



PRACTICAL RESOURCES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

# WESTERN RECORDER

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## FOR THE RECORD

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## WMU encourages hand-in-hand missions

By David Winfrey & Joyce Martin  
News Director & Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Working hand-in-hand with God, Christians can show love to the world through local, national and international missions efforts, speakers said during the annual Woman's Missionary Union conference, April 18-19 at St. Matthews Baptist Church.

"What are you going to do with what you have?" asked national WMU President Wanda Lee. "WMU exists for one reason and for one reason only. It is to enable us to know where the church and what the church is to be about."

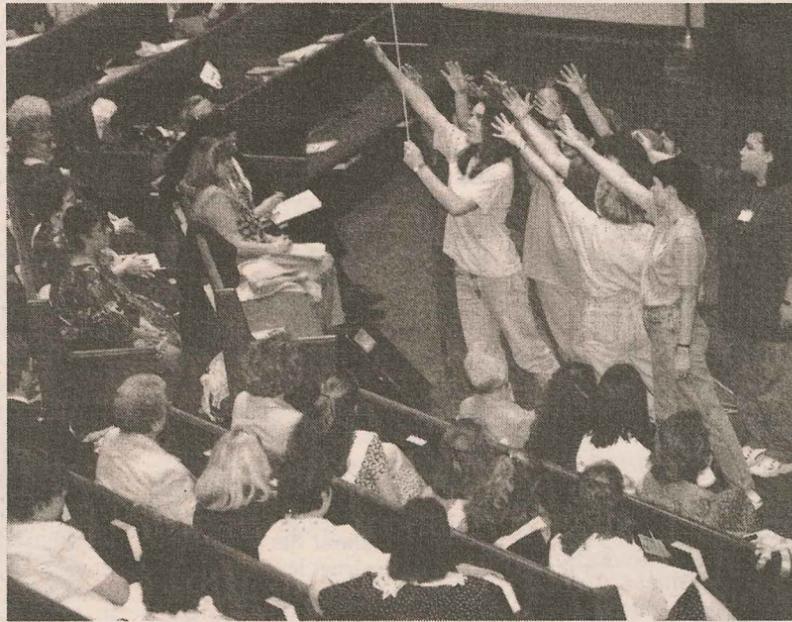
Lee encouraged the audience to discover the needs of children this year as child advocacy is the national emphasis for the Baptist women's organization.

Ministry opportunities to children include tutoring, after-school care and support for parents, speakers said.

"Not all are gifted to help juvenile delinquents, but many of us can help third graders learn to read," said Diana Garland, former dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Garland added that the third grade is when many seeds of juvenile delinquency are planted.

About 60 percent of American children currently are raised by a single parent, Garland added. "Studies show kids who grow up in tragic circumstances can make it if there is somebody in their lives who loves them and calls out God's gift in them," she said.

Using the story of God calling Moses to be his prophet, Lee said



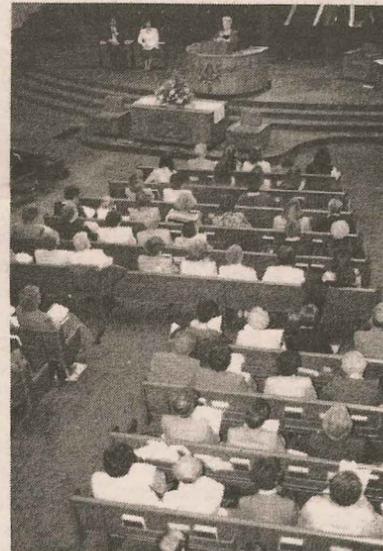
**ANNUAL MEETING** ■ Above Young women perform a drama during the Woman's Missionary Union meeting at Louisville's St. Matthews Baptist Church. ■ Right About 830 people attended the meeting.

Moses offered many objections but God wanted Moses to trust that God would be in control.

"Maybe we should learn to trust God a little more," Lee said. "When we do, I promise you will discover all the gifts and resources we need to do what God has called us to do."

Tony Hough, metropolitan missions director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, urged the audience to show compassion to get involved in missions.

"Our God says go to Ninevah,"  
□ See WMU urges ..., page 9



## Attitude & ministries key for Yellow Creek

OWENSBORO—When Wyman Copass came to Yellow Creek Baptist Church four years ago, he was impressed by the strong emphasis members placed on ministry.

"They see in scripture the model for what they're supposed to be doing," he says. "It's not that you're out there working for God. God's working through you."

This strong missions emphasis is reflected in more than a dozen ministry opportunities and strong missions giving. Last winter, the church collected about \$10,000 for the Lottie Moon Christmas offering for foreign missions—well above the \$6,000 goal.

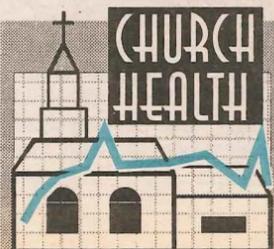
Vernon Cole, director of church growth for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, calls Yellow Creek an example of how attitude and church health go hand in hand.

In this month's installment of the Western Recorder's church health series, Cole offers some ideas for improving attitudes at a declining church or maintaining a can-do spirit at a healthy one.

□ See stories on page 8.



**SUNDAY MESSAGE** Pastor Wyman Copass said Yellow Creek Baptist Church already was involved in numerous ministries when he arrived four years ago. "I was tremendously impressed when I saw what the church was doing."



## God still works through Exodus story, prof says

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

GEORGETOWN—The biblical story of the Exodus is both a historical reality and an ongoing work of God in the world, according to Old Testament scholar Tom Smothers.

"Exodus is something God is always doing. This is how God works," said Smothers, who teaches at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Smothers used the Exodus story to frame a series of Bible studies during the Georgetown College Pastors' Conference April 14-15.

White, middle-class Southern Baptists often don't understand the importance of the Exodus story because they don't know what it means to be powerless, he said.

"The powerless of the world know this story," he said. "It's good news for them. They read it not just as a story about Israel but about them. They read it from below, not from above."

In contrast, most Southern Baptists "read it as a historical event once for all," he said. "But the powerless read it existentially and conclude that God wants to deliver us. They don't spiritualize it."

Baptist pastors "need to realize sometimes how difficult it is for us to preach the liberating news of Christ to those who perceive us to be on the side of Pharaoh," Smothers warned.

Yet by gaining a better understanding of how God worked through the Exodus, modern

□ See Smothers: God ..., page 11

Georgetown  
Pastors'  
Conference

■ More on page 10

Moving? See page 4 (0422)

# BAPTISTS

## NAMB staff taking shape as more job offers given

### Concern expressed for ethnics, blacks

The task force charged with creating the new North American Mission Board continues to defend itself against charges that the Home Mission Board's work with African-Americans and ethnics will be reduced when NAMB succeeds the HMB in June.

The HMB is one of three agencies being dissolved to form the new mission agency, which will focus on church starting and evangelism.

In an April 3-4 meeting in Nashville, the 10 members of the implementation task force heard concerns from the SBC's racial reconciliation task force, according to a Baptist Press report. The implementation task force, appointed by the SBC Executive Committee, never has held an open meeting.

The 17-member racial reconciliation task force expressed concern with NAMB's proposed structure, which eliminates the existing HMB units specializing in African-American and language mission work.

The new NAMB structure does include positions for several African-American church-planting strategists, as well as Hispanic and Anglo church-planting strategists.

Willie McPherson, HMB director of black church extension, warned during the racial reconciliation task force meeting that the NAMB structure threatens relationships established between the HMB cultural specialty departments and their counterparts on state convention staffs.

"It took decades to get to the point where we are now—that is, division status for the black church and language departments," added Leroy Gainey, associate professor of inter-cultural studies and Christian education at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in California.

"The dismantling of that would be just horrendous—not only in terms of getting work started but just the perception that this is not important, and at a time when ethnic and African-American churches are a growth area," said Gainey.

However, John Yarbrough, pastor of First Baptist Church in Perry, Ga., and chairman of the implementation task force, issued a statement that declared: "African-American and ethnic ministry is going to be a strategic part of NAMB's ministry."

Also, during the final meeting of the HMB trustee board April 16, trustees who have guided the HMB's work in the past approved a resolution encouraging the implementation task force to increase "personnel, missionaries and monies spent" on SBC work among ethnics and African-Americans.

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

ATLANTA—Professional staff members at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board and Brotherhood Commission began learning their new assignments with the North American Mission Board last week.

About 80 people were invited to attend a one-hour meeting April 16 in which they were offered positions in the new agency, to be created in June by a merger of the HMB, Brotherhood Commission and Radio & Television Commission.

Those 80 invitees included at least 11 Brotherhood Commission staffers, who were notified two days before and given airline tickets from Memphis, Tenn., to Atlanta to attend the meeting.

The afternoon meeting was preceded by a morning chapel service in which Tennessee pastor Adrian Rogers spoke about the dangers of "murmuring against leaders."

About 50 professional staff members from the HMB have not been offered positions with NAMB. Of those, a few are retiring but most remain in limbo.

According to HMB spokesman Marty King, some of those as yet uninformed could be alternate choices for positions that have been offered to someone else first.

"We have been told there is a large group of people who are alternates for positions," King explained. "So they're making offers first to these people who were in the meeting yesterday. We've been told they have alternates for every position."

In addition to the 80 existing HMB and Brotherhood staff members already offered jobs, the implementation task force overseeing creation of the new agency reportedly is offering jobs to about 40 people outside the existing agencies' staffs.

Existing staff members offered

positions have five days to accept or reject the offers. Apparently, no professional staff members offered new positions will qualify for severance benefits if they reject the jobs offered. Severance benefits are available only to those terminated or those offered positions at a reduced pay level. Those attending the April 16 meeting were told no one in that group would receive a reduced salary, even if the new position offered is at a lower level than the person's current position.

While some employees were offered positions similar to their current positions, others were assigned to entirely different areas. Some HMB employees described the effect as "fruit-basket turnover."

Likewise, some work units appear barely changed while others will see extensive staff changes.

For example, the HMB's chaplaincy division, which will become a sub-unit of a new ministry evangelism division, lost only one of its five professional staff positions; the remaining four will be filled by those currently holding similar positions.

On the other hand, while the HMB's associational missions division will have an expanded number of positions in the new structure, only two of the division's five professional staffers were offered positions April 16.

The new mission board's flagship magazine apparently will include no editors from the existing staffs of the HMB's MissionsUSA, the Brotherhood Commission's MissionsToday or the RTVC's Beam magazines. None of those editors were offered positions April 16.

Those directing staff selection for the new agency changed procedures for dealing with professional staff members after first notifying HMB support staff members of their fates through more than a week's worth

of one-on-one meetings to which employees were summoned with no advance notice.

In the first round of notifications, 128 HMB support staff members were offered positions with NAMB and 42 support personnel were terminated.

The new agency will employ about 165 fewer people than the three agencies combined currently employ.

An implementation task force appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee has been overseeing creation of the new mission board. That task force has held all its meetings behind closed doors and has communicated with Southern Baptists only through periodic pre-approved news releases issued through Baptist Press.

A sub-group of the task force, composed of John Yarbrough of Georgia, Bill Hogue of California and Mike Hamlet of South Carolina, has been handling personnel matters.

Yarbrough, who chairs the task force, could not be reached for comment on the staffing process.

Those expected to become trustees of the new mission board in June will meet in Atlanta April 24, where they presumably will hear a report from the committee appointed to nominate a NAMB president. The nominee is expected to be Bob Reccord, pastor of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va., and former chairman of the implementation task force.

Sometime after his nomination, Reccord presumably will announce his choices to fill five vice president positions in the new structure. However, Reccord will have no authority officially to appoint anyone until the NAMB trustee board is officially constituted June 19 and his own nomination is considered.

With additional reporting by News Director David Winfrey



"Could you pray for me? Lately, my hindsight has not been 20/20."

### BAPTIST BITS

■ **Utah Missions returned.** In their final meeting before the Home Mission Board is dissolved to create the North American Mission Board, HMB trustees voted to return Utah Missions to its founder. Utah Missions, based in Marlow, Okla., previously was an independent ministry led by John Smith. The ministry, which monitors and produces education material about Mormon doctrines, became a subsidiary of the HMB in 1991.

■ **FBC Atlanta moves.** First Baptist Church of Atlanta held its final Sunday worship service in its 68-year-old downtown facility April 6. As of April 13, all Sunday services and Sunday school classes were moved to the church's satellite location on Atlanta's northern perimeter. The 15,000-member church has planned to move out of downtown Atlanta for several years but has been unable to sell the 12-acre site. The move enables

the church to reunite downtown worshippers with those who have been attending services at the satellite location for five years.

■ **Hotel backs out.** The Wyndham Anatole Hotel in the Market Center area of Dallas has canceled its commitment of a 600-room block during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 17-19. Anyone who booked a room at the Wyndham Anatole through the Dallas Convention and Visitors Bureau will be notified of where the reservation has been transferred, said Jack Wilkerson, convention manager.

■ **Two elected at Midwestern.** Harold Poage has been named vice president for institutional advancement and Robert Vaughan has been named assistant professor of religious education at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Poage has been director of development at

Dallas Baptist University. Vaughan is minister of education at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

■ **Smith to Beeson.** Robert Smith has been named professor of preaching at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School. Smith currently teaches preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. Previously, he was a pastor for 20 years at New Mission Missionary Baptist Church in Cincinnati.

■ **Melick to Golden Gate.** Richard Melick, who stepped down as president of Criswell College because he does not hold the same view of the end-times as W.A. Criswell, has been named professor of New Testament studies at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. Melick previously was an administrator and professor at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, Tenn.

## Help wanted with welfare reform, ministry leaders told

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

LOUISVILLE—Government leaders charged with implementing welfare reform in Kentucky are open to help from anybody who cares about meeting social needs, a high-ranking official told community ministers.

"We will work with anybody in Kentucky who wants to work with us," said Sharon Perry, assistant to the secretary for the Cabinet for Families and Children.

Perry was one of four participants in a panel discussion about welfare reform during the annual Community Ministry Network national conference, held in Louisville April 11-13.

The panel also included government officials from Colorado, Indiana and Pennsylvania.

Perry appealed to Kentucky's community ministry leaders to help the state government craft creative solutions to implementing welfare reform. "We are trying many approaches," she said. "We really don't know what will work."

Under federal welfare reform enacted last year, states will begin receiving block grants, which they may administer according to their own needs.

Kentucky faces the challenge of beginning this new oversight role with a smaller pool of federal funds than the commonwealth previously received, Perry said. Other states, such

as Indiana and Colorado, effectively will have more money to spend per client because their welfare rolls have shrunk since the distribution formula was enacted.

That's not the case in Kentucky, she explained. "We do not have the windfall many states have."

That means it will be harder for Kentucky to start new welfare initiatives, Perry said.

Kentucky officials are trying several pilot projects around the state in an effort to identify what will be effective, she reported.

However, four issues create major barriers for welfare reform, Perry said: child care, health care, substance abuse and transportation.

Child care is pivotal because the

federal welfare reform act places a priority on getting welfare recipients into the workforce. Without adequate free or low-cost child care, however, most welfare recipients cannot afford to move into the low-paying jobs they are likely to get, Perry said.

The state also needs help crafting creative solutions to providing health care for the poor, treatment for substance abusers who are welfare-dependent and transportation to help welfare recipients get to and from jobs.

"Welfare reform affects everybody," Perry told the community ministers. "If we don't find a way collectively to make welfare reform work, all our communities will experience a decline in quality of living."

## Kentucky Baptists win 9 awards

Kentuckians won nine awards in the 1997 Wilmer C. Fields awards competition sponsored by Baptist Communicators Association. The annual awards were presented April 12 in Atlanta.

Robert Reeves and Dannah Prather of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children won first place in the special project or event category for "KBHC/Maryhurst Foster Care Collaboration."

Prather also swept the newsletter feature writing category with a first place for "Angela's Two Mothers Give Their All for Her," a second place for "KBHC Alumna Revisits After Nearly 40 Years" and an honorable mention for "Parents Experience Miracle of Daughter's Healing."

Pat Cole and Mauri Smith of the Western Recorder staff won first place in the single advertisement copywriting category for the Cornell Trace ad "A Home for Life."

Cole also won second place in the special print materials category for writing in a Cornell Trace insert published in the Recorder.

Joyce Sweeney Martin of the Recorder staff took second place in the newspaper feature series writing category with her series on literacy missions, "Get a Vision for Reading."

Mark Wingfield of the Recorder staff won first place in the newspaper news writing category for his story "Southern Avoids Probation" and first place in the interpretive reporting category for his series "New Faith Alignments."

## Quilters make portable hugs for children's homes residents



RICHMOND—Most kids respond the same way when they receive a new quilt, said Wanda Meadows.

"No matter how hot it is, if you give a child a quilt, he wraps himself up in it," she said.

Meadows, a member of Whitehall Baptist Mission in Richmond, is becoming an expert on kids and quilts.

Since she and her friends began their quilting mission last year, she has put dozens of quilts into the hands of boys and girls in the care of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children.

The quilters have sewn and donated 170 quilts to Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children and another five quilts to a children's mission in Brazil.

This labor of love started when the quilters made 11 quilts for young men at the Baptist youth ranch in Elizabethtown.

Meadows and fellow quilter Jean Webb said they didn't expect the boys to be so moved by the gifts.

"It was so exciting," Webb said. "It's like they all just need a hug."

Meadows agreed, comparing the quilts to God's love. It's comfort and security and warmth, and it's there at night when you're by yourself."

Every quilt has "God loves you" stitched inside and has a pocket the women fill with small gifts including guardian angel pins made from scraps of fabric.

The number of quilts they've produced surprises even Meadows and Webb.

"We thought maybe we'd do one project a year," Webb said. "But our numbers are never the same as God's. He kept leading us to other things."

The women always are asking friends, neighbors and family for unfinished quilt tops they can complete. The ministry shows no signs of slowing. The group has 13 members and meets weekly. Special work sessions are added when project deadlines near.

"I'm a slave driver," Meadows said with a laugh. "We pray for the group we're making quilts for and then we get to work."

Many of the women never had quilted prior to joining the group, but Meadows said they have learned by becoming part of a team—something she understands because she is legally blind.

"I have problems with the colors, so others help me with that," she said.

## Ministry projects planned to precede Louisville CBF meeting

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

LOUISVILLE—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship plans to use its 1997 assembly to boost missions throughout Kentucky.

Four missions projects are scheduled prior to the June 26-28 meeting at the Louisville Convention Center. They will take place in Morehead, Lexington and Louisville.

Tammy Ruckman, co-chair of the local arrangements committee, said the Fellowship hopes to attract more participants through the variety of projects. Past pre-convention efforts have centered on building Habitat for Humanity homes, she said.

"Our goal is to do missions in many regions of the state that many folks can participate in," she said. "We hope we have something for

everyone."

While most projects will be held the week of the assembly, Kentucky Baptists in Morehead will work June 16-21 with Habitat's "Hammering in the Hills" drive.

That week the group aims to build six houses in and around the eastern Kentucky city. Don Mantooth, pastor of First Baptist Church of Morehead, is the Fellowship coordinator.

The remaining projects are June 23 through noon June 26. The CBF meeting will convene the evening of June 26.

In Louisville, volunteers will help complete a mission house at St. Paul's Missionary Baptist Church, an inner-city congregation. The sponsoring church is Crestwood Baptist.

Volunteers in Louisville also will work on painting and clean-up at Jefferson Street Congregation at

Liberty. The sponsor is Highland Baptist Church. In addition to painting Jefferson Street church, volunteers will be cleaning up in the Clarksdale housing project and tending a community garden.

Lexington's Calvary Baptist Church will sponsor a pair of events. Members will teach such arts as clowning and puppetry at a creative arts day camp and host a backyard Bible club for inner city children.

In addition, the Fellowship is collecting health kits and baby items for migrant workers. The kits will be turned in at the convention.

Health kits include toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, men's deodorant, shampoo, shaving cream, disposable razors, combs and Band-Aids. They should be placed in a two-gallon, plastic resealable bag.

Baby kits should include a pack of disposable diapers for newborns and either a bottle of baby shampoo or a

can of powdered formula with iron, also in two-gallon, plastic resealable bags.

Ruckman said organizers have three goals for the projects:

■ To involve everyone who comes to the convention in missions, either through a project or by helping migrant workers.

■ To involve local churches in missions. Realistically, most projects will be done by members of churches that give to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in each city, she said.

■ To give recognition and support to work already being done by Fellowship missionaries and Fellowship-affiliated churches.

Youth groups interested in signing up for one of these projects should call the CBF's youth mission exchange at (800) 769-0210. Adults should contact Alice Marshall, chair of the missions committee, (502) 426-0618, or Ray Schnur (502) 426-5009.

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Note from Perkinses

*Ben Perkins, the 16-year-old son of Kentucky missionaries Ken and Beth Perkins, died suddenly Easter morning, as reported in an earlier issue of the Recorder. Last week, the Recorder received the following note from the Perkins family:*

It is hard to express our feelings after Ben's death. We have never hurt so much nor experienced such an outpouring of love and prayers.

The morning after Ben's homegoing we received 58 e-mail messages from more than 10 different countries and 15 states in the USA.

Ben's funeral was Saturday, April 5, at the Rosslyn Academy. You cannot imagine our joy when we received permission from the Kenyan government and the Rosslyn board of directors not only to have Ben's celebration service at Rosslyn but also to bury him there.

The school is planning a prayer memorial garden near the Rosslyn River in a beautiful grove of trees where we buried Ben. It's a place of birds, trees, prayer and quietness.

The service itself was an experience of love and worship. Speakers included Ben's campus pastor, church pastor and his Uncle Barry from California. The school's Rosslyn Singers rivaled heaven's angels with their three numbers.

Jeremy's, Ben's and Jesse's friends led in the service and in their ministry to the entire Perkins family. More than 550 people attended the service with more than 70 going home with us after the service. Beth had a back problem that was actually caused by all the hugs received during Ben's memorial service.

Friends took pictures and a full video of the service which will be a real treasure to share with all our family and friends stateside soon.

We cannot thank you enough for

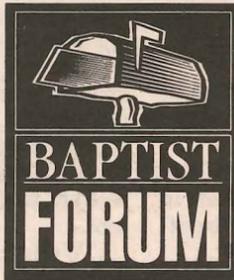
your timely and loving notes. It brought joy with the tears as we remembered our son through your kindnesses. While we celebrated Ben's strong faith in Christ, knowing he is with his Lord, we miss him terribly.

The asthma attack that killed him at 16 years was just too sudden at 1:30 a.m. Easter morning for Ben to be saved medically. He literally went from the arms of his earthly father into the arms of his Heavenly Father.

But we grieve our loss. So, we still covet your prayers and correspondence. We will leave Africa for furlough June 11. The next eight weeks will find us tying up loose ends, loving our two sons and doing all that's possible for Jeremy to have a great graduation. We are in for some tough good-byes. Thanks for your support.

*Ken and Beth Perkins  
P.O. Box 39973*

*Nairobi, Kenya, East Africa*



## Real progress?

We have been celebrating breaking the color barrier 50 years ago by Jackie Robinson, and a few days ago the triumph in golf of another African-American, Tiger Woods. There are others in Hollywood, in the music world, in the arts, in authors of best-selling books, in elected officials in state and local governments who are of another race in nearly every area of achievement by persons of color.

Yet, in the human heart of Baptists there is still exclusivity in our church life, in our social life, in our private life which favors our Caucasian majority. Let us pause to question our motives and our choices which we make from the Christ-like view of treatment of others as we wish to be treated. Surely we need to examine our consciences to see if real progress in race relations has been made in our attitude today.

*Edith Oldham  
Louisville*

## Does God cause disaster?

The recent devastating floods in Kentucky trigger again the inevitable question, "Why does God allow terrible things to happen?"

Prevailing theology is that God knew "before the foundation of the world" everything that would happen after the foundation, including knowledge of all who would be born, believe or not, and their time and mode of death—another way of insisting that God has ordained everything, since inflexible foreknowledge amounts to mandating everything, good or bad.

The pertinent question: Does God know the future; or, absent such knowledge, does he play it by ear until he ends things, sometimes intruding his presence in the world as he simply sees things unfold—and sometimes not?

Unless one believes God also knew before the foundation of the world when he would change his mind after the foundation of the world (a rather incongruous circumstance), one must conclude God changes his mind.

Many lessons from Scripture indicate this. For instance, God unmistakably decided (Genesis 6:6-8) to end mankind's existence, but changed his mind in light of Noah's righteousness.

Similarly, God decided to destroy the Israelites, his promised seed of Abraham, then rebuild a chosen people with Moses as progenitor (Exodus 32:9-14). Upon Moses' pleading, God changed his mind. Using Isaiah as his emissary, God indicated to Hezekiah (II Kings 20) that Hezekiah would not recover from his illness, but would die. Before Isaiah could even get off the property, God, answering Hezekiah's prayer, instructed Isaiah to tell Hezekiah that God not only would heal him, but also give him 15 more years of life. God changed his mind.

God unmistakably decided (Jonah 3) he would destroy the people of Nineveh, even instructing Jonah to proclaim this fact, but changed his mind when the people repented. After telling his disciples (John 7:8-10) he would not go to Jerusalem for the

## 'Jesus' film

"Celluloid Saviors" (March 25, page 10) did not include Campus Crusade's "Jesus" film. The "Jesus" film is now in 374 languages with another 200 in language production. While the four films mentioned in the article claim to have shaped America's perception of Christ, "Jesus" is having an impact around the world.

It has been said that "Jesus," based on the gospel of Luke, is the most biblically accurate film. Four hundred fifty-two missions agencies are using "Jesus," and more than 830 million people have viewed the film since its release in 1979. God has moved in the hearts of 46 million to make decisions after viewing the film.

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board is the world's largest single user of the "Jesus" film. FMB missionaries reported last year that more than 4 million people viewed films and videos, with a majority being "Jesus."

If Terry Lindvall from Regent University is correct that "film has overtaken Scripture as the major force shaping America's ideas about Jesus and the Bible," then Kentucky Baptists would do well to screen "Jesus" for themselves. Perhaps there is a new evangelistic media that has gone untapped—especially for videotape versions.

There was an interesting connection with another story in the same issue regarding low literacy rates among 1 million in Kentucky.

The Bible cannot communicate when it cannot be comprehended. The Bible read on audiocassette by Christian ministries like Hosanna or Gospel Recordings offers another option. Whether using audiocassettes, film or videotape, Kentucky Baptists have ministry tools available for sharing the Bible with their neighbors. They certainly make those old "Celluloid Saviors" appear flimsy indeed.

*Mark Snowden  
Foreign Mission Board  
Richmond, Va.*

Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus, apparently changing his mind (the only alternative being that he lied), went.

God is dynamic, rather than static, intruding himself, unplanned, into mankind's affairs as he sees fit. Many believers are uncomfortable with this circumstance, since facing God's fluidity means taking greater responsibility for their lives—no more of that "Well, it was his time to go," or "God's will be done."

If this were not the case, intercessory prayers would be silly. Christ certainly was not being silly in Gethsemane when he prayed in full belief that God could, and might, reverse himself.

Has God limited himself to not knowing what a believer will be doing tomorrow? Yes; otherwise, people would be mere automatons/robots incapable of personal thought or action. God looks for the grand surprise from believers, not dull inevitability accruing to a cruel divine charade. God is not a cosmic puppeteer, a creator of the unchangeable or the planner of catastrophe.

*James L. Clark  
Lexington*

## SINGLES

## Sex and the single Christian

By James Stillwell

*Q. If church is supposed to be a safe place to voice our questions, why do we never seem to hear an honest discussion there about sexuality? Single adults need moral guidance without the patronizing we sometimes hear from those who are married.*

*A. Married people within the church need to take compassionate notice of*



singles within the body of Christ. There is the temptation to deny one's own problems while pointing out the failures of others.

By seeking answers within the church, you reject the sexual wasteland offered by the world and expressed through its media. You also are correct in asking for spiritual guidance born out of reflection on God's word.

Single adults have a right to sexual information from a biblical context. In today's world, what you don't know not only can hurt you, it can kill you. Churches need people with both sexual integrity and compassionate empathy for discussion of these issues. The very life of Jesus Christ is testimony that one's sexual being as a single adult can be affirmed as both holy and human.

Scripture does not shy away from discussion of sexual brokenness. The story of the rape of Tamar in King David's family parallels the often unspoken sexual violence with which singles have to deal. Our churches must be a place where people can process such pain in a redemptive way.

Grace and guidance are held in proper tension in the writings of the Apostle Paul, who deals with both married and single sexual issues in 1 Corinthians. In his writing to the Thessalonians, he steers the Christian single toward holy relationships. We also can take lessons from Jesus in the encounters with single adults recorded in the Gospel of John. In chapter 4, the woman at the well is pointed toward redemptive hope. In chapter 8, he offers to the sexually judged words of grace which offer both a fresh start and decisive moral guidance.

The time has passed for condescending attitudes toward unmarried people. Real issues can be aired within the context of the grace-full and strong love of Jesus Christ.

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

## HE SAID/SHE SAID

### Spontaneous birthday picnic was loaded with sweet & sour

**HESAI**



Mark Wingfield

It's taken me years to figure this out, but I've finally come to the sad conclusion that our family just doesn't do birthdays well—at least not for grown-ups.

For example, last week was Alison's birthday. This year it fell on a Wednesday, so we had to celebrate on a different day to avoid a conflict with church. Since Alison and I both would be home only Tuesday night, we planned to take the whole family out for

a big birthday dinner. I had arranged my mental schedule accordingly.

But Alison and her dad, who was visiting, decided to eat a big lunch Tuesday while the boys were in their long day at preschool. She called me Tuesday afternoon to say she didn't think they'd be hungry enough for a birthday dinner. And besides, she said, it's a beautiful day outside so why didn't we just go on a picnic.

I could have done a picnic. I could have planned a great birthday picnic. But it's hard to plan a great birthday picnic on zero notice, especially when the birthday girl announces she wants deli items for her picnic and all the better delis in town already have closed for the day.

So as 6 p.m. approached, I determined to walk to the Kroger a few blocks from our house and get the necessary items from their deli. Of course, this turned out to be the one day of the decade the deli counter was closed for remodeling.

So I trudged home empty-handed, got in the car and drove to a fast-food restaurant that sells chicken salad and side dishes. We loaded up the picnic basket and walked to a nearby playground.

Alison was perfectly happy, but I was not. Because I had not been able to do what I thought was going to make her happy, I refused to acknowledge she might actually be happy.

And besides, if any husband had pulled that kind of last-minute switch on his wife, you would have heard about the results on the evening news.

**SHESAI**



Alison Wingfield

For the record, Mark was the one who had conflicts every other night of the week, not me. I thought we had the flexibility to go out either Tuesday or Thursday night. But, of course, Mark was going to be gone Thursday night also.

I was trying to make everyone's life easier, not harder.

And, to be honest, the thought of going to a fairly nice restaurant with two 4-year-olds was not appealing. I enjoy

going out to eat—without having to contend with two kids in tow.

Despite Mark's perspective, this birthday was much better than many. Usually, one or the other of us is sick on either our own birthday or on our other half's birthday. Year before last I remember fixing one of Mark's favorite meals, and he couldn't even taste it because of a sinus infection.

And when one of us hasn't been sick, Mark inevitably has been out of town.

So I thought a thrown-together picnic with contented children who could play and not disturb anybody was a good birthday celebration. Especially since we had our ice cream cake and could taste it too.

One of the best birthday presents was having my dad here to help celebrate. It doesn't always matter what you do, but who you are with that counts.

Of course, Mark still owes me a nice dinner.

## Israel should value religious liberty

If anybody ought to know the value of religious liberty, it is Israel. Here is a nation with an age-old history of suffering restriction and oppression at the hands of those who valued neither life nor liberty.

Yet some Israeli lawmakers now apparently want to do unto others what has been done unto them. A controversial bill under consideration in the Israeli Knesset would strike a fatal blow to democracy and religious liberty in Israel.

Under this bill, jail terms would be meted out to anyone convicted of attempting to persuade someone to convert to another religion. Jail terms also could be handed down to "whoever possesses contrary to the law or publishes things in which there is an inducement for religious conversion."

That pretty much rules out the New Testament.

The ramifications of this law being enacted are enormous. First, Christian missionaries no longer could live or work in Israel. Second, the small communities of Jews who affirm Jesus as Messiah would be virtually expelled. Third, it would become dangerous for Christians from other parts of the world to visit the Holy Land.

Under the vague wording of this bill, anyone who carries a New Testament onto Israeli soil could be imprisoned, as could anyone who speaks the name of Jesus as Messiah.

Clearly, it is hard for Americans to understand the worldview of Orthodox Jews living in Israel. Even American Jews often have trouble thinking like Orthodox Jews living in Israel. Added to that, this legislation come amid battles between various factions of the Jewish community that few outside Judaism fully understand. So any criticism we offer of Israeli policy could be perceived as uninformed or inappropriate.

However, Americans and Christians have valid reasons for expressing concern about such outlandish legislation in Israel. After all, Israel has had no greater friend in the world community than the United States.

And just as it is the duty of Americans to champion

democracy around the globe, so it should be the duty of Baptists to continue to stand for religious liberty for all people. That is a major part of what it means to be a Baptist.

Religious liberty should not be a threat to Judaism, just as it should not be a threat to Christianity. Religion that is coerced is not authentic religion.

The irony is that just as some Israeli lawmakers are attempting to silence any Christian witness in Israel, the Israel Ministry of Tourism continues to woo American Christians to visit the Holy Land.

A current tourism campaign aimed at the American Christian community uses the tag line: "Israel: No One Belongs Here More than You."

Which side of the Israeli government's mouth should Americans believe?

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has the political clout to stop this dangerous piece of legislation in its tracks, yet so far he has not even spoken against it. Why not?

Passage of this bill or anything similar to it not only could result in devastating financial consequences for the Middle East but could become a major impediment to U.S. relations with Israel. The prime minister and members of the Knesset should not forget that Israel's most ardent supporters in the United States come from the evangelical Christian community.

Our Baptist representatives and other Christian brothers and sisters in Israel are pleading with Americans to write Israeli officials in protest of this proposed legislation. If you are concerned about religious liberty, if you are concerned about U.S. aid to Israel, please take a moment to express your opinion.

The bill number is S757-1996.

The Knesset has a World Wide Web site on the Internet in English, where mail can be easily sent to every Knesset member and other government officials. The address is [http://www.knesset.gov.il/knesset/mk/14/mkindex\\_eng.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/knesset/mk/14/mkindex_eng.htm)

— Mark Wingfield

## It's a fixer-upper

By Carey Newman

My friend was buoyant. His own personal devotional time (he had been praying through the Psalms) had led him to a new insight about his practice of Christianity. Because he always had understood salvation as dealing primarily (even exclusively) with the removal of guilt, he never had fully enjoyed the dynamic activity of the Spirit in his life. He also confessed that he never could understand why God's Spirit continued to work in his life. My friend looked at me and exclaimed: "For the first time I see the connection between forgiveness and my spiritual life."

The Bible describes salvation in two main ways. First, the Bible teaches salvation is a change in relationship between God and the believer. For example, God "justifies" the sinner (depicting salvation as a legal relationship between the judge and the accused); God "reconciles" the estranged (depicting salvation as the restoring of a friendship); God "adopts" the orphan (depicting salvation as be-

coming a member of a family); and God "frees" or "redeems" the slave (depicting salvation as release from servitude or captivity).

But that is only half the story. The Bible also teaches that salvation is something that happens to and occurs within the believer. That is, God changes and transforms the believer.

For example, in salvation the believer passes from "death" to "life" (a change in existence); the believer "puts off" the garments of the "old life" and "puts on" Christ (a change in nature); and the believer is cured of "blindness" and receives "sight" (a change in perception). Salvation restores our relationship with God and changes us.

Two summers ago, Leanne and I made the decision to finish-out our basement. It was in pretty pitiful shape. A house constructed in 1941 had accrued quite a lot of interesting stuff in its basement. Moreover, it was poorly lit and possessed a certain aroma—I think the word is "dank." There were even certain portions of the basement I refused to explore (chiefly the coal room), for I was convinced (and

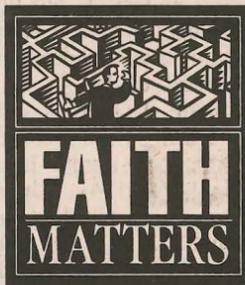
still firmly believe) that monsters lived there.

We acquired an architect and contractor; the architect provided the vision, the contractor provided the technical know-how. Almost overnight studs went up and rooms took their shape. Before the summer was out, the basement was transformed into a large TV room, a study, a play room, a bathroom and a laundry room. Numerous overhead lights chased away the darkness, while new vents cured the smell.

All monsters were summarily evicted. We now spend more time in the basement than in any other room in our house.

No doubt, salvation changes our relationship with God. But to understand salvation as simply or exclusively as forgiveness misses that God is in the business of renovating our lives. Through the activity of the Spirit of the risen Jesus, God reclaims that which has sat unused or misused. He makes warm and inviting the places where we rarely venture out of fear of what we might find. God wants to make our hearts his family room.

I congratulated my friend on his discovery: In God's hands we are becoming new creations. *Salvation is at one and the same time a change in our relationship with God and the complete transformation of our lives from the inside out.*



## Supreme Court studies aid program in religious schools

By Matthew Gamber  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Attorneys for the U.S. Justice Department and the city of New York have told the Supreme Court that the justices made the wrong decision 12 years ago when they barred public school teachers from entering religious schools to teach remedial programs in English and math.

The immediate issue in what some say could be a pivotal church-state case is how so-called Title I federal education funds can be used. The funds go to local public school districts to provide supplementary programs for economically disadvantaged and underachieving students whether in public, private or religious schools.

Equally important, the justices

could choose to use the case—*Agostini vs. Felton*—to provide new criteria in the way decisions involving separation of church and state are handed.

Groups such as the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission have petitioned the court to do just that.

The case is a challenge to the court's ruling in the 1985 case *Aguilar vs. Felton*. The court said public school teachers could provide remedial help to parochial school students, but could not do so inside religious schools.

New York and parents of parochial school students challenged the ruling, arguing compliance with the *Aguilar* decision makes it too expensive to cover all students needing the aid and provides inferior education to students in religious schools.

Since the *Aguilar* ruling, New York has operated a fleet of mini-vans outside religious schools that Paul Crotty, corporation counsel for New York, told the nine justices were "noisy, cramped with 10 students and their teacher and without bathrooms or storage space."

Acting U.S. Solicitor General Walter Dellinger argued that the court could overturn its earlier decision without any major revisions to its previous church-state rulings.

Justice Antonin Scalia asked Dellinger where the line should be drawn between providing assistance for supplementary education and regular education within religious schools.

"What's distinct between a remedial and a regular subject?" asked Scalia, "Is there no bright line?"

Dellinger responded that Title I

never was meant to raise the question of taxpayer support for regular education in religious schools and the program was meant solely as a support to benefit low-income and needy children.

Arguing in favor of the *Aguilar* ruling, Stanley Geller of the National Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty said allowing public school teachers to provide education inside parochial schools would violate the Constitution's provision separating church and state.

Geller did not argue against parochial school students receiving federal benefits, but insisted they should receive the aid at "religiously neutral sites."

A decision on the case is not expected until near the end of the term in early July.

## Baptists, Catholics & Mormons up as mainlines still declining

NEW YORK (RNS)—Membership in mainline Protestant denominations is down, but Mormon, Roman Catholic and Southern Baptist membership increased by about a quarter of a million between 1994 and 1995, according to the National Council of Churches' "1997 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches."

The Yearbook, the most authoritative source of church statistics for the United States and Canada, reported that overall mainline denominations—liberal denominations with predominantly white memberships—continued to lose members, as they have the past three decades.

The newly reported 2 percent loss is smaller than past losses and suggests membership figures may be stabilizing, the Yearbook reported. "But it should not be read as an indication that the mainline denominations are no longer declining," it said.

The Yearbook also reported that, in general, church income increased, even in denominations with decreased membership. The Presbyterian Church (USA), for example, lost 1 percent of its members but reported increased giving of nearly 3 percent.

The Southern Baptist Convention gained 49,236 members between 1994 and 1995, and Roman Catholic membership increased by 89,849. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or Mormons, increased 2.39 percent, gaining 98,400 members.

The Yearbook reported that more than half—54.56 percent—of all U.S. church members belong to just three denominations: The Roman Catholic Church, the Southern Baptist Convention and the United Methodist Church.

The top 10 U.S. religious denominations and their membership are:

- Roman Catholic Church, 60.3 million.
- Southern Baptist Convention, 15.7 million.
- United Methodist Church, 8.5 million.
- National Baptist Convention USA Inc., 8.2 million.
- Church of God in Christ, 5.5 million.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 5.2 million.
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 4.7 million.
- Presbyterian Church (USA), 3.7 million.
- National Baptist Convention of America Inc., 3.5 million.
- African Methodist Episcopal Church, 3.5 million.

## Judge: Chaplains' sermons illegally banned

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A federal judge has ruled the U.S. military violated the free speech and religious rights of chaplains when it barred them from preaching in favor of a ban on a controversial late-term abortion procedure.

"The chaplains in this case seek to preach only what they would tell their non-military congregants," wrote U.S. District Judge Stanley Sporkin in a 36-page opinion filed April 7. "There is no need for heavy-handed censorship, and any attempt to impinge on the plaintiffs' constitutional and legal rights is not acceptable."

His ruling is a victory for two military chaplains—a Catholic priest and a rabbi—who were joined in their lawsuit by a Catholic naval

officer and his wife and the Muslim American Military Association.

Sporkin, whose court is in Washington, D.C., also issued a preliminary injunction preventing the military from barring chaplains from urging congregants to contact members of Congress, who are again discussing a ban on what opponents call "partial-birth" abortions.

The House passed a bill March 20 banning the procedure and the matter is pending in the Senate.

Kevin Hasson, the chaplains' attorney and president of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, praised the judge's decision.

"This was the first time in U.S. history that the government dared to try to censor chaplains' preaching," said Hasson, whose Washington-

based organization is a public interest law firm specializing in protecting free expression rights of religious groups. "The court has made sure it will be the last."

Justice Department spokesman Joe Krovisky declined comment when asked if the department would appeal the decision.

The military had said in court papers that chaplains could preach about the abortion issue in general, but more specific discussions would allow politics to jeopardize order and discipline.

The military also argued that recommendations by the chaplains might be considered an order by congregants of lower rank.

The judge rejected those arguments.

## Congress restricts federal funds from suicides

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly April 10 to bar the use of federal funds to pay for doctor-assisted suicides.

Supporters of the measure said it was necessary to pass the bill before any court decision legalizes doctor-assisted suicide. The Supreme Court currently is considering two cases in which lower courts have ruled there is such a right.

The measure passed 398-16.

"Our precious health care money ought to be used to improve life, not end it," said Rep. Thomas Bliley, R-Va., during debate about the bill.

Among those lobbying most vigorously for the bill's passage was the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

In a letter to members of Congress released just a day before the vote, Richard Doerflinger, the bishops' top official on the issue, said religious, medical and disability rights leaders all support the bill.

"The bill's central goal is both modest and urgently necessary: ensuring that the federal government will play no part in legitimizing and institutionalizing assisted suicide as a response to health problems," Doerflinger said.

He pointed out that the bill has a "clear and limited scope" that prevents the use of federal funds for health programs to support and facilitate assisted suicide, but it does not regulate what states may do with their funds.

Doerflinger said the bill would not affect other issues such as abortion, withdrawal of medical treatment or the use of drugs to alleviate pain for the dying.

Opponents of the bill criticized it as a do-nothing measure that addresses a problem that does not exist because assisted suicide is not legal.

## Jewish group seeks study of 10 Commandments judge

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (RNS)—The American Jewish Congress is calling on an Alabama state government agency to investigate the conduct of a circuit court judge to determine whether non-Christians appearing in his court can get a fair trial.

The group made the request of the Alabama Judicial Inquiry Commission as 20,000 people rallied in Montgomery, Ala., April 12 in support of Judge Roy Moore and his practice of opening court with prayer by a Protestant minister and his display of the

Ten Commandments in his courtroom. Both practices have been challenged by the American Civil Liberties Union, making Moore's cause a national one with a high priority among some conservative Christian groups. Alabama state courts have ordered Moore to stop the prayers and to remove the plaque. The plaque issue is before the Alabama Supreme Court.

American Jewish Congress members called for an investigation after remarks were attributed to Moore that

his "duty under the (U.S.) Constitution is to acknowledge the Judeo-Christian God, not the gods of other faiths. We are not a nation founded upon the Hindu god or Buddha."

In a letter to Betty Blow, secretary of the inquiry commission, the group said an investigation of Moore was necessary "to restore faith and trust in the (Alabama) judicial system. ... No Buddhist, Hindu or Muslim can walk into Judge Moore's courtroom with confidence that he will not meet prejudice."

## Professors claim 'new Gospel' discovery

LAWRENCE, Kan. (RNS)—A University of Kansas professor says he and a colleague have identified an ancient document containing portions of conversations between Jesus and his disciples.

The manuscript, written in Coptic, uses Greek letters, probably was produced in the first or second century, said Paul Mirecki, an associate professor of religious studies.

Mirecki has been editing and translating the document with Charles Hedrick, a professor of religious studies at Southwest Missouri State University in Springfield, Mo.

Mirecki, a specialist in ancient writing, said the 15-page document appears to be a fragment of a larger manuscript. Based on its unorthodox themes, he speculated the larger document might have been burned by protectors of the emerging Christian faith.

The manuscript recounts a conversation between Jesus and his disciples that is said to have taken place following Jesus' resurrection, according to Mirecki.

The document emphasizes individual faith and knowledge over in-



**LOST GOSPEL?** William Brashear shows a Christian text identified as a "lost Gospel" that contains conversations between Jesus and his disciples. (Reuters photo)

stitutional religion, Mirecki added. He said it probably was written by a group of Gnostics, a term applied to members of various non-orthodox, early Christian sects.

Mirecki said he came across the manuscript at Berlin's Egyptian Museum in 1991. Hedrick independently found the document at the muse-

um. The two have collaborated since 1995.

Mirecki said that apart from the New Testament's four Gospels, scholars recognize approximately six other lost Gospels that detail Jesus' teachings. The Gospel of Thomas, discovered in Egypt in 1945, was the last such text to be identified.

## Iceland missions overtures by FMB getting warm reception

By Wally Poor  
SBC Foreign Mission Board

REYKJAVIK, Iceland (BP)—God used the burning bush to call Moses, but would he use the Internet to communicate with Southern Baptists? Maybe.

When Joe Bruce began to think about Iceland and Greenland as possible Southern Baptist mission fields, he asked Frank Johnson to check "chat rooms" on the Internet to see if anyone in cyberspace shared their interest.

Bruce directs the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's work in Middle America and Canada.

Johnson, Bruce's associate, found plenty of interest and enthusiasm in the chat rooms. He also learned that although 90 percent of Icelanders claim membership in the state church, a meager 1.5 percent attend services regularly. He also learned Greenland and Iceland have little evangelical Christian work taking place.

Bruce and Johnson decided to visit both countries to survey the needs and opportunities for mission work. Before they left, a retired Southern Baptist missionary told Bruce that his

daughter and son-in-law were being transferred to Iceland. A Tennessee Baptist also called to ask who could go to Iceland to help his daughter who had married an Icelander and had started a Bible study and Sunday school in her home.

When Bruce and Johnson arrived in Greenland, they found representatives from Campus Crusade there trying to advance a project to put the "Jesus" film into Greenlandic. Bruce had determined before going that using the "Jesus" film would be a good strategy for working in the expansive, barren land.

Long winter nights and a dearth of videos in Greenlandic insure the film will be watched often. Bruce committed \$5,000 to the project. Translating the film to Icelandic also is a goal.

In Iceland, "every one of the contacts we made within the small evangelical community repeated the Macedonian call, 'Please come over and help us,'" Bruce said.

"It seems that from all these seemingly coincidental circumstances, God is moving us to join him in what he wants to do in Iceland and Greenland. We are excited about the possibilities for ministry there," Bruce said.

## 340 Muslims killed after Mecca fire

MECCA, Saudi Arabia (RNS)—More than 340 Muslims were killed and more than 1,000 were injured April 15 after a fire swept through an encampment of pilgrims outside Mecca.

The fire broke out around noon at the pilgrims' temporary camp on the plains of Mina. High winds and 104-degree temperatures helped the fire spread quickly to 70,000 tents.

Witnesses said most of the dead were trampled to death in the panic as thousands tried to escape the flames.

Saudi authorities used helicopters and 300 fire engines to fight the blaze. TV reports showed the pandemonium in the camp as thousands of white-robed pilgrims tried to escape. Witnesses said most of the dead were from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

### WORLD VIEW

■ **BWA seeking food for Bulgaria.** Baptist World Aid, the relief arm of the Baptist World Alliance, has launched a special appeal to provide food for Bulgaria, where severe economic conditions have led to hunger and suffering, particularly among the elderly and poor. The Bulgarian government recently relaxed regulations that allowed only the government and its agencies to receive food supplies.

■ **Germany to brand Scientology-run companies.** The German government has announced it will identify companies owned by Scientologists with the letter "S" in employment office data banks, saying potential employees and job-seekers have a right to such information. The German government and the Scientologists have been engaged in a long-running feud. The government contends Scientology is a dangerous cult and the Scientologists have likened government harassment to the Nazi persecution of Jews.

■ **Bishop decries persecution.** At least 46 Roman Catholic missionaries were killed last year, and persecution of Christians continues to be a problem in many parts of the world, Archbishop Theodore McCarrick of Newark, N.J., said recently. The archbishop said most of the killings were in Africa. He cited Zaire, Algeria and Burundi as especially dangerous for church personnel.

■ **Tutu says cancer has spread.** Retired Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu has announced that he has been told by his doctors in Cape Town, South Africa, that his prostate cancer had spread and that he will undergo radiation and hormone therapy in an effort to treat it.

■ **99 percent of Brazilians believe in God.** Ninety-nine percent of Brazilians believe in God, according to a survey taken Easter week, but 57 percent of the 1,998 respondents said they had not been to a church or religious building that week. Of those surveyed, 69 percent report a belief in heaven, but only 32 percent anticipate they will get there. Forty-four percent believe in hell, according to the survey.

■ **Israeli cricket team protested.** Police in Malaysia used water cannons recently to disperse 700 Muslim protesters who opposed the government's decision to allow the Israeli team to play in an international cricket tournament. The Israel-Argentina match was not affected because organizers changed its location at the last minute. Anti-Israel protesters have disrupted the International Cricket Council Trophy tournament three times since competition began last month.

■ **China detains eight church leaders.** Chinese government officials have detained eight of the most important Protestant leaders of China's underground house-church movement, according to the Puebla Program on Religious Freedom. The most well-known figure arrested was Peter Xiu, a leader of the Wilderness house church network, which is said to have 4 million members and is believed to be the biggest house church movement in China.

## Priest: Stealing sometimes OK

LONDON (RNS)—A Church of England priest has come under fire for publicly proclaiming that stealing is OK—as long as it's only from big corporations.

John Papworth's Robin Hood approach to the eighth commandment prompted a quick rejoinder from Church of England officials. "As far as we are concerned, the command-

ment is quite clear: "Thou shalt not steal," a church spokesman told the *London Daily Telegraph*.

Papworth made his controversial comment first to a police consultative committee and then repeated it on a BBC radio program.

While it is wrong to steal from individuals or small neighborhood stores, mega-stores that run little stores out of business are another matter, he said.

"These faceless giant stores are exploiting vulnerable people by firing off a barrage of publicity leading them to shelves filled with easily accessible goods. ... Shoplifters stealing from supermarkets are not breaking the commandment ... because these giant stores are impersonal things without souls," said Papworth, 75.



Papworth



**HOT THREADS** Investigators say an electrical short circuit may have been responsible for the fire in the cathedral housing the famed Shroud of Turin. The cathedral in Turin, Italy, was heavily damaged in a fire April 11, but firefighters managed to save the linen cloth some Christians believe is the burial shroud of Jesus. Firefighters hammered through the four layers of bulletproof glass protecting the urn containing the 14-foot-long piece of linen and other fire personnel poured water on the vessel to keep it cool.

## Yellow Creek offers variety of ministries

### About this series

This is the sixth installment in a year-long series on church health in Kentucky. This series is being coordinated with a church growth research project conducted by the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Churches featured represent a sampling of the churches that participated in the research project. Churches participating in the project were chosen through a random sampling method. A smaller segment then was isolated for more detailed research. Many more healthy, growing churches could be presented than space allows in this series.

By David Winfrey  
News Director

OWENSBORO—New members at Yellow Creek Baptist Church won't have to look far to find an opportunity to work on one of the churches' ministries.

Able to wield a hammer? Brotherhood is looking for people to construct church buildings.

Have a heart for the poor? The food pantry could use more supplies and staff.

Love children? Locally, there's the weekday early education program for preschoolers. Plus, Woman's Missionary Union regularly travels with a van load of clothes to Oneida Baptist Institute.

Too young? Nonsense. Last summer, six seniors traveled to Nicaragua to do missions.

"Almost all of them have come back and remained in a vein of ministry in one way or another," Youth Minister Tony Rodgers said with a smile.

The membership's collective heart for missions is one of the church's main characteristics, said Pastor Wyman Copass.

It's also one of the traits that flagged Yellow Creek as a "healthy" church in recent research by the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"Yellow Creek is a different kind of church, and I really can't tell you what it is," said Copass, who came to the church about four years ago.

"I was tremendously impressed when I saw what the church was doing," he said.

Yellow Creek has a strong nucleus of laypeople, said Jim Spaulding, director of missions for the Owensboro area. "They're involved physi-



**SOUND THE CALL** Yellow Creek Baptist Church's hand bell choir plays during a recent Sunday morning worship service. The music department leads an annual Easter program called the Living Cross. This year, it drew more than 2,200 people.

cally and spiritually."

Staff and observers agreed that while some churches become healthy after the arrival of a new pastor or other leader, Yellow Creek has a tradition of health that predates current leadership.

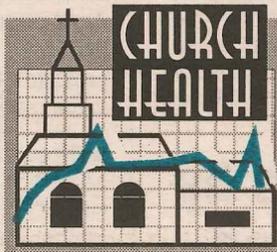
"I've been here going on 13 years, and that has been the pattern," Spaulding said.

Copass noted that ministry projects are as likely to be developed by members as by staff.

"There are a lot of areas where you can get involved," he said. "I think our (staff's) biggest constructive effort is to get out of the way and let it happen."

Rodgers said the church's goal through ministry is simply to imitate Jesus.

"He didn't just teach. His lifestyle strongly illustrates proactive ministry. We try to convey that here," he said.



## Church attitude and health are directly related, Cole says

By David Winfrey  
News Director

Healthy churches are filled with members who have positive, healthy attitudes, said the Kentucky Baptist Convention's director of church growth.

"It's a self-esteem issue," said Vernon Cole, who studied Kentucky Bap-

tist churches to determine the characteristics of healthy congregations.

That research has been the basis for an ongoing series of articles in the Western Recorder and will be the focus of a Church Health Summit Oct. 10-11.

Cole noted that members of Yellow Creek Baptist Church reflect a positive attitude that has helped them integrate a range of generations and new and established residents in the community. "They're able to reach them because of the optimism that they have."

Pastor Wyman Copass said he knew the church had a positive outlook when he was considering being its pastor.

As a pastoral candidate for the church, Copass asked to see the minutes from the past 10 years of business meetings. "I found out through that that in their doing the business of the church they seemed to have a good spirit."

That spirit has continued as both leaders and staff continue to trust each other, he said.

"I have not been in a finance com-

mittee meeting in two years," he said, adding that he knows the leaders have the congregation's best interest at heart.

Cole said the relationship between attitude and health is like the chicken and the egg. Either can precede the other, but they're definitely related.

Conversely, a stagnant or declining church emits a negative attitude to the place and you kind of get the feeling."

Plateaued or stable churches can start focusing inwardly and lose track of the outreach needs in the community, Cole said.

"It is very easy as a church moves into its middle-age stage to become contented with programs and decision-making processes that don't relate to the younger generations," he said.

As churches get out of sync with their communities, attendance declines and members can feel defeated, Cole said.

Churches with poor attitudes need a leader who can jump-start renewal in the congregation, he said.

## Others pick up mobile home ministry after leader's death

OWENSBORO—Don Bratcher had just finished preaching the Wednesday night service at Yellow Creek Baptist Church before he died of a heart attack April 2.

As mission pastor of Yellow Creek's trailer park ministry, Bratcher had directed a variety of services for the 300 families living in the community.

During his 2 1/2 years there, he and others offered meals, vacation Bible school and tutoring.

About 10 volunteers directed Royal Ambassadors and Girls in Action activities for the boys and girls.

The mission congregation averages about 35 in attendance. They meet in a double-wide chapel on which church members put a steeple.

One woman saw the men building the steeple and having so much fun that she went over and started talking to Bratcher, recounted Tony Rodgers, youth minister for Yellow Creek.

Bratcher witnessed to her and her daughter, leading both to accept Jesus as their personal Savior. The mother was baptized shortly before dying in a car accident, Rodgers said.

After Bratcher's death, members have pitched in to keep the ministry going. The Brotherhood's lay revival team currently is directing worship services, Rodgers said.

**SUNDAY SCHOOL** George Stewart leads discussion for Yellow Creek's young adult class, one of the church's fastest growing classes. "I think it's mainly because we're having fun studying the word of Christ," Stewart said.



# KENTUCKY

## WMU urges hand-in-hand missions, child advocacy

Continued from page 1

Hough said, recalling the story of Jonah. "But we say they are dirty, immoral, don't fit the church's agenda or our agenda."

Jonah sought to get lost in the world of lost people, Hough noted. But God had created the places and knew where to find Jonah and call him again to work in ministry.

"God says, 'You have your agenda. What about mine?'" he said, adding that God is calling Kentucky Baptists to work in several "Ninevahs".

This year, about 24,000 mostly Hispanic migrants will come to Kentucky in need of education, nutrition, housing and language skills, Hough said.

"The Lord God cries out to us, 'Should I not have compassion? Have I not taught you to have compassion?'" Hough said.

About one-third of America lives in apartments or other multi-housing communities, and 95 percent of those are unchurched, Hough said.

In the field of child advocacy, Hough said the need for services goes beyond the issues addressed by the Arkansas church that shut down its day care. "This issue is not about mothers with careers, but this issue is about kids with fears and tears," he said.

In a brief appearance, Gov. Paul Patton praised WMU for its emphasis on children's issues.

He also signed a proclamation declaring May 31 to be "Kentucky for Kids Day."

That day, up to 76 agencies and denominations will meet on the Capitol grounds in Frankfort to promote ministries and services for children, said Julie Keith, Kentucky WMU Acteen director.

Travis Collins, pastor of Mt. Washington Baptist Church and a former missionary to Nigeria, told the audience that missions is bigger than self-interest, human boundaries or human activity.

"Try to get up a trip to Russia, it's 'Let's go.' Try to get a trip to downtown Louisville, and lots of folks are kind of busy that day," Collins said.

"Missions isn't easy, but the stakes are so high that we have to move beyond our self-interests," he said. "God help us when we rely more on our resources—on our offerings even—on our planning session than we do on God, for missions is a lot bigger than human activity."

The two-day conference drew at least 836 registered WMU participants. An additional 356 Girls in Action attended a simultaneous meeting, hearing messages from missionaries and other leaders. Next year's meeting will be April 24-25 at Westport Road Baptist Church in Louisville.

President Peggy Hicks, a member of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville, was re-elected for the 1997-98 term.

Kathleen Hall, a member of Stanford Baptist Church in Stanford was elected vice president, and Joyce Thompson, a member of First Baptist Church of Morganfield, was re-elected secretary.

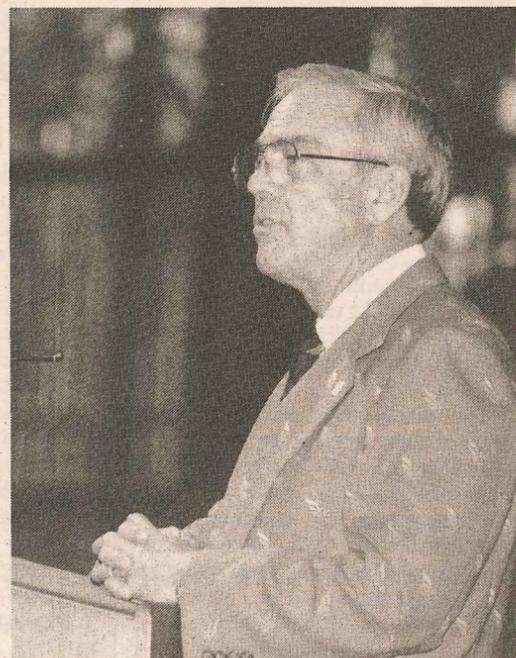
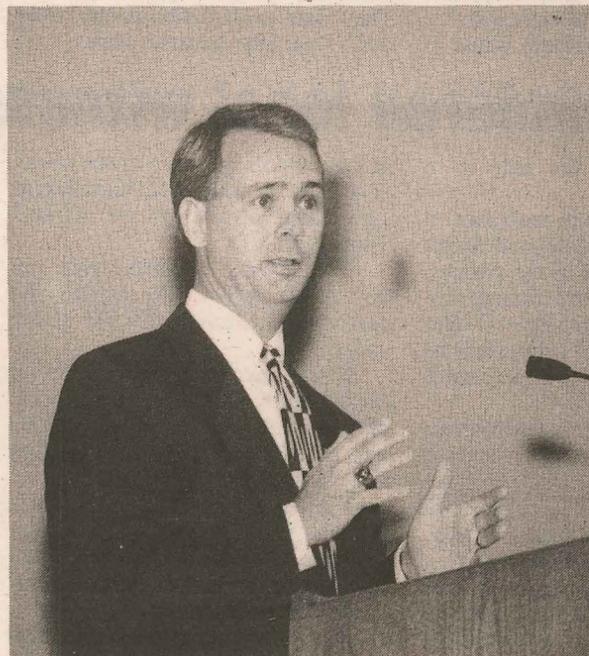


**PRAYER AND PROCLAMATIONS** ■ Left Attendees to the WMU annual meeting sing during one of the sessions.

■ Above Anne Windus, a missionary to South Korea, thanks WMU members for their prayers. ■ Middle Left Travis Collins, a former missionary to Nigeria, speaks about his work.

■ Middle Right National WMU President Wanda Lee talks about this year's emphasis on child advocacy.

■ Bottom Left Gov. Paul Patton signed a proclamation making May 31 "Kentucky for Kids Day." ■ Bottom Right New state officers for 1997-98 (from left): Vice President Kathleen Hall, President Peggy Hicks, Secretary



## Baptist traditions still relevant today, Shurden says

By Mark Wingfield & David Winfrey  
Editor & News Director



GEORGETOWN—Freedom is the core spiritual value of Baptist traditions, church historian Walter Shurden said during the Georgetown College Pastors' Conference.

Shurden, who teaches at Mercer University in Georgia, introduced a series of lectures on Baptist traditions by saying the best place to start is by asking "What is the core spiritual value of Baptist life?"

Based on his own understanding of Baptist history, Shurden said he believes freedom has been the core value uniting Baptists through the ages.

This emphasis on freedom is seen, for example, in Baptists' belief in baptism by immersion for believers only, in choosing a congregational form of government and in advocating religious liberty, he said.

Shurden outlined Baptist traditions related to four areas that are shaped by this core spiritual value of freedom:

■ **The individual.** Baptists historically have emphasized freedom for the individual, but this is threatened by addictions from two opposing sides, he said: applause and narcissism.

"I do not believe drug addiction is the biggest addiction in our society," Shurden said. "We love the applause."

This need for affirmation above all else makes humans "more Cocker Spaniel than Bulldog," he said. "We love to be rubbed."

The reason: fear of rejection, he suggested. "Because rejection is so painful, we will do almost anything to avoid it."

Yet a biblical and Baptist understanding of the individual demands "refusal to imitate the world around you," Shurden said. "When there is no autonomy, there is no authenticity."

Authentic Baptists are Baptists who "make up their own minds," he said.

The other extreme, however, is narcissism, or loving self so much that all else is lost.

Both extremes may be balanced by the Baptist tradition of community, Shurden said.

■ **Community.** "The centrality of the individual in Baptist life has never ever meant Lone Rangerism," Shurden said. "Besides that, even the Lone Ranger had Tonto."

He explained: "Baptist theology and especially the priesthood of all believers has too often been perverted into an every-tub-sits-on-its-own-bottom theology. The correct language is plural, not singular. We really ought to be talking about the priesthood of believers, of all believers."

The sense of community found in

the Baptist tradition holds promise for the vast numbers of Americans who feel "homeless" in society, Shurden said.

For Baptists, church is not found in denomination but in local congregation, he explained. "The local church is where the ordinary Baptist has found his or her meaning of community."

However, Baptists' "current addiction to bigness" may have "slaughtered our search for community in church life," he warned. Large churches especially must find ways to create a sense of community, whether through Sunday school classes or other small groups, he said.

■ **Religious authority.** Baptists' traditional views on religious authority are threatened by relativism in the culture and objectivism in the congregation, Shurden said.

Relativism is expressed by those who contend all religious beliefs are equally valid, Shurden said.

Church members, however, often want clarity and simplicity from pastors who do not always see issues in black and white, he said.

"Many people in church are like I was in seventh grade math class. They want a book with answers in the back," he said. "They want periods. They want exclamation points. They don't want any question marks."

Instead, Baptists traditionally have held a dynamic view of religious authority, Shurden explained.

Baptists traditionally have recognized four sources of religious authority, he said: Jesus, Scripture, the local church and individual conscience.

■ **The state.** Fanaticism and cynicism threaten historic Baptist advocacy of a separation of church and state, Shurden said.

The historian said he's appalled at how radical some Baptist churches view the traditional Baptist position on religious freedom to be.

Because many congregations are poorly educated about Baptists' historical position, the valid threats of a secular society cause churches to embrace "un-Baptist" policies that erode religious liberty, he said.

"We're trying to find some easy fix. So we have prayer in public schools or the Ten Commandments in courtrooms."

While fanaticism tries to turn the state into a church, cynicism causes Christians to barricade themselves from public life, Shurden also said.

These Baptist distinctives, while perhaps considered old-fashioned by some, are not out of date, Shurden said. "In a so-called post-denominational age, I still believe what Baptists have stood for historically is more relevant today than it ever has been."

## Internal fighting has hindered local witness, Tupper says

By David Winfrey  
News Director

GEORGETOWN—Baptists' internal fighting has hurt Baptist ministers' witness in their communities, according to seminary professor Frank Tupper.

"The war has distorted the way," Tupper told those attending the annual Georgetown College pastors' conference, April 16.

Tupper said the secular methods used by Baptists during recent years of conflict have hindered pastors' witness. "The distortion of the way through the war cripples ministry," he said.

"Now, pastoral ministry looks like any other business," he said. "There-

fore, The sense of the holy is in eclipse."

Tupper, a research professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was introduced to the pastors' conference as one of the first professors to have a tape ministry—an allusion to the practice of some students sending tape recordings of his classes to Tupper's critics.

After years of conflict with those conservative critics, Tupper moved last summer from teaching to being a research professor. That position will end after the 1997-98 academic year.

In his address, Tupper outlined three reasons the church is important enough to warrant pastors' commitment:

■ The church announces the good

news of God's salvation in our world. "For Paul, the route from blindness to sight happened through the church," Tupper noted.

"Nobody can duplicate what you do," he told pastors. "The spirit of God calls others through the life of the church."

■ The church teaches the Christian life for this world. "You are the poets of the gospel whose words give rhyme and rhythm to living the Christian life," he said.

Tupper noted that even while growing up in a segregated society, the church still taught, "Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight."

■ The church constitutes the presence of Jesus Christ in the world.

"Through your ministry in the church, Jesus Christ actually becomes present in the world in which you live."

Conversely, actions against the church are synonymous with actions against Jesus, Tupper said, "because the church constitutes Jesus in the world."

Although the entire church represents Jesus, Tupper told the pastors they still have a special representation of the church in their community. "Whether you like it or not, you wear a clerical collar," he said.

"The priesthood of the believer does not negate the priestly ministry that is yours as an ordained minister of God," he said. "You are physicians of grace who are able to touch wounds that only God can heal."

## Pastors urged to help laypeople distinguish fantasy from reality

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

GEORGETOWN—Laypeople need their pastors to help them distinguish reality from fantasy, Anne Davis told a group of pastors April 15.

Davis, former dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, spoke during the Georgetown College Pastors' Conference. In retirement, she continues to speak and teaches an adult Sunday school class at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville.

The tension between fantasy and reality is the essence of the biblical account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, Davis suggested. "The temptations revolve around one question: Will I choose fantasy or reality?"

Humans naturally create fantasies as one way of understanding their own cultural heritages, she said. These may relate to fantasies about ideal parents, ideal preachers, ideal spouses, ideal families.

"We create these fantasies as benchmarks, and somewhere as we move through life we have to learn to live with reality."

Yet the church too often promotes fantasy over reality, Davis said. As an example, she cited the picture of the biblical character Ruth she gained while growing up in a Southern Baptist church.

In Sunday school, Ruth was pictured as a "beautiful woman, loyal, the author of wedding ceremonies," Davis said. "But lo and behold, I found out one day she was a migrant worker. ... No one ever told me about Ruth the way she really was."

"Much of what I have been taught by

my church is fantasy. I haven't been told the realities."

The temptation story teaches that reality is this, Davis said: "Can you live hungry for 40 days of fasting and still let a rock be a rock?"

Davis first admonished pastors to "let us know what rocks are like."

Second, she asked pastors to help people in the pew "know we can't give away what we don't have."

The church must redefine major elements of doing worship and ministry if there is to be any good news to give away, Davis suggested.

For example, few churches know what to do with 65-year-olds, yet the senior adult population in America is growing rapidly and life expectancies are increasing, she said.

"I am increasingly concerned because we have Bransonized our senior adults. ... Our solution is busing: Put 'em on a bus and ride 'em around town."

Likewise, what makes worship meaningful for younger generations must be considered if the church is to have anything to give away, Davis said. "We haven't seriously considered what worship needs to be in the 21st century, so by default the entertainment mentality came in."

Finally, Davis called on pastors to "help us define who we are" in order to separate fantasy from reality.

"We are not interested so much in the what questions or the why questions or the how questions," she explained. "We get hung up on the who questions ... yet I don't hear much preaching on the who questions."

# MINISTRY

## Smothers: God still works through Exodus

Continued from page 1

Christians could better understand how God continues to work in the world, he said. The story of redemption is the story of God moving his people from one place to another, he suggested.

"This is what God has called us to do: To proclaim liberty to the captives."

Among the lessons found in the Exodus story, he said:

■ *Mobility separates people from sacred places.* Smothers compared the mobile temple the Israelites carried through the wilderness to the permanently fixed sacred spaces of today. In today's mobile society, people miss the sacred spaces, he noted.

The story of God's work in the

world is one of mobility, of passing through, of sojourners, Smothers said.

"There is no hope for us in sacred places. There is no hope for us in theologies. I don't care who dreams them up. ... We are bound for a better place. Shame on us for ever thinking we are at home here in this world."

■ *Not everyone wants the freedom to move.* "Freedom can be threatening," he said. "Not everybody among the Israelites wanted to leave Egypt."

Like the Israelites who had grown accustomed to their enslavement in Egypt, modern Christians can become comfortable in the world, Smothers said. "It's much more comfortable to

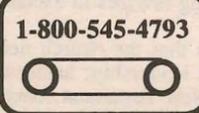
learn how to fit in."

Yet that flies against the nature of God's redemptive work in the world, he said. "We have been called to a radical commitment to Christ."



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- ▶ Program: Helen Musick, Youth Specialties Leadership Team and Youth Ministry Professor, Asbury College
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### DIRECTOR

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## CLASSIFIED ADS

**SEEKING:** Centerfield Baptist Church, a contemporary church located in Oldham County, currently is accepting resumés for a part-time minister to children. If interested, call (502) 243-1982 for more information, or mail resumé to: Centerfield Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1026, Crestwood, KY 40014.

**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:** Minister of music. FBC, Joelton, Tenn., seeks a full-time minister of music. The church, located 25 minutes northwest of Nashville, has an average morning worship attendance of 575 in multiple services, including one more contemporary in format and one more traditional. This person will oversee age-graded choirs from preschool through senior adult, and have significant responsibilities for senior adult ministry as well. Send resumé to: FBC, P.O. Box 86, Joelton, TN 37080; Attn: Dean Anderson.

**SEEKING:** First Baptist Church, Worthington, Ky., is accepting resumés for full-time pastor. Send resumés to: P.O. Box 368, Worthington, KY 41183, Attn: Glen Poling.

**FOR SALE:** 6 church pews, \$100 each. Parrish Avenue Baptist Church, Owensboro, Ky. (502) 683-2156.

**FOR RENT:** Sanibel Island, Florida: 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo available for vacation rental. Large pool, tennis courts, bikes, canoe, kayak, screened porch, lovely secluded beach. Weekly rates May through mid-December: \$595. Call Pat Owen, (502) 895-8752 (home) or (502) 897-5079 (office).

**SEEKING:** Associate minister for music. The First Baptist Church of Middlesborough, Ky., is seeking a minister to lead, develop and coordinate the music ministry of the church. In addition, the minister will assist the pastor in all areas of church life. The successful candidate will have a minimum of a college degree with a music emphasis, and a seminary degree is preferred along with previous music ministry experience. The candidate also should possess a calling to ministry and strong interpersonal and organization skills. The First Baptist Church of Middlesborough has a resident membership of 500 people and is a diverse community of faith affiliated with the SBC and CBF. Send resumé by April 30, 1997, to: Rev. Jeff Roberts, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 839, Middlesborough, KY 40965-0839.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Valley View Baptist Church, 8911 Old Third Street Road, Louisville, 40272. Previous pastoral experience desired. Resumé and cover letter by May 1, 1997. In cover letter describe where you are spiritually in your ministry and why God might be moving you into a new place. Fax: (502) 935-5252.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of music and youth. Seminary training and some experience preferred. Send resumé to: Union Baptist Church, P.O. Box 194, Union, KY 41091.

**SEEKING:** Full-time pastor for Blackjack Baptist Church, Franklin, Ky. Blackjack is a growing church with new sanctuary in '94. Worship attendance approximately 150-200. Interested persons should send resumé to: Weston Smith, 220 Turnertown Road, Franklin, KY 42134.

**SEEKING:** Calvary Baptist Church, Glasgow, Ky., is accepting resumés for position of pastor. All interested parties may reply by mail to: Pulpit Committee, Calvary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1524, Glasgow, KY 42142.

**FOR SALE:** 1984 Bluebird bus, 24-passenger, 35,000 miles, \$6,150. Call: Mrs. Roberts, First Baptist Church, Bowling Green, Ky., (502) 842-0331.

## Mediation gaining popularity for resolving church conflicts

NASHVILLE (BP)—Mediation, long used to solve business disagreements between management and labor, is gaining popularity as a tool to remedy church conflicts, according to a national consultant.

A biblical model for conflict resolution has led many congregations to use mediation when disagreements become severe, according to Norris Smith, a consultant in the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's pastor-staff leadership department.

Smith said Matthew 18:15-17 provides an overview of Jesus' formula for redemptive resolution of conflict in four steps of face-to-face confrontation: one-on-one, three-on-one, "tell it to the church" and, failing that, "let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

Smith said when situations reach the point of "tell it unto the church," mediation is a redemptive way for members to resolve conflict, compatible and consistent with Paul's admonition, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Biblical accounts of mediation, from conflict over neglect of the Grecian widows to dissension over circumcision of Gentiles, are among examples Smith gives. And he knows numerous contemporary stories of dysfunctional decision-making systems in churches corrected through mediation.

While bodies of research differ in the numbers of church staff members terminated each year, Smith said in nine of 10 churches experiencing severe conflict, the pastor resigns or is asked to leave.

"Pastors and other church staff can get caught in a dysfunctional church system that has been in place for years," he observed. "This is the way the particular church is wired together to make its decisions. Those kinds of churches repeat the same problems. They never resolve their conflict. They just run off the leadership."

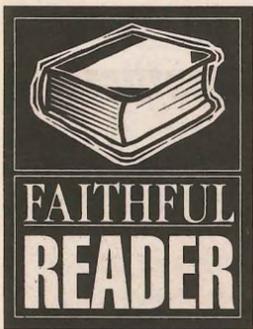
**SEEKING:** Enthusiastic part-time minister of music for a growing rural Baptist church. Send resumé to: Music Search Committee, Burgin Baptist Church, P.O. Box 266, Burgin, KY 40310.

**CONVENTION:** Dallas package—excellent hotel choices, some within walking distance. Discount airfares, Alamo rental cars. Christian Travelers, (800) 972-8952.

**SEEKING:** Resumés are now being received for the position of director of missions for Pulaski Baptist Association, Somerset, Ky. Located in south-central Kentucky, the association has 60+ churches and missions which support a variety of ministries with a strong emphasis on direct mission involvement through volunteer work in both home and foreign fields. Full-time salary package and benefits commensurate with experience. Interested candidates should submit resumés by June 30 to: DOM Search Committee, P.O. Box 72, Somerset, KY 42502-0072.

**SEEKING:** Auburndale Baptist Church seeks youth minister for grades 6-12, minimum of 20 hours weekly for at least the next two years. Annual salary budgeted at \$9,500. Resumés: Dr. Harry Mills, pastor, 5590 Bruce Ave., Louisville, KY 40214.

# BOOKS



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

## Best-selling Christian children's books

- 1 **Just in Case You Ever Wonder**, Max Lucado
- 2 **The Legend of Annie Murphy**, Frank Peretti
- 3 **Love You Forever**, Robert Munsch
- 4 **God's Little Instruction Book for Kids**, Honor Books
- 5 **The One Year Book of Devotions for Kids**, Tyndale
- 6 **Treasure Tree**, Gary Smalley & John Trent
- 7 **The Secret of the Desert Stone**, Frank Peretti
- 8 **Paw Paw Chuck's Big Ideas in the Bible**, Charles Swindoll
- 9 **The Tale of Three Trees**, Angela Elwell Hunt
- 10 **The Crippled Lamb**, Max Lucado

Source: Evangelical Christian Publishers Association

**Adultery and Grace: The Ultimate Scandal.** *Welton Gaddy. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996. 191 pages. \$16.00. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)*

The underlying question of this book is, "What is the greater sin? The act of adultery or how we treat adulterers?" Welton Gaddy approaches the subject with the firm statement that adultery is a sin with serious consequences. Adultery is a scandal whenever it occurs, but is it the ultimate scandal? According to Gaddy the ultimate scandal is that God's grace applies even to adultery.



The book offers a thorough exploration of the causes and consequences of adultery and the biblical texts that address adultery. Gaddy argues that when the church withholds forgiveness and grace from adulterers, the church is every bit as wrong as the adulterer.

Gaddy's thorough discussion of adultery is a strong treatment of the subject. The greater impact for me, however, was the statement on grace. Gaddy's discussion of grace addresses not only the theological meaning but the practical implementation of grace. Gaddy's call is for no less than a total submission to grace. Such submission does not flow readily in the institutional church. Rather, the church's practice of grace is more often an act of convenience.

Rarely have I read a more powerful, and convicting, statement on grace. All those affected by adultery and those who counsel and love them, will benefit from this book. Gaddy's discussion easily can address any other sin and how God's healing grace can address it. *Wayne Hager*

**Transformational Leadership: A New Model for Total Church Involvement.** *Phillip Lewis. Broadman & Holman Publishers. 264 pages. \$19.99. ♦♦♦♦♦*

The work of a transformational leader, according to Phillip Lewis, is fourfold: to transform people and organizations; to enlarge vision, insight and understanding; to produce behavior congruent with values and beliefs; and to bring about permanent and momentum-building change. Transactional leadership, by contrast, focuses on providing rewards in exchange for performance.

Lewis argues that the church needs transformational leadership; leadership rooted in a key New Testament concept: metanoia, the Greek word for change. Transformational leadership is not concerned merely with getting a job done, but is intent on changing the nature of organizations and individuals. Transformational leadership is not content with institutional maintenance, but with transforming the lives of church members, as well as those outside the church.

Transformational leadership requires a new vision of leadership built on the traits of patience, gentleness, teachableness, acceptance, kindness, openness, compassion, consistency and persuasiveness. This style of leadership recognizes that different settings, times and situations call for different responses and gifts from the leader.

In Transformational Leadership, Lewis describes the nature of the type of leadership he believes the church needs for the present and future. He contrasts that style with current models of transactional leadership, and he demonstrates ways we can shift from one model of leading to the other.

This is not a read-through-it-in-one-session book. The material requires some time to digest. Every chapter concludes

with guided questions which help the reader apply the material to his or her own life and situation. *Jim Holladay*

**Devotion Explosion.** *Stephen Schwambach. Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996. 113 pages. ♦♦♦♦♦*

ZIP! WOW! BANG! Holy quiet time, Batman. This new daily devotional plan could blow the lid off our spiritual complacency.

With the exuberance and humor of the narrator on the old Batman television shows, Stephen Schwambach outlines a daily devotional method he says will radically change one's relationship with God.

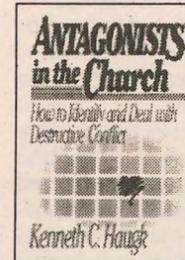
Drawing from Deuteronomy 17:18-20, Schwambach outlines a three-pronged approach to renewing one's daily walk with God: choosing and writing out a book of the Bible, praying by typing one's prayers on the computer and memorizing a verse or passage of Scripture.

For all the overblown rhetoric and sometimes outrageous sounding claims, Schwambach's proposal actually contains some sound advice and is built on some classic principles of spiritual guidance, the chief of which is the need to find a tool that will help focus one's mind on God. By suggesting that we write out Scripture, rather than simply reading it, he is giving us a tool or method with which we can focus our attention on the word beneath the words. The practice of writing one's prayers on the computer is a high-tech twist on an old practice designed to prevent the mind from wandering. Memorizing Scripture is a practice as old as Scripture itself.

Personally, I could have done without Schwambach's high-energy, side-show barker style of writing. That said, his little book, while probably not as radical as he would want to believe, does remind us of a key truth: Our desire to spend time with God will grow in direct proportion to our spending time with God. *Jim Holladay*

**Antagonists in the Church: How to Identify and Deal with Destructive Conflict.** *Kenneth Haugk. Augsburg Publishing House, 1988. 189 pages. \$12.99. ♦♦♦♦♦*

For the 10 years prior to writing this book, Kenneth Haugk gave workshops on acts of antagonism in the church. This book was the outgrowth of those workshops and Haugk's desire to make the information more available.



Haugk begins with the defining statement that antagonism is a reality in the church. Antagonism is not healthy disagreement but unhealthy conflict. Antagonists are defined as "individuals who, on the basis of unsubstantive evidence, go out of their way to make insatiable demands, usually attacking the person or performance of others. These attacks are selfish in nature, tearing down rather than building up, and are frequently directed against those in a leadership capacity."

Haugk follows this definition with a guide for identifying antagonists, including personality characteristics. Haugk's contribution not only provides concrete ways of dealing with antagonists, but also offers ways in which a church can prevent antagonism. At first consideration, Haugk's method seems harsh. But Haugk makes a good case that dealing with an antagonist is unlike dealing with any other person.

All church leaders will find useful information and tactics in this book. Despite the depressing nature of the subject, Haugk maintains there is hope, even in the face of antagonists. *Wayne Hager*

## Spring revival

By Robert Dunston

Many Baptist churches in Kentucky have a spring revival. As the flowers begin to bloom and the trees start filling with green leaves, it is a good time for us to renew our commitment to God.

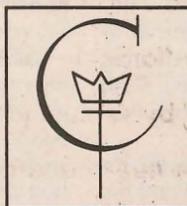
Cumberland College had its spring revival a little early this year. In mid-February the Baptist Student Union sponsored four revival services. Our coordinator for the services was Stephen Brown, a senior from Waynesburg.

Greg Pinkner, Associate Minister to Students at Legacy Drive Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, was our revival speaker. Greg speaks to college and high school youth across the country as part of Haven Ministries, based in Dallas. A graduate of the University of North Texas with a degree in communication, Greg will serve this summer as camp pastor for Mission-Fuge, a mission outreach of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. At each service Greg applied biblical teachings to life and challenged us to follow God with all we are and have.

David Hunt was the worship leader for our revival services. David grew up in North Carolina and in

Owensboro. While a student at Belmont University in Nashville, David began to serve as worship coordinator for the Baptist Student Union and discovered a love of singing and praising God. He has led worship for special services and revivals in many churches and colleges across the South and has participated in worship services at Centrifuge and Mission-Fuge. At each service David played guitar and sang.

**CUMBERLAND COLLEGE**



Revival services began during the regular chapel service on Monday morning, Feb. 17 and continued Monday through Wednesday nights. Cumberland College students added to the worship through music, drama and testimonies. Each night the Gatliff Chapel was filled with students, and God blessed through changed lives and renewed commitments.

How blessed we are as Kentucky Baptists to have schools where God is worshipped freely and passionately and where young people can discover the power of God as well as the power of learning.

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

## WMU and you: Factors of one

There are so many venues of communication in the 1990s, we often forget the impact that cultivating a relationship with one other person can bring.

This year WMU is challenging us to extend ourselves—not to a breaking point—but by factors of one.

I challenge you to consider asking the Lord to bring one poor family, one hurting child into your life.

I pray that you and I might be able to echo Job's words: "I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the orphan who had no helper. ... I made the widow's heart sing for joy. ... I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I investigated the case which I did not know." (Job 29:12-16) It is in giving to others that we truly are blessed.

Recently a ceremony took place in downtown Louisville to promote awareness and prevention of child abuse. At its close, 27 names were read aloud—the first names and ages of the children who died last year in Kentucky because of abuse or neglect. It was a sobering moment to hear those names with their tiny num-

bers after them, reminding us that lives are being snuffed out far too frequently.

Another event takes place Saturday, May 31 at the capitol in Frankfort. At 1 p.m., Kentucky for Kids Day begins with exhibits, music, drama, child advocacy speakers and children's activities. Join Women on Mission in this celebration of our children.

Come to Frankfort. Bring your Sunday School class, family or entire church. Perhaps after Kentucky for Kids Day, you will find the one child who God wants you to love and care for.

**HOMES FOR CHILDREN**



Brenda Gray

*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/kbhcc/>*

## Scholar parallels America and Old Testament Jerusalem

By Karen Long  
Religion News Service

DECATUR, Ga. (RNS)—America today runs the risk of destruction for the same reasons as Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C., according to one of the foremost Christian Old Testament scholars.

"In the (Hebrew Bible), the tradition of greed finally destroyed Israel and led it to exile," says Walter Brueggemann, professor of Old Testament at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga., and an ordained United Church of Christ minister.

"In the West, the tradition of greed has just about destroyed the tradition of conscience and left us in a terrible mess. ... The symbol of Nike is more powerful than the cross or the star or the crescent."

Brueggemann, 63, sees alarming parallels between contemporary America and ancient Israel. He says modern America could learn a few lessons from the Hebrew prophet Jeremiah, who challenged ancient Israel to look beyond the surface of society.

"... Jeremiah is probably the part of the Hebrew Bible we ought to be

reading right now," he says. "What Jeremiah observes is that there is deep denial in the heart of Israel. They say, 'shalom, shalom,' when there is no peace. And there is a deep denial in the United States that says the economy is buoyant. ...

"The United States is the quintessential practitioner of the quintessential greed. We are the last colonial power with standing armies to defend markets, so that we think of the oil over there as our oil. ...

"The church is a big sponsor of saying 'peace, peace,' when there is no peace. The politicians echo that."

The charismatic Bible scholar, son of a Nebraska minister, was featured on the recent PBS series "Genesis," hosted by Bill Moyers. He writes equally for other scholars and interested laity. A number of his books on the prophets and Psalms are used widely in adult Bible study classes.

These days, Brueggemann is especially captivated by the Book of Isaiah and sees parallels between Israel's ruin and the present-day United States.

"The Bible is not hard to understand: The violation of the Torah leads to the destruction of civil com-

munity. We have to ask ourselves, 'What if this is true?' In 587 B.C., all the public institutions failed. Israel lost its innocence. Israel lost its sense of specialness. Israel lost its certitude and entered into a profound season of grief and rage."

To tap into America's rage, Brueggemann suggests listening to the lyrics of the murdered rapper Tupac Shakur, certain country music and talk-show host Rush Limbaugh.

The anger in these voices strikes Brueggemann's ear a lot like the book of Lamentations. He hopes people of faith will start paying attention to America's sense of loss and rage, and fuss less about guilt.

"I believe the sense of loss and displacement among us is massive and pervasive," Brueggemann says. "And what we know is there is not enough Nike, there is not enough Coca-Cola, there is not enough beer, there are not enough new cars, to cover the loss."

He argues that houses of worship could be the arena to repair and heal.

"Suffering in isolation produces violence," Brueggemann says, "but suffering out loud in community produces hope. ... The church and synagogue are one of the few plac-

es that can turn anger into energy."

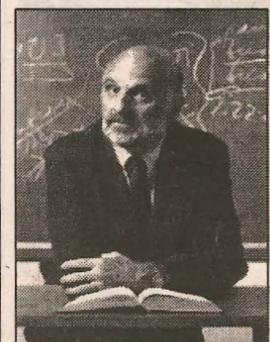
Honoring the Sabbath is another important way for Jews and Christians to face reality by reflecting on their priorities, Brueggemann says.

"The creation of the Sabbath is an antidote to the enormous anxiety we have about the fragility of the world," he says. "Our anxiety stems from the fact we are in a rat race we can't win. ... On the Sabbath, you must say, 'This is what my life is about: not making money or publishing books or whatever my seduction is.'"

But Jews and Christians of conscience are having a hard time in modern America for a variety of reasons, Brueggemann notes. He lists Bible illiteracy, the privatization of faith (faith as a private matter between an individual and a personal God), the church's own entanglement in greed, and widespread denial and despair.

"We've so privatized faith that we have nothing left but suburbia and family values," Brueggemann says.

"Well, that's a very small part of our faith. Jesus didn't get crucified for family values. He got crucified because he was an enemy of the status quo."



**"In the West, the tradition of greed has just about destroyed the tradition of conscience and left us in a terrible mess."**

Old Testament scholar  
Walter Brueggemann

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# PEOPLE

## PRAYER PARTNERS

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

- Jane Meredith in Penza, Russia, and a group of ninth grade girls who meet in her home for Bible study.
- Anne Albritton and Lori Milburn who are scheduled to work in Smolensk as soon as visa problems are resolved.
- LaRaine Dail in Moscow who reports a successful March 15 rally for college students. She asks prayer for upcoming discipleship, leadership development and evangelistic retreats for students.
- Pastor Gregory Torres and members of Primeria Iglesia, a Hispanic Baptist church in Hartford, Conn., as they and other volunteers renovate their building.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

- **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Friendship Church called **C.J. Simpson** as minister of youth.
  - **CORBIN**—Central Church ordained **David Ballou, Phil Bramlett, Ivan Bunch, Bill Evans, Curt Hart, Bob Jackson, David Jackson, Tim Logan, Burchell Martin, R.L. Owens** and **Troy Prewitt** as deacons Feb. 23.
  - **FAIRDALE**—First Church recently called **Philip Drake** as minister of youth and **Bryan Crady** as minister of music.
  - **IRVINE**—First Church licensed Youth Minister **Wayne Rogers** to the gospel ministry Feb. 16.
  - **LEXINGTON**—Cornerstone Church will hold revival services May 4 at 11 a.m. and 6 p.m., May 5-7 at 7 p.m. **Robert Vickers**, director of military chaplaincy at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, will be guest speaker.
  - **LOUISVILLE**—Highview Church called **Jimmy Scroggins** as minister to students. Scroggins will begin his new ministry April 20. **Kevin Ezell** is pastor.
- Parkland Church ordained **Todd Beasley**, minister of education at Crestwood Church in Frankfort, to the gospel ministry April 20.
- Brookview Church celebrated the fifth anniversary of Pastor **Delbert Watson** with a reception and an overnight travel package April 7.
- First Southern Church called **Randy Stinson**, native of Florida, as in-

terim pastor.

- Audubon Church called **Shelby White** as director of children's ministry March 1. Also, **Stephanie Smith** was called as minister of preschool.
- **LOWES**—Mount Olivet Church called **Wayne Carter** as pastor. Carter will begin his new ministry May 4. He resigned as pastor at Temple Church in Paducah effective April 30.
- **OWENSBORO**—Lewis Lane Church called Interim Youth Minister **Tom Collier** to serve also as part-time minister of education. **Bruce Malony** resigned as minister of music.
- **QUALITY**—Guptons Grove Church called **Jeff Morris** as pastor. He was ordained to the gospel ministry at Hazel Creek Church in Beechmont April 20.
- **SONORA**—First Church called **James Hill** as pastor. He will begin his new ministry April 27. Hill, pastor of Magnolia Church for more than 12 years, resigned April 6.

## MISSIONARY UPDATE

- **Carl and Cassie Gallion**, Baptist representatives to the Ukraine, have arrived on the field to begin their first term of service. Address is: 3-A, L. Tolstogo St., Kiev-4, 252004, Ukraine. He is a native of Jenkins.
- **Robert and Lisa Moor**, missionaries to Tanzania, are in the States. Address is: 918 Euclid Ave, Bristol, Va. 24201. He was born in Louisville.

## Church of Scotland panel urges easing anti-marijuana laws

LONDON (RNS)—A panel of the Church of Scotland, the government-established Presbyterian denomination, is recommending easing anti-marijuana laws and creating a blue ribbon commission to consider the pros and cons of legalizing the drug, especially for medical use.

The recommendations—what the panel called “partial decriminalization”—are contained in a wide-ranging and controversial report made public last month by the denomination's Board of Social Responsibility.

Bill Wallace, head of the church panel, said the drug problem pointed to a spiritual malaise. “Sometimes people turn to drugs on an experimental basis, but more often because their life is unfulfilled,” he said. “Until the spiritual problem is addressed, the drug problem will continue to increase.”



**CLEANUP** Laura McAllister, a student from the University of Louisville's Baptist Student Union, clears water from a building in Falmouth. About 30 students from the University of Louisville, Northern Kentucky University and Eastern Kentucky University spent their spring break helping with cleanup work. (Photo by Angela Perkins)



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## Both into prison and to death

“Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.” Luke 22:33

I received a touching letter this week from two Oneida graduates. Bruce, of the class of 1978, and Terrie, of the class of 1979, met while students at Oneida. They are married, and Bruce is in the military, stationed in Germany. Both are proud of their Oneida heritage and have been faithful supporters for many years.

They are concerned about a Christian brother in their church. He is an Egyptian and former Muslim. He is seeking political asylum in Germany, but it is very questionable whether asylum will be granted. I want to share with you part of the letter I received. I must warn you it is a painful and graphic letter.

“This man's name is Hamdy, he is married and has three children. Hamdy was a colonel in the Egyptian army until his conversion to Christianity. Before his conversion, Hamdy considered Christians to be his enemy. On one occasion he even helped to torture a Christian. Here is his description of what happened:

“I bore a lot of hate against Christian officers and soldiers which I let them feel. It was my goal to convert them to Islam. I was once present at the torture of a Christian soldier, who was tortured to death at the military hearing ... I was an eyewitness and was present at this torture. At the time I did not feel any pity for the convict.”

Now Hamdy is enduring the same persecution he once took part in. Here is just a small part of what this brother has been through after his conversion.

“They threw me into the military prison from April to November 1981. I was tortured very bru-

tally. For example, I was dragged naked across broken glass and sharp stones.

“I stuck with my belief in Jesus Christ as my Lord, my God and my Savior in the military and in public. ... I was then thrown out of my father's house and became an outsider in my own family.

“I was arrested the second time by the secret military in October 1984. ... They judged that I was a traitor and a demolisher of the Islamic belief and that I must be executed. ... I now confessed to my wife that I had become a Christian and after doing so she asked me for a divorce. We were separated for four months. ... During this time, my wife came to know the Christian belief.

“I was arrested and thrown in jail 14 times. ... This sergeant brutally forced me to squat onto a wooden pole, secured on the ground ... and caused me great pain. This man continually tortured me by making fun of my God, telling me to pray so that my God would free me.

“These officers then let the police go ahead and terrorize my family with whatever methods they pleased. ... They began verbally to threaten to kill me and also tried to put pressure on me by threatening to kidnap my three children. ... My son was hit by a car and had severe damage done to his left eye. He almost went blind. ... My youngest daughter also was severely injured.”

There is much, much more in this letter. Some of the torture was so graphic I was afraid to print it. Are we ready to face prison and death for our faith? Please keep this family and other persecuted Christians in your prayers.

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

## THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

## Marriage Savers helps avoid divorce

Clear Creek recently hosted Michael McManus, president of Marriage Savers. He is author of a definitive book on how any church can be transformed from a “wedding factory” grinding out marriages, half of which fail, into a marriage saver, where less than 10 percent of marriages are lost to divorce.

Marriage Savers seeks to develop a community marriage policy or covenant, a consensus among pastors of all denominations for rigorous marriage preparation. The program requires a minimum number of months of marriage preparation, a premarital inventory couples use to work through differences and marriage mentors.

McManus' own church offers proof the program works. Of 135 couples mentored from 1992 through 1996, nearly one-fifth of the counseled couples broke their engagements, avoiding a bad marriage before it started. Of the 110 couples who did marry, only a few are having trouble.

Ministers in 56 cities have joined efforts to lower the divorce rate and strengthen existing marriages. Modesto, Calif., saw the

divorce rate drop 40 percent in a decade; Moline/Rock Island, Ill., experienced an 8 percent decline in four years. During 1993 to 1995 Albany, Ga., and Montgomery, Ala., saw a 12 percent decrease.

McManus noted, “A handful of cities is responsible for nearly a fifth of the entire country's reduced number of divorces. Isn't that evidence that if pastors cooperated across denominational lines in creating community marriage policies in hundreds of cities that America's national divorce rate would also fall dramatically.”

McManus writes the weekly column, “Ethics and Religion,” syndicated by the New York Times to more than 100 newspapers. You may contact him at 9500 Michael's Court, Bethesda, MD 20817, (301) 469-5870, fax (301) 469-5871.

His campus visit was made possible through the Lacy-Lykins Lectures, endowed by former trustee Joan Parr, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington.

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

## Was crusade Hong Kong's last big Christian event?

By Kim Lawton  
Religion News Service

HONG KONG—Less than three months before Hong Kong returns to Chinese sovereignty, U.S. evangelist Luis Palau preached a message of hope to tens of thousands of citizens facing an uncertain future.

During a four-day evangelistic crusade ending April 13, Palau repeatedly said that trust in Jesus can allay fears about personal, social and political transition. Organizers estimated the total attendance for crusade events was 130,000.

"God says, 'I know the plans I have for you ... to give you a future and a hope,'" Palau said on the opening night of the crusade, quoting from the Old Testament book of Jeremiah. "The question tonight is this: Is there hope for society? And the answer from the Bible is yes, a thousand times yes."

Local church leaders called Palau's crusade theme, "Hope for Eternity," timely for a population of 6 million people unsure about what may happen after July 1.

At midnight June 30, Great Britain's colonial hold on Hong Kong expires. The territory officially will

become a Special Administrative Region under the People's Republic of China.

The Chinese have agreed to observe a policy of "one country, two systems" and have promised not to interfere with Hong Kong's lifestyle—especially its robust economic system—for the next 50 years.

The Basic Law, China's new mini-constitution for Hong Kong, also guarantees religious freedom and says church-state relations in the Special Administrative Region will be guided by three principles: mutual respect, mutual non-interference and mutual non-subordination.

Publicly, religious leaders of all faiths praise the Basic Law. Privately, however, many also admit the crucial test will be how Beijing interprets and implements the provisions.

On April 9, the day before Palau began his crusade, Hong Kong's designated post-July 1 government leader announced controversial new regulations restricting the freedom of association and assembly.

Under the proposed new regulations, all "societies" must be registered

with the police, and political groups would be prohibited from establishing ties and funding relationships with foreign organizations. Also, public demonstrations would have to have police permission.

International human rights groups condemned the proposals as vague and restrictive of basic civil liberties.

Some observers suggested Palau's Hong Kong crusade could be the last mass evangelistic rally in the territory. In mainland China, all public evangelism is forbidden.

But Palau said this was not the last crusade of the "old" Hong Kong, but rather "the first crusade of a new China."

During Sunday's closing meeting, Palau painted an optimistic picture for the packed stadium. "God is going to use you from Hong Kong to bless all of China," the international evangelist said, adding he is waiting "in faith" to hold a similar crusade in Shanghai (in mainland China).

Palau, who is based in Portland, Ore., was invited to Hong Kong by the Hong Kong Chinese Christian

Churches Union, a Protestant coalition.

Stephen Liu, chairman of the coalition, predicted China's prohibition on mass evangelism will not be implemented in Hong Kong. "In Hong Kong, we have the Basic Law, and inside the Basic Law, they assure us that we will enjoy religious freedom in Hong Kong."

However, Kwok Nai Wang, who directs Hong Kong Christian Institute, is more cautious.

Kwok noted freedom of speech and assembly were guaranteed in China's 1983 constitution. Six years later, he said, when Chinese students tried to exercise these rights, "they were met with machine guns and tanks in Tiananmen Square, which proves my point that without a government who has the will to respect and implement the Basic Law, it's just something on paper."

Kwok said he believes religious freedom will lessen after the turnover. "Without press freedom, do you have religious freedom? Without the freedom of assembly, do you have religious freedom? Without the freedom of speech, do you have religious freedom? You have to put it all into context," he said.

**Publicly, religious leaders of all faiths praise the Basic Law. Privately, however, many also admit the crucial test will be how Beijing interprets and implements the provisions.**



Palau

## Students' long drive results in far-reaching ministry work

LOUISVILLE (BP)—Spending nine hours in a van is not an appealing prospect, but several students from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary travel to Michigan every weekend for a church-starting ministry.

The van trip and weekend of ministry take time from family and seminary studies, but students call the effort a blessing worth the time and effort.

Keith Williams serves as mission pastor of New Life Baptist Church in Chelsea, Mich. Along with his wife and son, Williams began traveling to Michigan last November.

"We went to check it out and felt God leading us there. It's been an incredible opportunity," said Williams, whose family is joined by one or two other students each week.

Chelsea is a town in suburban Detroit with an exploding population, according to Williams, a master of divinity student from Stafford, Va. "A very large portion of those people are unchurched."

Sponsored by Immanuel Baptist Church of Pinckney, Mich., the Williamses are seeing people become involved in the mission church through community events, telephone surveys, advertisements in the newspaper and visitation. The church now averages 15 to 20 people on Sundays.

After graduating from Southern, Williams is planning to go to Michigan and plant his family in the Chelsea community.

Dee McCardle, a student from Brandon, Miss., is working with a ministry-based church start in Mt. Clements, Mich., almost nine hours from Louisville.

"When I first started assessing the needs of the people there, I was ex-

pecting the key ministry to be to single mothers," she said. "Instead, it turned out the ministry was with ex-felons, recovering addicts and their families.

Saturday evenings are spent in Bible study and fellowship with the group. On Sundays, McCardle attends churches in the Mt. Carmel area and other Baptist churches in the association.

"I've had a good response from the people that I've talked to in surrounding churches," McCardle said. "Hopefully churches will refer people to our group when they find people who have that type of need."

The Bible studies address the "basics of salvation," McCardle said.

"All of this is totally new to a lot of them. We've had three people accept Christ as their Savior during the meetings."

Through a similar partnership with the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana, Southern Seminary students are shuttled to various parts of Indiana for weekend ministry opportunities.

Cyril Mills, a student from Clearwater, Fla., leads an inner-city ministry project in New Albany.

"People are being reached for the Lord and it is exciting to see the difference he makes in people's lives," said Mills, who has worked at the New Albany mission more than three years.

The mission is located in a public housing community, which makes the congregation very transitional, he noted.

"It's good to see people get up by the word of God and find ways to help themselves out of the projects and into better homes and better jobs," Mills said.



## New Japanese missions leader notes FMB missionary's impact

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Seventeen years ago, Virginia Highfill, now a retired Southern Baptist foreign missionary, spoke at Hiro Sakamaki's church in Japan.

During that worship service, Sakamaki heard God's call to be a pastor. Seven years ago, after graduating from the Baptist seminary in Japan, Sakamaki was called to be pastor of Japanese Mission at Gardena-Torrance Southern Baptist Church in Gardena, Calif.

In July—still living out Highfill's impact on his life—the 35-year-old will leave his pastorate and return to Japan as the first-ever director of Japanese Baptists' foreign missions program.

"I have an interest in foreign missions because Miss Highfill came to my church as a missionary," said

Sakamaki.

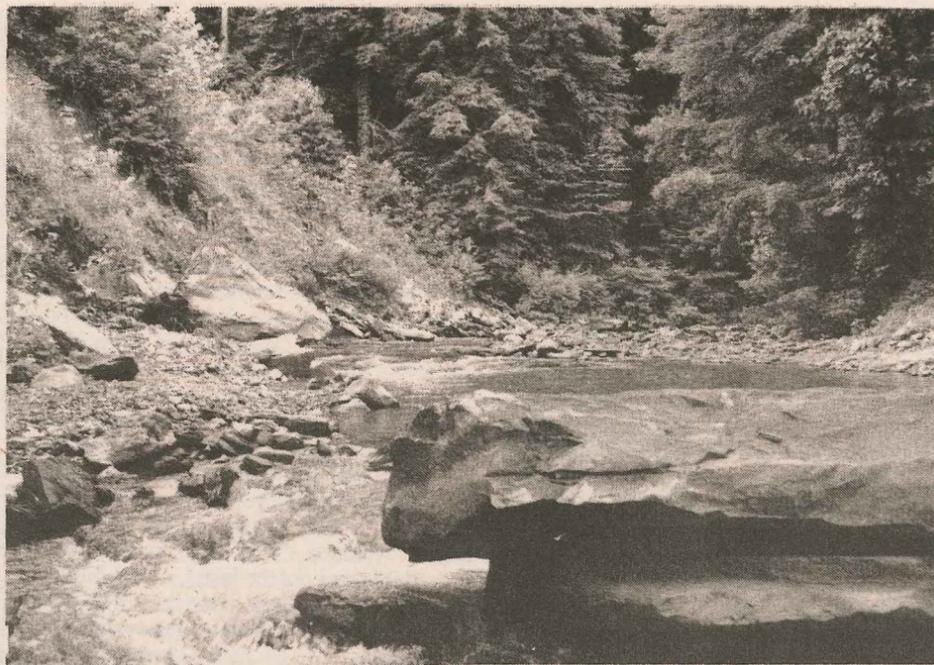
Japanese Baptists have had missionaries in other countries since 1965, when they sent a family to Brazil. Under assignment now are three missionary couples—one each in Thailand, Indonesia and Singapore. Another family, scheduled to work in Mongolia, had to withdraw when a child developed a bone disease, said Junichiro Naito, Japanese Baptists' general secretary, who appointed Sakamaki to his new post.

By the year 2000, the convention plans to grow from 330 missions and churches to 500, Naito said.

Sakamaki said he expects his role promoting foreign missions among Japanese Baptists will come easily. Because of his experience with Highfill, he said, "I realize this is important work."

**NEW MISSIONARIES**  
Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin presents new missionary certificates to Wesley and Jane Loewer, who were among 63 missionaries appointed April 8 in Little Rock, Ark. (BP photo by Guy Lyons)

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*President Bill D. Whittaker shares, "Family describes Clear Creek. Our size encourages closer relationships between students, families and faculty/staff. Our low faculty-student ratio allows you to personally know the faculty, many of whom live on campus. One student noted, 'At Clear Creek the professors are professional in the classroom, cry with me in their office, and/or share a cup of coffee in their home.'"*



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