



WESTERN RECORDER

February 11, 1997
Vol. 171, No. 6**FOR THE RECORD****NAMB**

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'I'm sorry'

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Paper: Christian Kuwaiti who fled facing death recants

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A Kuwaiti man who became the focus of international Christian concern after a Muslim religious court declared him an apostate for converting to Christianity reportedly has reverted to being a Muslim.

A newspaper in Kuwait quoted Robert Hussein Jan. 31 as telling a Muslim cleric that he had renounced his conversion to Christianity and was once again a practicing Muslim.

Reuter news agency said the Kuwaiti newspaper quoted Hussein as saying: "I clear myself from any religion that contradicts with Islam."



Robert Hussein

George Gatis, an attorney at the Rutherford Institute, a U.S.-based Christian legal defense organization that had been assisting Hussein, told Religion News Service that he could not confirm the Kuwaiti newspaper report.

"If it's true, though, then those who wanted to use Mr. Hussein to put a face on the discrimination that Christians face in Muslim nations have lost their face," Gatis said.

Hussein fled Kuwait last year fearing for his life after a Shiite Muslim court found him guilty of apostasy for converting to Christianity.

He made his conversion public in December 1995 during a custody battle with his ex-wife, who Hussein claimed prevented him from seeing his two children because he had become a Christian.

Under Islamic law, it is a crime punishable by death for a Muslim to adopt another religion. Public conversions out of Islam are rare in Arab nations. Hussein's court case was the first of its kind in Kuwait.

Various American Christian groups took up Hussein's case, including the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. Forty-eight members of Congress also wrote to Kuwaiti Crown Prince Shaikh Saad al-Sabah on Hussein's behalf.

Hussein apparently returned to Kuwait in August after marrying an American Christian missionary, Gatis said.

Reuter said the Kuwaiti newspaper also reported that his wife now wants to convert to Islam.

American men 'most pagan' pollster says

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

OXNARD, Calif. (ABP)—American men "represent one of the most pagan subcultures on earth today," according to the Barna Research Group, a leading surveyor of religion in American life.

"There are 94 million adult males in America. Unfortunately, the church does not have much influence in the lives of most of them," notes President George Barna in the latest edition of the organization's newsletter, the Barna Report.

One third of adult males claim to be born-again Christians, the Barna Research Group discovered in a 1996 nationwide survey. That means non-Christian American males outnumber Christian men 2-to-1.

Barely one in four adult males (28 percent) attends church services on a typical weekend. And just

29 percent of American men read the Bible each week other than at church.

"The trend lines show that there has been little positive change recently within the male population," Barna reported. "Since 1991, church attendance, Bible reading, Sunday-school attendance, volunteering at church and donating to a church all have declined among men. The proportion of born-again men has remained unchanged."

Reversing those trends "would represent a major step forward for men, families, the church and our society," Barna said. It would require a change in American men's religious beliefs and expectations of church, the survey results showed.

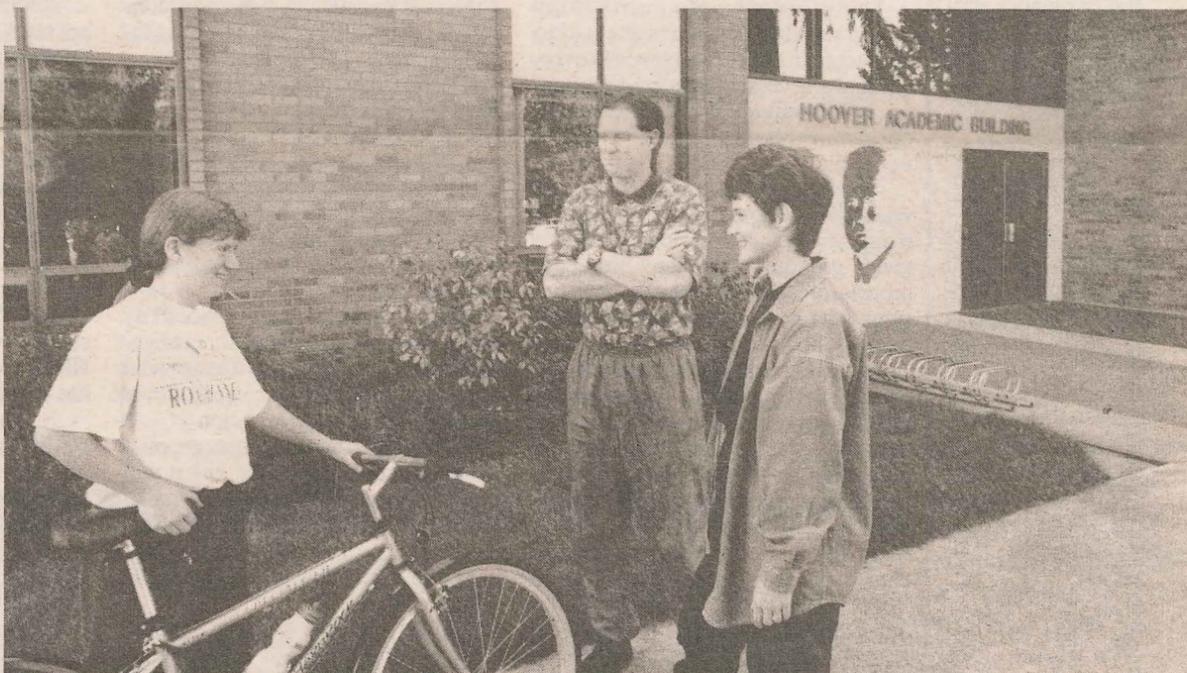
Fewer than half (47 percent) of

Christian men say they believe "there are moral truths which are unchanging," Barna said. Among non-Christians, one man in four (26 percent) professes to believe in absolute moral truth. The Bible and religious beliefs are the primary influences on moral thinking for only about 40 percent of men, the survey found.

Similarly, heaven and hell do not figure prominently in the religious thinking of men nationwide.

Just 21 percent of non-Christian men believe "hell is a place of physical torment." That compares to 56 percent of Christian men who believe in hell. On the other end of the spectrum, 39 percent of Christian men and 58 percent of non-

See American men ..., page 9



CAMPUS MINISTRY Wes and Charlean Hughes (right) talk with a student at the George Fox University campus in metropolitan Portland, Ore. The Hugheses work with campus ministries in Portland as Mission Service Corps volunteers with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board. They are among the missionaries featured this year for the week of prayer for home missions, March 2-9. (Photo by Don Rutledge)

Gunman robs Wednesday night worshippers

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

WOODBINE—A Wednesday night prayer service at Liberty Baptist Church Jan. 22 turned into a nightmare when a masked man walked in and demanded money.

Pastor John Laws was in the middle of explaining John 5:38-39 when suddenly he stopped talking, said church member Ralph Rogers.

Rogers looked up to see one of the children walking to the front of the church with his hands up. The child had walked to a table at the back of the church to get some candy, Rogers said.

Then Rogers saw a masked man, dressed in black, standing next to the pew where Rogers was seated. "This

ain't no joke," the man said.

The robber, armed with a single-barrel sawed off shotgun, ordered everyone to stuff their wallets into a duffle bag, Rogers said. They obeyed.

As the robber left the building, he told church members that "if anybody comes outside, my driver will kill you," Rogers said.

After waiting a couple of minutes, church members went outside to look around and to call the police from a house across the street from the church.

They determined the man had stolen about \$400.

The next day, Rogers, Pastor Laws and another deacon searched the area around the church. About two miles from the church—on the only road in the area which is not a

dead end, Rogers found the wallets, the gun and clothing the robber had discarded.

The robbery lasted only two or three minutes, but the experience still haunts the 13 people who were in the service that night, Rogers said.

The children especially have been affected, he said. "Our little 2-year-old boy, William, still has nightmares," he said. The three other children who were present "are still scared," Rogers said.

Even the adults are "still jumpy" during night services when they hear the church door open, he said.

As of Feb. 5, the case is still under investigation by the state police. "We have no leads," said Trooper Buddy Simpson of the Harlan State Police Post.

BAPTISTS

BAPTIST BITS

■ **Gregory Wills** has been named assistant professor of church history and Ben Mitchell has been named assistant professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Mitchell has been a visiting professor at the Louisville seminary since last fall. Wills also serves as the seminary archivist.

■ **Southern Baptist Theological Seminary** has begun a doctor of ministry degree program in evangelism and church growth. The three-year program consists of four week-long seminars on campus, plus an applied ministry component and a ministry project. The new degree is housed in the seminary's Billy Graham School of Evangelism, Missions and Church Growth.

■ **Leslie Stephen Wright**, former president of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., died Jan. 27 after a two-month illness. He was 84.

New mission board's staff structure emerging

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

ATLANTA—Workers in media and evangelism will comprise more than half the headquarters staff of the North American Mission Board, according to information released by the task force overseeing creation of the new Southern Baptist Convention agency.

NAMB is to be created in June through a merger of the SBC Home Mission Board, Radio & Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission.

No information has yet been released about the impact of restructuring on field missionaries. However, pieces of information are being released about what shape NAMB's headquarters staff in Atlanta will take.

Of the three primary thrusts of the existing HMB, evangelism gains in staff support in the new structure, while church planting and ministry are redefined with less direct support. The media work of the RTVC and the missions education work of the Brotherhood Commission combine to create the largest single unit of the new agency's structure.

Due to adoption of a matrix structure in which all positions are said to interact to achieve the agency's overall goals, several specialized emphases in the current HMB structure will not carry the high profile they have in the past.

Specialized efforts to start and strengthen congregations among African-Americans and dozens of language groups, as well as a broad approach to Christian ministry, will assume smaller and lower-profile positions in the new structure.

In the current HMB structure, the church planting unit is the largest of three major areas of missions work in terms of personnel and budget and the second-largest in staff among five organizational sections, with 84 positions.

In the new NAMB structure, a church planting group is one of five "work groups" but will include only 26 positions. Although details have not been released by the task force, up

to 24 church loans positions housed in the current church planting unit could be accounted for elsewhere in the new structure, creating a more likely downsizing of employees directly responsible for church planting from 60 to 26.

Two specialized areas of church planting given division status in the current HMB structure—for work among black churches and language churches—will be reduced to an unspecified number of consultant positions in the new structure. The new structure includes no specific department or division with overall responsibility for language missions or African-American work.

"Ethnicity concerns" will be addressed in the new congregation implementation unit of the church planting group, HMB employees were told in a Feb. 3 staff meeting.

David Hankins, a vice president with the SBC Executive Committee and liaison to the implementation task force, confirmed that language specialists will be among a group of church planting consultants, but he could not say how many and exactly what types they would be. He said, for example, there might be an African-American consultant, a Korean consultant, a Hispanic consultant and other consultants who are generalists.

Despite the apparent downsizing, Hankins said the new structure will not reduce the SBC's emphasis on church starting among African-Americans and language groups. Because of the matrix structure being used in the new organization, "every position in one sense will support church starting," he said.

That sentiment was echoed by Rudy Hernandez, a Hispanic evangelist from Grand Prairie, Texas, who serves on the 10-member task force creating the new organization.

"We don't have (language missions) as a division per se, but it will be prominent in the mission work of the board," Hernandez said. "Definitely, ethnic missions will play a significant role in the new North American Mission Board."

Others familiar with the HMB's longstanding emphasis on language

missions and work with African-American churches are privately expressing concern about the new structure. However, since the task force overseeing the restructuring meets behind closed doors and has released only selected information about the new structure, these individuals are not yet ready to speak on the record about their concerns.

In recent years, ethnic and African-American congregations nationwide have accounted for a major portion of the SBC's numerical growth. Language and black church starts combined have accounted for 50 percent to 60 percent of all new church starts in the SBC, according to HMB statistics.

Ministry, which currently is one of the HMB's five sections of work, will become a lesser unit under one of five "work groups" in the new structure. Ministry evangelism will be one component within the evangelization group.

Currently, the HMB ministry section includes chaplaincy, church and community ministries, special ministries, Mission Service Corps, student missions, alternatives to abortion ministries and volunteer projects.

Although specific information has not been released about what areas of work will remain, HMB employees were told in the Feb. 3 staff meeting that the ministry evangelism unit would include four areas: chaplaincy ministries, special ministries, immigrant ministries and Baptist center ministries.

The entire evangelization work group of which ministry evangelism will be only one part will have 56 positions. The HMB's current ministry section includes 54 positions. The HMB's current evangelism section has 43 positions.

In the matrix established for NAMB's structure, the evangelization group and church planting group serve as the two primary missions units and are supported by three other work groups: media and missions, strategic planning and mobilization, and business services.

The largest of the five work groups in terms of headquarters personnel

will be media and missions education, with 122 positions. The largest unit within this work group will be media technology, which will be housed at least temporarily in the currently facilities of the Radio & Television Commission in Fort Worth, Texas.

Other units in the media and missions education group and their sub-units reportedly will include public relations (promotion, news and information); publishing (editorial and photography); missions education (children, youth, adults, missions opportunities/events, missions development, publications); and media strategy.

The second-largest work group, with 86 positions, will be business services: finance and accounting; human resources; information services; church loans; and marketing.

The third-largest work group, with 56 positions, will be evangelization: direct evangelism (interfaith witness, evangelism events, soul-winning); campus evangelism; church evangelism (family, spiritual renewal, multicultural); ministry evangelism (chaplaincy, special ministries, immigrants, Baptist centers).

The strategic planning and mobilization group will include 44 positions in four units: associational planning (town and country, metropolitan); strategic focus cities; strategic planning, coordination and research; and volunteer mobilization (adults, youth).

The church planting group will include 26 positions in three units: leadership enlistment and training; strategy resource development; new congregation implementation.

In addition to the five work groups, an executive group will account for an additional 16 positions.

The new agency will employ a total of 350 people. That is about 165 fewer positions than currently exist at the three agencies to be merged to create NAMB.

Layoffs already have begun at two of the three affected agencies. A larger number of terminations are expected to be announced in the near future.

With additional reporting by Marv Knox

Fellowship faces budget cuts

ATLANTA (ABP)—An unexpected plateau in income has forced a 10 percent mid-year budget cut for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

Buoyed by rapid growth since the moderate group formed in 1991, leaders last year projected a 20 percent income increase in 1996-97. Through six months of the fiscal year, however, receipts of \$4.7 million were running only 2 percent ahead of last year.

"Where we expected some \$14 million in revenue (this year), we are probably going to get some \$12.5 million in revenue," Ed Vick, finance committee chairman, told the Fellowship's Coordinating Council Jan. 31.

Stunned by the budget shortfall, Coordinating Council ministry groups struggled during a three-day meeting in Atlanta to cut spending for the remaining six months of the year.

The council also authorized taking up to \$1.5 million from a global-mis-

sions reserve fund to cover both the budget shortfall and higher-than-budgeted costs for supporting the Fellowship's 140 missionaries.

The global missions reserve fund, accumulated from unexpended gifts to past years' Global Missions Offering, is about \$9 million, said finance committee member Bill Owen of Ardmore, Okla.

The cutbacks will mean layoffs of two support-staff members at the Fellowship's Atlanta offices and a hiring freeze for three other jobs that have been approved but not yet filled, said Fellowship spokesman David Wilkinson. A current vacancy in a professional-level marketing position will also be frozen, he added.

While no missionaries will lose their jobs, the cutbacks will postpone some projects and delay hiring of a coordinator of volunteer missions, said Keith Parks, missions coordinator.



Church planter Rick was familiar with Unchurched Harry and Mary, Saddleback Sam and Atlanta Al, but nothing in his preparations had trained him for Green Bay Gary.

KBC Cooperative Program sets record in January

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

Cooperative Program giving through the Kentucky Baptist Convention topped the \$2 million mark in January for the first time ever in a single month.

The \$2.15 million received from Kentucky Baptist churches in January also put Kentucky Cooperative Program receipts ahead of budget for the first time this fiscal year. Through the end of December, the fourth month of the fiscal year, Cooperative Program receipts had been ahead of last year's pace but 8 percent below the budget goal.

With the January contributions,

year-to-date gifts through the Kentucky Cooperative Program totaled \$7.9 million, which is 4.3 percent more than the same time last year and 1.1 percent ahead of the budget goal of \$7.8 million.

Undesignated Cooperative Program receipts are split, with 63 percent funding Kentucky ministries and 37 percent forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention for national and international ministries.

Gifts from churches to the KBC that are designated "Kentucky only" and are not split with the SBC totaled \$132,072 through the end of January. That is 0.9 percent ahead of last year but 14.3 percent below the budget goal.

When Cooperative Program gifts and "Kentucky only" gifts are combined, gifts toward the KBC's operating budget totaled \$5.12 million at the end of January. That is \$33,340 or 0.66 percent ahead of the budget goal.

KBC Executive Secretary-treasurer Bill Marshall, who retires at the end of February, expressed gratitude for the record-setting January report.

"To take my departure from the KBC knowing that in my last full month as executive secretary Kentucky Baptist churches not only set a new record in Cooperative Program giving but crossed the \$2 million mark for the first time ever is a wonderful going-away gift," he said.

Marshall said this upward trend

could point the KBC toward increasing its percentage split with SBC causes in future years. In November, messengers to the KBC annual meeting approved a proposal to reduce by 2 percent the portion of Cooperative Program gifts forwarded to the SBC beginning in September 1997. The recommendation carried a provision that future increases or decreases in percentage giving to the SBC Cooperative Program would be based on increases or decreases in giving from Kentucky Baptist churches.

"If this signals an upward trend and not an exception, Kentucky Baptist churches will be back to their previous 63-37 percent distribution in just a few years," Marshall predicted.

Aker to direct mountain missions; 2 other positions filled

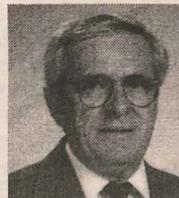
By Mark Wingfield
Editor

After a five-year vacancy, a new mountain missions director has been appointed by the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

David Aker, director of missions in Pulaski Baptist Association for 22 years, was named to the mountain missions post Feb. 6 by the KBC Executive Board's administrative committee. Aker's appointment was among three personnel matters handled by the committee.

Wyndee Holbrook, campus minister at Cumberland College since 1985, will transfer to a similar position at Berea College this summer. She will succeed Pat Brunner, who left the Berea post more than a year ago due to medical disability.

Holbrook, 38, is well-known across the state for her work at Cumberland and for her leadership of special statewide student ministry teams, including last summer's Atlanta Expressions team at the Olympics.



David Aker



Wyndee Holbrook



Sheldena Johns

will serve as a key missions strategist for that region.

Aker, 54, is one of the state's longest-tenured and best-known directors of missions. He recently concluded a term as president of the state association of directors of missions.

In Pulaski County, he has led in development of several innovative ministries, including a 14-acre park for family ministry and a clothing ministry that serves 4,000 people per year, while also making extensive advances in church planting, evangelism and partnership missions.

Prior to returning to his home county as director of missions in 1975, he served as pastor of Vanceburg Baptist Church in Vanceburg, Providence Baptist Church in Irvine and Ringgold Baptist Church in Somerset.

He earned the bachelor of arts degree from Cumberland College and did additional study at Southern Seminary, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Wheaton College before completing the master of arts degree from Luther Rice Seminary.

She holds the bachelor's degree in social work from Eastern Kentucky University and the master of divinity degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Also, Sheldena Johns was named interim evangelism associate, a part-time contract position that covers key responsibilities formerly handled by Monty Carter, who became the KBC's communications director in January. Johns previously helped coordinate the KBC's participation in the national "Here's Hope" campaign.

Johns, a Georgia native, is a 1995 graduate of Southern Seminary with the master of arts in Christian education degree. She also holds a bache-

lor's degree in English literature from Georgia State University in Atlanta.

She has held several church staff positions, including work with Brentwood Baptist Church in Houston and Christian Fellowship Baptist Church in Atlanta. She is a former Young Life leader in Louisville and previously worked in the mass evangelism department of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

KBC missions and evangelism director Larry Martin said the evangelism associate position will be filled on a permanent basis after a new executive secretary-treasurer is named. The mountain missions position filled by Aker has been vacant since the death of Ross Figart in April 1992. In this role, Aker will assist the churches and associations of Eastern Kentucky in a variety of ways. He also

New group says it can handle KBC assemblies by September

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

PADUCAH—Kentucky Baptist Assemblies Inc. will be ready to assume ownership of Cedarmore Baptist Assembly and Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly Sept. 1, according to the trustee chairman and interim president of the newly formed agency.

Kentucky Baptist Assemblies Inc. was formed by vote of messengers to the Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meeting last November. Formation of the new KBC agency was the result of a motion made from the floor of the previous year's convention that pre-empted an Executive Board recommendation to dispose of Cedarmore while retaining Jonathan Creek.

The documents approved by KBC messengers in November provide for transfer of the two assemblies from the KBC Executive Board to the new agency effective Sept. 1, with a option to delay the transfer if the new board is not prepared to take ownership.

Willis Henson, pastor of Lone Oak First Baptist Church in Paducah and

chairman of the board for Kentucky Baptist Assemblies Inc., said last week the new agency will assume responsibility for the camps Sept. 1.

The board also named Henson interim president of the agency until a permanent administrator is secured.

The board currently is receiving resumes for the president's job. Resumes should be directed to Henson at Lone Oak First Baptist Church, Box 7207, Paducah, Ky. 42002.

Henson said the board is seeking a person who has excellent administrative abilities, who understands camping as a ministry and is "sold out to it." This is not a post just anyone can fill, he said, noting the ideal candidate should have an extensive knowledge not only of camping but of how to market a camping facility.

Initially, the agency president probably will function as manager of Cedarmore, and the agency's offices will be housed at Cedarmore, Henson said.

All employees of both Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore will be terminated by the KBC effective Aug. 31, Henson said. Kentucky Baptist Camps and Assemblies will then re-

hire some of those employees.

Henson said the board perceives its greatest challenge will be bringing the facilities at Cedarmore up to modern standards and developing an effective marketing program for Cedarmore.

"We don't see any problem in Jonathan Creek continuing to operate" much as it has been, he said. "With some new marketing efforts, it will cost Kentucky Baptists less and less to operate Jonathan Creek in the future."

Making Cedarmore profitable will take longer and much more effort, Henson said.

"The biggest problem with Cedarmore is that ... it has been operated for the last seven to eight years anticipating its closing," he said. "It's really going to take drastic changes to turn it around."

However, Henson expressed optimism that both Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek can become viable enterprises that are more self-supporting financially than they have been in recent years.

"I'm surprised at the amount of positive support and interest we're finding among Kentucky Baptists," he

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Cumberland College** will host a campus visit for high school juniors and seniors Saturday, Feb. 15. For more information, call (800) 343-1609.

■ **Teri Blanton** has been named director of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children's First Step pregnancy counseling and adoption service. The program, with offices in Louisville, Harold and Jeffersonville, Ind., offers assistance to women facing unplanned pregnancies.

■ **Ninth and O Baptist Church** in Louisville is seeking assistance to pay for transporting shoes and medical supplies to a Sarajevo hospital. The church intends to ship a 20-foot container with 1,200 pairs of shoes and more than \$100,000 worth of medical supplies. For more information contact Ninth and O at (502) 636-5576.

■ **Correction:** Last week's Western Recorder listed the wrong phone number for those interested in working in partnership construction projects in New England. The phone number for Kentucky Baptist Convention's partnership missions office is (502) 244-6462.

WESTERN RECORDER

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MARK WINGFIELD
Editor

DAVID WINFREY
News Director

MAURI SMITH
Marketing & Business
Manager

C.R. DALEY
Editor Emeritus

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

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'Un-Baptist' actions

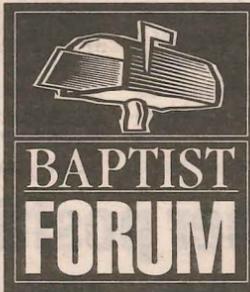
It seems every Southern Baptist association has at least one fundamentalist ring leader who always is prepared to hurl the label "Lillibral" at anyone who doesn't agree with their interpretation of Scripture. This seems to be the case in Muhlenberg County.

My previous church and association sadly went through and are presently going through the same ugly un-Baptist scenario.

At what point in history did one Baptist church inherit the authority to tell another Baptist church how to conduct its business? Why are some of these insecure preacher boys so intimidated by intelligent and gifted women who want to serve the Lord that they find it necessary to publicly lynch any church connected with them?

I don't see churches that acknowledge God's call to women trying to force their views on other churches. I know of no two Baptist churches that are exactly alike, and that is the beauty and strength of being a Baptist. We have the freedom to be different but yet are unified in our common goals.

I think the Golden Rule applies very aptly in this case. I pray that conservatives will come to see the wisdom of God's word in these situations one day and we can all get back to being true cooperative Baptists.



W.D. Hall
Henderson

Can't dictate to God

It is with much disgust and dismay that I read about the current situation transpiring in Muhlenberg County Baptist Association. When are we as Southern Baptists going to learn we cannot dictate to others and God who can be called into service to his king-

dom?

Are we so arrogant and close-minded to think that only we know the mind of God? How dare the fundamentalists who want to exclude fellow Baptists just because they differ on some minor issue. How would they feel if the tables were turned and an association decided to exclude all churches that allowed farmers who grow tobacco to be members?

Don't we as Baptists realize what the priesthood of the believer and local church autonomy mean any more? Maybe this association needs a short course in the "Baptist Faith and Message." These are the basics that built our denomination, and we are destroying them. How judgmental and hypocritical do we look to the unchurched world?

Our denomination becomes more exclusive and short-sighted every day from unwise leadership that places doctrinal purity and uniformity before soul freedom and personal autonomy before God.

Unity through diversity and respect for others' personal relationship with the Lord have made Baptists a premiere denomination. Let's have the wisdom to keep it that way by respecting the autonomy of the local church.

Tim Hall
Henderson

FMB responds

For decades, Southern Baptists have honored Lottie Moon by giving more than \$1 billion to reach lost people for Christ and to establish churches. Woman's Missionary Union has made this one of the finest monetary mission campaigns known.

The Foreign Mission Board has in the past and will continue to treat the stewardship of the Lottie Moon

Call for letters

Later this month, the Western Recorder will mark the retirement of Bill Marshall as executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. The Recorder will print brief letters from anyone who wishes to offer a public word of commendation or recall a fond memory of his tenure. Send letters by Feb. 17 to Baptist Forum, Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

Christmas Offering with integrity and accountability.

We were concerned to learn of the charges made by one of our former missionaries now with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship that Lottie Moon funds were used to further the cause of Jerry Falwell or any other pastor (Jan. 21, page 6). We have strict policies concerning the use of all funds given by Southern Baptists for missionary activities.

We have done an extensive search, made inquiries overseas as well as within the United States to try to understand the Turners' charges. We have been in conversation with the area director for the area where the Turners served. We have not found any evidence that tapes by Falwell have ever been purchased or distributed with Lottie Moon funds.

Informal tape ministries for the purpose of nurture and encouragement are very typical in most all the missions throughout the world. The FMB regularly makes available media resources from other non-Baptists. It would be absurd to discontinue use of media like Campus Crusade's "Jesus" film, for instance.

Certainly no tapes as the Turners describe have ever been distributed from Richmond.

Mark Snowden
FMB liaison to Kentucky Baptists
Richmond, Va.

Give me that old time millennialism

By Dale Hanson Bourke

For many people, all this talk about the millennium simply means a great excuse for a party. Others see it as a marketing opportunity. And the computer wizards among us find one more chance to point out that our computers could turn on us as soon as they recognize three zeroes.

But for those of us who grew up in conservative Protestant churches, talk about the millennium sends shivers up our spines. For the millennium, in our minds, will forever be associated with tribulation and the end times.

The millennium we learned about in our churches was not about the year 2000. Rather, it was the thousand years before or after the great tribulation predicted in Revelation.

In my childhood church and thousands of others, the millennium was a favorite topic of sermon series, complete with war, drama and a cataclysmic struggle between good and evil.

An elaborate timeline ran across the entire front of our sanctuary. On it were marked various events that would signal the end times and the emerging influence of the Antichrist.

Since during the tribulation everyone would have to wear the mark of the beast—or 666—we were warned against credit cards and were told never to give out our Social Security number. Census takers and meter readers were suspect. Every move toward creating data bases was resisted.

I don't know whatever happened to my childhood pastor, but if he hadn't already passed away, the advent of the Internet probably did him in once and for all.

And then there was the great theological debate between premillennialists and postmillennialists.

I'm not sure that I ever quite understood the finer points of this, but it did seem like one group thought everyone was going through the tough times before the millennium and the other group thought that being a believer excused you from the seven-year tribulation.

What is so surprising to me about all this is what a profound influence these teachings had on my childhood, and how the mere mention of the word millennium brings the emotions back to me in a rush. I spent a good deal of my formative years scared to death about the future.

COMMENTARY

SINGLES

Building self esteem in single adults

By James Stillwell

Q. The first thing lost in divorce often is one's self esteem. This issue also exists for the never-married person dealing with the death of a dream. What can one living in a "couple's world" do to shore up a sense of self-worth?



A. Divorce strikes a devastating blow to self esteem, especially when one to whom you have been married for

years says something like "I never really loved you."

When assuming Noah's ark (two by two) to be the biblical/societal ideal, one who never has experienced marriage feels left out in the cold. America is guilty of the idolatry of marriage. New Testament models Mary, Martha, Lazarus, Paul and Jesus are ignored in favor of Ozzie and Harriet or Leave it to Beaver, placing enormous pressures on single adults.

In three years, half the adult population of our country will be single. Rather than denigrate the demographics, growing churches reach out to single adults in a vibrant way. New Testament churches had places of service for all regardless of marital status.

With an exterior world often hostile to singleness, practice a few interior exercises:

■ **Acknowledge the positive past.** In spite of the negatives of life, there are many blessings God has given.

■ **Pray the "serenity prayer."** In every area of life, God can grant you the serenity to accept those things which cannot be changed, the courage to change the things you can and the wisdom to know the difference. Know when to be proactive and when to let go.

■ **Keep a victory log and a warm fuzzy file.** It's easy to keep track of our mistakes, and there are always others to help. But who keeps track of your victories? You can. When someone sends you an appreciation note for what you have meant to them, treasure it as representing others who value the ministry you have given.

As a growing, contributing member of the family of God, your world is a better place because you are in it. And you can feel good about that.

James Stillwell is minister with single adults at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington

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

HE SAID/SHE SAID

What's stubbornness to her may be tenacity to him

SHE SAID



Alison Wingfield

Stubbornness is a trait we all possess to some extent. I admit there are times when I can dig my heels in as well as anybody else.

But Mark has long been stubborn to a fine art. A basset hound could take lessons from him. (For those who aren't familiar with basset hounds, the breed is known for its obstinance.)

The most recent illustration of Mark's stubborn streak occurred during our frigid weather in January. For the last two years, I have tried in vain to get him to buy long underwear. I pointed out ads where it was on sale. I even offered to buy him some. But no, he said, it didn't get that cold here and he could manage without. I finally quit asking.

So what happened when we moved on the coldest day of the year? Mark had no long underwear. And jeans just don't cut it in 6 degree weather with 21-below wind chill.

I had no sympathy for him.

The male species does exhibit this wonderful trait quite often. I think it has something to do with pride. Like not asking directions when driving. And not reading directions when building. And not listening to directions when married.

But in Mark's defense, he can put his stubbornness to good use. That's when I use the more palatable word "tenacious." He will stick to a project to the bitter end. And there is no way he could accomplish what he does at work, church or home without this stick-to-it attitude.

So, I guess I'll have to take the good with the bad. And buy him some long underwear for next year.

HE SAID



Mark Wingfield

Just to set the record straight: I thawed out, and I didn't get frostbite. Even without the long underwear Alison just knew I should have been wearing.

Now I'll admit (but not to her) that it would have been nice to have owned some long underwear on moving day. Of course, who's to say I could have found it on moving day?

If I have been stubborn in refusing to buy long underwear, Alison has been equally stubborn in urging me to be sensible and get long underwear. I guess her kind of stubbornness gets classified as cautiousness or preparedness, while my kind rates as just plain old obstinance.

Every husband knows, of course, that once an argument like this gets going, it doesn't matter whether your wife is right or not. It becomes a matter of principle not to give in, because then you'd have to admit she was right in the first place. And all men inherently realize what a dangerous precedent that would set.

But I am stubbornly convinced that I've had exceptional training in being stubborn. Stubbornness is one of the hallmarks of my mother's side of the family. We're known in a five-county region in Oklahoma for this trait.

The father of all stubbornness in our family is my grandfather, the former mayor of Randlett, Okla., population 461. He wrote the book on stubbornness. Of course, he had plenty of practice, being a wheat and cattle farmer through the Depression and then rebuilding three times after tornadoes.

The blink-and-you'll-miss-it town where he still lives certainly never had a more stubborn mayor, but I doubt they've ever had a mayor who got more done.

That stubbornness and tenacity are opposite sides of the same coin demonstrates the truth of the notion that our greatest character flaws often are the same as our greatest character assets. The challenge is not to be so stubborn that we can't tell the difference between the two.

Do you know where our children are?

For our children, this is the best of times and the worst of times.

On one hand, they have access to more education, better games and more resources than ever before. On the other hand, they are exposed to more violence, more abuse and more heartache than ever before.

On top of that, American children today live in an increasingly adult-oriented society. According to statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly two-thirds of American households in 1995 included no children. Compare that to 1950, when about half of all U.S. households included children.

Changing demographic patterns and changing child-rearing patterns are creating a society that often forgets children are present. Plenty of households with children still exist—about 35 million—but they now represent a significant minority of all households.

You don't have to hold a doctorate in sociology to understand that an adult-oriented culture acts differently than a child-oriented culture. Priorities are different. Visions are different. Services are different.

This seismic shift in demographics affects not only the mindset of the secular world but of the church as well. And so it is timely for Woman's Missionary Union to have chosen child advocacy as the focus of its 1997 national ministry project.

This week has been designated "Focus on WMU Week" in Baptist churches across Kentucky and America. In this week, WMU leaders are appealing to churches large and small to make commitments to participate in "Project Help: Child Advocacy."

This is a worthy goal not only for churches to participate in corporately but for individuals to join as well. The children of our world need our attention.

We should start by examining how we treat children in our churches.

Are we meeting their age-appropriate educational needs, or are we shuffling them off into glorified babysitting so the adults can do their thing? Teaching children is not the lowliest job in the church; rather it is the greatest and most important. And incidentally, most churches desperately need more men teaching and working in children's classes, both because help is always needed and because children need to see both male and female role models.

Do we give children opportunities for meaningful involvement in worship and other church functions? Are children asked to read Scripture, offer prayers, collect the offering, give testimonies in worship? I recently heard two children give brief testimonies at a church in West Kentucky, and they did a better job than most adults. On top of that, what they had to say cut right to the heart of things and connected emotionally with everyone present.

What is your church doing to minister in Christ's name to children outside the walls of your church? If a child in your community needed help, needed someone to talk to, needed attention, would he or she have any reason to turn to your church? What message has your community heard from you about children?

What do you know about the plight of children in your community? In developing a ministry plan, has your church investigated the unmet needs of children—for foster parents, for tutoring, for after-school care, for role models, for surrogate grandparents, for attention of any kind?

This week, take time to look beyond your adult world and discover the needs of children. Then become an advocate on their behalf. When you do, you'll be following the footsteps of Jesus, who said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

— Mark Wingfield

(No) vacancy

By Carey Newman

My friend was distressed. He had just returned from a meeting of the firm's vice presidents where he had been instructed to release one of his employees. He had to admit the termination was justified: although likable, the employee had repeatedly made costly mistakes, consistently ignored company policy and obstinately refused to enter the employee development program. Still, my friend felt sorry for the fellow. My friend obviously had put a lot of thought into the question he posed to me: "How is it that God can continue to forgive me when I continue to mess up?"

There is a temptation to sentimentalize grace, especially God's grace. God's grace is sometimes understood simply as emotion, as God's "pity." God continues to forgive us because God feels sorry for us.

While in a way this is true, in the Bible God's grace refers to God's actions and not God's emotions. Grace is seen in what God does—the way he creates, provides, saves and rescues, forgives and transforms. Grace is thus a tangible expression of God's

faithfulness. God continues to forgive because he has committed himself to a vision of blessing the entire world. Our experience of grace, in and through the saving deeds of Jesus Christ, is the result of this commitment.

Although we only attended, last summer's Olympic games afforded Leanne and me the opportunity to participate in a special team event—the "Mad Train Scramble."

Apocalyptic predictions of traffic problems in the downtown area effectively scared Olympic fans off the roads and onto MARTA, Atlanta's

rapid-transit system. Unfortunately, everyone got on at the end of the line, leaving little or no room for those wishing to get on between the end of the line and the venues.

Along with several hundred others, Leanne and I stood watching train after train pass. People waiting to board grew restless, anxious and finally desperate. Many had spent an enormous sum of money and traveled a great distance for the privilege of attending, and yet they were worried they might not make it to the venue for the event.

People on board the trains tena-

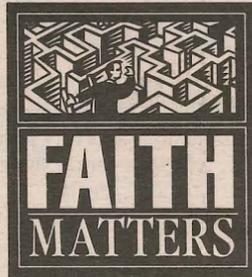
ciously guarded their space and consistently refused to move away from the doors, evidently fearing they would never be able to get off at their stop.

Even though there was room for some, there was not enough room for all, and so none were let aboard—despite the pleas and pushing of an anxious crowd.

Grace always makes room. Grace acts boldly, lavishly and indiscriminately. In fact, it makes room for anyone and everyone, wishing to accept it. Grace is offered to all, even if it is enjoyed only by those who willingly join their lives to the risen Jesus. Grace destined just for a lucky few is no grace at all.

While grace makes room without preconditions, grace should never be taken for granted. God paid dearly to offer this grace—the rejection, suffering and, ultimately, the death of his one and only Son, Jesus. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer has reminded us, while God's grace is free, it is never cheap. It comes at a price.

I told my friend to sleep well and live soberly, because the joy given by the experience of God's grace is only surpassed by the lengths to which God went to give it to us. *Grace is that part of God which stops at nothing in order to have a chance at overwhelming our reluctance, forgiving our sins and changing our circumstances.*



NATIONAL NOTES

■ **'Moral principles' called for in campaign reform.** A religious coalition is calling on politicians to incorporate religious and moral principles in campaign finance reform. "Our goal is to re-focus the campaign finance debate away from strictly political considerations and back on moral and democratic ideals," said Tom Choquette, of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

■ **Carter nominated for Nobel Peace Prize.** The American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker agency working on humanitarian issues, has nominated former President Jimmy Carter for the Nobel Peace Prize. It is the second time the group has forwarded Carter's name for consideration. In January 1996, Carter led a team to monitor the Palestinian elections. He also has played a role in conflict mediation in several other countries, including Bosnia, Haiti and North Korea.

■ **Judge appoints attorney to defend fetus.** A pregnant New Jersey woman jailed on drug charges was scheduled to be let out of prison to have an abortion while an attorney appointed by a judge to represent the fetus is seeking to prevent the procedure. Judge Leonard Arnold did not question the woman's right to an abortion, but said because of the fetus' potential to survive outside the womb it is entitled to legal representation.

■ **'Souper Bowl' tops record.** More than \$1.4 million in collections for anti-hunger and anti-poverty ministries has been reported to the "Souper Bowl" campaign this year. Youth in participating churches invite parishioners to drop one dollar into soup cauldrons as they leave worship on the morning of the National Football League championship game. Based on past giving trends, organizers said, totals should reach \$1.6 million. Last year's total: about \$1.3 million.

■ **Germany's Scientology stance criticized.** The U.S. State Department's annual report on human rights includes criticism of Germany for its treatment of the Church of Scientology. German officials regard Scientology as a cult that preys upon individuals for financial gain. Scientologists have been denied government jobs and officials have sought to boycott concerts and movies. A German official said the United States had fallen prey to a Scientology public relations effort.

■ **Lowery to leave SCLC.** Joseph Lowery, who for 20 years has led the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, has announced his retirement. Lowery, 74, a United Methodist from Huntsville, worked with Martin Luther King Jr. and Ralph Abernathy to found the conference in 1957 and make it one of the civil rights' movement's leading organizations.

■ **Catholic Alliance gets new executive.** Keith Fournier has been named president of the Catholic Alliance, an off-shoot of the Christian Coalition. Officials said the Alliance has grown to 50,000 members and supporters. U.S. Catholic bishops have distanced themselves from the Alliance, objecting to use of the word Catholic in its name as well as to some of its conservative domestic policy positions.

■ **Survey: TV preachers didn't help Dole.** In contrast with the campaigns of Ronald Reagan and George Bush, major television evangelists gave virtually no help to Republican contender Bob Dole in his 1996 quest for the presidency, said communications professor Stephen Winzenburg. His content-based poll found TV preachers silent on this past election. "The unspoken message from most televangelists was that Clinton's presidency wasn't worth talking about and Dole was not a strong supporter of the evangelical moral agenda."

■ **Ex-Mormon radio host sentenced.** The former host of a weekly Mormon radio program promoting church values was sentenced to up to 15 years in prison for sexually abusing a 14-year-old girl. Lloyd Pond pleaded guilty to the reduced charge of forcible sexual abuse. He had originally been charged with forcible sodomy in a case that provoked debate in Salt Lake City over whether Pond had received lenient treatment because he was a spokesman for the Mormons.

Support urged for poor at prayer breakfast

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON—A bipartisan crowd of politicians, diplomats, church leaders and other prominent people, including President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, gathered Feb. 6 for a morning meal of muffins and morality at the National Prayer Breakfast.

About 4,000 people from six continents filled a Washington hotel ballroom and spilled into auxiliary rooms to hear remarks from renowned neurosurgeon Ben Carson and Clinton, stressing the religious obligation to help the less fortunate and to be more civil in public debates.

Continuing a 45-year tradition, the breakfast is organized by legislators who meet weekly for bi-partisan U.S. House and Senate prayer breakfasts.

In his keynote address, Carson, the director of pediatric neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, implored his audience to realize they have only reached their current status through God's grace.

Carson, an African-American who gives God and his mother credit for helping him grow from being a poor, Detroit youngster with no interest in learning to a well-known doctor,

urged the audience to care about the plight of young, black males.

"Some people say, 'Well, I'm not a black male, so it does not concern me,'" Carson said. "I beg to differ with you. All of our ancestors came to this country in different boats, but we're all in the same boat now, and if part of that boat sinks, eventually the rest of it goes down, too."

He also said it was "hogwash" to believe God should not be spoken of in public.

"Don't ever get too big for God and don't be ashamed of a relationship with God," he said.

Clinton returned to the theme he first expressed in his inaugural address and again in his State of the Union message—the need to be "repairers of the breach," a biblical reference to Isaiah 58:12.

He urged the crowd to pull certain people out of the breach—the poor, people around the world in need of help from the United States, and the cynics among politicians and the press. Clinton asked for prayer for people in public office as well as for all those who have slipped through the cracks.

"Remember that in every scripture of every faith, there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of admoni-

tions not to forget those among us who are poor," said Clinton, who signed welfare reform legislation last year that will deny many of the poor government aid.

"They (the poor) are no longer entitled to a handout, but they surely deserve—and we are ordered to give them—a hand up."

In addition to the remarks by Clinton and Carson, prayer breakfast participants heard scripture readings from House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., and Rep. Richard Gephardt, D-Mo.

Vice President Gore cited several Bible verses that he related to the recent spate of church arsons and the support given to help the congregations rebuild.

"These houses of worship have been lifted back up and the breath of the spirit has been breathed into them," Gore said. "May the same thing happen to our hurting nation."

After the breakfast, one participant found this year's event unusual.

"Usually, it's so nondenominational and boiled down," said Rep. Joe Scarborough, R-Fla., a lifelong Southern Baptist. "You just get a feel-good message. But not this time. He (Carson) really acknowledged the absolute importance of God in his life."

Teens taking True Love Waits to next stage

WASHINGTON (RNS)—When Valentine's Day rolls around this year and young people's fancies turn to romance—and its physical expression—a growing number of teens are telling their peers that love is a waiting game and sexual abstinence a virtue.

That message will come from students involved in "True Love Waits Goes Campus," a campaign urging sexual abstinence among teens and college students that includes rallies, Bible studies and card-signing commitments on the days leading up to and including Feb. 14.

The True Love Waits program began in 1993, launched by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, and has spread to include more than 40 other denominations and Christian

student groups.

In 1996, a chain of some 350,000 cards pledging an individual's commitment to abstinence was lifted to the roof of the 27-story Georgia Dome during a Christian youth rally.

Now, organizers and supporters are moving the cards into public venues where they will be seen by the people they want to influence most—other students. Their aim is to have a display on every public secondary school campus in the next two years.

"The 'Goes Campus' campaign really is a move to get teenagers who have already committed to sexual purity to take that to their campuses," said Glen Whatley, youth consultant for True Love Waits.

In some cases, Christian club members at schools throughout a

community plan to gather for a single rally on Feb. 14 or on a day leading up to Valentine's Day.

The True Love Waits effort also is being highlighted in rallies across the country featuring Christian artists Patty Cabrera and Jonathan Pierce. The two sing songs and join other speakers in challenging youths to remain virgins or make a new commitment to abstinence.

Pierce, who has participated in 15 rallies, tells students about his decision to remain a virgin until he married his wife, Denise, in June 1995 at age 26.

"The schools are handing them ... condoms and saying it's OK," said Pierce, who performs as a solo artist and as a member of the Gaither Vocal Band. "I just wanted to give them an alternative, to think about it first."

Religious broadcasters tune in for fund-raising

ANAHEIM, Calif. (ABP)—Like churches, charities and other organizations that depend on the donor dollar, religious broadcasters are feeling the financial pinch.

When those broadcasters gathered Jan. 25-28 for their annual meeting, no fewer than eight workshops addressed fund-raising, donor relations and revenue issues for this largely non-profit industry.

"It's the silent subject—a proven, 25-year statistical decline in the percentage in Christian giving," said Brian Kluth, president of the Milwaukee-based Christian Stewardship Association. "Unless there's a renewal in stewardship, everything we're about now will begin to unravel."

Christian non-profits, he said, must move away from depending just on weekly offerings and learn to tap into donors who receive monthly sales or

will give through electronic bank transfers.

Paul Nelson, president of the Virginia-based Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, said, "even where income is up, I think the rising dollar is coming from fewer people."

He said Christian charities have "got to focus on major donors." But he added, "the bread and butter still is your 10- and 20-dollar-a-month donor."

Religious broadcasters have suffered from donor distrust since the scandals that scarred several prominent Christian ministries with the image of 1980s excess and greed.

The key figure in those scandals, former PTL leader Jim Bakker, was on hand for the recent convention.

Conventioners lined up to have the shy, unassuming, Bakker sign copies of his 616-page tome, "I Was

Wrong"

But Bakker doesn't stand to get rich from the book. Before finishing his prison term in 1994, he signed away his book royalty rights to his lawyers and the Internal Revenue Service, to which he still owes more than \$1 million.

With about 4,000 people at this 54th annual gathering, Gustavson said this was the group's largest convention.

Radio stations make up the bulk of National Religious Broadcasters membership.

Of the nation's 1,648 religious stations, the largest concentrations are in Texas (125), North Carolina (104), Florida (87) and California (78). James Dobson's "Focus on the Family" program is the industry's top syndicated daily radio show, heard on 943 stations.

Christian Coalition unveils legislative goals

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Christian Coalition unveiled Jan. 30 an ambitious agenda for the new Congress, featuring a legislative package intended to combat poverty and crime while getting minorities and Democrats to work with it.

The package includes proposals for a \$500 per person tax credit for charitable giving, economic empowerment zones to stimulate inner-city neighborhoods, government scholarships to cover full private school costs for poor students, allowing government funding for faith-based anti-addiction programs and providing financial bonuses to states that reduce juvenile and gang-related crime.

It also includes a coalition pledge to raise up to \$10 million by the year 2000 to assist African-American and Latino churches in ministry to "at-risk youth."

Overall, the plan represents a sharp departure from the coalition's past emphasis on anti-abortion, anti-homosexual, anti-welfare, anti-tax and balanced-budget measures.

Ralph Reed, the coalition's executive director, said the new initiative would augment and not replace his organization's past concerns, which will continue to include an effort to expand religious expression in public schools

and a ban on a controversial late-term abortion procedure called "partial-birth abortions," by opponents.

But having worked in support of last year's successful effort to limit welfare, Reed said conservative evangelicals are obliged now to work with minority groups to alleviate crime and poverty.

"We can no longer blame the liberals for the carnage that is our inner cities," he said. "For too long, our movement has been predominantly—frankly almost exclusively—a white, evangelical, Republican movement with a political center of gravity centered in the cloistered safety of the suburbs."

Reed called the coalition's plan "a compassionate, faith-based agenda to combat poverty and restore hope" that involves both government and the church.

"We disagree with those liberals on the left who believe that government is always the answer, and we disagree with those libertarians on the right who believe the government is always the problem," he said.

Coalition critics remain unconvinced by Reed's new agenda.

Henry Lyons, president of the National Baptist Convention, USA, the nation's largest black Baptist denom-

ination, said he was "highly suspect of whatever this is. Is it Greeks bearing gifts?"

"Given their past record, I don't see (the coalition) being taken with credibility on this by African-American church leaders."

Albert Pennybacker, president of the Interfaith Alliance, a group of liberal and moderate religious leaders organized to oppose the Religious Right, called the coalition plan "nothing more than a politically packed strategy aimed at softening the Christian Coalition's image, while doing little to address the real issues affecting poor and working families."

Reed—noting the coalition raised about \$750,000 to rebuild black churches destroyed in a wave of church fires—denied having an ulterior motive.

"The pro-family and religious conservative movement has gone through a transformation on the question of race and reaching out to the truly disadvantaged," he said.

Reed gave no overall figure for what his proposals would cost government. Neither did he suggest where the money should come, although he did say the coalition would continue to press for a balanced budget amendment and overall tax relief.

Analysts say church-state case could have broad implications

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Accepting a case that could have significant implications for church-state relations, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to reconsider its 1985 decision that prohibited public school teachers from conducting remedial classes at religious schools.

The case re-examines whether it is permissible under the First Amendment's establishment clause for federally funded teachers to teach remedial classes at religious schools.

In the 1985 *Aguilar vs. Felton* case, the justices ruled that such remedial classes were unconstitutional.

"The symbolic union of church and state inherent in the provision of secular, state-provided instruction in the religious school buildings threatens to convey a message of state support for religion to students and the general public," the court said in a 5-4 vote.

Since that decision, teachers, under a federal remedial education program, have been offering assistance to parochial students in vans parked near religious schools or in other off-site facilities.

Legal analysts said the case coming before the court could have implications far beyond the issue of remedial education. In recent years, there has been debate within the legal community over what criteria should be used to determine whether a government action unconstitutionally supports or "establishes" religion. Legal experts do not rule out the possibility that the justices could use this case to hand down significant new guidelines for the relationship between religion and government.

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MISSIONS

House of Hope showing love to Brazilian AIDS patients

By Mary Speidel
SBC Foreign Mission Board

VITORIA, Brazil (BP)—When Regina Carvalho talks about her family, her choice of words speaks volumes.

"They are nauseated by me," says Carvalho, who has AIDS.

When she had a miscarriage, the man she lived with left. She started losing weight. Later, a blood test showed she had the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, which causes AIDS.

After she told her family, "they didn't feel the same about me anymore," Carvalho says. "Friends were even worse."

But she found a place where people care. The House of Hope is a Baptist AIDS hospice in Vitoria, Brazil, where people with AIDS can stay after they're released from the hospital but are too sick to go home. Out-of-town patients also use the house while getting treatment at local clinics. Some, like Carvalho, live at the house because they've nowhere else to go.

Through House of Hope, Southern Baptists help share Christ's love with Brazilian AIDS patients. Karen and Tony Gray keep the house running. They opened it in June 1995, two years after Karen Gray began visiting AIDS patients in Vitoria hospitals.

God gave her the idea for the house one night when she couldn't sleep for worrying about patients' needs.

A former teacher, she has no training in pastoral care, social work or health care. But you'd never guess that.

In Carvalho's room at House of Hope, Gray takes the Brazilian's thin hand in both of hers, speaking softly in Portuguese. During the last three years, she's done that with several hundred AIDS patients.

"Touching patients is one of the most important things we do," Gray says. "Brazilians live and talk very close to each other. They're constantly touching."

When someone in Brazil gets diagnosed as HIV-positive, human touch is usually what he or she loses first. That was true for Elizabeth, one of the first AIDS patients to stay at the house. She was considering suicide before she met Gray.

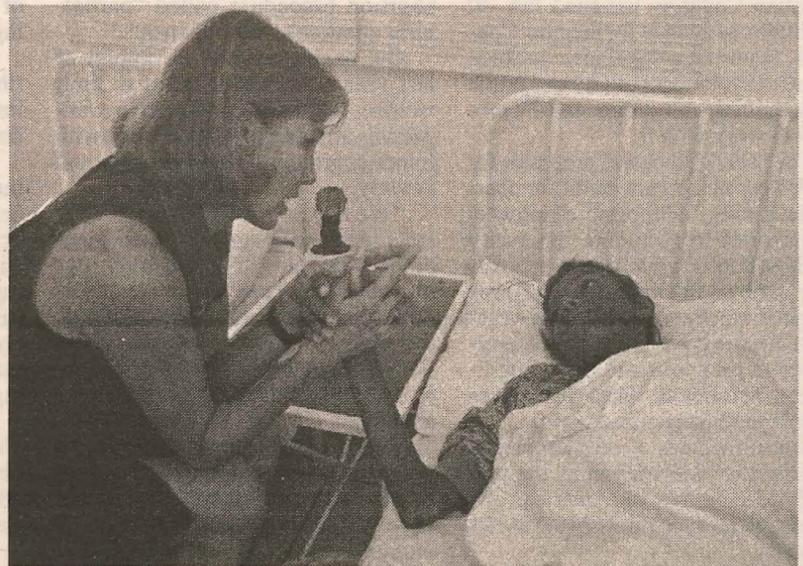
Elizabeth accepted Christ in the hospital before she died. So have 95 other AIDS patients helped by House of Hope workers. Gray keeps a notebook with information on each patient she knows and red marks beside the names of ones who've died. So far, there are more than 200.

Gray has prayed at the bedside of prostitutes, transvestites and homosexuals. She's helped buy coffins and plan funerals for patients whose families rejected them. She's comforted young mothers and Christian wives who got AIDS through no fault of their own.

"Sometimes I'm amazed I'm not crazy or totally depressed," Gray says. "There are no other reasons except the Lord sustaining us and Christians praying for us."

"I was born and raised and lived my life in a comfort zone," Gray says. "Stepping out of that has been a real learning and growing experience."

This story originally appeared in the SBC Foreign Mission Board's Commission magazine.



TOUCHING LIVES Karen Gray (left), a Southern Baptist missionary, comforts AIDS patient Regina Carvalho at "House of Hope," a Baptist AIDS hospice in Vitoria, Brazil. Gray and her husband, Tony, opened the hospice in June 1995, two years after Karen Gray began visiting AIDS patients in Vitoria hospitals. Through the house, Southern Baptists help share Christ's love with AIDS patients like Carvalho, who accepted Christ before her death last year. (BP photo by Don Rutledge)

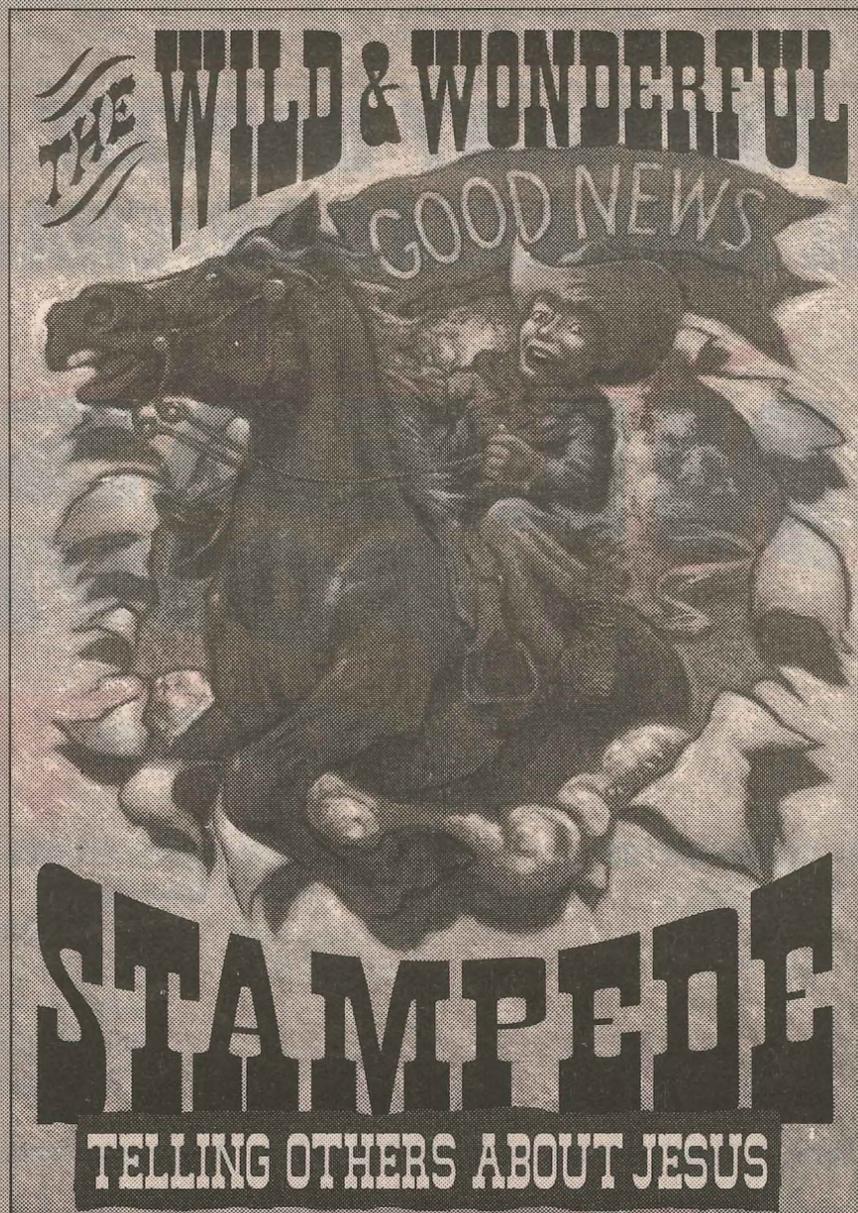
The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has helped finance the house and its ministries. Woman's Missionary Union adopted House of Hope as its 1996 national ministry project.

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LEADERSHIP

Churches must be practical to reach men, Barna says

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

OXNARD, Calif. (ABP)—Churches must be practical if they expect to reach men, says religious pollster George Barna.

His research group surveyed U.S. men to determine their religious beliefs and attitudes toward the church.

The survey responses point to four steps churches can take to "challenge men to grow in the faith," Barna said. They are:

■ **Address men's needs.** "Men automatically search for value," he noted. Men will give an audience to churches that relate Christianity to men's unique needs, interests and desires.

■ **Design a male-friendly ministry.** During their first few visits, men are trying to learn whether a church "is the type of place, has the kinds of ministries and opportunities and incorporates the types of people they find attractive," Barna reported.

But as a group, men don't want to be singled out and pressured, the survey found.

Specifically, they dislike phone calls from church people to discuss their visit, unscheduled home visits by church representatives, unsolicited gifts being brought to their home or

pressure to identify their presence at the church—name tags, introductions, special acknowledgments, Barna wrote.



Church-sponsored events other than weekend worship—such as Christian concerts, social gatherings, community service projects or seminars on topics of personal interest—would attract numerous

men, survey respondents claimed. Men respond best to church leaders who are accessible, respectable, experienced and practical, the survey found. It also showed that men expect

information about the church to be "communicated relevant to the real world in which men operate."

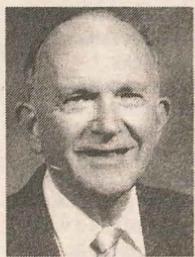
■ **Pray for men.** "The ministries which attract men and which show evidence of transformation among men are led by individuals who specifically pray for the men to whom they will minister," Barna said.

■ **Challenge men without destroying them.** Men told pollsters they are wary of guilt and manipulation used as tools to involve them in church.

"Already overburdened with responsibilities, they are not looking for more things to do," Barna said. "Effective ministry is positioned as faith which produces a way of life that reduces their burden, lightens their spirit and enhances their quality of life."

Barna found five things most unchurched men look for from a church:

- Practical understanding of the Bible.
- Personal and meaningful knowledge of God.
- Strong friendships with other men.
- Religious teaching for their children.
- Pragmatic solutions to complex personal issues.



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American men 'most pagan,' Barna says

Continued from page 1

Christians believe "a good person can earn their way into heaven."

The closest the two groups come to agreeing is about life after death. Fifty-five percent of Christians and 50 percent of non-Christians said they believe "all people experience the same outcome after death, regardless of their beliefs."

Doctrinal confusion among non-Christians may be exacerbated by unorthodox beliefs held by many Christians, Barna said. Of Christian men surveyed, 27 percent said they believe "Jesus Christ committed sins" and 28 percent denied the physical resurrection of Jesus.

Apart from their religious beliefs, many men apparently avoid church because it does not live up to their expectations, the newsletter reported. Eighty-five percent of men who do not now attend church have been active in a church before, the survey found.

"Their rejection of the church is a deliberate and substantive, rather than casual and uninformed, choice," Barna insisted. "Why have so many men rejected Christ or his church at the same time they are searching for meaning, purpose, significance, influence and inner peace?"

"The bottom line is that men tend to be bottom-line oriented," Barna wrote. "Most men perceive the costs of church involvement too far outweigh the benefits."

In a recent Time magazine cover story, Bill Gates, billionaire head of the Microsoft computer software firm, articulated that notion. "Just in terms of allocation of time resources, religion is not very efficient," Gates said. "There's a lot more I could be doing on a Sunday morning."

Much is at stake in the church's struggle to reach American men with the gospel, Barna noted.

"If America is to experience a significant moral and spiritual revolution, it must integrally involve men," he said. "The need for such a transformation is undeniable."

'Multitudes' expected in D.C. for Promise Keepers assembly

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Promise Keepers officially announced plans Feb. 4 for "multitudes" of men to come to Washington, D.C., Oct. 4 for a "sacred assembly."

At a news conference, organizers outlined an event they said would be more racially and ethnically inclusive and more spiritually focused than the Million Man March of October 1995, a rally of hundreds of thousands of black men organized by Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

African-American, Hispanic and Native American board members took turns at the mike during the news conference as a demonstration of the group's emphasis on diversity.

Bishop Phillip Porter of the Church of God in Christ, an African-American who is chairman of the group's board of directors, said his placement in the organization is an example of Promise Keepers' commitment to people of color.

"That's amazing to many people because many folk believe that Promise Keepers is just a white evangelical group," he said.

And during Promise Keepers' rallies in 1996, 500,000 mostly Anglo men stood and promised God and founder Bill McCartney they would bring a man of color to the Washington assembly, said Raleigh Washington, the group's vice president of reconciliation.

Recalling Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech, Washington spoke of the whites who may agree with King's vision of blacks and whites joining hands.

"The white folks are going to be here but they can't make that dream come true by themselves," Washington said. "Now if I'm a black man and I got a chance to make Martin's dream come true, I'm coming to D.C."

Porter, however, said the march will be focused on things of the spirit rather than on race. "We speak of the core need of men. We know that's not skin, but sin."

Promise Keepers, founded in 1990, is dedicated to shaping Christian men's spirituality by urging them to be more committed to God, their families and their churches.

In addition to the Washington assembly, Promise Keepers will again hold regional rallies. The schedule:

May 2-3: Detroit and Los Angeles.

May 9-10: Cincinnati.

May 16-17: Houston and Tampa, Fla.

May 23-24: Chicago and Seattle.

May 30-31: Birmingham, Ala., and Kansas City, Mo.

June 6-7: Knoxville, Tenn.

June 13-14: Buffalo, N.Y., and Washington, D.C.

June 27-28: Fresno, Calif., and Miami.

July 18-19: St. Louis.

July 25-26: Pittsburgh.

Aug. 15-16: Minneapolis.

Oct. 24-25: Irving, Texas.

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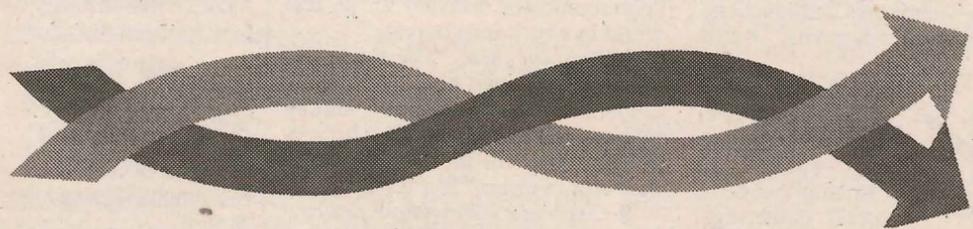
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How to Get the Best Out of TV Before It Gets the Best of You. Dale and Karen Mason. Broadman and Holman, 1996. \$12.99. ♦♦♦ (out of five)

In some ways this book is like others that take on television as the evil destroying the family, and hence the nation. The usual approach of this type of book is to encourage getting rid of TV entirely.

This book is more realistic in its suggestion we manage TV rather than toss it out of the house. The authors relate their own family's pilgrimage to gain control over the TV. From their own experience, they offer a number of tools which allow a family to evaluate TV usage and then bring TV under control.

The main impact of this book is in the overall impression it makes that family TV viewing deserves careful inquiry. Even if you judge the threat of TV differently than the authors, the book is useful. The book gives every person cause to consider what could happen in the life of a family if TV time was spent in conversation, family activities and spiritual enrichment. The next time you view TV you most assuredly will wonder if your time could be better spent.

Other contributions of this book are the 10 ways to control your TV and the 150 alternatives to TV viewing. A list of video reviews is intended to give direction in the wholesome use of the VCR. The problem with the list is most of the videos will be hard to find as rentals since the list is mostly Christian films. (Christian video rentals is not a big business.) *Wayne Hager*

Playing Hide-and-Seek: A Non-Churchgoers Path to Finding God. Michael Elliott. Peak Road, 1996. 99 pages. \$9.95. ♦♦♦♦

Elliott, a former pastor/director of a Baptist Center, has written a book which is indeed hard to read for those who still work and minister within the institutional church. I found myself going back on a number of occasions to be sure I understood what he was doing in the book. Elliott is the non-churchgoer saying "the church is not the best place to have a personal, one-on-one experience of finding God."

Elliott's contention is that God is playing a game of hide-and-peek with us and we often are looking for God in the wrong places. Even once you accept Elliott's contention of how God interacts with us, the road is not easy. Very little of what is valued in "church" receives a positive word.

A number of times I wanted to scream "You're wrong!!" But in my anger I came face-to-face with perceptions I do not share but which I must consider. What I could not do as much as I wanted to, was to dismiss what Elliott says as having no validity. If it has validity for him, it stands to reason that thousands of others stand ready to give him a hearty "Amen." And if this is true, then the church and its ministers have a lot to learn and confess.

When you read this book, pick it back up from where you have thrown it, and finish it. Your impression of the church and your understanding of the non-churchgoer will not be the same. *Wayne Hager*

Tattered Trust: Is There Hope for your Denomination? Lyle Schaller. Abingdon Press, 1996. 136 pages. \$12.99 ♦♦♦

I love reading Lyle Schaller's observations on the future of the church. I hate reading Lyle Schaller's observations. Sometimes his rambling, Socratic method of writing leaves me wondering where

he is going. Perhaps that is because he tries to cram too much information and food for thought into too few words. Often his most recent book contains too much rehash of his last book. Yet, interspersed throughout anything he writes are jewels of insight, inspiration and challenge.

"Tattered Trust" is no exception. The book reads more like a collection of essays than a work that was conceived as a piece. Every chapter contains a differing statement about the theme of the book. Though he is writing about the future of denominational structures, what Schaller has done is transform many of his observations about the future of the congregation into a book about denominations.

Despite these criticisms, Schaller man-

ages to put his finger on a key issue denominational structures must address if they are to remain viable. For Schaller, trust is the crucial issue. He contends most people born after 1955 do not trust denominational organizations, and that most denominational structures do not trust the laity. If denominations do not address this issue, their futures are bleak.

Schaller praises the Southern Baptist Convention as the type of "made in America" democratic organization that can adapt to the younger generations. However, he offers a warning about a trend he sees within the SBC to turn away from trusting laity toward more centralized control.

Though written primarily for mainline denominations, Baptist pastors, laity and denominational workers will find Schaller's questions thought-provoking. *Jim Holladay*

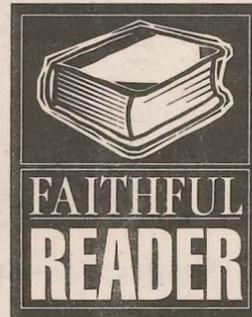
Discovering Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach. Roy Oswald and Robert Friedrich Jr. Alban Institute, 1996. 174 pages. \$17.95. ♦♦♦♦♦

Finally a book about planning that takes seriously the nature of the church. Oswald and Friedrich admit to frustration with the spate of books calling for the pastor or leader to discover God's vision and then try to convince the people to follow him. In response, they have developed a model of strategic planning based on a "theology and methodology that places the entire congregation in the center of the visioning process." They are convinced that "only grassroots visions have any real meaning or staying power."

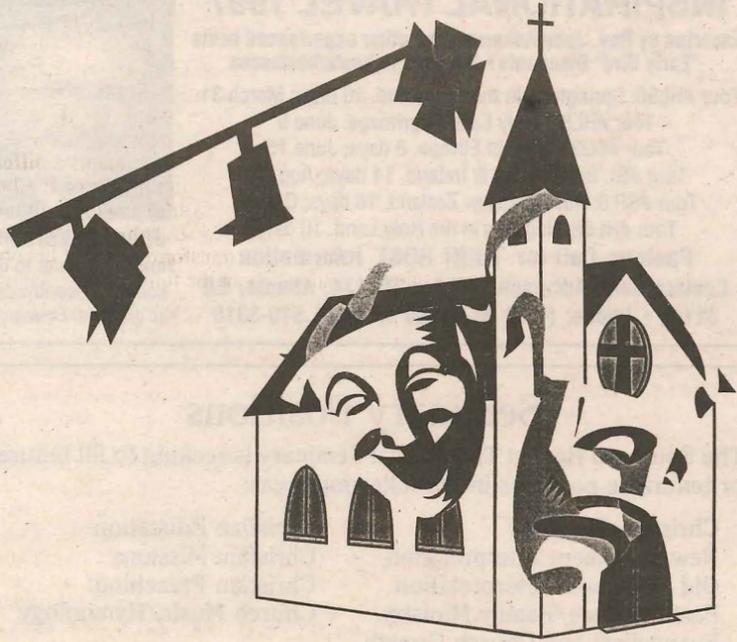
They argue that strategic planning in the church is fundamentally a process of spiritual discernment, which uses the best of the behavioral sciences. Spiritual discernment is necessary so members of the church are "able to distinguish between messages from God and messages that stem from our own willfulness, our ego, or even our shadow." As a process of discerning God's will, strategic planning is also a process of conflict resolution, as church members bring competing understandings to the table.

Oswald and Friedrich offer a process of strategic planning that is bathed in prayer and Bible study, as well as congregational and community study. The book thoroughly explains the method and how to implement it. It contains the essential research tools as well as background information on fasting, centering prayer and effective ministry in various sized congregations.

As I read this book, I could visualize this process being implemented in my church. The thing that excited me the most was that I could actually see this process of strategic planning being a time for genuine spiritual renewal. *Jim Holladay*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Midlane Park Baptist Church in Louisville, and Jim Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville.



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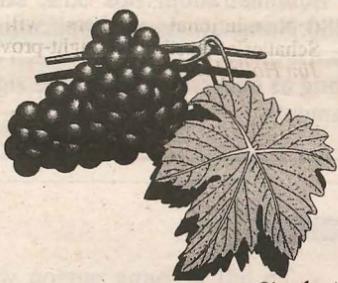
WORLD VIEW

■ **Official church in China reportedly growing.** The Chinese government's Protestant church is said to have increased the number of church buildings from 7,000 to 12,000 and distributed 10 million Bibles during the past five years. The number of meeting points also has grown from 20,000 to 25,000, according to the Chinese Christian Conference, the Chinese government's official body for churches.

■ **Baptist World Alliance condemns attacks.** The Baptist World Alliance has asked the U.S. government to condemn four recent attacks by Burmese militants on Karen refugees in Thailand and to use its power to help prevent further attacks. In these forays on the Karens, most of whom are Baptists, churches and schools were burned.

■ **Bishop asks airlines not to fly over funerals.** A Norwegian Lutheran bishop has asked that all air traffic at Oslo's Gardermoen airport be halted while funerals are conducted at the seven churches below the airport's flight paths. The bishop said plane noise detracts from the dignity of funerals. "It must be possible to ground all air traffic a few times a week." But the planning chief for Norway's aviation board said the frequency of takeoffs and landings preclude the airport from complying with the request.

■ **Cult ruled no longer an imminent threat.** An independent panel in Japan has rejected a government request to ban the cult whose members have been found guilty of Tokyo subway nerve gas attacks and other violent crimes. The panel said that what remains of the Aum Shinri Kyo cult poses a potential, but not an imminent, threat.

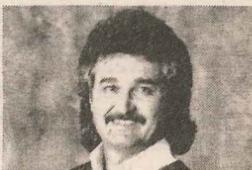


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SPORTS

NFL defensive star shares Christ's impact on his life

NEW ORLEANS (ABP)—God, not the gridiron, was on the minds of Washington Redskin Darrell Green and other NFL stars at a recent award presentation.

"Folks, football is great ... but people need to know about Jesus Christ," said Green, a defensive back and this year's recipient of the Bart Starr Award honoring exemplary character and leadership at home, on the field and in the community.

The award, named after the legendary Green Bay Packer quarterback, is presented annually by Athletes in Action, a subsidiary of Campus Crusade for Christ.

Recipients of the award are determined by a vote of NFL players at the end of the season.

Green has been to five Pro Bowls and holds the Redskins' record for interceptions. He also has established a foundation to help develop young people into leaders. He sponsors learning centers for youth and is involved in other activities to assist those in need.

Green said those accomplishments pale when compared to the most important thing in his life. "It's Jesus Christ and him crucified."

"God has chosen to allow me to play a game called football," Green said at an awards breakfast in New Orleans, one day before the Super Bowl. "To be able to take that little kid's game—one of the foolish things of this world—and glorify Jesus Christ, that's what it's all about. That's the bottom line."

Green said he came to faith in Christ while in college and found people who helped disciple him in the Christian life. He also emphasized that God is looking for people who will go out and

work for him, love others and serve.

Following Green's acceptance of the award, Minnesota Viking receiver Cris Carter echoed the need for a life committed to following and obeying God.

Carter noted the common practice among Christian players of kneeling to pray after scoring a touchdown. "It's kind of easy to bow down in the end zone," he said. "But the real test of my character is, can I bow down to God on a Monday when millions of people are not watching and the stands aren't packed and my wife is not necessarily saying I am a superstar and my little boy is late for school?"

Mike Holmgren, head coach of the Green Bay Packers, also spoke about his family and faith. "You are challenged every day to step forward and make a commitment and let people know where you stand."

Difficult times teach Christians to rely on God, Holmgren said. "It's so important. I know I can rely on him for all my needs. And I know that the Lord has a plan for my life. And when it gets really tough, that's a comforting thought."

"Disappointments happen," echoed Indianapolis Colts quarterback Jim Harbaugh.

"But really I don't get discouraged. As my faith has grown and I've seen what the Lord has done in my life—he's taken me through so many disappointments and times when I was hurt—I know with the Lord I can overcome anything."

Harbaugh added he is encouraged by the increasing number of football players expressing their faith. "It shows where the hearts of many men who play in the NFL are. ... It encourages me. ... I hope fans are encouraged."

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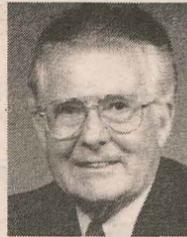
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Our mission

By Robert Dunston

Every college must have a mission statement. Accrediting agencies want to know what a college is attempting to do and what it hopes to do in the future. Prospective students and their parents want to know how a college sees itself and what the goals of the college are for its students. Faculty, staff, administration and current students also need to be reminded of the college's mission and how they are fulfilling it.

Cumberland College has a mission statement that is both a source of pride and challenge. It reads:

"Cumberland College offers promising students of all backgrounds a broad-based liberal arts program enriched with Christian values. The college strives for excellence in all of its endeavors and expects from students a similar dedication to this pursuit. It's commitment to a strong academic program is joined with a commitment to a strong work ethic. Cumberland encourages students to think critically and creatively so that they may better prepare themselves for lives of responsible service and leadership."

In this and the next few columns I will tell you how we strive to make

our mission statement a reality.

From the very beginning, we at Cumberland College accent our commitment to Christ. That commitment reflects itself in the Baptist Student Union and other religious activities that occur on campus and in our many students who are preparing for ministry. But our commitment to Christ is also part of our academic curriculum.

One expects that courses in English, history, communication, art, music, theater, business, mathematics and the sciences would all be part of a liberal arts degree. Students need to be ready to live in the world and understand more than just one limited field.

But we believe that knowledge without Christian values and ethics is incomplete and potentially dangerous. All students who attend Cumberland must take two courses in religion which help them mature in their own faith and commitment. We also hope that these courses will persuade those who are not Christians to accept Christ as Savior.

We believe we start at the right place.

Robert Dunston is chairman of the religion department at Cumberland College, 6000 College Station Dr., Williamsburg, Ky. 40769

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



God's 24-hour love channel

A new romance channel is being touted on cable commercials these days, offering classic love stories 24 hours a day. The channel's slogan is: "Love means never having to change the channel."

No doubt all the movie channels will give us Rock Hudson showering Doris Day with flowers and chocolates in heart-shaped boxes. Fred and Ginger will split up and then dance back into each other's arms, and Dr. Zhivago and Romeo and Juliet will be shown over and over, being called "the greatest love stories ever told."

I wonder if we'll get to see the ultimate story of sacrifice and passion portrayed on our TV screens. Probably not, but I know where to find it, and yes, it's on 24 hours a day.

This time of year is a wonderful opportunity to teach children about the active, endless love of God. For the children in care of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, it is especially poignant.

In our churches, Bible studies and daily interaction, we can tell those who have been abandoned and abused that even if they had been the only person on earth, Jesus still would have made the trip—just for them.

To tell a young person who finds it hard to trust, difficult to smile, painful to look in the mirror, that he or she is that important to the God of the universe is an incredible privilege.

Last year, 138 of our young people discovered this love and acted upon it by making professions or rededications of faith in Christ as their personal Savior.

For others, seeds have been planted, and we know God will reap a beautiful harvest.

As I said, the "channel" is always open. How blessed believers are to have access to our mighty God at any time.

Please join me in praying for all the children who need to know what true love is.

Pray that the understanding will grow into action, and action will blossom into a determination to live out God's love story in a life of joy.

Brenda Gray is vice president for development and communications for the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Rd., Middletown, Ky. 40243. Call (800) 456-1386. The World Wide Web address is: <http://www.iglou.com/kbhcl>

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Brenda Gray

'Sorry' seems to be the hardest word

By Julia Lieblich
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON—The political year so far has been long on mistakes and short on apologies.

"Mistakes were made," President Clinton told reporters of his party's fund-raising tactics.

"A mistake had been made," House Speaker Newt Gingrich said about his ethics violations.

About a decade ago, President Reagan inaugurated the passive refrain. "Serious mistakes were made," he said during the Iran-Contra investigation into the sale of arms to Iran and funding of Nicaraguan rebels.

This bipartisan fondness for the passive voice begs the question: Why is it so hard for politicians to say, "I'm sorry."

"Politicians love the active voice except when they're in trouble," says Larry Sabato, a University of Virginia professor of government. "It's the nature of the beast. They are used to being hailed as conquerors ... who are too special to make mistakes. They're just poorly served by staff who work 18 hours a day and don't take vacations."

Failure to admit culpability, Sabato says, often means the failure to rem-

edy errors. "If (Clinton and Gingrich) have done nothing wrong," he says, "they have nothing to atone for. If they admitted personal guilt, they might be more inclined to reach a bipartisan solution, which is the only hope for (campaign finance) reform."

Faulting one's subordinates or the political system is encouraged in a political culture that penalizes politicians for admitting errors, says Edward Weisband, a political science professor at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. "The culture argues that if you've made one mistake you are culpable in perpetuity."

A healthier society, Weisband says, would see that admitting to an error in judgment "can indicate greater moral and ethical character. Civility requires us to (allow) public officials to admit when they are wrong."

And civility, he adds, demands the public accept apologies in good faith. "A person has the right to make peace in the world," he says.

But Sabato says it's a good idea to make sure an apology sticks. Twenty-four hours after Gingrich expressed remorse over his ethics violations, "he started attacking again and blaming others."

The Clintons, Sabato adds, also are

"by nature blamers. They're never responsible. It's always somebody else's fault."

Not all politicians have been loathe to express remorse. Former Defense Secretary William Perry publicly accepted responsibility for failing to prevent the deaths of 19 airmen in the 1996 terrorist bombing in Saudi Arabia—an apology that did not hinder his career, Weisband notes.

In 1979, George Wallace, former Alabama governor, showed up unannounced at Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, where Martin Luther King Jr. once served as pastor, and expressed remorse for the pain he had caused blacks.

And last October, he apologized to Vivian Malone Jones and James Hood, the two blacks who tried to enroll at the University of Alabama in 1963 only to find the governor blocking the entrance.

"The part that was so meaningful is that he came full circle," said Jones. "He went from saying, 'Segregation now; segregation tomorrow; segregation forever' to admitting he was wrong."

David Azbell, spokesman for the Wallace Foundation, said the governor knew he could change course and rely on his constituents' support.

Religious partnership links environment and social justice

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The National Religious Partnership for the Environment unveiled Feb. 6 a three-year, \$4 million campaign designed to promote programs that connect protecting the environment with advancing social justice.

"The poor are disproportionately impacted by many environmental decisions," said Roberta Hestenes, pastor of Solano Beach Presbyterian Church in Solano Beach, Calif., and a former chairwoman of the board of World Vision, the evangelical relief agency.

According to Partnership officials, the campaign will have several components, including recruiting 40 new religious agencies to work with the Partnership.

The Partnership, which began in 1992, is a coalition of several major faith groups including the Evangelical Environmental Network, the U.S. Catholic Conference, the National Council of Churches, and the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life.

Evangelical, Jewish, Catholic and mainline Protestant leaders affiliated with the Partnership met with political leaders, including Vice President Al Gore and several Republican congressional leaders, to urge that all government policies consider the impact of environmental legislation on the poor.

Roman Catholic Bishop William Skylstad of Spokane, Wash., said there is a moral imperative to protect both the environment and human life. "We are stewards responsible for taking care of God's 'garden' and God's special people—the poor and vulnerable, the victims of injustice."

Greater
friends
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one
down

FOR
EVER

Youth
Fest
1997

Youth
Evangelism
Conference

June 27-28

Starting Times (EDT):
Friday - 7 p.m., Saturday - 9 a.m.

Freedom Hall
Louisville, Kentucky

A SPECIAL YouthFest Offer:
Stay over for JoyJan '97 featuring Michael W. Smith!!

Kentucky Baptist youth groups who pre-register for YouthFest '97 can purchase for an additional \$10 per person tickets to JoyJan '97, Kentucky's premier contemporary Christian music festival sponsored by the Louisville Redbirds! JoyJan '97 and YouthFest '97 are separate events. The Kentucky Baptist Convention's Office for Evangelism is responsible for and sponsors YouthFest '97. The Kentucky Baptist Convention is not responsible for JoyJan '97, or any of its sponsors, promoters and/or agents.

Registration and hotel information is coming to a mailbox near you soon. For additional information, call the Office for Evangelism at (502) 245-4101.

Beat the rush and make your conference and hotel reservations today!



Phillips, Craig & Dean



CHOSEN



FACE to FACE



Buster Soaries

PRAYER PARTNERS

Pray for these specific needs related to Kentucky Baptist partnerships with Russia and New England:

■ Ed and Nelly Waldron, church planters at Family Baptist Church in Randolph, Mass.

■ John and Sarah Lee, church planters at New Life Fellowship in Somerville, Mass.

■ Glenn and Wendy Hatch, church planters at St. Johnsbury, Vt.

■ Nancy and Bob Walden, Kentucky partnership coordinators in Moscow.

■ Foreign Mission Board career missionaries Dick and Marilyn Beaudoin in Moscow. They ask for prayer to be able to achieve balance in their devotional lives, work, Russian language study and personal time.

WANTED: Weekday Early Education director for Shively Baptist Church. Previous experience and/or familiarity with the administration of a child care program, including state licensing regulations. Ability to plan, organize, train and supervise the program and teachers. Contact Sharon Zachery, (502) 367-9155.

TOUR: Biblical Greece and Turkey. 8-day tour departing Sept. 8, Athens, the Parthenon, Mars Hill, Corinth, plus a 3-night Aegean cruise to Mykonos, Rhodes, Ephesus and Patmos. Only \$1,798. Call Pastor Studie for brochure (502) 247-8331.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for Southern Heights Baptist Church. Please submit resumé to: Robert Pike, chairman, Pulpit Committee, Southern Heights Baptist Church, 550 Roy Arnold Ave., Danville, KY 40422.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth, children and education for First Baptist Church of Mt. Sterling, Ky. Applicants must enjoy working with young people and their parents. Send resumé to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 324, Mt. Sterling, KY 40353.

Mountains to the Mississippi, our listing of Baptist news from across the state, will return next week.

WANTED: Youth to audition for 1997 Kentucky Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra. Must be in grades 9-12, active in music ministry of a Kentucky Baptist church. Information, call Church Music Department (502) 245-4101.

SEEKING: Calvary Baptist Church of Lexington, Ky., is accepting resúmes for the full-time position of minister to students/church recreation. This minister will provide direct leadership for all phases of college ministry as well as recreation ministry for the church family. Seminary training and ministry experience are expected. Tentative starting date for the position is June 1, 1997. Please send resumé with references by March 1, 1997, to: Rev. Hank Ellington, Calvary Baptist Church, 150 E. High St., Lexington, KY 40507.

NEEDED: Youth groups for week-long summer missions work helping urban church reach children and youth. Programs will be in place for each group. Have eight 1-week slots left to be filled. Contact: Tim Knight, First Baptist Church, Dayton, KY, (606) 431-7105. Guaranteed to be an exciting, spiritually building time for your group.

SEEKING: Central Baptist Church of Eureka, Mo., is prayerfully accepting resúmes (until March 15, 1997) for a dynamic, full-time youth/music minister to serve in a rapidly growing community. Send resumé to: Central Baptist Church, P.O. Box 66, Eureka, MO 63025, Attn: Search Committee.

WANTED: Church financial secretary, part-time. Computer skills required. Apply or send resumé to: Lyndon Baptist Church, 8025 New LaGrange Road, Louisville, KY 40222. (502) 425-7150.

SEEKING: Meta Baptist Church is presently in the process of searching for a full-time minister of youth and music. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Meta Baptist Church, 8807 Meta Highway., Pikeville, KY 41501.

SEEKING: A small church in central Kentucky seeks a pastor. For more information, please send resumé to the Pulpit Committee, Liberty Baptist Church, c/o Danny Blankenship, 810 Wallace Ave., Leitchfield, KY 42754.

NEEDED: Fern Creek Baptist Church has an immediate opening for a preschool and/or parents day out teacher. Hours are MWF, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. for preschool and TT, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. for parents day out. We offer competitive wages, a friendly environment and other benefits. Please contact Debbie Gorbandt or Linda Barnes at (502) 239-0316.

SEEKING: A full-time minister of music and education. The position will require the ability to provide strong leadership, direction and training for our music and education programs, plus assist the pastor with the overall ministries of the church. Send resumé to: Morganfield First Baptist Church, 200 North Morgan, Morganfield, KY 42437, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Experienced full-time youth and singles minister. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 804 West Fifth Street, London, KY 40741.

SEEKING: Small LINY congregation searching for full-time/bivocational pastor. College and seminary required; age 35 and older with strong Bible-based preaching, outreach background and administrative skills. Send resumé to: Trinity Baptist Church, (Attn: Pastoral Search Committee), 1368 William Floyd Parkway, Shirley, NY 11967.

SEEKING: In need of pastor at Lucas Grove Baptist Church, Upton, Ky. Call: Roger Dennis, (502) 369-7676 (day), 369-7915 (night).

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Send resumé to: Moreland First Baptist Church, 501 Old Danville Pike, Hustonville, KY 40437.

SEEKING: Minister of music/youth. Salary negotiable. Send resumé to: New Bethel Baptist Church, P.O. Box 100, Verona, KY 41092.

SEEKING: Metro Peoria Baptist Association in Peoria, Ill., is seeking a director of missions who meets Home Mission Board guidelines. If interested, send resumé to: Charles Hargrave, 907 N. Maplewood, Peoria, IL 61606. Deadline for resúmes is March 1, 1997.

SEEKING: Centerfield Church in Oldham County is seeking a volunteer praise and worship band. Auditions will be held through the month of February. For more information, call (502) 241-9345.

I thought I did, but I didn't

We all know how easy it is to forget to do something. Most of us do not want to admit we simply forgot. I don't know about you, but a greater problem for me is to think I have done something, only to find out I really haven't.

I don't know how many times my wife has asked me about a certain event or some critical detail, only to get a reply similar to this: "I told you several days ago all about this." I have a wonderful wife. She simply smiles and normally will respond, "I know you think you told me, honey, but you didn't."

For many years I would really press the issue, insisting that she was the one who had forgotten, not me.

Now that I am a little older and more aware of my own deficiencies, I am less inclined to place the blame on her or anyone else. I must say, though, there are still times when I am sure I have done something, only to have those around me tell me I haven't.

Just before Christmas I was reminded again that I have not always done what I think I have. I was cleaning my desk at home. Before becoming president I did a lot of my paperwork at this desk. I use the desk very little now. As I was clearing the desk of unwanted paper and other items, I noticed what appeared to be a check among some papers. When I unfolded the paper, I was surprised to find that it was in fact a check. It had been written to me in the summer of 1994, just before I became president.

I will say that 1994 was an extremely difficult year for my family and me. Previous president Barkley Moore passed away Jan. 25. My father passed away two weeks later, in February. Then in March my oldest son was admitted to the in-

tensive care unit at Baptist hospital in Corbin. In April his first child, and our first granddaughter, was born. This granddaughter passed away six months later. In May my mother passed away. All of this time Oneida was without a president. So it is a little understandable that this check was not a priority in my life when it was misplaced.

I had to chuckle a little last week when I received a certain check in the mail. This check had been written in September 1994. The person wrote me this note on the back of the check: "I was dumbfounded when I found this check that I had written in 1994. I'm replacing it, but just wanted you to know that I wanted to remember Barkley Moore. What happened that I misplaced it and didn't mail?" Remembering the check I had found just a few weeks earlier, I fully understood how those things can happen.

It does make one wonder how many times we think we have done something, when in reality we haven't. Or how many times do we plan to do something and do not follow through?

How long has it been since you have visited our campus? If you have not been here for three years or longer, you may be surprised to see so many changes; new buildings, new daycare, new housing for our faculty and staff, new pews in our chapel and much more. Spring is a beautiful time to plan a visit. Come by yourself, get a Sunday school class to come with you, travel with a WMU group or simply get a van load from your church to come.

Don't put it off—you may forget.

W.F. "Bud" Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, P.O. Box 67, Oneida, Ky. 40972

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Churches provide student scholarships

Two southeastern Kentucky churches have committed \$62,000 for endowed student scholarships. The pledges are part of Clear Creek's Beyond 2001 campaign and represent more than 10 percent of the goal for Kentucky Baptist churches.

Horse Creek Baptist Church in Manchester voted to give \$32,000 in honor of former pastor Dervis Rush. He was pastor of the Clay County church for 37 years. God called him to preach at age 14 while at Clear Creek's summer camp.

A homecoming revival with Rush preaching brought in \$19,000 to begin the scholarship.

Jan. 19, First Baptist Church of East Bernstadt honored Earl Clark by establishing a scholarship endowment of \$30,000 in his name. Pastor Kenneth Felty noted: "Brother Clark's teaching ministry has advanced Christ's kingdom in southeastern Kentucky, throughout the nation and abroad as a result of his 24 years on Clear Creek's faculty. Many churches have received Clark's pastoral gifts. He was our pastor for more than six years. We honor our Lord Jesus by 'giving honor to whom honor is due.'"

The church made an initial gift of \$4,000 and will complete the

pledge during the next four to six years through monthly gifts and special offerings.

Spears Mill Baptist Church near Paris will contribute one-half percent of undesignated offerings. Pastor J.T. Rafferty, a 1990 graduate, said, "The church has seen the value of Clear Creek in my ministry and wants to help train others."

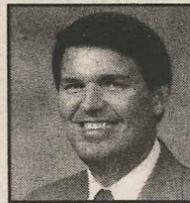
First Baptist Church of Madisonville agreed to be western region chair church and pledged \$10,000 to create a scholarship in honor of former pastor Harold Purdy. After retirement from Madisonville, Purdy taught at Boyce Bible School in Louisville.

Each month we receive news of other churches joining the effort to help meet our need for student financial aid.

Experience in other campaigns indicates we will reach the \$610,000 KBC goal when we have the participation of just 280 churches. That's only about 10 percent of KBC churches. Surely more churches than that will see the need. Will your church be among those who respond?

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Former Jehovah's Witness gets new lease on life

By Lisa Smith
SBC Home Mission Board

SALISBURY, N.C. (BP)—George Kesterson carries a photograph in his wallet as a reminder of his former life.

"This was me back when I was so ill," he says. Barely recognizable, the bloated face staring back bears little resemblance to the trim, energetic man Kesterson has become.

The photo illustrates his testimony of being physically, spiritually and emotionally sick. Doctors misdiagnosed Kesterson as having an incurable form of Crohn's Disease. He took 52 pills a day, believing he was terminally ill.

When doctors operated on Kesterson and discovered he had a treatable illness, he got a second opportunity at life. "I'm going to make that count for something," he says. "I asked God to give me a year, but God has given me several years."

At 45, Kesterson uses that opportunity to tell others how he recommitted his life to Christ after being a Jehovah's Witness for 21 years. As director of Watching the Watchtower ministries, he reaches out to Witnesses and teaches Christians about Witness beliefs.

As a Mission Service Corps volunteer through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, Kesterson supports his ministry by working as a mortgage banker. He lives in Salisbury, N.C., where a Jehovah's Witness regional training center opened in 1995.

Believing education is the best protection against deception, Watching the Watchtower sponsors a billboard along Interstate 85 near the training center. The sign advertises a number where callers can hear recorded mes-

sages by former Jehovah's Witnesses. "We're able to minister to people in ways the conventional church cannot," Kesterson says.

When he was 11 years old, Kesterson made a profession of faith in Christ. A year later, a Witness visited his home. "One Saturday, a kindly old gentleman came knocking on our door bearing Watchtower publications, and he returned to take an interest in me," Kesterson recalls.

The man read from Watchtower publications during weekly reading sessions. Kesterson attended services at the local kingdom hall. "Thus began my stint with the Watchtower Society that would consume the next 21 years of my life."

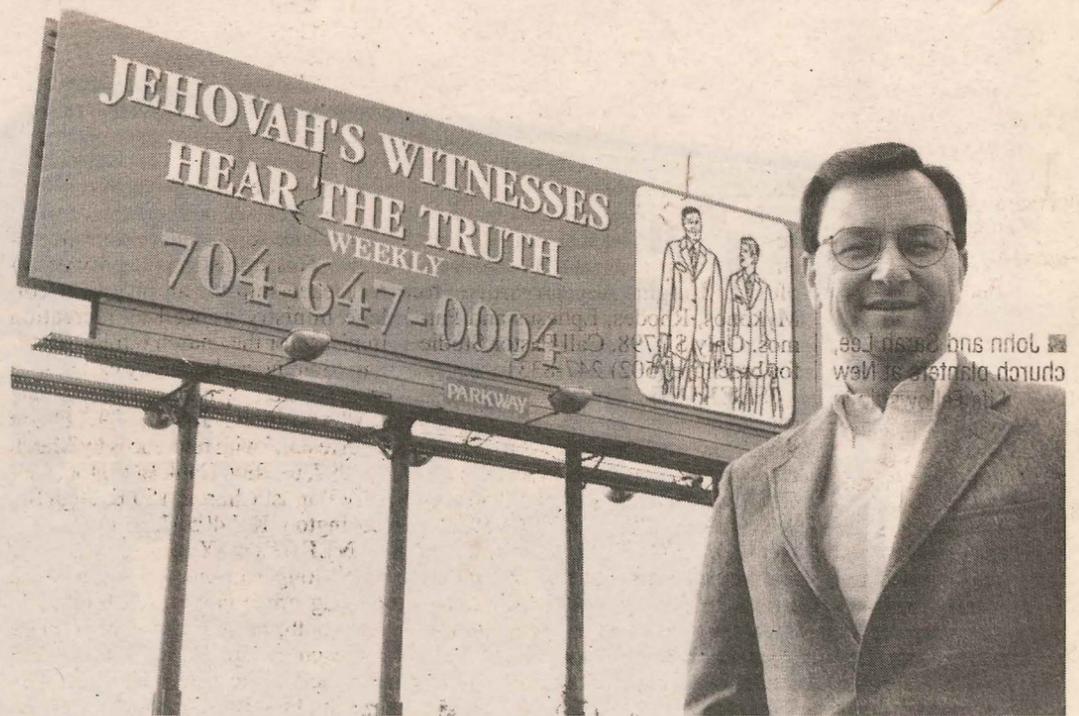
During those years, he abandoned the activities of other people his age and became a self-described "walking, talking salesman" for the Watchtower. "It led me to forfeit a college education to pursue the Watchtower missionary activity and to build my whole life around the teaching of the organization."

He accepted the prohibitions against having blood transfusions and going to war. "It was like I had a shopping list of things I wouldn't do."

Kesterson discovered false prophecies in the Watchtower beliefs, but he still accepted the teachings as true.

Following the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses put a strain on Kesterson's personality and on his marriage. "I was very much out of character, partly because of the cult influence," he says. "I was arrogant and domineering."

He says his attitude and poor health contributed to the dissolution of his marriage. With his family gone, Kesterson re-evaluated his life—including Jehovah's Witnesses teachings. "You don't get true teachings



SIGN OF THE TIMES
George Kesterson stands in front of a billboard his ministry sponsors on Interstate 85, not far from a Jehovah's Witness training center. "I believe Jehovah's Witnesses are not to be written off but to be loved."

from false prophets," he recounts.

What he discovered made him turn from the Watchtower and recommit himself to the Christian faith he professed as a child.

"Even after becoming a recommitted Christian, I experienced difficulty," he says. When his health continued to deteriorate and he couldn't work, Kesterson's house was foreclosed upon and his car repossessed.

"But I was still loving and trusting God," he says. "I came to discover that the storms of life will not last and that your boat will not sink if the Lord Jesus Christ is in the boat with you."

When he felt called to the ministry, Kesterson knew he wasn't the typical candidate for a pastorate. "I was a divorced, uneducated, ex-Jehovah's

Witness," he says with a laugh. "I could not give myself away."

A friend convinced Kesterson he needed only God's permission to do his work. The next day, Kesterson felt God speaking to him through his pastor's sermon. In the sermon, a quote from the late evangelist Dwight L. Moody seemed directed at him: "If God is with you, make no small plans."

Kesterson's plans include using his background as a former Jehovah's Witness to answer questions of people involved in the organization.

As he talks, Kesterson reaches into his duffel bag and pulls out letters from former Witnesses he has helped. "I believe Jehovah's Witnesses are not to be written off but to be loved."

People have a devil of a time stopping religious rumors

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Some religious rumors are fly-by-night. Chances are if you missed the bogus "Associated Press" wire story on the Internet about Microsoft acquiring the Roman Catholic Church, you won't be hearing any more about on-line absolution.

But many religious rumors, from reports of satanic corporate symbols to devil worshipers who sacrifice children, have remarkable staying power despite evidence debunking them.

During the past 15 years, for example, the Federal Communications Commission has received hundreds of thousands of calls and letters about a fake petition allegedly circulated by atheist-activist Madalyn Murray O'Hair pressuring the FCC to ban religious programming.

Procter & Gamble has been fending off charges for 15 years that its logo is satanic—rumors the company claims were spread by business rivals.

Religious themes, experts say, provide grist for rumors because they are deeply embedded in our culture and rely on faith rather than reason.

Some people find rumors alluring because of their mystery. For others, they help alleviate the tension stemming from uncertainty. And religious

rumormongers use stories to mobilize people against perceived enemies of the faith, whether a corporate competitor or the devil incarnate.

People rely on rumors to explain people and situations they know little about, whether it's a new religion or a mystical phenomenon, says anthropologist Daniel Rothenberg, who studies rumors in Latin America. The subjects may be complex and contradictory, but most rumors are short and simple.

"The longer and more complicated a story the less likely it is to be told and retold," says Rothenberg.

A hoax is concocted deliberately to deceive, such as the story that Microsoft had acquired the Catholic Church.

A rumor, on the other hand, may have a kernel of truth. A story that Christian Science founder Mary Baker Eddy was buried with a telephone is false, but its genesis may have some basis in fact.

In 1910, Eddy's body was brought to the general receiving tomb at Mt. Auburn Cemetery in Cambridge, Mass., before burial, says Michael Davis of the church history department of The First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston.

"Church watchmen were on duty 24 hours a day and a telephone was installed for their use," Davis said. The phone was disconnected, however, when her body was transferred.

Determining whether a religious claim has merit is difficult even for experts who study the phenomenon. "What you make of (a story) depends on where you're coming from," says Peter Kivisto, sociology professor at Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill.

Some people, he says, would be quick to dismiss all the recent sightings of crying Madonnas in Italy. The Catholic Church, however, believes in the possibility of miracles as manifestations of divine power.

Rumors help people alleviate the tension that comes with fear and uncertainty, says Tom Saunders of Baltimore's Rumor Control Center. "The mind tries to eliminate chaos and uncertainty," he says, "and when answers aren't forthcoming we piece together information giving rise to rumors. ... They explain things and relieve tension and uncertainty temporarily."

Not all rumors forecast doom, Rothenberg says. "What makes rumors so interesting is that they're fun," he says. "People like to tell stories. Why do people tell the story of Mary

Baker Eddy and the telephone? Because it's weird."

Rumors, says Rothenberg, "lend themselves to a loose creativity and allow people to hint of a possibility without taking responsibility for it as a fact."

Rumors can also be used to rally the troops. "O'Hair has been sufficiently demonized so the Christian right can use the name of an ungodly atheist to mobilize the opposition," says Kivisto.

The only way to stop rumors, says Saunders, is to disseminate information about specific charges, citing studies, company responses and other data. Still, some rumors have a life of their own. The fact Madalyn Murray O'Hair has been missing since September 1995 has not stopped her infamous petition from circulating in churches.

Her disappearance has even fueled competing rumors. Some say that the 77-year-old atheist, in declining health, has gone off to die in private. Others believe she absconded with funds from her organization, American Atheist Inc.

O'Hair cannot be reached to confirm or deny. But if history is any indication, it hardly matters.

During the past 15 years, the Federal Communications Commission has received hundreds of thousands of calls and letters about a fake petition allegedly circulated by atheist-activist Madalyn Murray O'Hair pressuring the FCC to ban religious programming.



The community gathers for the dedication of the \$2.2-million Anne Wright Wilson Fine Arts Building.

Georgetown College gets to the Art of the Matter

Anne Wright Wilson Fine Arts Building to host world-class exhibits

Georgetown College dedicated the new Anne Wright Wilson Fine Arts Building in October 1996, opening the door to a facility that will serve as the cultural heart of campus and will benefit Scott County and the region. Robert N. Wilson, a Georgetown alumnus and vice chairman of Johnson & Johnson, donated \$1 million to name the building after his wife, Anne Wright Wilson, an accomplished consultant in architectural/interior design with a longtime interest in the arts.

The building provides space for painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, printmaking and computer imaging studios, as well as classrooms and offices. It also houses one of the largest galleries in

Central Kentucky. With its ample lighting and high ceiling, the gallery can accommodate world-class exhibits.

The inaugural exhibit, on display last fall, was titled "Works on Paper: Selections From the Johnson & Johnson Corporate Art Collection." And from May 5 - 21, 1997, the college will host the nationally renowned exhibit, "Selections From the John J. Audubon Museum Collection."

Get to the art of the matter: Come visit the Anne Wright Wilson Fine Arts Building at the corner of College and Mulberry streets on the Georgetown College campus.

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