study found the denomination's growth outpaced population growth in states outside the South, but Southern Baptists lost strength in their own backyard, the traditional Southern states.

And even the gains made outside the South were minimal, Chaney noted.

According to the report, the U.S. population grew 27 percent during the period studied, but the number of Southern Baptist churches increased only 13 percent.

In the South, the population grew 42 percent while SBC churches increased only 9 percent. "This represents a serious loss of market share," Chaney wrote. The ratio of population to churches in the South grew from 2,196 people for every SBC church to 2,876 people for every church.

"We must not get to the place where we think we've got it made, because we are losing strength in the areas where we think we're strong-

est," Chaney said.

The South still holds the lion's share of both SBC constituted churches (80.4 percent) and resident members (85.5 percent). As a result, the gains made in new work areas often appear more dramatic, he said.

Outside the South, population grew 20 percent and SBC churches grew 32 percent. The ratio of population to Southern Baptist churches outside the South decreased to 22,196 people for every church. While that's an improvement, it's still unacceptable, Chaney said. "The job is unfinished outside the South by whatever standard you want to say."

Reducing the ratio outside the South to one church for every 5,000 people (nearly double the Southern ratio) would require establishing 26,000 more churches, he said.

Southern Baptists currently average 1,119 church starts a year, he noted. Even if all those occurred outside the South, it would take 24 years to reach the ratio of one church per 5,000 people.

Southern states needed 9,632 more churches at the end of 1993 for the number of people for each SBC church to equal the 1970 level. "We have to get far more serious about evangelism and church planting," Chaney commented.

One encouraging sign from Chaney's report is that Southern Baptist church members now constitute a slightly larger percentage of the total U.S. population than in 1970. One of every 24 Americans is a Southern Baptist.

Southern Baptists started 1,297 congregations last year, but Chaney wrote the convention's average 1,119 new congregations each year "provides no grounds for boasting."

"Overall our intention is to try to pick up the pace," Chaney said. "What we have been doing may be steady, but it has been slow. The unfinished task is immense."

Chaney recommended a detailed study of communities to identify the best response in each case. Such a study would include current churches' strengths and the presence of other denominations, he said.

Many communities lost ground because they changed ethnically or socio-economically, Chaney said. "The churches that were there are in decline because there are no more people like them to reach and they can't make the transition."

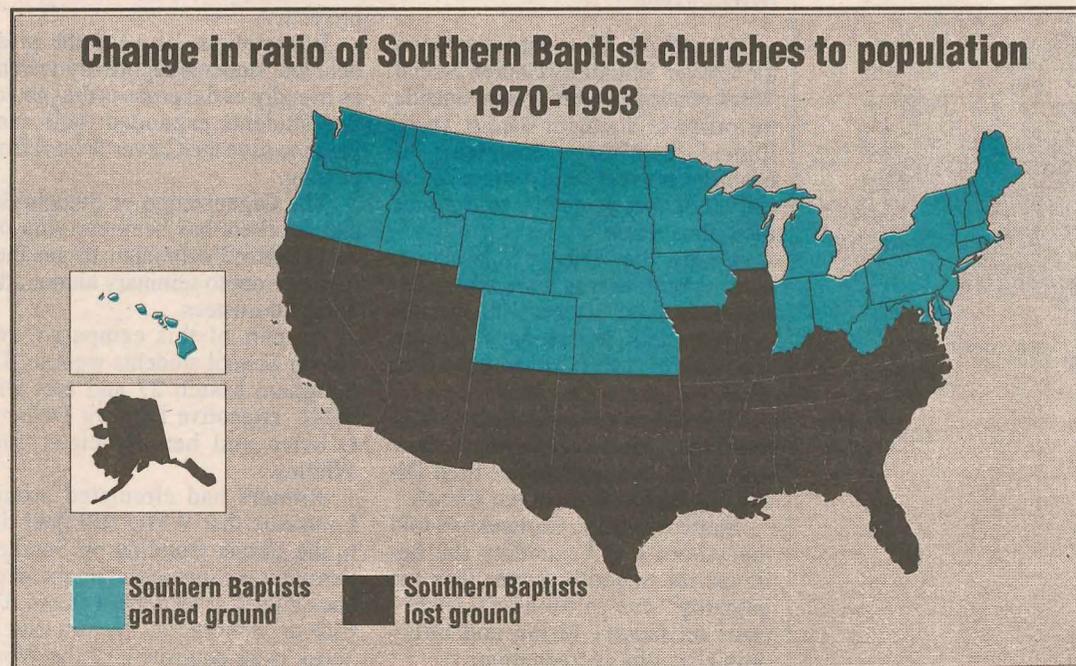
Chaney recommended state conventions begin intervention programs to identify endangered

churches and help them refocus on reaching their changing communities. Such work, however, will be slow, he said.

"The truth is that very few churches will accept intervention until they're absolutely on their last leg, and that's tragic."

Chaney's study shows Kentucky gained in percentage of Southern Baptist church members to population but lost in ratio of churches to population.

Kentucky's ratio of churches to population moved from 1,480 churches per resident to 1,656 churches per resident. However, Southern Baptists now account for one out of 6.8 state residents, an improvement from the one out of 7.1 ratio recorded in 1970.



Students troubled by Carver School's uncertain future

"I could go to a secular school, but I came here for the theological education also. ... If I had wanted a secular perspective, I could have stayed in Brazil."

Ruth Souza, who came from Brazil to study social work at Southern Seminary's Carver School of Church Social Work

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Michael and Wendy Bland lived with her parents for four months in order to save enough money to move to Louisville and enroll in the Carver School of Church Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Now they believe their dreams may die if the Carver School closes due to an impasse over faculty hiring and the firing of the school's dean.

Ruth Souza sacrificed family relations and security to come to the Carver School from her home in Brazil. "My family is reduced to nobody. My home is reduced to a dorm room. And I gave up my job and career possibilities," she explained.

Souza came to the Carver School for the uniqueness of its program, but now she fears she won't be able to complete the degree she started.

"I could go to a secular school, but I came here for the theological education also. ... I want to learn social work from a Christian perspective," she said. "If I had wanted a secular perspective, I could have stayed in Brazil."

Souza and the Blands are among 117 students facing the possibility that the Carver School—the only seminary-based school of social work in the world—may lose its accreditation and be forced to close.

Events of recent weeks, including the seminary president's firing of the school's dean, problems with hiring faculty members and almost certain accreditation problems, have jeopardized the future of the school.

Students—many of whom have been participating in peaceful demonstrations on campus to voice their concern—have found their own educational and career plans suddenly shrouded in uncertainty.

"I feel like it really throws a wrench in our plans," Michael Bland said. "Plans for the mission field, for children, for our whole life in gener-

al. I understand things can come up unexpectedly, like illnesses. But when you come here with the expectancy for education, you shouldn't have to wonder if the school of social work will be here.

"It feels like our place on campus and our hopes for ministry later are at a standstill," he said.

A trustee committee will be appointed later this month to study the future of the Carver School. But their recommendation isn't scheduled to be heard until next October, well into the next academic year.

Carver students have said that's too long for them to remain in limbo.

"We're scared of what tomorrow's going to bring," said Jody Morrow, a social work student whose husband is enrolled in the seminary's master of divinity program. "Financially, we're very concerned. ... We've sacrificed a lot to get here."

In order to stay in school, Morrow said, she works three jobs in addition to her field placement service and her husband maintains a 40-hour-per-week job at Charter Hospital along with his own studies.

"And now we have a 16-month-old son," she added. "We can't just pack up and move somewhere else."

Because of the Carver School's unique position as the only one of its kind to combine theological training with an accredited social work degree, its closing would pose a difficult dilemma for students, she said.

"I came with the full intention of getting the church social work degree," Morrow said. "It was through the church that I saw the need for social work."

Changing to another degree program at Southern, or transferring to

another seminary, is not an option for Morrow either, she said.

No other seminary offers an accredited MSW degree, without which she could not be hired by most Baptist children's homes, hospitals or weekday ministry centers, she said. "All of these require an accredited social work degree in order to get federal and state funding that helps supplement the lack of tithing by the churches," she explained. "They don't have the freedom to hire someone with a (master of divinity in) Christian social ministries degree."

Some seminary administrators have suggested the master of divinity in Christian social

ministries as an alternative to the social work degree.

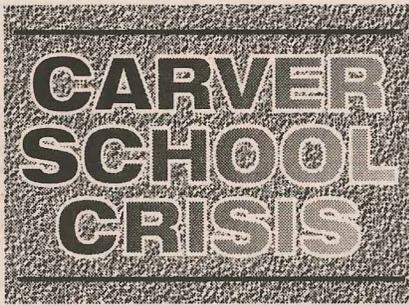
Geri Morgan, who enrolled in the Carver School in 1993, said she understands social work to be her Christian calling.

"I came here to help bridge the gap between the church and ministry to persons with AIDS. This was the degree that would put me in line to do that," she explained. "It's the only church social work program in the world. And I felt strongly the church needed to make more efforts in dealing with this problem."

If the Carver School should close, Bland said, "it will be a huge loss for Christian ministry as a whole—not just Southern Baptists. If it's closed, people will see that as a failure."

"Even if it stays open, we will be concerned about what kind of school will be here," he continued. "And will it be a place where I want to continue my education?"

Morgan agreed changes at the school have caused her to rethink her decision to study at Southern Seminary.



"If they should close the Carver school, I would take that as a personal stab against women and minorities," she said. "I could not have a clear conscience and stay here and support what's going on—financially or with my presence."

The Blands take personally President Al Mohler's statement that the philosophy of social work is "not congruent at all points" with the overall mission of the seminary.

"Being a social worker is a part of who we are," Michael Bland said, adding that if social work doesn't fit with the seminary's mission, it's clear he no longer will be accepted there.

"I'm feeling anger that somebody else can tell me I'm not congruent with the Bible," said Ben Sandford, also a social work student. "Everything I've been taught (at Southern) is congruent with the Bible."

Souza recognizes the Carver School crisis was prompted by issues that do not concern Brazilians. But it could impact her ability to return to minister with Brazilians, she said.

"In Brazil, life is much more practical," she said. "People spend their time providing food and clothing for their families. They never have time for asking these kinds of questions like women in ministry."

Women in ministry is an issue in the crisis because Mohler has instituted a rigid litmus test on women's role in the church to which all prospective faculty members must adhere.

"I could be saying 'This is an American problem, not my problem, and when you solve your little fight here, then I'll solve mine.' But since I'm here and I believe God called me here, I'm willing to go through this and find a way that it can help me," she said.

Still, the Brazilian acknowledged the situation has caused her great sadness. "It's a deception that you come here with a dream and a goal, and you might not be able to achieve that goal because of things out of your control. You get frustrated."

Carver School students and alumni organize to save school

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

LOUISVILLE—Students from the Carver School of Church Social Work continued their protest outside the office of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Al Mohler last week, and alumni of the Carver School geared up to fight for their alma mater.

Meanwhile, Carver School student representatives traveled to Birmingham, Ala., to meet with officials of Woman's Missionary Union, which birthed the Carver School in 1907.

Carver School students have held a sit-in outside Mohler's office since March 20, the day Mohler fired Diana Garland as dean of the school.

Earlier that day, Garland had told the school's 117 students she believed the school's future was "in jeopardy" due to Mohler's restrictions on faculty hiring and likely problems with accreditation.

On the first day of the sit-in, Mohler delivered pizza to the student protesters.

But relations between the president and students reportedly weren't as friendly as the protests dragged on and students expanded their campaign to save the Carver School from closing.

The Organization of Student Social Workers has been carrying out an organized campaign to get their message out to seminary alumni, donors and trustees.

As part of this campaign, two Carver School students went to Birmingham March 27 and met with WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien and her associate, June Whitlow.

Rumors had circulated around Louisville that WMU still held title to the Carver Building on Southern Seminary's campus and might take it back if the Carver School closes. The Carver School of Church Social Work is an outgrowth of the Women's Training School started by WMU in 1907. Although the Carver Building now houses other seminary programs, it was originally built to house the Women's Training School.

Teresa Dickens, a WMU spokeswoman, said WMU attorneys had researched that claim and reported WMU maintains no real ownership of the building or the Carver School. "In 1957, WMU actually turned the school over to the Southern Baptist Convention," she said.

However, WMU did endow a professorship in the Carver School, and "we're still investigating whether we have any ties to it legally," Dickens said. "That issue has not been determined."

Dickens said WMU did not initiate the investigation but has attempted to respond to students who "came to us wanting us to help them."

Meanwhile, alumni of the Carver School held a series of organizational meetings last week and chartered

a new organization temporarily called the Carver School Alumni Association.

Officers elected for the alumni association include Steve Williams, president; Larry Owens, vice president; Cindy Willis, treasurer; Brena Stevens, secretary; Tina Ward Pugh, public relations coordinator; and Cindy Ralston, membership coordinator. The current president of the Organization of Student Social Workers also will serve as a liaison to the alumni association.

In other developments related to the Carver School crisis in the last week:

David Dockery, seminary vice president for academic administration, met with Carver School students to hear their concerns.

The Organization of Student Social Workers began arranging peer support groups for all interested seminary students to help process grief and confusion about the turmoil on campus.

Religious conservatives losing confidence in GOP

By Michael Shanahan
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Jubilant when the Republicans won the November election, abortion opponents have grown disillusioned and angry with the party, and some are threatening to back a third-party presidential candidate in 1996.

Social conservatives, convinced they were instrumental in giving the GOP control of Congress last fall, believe they have been abandoned by both party leaders on Capitol Hill and most of the GOP presidential field.

"There is a sense of betrayal," said Gary Bauer, who heads the conservative Family Research Council, a Religious Right lobbying organization with ties to James Dobson's Focus on the Family. "There are signs that the party is becoming inhospitable to our values.

"This time, they are not going to get away with throwing us a few bones," Bauer said. "We will not be the black sheep of the Republican coalition. The party is making a basic miscalculation if they think they can win without us in 1996."

In an interview, Bauer said groups like his might support "an independent fusion ticket" headed by abortion opponents like Republican Pat Buchanan or former Democratic Gov. Bob Casey of Pennsylvania.

Conservative television commentator Buchanan, currently seeking the Republican nomination, has said, "There will be a third party if the Republican Party walks away from the cultural and social and moral issues and says, 'We are simply about economics. We don't care about anything else.'"

The abortion debate is flaring just when party unity is threatened by unrelated economic issues like whether to lower taxes and cutting entitlement programs for the elderly and low-income families.

"There is a certain amount of rustling at the grassroots of a movement which proved its loyalty to the Republicans in 1992 and 1994," said John Green, a political scientist at the University of Akron.

"Now, the House Republicans are nearly finished with voting on the economic proposals in the 'Contract With America' and the social conservatives want to nail their agenda to the church door," Green said.

Until recently, Bauer and other Religious Right leaders like Dobson of Focus on the Family and Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition, had been patiently waiting their turn for consideration of social agenda issues in the new Congress.

But decisions made by House GOP leaders on proposals related to abortion and welfare reform have persuaded them the Republicans are not taking them seriously.

The headline on a newsletter to 2 million people on Dobson's mailing list said, "Republicans Take a Walk on Moral Issues." Haley Barbour, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, was described as "intran-

sigent and unsympathetic" during discussions with Dobson about Barbour's attempts to de-emphasize abortion in the 1996 campaign.

In a letter to Dobson, Barbour defended his belief that the Republican Party should be a "big tent" which permits a divergence of opinion.

"To me, it simply means ours is an open party," he said. "In a party big enough to elect majorities in both houses of Congress and governors of 30 states, it would be silly to think everyone would agree on everything."

Barbour said while he opposes abortion rights personally, "I am not a single-issue voter. Although every voter has a right to cast his or her ballot solely based on a candidate's position on only one issue, I am pleased few people do."

At a meeting among heads of 15 anti-abortion and House GOP leaders, Bauer said he pressured Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., to give issues like abortion and gays in the military a higher priority.

In addition, Republican presidential candidates like Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas and former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander all have sought to play down abortion in the campaign and make the issue a low priority if elected.

Dole infuriated some religious conservatives by saying he had not yet made up his mind whether gays should be permitted to serve on active duty in the military.

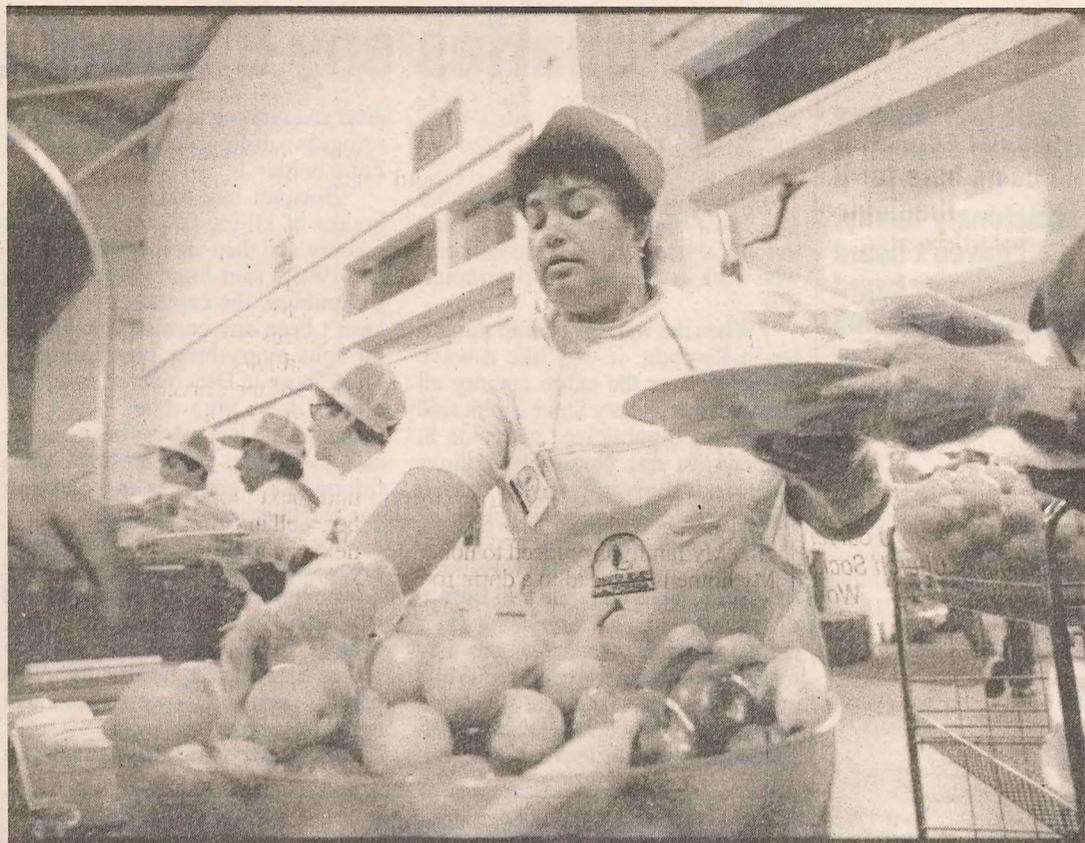
The entry of Pete Wilson as an almost certain contender for the nomination also has disturbed abortion foes because the California governor supports a woman's right to choose abortion and is far more liberal on most social issues than the other contenders.

Leaders of anti-abortion groups around the country show varying degrees of disillusionment with the Republicans, whose party platform calls for a constitutional amendment to ban almost all abortion.

In Texas, some Christian conservative members of the state Republican committee are demanding an endorsement of Allan Keyes, a militant but little known anti-abortion contender for the presidential nomination, because Gramm has said if he wins the endorsement, abortion would not be a litmus test in selecting a vice presidential candidate.

Al Clements, secretary of the Texas Right to Life Committee and a member of the Republican State Executive Committee, said, "There is a lot of talk among Christian conservatives about supporting Allan Keyes or some third-party candidate who is pro-life. It is going to be a big battle within the party."

"And if things keep going the way they have been in the Congress there will be some real dissatisfaction within the pro-life movement," he said. "There will be some really unhappy people if welfare reform passes and it encourages more, not fewer abortions."



Religious school voucher proposal back in Congress

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Sens. Dan Coats, R-Ind., and Joseph Lieberman, D-Conn., introduced legislation March 24 which would permit low-income parents to receive federal funds to send their children to private and religious schools.

"Our bottom line is to provide the best educational opportunities to American children," Coats said in a statement announcing the proposal for a pilot voucher plan.

The bill, the Low Income School Choice Demonstration, would cost \$30 million over three years.

Under the bill, the secretary of education would select 10 to 20 school districts to participate in the pilot project. The district would distribute the federally financed vouchers, in a method similar to the one used for food stamp coupons, to low-income families. Their ability to use the vouchers would be determined by whether their children were eligible for the federal school lunch program.

The vouchers then could be turned in to any private school in the district to help pay tuition costs.

"Until now, largely middle- and upper-income families have been able to choose the best school for their children," Coats said. "I think all families should have that choice, and my bill provides an opportunity to study how well that concept would work."

Lieberman said that, while there are many excellent public schools, "it is clear that public schools are not working for all students, particularly those in our poorest communities."

"We should try to give more children who live in poverty the same kind of educational choices other students have," he said.

A similar bill was defeated 53-41 during the last Congress.

Although the Coats-Lieberman bill calls only for setting up pilot projects, it is likely to be the flash-

point this year in the two-decade fight between advocates and opponents of aid to schools run by churches, synagogues or mosques where religious instruction is part of the curriculum.

That fight has been going since 1973, when the Supreme Court struck down a voucher-style program in New York state.

While polls show many Americans are unhappy with public schools and the education they provide, the voucher movement has in recent years suffered setbacks both at the polls and in the courts.

In 1993, in a major test, California voters rejected a voucher plan by a 2-1 margin. Just last week, U.S. District Court Judge John Reynolds ruled religious schools could not be included in Milwaukee's voucher plan.

The Coats-Lieberman proposal immediately drew fire from the Washington-based Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the Baptist Joint Committee.

"Public funds may not be used for private religious purposes," said Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United. "No tax dollars may be directed into the coffers of private religious schools."

"Laundering public money through parents' pockets does not change the fact that significant tax dollars eventually will be paid directly to parochial schools," added Melissa Rogers, associate general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee.

But Richard Cizik, policy analyst for the National Association of Evangelicals, welcomed the Coats-Lieberman bill as reflecting a decade-old NAE position.

"Our opinion is that this (voucher system) is the way to go with education, health and welfare benefits," Cizik said. "Let's try them out and see how they work. The best place to start is with low-income people."

RELIEF MINISTRY Luz Albor, a member of New Hope Baptist Church in Watsonville, Calif., serves food to victims of California floods at an American Red Cross shelter. The California Southern Baptist Convention Brotherhood office has dispatched a relief feeding unit to the shelter, where Baptists have been serving flood victims for several weeks. (BP photo by Jim Burton)

Missionaries say Burundi could become like Rwanda

Since late January it's been unusual if the Smiths, a missionary family, "haven't heard gunfire or heard grenades exploding in our neighborhood."

By Craig Bird
SBC Foreign Mission Board

NAIROBI, Kenya (BP)—Burundi is a "slow-burn Rwanda," according to four Southern Baptist missionaries who work in the central African country.

"When the war turned into slaughter in Rwanda, it was like a wave sweeping over the entire country all at once," missionary Steve Smith said of the much-publicized genocide in Rwanda last year. Now recent killings in Burundi suggest it may be headed for the same disaster, he explained.

Smith, his wife, Tara, and David and Cathy Brandon and their three daughters, all of whom live in Burundi, recently visited Kenya for their annual mission meeting, where they told some of their experiences. While at the meeting in Kenya, the latest round of violence exploded in Bujumbura, Burundi, leaving hundreds

dead and sending tens of thousands of refugees surging across the nearby Zaire border.

"Burundi has been having outbreaks of killing in one part of the country and then another since October 1993," said Smith, who lives in Bujumbura, the capital city. "There hasn't been any consistency. We all thought everything was going to break loose in December, then things quieted down for awhile."

Since late January it's been unusual if the Smiths "haven't heard gunfire or heard grenades exploding in our neighborhood," he said.

The Brandons, from Elizabethtown, work in the northern part of the tiny country in Gitega. They reported that area has been mostly calm. "There have been instances when we've been afraid, but for the most part it's been quiet—we've been able to get out and do our work."

His primary work has been with a

development project distributing seed and fertilizer.

Early eyewitness reports on the latest violence estimated 500 people were killed, while official government statements put the figure at "150 at least." Most of the dead and nearly all of the refugees are ethnic Hutus.

Even though Burundi and Rwanda are populated by the same two ethnic groups, the Hutus and the Hutus, the major difference in the two situations is who holds the power.

For 30 years after independence in Rwanda, the Hutus, who make up nearly 90 percent of the population, controlled the government and army. So when the invading Tutsi-dominated army appeared to be winning the civil war, the Hutus were in position to massacre 500,000 to 1 million Tutsis in a matter of weeks.

In Burundi, the Hutus have only

gained political control during the past several years, despite the fact that they represent approximately 80 percent of the country's 6.3 million population. The Tutsis still control the army. Several instances of ethnic cleansing have been blamed on the Tutsis in Burundi, including a systematic slaughter in the early 1970s that left hundreds of thousands of Hutus dead.

"Killings are going on on both sides in Burundi right now," Brandon said. "Hutu militia will attack Tutsis somewhere and the Tutsi military will retaliate. And, of course, the ones who started it get away, and it's mostly the women and children who get killed. It seems like every time there's some progress toward easing things, extremists on one end or the other will stir something up and ruin the chance for peace."



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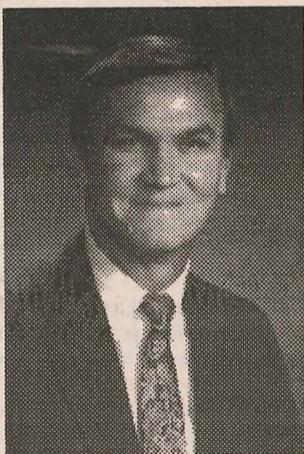
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As we sang to him, my thoughts went back 10 years to the day when we got the call telling us that he had been born. You see, Jason, like our oldest, Andrea, is adopted. We will forever be indebted to four different birth parents who made a tremendous difference in our lives.

Kentucky Baptists are making similar differences in the lives of many children and families through First Step Pregnancy Counseling and Adoption. Our goal with First Step is to help a family facing an unplanned pregnancy deal with the crisis before them so that the child to come has an opportunity to grow up in a loving and caring home.

Sometimes this means helping the birth parents make arrangements and prepare to parent their child. At other times, this means supporting birth parents in a difficult and selfless decision to provide a home through adoption.

If a choice for adoption is made,

the birth parents review detailed profiles of families who want to adopt. If they so choose, they then have an opportunity to meet the prospective adoptive parents and then decide with them how open the process will be. In many cases today the adoptive parents are at the hospital when the baby is born.

First Step helps to ensure that adequate thought and planning go into preparing for the child's arrival. The conception may not have been planned, but the life of the child requires much forethought and planning.

First Step counselors are available to help families all over the state. The program's main office is in Louisville, but on April 17 we will be adding our first branch office in the new Cornerstone Family Center in Harold (between Pikeville and Prestonsburg).

If you think First Step can be of help to you or someone you know, please call toll-free at 1-800-928-5242.

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

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Curtis C. Mooney

'True Love Waits' gaining a following in Mexico City

MEXICO CITY (BP)—Along with Wal-Mart and Whataburger, "True Love Waits" has hit Mexico City.

Young people from Mexico City's Anastasis Baptist Church—energized by a study of the "Experiencing God" discipleship course—heard about the "True Love Waits" sexual abstinence program and decided to get involved.

The "Experiencing God" study made such a big impact on their lives they began asking: "What's next?" said Larry Gay, who leads the youth

with his wife, Susan. The Gays, from Birmingham, Ala., are Southern Baptist missionaries in Mexico City.

That question led to the pilot project in Mexico of "True Loves Waits," a program of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. About 40 young people at Anastasis church—in an upper-class area of Mexico City—recently completed a Mexican version of the program, stressing the Christian plan for love, sex and marriage. Many signed pledges to wait until marriage before

becoming sexually active.

But "True Love Waits" is just one slice of what God is doing in the Anastasis church, according to the Gays. "I'm speechless," Mrs. Gay said. "It's been one of those things where you just know God is working. It's nothing that we did. It's him."

So far, at least 120 people at Anastasis have taken "Experiencing God," also a Sunday School Board program. "Our church is truly having an experience with God right now," Gay said. "We didn't just take a course."

For example, since completing "Experiencing God," the church's young people have committed themselves to taking "True Love Waits" beyond their church to other Mexican Baptist youth.

To do that, they've pledged to design and publish Spanish-language materials for the 1,200 churches in the National Baptist Convention of Mexico. By July they hope to get at least 2,000 young people to sign commitment cards promising not to have sex outside marriage.

Bible now in 341 languages

NEW YORK (ABP)—The complete Bible is now available in 341 of the world's languages and the New Testament in 822, according to an annual report by a group committed to translating, publishing and distributing the Scriptures.

At least one book of the Bible is now available in 2,092 of the world's estimated 6,000 languages, said Eugene Habecker, president of the American Bible Society, while releasing the 1994 Scripture Language Report. The report was compiled by the New York-based Bible society and its global partner, the United Bible Societies.

"While this is a major accomplishment, we must continue the work," Habecker said.

At least a portion of Scripture appeared in 27 new languages last year, according to the report. Four new Bibles were reported and the New Testament was made available for the first time in 18 more languages.

Baptist missionary couple found murdered in Russia

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—A Southern Baptist physician and his wife have been murdered in Khabarovsk, Russia, where they have worked on medical projects since 1993.

Local police found the bodies of Chu Hon Yi and his wife, Kei Wol, March 28 after entering the apartment

at the request of a concerned friend who hadn't seen them for several days.

Yi had sustained several blows to his head. Mrs. Yi had been strangled. There were no signs of forced entry, and the apartment's front door was locked when police arrived. Police estimate the deaths occurred March

23. Police have launched a murder investigation but so far have released few details.

Yi, a retired cardiologist from Virginia Beach, Va., had worked with his wife, a registered nurse, at Khabarovsk Medical Institute. He practiced medicine and taught medical personnel there, working through Co-

operative Services International, a Southern Baptist aid organization. Khabarovsk is located in the Pacific coast region of eastern Russia on the Amur River.

Yi, 60, and Mrs. Yi, 59, were longtime members of the Tidewater Korean Baptist Church in Virginia Beach, a church they helped start.

Cambodian convention formed

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (BP)—Cambodian Baptists capped recent years of extraordinary growth in this Buddhist nation by forming the country's first Baptist convention March 20.

Cambodian Baptists have grown from zero to 43 Baptist churches and more than 1,400 believers in less than three years.

This growth has occurred in a nation where Buddhism is the state religion and Christians account for only 15,000 of 9.5 million citizens.

To maintain this growth, the churches realized they needed to work more closely together, explained Kentucky native Bruce Carlton, one of several Southern Baptist guests at the meeting. Carlton, from

Georgetown, works in Cambodia as a humanitarian aid worker.

"The Lord has blessed these believers so much," Carlton said. "The convention was initiated out of a felt need for cooperation. You could see it in the way the people came together in such a spirit of love and humility."

"The whole meeting revolved around prayer and an overwhelming spirit of unity. It was one of the most beautiful things I have ever experienced."

"Three years ago if someone had said Cambodia would one day have a Baptist convention, I would've called them crazy," said Carlton, who has worked in Cambodia since 1990. "This can only be explained as the work of God."

Pope speaks on abortion

VATICAN CITY (ABP)—Pope John Paul II issued a statement March 30 reaffirming the Roman Catholic Church's condemnation of abortion and euthanasia, as well as extending its ban on contraception and its opposition to capital punishment.

In an encyclical titled "The Gospel of Life," the pope issued his strongest condemnation to date of both abortion and the death penalty and extended "moral condemnation" to medical research on human embryos.

"I confirm that the direct and voluntary killing of an innocent human being is always gravely immoral," wrote the pope in the 11th encyclical of his 16-year papacy.

Even decisions to abort for reasons that are not "purely selfish" or "out of convenience"—such as the mother's health or to preserve a decent standard of living for other members of the family—are sinful, the pope said.

Euthanasia, even to end suffering, is a "grave violation of the law of God," the pope said, but should be distinguished from legitimate decisions to forego "aggressive medical treatment."

GODSPEL

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Saturday, April 8 2:00 PM
Palm Sunday, April 9 7:30 PM



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PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

Pray for these specific needs related to Kentucky Baptist Convention partnerships with Baptists in Utah-Idaho and Russia:

- A construction team from Clear Creek Baptist Bible School and Immanuel Baptist Church in Danville going to Vyborg, Russia, April 26-May 10.
- Russian van drivers who transport volunteers on the field.
- A stabilization in the Russian economy which will make it easier for Russian Baptist churches to purchase building materials.
- John Edwards of Russell First Baptist Church and his construction team of 20 who will be going to Penza, Russia, May 3-17.
- For volunteers to come forward for urgent needs this summer in Utah and Idaho.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

- **CADIZ**—Hurricane Church will celebrate its 150th anniversary April 9. The worship service will include guest speakers. A time of remembrance from former pastors and friends will follow the fellowship lunch.
- **CLINTON**—First Church called **Dennis Norvell** as pastor Feb. 1. He previously was pastor at Poplar Springs in Murray.
- **ERLANGER**—Erlanger Church ordained **Steve Johnston, Steve Sorrell, Chris Caddell, Kevin Lindeman, Jim Carpenter, Cohen Copley, Paul Ledden, Tony Fields and Bill Ellis** as deacons March 26.
- **FERGUSON**—Ferguson Church ordained **David Milby, Gary Jones and Michael Wooldridge** as deacons March 19. **Darrell Vance** is pastor.
- **HAMMOND**—Cole's Branch Church called **Tim Johnson** as pastor.
- **HENDERSON**—Zion Church held a "Here's Hope" revival March 12-15 with 24 professions of faith and more than 50 decisions.
- **LEXINGTON**—Russell Cave Church will present a live portrayal of the Last Supper April 9 at 6 p.m., April 13 at 7 p.m. and April 16 at 6 p.m.
- **LOUISVILLE**—International Friendship Program, a mission action project of the Long-Run Association WMU, celebrated its 20th anniversary at Walnut Street Church March 22.

The program has reached out to internationals from 109 countries.

The men's ensemble of Melbourne Heights Church will present a "The Living Last Supper" April 13 at 7:30 p.m. Also, it will be presented at Mount Nebo Church April 14 at 7:30 p.m.

■ **MOUNT VERNON**—First Church called **Maynard Head** as pastor. He previously was assistant to the president at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College and pastor of several churches in Kentucky.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church, Hopkinsville, accepting resumes for full-time minister of youth and associate pastor. Mail to: FBC, P.O. Box 838, Russellville, KY 42276-0838, Attn: Dr. Randall S. Neal.

FREE PEWS: Oneida Baptist Institute is giving away our 64 used chapel pews. If you are interested or need more information, call (606) 847-4111—ask for Dr. Underwood.

WANTED: Used pews, 10 feet long; must be in good condition at reasonable price. Leave message on machine at (502) 737-3952.

FOR SALE: Hammond A-100 concert organ (like the Hammond B-3). Perfect for churches; excellent condition, \$1000. Call (502) 423-1184.

■ **PLEASUREVILLE**—Elmurg Church called **Jim Bohrer** as pastor. He is a student at Southern Seminary.

■ **SHELBYVILLE**—First Church called **Edwin Erwin** as pastor. He previously was pastor at Bessemer Church in Greensboro, N.C. He will begin his new ministry May 22.

■ **SHEPHERDSVILLE**—Bardstown Junction Church ordained **Philip Drake** as youth minister March 26.

■ **WADDY**—Mount Vernon Church called **Johnny Collett** of Middlesboro as pastor. He is a student at Southern Seminary.

Waddy Church called **David Hoschar** of Kenova, W. Va., as pastor. He is a student at Southern Seminary.



EASTER PAGEANT First Baptist Church of Pikeville will present the life of Christ through drama and music in the Jenny Wiley State Park Amphitheater April 14, 15, 16, 22, 23, 27, 28 and 29. Performances of "The Deliverer" begin at 7:30 p.m. each night. More than 4,000 people saw the pageant last year. Tickets are available for a \$1 donation by calling (606) 432-4603.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE: Church has a 310 AB Dick offset press. Price \$200. Used for newsletter. (502) 239-2129.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church, Milledgeville, Ga., is seeking an associate pastor for education. Affiliated with SBC and CBF. Send resume with references to: Personnel Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 795, Milledgeville, GA 31061.

NEEDED: Small Baptist church in need of donated church van. Phone (606) 325-1426.

WANTED: Part-time organist/choir accompanist to play for Sunday morning and Sunday night worship and Wednesday rehearsals. Send resume to Jim Rittenhouse, P.O. Box 91146, Louisville, KY 40291, or call (502) 587-8015.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music for exciting, fast-growing, mid-sized church. Resume or call should be addressed to: FBC, P.O. Box 339, Belfry, KY 41514; (606) 353-4645.

FOR SALE: Here's Hope New Testaments. The cost of a case of 48 New Testaments is \$31.20. Limited number of cases available. Contact Long Run Association, 2722 Crittenden Dr., Louisville, KY 40209, or call (502) 635-2601.

WANTED: Church bus; minimum 25-passenger. Phone (502) 828-3143.

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 six

It is only fitting to end this series with a story that is a little different. We get calls nearly every working hour, often from desperate parents of a child who has serious academic or social problems. One of the most common misconceptions about Oneida is that we take mostly "problem" children.

We have always considered it a privilege to take young people who had not been successful in other places. While many of our students have had some problems, they are not necessarily problem children.

This final story is about a student who came to Oneida because two siblings were attending here.

This student was in the eighth grade and wanted to attend summer school. He/she was disappointed to learn that we did not, at that time, offer summer school for middle school students.

We learned that this student did not have any problems in school, nor were there any problems in the home. We knew the parents had divorced and the home environment was not as structured as it could be.

Finally, after long negotiations, it was determined that we would enroll this young person in a 9th-grade biology class. We knew this person was already an honor roll student. At the end of summer school we were very pleased; the report card showed all A's.

Our next decision was one that we do not make very often, but as the old saying goes, "there are exceptions to every rule."

The exception in this case was to promote the youth to the 9th grade. This decision was made after testing and counseling. The test scores indicated that this student was capable of doing 10th-grade work.

We warned this youth that it was going to be a difficult transition from the 7th to the 9th grade. The youth was told that we would keep a careful watch to make sure the grades and attitude showed us we had made the right decision. If at any time we determined that we had made a wrong decision, we would put this student back in the 8th grade.

You no doubt have heard of another old saying, "like a duck takes to water." That describes this youth. This student has been on the honor roll all four years. We have never been disappointed in anything this person has done.

In addition to the academic achievements, there has been involvement in many activities. This youth has been one of our outstanding band members and has been a spiritual leader on campus. We have seen growth and maturing in every area of this young person's life.

The past six articles I have written have been real stories about real students who will graduate this May.

Most of these six young people have been on full or nearly full scholarships. They were not turned away because they were not Christians or because they were not doing well academically. They were not rejected because they had social problems at home or at school, or because they could not pay the modest room, board and tuition.

Each of these and thousands of other youth have come to Oneida because of the simple truth that God is their Creator, Jesus is their Savior and that everyone is precious in God's sight. Thank you for your trust, support and prayers.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

'I was in prison and you visited me'

"Whenever I leave the prison, I feel I have made a difference in people's lives," 1982 graduate John Ramsey challenged our students in a chapel message. He is chief chaplain at Eastern Kentucky Correctional Complex in West Liberty, the state's biggest prison. The \$72-million facility has 1,600 inmates and a staff of 400.

Ramsey was a prison volunteer when he lived in Bell County, but had no desire to work in the system. In a five-month period after he resigned as pastor in Frenchburg, the Lord directed him to the prison ministry. Six months after he became chaplain, he was called as pastor of First Baptist, West Liberty.

Ramsey directs 40 volunteers to lead a visitation program for children, worship services, Bible studies, MasterLife and Experiencing God. He does personal counseling and marriage crises counseling. He is responsible for a 120-hour training program for volunteers. When they have completed this, they are able to go out into the yard, eat with inmates, and do all the work of a chaplain.

Ramsey faces a variety of challenges. "The system can't make the chaplain do something that violates personal convictions, but I do have

to minister differently than in a local church. An inmate can't be nurtured like a typical church member. Most of my flock are abused and school dropouts. I could spend all my time with one. They grow very slowly. Some of them are manipulators and try to use the system," he said.

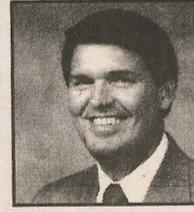
He works with many denominations; some that he had heard the worst stories about become his best volunteers. He is required to put an inmate in touch with their choice of religious leader.

The West Liberty facility has a \$1 million law library. John has been the subject of three lawsuits. "I'm very careful to document everything."

"When it comes to leadership in the prison chapel services and in Christian development, I limit participation to those who live the faith they profess. Some chaplaincy programs are just turned over to the prisoners, but I do not do that," Ramsey acknowledged. "I have seen the Lord work in the prison more than I have in churches. Every week we have men come to know the Lord. Some are baptized every month."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

MISSIONS

Missionary takes '12 Steps' to Mexican churches

By Mary Speidel
SBC Foreign Mission Board

MEXICO CITY (BP)—As a Southern Baptist teenager, Laura Reagan lived three different lives.

One was the "shining star" who excelled at school and extracurricular activities. Another was the church youth group member growing as a Christian.

But there was one Laura most people didn't know. She attended Alateen meetings, based on the "12 Steps" of recovery developed by Alcoholics Anonymous. There, other teenagers understood her shame: they, too, were children of alcoholics.

Each of those "lives" played a part in her call to foreign missions.

She developed a strong Christian faith early. "I remember lying in bed at night praying during fights (between her parents). Praying was truly my lifeline," Reagan said.

At the same time, she was learning about missions. In the early stages of her father's alcoholism, he was a lay preacher in a pioneer mission setting. Several relatives also were involved in missions.

And growing up in Texas' Rio Grande Valley exposed her to another culture. "I remember studying Spanish in second grade and looking at pictures of Mexico City," she recalled. "I had a clear sense I'd live there someday."

"Someday" arrived in 1991 for her

and her husband, Dan, also from the Rio Grande Valley area. That year they were appointed missionaries to Mexico City by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

There, she now leads a Mexican Baptist ministry to alcoholics, other addicts and their families. Her husband is a church planter in Mexico City's northeast sector.

"We operate two different ministries, but we're very involved in each other's work," Dan Reagan said. That includes sharing equally the care of their 6-year-old daughter, Hope.

After arriving in Mexico City, the Reagans led a seminar on alcoholism in the city's Jardines de Morelos neighborhood. They've since planted a mission congregation there. Sergio Carrillo, pastor of the mission's mother church, supports their view that the "12 Steps" have a place in Baptist churches.

"The 'Steps' are a defined path of growth with a biblical base," said Carrillo, an ophthalmologist. "The first step is really the same thing as recognizing our sin. And the other steps can be applied to Christians to help them grow as disciples.

"Alcoholics meet with their friends in the bar because they feel accepted in their hurt," he added. "They don't go for the pleasure of alcohol, but because somebody's there."

A former substance abuse counselor in the New Orleans area, Laura

helps Mexican Baptists learn to "be there" for alcoholics and their families. She leads seminars on alcoholism in churches across the country.

When church leaders are interested, she helps them start a Christ-centered, "12 Step" support group called "Vencedores," Spanish for "Overcomers." The groups use the Bible and literature from Alanon. Laura and missionary colleague Judy Garrett also plan to write some Christian recovery materials geared to Mexican culture.

Alcoholism is Mexico's ninth leading cause of death, according to Jesus Medrano, a public health expert in epidemics in Mexico City. Nationally, 15 percent of all illnesses and accidents and 75 percent of suicides in Mexico are related to alcohol. In the part of the city where Medrano works, the third highest cause of death is cirrhosis of the liver.

"But our statistics aren't exact because of the denial of the disease—both the alcoholic's and the family's," he said.

Mexican Baptist layman Fausto Anaya Aguilar understands that denial. He couldn't admit his own alcoholism until his son developed a drug addiction.

That led Anaya and his wife to a secular "12-Step" program. But they wanted to get that "12-Step" support in a Christian context.

That's when they met Laura at an alcoholism seminar she led at Mexico



City's Good Shepherd Baptist Church. The couple now leads an "Overcomers" group through that church. Several group members have accepted Christ as Savior through the program.

Laura also has started an informal support group for Mexican "yuppies" who are learning English at a school run by Mexican Baptist Claudia Rivera.

The group offers students a chance to practice their English. And it gives the missionary a chance to share her faith in a way that isn't "preachy."

"I feel like I was born for this," Laura said.

That's a long way from the days when she hid her family's "secret." "Now I openly talk about my background first, then I share my faith," she explained.

TWO TRACKS Southern Baptist missionaries Laura and Dan Reagan work on two tracks in Mexico City—he in church planting and she in developing ministries to people suffering from addictions. Here their schedules converge on the single track of a subway ride, along with their 6-year-old daughter, Hope. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)

Couple found help at church, now offering help to others

MEXICO CITY (BP)—Laughter resonates throughout the home of Fausto Anaya Aguilar, a recovering alcoholic.

But it hasn't always been that way. Anaya, a Baptist layman in Mexico City, remembers when his life was "full of anguish and problems."

"People put the stamp of 'drunk' on me. I withdrew socially because people didn't accept me," Anaya said. "I caused my family financial problems by missing work and by wasting money on alcohol and night life."

At the same time, Anaya's alcoholism took an emotional toll on his family.

"I felt very depressed, like I was 'on the floor,'" said his wife, Elena Garcia de Anaya. "I didn't want to live."

She had been a Christian for years, active in a Mexican Baptist church. For 14 years she'd prayed for her husband to change. But nothing happened.

"Finally I decided, 'This man's really hardheaded. God's never going to touch him,'" she recalled. "I just let go. I said, 'He's lost, and I'm not going to spend any more energy on him.'"

The family hit rock bottom when their son developed a drug addiction several years ago.

"When I found out my son was using drugs, I felt like everything was falling in on top of me," Mrs. Anaya said.

But that crisis forced her husband to face his own disease.

Their son became psychotic be-

cause of the drug abuse. He entered a psychiatric hospital. Anaya saw medical workers restrain him with a straitjacket. That was the final blow.

"It broke my heart," Anaya said. "I felt so guilty. I felt the Lord was telling me, 'You made (your son) like this.' But God was speaking to me out of love, not out of punishment."

Anaya began secretly reading the Bible. Meanwhile, the couple had been attending a secular support group for dysfunctional families. The group is based on the "12 Steps" for recovery developed by Alcoholics Anonymous.

"When I first went to the meetings, I didn't like them," Mrs. Anaya said. "I didn't think I could find help there, because the people had the same problems we did, or worse."

Later they met Laura Reagan, a missionary in Mexico City with the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. She came to their church to lead a seminar on alcoholism and the family.

Reagan understood the Anayas' struggles. She faced some of the same ones growing up in an alcoholic family and had worked as a substance abuse counselor in the New Orleans area before becoming a missionary.

"When we met Laura, we knew God brought her here," Anaya said. "She helped us to understand more deeply the '12 Steps,'" added his wife.

Reagan helped start a Christian support group at the couple's church, Mexico City's Good Shepherd Baptist. The group—called "Overcom-

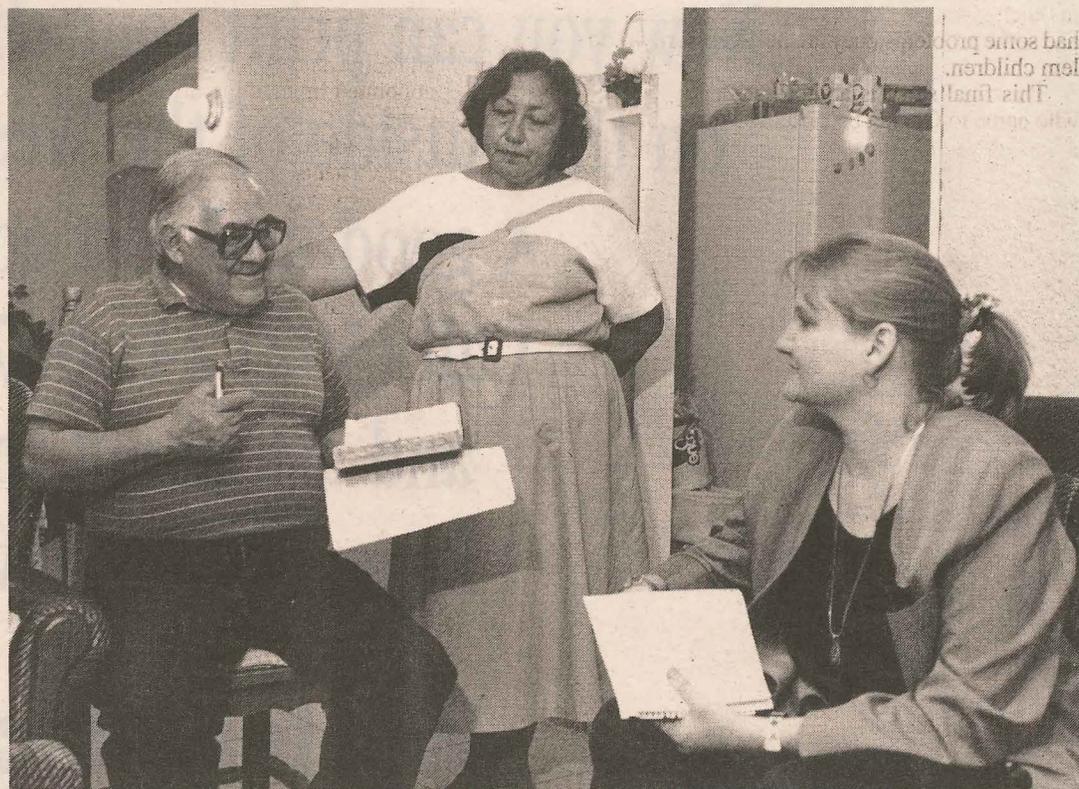
ers"—offers Christ-centered support based on the 12 Steps.

Now, the Anayas lead the group, open to anyone struggling with addictions themselves or in their families. They use the Bible, Christian "recovery" material and literature from Alanon, a 12-Step group for families of alcoholics.

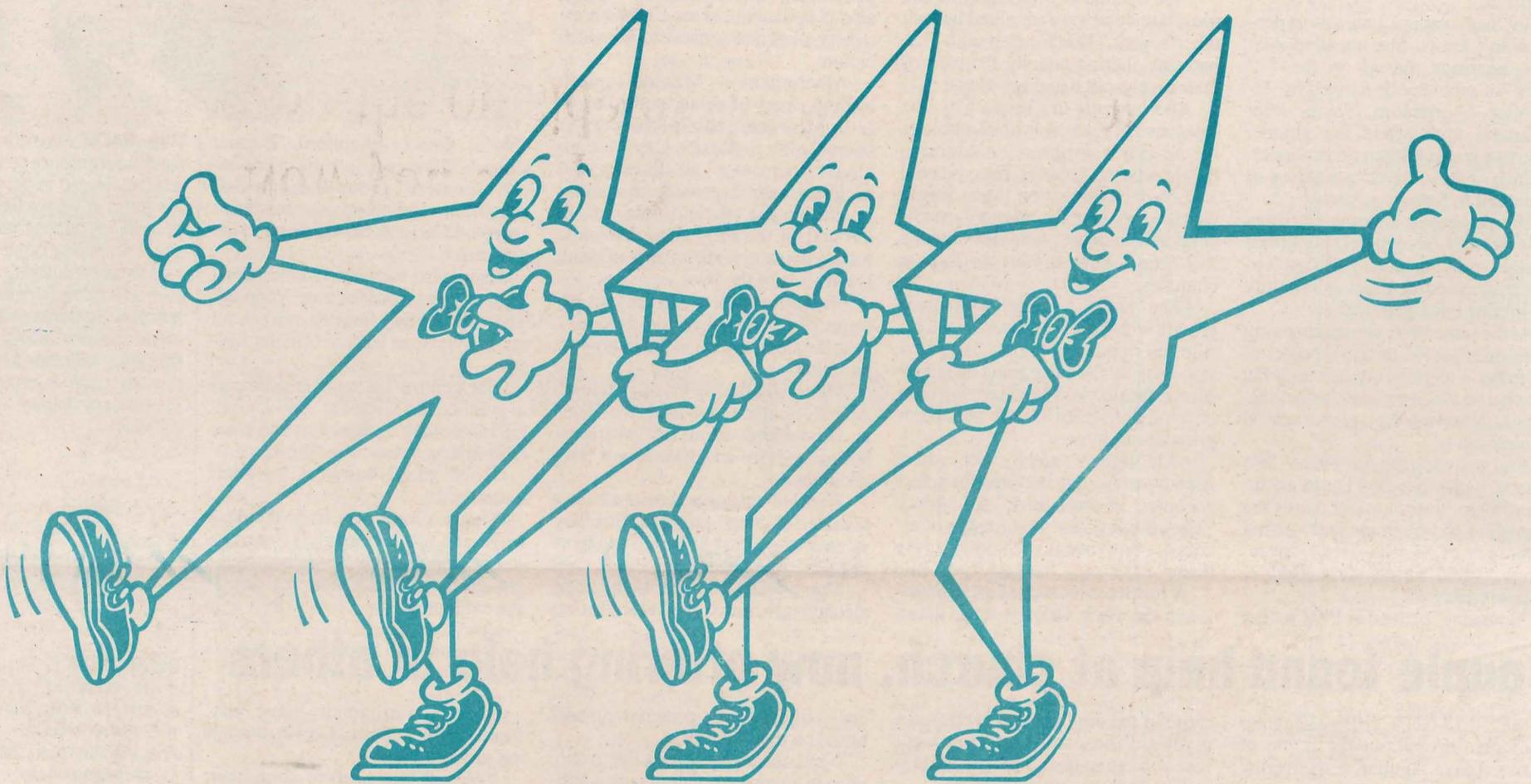
Several participants have professed faith in Jesus Christ through the group's witness.

"We ask the Lord to strengthen and guide us in our ministry," Anaya said. "We're working with souls he wants to restore and save. God is using us to help people find the abundant life he promises."

OVERCOMERS Fausto Anaya Aguilar (left), a recovering alcoholic, and his wife, Elena Garcia de Anaya, update missionary Laura Reagan on the progress of a Christian support group they lead through a Baptist church in Mexico City. (BP photo by Warren Johnson)



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