



WESTERN RECORDER

January 30, 1996
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FOR THE RECORD

Against gay stance

Leaders of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship have reaffirmed a decision made last summer to defund the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America because of its position embracing homosexuals. *See page 2.*

Abortion bills

Three abortion bills have been introduced into the Kentucky General Assembly. *See page 3.*

Editorial

Beware: Perception isn't always reality. *See page 5.*

School vouchers

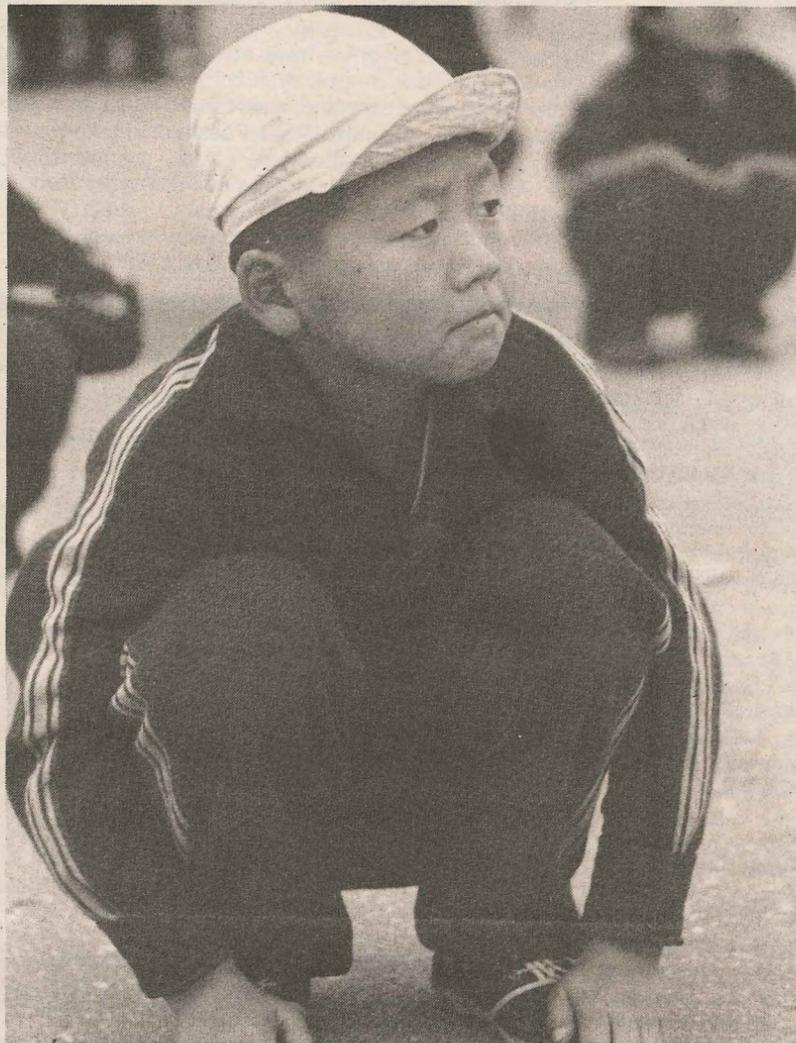
Opponents and advocates of school vouchers are watching two cases, one in Wisconsin, the other in Washington, D.C., that could impact the availability of vouchers in other communities. *See page 6.*

Best sellers

A listing of current religion best sellers in Christian book stores nationwide. *See page 7.*

Women's partnership

Three Kentucky women are working to develop a partnership between Baptists in the continental United States and Baptists in Puerto Rico. *See page 9.*



KOREAN RELIEF PLANNED Children, pregnant mothers and the elderly are the most likely to suffer from a flood-induced famine now ravaging rural areas of North Korea. The normally isolated communist nation has appealed for outside help and agreed to receive aid from Christian organizations. The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, through its Cooperative Services International unit, will spend \$500,000 to send food. The effort will feed up to 10,000 schoolchildren, send low-cost rice and other foodstuffs donated by Southern Baptist churches in the United States. While some nations have disputed the severity of the famine and refused to supply food, a Korean-American who has traveled to North Korea five times since November has seen the suffering. "I saw people eating soil," reported the Korean-American, who spoke on condition of anonymity. When he visited one small North Korean hospital in December, a doctor told him 100 people die at the facility during a typical six-month period. In the previous six months, the doctor said, 1,420 people had died—mostly children and elderly patients weakened by malnutrition. For information on how you or your church may help with this project, call (405) 357-2155. (BP file photo by Warren Johnson)

Convert from SBC witness in Las Vegas now in Bosnia

BIHAC, Bosnia (BP)—Rotco Renear, a native of Croatia, was living in Las Vegas when the Southern Baptist Convention met there in 1989.

Although he did not attend the convention, Southern Baptists helped change his life.

Renear was alone when some Southern Baptists came by his home one day during door-to-door evangelistic witnessing as part of the three-day Baptist meeting.

"I listened to them, and I liked what they told me," Renear said in an interview in Bosnia, where he now works as a Protestant Christian counselor in a country where Protestants are a distinct minority. He said part of his Christian ministry is helping women from neighboring countries who have come to Bosnia during the war as prostitutes. He said those who

are pregnant can't make a living and they can't go home.

Renear also works with groups that set up adoptions for the babies.

Renear and Ladislau Rusicka, minister of a 100-member Baptist congregation from Croatia, are apprehensive about the future of small Protestant groups in a nation where religion is synonymous with nationalism.

"To be Catholic is to be Croatian and to be Croatian is to be Catholic," Renear said. "The same is true of the Orthodox Christian Serbs. Here, religion has nothing to do with the heart; it has everything to do with nationalism. Religion is their identity."

Renear said the new Croatian constitution that will make Croatia a European nation guarantees freedom of religion. However, according to the

□ See SBC's witness in ..., page 9

Musicians sing the praises of Sunday school's values

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)—Sunday school is a way of life for most Southern Baptists, and memories of childhood Sunday school experiences are undoubtedly common in Southern Baptist circles.

It's that way for the guys from Geoff Moore & the Distance, too, and the most recent release from their Home Run album, "Tell Me Again," captures the essence of the importance of Sunday school.

"Sometimes we forget where we learned the fundamentals of the faith," Moore said. "It's hard for us to put a finger on it, but most of us learned the fundamentals through faithful Sunday school teachers. That became the foundation of biblical truth in my life."

"Tell Me Again" offers a chapter out of Moore's childhood in Flint,

Mich., where Daisy Keen was his Sunday school teacher. Co-written by Moore and Steven Curtis Chapman, the song expresses Moore's desire not to forget the lessons he learned at a young age under the teaching of Sunday school teachers like Keen.

But the song is representative of the experiences of most of the members of the Distance as well.

Keyboardist Geof Barkley grew up in a Southern Baptist church in Shreveport, La., and remembers his teacher, Mrs. Brock, and "her big beehive hairdo. She's still teaching, and when I go home I usually go to her Sunday school class there," Barkley said.

All of the band's members are quick to point out the importance of Sunday school in their own lives and

□ See Musicians praise ..., page 7

Want your church to grow? Set a goal and make it known

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

SOMERSET—Church leaders committed to the numerical and spiritual growth of their congregations should set a yearly baptism goal and "plaster it on every swinging door in the church," a growth specialist told Kentuckians Jan. 23.

"Without a vision, the people perish," Neil Jackson said, quoting Proverbs 29:18. "You have to have a vision."

Jackson is retired senior growth consultant for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board and author of numerous books related to church growth and outreach.

He addressed a group of about 65 church leaders gathered at First Baptist Church in Somerset Jan. 23—one stop in the weeklong Small Church Growth Tour sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Sunday

school department.

Other stops on the tour included Campbellsville, Hazard, Glasgow and Central City.

The annual conference targets areas in a particular region with large concentrations of small churches, said Jeff Hicks, KBC Sunday school associate. He expected about 800 church leaders to attend one of this year's five sessions.

Churches should learn from commercial advertising that repetition reinforces behavior, Jackson said. Companies are willing to spend \$1.5 million on a 30-second television advertisement during the Super Bowl because they believe it will affect viewers' behavior, he noted.

Similarly, if pastors choose as a goal to baptize 25 people in a year, "they should plaster a sign that says 'Baptize 25' on every swinging door in the church," he said. "It works."

And after choosing a spiritual goal

for baptisms, pastors should engage the entire congregation in reaching it, he added, suggesting that each department director be encouraged to set his or her own quarterly goal for new enrollees.

"Statistically, to be able to baptize one new person, you have to enroll three people," Jackson said. So Sunday school leaders should set a combined goal of at least 75 new enrollees in a year for the church to baptize 25.

"When a person has input to anything, they just committed," he said, emphasizing the importance of empowering Sunday school leaders to take ownership in the churchwide goal by setting their own goals.

Pastors and Sunday school directors should contact each department about progress toward its goal on the 10th week of each quarter, he suggested.

And churches must reach out dili-

gently from an updated prospect file at least as large as the Sunday school enrollment, Jackson added.

"You'll go over the top with this principle," he said.

Also during the conference, Jackson offered dozens of strategies to help churches improve their ministries to members and prospects:

■ **Furniture talks.** Set up a Sunday school room with one more chair than the number of people enrolled. On the front of each chairback, tape a card with a class member's name and telephone number. The card on the extra chair would read "New Member."

"That says to somebody, 'You're wanted, you're needed, you're expected. And besides that, everyone will know when you're absent,'" Jackson said.

At the close of the lesson, ask each person to choose one of the names on the empty chairs to contact for the

□ See Want your church ..., page 8

BAPTISTS

Fellowship affirms defunding of Peace Fellowship

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's governing board voted Jan. 26 to affirm last summer's decision to defund the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America because of disagreement over the issue of homosexuality.

The Fellowship's Coordinating Council, meeting Jan. 25-27 in Atlanta, overwhelmingly rejected a motion by Jose Orraca of Kent, Conn., to rescind the vote defunding the Baptist Peace Fellowship for its pro-gay stance.

The council instead approved a substitute motion by Joel Snider, chair of the moderate group's ethics and public policy committee, that stopped short of affirming the Baptist Peace Fellowship but opened the door for case-by-case funding of specific projects.

The Baptist Peace Fellowship, which recently moved offices from Memphis, Tenn., to Lake Junaluska, N.C., adopted a "Statement on Gay and Lesbian Justice" last February that declared the organization a "welcoming place" for anyone regardless of sexual orientation.

The American Baptist Churches immediately defunded the group, but eventually restored ties after the Peace Fellowship adopted a revised "Statement on Justice and Sexual Orientation" in June. The revised statement backed off an earlier commitment to "take an active role at denominational meetings" to oppose anti-gay measures and stated the resolution was intended merely to "seek to deepen dialogue" on the issue.

Later, on the eve of the Fellowship's July 20-22 general assembly in Fort Worth, Texas, the Coordinating Council quietly deleted a budget line item for the Baptist Peace Fellowship. The action was not reported at a plenary session, and many people attend-

ing the general assembly did not learn of the action until reading about it in news accounts back home.

Orraca said Fellowship money should not be used to wield control. The Fellowship supports not only its own alternative ministries to programs of the conservative-run Southern Baptist Convention—including 100 missionaries—but also gives money to outside agencies that provide services such as theological education, ethics, religious liberty, women in ministry and new services.

"Our principles are to be inclusive, not exclusive; to cooperate, not to control," Orraca said.

But Snider, pastor of First Baptist Church in Rome, Ga., said confrontational language in the Baptist Peace Fellowship's original statement left the ethics and public policy committee no choice but to defund the group.

"We just simply didn't feel that, based upon the in-your-face tone of the statement, we would be good stewards of CBF money or relationships to continue funding of Baptist Peace Fellowship," Snider said.

Offering a wholesale affirmation to the peace group "would be to condone the statement itself," Snider said, which many Fellowship members find objectionable.

Since some Fellowship members "have appreciation for other aspects" of the Baptist Peace Fellowship's work, Snider said, his committee did not close the door altogether. Should the Peace Fellowship request money "for specific projects on a consensus issue," he said, "we said maybe we can work something out."

After a brief discussion, the Coordinating Council rejected Orraca's amendment by an overwhelming voice vote, then adopted Snider's substitute motion by voice vote with no opposition.

In an interview after the vote, Orraca said he was satisfied with the process by which his motion was han-

dled but he believed more members of the Coordinating Council agreed with him but were "afraid" to speak out.

"Southern Baptists have always used money for control, even before the fundamentalists came," said Orraca, who is originally from Puerto Rico. "I find that despicable."

Orraca noted that moderates often criticize conservatives for being narrow and exclusive. "Sometimes we are hoity-toity about the other side.

We are just as bad," he said.

Snider countered that local churches, not the Fellowship, should decide issues such as how to respond to homosexuality.

Snider said he believes the Coordinating Council was being "forced" to take a position on homosexuality against its will. "In my mind, we are trying to be positioned in this argument," Snider said. "It's a local church matter. We don't want to position the Fellowship."

Smith and Parker named to new roles

ATLANTA (ABP)—Martha Smith, a pastor's wife in Gastonia, N.C., will be nominated as moderator elect of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the group's Coordinating Council learned Jan. 27.

Smith, a past member of the Coordinating Council, will be nominated at this summer's General Assembly in Richmond, Va., reported current moderator-elect Lavonn Brown, who chairs the Fellowship's nominating committee.

At the general assembly in June, current moderator Pat Anderson will complete his term. He will be succeeded by Brown, pastor of First Baptist Church in Norman, Okla. If elected, Smith would be moderator in 1997-98.

Smith's husband, Leon, is pastor of First Baptist Church in Gastonia and currently serves on a search committee for a successor to Fellowship Coordinator Cecil Sherman.

In other business, the Coordinating Council elected 42-year-old Gary Parker, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jefferson City, Mo., as the first Baptist principles coordinator, one of four leadership positions in a recently implemented staff structure.

The council also heard reports from a commission studying whether the group should declare itself a separate convention from the Southern Baptist Convention and from a group seeking a new chief executive officer.

The commission named to study whether the Fellowship should become a convention separate from the SBC declined to offer specifics about the progress of their discussion. Chairman Randall Lolley said his group plans to publish its report for presentation at the Fellowship's general assembly in June.

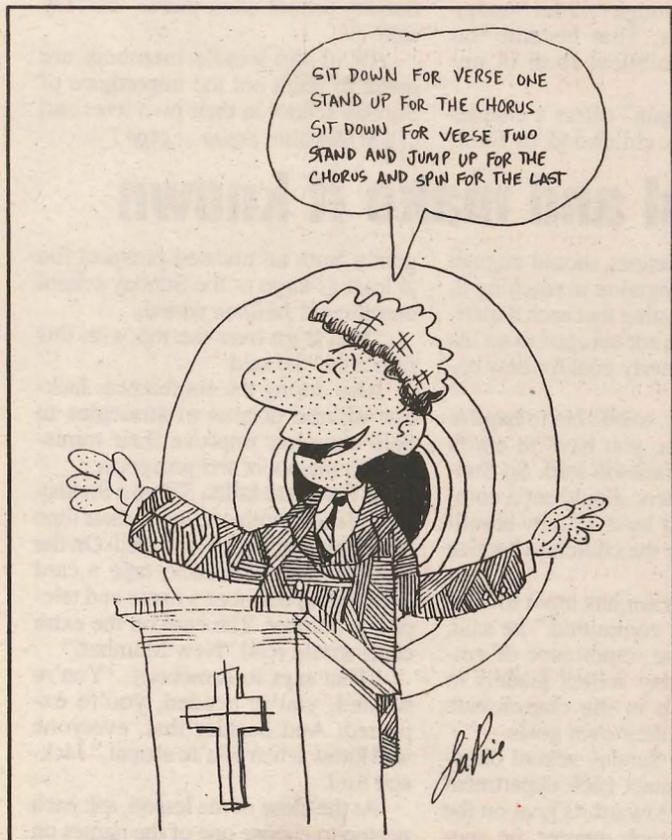
Lolley said the commission does not plan to bring a specific recommendation about forming or not forming a convention. "That would be wonderful if we could do that," Lolley said, "but it's not our assignment."

A search committee seeking a successor to Cecil Sherman, who retires this summer as the Fellowship's first full-time coordinator, has received 34 nominations and interviewed several candidates, reported Carolyn Crumpler, search committee chair.

Crumpler said the committee hopes to present a candidate to the Coordinating Council in April.

"We just simply didn't feel that, based upon the in-your-face tone of the statement, we would be good stewards of CBF money or relationships to continue funding of Baptist Peace Fellowship."

Joel Snider



BAPTIST BITS

■ **Peace Fellowship adds staff.** The Baptist Peace Fellowship has added three new staff members: Pat Parker of Atlanta has been named associate director; Steve Jacobsen of Lewisburg, Pa., has been named business manager; David Teague of Raleigh, N.C., has been named associate editor of the organization's newspaper, the Baptist Peacemaker.

■ **Miller to Fellowship.** Flint Miller of Wilmore has been named associate missions coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. Miller, 37, will have responsibilities in personnel, enlistment and training.

■ **Jordan elected in Oklahoma.** Oklahoma City pastor Anthony Jordan has been elected executive director-treasurer of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma. Jordan, 46, will succeed Bill Tanner, who retires June 30.

■ **Baylor seeks \$1 billion.** Baylor University has announced a 10-year

campaign to raise \$1 billion for endowments, capital projects and other needs. The campaign will build a new student-life complex, a law school and a permanent home for the George W. Truett Theological Seminary.

■ **Prayer sought.** Two Southern Baptist chaplains serving with American troops in Bosnia need prayer support from their fellow Baptists, according to Lew Burnett, recently retired Home Mission Board director of military chaplaincy. Jeff Bruns and David Campbell, who each served in Europe, were reassigned to Bosnia.

■ **Floyd to be nominated.** Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church in Springdale, Ark., will be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, which meets June 9-10 in New Orleans. Claude Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, said he will nominate Floyd, who also is

chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

■ **Resources available.** Supplemental material to this year's home missions study is available from SBCNet, the Southern Baptist Convention's on-line service. The files are found in the HMB library of SBCNet.

■ **Southwestern listens to panel.** An emphasis on spiritual formation and "mentoring groups" were among priorities suggested at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary when a "Blue Ribbon Committee" of more than 40 Southern Baptists met to study the future at Southwestern. President Ken Hemphill formed the group to seek input on a wide range of issues. Priorities identified by the committee include spiritual formation, interpersonal relations course work, leadership skills course work, lifelong learning emphasis and integration among the seminary's three schools.

Abortion bills introduced; school prayer bill moving

By Mark Wingfield
Interim Editor

FRANKFORT—Three bills related to abortion have been introduced in the Kentucky General Assembly.

The bills are similar to legislation proposed in the 1994 General Assembly which was passed by the House but never brought to the floor for debate in the Senate.

House Bill 362 and Senate Bill 153 are similar in nature. Both are "informed consent" bills which would require a 24-hour

waiting period before a woman could have an abortion. The waiting period would commence after the woman had been given information about abortion procedures and alternatives to abortion.

House Bill 345 would require facilities that perform abortions to meet certain health standards to be licensed.

In other developments in this year's General Assembly:

■ A bill related to student-initiated school prayers passed the House by an 88-4 vote Jan. 22 and has been sent to the Senate. House Bill 10 says: "No school board, administra-

tor or teacher shall prohibit students from praying during non-instructional times, including, but not limited to baccalaureate services, athletic events and extracurricular activities, when the prayer is voluntary and student-initiated."

■ A bill was introduced Jan. 11 that would require the Cabinet for Human Resources to implement a five-year statewide public awareness campaign on alcohol and drug addiction in women and the

"coexisting issues of chemical dependency and domestic violence."

House Bill 275 also would require the state to fund additional workers in each regional office of the Cabinet for Human Resources to specialize in issues of chemical dependency among women and domestic violence.

■ A bill was introduced Jan. 18 that would make it more difficult for anyone under age 18 to purchase tobacco products and would stiffen the penalties for businesses that sell tobacco to underage customers.

To check the status of a bill, call (800) 776-9158. To give your senator or representative an opinion about a bill, call (800) 372-7181.

Kentucky
General
Assembly



Teams respond to flooding

RIPLEY, W.Va.—Rising floodwaters in West Virginia sent Kentucky Baptist disaster relief volunteer teams streaming to offer helping hands last week.

At least 30 Kentuckians were dispatched to the vicinity of Ripley, W.Va., where they staffed an emergency feeding operation and began planning an extensive mud-out effort. The mud-out phase was not expected to begin in full until sometime this week, when floodwaters were projected to recede.

The Kentucky crew faced several difficulties in the early stages of this relief effort, including high winds that blew down a large food-service tent.

Next week's Recorder will include more details of the relief effort.

The Kentucky disaster relief volunteers were among teams dispatched to West Virginia and Pennsylvania from six state or regional Baptist conventions.

The quick response of Southern Baptist disaster relief units impressed West Virginians, said Larry Wood, evangelism director for the West Virginia Convention of Southern Baptists.

"It's difficult to put into words the feelings of seeing Southern Baptists rally together so quickly to help," Wood said. "It does my heart good to be a part of that effort."

ART SERIES ESTABLISHED

Campbellsville College President Ken Winters (center) receives a check from Mark Johnson, president of Citizens Bank & Trust Co. of Campbellsville, as initial funding for a new Citizens Bank/Campbellsville College Performing Arts Series. The bank's gift will provide initial funding for the college to construct a new 227-seat recital hall. Also pictured are Bill Collins, Forest Shely, Ray Altman and Thomas McMahan. (Photo by Joan McKinney)

Baptists strong in House

FRANKFORT—Baptists make up the largest faith group represented in this year's Kentucky House of Representatives and the third-largest faith group represented in the Senate.

Of the 97 representatives working in Frankfort this session, nearly one-third (30) identify themselves as Baptists. The next-largest grouping is Catholics, with 16 members of the House.

Other faith-group representations in the House include: Church of Christ and/or Disciples of Christ, 15; Methodists, 11; nondenominational, six. Thirteen representatives list no religious affiliation.

Of the 38 senators, six are Baptists. Catholics claim the most representation in the Senate, with nine members. Seven senators are Methodists.

The Senate also includes Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, an Episcopalian, Nazarene, Pentecostal and Mormon. Two Senators list no religious affiliation.

Six of Kentucky's current senators and representatives are graduates of Kentucky Baptist Convention-affiliated schools. One senator and three representatives hail from Cumberland College; one representative hails from Campbellsville College and one from Georgetown College.

Former evangelism leader dies

LOUISVILLE—Thomas Hicks Shelton, former director of evangelism for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, died at the Forum in Louisville Jan. 22. He was 84.

Shelton also was a longtime Kentucky Baptist pastor and former KBC president. In retirement, he served as interim pastor of numerous Kentucky Baptist churches.

He was the fourth of seven preachers in a line since the late 1700s. He was one of five associational directors of missions to come from one family.

Survivors include four daughters, Patricia Koppman of San Diego, Calif., Barbara Gardner of Hopkinsville, Nancy Jennings of Crestwood and Susan Shelton of Versailles; a sister, Jane Morton; seven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Reba Hubbard Shelton, in 1990.

A funeral service was held Jan. 26 at First Baptist Church of Princeton. A memorial service was held Jan. 27 at Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville.

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Sweet at Campbellsville.** Contemporary Christian musician Michael Sweet, formerly of the group Stryper, will present a concert at Campbellsville College March 30 at 7:30 p.m. in Powell Athletic Center. For ticket information, call (502) 789-5210.

■ **Worship workshop planned.** A worship workshop will be offered at Campbellsville College Feb. 27 at 7 p.m., with sponsorship by the college and the Reuben and Jewel Robertson Worship Fund. The workshop will feature Stephen Shoemaker

and Thomas Stoker, both of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, speaking on "The Service of Word and Table in the Ancient and Modern Church." For registration information, call (502) 789-5029.

■ **Exhibition mounted.** Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's Center for Religion and the Arts presents "Public Space, Sacred Space: Sculpture by Ed Hamilton" in the North Gallery of the Campus Center Feb. 6-March 22. For information, call (502) 897-4113.

■ **Full scholarships offered.** Georgetown College will guarantee full four-year scholarships for up to 10 participants each year in the YOUNG Scholars program. The program serves children from financially disadvantaged families who want to attend college. YOUNG is an acronym for Youth Organized for Understanding New Goals. The program also is named in honor of Kentuckians Whitney M. Young Sr. and Whitney M. Young Jr.

■ **"True Love Waits" event.** Ninth & O Baptist Church in Louisville

will sponsor a "True Love Waits III: Thru the Roof" rally Feb. 14 from 7-10 p.m. The rally will feature testimonies from teens who have committed themselves to sexual purity and viewing of a broadcast of the "Thru the Roof" celebration in the Atlanta Georgia Dome. For information, call David Fletcher at (502) 636-5576.

■ **Oxford String Quartet to play.** Georgetown College will present a concert by the Oxford String Quartet Feb. 15 at 8 p.m. in John L. Hill Chapel. Tickets are \$10 at the door.

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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BAPTIST FORUM

Aid to the poor

The recent editorial dealing with legal aid to the poor sounds like a reverberation of the worn-out mantras of the extremist congressional Democrats, namely that the "mean-spirited, right-wing conservative Republicans" are trying to hurt the poor and elevate the rich through their "malicious" legislation.

I suppose this editorial is intended to provoke social concern, but it is really only a guise for political expression.

Few Christians would refute Mr. Wingfield's desire to help the poor and prevent injustices borne by them, but his premise really evades the issue of "personal responsibility" and Christian responsibility by laying the responsibility upon "society," or more appropriately government.

If we are Christians who have concern, then it should be we who take responsibility to aid the poor, not the government. I agree that there are scriptural imperatives for the church to act on behalf of the poor, but we are abdicating our Christian responsibility to an uncaring entity and a system which has failed.

Maybe Mr. Wingfield should refrain from politicizing this issue (which really has little to do with legal aid to poor and much more to do with his feelings toward conservative congressional reformers in general) and lead Baptists of like mind to put their money where their mouths are by introducing an ap-

propriation to the budget committee to provide legal relief for the poor in the next Kentucky Baptist Convention annual budget or recruit some Christian attorneys in Kentucky who would offer pro-bono services.

Dennis A. Borden
Corbin

God still calls

I appreciated the editorial regarding the need for the church to participate more in ministry to those in need. This was one of the first ministries of the church. Somewhere along the line, we have been willing to pay (dearly) for the government to do this.

I hope in the future we can get back to our "Father's business" instead of nit-picking each other, which leads me to another reason for writing: concern regarding the shameful way the Carrolls and other missionary couples have been treated by our Foreign Mission Board.

Perhaps these folks were answers to our prayers years ago for God to "send forth laborers into the harvest." And now, after 16 years of faithful service that obviously God is blessing, our FMB "fires" them.

How can the Carrolls explain this to Christians they have cultivated for years? Is this the spirit of the Jesus they have been taught to love and trust? I say no—he is not like that. Only when man wants to control and is not satisfied for him to control do we behave like this.

God is still calling and sending forth laborers, but it will be with agencies who support them after they are sent. I pray there will be some heart-searching and repentance in our leadership. It comes to mind often that Jesus came, lived

and died. The majority of the church leadership missed him. Their rules are worth more to them than life. In fact, they killed him.

Ann Neikirk
Somerset

Anti-Christ not a person

The year 2000 is soon approaching, and a lot of the end-times preachers have targeted this as the year of the (so-called) rapture and all that follows the pre-millennial belief.

I will not take time and space to go into detail, but most of those who read the Western Recorder are aware of this interpretation.

Everyone has a right to interpret the Bible as he or she likes. However, I claim to be a mainstream Baptist and have never become a convert to this interpretation.

I think some of these young ministers would do well to read some of the late Herschel Hobbs' books. After being in the ministry over 50 years and burning a lot of midnight oil, I am convinced this is an erroneous doctrine.

The parable of the wheat and tares clearly teaches that all the world will be harvested and judged at the end of the world.

God will remain in charge of this world until the end of time and never will he withdraw his spirit for a so-called anti-Christ. Anti-Christ is a spirit, not a person.

Burney Manning
Somerset

■ **What do you think?** The Western Recorder welcomes reader response to news and opinion pieces. Send your signed letter to the editor, 250 words or less, to Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253. Fax us at (502) 244-6474. E-mail us on CompuServe at 102667,1300.

Thirteen going on 14

On Feb. 1, I will begin my 14th year as a "paid cheerleader" for the Kentucky Baptist family.

For my first four months, I would commute (at personal expense) to Richmond, Va., working here Monday through Thursday, apprenticing with Dr. Franklin Owen who would turn his job over to me at the May Executive Board meeting.

Eldred Taylor, then president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, helped me arrange a low-cost room on the second floor of the Spring Meadows administration building. There I slept until our family and I moved from Richmond to Shelbyville in June.

Those of you who have achieved the age of 60 understand the feelings which generate the thought "but I don't feel 13 years older!"

But the fact remains: I am 13 years older than I was when I began this ministry. A whole bunch of the Baptist pastors out there were still in high school then! And a whole bunch of well-known, genuinely loved and highly respected pastors have since

retired, not a few of whom have gone on to be with the Lord.

During these 13 years, most of the agency and institutional leadership has turned over at least once. Think about it:

■ **WMU**—Kathryn Akridge, Dee Gilliland, Kay Trisler.

■ **Western Recorder**—Chauncey Daley, Jack Sanford, Marv Knox, and whom-ever is elected in May.

■ **Baptist Healthcare**—Homer Coggin, Ben Brewer, Roger Struble, Edgar Vaughn, Tommy Smith.

■ **Georgetown College**—Ben Elrod, Morgan Patterson, Bill Crouch.

■ **Campbellsville College**—Randy Davenport, Ken Winters.

■ **Homes for Children**—Eldred Taylor, Curtis Mooney.

■ **Oneida Baptist Institute**—Barkley Moore, Bud Underwood.

■ **Kentucky Baptist Foundation**—Grady Randolph, Richard Carnes, Barry Allen.

■ **Cumberland College**—James Taylor, the only one still at the helm since I came on board 13 years ago.

ON MISSION TOGETHER



William W. Marshall



FAMILY FORUM

Facing friends who become bullies

By Wade Rowatt

Q How do I help my daughter get these kids off her case? They hound her at school with taunts and name calling. They used to be her best friends, but they turned against her because she has befriended a new girl at school of a different race. The girl is adopted by white parents and really very nice.

A Your daughter has displayed compassion, courage and character. Praise her for caring about the feelings of that "new girl." Encourage her not to cave in to pressure from her so-called friends. Help her see that doing the right thing can be costly, but still leads to inner uprightness. Support her decision to stand by her new pal.

She faces two big issues. One is how to respond to the verbal abuse. The other is how to make new friends and reclaim any of the old ones.

Ignoring insults, jeers and mockery often lessens their effectiveness. Do not let on that they are even heard. If it continues, she might confront these former buddies with something like this: "I still like you. Why are you so mean to me?" Let them know that she wants to remain friends, but that she will not compromise convictions.

Perhaps your daughter could discuss the problem with a teacher, school counselor or principal. Let the issue be faced as a presence of prejudice and racism. It is certainly better if this can be worked out at the student-to-student level.

Your teen can begin to find new friends by becoming involved in new activities. Assist her in getting involved in school clubs, volunteer activities or a new hobby. Teenagers naturally shift their peer groups around. This may take a while, but invest time in supporting a fresh start.

Reclaiming those former friends will not be an easy task. She stands a better chance one-on-one. She could invite one to spend the night and discuss the hurt and pain. Probably a phone call or letter would be a safer first attempt. She will perhaps be more successful by listening to their side first and then explaining her feelings. They may risk social rejection if they come over to her side again. Do not expect miracles, but "love your enemies." Suggest that she at least try.

Wade Rowatt is director of the St. Matthews Pastoral Counseling Center in Louisville.

HE SAID/SHE SAID

Forget reality: Self-studies paint pictures too rosy or bleak

HESAIID



Mark Wingfield

Here is one of the deepest, darkest secrets of manhood: Most men think they are more attractive than they are.

This secret has several corollaries: Most men think they are stronger than they are, smarter than they are, and so forth. I know this is a giant surprise to the female world, but it is the unvarnished truth.

Granted, there are exceptions to these rules among a few emotionally healthy, well-balanced, reality-based men out there somewhere. But who these men are, I don't know.

Lest someone rush to develop a 12-step program to correct this fault of malehood, it must be noted there is a very good reason for it. This is an essential coping mechanism, since most of us need a few doses of fantasy to keep up our courage.

Critical times occur in every man's life, however, in which reality forces its way in on us—but hopefully just for a moment. These painful moments of truth may happen at the gym, when seeing those around you makes it all too clear you're not as fit and muscular as you've been telling yourself, or at the movies, where you're clearly not the most attractive male in your wife's line of view.

There is good news to lift us out of these moments of despair, however. These are times when even the most backslidden among us may cling to Scripture and rejoice that we are made in the image of God.

SHESAIID



Alison Wingfield

What most women think about their bodies is no secret. We are always finding fault with ourselves. Women tend to focus on the negative aspects of their figures rather than the positives.

Those lush babes and skinny models constantly paraded before our eyes don't help matters. But I have to admit, when I look at the models used for "mature women's" clothes, it doesn't exactly inspire me

to look in that section of the store.

So, the comparisons go both ways. We see how far we have to go to have the perfect hair, makeup, legs, not to mention stomach and hips, but then again we're not as bad as so-and-so who has really "let herself go."

What I've never been able to understand is why men are allowed to grow old so much more gracefully than women. Sure, they get a lot of bald jokes (which Mark is hearing more and more frequently), but overall they have the better image. Sex symbols such as Sean Connery, Robert Redford and Paul Newman are still alive and well, and, well, still sexy. But not many women their age are thought of in the same light.

I think women laugh more, cry more, and live more, so it tells on our bodies. And don't forget why a lot of us have those lovely stretch marks. Talk about major trauma on the body. We have the babies.

We should be proud of that, instead of trying to hide and repair the lines of living. Just don't ask me to wear a bikini.

Mark Wingfield is interim editor of the Western Recorder. Alison Wingfield is a freelance writer.

Beware: Perception isn't always reality

Associated Press recently reported the story of Alisa Izquierdo, a 6-year-old who was allegedly tortured to death by her demented mother.

Residents of the New York City apartment building where Alisa lived and died heard the mother's screaming and daughter's sobbing day after day but were not alarmed.

"You would hear shouting and screaming," said one next-door-neighbor. "We thought it was their way of disciplining the kids. That's not unusual, in this building at least. Now we feel bad that we didn't call the police or something."

Last week, O.J. Simpson gave his first live interview about his dead ex-wife. Although acquitted of Nicole Brown Simpson's murder, the Juice has admitted he at times squeezed his wife too hard. His reputation as a spouse-abuser has become a rallying point for domestic violence awareness programs nationwide.

But in the interview with Black Entertainment Television, the Associated Press reported, Simpson characterized his history of abusing Nicole Simpson as typical of most married couples.

"We've had plenty of arguments, which I think is true for any couple," Simpson said. "I would say anybody who is out there or is in a relationship, just turn a tape recorder on. Next time you have an argument, you will not believe that was you."

Throwing punches and shouting obscenities may be common in Simpson's world, but it's not the norm for the millions of healthy relationships Americans enjoy. He thinks his unlawful behavior is normal, just like the residents of Alisa Izquierdo's apartment building have come to believe shouting and wailing and screaming are normal sounds to seep out from a family's private quarters.

Both Simpson and Alisa Izquierdo's neighbors have made their perceptions reality—and they are wrong.

You don't have to be a spouse abuser or have innocent children murdered next door to you to fall vic-

tim to the same mentality, however. It is one of the most subtle dangers of our age—self-serving relativism.

Unfortunately, many good people have refused to hear this warning in recent years because the loudest preachers of it have come from the extreme Christian right. These prophets of doom and gloom have lost their credibility in many quarters because of the political and social agendas they have carried and the mean-spirited tactics they have used to enact those agendas.

Even many God-fearing Baptists dismiss the rhetoric of the far right as one more example of the boy who cried wolf. Try to talk about right and wrong, and these wary Baptists ask, "What's your agenda?"

It is no wonder, then, that two-thirds of American adults believe there is no such thing as absolute truth. Even 40 percent of Christians believe that "everything in life is negotiable," according to the Barna Research Group.

Yes, many things in life are negotiable, and many gray areas do exist. Sadly, the church's failure to acknowledge this reality in the past has created a mistrust with thinking people and could deny the church a hearing on the absolute truths that really do matter.

Nonetheless, it is time for us as Christians, as Baptists, to renew our focus on what is right and what is wrong. Absolute truths do exist. Our self-serving perceptions are not always reality.

Even if we cannot agree on every point someone declares absolute truth, let us agree that such truths do exist.

Somehow, Christians and the churches they attend must regain the moral center and earn the credibility to remind their communities of the basics of life.

When will we become a humble moral compass so that people like Alisa Izquierdo's neighbors and O.J. Simpson will face a clearer perception of reality?

— Mark Wingfield

EDITORIALS

Thank God for the Baptist Student Union

If you've ever wondered why your church should increase its missions giving to the Kentucky Baptist Convention, you should have been at Kenlake State Resort Park the weekend before last.

If you've ever wondered if there's any hope for the future of our state and nation, you should have been at KenLake.

If you've ever wondered if all college students are as hopeless and clueless as most of what we see portrayed in the secular media, you should have been at Kenlake.

College students mainly from Kentucky, but also from a few surrounding states, took over Kenlake that weekend. They came 300 strong and filled every cabin on the grounds.

Their purpose was not recreation, dating or vacationing. Instead, they came to plow new spiritual territory in the first-ever "Experiencing God" college weekend retreat. They asked for it; they planned it; they helped lead it.

They did have to get some special help from the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, however, since no college-age materials had yet been published for an "Experiencing God" weekend-retreat. What the Kentucky students developed could become a model for other college groups.

By the end of the weekend, walking the shores of

Kentucky Lake had taken on the same kind of significance for these students as walking the shores of the Sea of Galilee gave the original disciples. They had met Jesus.

This was no cotton-candy, fluffy summer camp experience. Nor was it the light-hearted pleasure of a state BSU convention. This was the fervor of an old-fashioned revival meeting tempered by the seriousness of a final exam.

These 300 students earnestly sought God, carefully confessed sin and built strong foundations for their spiritual futures. God's Spirit was almost visibly present in the Sunday morning worship. This was one of those rare times that everyone involved will look back on in years to come as a pivotal, life-changing experience.

I wish you could have been there. But in a way, you were, because of your financial support for KBC ministries like the Baptist Student Union.

So the next time you're tempted to cut back on missions giving, think about 300 students packing out Kenlake State Resort Park in a serious search for God.

And the next time you're convinced the future looks bleak for our state and nation, remember the students who did serious business with God one weekend in January. God still moves.

— Mark Wingfield

CLC files brief for Wisconsin's school voucher plan

The brief contends that voucher programs such as Wisconsin's are "religion-neutral" because the money flows from the government to parents, who then pay whatever school they choose.

WASHINGTON (BP)—The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has joined in a brief supporting the inclusion of religious schools in an educational choice program when other private schools are participants.

In a case before the Wisconsin Supreme Court, the brief calls for the justices to uphold an educational choice program in Milwaukee which was amended to include private religious schools.

Initiated in 1990, the original Milwaukee Parental Choice Program permitted parents to use public money to pay for their children's tuition only at non-religious private schools. Last year, Gov. Tommy Thompson proposed inclusion of religious schools in the program, and the state legislature approved it in June.

People for the American Way, the Milwaukee Teachers' Education Association, parents of public school students and members of the clergy filed suit, charging the inclusion of religious schools is an unconstitutional establishment of religion. A county circuit court granted an injunction, blocking expansion of the program.

The Christian Legal Society brief, signed onto by the National Association of Evangelicals and the CLC, argues the inclusion of religious schools would not breach church-state separation, while the exclusion of religious schools would infringe on the free exercise of religion.

"This case is not about tuition tax credits and vouchers," said Richard Land, the CLC's president. "It is about religious freedom and government discrimination against religion.

"This case does not say that the government must or should offer vouchers to parents who choose alternative schools for their children. It does say that if the government chooses to offer such vouchers, it must not and cannot discriminate against religious schools as opposed to other private schools."

The brief contends that voucher programs such as Wisconsin's are "religion-neutral" because the money flows from the government to parents, who then pay whatever school they choose.

Opponents of such voucher programs traditionally have argued that placing parents in the middle of the transaction does not negate the effect of government providing funds for religious schools.

State aid provided to the Milwau-

kee public schools for the 1995-96 school year is \$3,667 per student. If the amended choice program had been implemented, participating private schools would have received up to that amount for each student who was in the program for the entire year.

During the spring semester of the 1994-95 school year, 768 students attended private schools in Milwaukee under the original educational choice program. At the time the lower court blocked implementation of the law, more than 4,500 students had been accepted to attend private schools under the expanded parental choice program.

Of the 122 private schools which would have been eligible to participate this year in the amended program, 89 are religious.

All sides watching D.C.'s request for school vouchers

If the court found the District's voucher plan legal, similar programs would sweep the country, school choice advocates say.

WASHINGTON (RNS)—On the west side of Syracuse, N.Y., a public school and parochial school competed for the area's students, remembered one resident, Rep. James Walsh, R-N.Y.

Parents from Roberts Elementary and Most Holy Rosary knocked on their neighbors' doors to sell the advantages of the competing schools. They worked to find ways to make the schools better. They raised money for improvements.

The results? "Excellence in those schools," Walsh said.

Walsh has drawn on this experience to champion a \$3 million voucher program that would allow poor Washington children to attend the public or private school of their choice. If approved, Washington would become the third city in the country to adopt school choice.

But the proposal, included in the House version of the annual spending bill to fund Washington's local government, has been opposed by key senators, teachers' unions and Washington officials. The conflict has stalled the bill, forcing the city gov-

ernment to run on a temporary spending measure that expires Jan. 26.

The outcome of this political standoff could have an important impact on the school choice movement. Choice advocates say such a program in the nation's capital would provide a potent symbol and strong push for their movement.

More important, they say, it would likely provide the Supreme Court case to test whether public money for private schools is constitutional.

If the court found the voucher plan legal, similar programs would sweep the country, the choice advocates say.

"Once they get up and running, it's just going to accelerate," said Jeanne Allen, president of the Center for Educational Reform, a national nonprofit organization that advocates school choice and other reforms.

Taxpayer-financed voucher programs have been proposed for years as an answer to what critics regard as the failure of the nation's public schools. But vouchers are resisted by public school teachers, administrators, church-state separationists and other advocates of public education.

Only two cities have adopted voucher plans.

In August, the Wisconsin state supreme court blocked the expansion of Milwaukee's 5-year-old voucher program because proponents wanted to add religious schools to the mix of private institutions eligible to participate. The Milwaukee program currently serves about 800 students.

A voucher program in Cleveland is scheduled to begin in September, but that, too, is under challenge in the courts because it would include religious schools among those eligible for voucher funding.

Although the Cleveland case is already in lower courts, a challenge to the proposed Washington plan would probably get to the Supreme Court first because the House bill requires an expedited review by the high court.

Opponents of school choice say it would suck away money badly needed by public schools and leave them with the most difficult students.

Linda Rosenblatt, a spokeswoman for New York State United Teachers, a union affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, called the vouch-

er proposal a "cruel hoax" that would "make a sharper division between haves and have-nots."

"You'd be further weakening the public schools," she said. "The system of free public education is at stake."

Comparing public and private schools is unfair, teachers and administrators argue. Private schools not only choose their students, they are not tied by the requirements and restrictions that burden public schools.

Besides, Rosenblatt said, public schools already are responding to concerns about falling standards, lax discipline and unsafe schools.

"What we really need to do is work on the system we have," she said. "Despite its problems, it still provides miracles everyday."

Supporters of school choice, however, say increased competition would accelerate public school reform. Public schools are finally beginning to respond to concerns about standards and safety in part because of the growing support for voucher programs, particularly in poor, urban areas, school choice advocates say.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Chaplains sought.** The Air Force Reserve needs 25 to 40 new chaplains, due to many unexpected retirements, said Pat Davis, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board interim director of military chaplaincy. The number of days reserve chaplains serve per month is negotiable, Davis said. For information on becoming an Air Force Reserve chaplain, contact the HMB chaplaincy division at 4200 North Point Parkway, Alpharetta, Ga. 30202-4174 or (770) 410-6490.

■ **Mormon church sued.** A \$750 million lawsuit has been filed in a West Virginia state court charging the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with negligence for what the suit said was an effort by local church officials to cover up a case of child abuse involving a church member. Church officials in Salt Lake City have denied the allegations. According to the suit, a father who repeatedly sexually abused his two children confessed his abuse to church offi-

cial but they failed to report the abuse to the authorities or to discipline the father under church rules.

■ **Episcopal priest fights gay rights.** Michael McClenaghan of St. Clement's Episcopal Church in Rancho Cordova, Calif., has resigned as rector and renounced his Episcopal priesthood because of what he called the denomination's acceptance of homosexual behavior. Seven members of the church's vestry, or church council, also resigned from the church. McClenaghan charged that the Diocese of Northern California and the national church have followed "the wide, politically correct road, teaching that not only the person, but the homosexual behavior is to be accepted."

■ **Bias cited in abortion coverage.** A study commissioned by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops shows that supporters of legal abortion get preferential treatment in the secular media. For example, Repub-

lican supporters of abortion rights often were described in the media as "moderate" while Republican opponents of legal abortion often were labeled as "far right," "hard right" or extreme right," the study found. Secular reporters never used terms such as "hard left" or "far left" to describe abortion advocates.

■ **NAE head visits Clinton.** Don Argue, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, paid a 20-minute visit to President Clinton in the Oval Office Jan. 16. "We were warmly received by the president and had an excellent discussion of the need for the government to take a strong and visible stand against worldwide religious persecution," Argue said.

■ **New Era to sell assets.** John Bennett Jr., founder of the collapsed Foundation for New Era Philanthropy, has agreed to sell his home and other assets to help resolve bankruptcy claims. Under the agreement,

Bennett will turn over about \$1 million in assets. A lawsuit by the the federal Securities and Exchange Commission also is pending.

■ **Grahams honored.** The U.S. House of Representatives voted Jan. 23 to honor evangelist Billy Graham and his wife, Ruth, with a Congressional Gold Medal. Two representatives voted against the measure: Pat Schroeder, D-Colo., and Louise Slaughter, D-N.Y., although Slaughter later said she voted no by mistake.

■ **Treasurer admits embezzlement.** The former treasurer of the Episcopal Church admitted to a federal court in Newark, N.J., Jan. 24 that she embezzled more than \$1.5 million from the church and evaded income tax on part of the stolen property. Ellen Cooke faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine on the first count and a \$250,000 fine on the second count.

Marchers urge Clinton not to veto bill

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Thousands of cheering anti-abortion activists, rallied in Washington Jan. 22 on the 23rd anniversary of the landmark Roe vs. Wade decision, condemning President Clinton for his stance on abortion and urging him to approve a proposed legislative ban on a controversial procedure.

The annual march, held on the Ellipse in sight of the White House, drew about 60,000 people from across the nation, according to the U.S. Park Police.

In numerous speeches to the sign-waving throng, Republican members of Congress condemned Clinton for his plans to veto a proposal, passed by the House and Senate, to ban an infrequent late-term procedure known as the "partial-birth" abortion.

Slight differences between the House and Senate versions must undergo reconciliation before the measure reaches Clinton's desk.

The bills deal with a medical pro-

cedure called dilation and extraction that involves partially extracting a fetus, feet first, and then collapsing the skull in the birth canal by suctioning out the brain.

"This has less to do with whether you are pro-choice or pro-life than it has to do with whether you are civilized or not," said Rep. Roscoe Bartlett, R-Md. "Civilized people just don't do things like the partial-birth abortion."

Marchers, including parents with children, waved signs that read "Stop All Abortion!" and "We Vote Pro-Life" as they cheered on the politicians.

Rep. Linda Smith, R-Wash., joined other members of Congress in calling for abortion to be a key issue in the upcoming presidential election.

"We have to tell this president you acknowledge the humanity of these babies or we're going to get somebody else," she said.

A White House spokeswoman said Clinton remains resolute about his plans to veto the proposed ban on the controversial abortion procedure.

"The president is planning to veto this bill because it does not provide an exception for consideration of the health of the mother," said White House assistant press secretary Kathy McKiernan. "The president has consistently opposed late-term abortions except to protect the life and health of the mother."

Rep. Tom Latham, R-Iowa, said even if Clinton vetoes the bill, discussion about the measure has ended the "23-year cover-up of abortion methods."

"The violence ... is being exposed," Latham said. "America can no longer live in denial of the truth."

Other speakers also decried abortion, but in more general terms.

Rep. Jim Bunning, R-Ky., compared abortion to the atrocities in Bosnia.

"Is genocide 2,000 miles away worse than mass homicide right here at home?" he asked. "I don't think so. ... Every day, 4,000 unborn babies that have never had a chance to hug a teddy bear are being slaughtered in this nation."

Converted 'Jane Roe' gives first speech

WASHINGTON (BP)—When Norma McCorvey, known in America's struggle over abortion as Jane Roe, stood before a crowded meeting hall on the eve of the 23rd anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court decision bearing her name, she grieved with abortion opponents instead of celebrating with abortion advocates.

In her first public speech since being baptized in a Dallas swimming pool in August, McCorvey spoke briefly to those gathered Jan. 21 at a Georgetown University chapel memorial service.

"She said, 'Jane Roe is dead, but if she were here, she would ask your forgiveness,'" said Patrick Mahoney, a longtime anti-abortion activist who

spoke at the service and was part of a group which met with McCorvey the previous night.

"I think Sunday she was just coming to say she was sorry and ask for forgiveness. It was just amazing to see her hugging (former Operation Rescue leader) Randall Terry and other pro-life leaders."

"Jesus Christ has changed her life. There is no other explanation for the change in her life," said Will Dodson of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission after attending the service. "She seems to be a woman at peace with God."

Having left a lifestyle which included lesbianism, drugs, alcohol and abortion advocacy, McCorvey called her new life as a Christian the "best

six months of my life," according to the Times.

She now works as a volunteer at the Operation Rescue office, located adjacent to the abortion clinic where she previously worked.

Five other employees have left the clinic at least partly because of the influence of McCorvey or others at Operation Rescue.

Claiming to be a victim of rape, McCorvey challenged the state of Texas' anti-abortion law, resulting in the 1973 decision known as Roe vs. Wade. McCorvey later said she had not been raped, but had engaged in consensual sexual relations.

In addition, she never had an abortion. She delivered the baby and gave her up for adoption.

Supreme Court strikes down abortion limit

WASHINGTON (ABP)—For the third time in recent weeks, the U.S. Supreme Court has struck down a state's attempt to restrict abortions funded by Medicaid beyond federal guidelines.

In its latest action, the high court refused Jan. 22 to review a decision by a federal appeals court disallowing two conditions placed on Medicaid-funded abortions by the state of Pennsylvania.

One restriction required that a woman seeking an abortion because of rape or incest must have first reported the incident to law enforce-

ment authorities. The second required that two physicians certify that failure to end a pregnancy would endanger the life of the mother.

Medicaid is a jointly funded federal-state program that provides health care for indigent Americans. The program does not routinely pay for abortions, but since the fall of 1993, federal guidelines have allowed funding for abortions in cases of rape and incest and to save the mother's life.

The appeals court noted that federal regulations allow doctors to waive reporting requirements if a victim of rape or incest is unable to com-

ply for physical or psychological reasons. Pennsylvania's policy lacked such a waiver.

Federal regulations require only one physician to certify that an abortion is necessary because the life of the mother is endangered. The appeals court said Pennsylvania's requirement for a second certification makes the attending physician's certification irrelevant.

In recent weeks, the high court also let stand lower-court rulings that rejected attempts by Colorado and Nebraska to deny funding for abortions in the cases of rape or incest.

Musicians praise Sunday school's influence

Continued from page 1

in the lives of Christians in general. "It helps to dig and discuss and learn how to apply things to life," said Chuck Connor, the band's drummer. Connor also grew up as a Southern Baptist in Florida.

"It's important to be in a situation where you can interact in a group with

your peers," said Roscoe Meek, the electrical and acoustic guitarist for the Distance who also has Southern Baptist roots in Shreveport. "Those are the people you can spill your guts to."

Moore also appreciates the Sunday school experience for the sake of his two boys, Josh and Justin. "That's what church really is to them," Moore

said. "It teaches them not only a love for the faith but also a love for the church."

But the song has a sad side to it. Hoping to share the song with Keen, Moore contacted her family, only to discover she had died two days before the album came out. Her funeral was held on the day of the album's release.

RELIGION BEST-SELLERS

■ Clothbound non-fiction

1. *A Gentle Thunder*. Max Lucado.
2. *Life on the Edge*. James Dobson.
3. *One Wintry Night*. Ruth Bell Graham.
4. *My Utmost for His Highest*, Updated Edition. Oswald Chambers and James Reimann.
5. *Heaven, Your Real Home*. Joni Earkeckson Tada.
6. *Rebel With a Cause*. Franklin Graham.
7. *When God Whispers Your Name*. Max Lucado.
8. *The Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper*. Focus on the Family.
9. *When God Doesn't Make Sense*. James Dobson.
10. *Quiet Times for Couples*. Norman Wright.

■ Paperback non-fiction

1. *Chicken Soup for the Soul*. Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen.
2. *God Came Near*. Max Lucado.
3. *The Final Battle*. Hal Lindsey.
4. *Stick a Geranium in Your Hat and Be Happy!* Barbara Johnson.
5. *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior*. Max Lucado.
6. *God's Chicken Soup for the Spirit*. Kathy Collard Miller and Larry Miller.
7. *Planet Earth 2000 A.D.* Hal Lindsey.
8. *My Utmost for His Highest*, Updated Edition. Oswald Chambers and James Reimann.
9. *The Bondage Breaker*. Neil Anderson.
10. *More than a Carpenter*. Josh McDowell.

■ Children's books

1. *The Beginner's Bible*. Karyn Henley.
2. *The Baby Bible Storybook*. Robin Currie.
3. *My First Bible in Pictures*. Kenneth Taylor.
4. *My Little Promise Bible*. L.J. Sattgast.
5. *The Preschoolers Bible*. Gilbert Beers.
6. *The Early Reader's Bible*. Gilbert Beers.
7. *Rock-a-bye Bible*. Marjorie Ainsborough Decker.
8. *My Mommy and Me Story Bible*. Tracy Harrast.
9. *The Toddler's Activity Bible*. Nelson.
10. *The Toddlers Bible*. Gilbert Beers.

■ Christian music

1. *Jesus Freak*. DC Talk.
2. *RIOT*. Carman.
3. *I'll Lead You Home*. Michael W. Smith.
4. *Heaven in the Real World*. Steven Curtis Chapman.
5. *WOW '96: The Year's 30 Top Christian Artists and Songs*. Various.
6. *My Utmost for His Highest*. Various.
7. *Jars of Clay*. Jars of Clay.
8. *The Whole Truth*. Point of Grace.
9. *The Concert of a Lifetime*. Ray Boltz.
10. *Going Public*. Newsboys.

Data based on actual sales in Christian retail stores in the United States and Canada in December 1995, as provided by Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Listing here does not constitute endorsement by the Western Recorder.

CHURCHES

Want your church to grow? Set a goal and make it known

Continued from page 1
next week.

If only 10 or 12 chairs are set up when 25 people are enrolled, the furniture says, "We don't want any more people here," Jackson said.

■ **Saturday night caller.** "This is

what I call my laid-back visitation program," Jackson said, because it can be done from a living room recliner.

The Saturday night caller begins about 5:30 p.m. on Saturday calling each person on the Sunday school

class roll.

"It only takes 60 seconds," Jackson said. "I say, 'This is Neil, I'm calling to find out how many I'm going to have in Sunday school in the morning.'"

If the person will be out of town, respond positively by encouraging him or her to have a good time. Ask if the person has a specific prayer request. Finish the conversation by saying, "Be looking for you in Sunday school when you get back to town."

■ **Hand of fellowship.** Each person in the class traces his or her hand on a piece of paper, then writes his or her name, address, telephone number and birthday on the fingers and thumb.

The sheets are shuffled and redistributed; members make contact each week with the person whose "hand" they received. A major benefit of this project is that class members who hardly know each other discover they have similar joys and struggles, Jackson said.

■ **Seasonal visitation.** Jackson explained his seasonal calendar for contacting inactive members and prospects.

September through Thanksgiving, when the weather is pleasant and folks are settling into a routine, is an ideal time for personal visits. Thanksgiving through Valentine's Day, when the weather is bad and people travel for holidays, telephone contacts are ideal. Valentine's Day until May 30th presents another good season for personal visits. During the summer months of June, July and August, when people travel most extensively, notes and cards offer the best contact.

■ **Absent, present, prospect.** Attach name cards for each member and prospect on a bulletin board under one of three headings: Absent, present or prospect. When members arrive, they move their name from the absent list to the present list. At the end of the lesson, members use the board to select two absentees and one prospect to contact during the week.

Tips for identifying prospects

SOMERSET—Most churches have an abundance of untapped prospects at their fingertips, church growth specialist Neil Jackson told Kentucky church and associational leaders at a recent conference in Somerset.

Jackson, retired senior growth consultant for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, is the author of "Motivational Ideas for Changing Lives," "Doing the Impossible" and "100 Great Growth Ideas."

Jackson described "instant prospect," his strategy for developing a pool of prospects from regular attenders.

During the worship hour one Sunday, Jackson explained, leaders distribute 4-by-6-inch index cards to everyone in attendance—adults and children.

Each person is encouraged to write the name, address and telephone number, if known, of neighbors, friends, relatives in the area and work or school acquaintances they know who do not attend church. At the bottom of the card, each person writes his or her own name and circles it.

Even if only 25 cards are collected, with three names on each, the church has gained 75 prospects instantly, he noted.

"Every quarter you ought to be doing something in the main auditorium that's going to find you prospects," Jackson said. "You need a prospect file that equals the Sunday school enrollment."

Jackson supplied church leaders with a list of many other ways to find new prospects:

■ List unchurched families from vacation Bible school records.

■ Identify homes where children play in yards on Sunday mornings.

■ Subscribe to the city's newcomer service for information on prospects.

■ Survey an entire telephone exchange.

■ Use a door-to-door survey to locate unchurched people.

■ Request information from mobile home park managers.

■ Identify shift workers through a church survey.

■ Gather information on those who work in hospitals.

■ Check newspapers for information on newlyweds.

■ Provide social events for parents without partners.

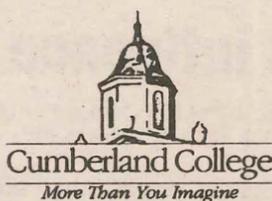
Campus Visitation Day

The Faculty, Staff, and Students of
Cumberland College
invite all high school seniors and their parents
to spend a day on our campus.

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1-800-343-1609



Growing a ministry

It's hard for me to believe but it's now been a full year since we began our new ministry in Eastern Kentucky along the Pike and Floyd county line in the small community of Harold. A group of laymen in the two associations built an office building for us to use for Cornerstone Counseling, First Step Pregnancy Counseling and Adoption, and Family Foster Care. The two Baptist associations, Pike and Enterprise, committed resources to bring these services to their area of Eastern Kentucky.

The Big Sandy is a large area geographically and in population. As in every community, there are many human needs. Along with the many local people who committed themselves to this new ministry, we committed ourselves to help meet those needs.

The past year has been a busy one for staff as they have worked to establish this new ministry. Renita Tackett, who directs the foster care program for the area, has spent the year recruiting, training and licensing families to care for children. I am pleased to say that there are now five foster families with more to come.

The new Cornerstone Counsel-

ing and First Step ministries are also doing well. Counselor Arlene West has helped numerous individuals and families begin the healing process as they have sought help in finding solutions to difficult problems.

In the coming year we believe we will touch the lives of even more families as the knowledge about this special ministry spreads.

To me, the remarkable part of our work in Eastern Kentucky is the commitment of the local people to provide resources for their communities. They built a building. They raised the funds and then they invited us to come in and provide the day-to-day professional staff.

That commitment in so many ways epitomizes the commitment that Kentucky Baptists show all over the state of Kentucky. We are a "can do" people that respond when we see a need.

It is truly a joy to join together with fellow Baptists in our Lord's work!

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



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HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Curtis C. Mooney

MISSIONS

Kentucky women helping form Puerto Rican partnership

By Melanie Childers
Staff Writer

Baptist Women in Ministry, the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship are launching a triple-layer partnership with Baptists in Puerto Rico.

Last fall, three women representing the three organizations visited Puerto Rico to offer encouragement, present scholarships and discuss possibilities for joint projects.

Carolyn Hale, communications coordinator for the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship and a member of the Baptist principles ministry group for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, was invited to represent the national Fellowship and present scholarships for ministerial students in Puerto Rico.

Jo Garnett, moderator-elect of the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship, went hoping to develop projects with Puerto Rican Baptists particularly centering around camp development.

Kathy Manis Findley, pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., was invited by Jose Oliveras-Ocasio, a Puerto Rican and member of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's coordinating council.

"During a meeting of the Alliance of Baptists last year, I met Jose Oliv-

eras-Ocasio," Findley explained. "He just came up to me and said ... 'We have three Southern Baptist churches with women pastors; I'd like for you to go and be an encouragement to them, and be a guest at our associational annual meeting.'"

Finley, president of Baptist Women in Ministry, which provides a network of support and encouragement for women ministers, said she had no idea three Southern Baptist women were serving as pastors in Puerto Rico.

Although the visiting women were unable to attend the association's annual meeting, they did have numerous opportunities for dialogue and encouragement, Findley said.

"It was a good opportunity for Women in Ministry to be the support and encouragement we say we want to be," she added.

The Kentucky Baptist Fellowship's partnership with Puerto Rico is developing around the specific need of constructing an associational camp, Garnett explained.

"The Puerto Rico Baptist Association has had a substantial amount of land for 25 years; they've wanted to build a camp that would serve youth and children."

Last November, the association

voted to go forward with the partnership, and the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship is gearing up to provide funds and volunteer laborers to complete the task, Garnett said.

Representing the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Hale presented a check for more than \$2,500 to Samuel Pagan, president of the Evangelical Seminary of Puerto Rico. The money will provide financial aid to six Baptist students for one semester. After the second semester, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship will have provided Puerto Ricans more than \$5,000 in scholarship money for the year.

The delegation also discussed with the seminary's president other joint projects in theological education, including exploring the possibility of funding a course taught by a Southern Baptist scholar to encourage Southern Baptist ministers in Puerto Rico to receive master's-level theological education from an ecumenical seminary.

Women in Ministry hopes to offer an educational stipend to women pastors in Puerto Rico to enable them to participate in Baptist Women in Ministry meetings—"to preach, teach and offer workshops to us here," Findley said.

"The model they have as pastors is not offensive either to their congregations or people around them," she continued. "I think there may be something we can learn from their congregations loved them, and these were not predominately female churches.

"Whatever they're doing, they're doing well—earning the respect and love of their congregations. They may have a secret there," she added.

For its part, Baptist Women in Ministry hopes to help produce educational materials in Spanish—especially a curriculum that encourages girls and young women to consider a call to ministry.

But Findley is convinced the biggest need is for encouragement and networking.

While in Puerto Rico, Findley, Garnett and Hale preached in one of the Southern Baptist churches served by a woman pastor.

All three found ways to encourage the women who led those congregations.

"It was sort of like an unofficial ordination," Findley said. "In my heart I ordained her—without the service, the council or the certificate. I gave her the gift of blessing."

Bible translators mark milestone

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea (EP)—Wycliffe Bible Translators passed a milestone recently when they completed their 400th translation of the New Testament and presented it to a native group in Papua New Guinea.

The Baria natives, who live in southeast Papua New Guinea near the Owen Stanley Mountain Range, were the recipients of the newest translations.

Wycliffe translators have rendered portions of the Bible into more than 2,000 languages. Currently, more than 6,700 languages are known to be spoken throughout the world.

Wycliffe estimates another 1,000 translations are needed before the Bible will be available in a language readable by every nation.

SBC's witness in Las Vegas led to Bosnia

Continued from page 1

constitution, only religious groups with at least 30,000 members will be officially recognized as a church or denomination.

"Under those conditions, only the Catholic Church can be recognized as an official church," said Renenar, a former Catholic. "The small Protestant churches, which are called sects here, will have to call themselves a community or fellowship, but not a church."

The Catholic Church, as the only official church in Croatia, will continue to be subsidized by the government. Many countries have a government-subsidized state church.

Rusicka's small Baptist congregation in a town near Zagreb is the only Protestant church in an area of several thousand people, he said. Rusicka and Renenar accompanied a group from the United States recently, led by Franklin Graham, son of evangelist Billy Graham, in their travels in Croatia and Bosnia.

Graham is head of Samaritan's Purse, based in Boone, N.C., a no-frills, no-red-tape relief organization that provides emergency relief to countries plagued by war, famine and other disasters.

The group of about 75 people going into Bosnia with Graham just prior to Christmas included several from England and Canada. They were helping distribute about 800,000 shoe boxes filled with toys and personal items from children and families in the United States and several European countries. It was a Christmas effort called Operation Christmas Child.

You are cordially invited to attend . . .

A Special Event for Women

11:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. * February 27, 1996

University Plaza Hotel & Conference Center * Bowling Green

Join us at lunch for a time of testimony, song, and challenge; then stay for seven seminars designed especially for you!

(Seminar times - 1:15 - 2:15 p.m. & 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. Each seminar will be repeated the second hour.)

Prayer, The Untapped Resource	Nell Bruce
The Mormons at Your Door	Patience Fort
Conflict Management Skills	Dee Gilliland
Nurturing Creative Aloneness in the Midst of Loneliness	Jane Kendrick-Lites
Time Management	Debbie Lloyd
The Woman's Search for Self & Fulfillment	Diane Strack
Lifestyle Witnessing	Bettie Wright

Don't miss this opportunity! Reserve a table for you & your friends today. Cost: \$10 per person/\$80 per table. Tables of 8 assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. **Preregistration required.** To register, send completed form together with \$10 check to Office for Evangelism, Kentucky Baptist Convention, P. O. Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433; phone: (502) 245-4101, **no later than February 9, 1996.**

- Yes, my friends and I would like to attend the *Special Event for Women*. Please send me information about being a table hostess.
- I'm not interested in being a table hostess, but will attend the *Special Event for Women*. My \$10 check is enclosed. Make checks payable to Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone (____) _____ Church _____

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

Pray for these specific needs related to Kentucky Baptist partnerships with Boston and Russia.

- Baptist representatives Joe and Gloria DeLeon ask for prayer that God will guide the Russian Baptist Union as they make plans to reach Russia.
- That God will use students in Russian pastors' schools to start churches.
- International Service Corps volunteers Clay and Connie Cartwright, who have experienced "pressure from the enemy" in their work in Tambov.
- Kelly Marchant, director of International Ministries at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge.
- Pastor David Jackson and Community Baptist Church in Weymouth, Mass., as they seek to impact their area with the gospel.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

- **CORBIN**—First Church ordained **Lynne Huff** and **Donna Davis** as deacons Jan. 21.
- **DANVILLE**—Calvary Church ordained **John Feather** of Parksville as deacon. Also, installed as active deacons for 1996-98 were **Gary Gilbert**, **Mike Pennock** and **Vaughn Wilson**.
- **EDMONTON**—Edmonton Church called **Steven Sholar** as pastor. Scholar previously was pastor of Big Spring Church in Elliston, Va.
- **HODGENVILLE**—Ovesen Heights Church called **Norman Douglas** as pastor. Douglas previously was pastor at Trammell Creek Church in Greensburg. He began his new ministry Jan. 21.
- **LOUISVILLE**—Midlane Park Church ordained **Frances Meador** and **Dorothy Scarlott** to the deacon ministry Jan. 14.
- **Beechmont Church** ordained **Clifton Hopkins** and **Ralph Bland** as deacons Jan. 28.
- **OWENSBORO**—Seven Hills Church ordained **Robert Whitaker** and **Denzil Johnson** as deacons Jan. 21.
- **PHILPOT**—**Joe Thomas**, pastor at Dawson Church for 17 years, retired Dec. 31.
- **VERSAILLES**—**Kevin Carter** resigned as minister of youth and activities at Versailles Church effective Feb. 4.
- **VINE GROVE**—Vine Grove Church ordained minister of youth **David Hicks** to the gospel ministry Jan. 28. Hicks will become full-time associate pastor, minister to youth and evangelism.
- **Correction:** **Steve Thompson** was incorrectly listed as pastor of First Church in Morgantown. The correct town is Morganfield.

Thank You!

On behalf of Kentucky Brotherhood, WMU, Partnership Missions and children all across Moscow, we would like to sincerely thank every church and individual who participated in the 1995 Christmas Gifts to Russia project. Many believers across Kentucky have been in continuous prayer for Russia and the vast opportunities there to continue God's work, and we see your gifts as an answer to those prayers. Thank you again, and God bless.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Bivocational youth pastor. Please send inquiries or recommendations to: Anchor Church, Attn.: Search Committee, P.O. Box 18195, Erlanger, KY 41018, or call (606) 727-6400 or (606) 356-9259 and ask for Mike.

WANTED: Associate pastor for youth. Frankfort-area Baptist church; 20 hours per week. Contact: Personnel Committee, Box 4562, Frankfort, KY 40604-4562

SEEKING: Part-time minister to youth and children. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Scottsville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 392, Scottsville, KY 42164.

NEEDED: The newly-organized Parkway Baptist Church of Bardstown needs the following: chairs (all sizes), tables, children's furniture, office equipment (computer, printer), autoharp, rhythm instruments, step bells, preschool/children's music, records, tapes and Bibles. Call (502) 348-8930 or 348-6215.

CARE: Kinnett Care. Services include live-in and hourly care, personal care, meals, housekeeping, companionship. Free in-home assessment; insured and bonded. Call 24 hours, (502) 499-7777.

SEEKING: Part-time music director for Sunday services and adult choir. Warm, music-loving church, N. Kentucky Association. Send resumé to: Crescent Springs Baptist Church, 627 Buttermilk Pike, Crescent Springs, KY 41017.

POSITION: Director of missions. The West Virginia Tri-County Baptist Association, located in the eastern panhandle of the state, is accepting resúmes for the position of director of missions. Please send resumé to: Chairman, DOM Search Committee, c/o South Berkeley Baptist Church, P.O. Box 291, Inwood, WV 25428.

SEEKING: 25-year-old exurban Southern Baptist congregation with 150 members (25 miles from Washington D.C.) prayerfully seeks senior pastor having minimum of 5 years experience, master's degree from Southern Baptist seminary preferred. Candidate should be Bible-based, family-oriented and possess the abilities to coordinate current staff including a strong, vibrant music program. Send resumé by Feb. 14 to: P.O. Box 326, Poolesville, MD 20837.

MISSIONS: Youth groups needed in New Orleans, Atlanta, Orlando, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Buffalo for 1996 summer mission projects. We provide meals, lodging, assignments. For information, costs, call Dr. Harry Fowler, Youth on Mission, (800) 299-0385.

Our roots

Most of the really good and important things in life come about because of a need to improve something, or are born of a crisis. In the late 1800s the mountain feuds of Eastern Kentucky were still raging. Fathers, sons, grandfathers, grandsons, uncles and friends never knew for sure they would return home from the day's chores. Angry men might hide in ambush or duel to the death on Main Street.

While the founder of our school, James Anderson Burns, was born in West Virginia, his family roots were in the Eastern Kentucky mountains. His father had moved to West Virginia before James was born to avoid further bloodshed.

In his late teens, Burns decided to go to Kentucky. He longed to see kinfolk he had never met. Burns' father did not want him to go, but young James would not be stopped. His father had warned of the feuds and was afraid James would get involved.

Burns did return to Kentucky and sure enough, he soon found himself caught up in the bitterness of the feuds. During one fight Burns was nearly killed. For three days he hid in the mountains, barely alive and not quite dead. God spoke to him in a dream on the third night. In Burns' words, "I was not the same—very different. The urge of vengeance was gone, and a peace reigned within...I dismantled my guns. My feud days were over. But I was a thousand times more determined than ever that the feuds should be stopped."

Burns did not know at the time how he was going to accomplish his dream. Not until later did he see that a Christian school teaching the love of God would be the solution.

Burns and his new friend, H. L. McMurray, a Baptist preacher from Kansas, climbed a large

oak tree that overlooked the valley here in Oneida. From the branch of that tree they decided to start the school Burns had envisioned.

It would not be a simple task. Burns would need to have a meeting with the feud leaders. They would have to share his dream. Money would need to be secured to build the building, and teachers would be needed who were committed to the idea. Little by little God moved mountains, and the feuding families agreed to try.

In the fall of 1899 Burns, McMurray and others began construction. Could they have it ready by Christmas? Cold winter weather set in, the mill up the river was broken and Burns did not have enough lumber to finish. He wanted so much to have the school ready by the first day of January.

Not often has the South Fork of the Kentucky River at Oneida frozen solid enough to drive a team of oxen across, but the winter of 1899 was one of the exceptions. In the distance Burns saw a man driving a team of oxen with a load of lumber. The man was Frank "Boozer" Burns and the wood came from the loft in his house. He crossed the ice-covered river and unloaded the wood.

The eager men went back to work. Day and night they labored, sleeping on the wood shavings on the floor. Yes, the school would open on time.

A deep, wet snow fell the night before the first day of school. When morning came, so did the eager students; some on foot, others on mule back and some in wagons. Burns' dream had come true and his school opened Jan. 1, 1900.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Affirmation from our friends

Carlton Associates recently completed a survey to determine the practicality of conducting a campaign to raise \$4 million for the college. The survey also helped to identify, evaluate and cultivate leaders and prospects for the campaign.

Personal interviews with a wide cross section of the college's constituency focused on Clear Creek's mission and future plans. Consultant Richard Carlton indicated, "The response of those participating in the interviews was very supportive and optimistic."

When asked to identify the strengths of the college, the major responses were: Bible-centered; trains older adults for Christian service; strong and dedicated faculty; strong presidential leadership; and low student costs.

When asked to describe Clear Creek to a friend or prospective student, the respondents used the following terms: a Bible college that fills an education void for older adults; a top-notch small Bible college; a strong academic Bible college; a family atmosphere for Bible teaching; a college that gets the most for its dollar.

The majority of those interviewed want Clear Creek to con-

tinue to hold fast to its mission which gives it a unique position and role in the life of Kentucky Baptists.

The overwhelming majority of respondents rated the program effectiveness of Clear Creek as very good to excellent. They clearly perceive that the college is fulfilling its stated mission.

How did these friends rank our needs? The two items most mentioned were student housing and endowed scholarships. Other priority concerns included student workshops, academic support and a classroom building.

"The most encouraging factor in this study is the large number of respondents who indicated a willingness to both contribute to and serve as volunteers in a forthcoming campaign," Carlton stated.

The leadership phase of BEYOND 2001 continues through March with a public announcement on the campaign scheduled for April. Pray with us as the Lord provides leaders for the most ambitious development campaign of our history.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

CHURCHES

Unconventional church meets needs of unusual city

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)—Roy Crecelius saw a new face at West Oakey Baptist Church in Las Vegas one Wednesday night, so he introduced himself and asked the stranger how he heard about West Oakey.

"He told me the Jewish owner of a casino recommended our church," Crecelius said.

Well, West Oakey is different.

The first Nevada church in the Southern Baptist Convention to reach the 1,000 mark in Sunday school draws all kinds of people from all over the world, as the place known as "Sin City" continues to grow faster than any other in the country.

"Some of the strangest people in the world live here," said Crecelius, a West Oakey member and 40-year-old father of two. "Somebody has to be a bastion of calm in the storm."

The church is serving the diverse area with a style and flavor as unique as Las Vegas. The membership isn't intimidated by the challenge of ministering to the tens of thousands who work in the Las Vegas night life.

"We reach out to a lot of those people here," said Becky Tinklepaugh, who with her husband and two children joined West Oakey last summer. "We open our arms, because the people in this church are real; they've gone through difficulties. They see that person with a gambling problem or a drinking problem, and they think, 'There but for the grace of God go I.'"

Pastor Michael Rochelle's preaching style is aggressive and to the point. "Sunday mornings, I preach with an emergency room attitude that people have great need for hope and help, and that Jesus Christ can meet that need."

Most of the congregation does not come from "The Strip." Said Tinklepaugh, "Most Vegas residents stay away from the strip."

The suburbs look like those of any other big city, she said. West Oakey is different, though. Rochelle gives assurance West Oakey is Southern Baptist to the core doctrinally, but he

has led the church to a style that might not sell in a typical Southern Baptist venue.

"I'm not a program person," said Rochelle, who has led the congregation from an average worship service attendance of about 240 nine years ago to an average of about 1,500. "I don't necessarily believe that because it came out of Nashville it's for us."

So West Oakey doesn't promote Lottie Moon or Annie Armstrong missions offerings per se, instead emphasizing "Missions Around the World" and "Missions in America." Still, the congregation gives 18 percent to 20 percent of its budget to the Cooperative Program and has two mission churches. It was the first church in Nevada to give \$100,000 to the Cooperative Program in a year.

"A lot of people are going to roll over when they hear we don't use Lottie Moon's name and don't teach her story," Rochelle said. "But we promote missions—Southern Baptist missions." Nevertheless, West Oakey was the first Nevada church to give more than \$25,000 to the Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong labels. And I don't focus on 'Missions in America' at Easter. I do it at July 4th when we're focused on America.

"We have a very generous church. We've given away tens of thousands of dollars to churches here in Nevada who had special needs."

Another major difference is the administrative structure.

"We are staff-initiated," Rochelle said. "We have only two committees (finance and personnel). I know this sounds contrary, but we don't vote to add a worship service. That's the staff's responsibility to decide. We don't vote on much, except fun things like giving away money."

Rochelle said he believes people are freed to minister when they're relieved of church administrative responsibility. Eric Kelley, who joined in the past year after moving from a more traditional Baptist church in

Texas, said the structure works.

"I came from a church that probably had more committees than members," Kelley said. "I was on the nominating committee. They kept creating new committees and bogging things down. That isn't a factor at West Oakey."

Crecelius and Tinklepaugh said the congregation doesn't feel controlled by the leadership style.

"We trust our ministers," Tinklepaugh said. "Not everyone is going to agree with every decision made, but when we don't agree, we trust the Lord led them that direction."

Crecelius said West Oakey frees it members to respond to ministry opportunities they see.

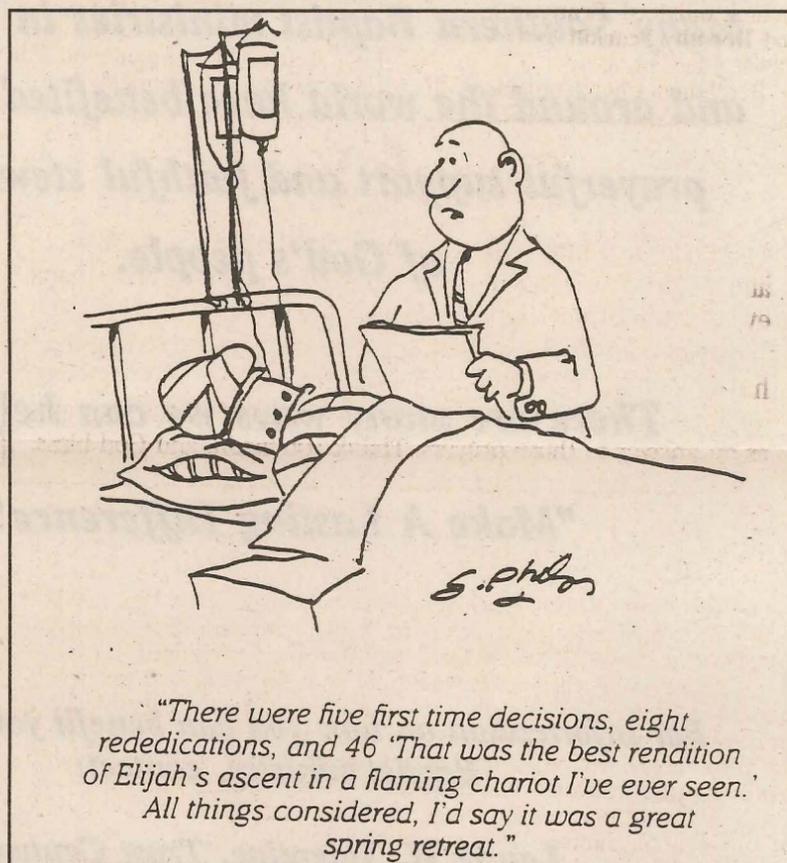
"Michael says, 'If you've got a

great ministry idea, jump on it,'" Crecelius explained. "'Don't wait for me to act on it.'"

West Oakey focuses on helping families, in part because the community they serve is experiencing rapid growth dominated by 25- to 45-year-olds with young families.

Rochelle preaches exclusively on the family from Easter to July 4, and Wednesday night classes are focused largely on family issues.

"It's wonderful to preach on the atonement and propitiation of Christ," Rochelle said. "But the people who come here on Easter don't understand that. But if I tell them the same Jesus is able to heal their families and help raise their kids, they want to know more."



"There were five first time decisions, eight rededications, and 46 'That was the best rendition of Elijah's ascent in a flaming chariot I've ever seen.' All things considered, I'd say it was a great spring retreat."

Congregations with opposite approaches share building

GRANADA HILLS, Calif. (BP)—Two Southern Baptist congregations with nearly opposite approaches to ministry have found a way to work together in the Los Angeles area.

One, a traditional Southern Baptist church, has dwindled to fewer than 50 members, a large portion of them in their 70s. The worship is traditional, including responsive reading and traditional hymns.

A few miles away, the bud of a new church is ripe for planting. This new congregation—aimed straight at the heart of Generation X—worships with guitars, encourages a causal atmosphere while still emphasizing repentance.

Rather than working against each other, these two congregations have chosen to work together.

First Baptist Church of Granada Hills, led by Pastor Bruce Swetnam, continues to meet at 11 on Sunday mornings, still holding its Sunday school before the church service.

Yet the older, more established church has invited Harvest Church of the Valley, a new Southern Baptist church with an innovative format, to share its facilities.

Harvest Church meets at 9:15 a.m., offering home cell groups instead of Sunday school classes. Pastor Rob Myers' office in the church is a converted Sunday school room. The two congregations share the other facilities—rarely, but occasionally, intermingling with each other.

The plan is for Harvest Church to enfold the older church into herself as she grows to the point of maturity. Rather than 10 years from now having no Baptist church in the community, leaders of the dying congregation have planned for a new vital congregation to grow up around them.

"My personal feeling is not to worry about who might have a few more people or what might prove to be a more successful method of reaching people for the kingdom," Swetnam says. "My desire is to reach them us-

ing whatever means necessary. This approach is born out of the desire to maximize the use of our facilities to reach those people."

Harvest Church's Myers is grateful to have help from Granada Hills. An experienced church planter, he says two difficulties to overcome are the financial burden and core families to help start the church. Using Granada Hills' facilities solves the financial problems. Myers and his wife, Estelle, have been leading home cell groups for several months, developing the core membership support Harvest Church will need to survive.

The approach appears to be working.

Heddy Firozkar, just past her teens, says she visited several churches and knew she wouldn't be able to bring her friends to them. Yet, in non-traditional Sunday morning shorts, Firozkar brought three friends to Harvest Church one Sunday—a radical shift for someone who was president of the Atheist Club at Granada Hills

High School a few years ago.

"This valley doesn't need another church that just preaches 'peace and love,'" Firozkar says. "It needs a church that preaches repentance, and Harvest Church does that. We are accountable to each other, yet we're causal and open. We don't have to fake it and pretend nothing's wrong in our life."

Andy Viera, director of missions for San Fernando Valley Baptist Association, sees the Granada Hills-Harvest Church partnership as a wise decision. "We do this all the time with ethnic groups, where you pancake congregations into a facility, and have Koreans, Hispanics, Asians or Filipinos meeting at separate times during the day. Why not try the same thing with two English-speaking congregations?"

"It's proving that the church is not the building—the people are the church," Viera added. "You can have a variety of congregations worshipping under the same roof."

"Sunday mornings, I preach with an emergency room attitude that people have great need for hope and help, and that Jesus Christ can meet that need."

Pastor Michael Rochelle

"We do this all the time with ethnic groups ... Why not try the same thing with two English-speaking congregations?"

*Director of missions
Andy Viera*

