



WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

Coppenger chosen
Mark Coppenger, vice president for convention relations with the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee, has been nominated to become the next president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. *See page 2.*

Gilliland to retire
Dee Gilliland has announced plans to retire as executive director of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union. *See page 3.*

Editorial
Participate in the National Day of Prayer. *See page 5.*

Gun-toting gospel
The paramilitary groups which have gained attention in light of the Oklahoma City bombing often espouse an apocalyptic religious perspective. *See page 7.*

Women called to grow more in grace

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

BOWLING GREEN—In the midst of uncertainty, structural changes and leadership changes, Baptist women must continue to grow in grace and stay focused on the task of missions, speakers said during Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union's annual meeting April 21-22.

More than 1,600 women and girls gathered at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green for the meeting, with "Growing in Grace" as the theme. This number included not only 948 women but also 127 teenage girls who attended a Friday night Acteens dinner and 566 elementary-age girls who participated in a Girls in Action missions event on Saturday.

Each session began with the proclamation that "There is a place for you in WMU." But speakers repeatedly broached a more delicate question: "Is there a place for WMU in the future of the Southern Baptist Convention?"

In light of the proposed restructuring of SBC agencies and its potential impact on WMU, speakers wove into their presentations threads of gratitude for the influence of WMU on their lives. Others directly criticized the restructuring plan, which virtually ignores WMU and assigns some of its traditional tasks to other agencies.

Expressions of thanks for WMU came from many speakers, including:

■ Janet Dillard, furloughing missionary to Kenya, traced her "pilgrimage to missionary service" through WMU missions organizations, saying God "chose to use you to direct me on my path to missions service."

■ Leslie England, who along with her husband, Ray, has completed one term as a missionary in the Philip-

pine, related how God called her to be a missionary while playing the role of Lottie Moon in a GA skit.

■ Sandy Hale, who serves with her husband, Ken, in New England, thanked Kentucky WMU for instilling in her "a missions heart."

In their greetings to WMU, host pastor Richard Bridges and Kentucky Baptist Convention President Billy Compton continued the thread of affirmation.

Bridges recounted how his mother carried him in a basket to a "circle meeting" when he was only a few days old. "I

ative Secretary-treasurer Bill Marshall sounded a similar note in a letter.

Catherine Allen, president of the women's department of the Baptist World Alliance, placed women in the global context of 25 million Baptist sisters. She painted a broad picture of governmental, sociological and religious oppression faced by many Baptist women around the world.

Citing examples of risks they take for the gospel, she admonished Kentucky women to learn from those women to "grow in grace in spite of the risks" brought on by

sociological and religious trends prevalent in the United States.

Remember that Christian women "do well in repressive societies," she said. "No government can make a law that can keep women from praying."

Praying women kept alive the churches in the former Soviet Union, and praying women "prayed the government down," she declared.

Allen asserted that powerful sociological and religious forces are trying to make American women weak, but the Bible and the history of women around the world offer hope. In Christ, grace abounds to make weak women strong, she said. "God has chosen weak women to shame those who have power."

Allen concluded her message with a rousing call based on Romans 8:31 to continue to grow in grace in spite of those trends.

"Who can bring a charge against us?" she asked. "Who shall separate us—from each other or from our missionaries? Shall any created thing? No, we are conquerors," Allen said to a standing ovation.

Wendell Belew, a retired home missionary and former mountain missions director in Kentucky, continued the call to grow in grace as he led Bible studies in each session.

The human mind cannot begin to comprehend God's grace, Belew said. □ *See Women called ... , page 3*



WMU SCENES At left, Jody Baker and Dee Gilliland pose with a copy of their new book, "Mountain Greats." Center, Vera Kadaeva, president of the Russian Baptist women's group, greets Catherine Allen of the Baptist World Alliance. Top, Kristy Smith of Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah displays the meeting theme.



honor your presence and honor your crucial task," he said.

Compton praised the "extravagant grace WMU has showered over our convention." He likened that grace to the perfume offered Jesus by Mary Magdalene—a gift he said "was not wasted and will be remembered as a memorial as long as the gospel is preached."

Both WMU President Kay Trisler and WMU Executive Director Dee Gilliland spoke to the uncertainty of WMU's future role in the denomination in their reports. And KBC Execu-

Hard questions: Explaining the bombing to kids

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—How do you explain an enormous tragedy like the Oklahoma City bombing to children?

For adults who themselves are in shock over the media images of recent days, dealing with a child's innocent but pointed questions—"Why did this happen? Who did it? Can it happen to our family?"—can be an unsettling experience.

Experts are urging parents and teachers to put the tragedy in perspective for kids and give them tangible ways of coping with their fears and uncertainty. But most of all, they say, parents need to be honest with their children—even admitting that adults, too, do not understand why the bombing occurred.

"I think parents have to say very honestly to children (that) it's a very hard thing to explain," said Jane Annunziata, a McLean, Va., clinical psychologist who specializes in working with children. "We don't know why this happened. What would motivate somebody to do something like this, to kill so many people?"

Annunziata and other childhood experts said it's important to reassure children that they are generally safe in this country and that the Oklahoma tragedy is an extreme exception.

They also say it's important to give youngsters a concrete means of expressing their emotions.

For instance, they may want to send some of their allowance to a relief fund to help bombing survivors or plant a tree in their back yard in memory of those who died. Tangible expressions of faith also may be helpful, from □ *See Talking to kids ... , page 7*

Kentucky pastors share hopes, dreams & frustrations

By Marv Knox
Editor

GEORGETOWN—Ever wonder what goes on inside your pastor's head?

Two panel discussions provided insight into pastors' hopes, dreams, fulfillments and frustrations during the Georgetown College Pastors' Conference last month.

The discussions were designed to allow participants to share their feelings about the highs and lows, as well as the challenges, pastors face, said conference organizer Kenneth Chafin, a retired pastor and seminary professor from Louisville.

The pastors' observations also provided a window through which

laypeople can view their world, he added.

Panelists pondered several questions about pastoral life. The topics and their answers included:

■ **What is the most fulfilling aspect of the pastorate?**

■ "Recognition that ministry is God's idea. It's not something we choose, but God calls us.

That involvement in God's plan provides satisfaction during fulfilling moments and comfort during hard times of ministry."

■ "The thing that is most reward-

ing to me is that I can be a human being with my people. They want to hear the gospel, and they also want to hear how I'm doing with the gospel.

...

"When pastors talk about our high and low points, people identify with us. Then, when we minister to them, we've already provided a context in which that

relationship is real."

■ "I like the Baptist ideal that I've had the opportunity to 'tell it like it is' from the pulpit. A pastor is accountable to God for what you say in a con-

Preacher Talk

BAPTISTS

Coppenger nominated to lead Midwestern Seminary

"The seminary needs leadership which not only believes in inerrancy, but also stands for it and administers by it."

Mark Coppenger

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—Mark Coppenger, the Southern Baptist Convention's top public relations officer, has been nominated as president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Trustees of the school in Kansas City, Mo., will meet in a called session June 1-2 to interview and vote on the nominee, trustee Chairman Lewis Adkison announced. If elected, Coppenger will take office Aug. 1, 1995.

Coppenger, 42, is currently vice president for convention relations with the SBC Executive Committee. If elected, he would become Midwestern's third president, succeeding Milton Ferguson, who has held the post since 1973.

Ferguson, 66, announced to trustees last April his plans to retire at the end of July 1996. Upon hearing of Coppenger's nomination, Ferguson told the board he is "fully committed to serving the two years to my retirement date" but repeated his offer to step down sooner "if in the judgment of trustees it is in the best interest" of the seminary.

Trustees approved a retirement benefit of \$50,000 to be disbursed at Ferguson's discretion "in honor and appreciation" of his leadership. The package will become available when the new president takes office and must be appropriated by Aug. 1, 1996. In addition to the gift, Ferguson will continue to receive salary and

benefits through July 1996, Adkison said.

Adkison told reporters Coppenger was the only person interviewed for the post. The committee received 24 resumes and recommendations, narrowed a short list to six and then again to four finalists, and then chose to consider only one candidate at a time, he said.

Coppenger was "very clearly" the No. 1 candidate of the search group, Adkison said. He described the committee's recommendation as "unanimous and enthusiastic."

Adkison said Coppenger possesses several characteristics sought by the search committee and reinforced in listening sessions with faculty, staff and students.

Among qualities Coppenger would bring to the post are academic credentials, Midwest connections, pastoral experience, evangelistic focus, "vision and leadership" and the fact he is "a known conservative," Adkison said.

Coppenger earned a doctorate at Vanderbilt University and taught philosophy at Wheaton College six years before entering Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1981. He received the master of divinity degree from the seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1983 and then served five years as pastor of First Baptist Church in El Dorado, Ark.

In 1988 he became executive di-

rector-treasurer of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, serving there until joining the newly created SBC Executive Committee position in 1991.

Coppenger was a trustee of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1987-88 and became the center of a controversy over Southern Seminary's Boyce Bible School program in Indiana in 1990. Then seminary Provost Willis Bennett shut down the Boyce program in Indiana after Coppenger wrote an article in the Indiana Baptist critical of the seminary and its personnel.

Coppenger specifically criticized Bennett and then seminary President Roy Honeycutt, as well as the general direction of the school.

At the time, Bennett charged that Coppenger "will never be satisfied with Southern Seminary until decisions are made his way and interpretations of Scripture are in agreement with his own views."

Coppenger faced other difficulties in Indiana, including having to address a financial crisis that was largely created before his arrival as executive director. Nevertheless, he bore the brunt of criticism while making personnel cutbacks and budget reductions due to the crisis.

In his role with the SBC Executive Committee, Coppenger has become the chief apologist for the SBC's new conservative leadership. He has used

SBC Life magazine as a platform for telling what he has called "the other side of the story," often touting advances under the conservative leadership.

Adkison said the search committee purposely set out to find a candidate who affirms the inerrancy of the Bible. "I think we all feel, both our search committee and board of trustees, this is a direction of our convention," he said. "It's just very important we have one who believes the Bible without any reservation and is an inerrantist."

In a document Coppenger wrote for Midwestern's trustees, he declared: "The seminary needs leadership which not only believes in inerrancy, but also stands for it and administers by it."

In addition to inerrancy, Adkison said Coppenger will emphasize missions and evangelism. "We are very excited and enthusiastic about Midwestern Seminary becoming a mission seminary with a lot of focus and emphasis on the Midwest and Upper Midwest," he said.

Asked if he anticipates confrontations between the new president and faculty, similar to those at other SBC seminaries which hired new presidents with an agenda of moving the schools to the right, Adkison responded, "I don't expect it to be a problem."

Compiled from Associated Baptist Press, Baptist Press and staff reports

Brotherhood & Stewardship trustees question restructuring

The proposed restructuring of Southern Baptist Convention agencies has drawn new criticism from trustees of two commissions that would be heavily impacted by the changes.

Trustees of the Brotherhood Commission unanimously adopted a "statement of concern" about the restructuring, concluding: "We do not embrace or support the recommendation in its current form."

Trustees of the Stewardship Commission adopted a statement that stops just short of directly opposing the restructuring. And the trustee chairman expressed his conviction that dissolving the Stewardship Commission "is not in the best interest of the Southern

Baptist Convention."

Under the restructuring proposal, the Stewardship Commission would be eliminated. The Brotherhood Commission would be merged into a new entity along with the Home Mission Board and Radio & Television Commission.

The restructuring proposal is to be considered by messengers to this year's SBC annual meeting in Atlanta June 20-22.

Brotherhood Commission trustees instructed Brotherhood Commission President James Williams to "graciously decline" to appear on a promotional video about the plan.

The video, being produced by the SBC Executive Committee, is sched-

uled to be shown to SBC messengers in Atlanta.

Primary concerns expressed by Brotherhood Commission trustees include:

- The proposed structure of the new North American Mission Board's trustee board.

- Breaking apart the Brotherhood Commission's current work in both men's ministries and missions education.

- Potentially losing valuable Brotherhood Commission staff members and the "entrepreneurial and progressive approach" they offer.

Meanwhile, trustees of the Stewardship Commission discussed the reorganization proposal at length dur-

ing their spring meeting. Trustee Kenneth Hull made—and subsequently withdrew—a motion that trustees go on record as opposing reassignment of the commission's duties and requesting that the Stewardship Commission remain intact.

Instead, trustees approved a motion by trustee Charles Sullivan that a four-member committee be appointed to draft an official response to the Program and Structure Study Committee report.

The statement stresses the importance of stewardship development for Southern Baptists in contemporary American society.

Based on Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press reports

Jackson backs out; seminary says he wasn't asked

LOUISVILLE (ABP)—Evangelist Richard Jackson says he backed out of an agreement to teach a short-term course at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary to protest actions by seminary President Al Mohler.

Recent decisions to "terminate faculty members who will not adhere to a specified creed followed by the public reprimand of adult students who took action against such anti-Baptist decisions have stirred within me a personal conviction that simply will not allow me to fill the July 17-21 teaching position," Jackson wrote in an April 24 letter to David Dockery, vice president for academic administration at the seminary.

But seminary officials say Jackson never was officially invited to teach at the school. Jackson was contacted about teaching a one-week

course on "Evangelistic Preaching" at Boyce Bible School, a division of Southern Seminary, but never was offered a contract, Dockery said.

Dockery said Jackson was not invited to teach "in part" because he refused to sign the Abstract of Principles, the seminary's founding document. Jackson refused to sign the document out of a personal conviction against signing doctrinal creeds.

Jackson called the seminary's response ridiculous. If he wasn't invited to teach, Jackson asked, then why was he asked to sign the Abstract? "The last thing they said to me was, 'You don't have to sign it,'" Jackson insisted.

Jackson said he was disturbed by Diana Garland's firing as a seminary dean and President Mohler's treatment of students who objected to the firing.



Jeff said he welcomed Sylvia as a new member of the board and looked forward to her input from a female's perspective. Jerry then nominated Sylvia for board secretary and Doug seconded the motion.

Kentuckians voice concern over SBC restructuring

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

BOWLING GREEN—Three Kentucky Baptist Convention leaders have expressed concerns about the proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention and its impact on Woman's Missionary Union.

The restructuring proposal, created by a special study committee composed of seven men, virtually ignores WMU and assigns some of WMU's traditional roles to other agencies. The committee has defended their action, saying their intent was to honor the request of WMU to remain an auxiliary to the SBC. Only agencies under the direct control of the SBC can have ministry assignments from the SBC, they explained.

During the April 21-22 annual meeting of Kentucky WMU, concerns about WMU's position in the restructuring were expressed by KBC Executive Secretary-treasurer Bill Marshall, Kentucky WMU President Kay Trisler and Kentucky WMU Executive Director Dee Gilliland.

Marshall's remarks were written in a letter of greeting which was read

at the WMU annual meeting. Marshall expressed regret for what the "unnecessary and ill-advised proposal related to WMU" and the "anguish to WMU leadership which has resulted from the proposal."

While acknowledging he has no authority to speak for all Kentucky Baptists, Marshall wrote that his 12 years as KBC executive secretary and 19 years with the Foreign Mission Board "assures me that WMU is held in high regard by the vast majority of Kentucky Baptists and Southern Baptists."

"I, for one, will do all that I can to support and affirm your continued, vital role in our mission together," he wrote.

Trisler told women attending the annual meeting this is not the first time "those in authority in the SBC have seemed to want to exclude WMU."

"In every instance," she said, "we have said we will continue to do missions, for that is our task. We do not fear what others will do to us; we will follow the leadership of the Lord. That mandate for WMU for over 100 years has been to support the mission

cause by praying, giving, studying, encouraging, supporting and going. It's biblical and that is what we will do."

Trisler said she is at peace about WMU's decision to continue on its task. "We do not need to fight. As we are faithful and continue to do the best that we know how, the Lord will be with us," she assured the women.

While acknowledging that some of the downsizing called for in the restructuring will be good, Gilliland hastened to say that she fears that "baptistically the diminishing of some of the structure appears to centralize authority and power, removing it further from the people."

"As a Baptist, a believer in a people-led, non-hierarchical organization, set up by the churches to assist the churches in performing their God-given role, I have a problem with centralized, authoritarian control," she said.

Gilliland asked two questions:

■ If the role of WMU has been defined in the past, why can't it be defined now?

■ What is the purpose behind assigning traditional WMU tasks to oth-

er agencies?

Gilliland offered a rebuttal to the explanation that WMU was not included in the restructuring report because WMU elects its own board and thus is not accountable to the denomination.

"Have we not always behaved in a most accountable and responsible manner?" she asked. "Have we not always led in the support of missions?"

Gilliland acknowledged that the presidents of both the foreign and the home mission boards have said they would expect to continue their relationships with WMU. But she questioned the words "expect to."

"When you talk with attorneys, they will tell you that expectations don't mean that much. It is what is written in the report (that matters)," she said. "I believe it is the written report that determines the action of the trustees of the agencies."

In response to the report, she suggested the women pray, seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to determine their own opinions, inform others and go to the SBC annual meeting and vote.

Women called to grow in grace amid change

Continued from page 1

He posed several questions related to the topic:

■ What is grace? It is God's undeserved kindness showered on mankind, yet it is unfathomable and undefinable, he said. To study grace is a "continuous journey to understand the depth of God's love."

■ To whom is grace given? "Grace is available to all who trust Christ. It is not God's will that any should perish."

On this point, Belew specifically addressed a resurgence of Calvinist theology among Southern Baptists. The Calvinist doctrine of limited atonement—which he described as "only those on God's list" will be saved—was as heretical in the 16th century as it is today, he said, challenging the women to "continue your wonderful stand today that grace is for all."

■ Why was grace given? "Because we were so very lost," he said.

■ How does one grow in grace? Each time a person professes faith in Christ and "we see the sparkle in the eye, we grow a bit," he said. "Each time we minister to those in need, we

grow a bit."

WMU historically has called the denomination to remember what Jesus came to do and to remember what is needed most is to be like Jesus, Belew said.

"Social work was what Jesus said was most important," Belew said. He asserted that the "greatest judgment Jesus expressed in all of the Bible" is recorded in Matthew 25, Jesus' statement of condemnation for those who refused to clothe the naked, feed the hungry and care for the sick and imprisoned.

"It doesn't matter that the president of a seminary says social work is incompatible with theology," Belew said in reference to the current controversy over the Carver School of Church Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "You know what the Bible says. You will not forget."

The future of the Carver School has been called into question, in part due to seminary President Al Mohler's assertion that the culture of social work is not always compatible with Christian theology. The Carver School is an outgrowth of a training

school for women started by WMU members at the turn of the century.

Also during the Bowling Green meeting, Kentucky WMU members:

■ Heard a report from Vera Kadeeva, president of the women's department of the Union of Evangelical Christians-Baptists in Russia.

■ Learned of the upcoming retirement of Dee Gilliland as executive director of Kentucky WMU effective May 15, 1996.

■ Re-elected as officers Kay Trisler of Harrodsburg, president; Sara Billups of Ashland, vice president; and Joyce Thompson of Morgantown as recording secretary.

■ Approved a financial and services agreement to guide relationships between WMU and the KBC. If approved by the KBC Executive Board, the agreement will take effect Sept. 1.

■ Heard thank-yous from missionaries and a missionary kid for Christmas gifts sent annually to Kentucky-born foreign missionaries and their families. Participants in this year's annual meeting donated \$3,842 to be used for those gifts next Christmas.

■ Received training in upcoming WMU organizational changes.

WMU's Gilliland announces retirement plans

BOWLING GREEN—Dee Gilliland has announced plans to retire May 15, 1996, as executive director-treasurer of Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union.

Gilliland, who has led the missionary group since September 1984, made the announcement at the annual meeting of Kentucky WMU April 21-22.

Gilliland came to Kentucky from the national WMU offices in Birmingham, where she pioneered a new position in marketing. Prior to that, she was WMU director for the Northern Plains Baptist Convention.

Friends describe Gilliland as a visionary who is able to see the potential in people and in organizations. During her tenure with Kentucky WMU, she has helped develop strong associational leaders, begin a WMU Heritage Fund and secure articles of incorporation.

"I have felt very much at home in Kentucky," Gilliland said. "Kentucky women are a very special breed. They are strong, committed and faithful."

Both inside and outside Kentucky, Gilliland is known for her dramatic monologues and her writing.

She has written one book, "Selected Women of Scriptures of Stamina and Courage."

In retirement, Gilliland hopes to spend more time writing, leading conferences and performing dramatic monologues, she said.

Gilliland and her husband, Ray, are the parents of two sons and the grandparents of four.

"Kentucky WMU is deeply indebted to Dee for her charming, gracious, perceptive leadership during the past 11 years," said WMU board member June Rice. "She will leave mighty big shoes to fill."

BLUEGRASS BURGEOO

■ **Family members killed.** The bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building took a heavy toll on the family of Trent Argo, admissions director at Campbellsville College. Three relatives of Argo's worked in the building and two others were in the building at the time of the blast. Two of those relatives were away from the building at the time of the blast and one escaped unharmed after the blast. But two of Argo's cousins were killed in the bombing.

■ **Commencements set.** Two Kentucky Baptist colleges have announced plans for spring commencement ceremonies. Campbellsville College will graduate 175 students in ceremonies May 6, with Bruce Heilman, chancellor of the University of Richmond, Va., as speaker. Georgetown College will graduate 216 students in ceremonies May 13, with U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell as speaker.

■ **Fulbright scholar named.** Noah Cooksey has become the sixth Georgetown College student to receive a Fulbright grant in the last seven years. Cooksey, of Louisville, will spend the next academic year in Korea, where he will teach English to high school students. Georgetown College has produced more Fulbright scholars in the last seven years than any other private college in Kentucky.

■ **Day of Prayer set.** Thursday, May 4, has been designated a National Day of Prayer. Various events are planned across the state to mark this day. For information on National Day of Prayer activities in Kentucky, call (502) 228-3338.

■ **Conference on mental illness set.** A conference on "Ministry and Mental Illness" is planned for May 20 in Bowling Green. The event is sponsored by the Kentucky Alliance for the Mentally Ill. Speakers include Paul Weaver, a Baptist minister and expert on mental illness, and a panel of church leaders. For information, call (502) 245-5284.

■ **Correction:** The April 18 issue of the Recorder incorrectly identified Bill Kaufman as interim pastor of Valley Station Baptist Church in Valley Station. Kaufman is pastor emeritus of that church. Don Zuberer is the church's current pastor.

OPINION

WESTERN RECORDER

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

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Derby witness

When is a mini-marathon more than a race? When is a parade more than a parade? When is a balloon race more than something to Ohhhh and Ahhhh about? The answer to all of these questions is when you add the words "Derby Festival" in front of the event.

I admit it is very easy to get caught up in the atmosphere of pageantry that accompanies the Kentucky Derby. But do not forget the bottom line of the events. Everything that happens is designed to showcase the largest one-day gambling opportunity in Louisville each year.

Let me suggest that, just maybe, the cause of Christ could be better served if Christians would examine more closely the motives that direct the activities of the Derby Festival. Instead of joining the crowd, why not find a way to witness to the crowd?

*Claude Witt, executive director
Temperance League of Kentucky
Louisville*

Look at WMU

Thanks for providing information concerning the proposed reconstruction of the Southern Baptist Convention. I agree that these matters be divided at the convention so each can receive its deserved attention. Perhaps some of them are wise.

One of the recommendations, concerning the Woman's Missionary Union, certainly should be opposed by messengers attending the convention. The missionary awareness and zeal for missions in most of our churches are the results of the mission education programs sponsored by WMU. Many missionaries have testified that they became concerned about missions through being involved in one of our youth organiza-

tions.

The skill with which WMU promotes our special missions offerings is responsible for the tremendous increase.

It is sad that the Southern Baptist Executive Committee is recommending a new women's organization be organized in competition with WMU.

It's time the committee take a look at the complete program and work of WMU and its accomplishments over the years, and help demonstrate a spirit of servanthood in missions around and all over the world.

*Anna Turley
Louisville*

BAPTIST FORUM

■ More letters on page 6

God's value

Recent recommendations to streamline the Southern Baptist Convention boast efficiency, but that is not God's only value. Love and faith are not necessarily efficient.

The concentration of control increases power, which in turn tempts and destroys mortals. The present dispersion of control and responsibility among SBC agencies may encourage freedom and involvement to God's glory.

*Russell Bennett
Louisville*

A bigger fight

One expects to see dishonest descriptions of the Republican "Contract with America" when reading the liberal New York Times or listening to Jesse Jackson or Eleanor Holmes Norton.

To find it on the pages of the Western Recorder is mind-boggling. But there it is, in black and white, in Marv Knox's editorial (WR, April 11). "Their meager meals will go to fund the appetizers of the corporations' and

the wealthiest Americans' feast of tax breaks. ..."

This is followed by the usual charge of lack of compassion and the non-sequitur that welfare is necessary because "Jesus commanded his followers to feed the hungry."

There are no pleasant words to describe my feelings on seeing Christian compassion denigrated by using it to oppose welfare cuts.

To accept Mr. Knox's characterization of compassion requires supporting a system which helps destroy the families of those depending on it, contributes to illegitimacy, crime, moral pathology, and discourages marriage, personal responsibility and work.

If Mr. Knox searches for the true Christian ideal of compassion, he will find biblical evidence that the sequence of caring for one's physical needs is the responsibility of the individual, the individual's family, the church and the government.

The exact opposite sequence is advocated by liberal propagandists and the Western Recorder editor. This fact illustrates that those of us who strive for a return to public policy based on common Christian principle are in for a bigger fight than we imagined!

*Ricky L. Cox
Campbellsville*

Be careful

After reading your editorial on the Senate's consideration of the "Contract with America," (WR, April 11), I find myself questioning if you fully understand what you are writing.

As the editor of our state's Baptist newspaper, you probably are being "looked up to" by many.

Therefore, do you not think it behooves you to be very careful with the truth?

*Annie Ashby
Hopkinsville*

Don't let the tube get you

It seems to be a reality that the American public is reading less and spending more time in front of the "tube," either with television or videos.

With VCRs so affordable for consumers, it is tempting to spend two or more hours, a couple of nights a week, "zonked out" in an easy chair watching whatever is one's preference.

Having indulged in some of this myself, I recognized that it was eating into time that for me could and should be spent more constructively. It was also cutting into that precious commodity known as "discretionary time."

I still enjoy a good, quality video, a wild-life program, "Masterpiece Theatre," selected public television programs and, of course, UK basketball. But I have become aware that television could exercise control over one's life; that it can become as addictive as a drug.

Perhaps that is one reason I have begun reading more. I can't recall any TV program or video having had as

positive and durable impact as some of the good books I have read recently. When I read, I feel I am growing; when I am watching the tube, I am usually relaxing.

All of which is to let the reader know I have received from my friend and colleague, Mark Short, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, his latest reading list for Christians. I am listing a sample of the 60 he reviews, and offer, again, to send the reader a copy of the list upon request:

ON MISSION TOGETHER



William W. Marshall

■ "The Finishing Touch," by Charles R. Swindoll, Word. It is unusual for me to recommend two devotional books in the Top 60, but both are exceptional. The author helps us to become "God's masterpiece." Pastors, there is a wealth of illustrative material here.

■ "Exploding the Domsday Money Myths," by Sherman Smith, Thomas Nelson Publishers. The past two years we have had an overabundance of doomsayers' books sold in America. Sherman Smith says many of



Role of oldest-old

By John Lepper

As we get older, we may begin to wonder about our usefulness in life. Because we live in a production-oriented society, our sense of self worth can be tied to what we accomplish. As we get older, our productivity may diminish, and therefore our sense of usefulness may also decline.

What are the oldest-old to do? You may value productivity but now be unable to be productive. Instead of thinking about your worth in terms of productivity, think of your value in terms of the role you play, specifically, the role you play in your family.

Studies have been done of the oldest-old—generally, those people who are 85 or older and part of the oldest generation in their families. It was found that the role these elderly play in their families is very important.

The term "kin-keeper" has been used by researchers to talk about a family member who takes the lead in helping the family develop and maintain close ties. The kin-keeper is the person who spreads the news, arranges for get-togethers and promotes unity and harmony among kin.

The role of the kin-keeper extends across generational lines and influences the second, third and even the fourth generation.

Various things can threaten positive family relationships between the generations. These may include such things as distance, the death of a family member, the large number of extended family members and family disputes. Nevertheless, kin-keepers do things to keep the family together, attempting to weave new fabric from shreds of old relationships.

The role of kin-keepers is a highly respected position in families. They provide a link with the past, thus providing the vital role of memory. They also provide models of how the next generations can carry on family traditions.

Who are the kin-keepers in your family? Maybe you need to identify and express appreciation to them. Has death or failing health caused your family to have no kin-keeper at this time? If so, maybe you need to consider taking on this role.

John Lepper is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's family ministry department.

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

EDITORIALS

Participate in the National Day of Prayer May 4

The word "prayer" has cropped up a lot more than usual lately. As with other monstrous calamities, the Oklahoma City bombing turned Americans to their knees. Evangelist Billy Graham and President Bill Clinton led the nation in a prayer-filled and prayerful service of mourning. Civic leaders, politicians and news anchors have reminded us to pray for all the victims.

Unfortunately, human nature tends to pull the majority of people away from prayer. As a nation or group, we don't tend to think about prayer—much less pray—until the unspeakable happens. The same thing happens with individuals. How often have we felt the need to get "caught up" on our prayer lives only after tragedy strikes?

As much as Oklahoma City needs our prayers, it is only one facet of overwhelming prayer need in our land today. Our government leaders face complex problems of gargantuan proportions, and they need prayer for compassion to identify with the problems, wisdom to see solutions and courage to do what is right. Families need our prayer, to help keep marriages together and raise children under challenging circumstances.

Young, old, sick and poor need prayer for strength and comfort. Healers—from doctors and nurses to social workers and parole officers—need prayer for strength and insight. Business and civic leaders need prayer, that they will seek the common good, not just the bottom line or the special interest. Churches need prayer, that each would be the body of Christ in its community. And unbelievers need prayer, that they would accept Christ's love.

Americans will draw together to pray this Thursday, May 4, for the 44th consecutive National Day of Prayer.

Kentuckians will have at least two opportunities to participate in Day of Prayer events: A "bridge walk" across the Second Street Bridge in Louisville, from noon to 1 p.m.; and a prayer vigil on the steps of the state capitol in Frankfort at 8:30 p.m. Local events will be held in communities statewide.

The National Day of Prayer is needed and timely. But let us not forget to pray for our nation every day of the year.

Marv Knox

Kentuckians will conduct two major National Day of Prayer events May 4: A "bridge walk" on the Second Street Bridge in Louisville, from noon to 1 p.m., and a prayer vigil on the steps of the state capitol in Frankfort at 8:30 p.m. Other events will be held in communities statewide.

Stop fueling flames

Your editorial about Southern Seminary (WR, April 25) was unacceptable! Isn't it time we work together and stop fueling the flames that divide us as Baptists?

I would like to say two things about your editorial:

■ The doctrine of the priesthood of the believer centers around the local church and the individual's right to faith, not to a position in the workplace. Neither the seminary nor our colleges qualify as a church. They are educational extensions and supports to church ministry, but not churches.

■ To say our seminary is no longer Baptist is ridiculous! I have watched closely the transition with Dr. Mohler's leadership as he has walked with trustees to bring about change to what the majority of Baptists feel is right.

I believe you to be fair-minded. I hope you will lay down the sword and turn it into plowshares and editorialize on that which would encourage and build our Kentucky Baptist family. May I say very humbly, if that is impossible, then maybe it should be your name taken off the Western Recorder instead of the name "Baptist" taken off our beloved seminary.

In this edition, you dedicated five pages to rhetoric. I am sure in your view they just reveal facts, but they only add fuel to the fire in our denomination. Come on, walk in the center of the road again. Let us be fair, and most of all keep the focus on winning a lost world to Jesus.

Rodney Burnette
Louisville

BAPTIST FORUM

■ More letters on page 6

Pick up the pieces

Thanks to Editor Marv Knox for speaking the truth about the tragedy at Southern Seminary (WR, April 25). The school slogan needs to be changed to "For such a mess as this."

Seminary events have demonstrated the fruits of fundamentalism:

■ Thought-control as the academic strategy.

■ Intimidation as the atmosphere of learning.

■ Repudiation as the attitude toward women.

■ Authoritarianism as the style of administration.

Perhaps most disheartening is the hard-line manner in which the administration and trustees have responded in the Carver School situation. They have employed a confrontational style using the philosophy, "I win; you lose." As hundreds of ministerial stu-

dents move into our churches with this idea of pastoral leadership, it will yield a harvest of anger, frustration and division in our churches, just as it is doing at the seminary.

Editor Knox asked, "Who will lead for such a time as this?" Who better to step forward than the presidents of our four colleges? Let them take the lead. Let other pastors add their voices to the call for something new. Surely, our lay leadership, those who have glimpsed the kind of ministerial leader to be shaped at the seminary, need to let their voices be heard. And Bill Marshall is most in position to bring together representatives of these constituencies.

God help us work together to pick up the pieces of this mess and make of it something good and glorious for our Lord Jesus Christ and his churches.

Dwight A. Moody
Owensboro

Voice of freedom

What has happened to the voice of freedom in Baptist life?

We once were the voice of dissent when the state or established religion stifled the voice of freedom. Now, after more than 300 years, we are seeing the establishment stifle the voice of dissent. This has been obvious in

the action of the Southern Baptist Convention leadership to mute the voice of dissent raised by the Baptist Alliance, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and now Woman's Missionary Union.

The recent decision of Southern Seminary trustees to require that teachers could not publicly disagree with the president is to move from an inerrant Bible to an inerrant president. His addition to the articles of faith of the political-social agenda of the religious right brings an even greater alarm to our denomination. Not only are we limiting spiritual freedom by requiring that no teacher can believe God can lead a woman to be a pastor, but also academic freedom by limiting what a person can teach even though the ambiguity of the Bible on that issue leaves much freedom of interpretation. Tragically, we have now moved to be a voice for a political-social agenda in hiring policies.

In the past, I have been proud of my alma mater, but these actions to stifle dissent and disagreement emphasizing presidential infallibility and promoting a political-social policy cause me to be disappointed and really become embarrassed with it carrying a cherished name of "Baptist" for whom freedom came at a high cost.

John Dunaway
Henderson

When that Cardinal of mine steps up to the plate, I hang on every pitch

Up to now, our family's foray into the wide world of sports has been tame.

That's life for parents of small daughters. This may not be true for the parents of sons, who seem to thrive on adrenalin and testosterone. But for moms and dads of little girls, the human drama of athletic competition crawls.

First come dance classes. (I know; dance isn't exactly athletics. But it involves activity, requires equipment and you have to pay for it, so it counts.) Dance, at least at the 3-year-old level, is non-competitive. In the eyes of parents and grandparents—the only ones who actually show up for recitals—every girl is a prima ballerina.

Next comes gymnastics. The world of floor exercises and uneven parallel bars

holds promise of true athletic competition, of course. Every little Dominique Dawes wanna-be goes to bed dreaming of perfect 10s. But at the elementary-school level, nobody judges the perfection of each cartwheel, round-off and p-a-i-n-s-t-a-k-i-n-g trip down the balance beam. In the eyes of parents and grandparents—the closest most girls will come to stern Baltic judges—every child is a gold medalist.

Recently, however, our athletic fortunes

changed. Molly joined the Cardinals in a machine-pitch softball league. I'm not sure we're ready for the thrill of victory, much less the agony of defeat.

Last year, Molly played in a tee-ball league. Each girl swung at a ball on top of a waist-high tee until she hit it.

Nobody made an out. And since nobody kept score, everybody won.

This year, however, Molly must hit a ball sailing through mid-air.

That means she can strike out. And, according to the unofficial yet rig-

id rules of parent-supervised sports, I can too.

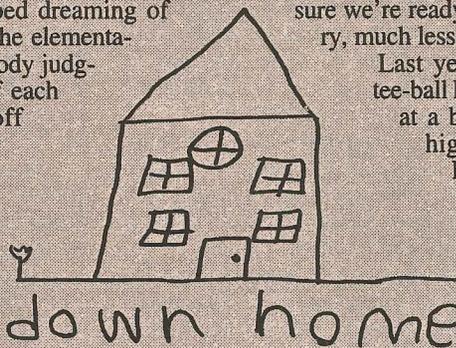
I felt the pressure the other afternoon, as Molly endured a frustrating batting practice. Perhaps it was discomfort with a new batting helmet or the weight of the big aluminum bat, but she couldn't buy a hit.

"Maybe you could practice with her," her well-meaning coach suggested, as if we hadn't already spent untold hours in the yard with bat, ball and gloves.

Since then, Molly's been concentrating on keeping her left shoulder down, her right elbow up and swinging to the ball. She's hitting better and adjusting to the pressure.

But I still get butterflies each time she walks to the plate.

Marv Knox



OPINION

Ray of hope

I attended the recent candlelight vigil at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. There were several things I noticed, some more so than others. There were some trustees, four that I noticed, and they chose to stay off to themselves. There were many speakers, two hours' worth, and many willing listeners. Unfortunately, there wasn't one speaker who was willing to take the lead for the listeners, a possible reason for the trustees' presence. So it was no small thing when the wind kept blowing the candles out. It was highly symbolic. And then there was Jeff Street at Liberty! Members of that congregation sang inspiring songs that were greatly appreciated. Their pastor preached mightily, which was expected. But who and what Jeff Street at Liberty is wasn't used for the people who came looking for hope. They called a woman to be their pastor, knowing that they would be kicked out of their building of worship for doing so. They picked the cross and carried it and are now worthy. Nothing stood in their way to compromise that for which they believed. Not degree work, not their futures and not their employment. The folks at Jeff Street at Liberty are a ray of hope for their example. We should be so bold!

Pete Sinclair
Louisville

Support Mohler

It is certainly regretful that much negative publicity has evolved from Dr. Al Mohler's handling of Diana Garland's dismissal. Dr. Mohler needs our support and our prayers.

The chairman of the board, Richard White, answered several questions in an open letter concerning the controversy between Dr. Mohler and Dr. Garland. Until you know the facts, you should not jump to judgmental conclusions. I hope Marv Knox gets the message—"look, listen, before you lip!" In my estimation, our editor has managed to stir up this hornet's nest.

Dr. Mohler has strong biblical convictions that anchor him to the perfect word of God. As a Kentucky pastor, I am thankful for a president of our seminary who has the conviction and guts to do the right thing. His decisions will not always be popular, nor will they be acceptable by some, but I want Kentucky Baptists to know that this pastor stands with Dr. Mohler.

In Dr. Mohler's position, tough decisions must be made. He needs our support, not our criticism. The faculty members of the Carver School should be ashamed of themselves for opposing Dr. Mohler and for making this a public issue.

As I view what's happening at Southern Seminary, I see a man of God, Dr. Mohler, leading the seminary in a way that represents "grass roots" Southern Baptists. Our Southern Baptist Convention has already spoken—now the implementation is taking place.

Let's support Dr. Mohler.

Terry L. Williams
Corbin

Defining moment

President Al Mohler was tragically right. The recent trustee meeting was "a defining moment" in Southern Seminary history.

It was a defining moment for truncated biblical scholarship. The trustees and Dr. Mohler know full well the Scriptures they quote to argue women may not serve as pastors are matched by others which show women preaching, teaching and evangelizing.

It was a defining moment for the loss of academic freedom. New faculty will not be allowed even to think that God might call women to be pastors, much less say so.

It was a defining moment in the battle for fundamentalist control of the Southern Baptist Convention. Just as the majority of Baptists of the South supported slavery in 1845, now in the name of majority rule the Scriptures are abused again. Our daughters are forbidden to prophesy.

It is a defining moment for glaring incompetence. Once the best academic institution Southern Baptists possessed, Southern will be lucky to escape probation by its accrediting agencies. Indeed it should not escape. There will be a school there, but the seminary we love is dead.

Finally, this was a defining moment for the witness of Baptists. Many Baptists will applaud Dr. Mohler and the trustees. The majority

of us were wrong about slavery too. But all is not tragedy. Many Baptist churches affirm women as full partners in the gospel. Ultimately Al Mohler will not define us. The gospel of Jesus Christ will.

Ronald D. Sisk
Louisville

A bold stand

I have observed, with much chagrin, the current discussion over Southern Seminary President Al Mohler and his stance on women in the ministry. Thank you, Mr. Mohler, for taking a stand in a day when most people, including some Christians, politicians and even most mainline denominations are content to debate and compromise sound doctrine.

To the liberal constituencies in the Southern Baptist Convention: What debate is next? Homosexuality? Abortion? The deity of Christ? The infallibility of Scripture?

I shudder to think what the Southern Baptist denomination would be were it not for men like Mr. Mohler, who will stand for sound doctrine and let the storm of protest begin from the left. That is exactly why I am Southern Baptist and proud of it.

If the stand that Dr. Mohler has taken infers that Southern Seminary is no longer Baptist (WR, April 25), then I too, and millions of Christians like me, am no longer Baptist.

The current state of our nation shouts loudly of what 30 years of biblical compromise has done. I will pray for Mr. Mohler, for we need more men who will stand for Christ and not slide to the left.

Rodger Howard
Pineville

Add it up

When does 2+2=3? When one is unconcerned whether or not the figures add up correctly.

Recently, I have had a difficult time adding up what is occurring at Southern Seminary.

The Carver School of Church Social Work is in jeopardy of losing its accreditation. In a 37-2 vote, the seminary faculty affirmed the Carver School and its recently fired dean. The seminary's enrollment and income is on the decline. Students are staging an ongoing protest outside of the seminary president's door. Some of the conservative evangelical professors are so concerned with President Al Mohler's "ultra-conservative theology and combative administrative style" that they are demanding a meeting with seminary trustees. Staff cuts are expected at the seminary as early as this summer, including the position of seminary pastor.

Of all the positions being eliminated, why that of the seminary pastor? Is that position also incongruent with the current theological education at our beloved Louisville school?

All of these occurrences are the result of leadership decisions based on "the views of 'mainstream' Southern Baptists who have supported conservative reforms." Really? Can financial and enrollment concerns, plus potential accreditation problems, plus student distrust, plus faculty distress

equal the type of seminary Southern Baptists want in preparing men and women to share the love of our Lord and Savior?

Add it up for yourself. You tell me.

Toby Tyler
Campbellsville

Accountability

Dr. Al Mohler told Southern Seminary students: "You cannot hold us accountable. That is not your role" (WR, April 11).

This statement represents the problem within the seminary.

It is inconceivable that this concept has been adopted. In life, accountability is not only present, but desirable. In purchasing a car, we hold the manufacturer accountable. In purchasing clothing, we hold the manufacturer accountable. In purchasing a home, we hold the builder accountable. Christians believe that sin is that for which they will be held accountable.

But in purchasing an education within the seminary, students are told, in terms that are couched in control modes, that they cannot hold administrators and trustees accountable.

When students pay hard-earned money for an educational experience that is stunted, biased and inferior, they do not have the right to demand accountability from those who are diminishing their opportunity to learn.

Alas, today's students at Southern Seminary can turn to no one for help. This school is destined and is running toward mediocrity. The attitude that embraces no accountability is prevalent on campus and is that which forms the daily administrative intent to force-feed students.

Perhaps, one day, the forced pabulum of discontent will find the avenue of reverse-paralysis and accountability will once again be seen in the erasure of current personnel by those who were told they had no right of expectation.

Edward Clark
Danville

Ironic incongruity

It's ironic the president of Southern Seminary cannot reconcile Christian social work with more "traditional" forms of ministry.

The secular political allies of the fundamentalists have allies to achieve their aim of getting government out of the "people-helping" business, contending that churches and private charities are better equipped to provide such aid to our needy brothers and sisters. Now we have a person responsible for leading an institution which trains people called by God to minister not only to the spiritually poor, but also the emotional and materially poor, and his assessment is such efforts are incongruent for Southern Baptist churches.

The accounts of Jesus' earthly ministry in the gospels more closely resemble the activities of missionaries and social workers than they do mega-church staff members and seminary administrators, especially those who attempt to wield authority like a club rather than lead through service. We need to seek God's guidance for the future of our denomination as an instrument of ministry; we need to seek his forgiveness for permitting the

present leadership to be where they are due to our inattention, our complacency and our apathy; and we need to earnestly and urgently ask where he would have us as individuals and congregations serve.

Ed Canada
Middletown

Culture congruency

Jesus never sidestepped an open and spirited debate of his doctrine. He never raised the possibility of disciplinary action against those who would criticize his leadership or fail to relate constructively to his agenda.

Jesus never faulted anyone for not following the proper institutional channels. He never made policy decisions behind closed doors. He never claimed to be accountable to anyone but God. He never appealed to the will of the majority in support of his most controversial words and deeds.

Jesus never valued theological precision over the needs of real-live hurting people.

Jesus never decried peaceful protest as a travesty of spirit and truth.

Jesus never did any of these things. The principalities and powers that now rule invisibly at Southern Seminary want you to believe that all of these measures are necessary if the institution is to remain faithful to Jesus. What does this mean for the future of Southern Seminary and the Southern Baptist Convention? I don't know.

The only thing I know is that the culture of the Kingdom of God is not congruent with the culture of power politics.

Darrell J. Pursiful
Louisville

Gamaliel test

I was saddened by an open letter in which reference was made to "significant issues within the life of the church, such as openness to homosexuals as church leaders or the possibility of women serving as senior pastors" (WR, April 18). This statement is unfair and mean-spirited; the one has nothing to do with the other.

In an earlier paragraph, it is alleged that less than 1/10 of 1 percent of the Southern Baptist churches have women serving as pastors. Well, before the Emancipation Proclamation, probably less than 1 percent of slaves had been voluntarily freed. Should President Lincoln then have been deterred from freeing the other 99 percent? And before 1920, much less than 1/10 of 1 percent of women were voting!

Why are some Southern Baptist Convention leaders so extremely biased against ordaining women? Is there a specific scriptural basis for the exclusion which also requires them to tithes in support of the church? I see nothing about possession of a womb which disqualifies a child of God from ordination to ministry.

Finally, why not try the Gamaliel test. He wisely counseled his own Sanhedrin, that which is not of God will fail and that which is of God will prevail, admonishing his fellow members not to fall into a trap of frustrating divine will (Acts 5:34-40).

Smith H. Gibson
Edgewood

Paramilitary groups carry religious perspective

By Ira Rifkin & Gustav Spohn
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—America's right-wing paramilitary groups speak a language thick with urgency. Their message: They must act now to counter an evil federal government out to crush Americans' constitutional rights.

Much of the language is political. But guiding many of the groups is an apocalyptic religious perspective grounded in the New Testament book of Revelation and its vision of a final, violent confrontation between the forces of good and evil, between God and Satan.

The coming millennium only adds to the volatility of this reading of Scripture, leading some experts on right-wing extremism to warn that the recent bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City may be a harbinger of more violence to come.

"We're in for a rough ride," said Stjepan Mestrovic, a sociologist at Texas A & M University and author of a forthcoming book on apocalyptic religious movements. "When the millennium passes, things will get better again. But I think we're in for a lot more of this extremism."

James Wood, a professor of church-state studies at Baylor University, agreed. The university is in Waco, Texas, site of the 1993 Branch Davidian shootout that has become a rallying cry for paramilitary groups.

"It's easy to see that this could be the beginning of a pattern," he said. "Certainly, to a committed terrorist, (the Oklahoma City bombing) is an encouragement."

Those familiar with paramilitary extremists say not all are religiously motivated. But they note the frequency with which Christian terminology and symbols are mixed with the groups' political identities.

Nor are all Christians who take seriously the book of Revelation extremists, they add.

But for many right-wing militarists seething with hatred toward the federal government, the book of Revelation foretells a battle between true Christians—as many of the militarists see themselves—and Washington, D.C., viewed as the devil's city and the manifestation of the biblical Babylon.

Viewing themselves as Christian patriots, many militarists see the nation's capital as controlled by satanic agents intent on establishing a one-world government that will destroy Christian faith and the white race, said John Helgeland, a religion professor at North Dakota State University.

They believe that "anyone who works for any government agency is a demon or a dupe of a demon," which allows them to rationalize the taking of lives, Helgeland said.

Events such as the raid on the Branch Davidian compound, in which sect leader David Koresh—who also preached an apocalyptic vision—and some 80 followers died, are taken as evidence of the federal government's perceived hostile intentions.

Apocalyptic theology is hardly new. It extends back to Jewish sources during ancient Israel's exile in the enemy stronghold of Babylon 2,500 years ago.

During the Cold War, noted Flinn, Moscow was the modern Babylon and communism was the earthly manifestation of Satan.

In Hal Lindsey's 1970 religion best-seller "The Late Great Planet Earth," the Soviet Union and its Arab allies were depicted as Satan's agents resisting the restoration of Israel, a requisite for the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

Today many paramilitarists see the

federal government as Satan's agent, and apocalyptic beliefs carry with them an urgency previously unknown.

"For the first time, the death of the culture is scientifically possible, thanks to the nuclear age," said Charles Strozier, co-director of the Center on Violence and Human Survival at the City University of New York.

"Before the nuclear age, it took an act of imagination to image the ultimate end. Only mystics, artists and psychotics could do that. Today you need to deaden a part of yourself not to consider the end of the world. For some people, that's just further impetus to act," he said. "In that context, taking out the U.S. government is an apocalyptic act."

To most of the nation, those responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing are a lunatic fringe.

However, Strozier and others warn against dismissing them in such simplistic terms without considering that they may have deeply held religious motivations.

"They are profoundly alienated, and their zealotry is extra-normal," said Bruce Hoffman, director of the Center for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence at Scotland's St. Andrews University. "But not all terrorists are insane, and only a minority of the militia group members are willing to blow up buildings with babies inside. But sometimes rational people reach conclusions that for the rest of us are irrational."

Religious beliefs by their very nature often tend to defy rational explanation, Hoffman said, and that makes religious-inspired terrorism all the more difficult to comprehend.

"For the terrorist believer—Christian, Muslim or otherwise—it's a sacramental act, almost transcendental. It's nearly incomprehensible to the non-fanatic."

Dean Kelley, a religious liberties consultant to the National Council of Churches, said the government's failure to consider adequately the Branch Davidians' apocalyptic beliefs virtually guaranteed a bloody ending to their confrontation with federal agents, four of whom also died in the final assault.

For Kelley, the way to head off further violence by paramilitarists is for mainstream religious groups to encourage the federal government to "communicate" with them.

"I'm not suggesting that it's easy," Kelley said. "We've gone so far down the other road that it may be pretty hard to go back to 'go.' But going further down the same road is not going to lead to anything but open warfare."

But for Carl Rasche, such talk sidesteps a deeper religious issue: whether "certain religious beliefs might be toxic and pernicious."

Rasche, a University of Denver professor whose 1991 book "Painted Black" predicted increasing acts of cult terrorism, blamed "religious liberals" for failing to condemn fringe religious beliefs that contain violent elements.

"We believe that truth is relative and anybody can believe whatever they want," he said. "Then we're hor-

rified when somebody's truth tends to become so militant and subjective that they bomb a federal building and kill innocent children.

"We are facing something rather momentous here. We are seeing violence erupt in this country because of religious beliefs and values that really are out of control. In our rage to respect religious diversity we've created a monster."

Talking to kids about the bombing

Continued from page 1

joining in prayer to lighting a candle.

"If kids can do something with their feelings, they'll feel better and feel less overwhelmed," Annunziata said.

Alan Fogel, a psychology professor at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, said commenting on how unusual the event is may not provide enough comfort for a child.

"I think a better strategy would be just (to) recognize the child's fear," said Fogel, an expert on parent-child relationships. Like Annunziata, he suggested practical ways for children to express their grief, such as writing a letter to parents of victims or even to President Clinton.

The president, concerned about how the nation's children are reacting to the crisis, already has reached out to the young.

"My message to the children is that this was an evil thing and the people who did it were terribly, horribly wrong," Clinton said in a televised address from the South Lawn of the White House April 21. "I don't want our children to believe something terrible about life and the future and grown-ups in general because of this awful thing."

Andrew Lester, an author on pastoral care for children in crisis, said parents should realize "this explosion has affected a child's future (expectations), his or her perception about safety and about the nature of adults."

Children need to be assured, too, of their understanding of God, said Lester, professor of pastoral theology and counseling at Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, Texas.

Based on the events in Oklahoma, youngsters who are developing their concepts of God may jump to the conclusion that "maybe God's a meanie," he said. "If I were talking with a young child, I would take a lot of time in these days to find a way to reaffirm that God ... is a God of love."

If a child is under the impression that God caused the blast, Lester said he would respond: "That's a bunch of baloney. God doesn't go around blowing up people."

Parents also need to be careful not to stereotype a certain group of people based on the race, religion or ethnic background of anyone who becomes a suspect in the Oklahoma case, experts said.

"We're going to have to hit on the issue of love for all people so that we don't become prejudiced to certain groups of people," said Daniel Riemenschneider, executive director of the Christian education department of the Free Methodist Church of North America in Indianapolis. "Christ does not want us to act that way."

Experts disagree on whether parents should attempt to impart a moral lesson to their children based on the bombing incident.

Annunziata believes such an approach can be useful.

"We always are taught not to hurt other people," she suggested telling children. "This is just such an extreme act of violence and this is really wrong."

But Sydney Koret, executive director of the American Association of Psychiatric Services for Children in Rochester, N.Y., said discussions of moral issues probably should be kept among adults.

"For children, what they need to know is about their own security," Koret said. "The morality will flow from the assurance that comes."

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MINISTRY

Stagg: 'Give your life away'

GEORGETOWN—Outlook on life and attitude toward God determine much about aging, Frank Stagg said during the Georgetown College Pastors' Conference.

Stagg, an octogenarian retired New Testament professor, illustrated his theme with two masterpiece sculptures by Michelangelo. The artist's renderings depict Moses, who led the Hebrew slaves out of Egyptian captivity, as an old man and David, the second king of the Jewish nation, as a youth.

"As a young man, Moses was angry," he said. "Moses' best years were after his 80th birthday. He went out strong and was considered a prophet and a spokesman for God."

King David started life full of vigor, Stagg added. But after a lifetime of wandering to and from God, slavishly following his own pursuits, he died "all washed up."

Consequently, Michelangelo captured each at his zenith—David in youth and Moses in age.

"Why is it that the years work for some people and against other people?" Stagg asked. "A life turned inward leads to self-destruction. A life turned outward leads to God."

Supporting his claim, Stagg cited the "example of two Sauls." King Saul, David's predecessor, was modest and prepared as a young king, but as an old man, Saul committed suicide. "Saul committed suicide long before," he said. "He never learned to control his anger and gave his life over to vengeance."

Saul of Tarsus, on the other hand, eventually became the Apostle Paul, greatest missionary of the Christian faith.

The young Saul of Tarsus was gifted and religious, but also bigoted and closed-minded, Stagg said. But after conversion to faith in Christ and a slow maturity, he became "a new kind of man."

Christians should learn from these examples, he said. "Anyone who tries to save self will self-destruct. A life turned inward will smother itself. Only in losing your life will you find it. You must give it away."

Kentucky pastors share hopes, dreams

Continued from page 1
away and death?"

■ "I'm most grateful for the laypersons who impacted my life with spiritual depth and discernment."

■ "I always enjoy seeing people pull together for a common goal. And I never tire of watching laypeople contribute to worship. ... Sometimes what I contribute (through a sermon) pales in comparison to what they already have done."

■ "When I go to a home where there's been a death, nobody comes vying for my job. And yet I revel in sharing with people in the extremities of life."

■ "I'm grateful for the privilege of seeing changed lives. ... The best letter I've ever received thanked me for presenting that person with the gospel."

■ **What would you like to take out of your job description?**

■ "The expectation of total involvement in all aspects of church life and the expectation that the pastor can do all things equally well—preach, teach, counsel, administer and so forth. Sometimes I feel like a plate-spinner in a circus."

■ "I resent church expectations about my family—how they should dress and how they should participate in church. Nobody asks my wife out for coffee, but they expect me to be everywhere but home."

■ "If a pastor wants to get people upset, say, 'If I don't take care of myself, I can't take care of you.' I'm willing to spend 20 percent of my time 'paying the rent' and 80 percent doing what I feel is needful in our church."

■ "Some people seem to relate to me only as a role and not as a person. I'm a human being with feelings and needs. ..."

"Some people have told me in so many words, 'I have vowed never to be a friend to my pastor,' and they have kept their vow."

■ **What are the issues that need to be on your church's agenda?**

■ "Our congregation needs to do things in stages. As it's been said, 'You can't hurry the chick out of the egg.' But we need to do a better job of ministering in our community, consider how to grow in our current location and take seriously what it means to live in an urban community."

■ "We've got to help church people slow down life enough to enjoy their relationship with God. We've got to help them find a place of retreat, where they can wait for the Lord."

Also reported by Kathy Palen, a freelance writer from Georgetown.

Preacher Talk

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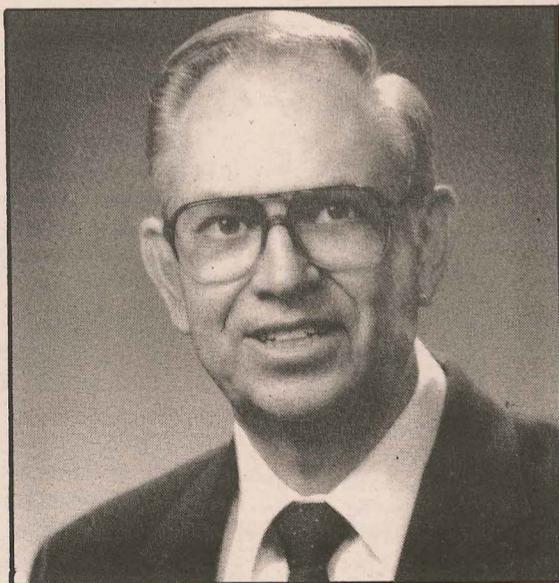
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Giving for the long term

A few days ago we received a letter from an attorney containing a check for \$5,000. The money was a gift from the estate of a gentleman who cared deeply about our children and who had made plans to continue helping them even after his own death.

This kind of gift is always special because it shows a depth of caring that is totally unselfish. Individuals who give in this way send their love to those who will never be able to thank them in a world of which they are no longer a part.

This kind of gift also speaks volumes about individual stewardship. Out of love and appreciation for what God has done, this gentleman took time to plan how the overflow of God's blessing would be used after he had gone on to be with the Lord.

The gift annuity is another type of planned gift that a number of other special friends have chosen to be their way of helping children.

We take these gifts and invest them with other gifts. The donor then receives a guaranteed rate of return for the rest of his or her life. Upon the donor's death the portion remaining in the annuity passes directly to our work.

Special trusts can also be planned to help children.

One gentleman who is helping in this way has no children and had decided along with his wife before her death that all they had left in life would go to help children. He lives out of the trust at this time, but upon his death the income from the trust will automatically come to KBHC.

The principal will remain intact and produce money to support our children far into the future.

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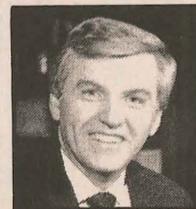
For some individuals with large estates a gift to KBHC may actually increase the resources they can pass to their own children.

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If you have questions or want to advise us of an arrangement, call 1-800-456-1386 and ask for my office or for the Development Department.

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

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Curtis C. Mooney

MINISTRY

Grace isn't popular but essential, pastors advised

By Marv Knox
Editor

GEORGETOWN—Only God's grace can enable pastors to see their jobs as springboards for ministry rather than dead-end traps, a Kentucky Baptist told ministers at the Georgetown College Pastors' Conference last month.

Although grace isn't a popular topic for sermons, it's what makes the biggest positive impact on people's lives, added Bob Long, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville.

"The Work of the Pastor" was the theme for the conference, sponsored by Georgetown College in Georgetown April 17-19. Almost 90 ministers, primarily from Kentucky but also from as far away as Texas and New York, participated in the conference, said Kenneth Chafin, Long's predecessor at Walnut Street and organizer of the meeting.

Historically, most Baptists have seen ministry as a one-way calling, Long noted: "Once you're in, you're in. You don't get out unless you're in a pine box, or you do something stupid and you're forced out."

But churches and pastors need to consider whether God's call to some ministries is temporary and transitional rather than permanent and for life, he said. "Could God call some as ministers for a season and then release them to something else?" he asked.

That concept follows the patterns of many baby-boom workers, who change careers regularly, Long said, noting trends of the largest generation in American history impact ministers just as they impact laypeople.

"A lot of boomers are looking at ministry and asking: 'Is this a trap? Is there a way out?'" he reported.

That attitude is not merely a mid-

life crisis issue, he said. Rather, it reflects a transitional perspective on life, as well as the sheer difficulty of ministry, he added.

Pastors today face the pressure of church members judging their sermons against the nation's best-known preachers, who appear on television every week; the challenge of competing for time and attention of busy members; and the intensity of a "consumerist culture."

"I don't know any way you can avoid feeling trapped unless you make a couple of structural changes," Long advised.

First, he urged pastors to adopt the attitude of Christ. "Live life looking out instead of looking in," he said.

Second, he exhorted pastors to depend upon God's grace. "When we sift through all the stuff in our lives, what's left is grace—when God becomes sovereign and we become free," he stressed.

"I'm tired of all the phrases we use to avoid talking about grace, like, 'God hates the sin but loves the sinner.' I avoid grace because I struggle with grace; it projects me down paths I'd rather not walk.

"But no other institution or messenger will talk about grace," he added, promising fulfillment for pastors who deal honestly with God's grace. "It's a springboard to freedom. ... Preachers who give in to grace will be able to take their churches where no one has gone before."

True grace was modeled by an unlikely source, the "good Samaritan," reported Kevin Cosby, pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church in Louisville.

Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan

characterizes some major philosophies of life and illustrates principles Christians can use when they come together in community, Cosby said.

In the parable, a Jewish traveler is beaten and robbed by thieves, ignored by religious travelers and finally helped by a Samaritan, from an ethnic group normally at odds with Jews.

The philosophy of the thieves is "what's yours is mine, and I'm going to take it," Cosby stressed. It's the philosophy of gangs, crime syndicates, highway swindlers and stereotypical used-car dealers, crooked preachers, welfare

cheats and some attorneys and accountants.

The philosophy of the religious passersby is "what's mine is mine, and I'm going to keep it," he added. It's seen in people who think charity begins at home and who adopt the prevalent mood of the country, which ignores the poor and the homeless and opposes foreign interests.

The philosophy of the Samaritan is "what's mine is a trust given by God, and I'm going to share it," he said. "He was only concerned that the person was a member of the human family."

The Samaritan is a model for today's Christians, Cosby urged. The Samaritan felt the pain of the other person, one of life's victims; took creative risks; and took on unlimited involvement to help a person in need.

Living like that Samaritan is not easy, Cosby noted. He cited overwhelming need, with broken families, addicts, people in grief and prisoners. He also warned, "There is no assurance you won't get hurt."

Preacher Talk

Still, "That's what it means to be a Christian," he insisted.

The vulnerability of the Samaritan is not unlike the pastor who is willing to be a prophet, added James Hyde, professor of ethics and pastoral care at the University of Louisville medical school.

"To be prophetic is to run the risk of encountering danger," Hyde said. He defined prophets as "ordinary people ministering in extraordinary times" who are willing to serve others and speak out on behalf of the poor and disadvantaged.

Prophetic ministry requires three things, claimed Hyde, who was a pastor for 14 years.

"Know God," he began. "To be 'in Christ' is to know God. That knowledge comes through experience, and it gives us a vision of God that forms us and fuels us with a passion to be servants."

Second, a prophetic minister must know himself or herself, he added.

Characteristics of a healthy minister include recognizing and accepting personal strengths and limitations, he said. They also include healthy self-esteem, tolerance, a "reliable community of faith," "the awareness of the holy," appreciation for reconciliation, and respect for others.

Third, such a minister knows "whose you are," Hyde said. That involves understanding the "sacred stories" of the minister as well as the people of the congregation.

Finally, a prophetic minister understands the people and the times, he concluded.

"The prophet reaches down and touches people. We reach down and touch people who are outcasts. ... Let us go and sit where people sit and dwell where they dwell."

With additional reporting by Kathy Palen, a freelance writer in Georgetown

"I'm tired of all the phrases we use to avoid talking about grace, like, 'God hates the sin but loves the sinner.' I avoid grace because I struggle with grace; it projects me down paths I'd rather not walk."

Bob Long, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville

Pastors can practice what they preach, Sherman says

By Marv Knox
Editor

GEORGETOWN—Pastors must practice what they preach if they're going to have credibility, Cecil Sherman told participants in the Georgetown College Pastors' Conference.

Sherman, a longtime pastor who now heads the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, addressed the conference theme, "The Work of the Pastor."

"Character and integrity have to be lifetime patterns" for ministers, Sherman stressed. He acknowledged his listeners could think of "glaring, public embarrassments to the ministry" but stressed those failures aren't what hinder most pastors' ministries.

Good pastors can be tripped up by mundane shortcomings, he reported. So, he urged ministers to focus on the basics of credible ministry. That includes organizing personal and church work, keeping ambition in check, "playing fair" with people, resisting the temptation to seek money and trying hard to make their marriages work.

"Can this be done?" he asked. "Yes. Many, many good people have lived by these rules and are living by

these rules. They make for trust, confidence, credibility. And that lets the pastor do his work."

He offered nine other guidelines for effective ministry. They were:

■ "Being a serious pastor and being a serious husband/father make for tension and guilt," he said. "This comes with the job."

Pastors ought to imagine they are taking two courses in college—church and family, he suggested. Rather than spend all their time on one and fail the other, they should seek balance.

"I've tried to make a B in church and a B in home/family," he admitted. "I know some people who've made an A in church and nearly failed family. There is great sadness in this approach."

■ "The work of the pastor is done in a political arena," he warned. "If you do anything, it will create opposition."

Consequently, pastors must learn to live with opposition, but they must try to be kind and face only one hard issue at a time, he said.

■ "If you stay in a church, you will get discouraged," Sherman said.

To beat depression, he urged min-

isters to realize discouraging times will pass away and to seek a support group. Pastors also can benefit by staying in good physical condition, developing an optimistic outlook, letting their members "pastor" them and, if all else fails, getting help.

■ "Until people trust you, they will not let you lead or pastor them," he advised, "so plan to stay."

Pastors often do not stay with the same people long enough for their congregations to trust them, he reported, urging: "Plan to stay awhile. ... Give them reason to trust you, and good things will happen."

■ "Pastoral care is the laboratory for helpful preaching," he said. "Know your people, then search the Scripture to equip them for life."

He told how, when he changed churches, he needed a year before he could understand the needs of his new congregation enough to preach for them. "A pastor preaches to and for and out of his people," he said.

■ "Vision is what people want from a pastor," he added. "Give them a vision; then give them a plan to attain that vision."

A major task of the pastor is to help members see dreams for their

church and then help them figure out how to attain those dreams, he said.

■ "A staff will 'do their own thing'; if there is a larger purpose at your church, you must give it," he noted.

That means the pastor must set the direction and the tone for overall staff accomplishment, he said. "You set a direction for the institution; the several parts are fitted into a whole. Then you've done your job, and the church will be healthy for it."

■ "Two tasks cannot be delegated—raising money and enlisting people," he conceded.

Sherman particularly advocated that pastors set the example for financial giving and soul-winning in churches.

■ "Turning a declining church into a growing church is hard work, but it can be done," he promised.

Strong church growth involves getting people to join the church, not cultivating a following around the personality of the pastor, he said.

"This means they are fitted into the small groups," he added. "Their lives get entangled into the lives of the congregation. These people have the chance to become churchmen. Always that is my goal."

"I've tried to make a B in church and a B in home/family. I know some people who've made an A in church and nearly failed family. There is great sadness in this approach."

Cecil Sherman

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

- Members of Calvary Baptist Church in Glasgow and team leader Ronnie Raines as they lead evangelism and discipleship teams around Moscow.
- A Kentucky construction team led by Coy Webb of Monticello who will work in Sosnovi Bor this month.
- Alan Chamness and Frank Kuriger as they teach in the Russian pastors' school this month.
- U.S. missionaries in Russia who are applying for Visa extensions.
- Revival and vacation Bible school teams who will work in Utah/Idaho this summer.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

- **BRODHEAD**—Vestal Meece resigned as pastor of Ottawa Church Feb. 26. He will live in Somerset.
- **CRESTWOOD**—Scott Hamric resigned as pastor of Centerfield Church.
- **ELIZABETHTOWN**—Immanuel Church called Linn Bearden as minister of music. He began his new ministry April 23.

Valley Creek Church will celebrate homecoming and dedication of its new worship center May 7, beginning at 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

- **FRANKLIN**—Don Phillips celebrated 22 years as music minister at First Church.
- **LEXINGTON**—Revelation Church called George Bryant as pastor.

Richard Landon resigned as pas-

tor of Trinity Church April 23. He plans to stay in Lexington and begin a private practice of counseling and spiritual guidance.

- **LOUISVILLE**—The Carver School Alumni and Friends Association will hold a meeting for all alumni of the Carver School of Church Social Work May 8 at 7 p.m. at Highland Church.

- **SHELBYVILLE**—Mount Pleasant Church called Lindsey Inman as pastor. He previously was pastor at Cove Hill Church in Carrollton.

- **SOMERSET**—Camp Ground Church called Terry Harbison as summer youth minister. He is a student at Cumberland College.

- **TAYLORSVILLE**—Little Mount Church licensed Associate Pastor Scott Lester for ministry with youth

Oklahoma City relief donations

Churches and individuals desiring to send financial support for victims of the Oklahoma City bombing through Baptist channels have at least two options, according to Barry Allen, business manager for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

If churches want credit in their KBC contribution records, checks should be made payable to the KBC, marked for Oklahoma City

Baptist Relief Fund and mailed to the KBC at Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253-0433. These funds will be forwarded to the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma.

Direct contributions should be labeled "Oklahoma City Baptist Relief Fund, Account #2201-335.5" and mailed to the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, 3800 N. May Ave., Oklahoma City, Okla. 73112.

and children.

- **WADDY**—Hempridge Church called Barry Beauchamp of Chiefland, Fla., as pastor. He is a student at

Southern Seminary.

- **WARSAW**—Bramlette Church called Phillip Rowan of Shepherds-ville as pastor April 16.



SPECIAL BIBLE Joanne Sizemore (left) and Earl Leach (right) of New Hope Baptist Church in Winchester present Amanda Woosley with a new Braille prayer book, part of a book set that will include a Braille Bible. Woosley has been blind since birth and attends Kentucky School for the Blind in Louisville. On weekends she returns home and attends Sunday school at New Hope with her parents. Sizemore is her Sunday school teacher, and Leach is Sunday school superintendent. The new Braille Bible set was donated by the church's Sunday school. The church is seeking a Braille-trained worker for the Sunday school program.

From Greensburg to Hopkinsville

This past year school year has been a year of many "firsts" for me.

When I agreed to serve as the new president of Oneida, I knew there would be a host of new experiences. I knew many decisions would fall squarely on my shoulders, while I would have help in other areas.

God had surrounded me with many who were willing and able to help. I cannot express how thankful I am for the support I have received from the dedicated staff here at Oneida.

One of my new responsibilities was speaking in the many churches who invited the Oneida choir and me to share in their Sunday services. My years as a Sunday school teacher and deacon were some help, but I must confess I was more than a little concerned about standing behind the pulpit.

As the day drew near for the choir and me to be at the first church service in October, I became more and more faint-hearted. A special verse to me during these past months has been Jeremiah 33:3, "Call unto me, and I will answer you, and I will show you great and mighty things that you do not know."

The choir and I boarded the bus on Sunday morning heading for the Greensburg Baptist Church. I was so thankful for the support of the choir. Many of those students were veterans of choir trips in past years. Many had traveled with Dr. Moore, and then with others who represented our school last year after the death of Dr. Moore. I did not want them to know how frightened I was. As I looked into their confident faces, it was a great encouragement to me.

As I listened to the choir perform during the first part of the service, I felt confident that at least

one-half of the service was going well.

The choir finished. It was then my turn. I do not remember most of what I said, but I do remember being confident because of the support and performance of the choir.

The choir and I have been to many churches the past several months. They have patiently heard me tell the Oneida story many times. We have traveled from eastern Kentucky to near Paducah. The first weekend in April brought an end to this year's schedule.

What a weekend it was! We left here at 12:30 Saturday afternoon. We were on our way to Fredonia Baptist church, nearly eight hours away by bus.

Fredonia was waiting for us with the youth from their church, a rented gym, refreshments, games and a puppet show. What a wonderful treat for our choir!

We spent the night in the homes of the members of the church.

After the morning service at Fredonia, we were off to Kelly Baptist Church in Hopkinsville.

Kelly had moved their evening service to an earlier time so we could be at Henderson Memorial, in Hopkinsville, for the 7 p.m. service. The choir did not have time to take their robes off. They boarded the bus and we made a quick trip across town to Henderson Memorial.

Kelly and Henderson Memorial were wonderful hosts.

God has showered me with many blessings these past months, and the choir has been one of them. Thank you, choir for your dedication and support!

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Committed and caring

"Committed to Christ and Caring for our Community" Pleasant Memorial Church in Owensboro fulfills its theme in a dynamic ministry led by Pastor Dan Stallard, a 1991 graduate.

Stallard, Donna and their two children came to Clear Creek after several years with the Marines. Following graduation from Southern Seminary, they went to Owensboro in June 1993. "Every week gets better," Stallard acknowledges with thanksgiving. Sunday school average attendance has grown from 34 to 75, and the church baptized six last year. "That doesn't sound like very many, but the year before there were none."

"The church was established to be a community church, and with 400 homes at our front door, there are many people to reach." Discipleship groups have kindled on-going revival. "Fresh Encounter" and "Experiencing God" involve key leaders. The music ministry has grown from one accompanist to an 18-voice choir and three accompanists.

I wasn't surprised to hear evidence of Stallard's long-time interest in counseling and helping families. He is on the local team for Marriage Savers and family minis-

try for the association. Daviess-McLean recently had a single-parenting conference and plans a divorce recovery workshop.

"We're practicing what James 1:27 teaches," Stallard said as he described a widowed person's encouragement group. A senior adult ministry also involves members and community in special activities.

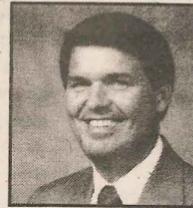
"What about mission emphasis beyond our church?" I asked. Stallard responded: "We doubled our Lottie Moon offering and just had our home missions study. The church gives 10 percent to the Cooperative Program and 4 and 1/2 percent to the association."

The church's newest ministry is to the deaf. Seven hearing-impaired are enrolled, and the church sponsored a deaf interpreter for the associational Here's Hope rally. They want to send a deaf evangelistic team to Russia.

"Experiencing God" teaches us to find out what God is doing and join him. Dan Stallard and Pleasant Memorial are discovering the excitement of that obedience.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

MINISTRY

Seeker service wasn't warm but was friendly

MISSION VIEJO, Calif. (BP)—Anyone who thinks "seeker-sensitive" worship panders to making people comfortable probably didn't attend this year's Easter celebration at Saddleback Valley Community Church in Mission Viejo, Calif.

Saddleback is a trendsetter among Southern Baptist congregations because of its intentional outreach to the unchurched populations of Southern California through contemporary worship.

For this Easter, the church put up a 5,000-seat tent on one of its parking lots. But churchgoers weren't greeted with the usual Southern California sunshine.

Pastor Rick Warren described the scene in an E-mail to several friends on the SBCNet computer bulletin board: "An Alaskan storm came through, dumping snow on Saddleback Mountain and frigid, icy rain on a very leaky tent. The tent sagged under the load of hundreds of gallons of water caught in folds."

Chilly winds blew through the tent "periodically picking up hundreds of gallons of water and dousing attendees in different parts of the tent throughout the service," Warren added. "Everyone was freezing by the end of the service."

The storm shorted out the church's sound system and lights, but church members dried out amplifiers with hair dryers.

Despite the difficult circumstances, 15,000 people attended Easter services at Saddleback, 169 people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ and 450 families filled out "first-time" visitor cards.

"I'm amazed at the commitment of the people in this church," Warren said. "I cried with gratitude all afternoon—after I built a fire and thawed out."

Missionaries serve America's Cup crowd

By Sarah Zimmerman
SBC Home Mission Board

SAN DIEGO (BP)—As international yachting crews set their sails for the America's Cup trophy, Tommy Hendricks and Mari Flores will drop their anchors on shore.

Hendricks and Flores are semester missionaries assigned by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board to minister to America's Cup fans, sailors, organizers and reporters.

America's Cup is the "Super Bowl of sailing," Hendricks said. After months of qualifying competitions, the first of nine races to determine this year's winner will be May 6. Each race attracts thousands of fans, accounting for many of the 1 million tourists expected to visit San Diego this year.

Hendricks moved to San Diego last fall from Oklahoma and began working as a volunteer in the America's Cup headquarters three days a week. His supervisors there were initially skeptical of the missionary's motives; one woman asked if he had a quota of souls to reach.

Through a servant's spirit, Hendricks earned their trust. He runs computer programs, answers phones at the switchboard and makes frequent trips to the airport to pick up or drop off guests.

Flores, from Texas, joined Hendricks in January and was assigned to the information center. There she answers phone calls about race results or how to get on a spectator boat.

The two semester missionaries are regularly asked why they are there, and both take the opportunity to share Christ. "If you're willing to talk, there are witnessing opportunities," Flores said.

Beyond the America's Cup headquarters, Hendricks and Flores help local churches reach their communities through creative arts. Several churches established puppet teams or clowning ministries under the direction of a US-2 missionary assigned to San Diego during the 1992 America's Cup races.

Church members trained in the

performing arts comprise TEAM XA, with XA being Greek for Christ First. The team has performed at nursing homes, a women's rescue mission, public schools and church-sponsored block parties.

A block party sponsored by Coronado Southern Baptist Church in March attracted more than 2,500 people, and five people made professions of faith in Christ. While guests stood in line for hot dogs and cotton candy, Hendricks juggled tennis balls and performed magic tricks.

One trick involved pouring water from a vase until it seemed empty. But every time Hendricks tipped the vase over, more water came out. He compared it to God's endless love and the friendliness at Coronado Southern Baptist Church.

Meanwhile, Flores, dressed as a clown, shaped balloons into animal figures for children. As they watched her sculpt the balloons, Flores told children that God loves them and she asked if they attended church.

Their artistic skills have opened doors for further opportunities with America's Cup. The race managers asked TEAM XA to perform at a kick-off event for the races last fall and to entertain spectators during the spring competitions. Hendricks will play the piano during the America's Cup ball, a \$250-a-plate dinner May 4.

Hendricks said he has been surprised at how his talents have been used in this ministry. "What they needed and what I could do fit like a glove."



SMOOTH SAILING Under appointment of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Mari Flores and Tommy Hendricks are serving as semester missionaries in San Diego, Calif., where they are developing ministries related to the America's Cup competition. (BP photo by Sarah Zimmerman)

Bus ministry planted a seed in him, which he's passing on

MOBILE, Ala. (BP)—When the Pine Forest Baptist Church bus rolled through the streets of Macon, Ga., little Jerry Busbee's parents put him on board. They sent him to learn about Jesus in Sunday school, to learn about right and wrong. He listened, fidgeting in the pew as the preacher talked about God's love.

He quit listening when he entered the sixth grade—quit riding the bus, quit coming to church. But the seed was planted.

Years passed. The seed sprouted. Busbee returned to church to play basketball with friends, stayed for Wednesday night fellowship and heard God's call.

Now, that call will send Busbee onto the mission field to sow seeds of his own. His mission: to develop an outreach ministry targeting children between the ages of nine and 12 in Madagascar as a journeyman for the

Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

"The hardest part now is waiting. I could put my textbooks down now and go," said Busbee, a graduating senior majoring in religion and mathematics at the University of Mobile.

For the next two years, Busbee will work with FMB missionary Fred Sorrells in Antananarivo, the capital city of Madagascar.

He received his first taste of foreign mission work on a University of Mobile trip to St. Maarten, Netherlands, Antilles, and hopes his new assignment will help him discover whether he is called to foreign mission work as a career.

Busbee has used his talent in children's ministries at First Baptist Church of North Mobile, Ala., and at Sage Avenue Baptist in Mobile, where a bus ministry brought youngsters to church.

"In a sense, I see myself in those children," Busbee said. "Bus ministries are dwindling in churches, largely because of the politics involved. For example, children don't give money to the church, but it costs money to run the buses and supply materials."

In addition, it's often difficult to find patient, dedicated volunteers to monitor a busload of rambunctious children whose parents are at home during Sunday morning services, he admitted. But Busbee believes the heavenly—and earthly—rewards are worth the effort.

"When you work with children, you hear their sweet, to-the-point prayers and understand that you don't have to be sophisticated and use big words to talk to God. You see their excitement, their enthusiasm, and you have a peace that you're doing what God wants you to do. You see God

use you to change children's lives, to put them on the right track."

And Busbee believes the church's responsibility is clear.

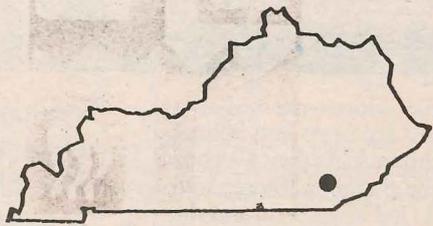
"Jesus says, 'Do not hinder the little children to come unto me.' If we're not telling them about Jesus, we're hindering them. We have to take the initiative and teach them."

"Sometimes these bus ministries provide the only opportunity for many children to come to church," he said. "That was definitely the case for me."

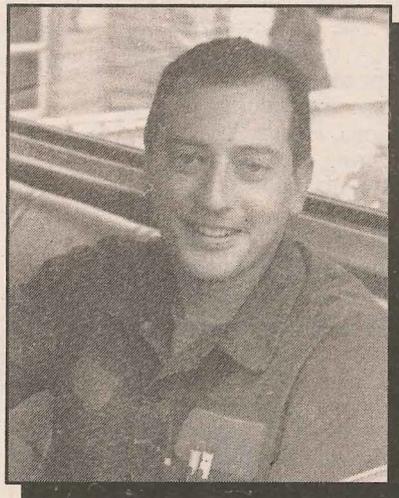
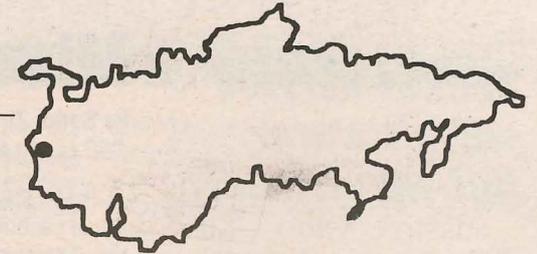
Busbee knows a seed planted during a Sunday morning bus ride can lead to a life dedicated to planting seeds.

"It's always in the back of my mind when I'm working with children," he said. "I always wonder, 'Which of these children is God using me to impact for the rest of his life?'"

To Russia With Love

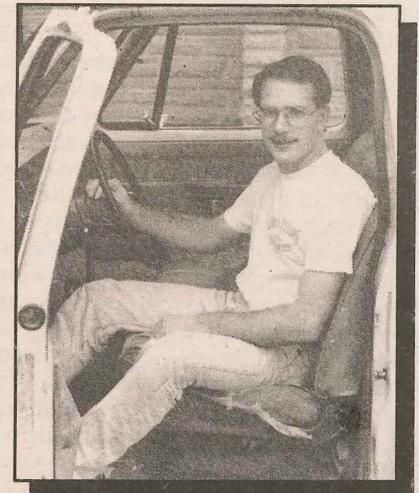


Bridging the Gap

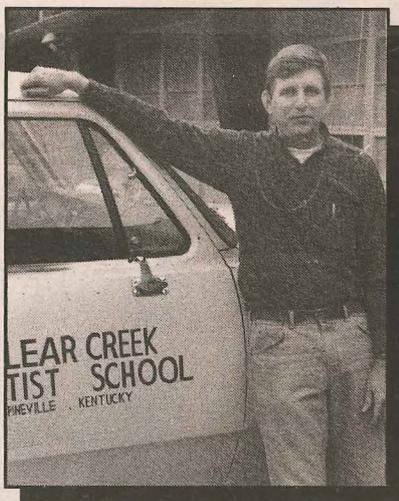


Gary Baker is a junior from Harrodsburg and is serving as the Sunday school director and education minister at Hosman Baptist Church in Pineville. He and Carla have two boys, Lee, 12, and Kurt, 4.

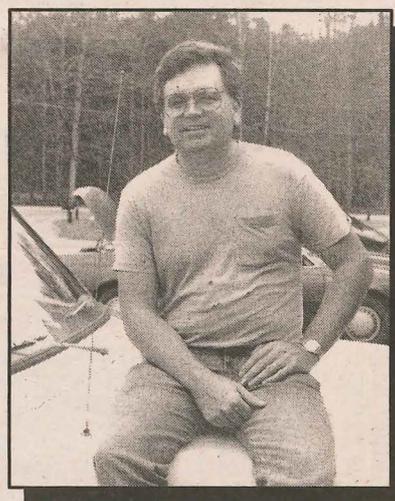
Clear Creek has commissioned a five-member team to build seven trusses on Vyborg Baptist Church in Vyborg, Russia. Five students will be joined by five volunteers from Immanuel Church in Danville April 26 through May 10. Eight thousand dollars is needed for construction of the church's roof. Clear Creek and Immanuel will each raise half. The men will stay at a hostel and will be fed primarily by the members of the church with some meals at a local restaurant. The volunteer team will be given speaking opportunities in area churches.



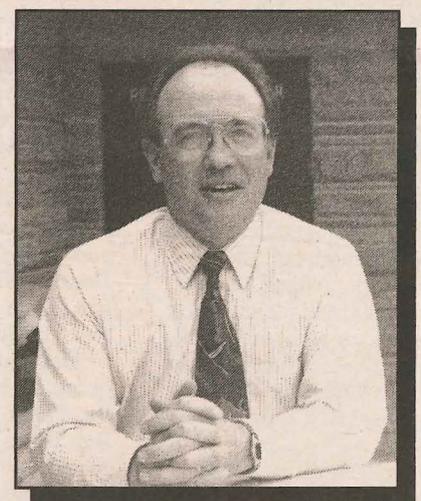
Dan Brinker is a junior at Clear Creek. His wife, Jennifer, and he are the proud parents of 1-year-old Sarah Ann. Brinker is on the Christian education track at Clear Creek.



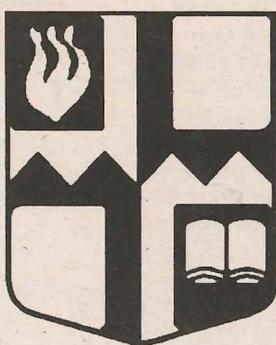
Ronnie Washam is supervisor of student workers in the campus operations department. He came to know Jesus as his Lord and Savior through the witness of Clear Creek students and was baptized in Clear Creek. He, his wife, Vicky, and daughter, Chatty, are members of Newtown Baptist Church in Pineville.



Senior Johnny Skreans will miss graduation to be on the Russia team. His future plans include attending Grace University in Omaha, Neb., to obtain a degree in flight and aviation mechanics. He and Dawn have three boys: Brandon, 11; James, 8; and Matthew, 3.



Director of Student Affairs Fred Cummings is a 1987 graduate of Clear Creek and a 1993 graduate of Southern Seminary. His wife, Margie, is director of library services. They are members of First Baptist Church, Pineville, and have three children: Eric, 23; Peter, 21; and Kara, 16.



Clear Creek Baptist Bible College

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