



# WESTERN RECORDER

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## What if dying patient wanted your help pulling the plug?

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

LOUISVILLE—John is a 35-year-old single man experiencing the last stages of lung cancer that has spread into other parts of his body. His doctor has said he has five months to live at most.

Faced with this news, John makes three requests of his doctor. First, he wants to stop all chemotherapy. Second, he wants to stop all pain medication. Third, he wants the doctor to turn off his pacemaker, which was installed about 10 years earlier due to a heart irregularity unrelated to his cancer.

He wants to die a "natural" death. If you were the doctor, what would you do?

This real-life story is one of several cases examined by participants in a conference on life and death decisions held April 17-18 at the Seelbach Hotel in Louisville. The conference for clergy, physicians, nurses and ethicists was sponsored by the Wayne Oates Center and the University of Louisville School of Medicine.

Participants spent about an hour bantering back and forth all the legal, medical, moral and ethical aspects of

John's case.

The case highlighted the complexity and difficulty created by many modern end-of-life scenarios. It also highlighted the different perspectives physicians, nurses, clergy and others have of such cases.

A physician wanted to know if the patient had been fully informed about the consequences of his decisions. That prompted a discussion revealing that most physicians are highly concerned about informed consent of their patients, but many terminally ill patients don't want to be fully informed.

One nurse commented that while the patient may sincerely want to stop pain medication, such a decision creates a difficult environment for everyone. "We have to watch the excruciating pain," she said.

That prompted another person to ask, "How private and how isolated should a person be allowed to remain in death?"

Another nurse explained that she sees a difference between withdraw-

ing treatment that has already begun and withholding treatment that has not begun. "Those of us at the bedside know there is a difference."

Yet another nurse confided: "You never forget what it feels like to turn off a ventilator, to turn off a drip."

This case also highlighted the difference between what patients request and what their ultimate values are, said Joan Gibson, the keynote speaker who presented the case.

She explained that in the real case, John's physician, with whom he had a good relationship, was willing to stop chemotherapy and stop pain medication, but was not willing to turn off the pacemaker. However, after much soul-searching, the physician offered to refer John to another physician who would be willing to deprogram the pacemaker.

He declined her offer. "The most important thing is that you are with me," John told the doctor. "I can't imagine going through this with someone else."

Gibson used this case to illustrate

why she thinks it is vital for medical personnel, family and friends to learn what values motivate patients.

"Often, when people say, 'I want to stay alive at all costs,' there's a story behind it. You need to find out what it is," she told the doctors and nurses.

Modern medical advances have radically changed the way Americans die, explained Gibson, director of the health sciences ethics program at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

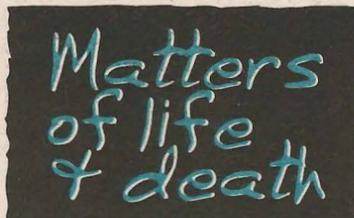
"Death waits in a waiting room to be summoned by a doctor or nurse," she said. "It's not that death has changed; it's that we are changing our position, our standpoint."

This new way of dying opens an array of moral and ethical questions, participants said.

For example, when others must make decisions for patients who no longer can speak for themselves, all types of motivations can lurk behind the surface.

Ultimately, modern medical advances have not changed attitudes about death, only attitudes about what leads to death, Gibson said. "It's not the death but the getting there that scares most people."

■ See more stories on page 8



### Heaven's Gate Ministries gets unexpected PR

JACKSON, N.J. (RNS)—A charitable organization with the same name as the quasi-religious group whose 39 members committed suicide in California last month has received a windfall from the publicity surrounding the Heaven's Gate tragedy.

Heaven's Gate Ministries, a small charity organization based in Jackson, N.J., has received calls from newspapers and radio shows daily since the mass suicide in Rancho Sante Fe, and its normally quiet World Wide Web site has had more than 8,000 hits.

During the two weeks after the suicides, the organization received about \$1,500 in donations, a relatively large amount compared to the \$12,000 the charity received in all of 1996.

According to the Chronicle of Philanthropy, the cash flow comes at a particularly good time for Heaven's Gate Ministries. Arsonists burned down its warehouse on Palm Sunday, destroying about \$100,000 worth of items.

"God is using the timing of this to take the focus away from something that isn't his will," said Robert Meyer, founder and president of the charity.

But Meyer said the publicity has had negative results, including receiving hate mail and phone calls from people who ask, "Why are you killing people?"



**PRAYER TIME** South Korean kindergarten students pray before their lunch in a central Seoul park. More than 40 percent of South Koreans are Christians, and such public prayer is not uncommon. (Reuters photo)

## Kentucky pastors start divorce care network

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

RICHMOND—Pastor Paul Sowders credits his church with helping him get through his 1994 divorce.

"They actually rejected my resignation and told me to take as much time as I needed and tell them when I was ready to come back," said Sowders, pastor of Gilead Baptist Church in Richmond.

Now Sowders and three other divorced pastors from Louisville, Lexington and Glasgow have organized Hope Net to assist pastors and pas-

tors' families encountering divorce.

Although his wife had left him with two children to raise, Sowders said his church members' prayers, letters and support enabled him to return to the pulpit on Mothers Day 1994 and preach about the role of a Christian mother.

"My church was very loving and very understanding throughout the process," he said. Not everyone was as graceful, he added.

"I had ministers tell me God didn't love me any more," said Sowders. "Some came within a hair of telling me I was bound for hell."

"Chuck Colson said the church is the only place that shoots their wounded, and unfortunately the pastors are some of the wounded being shot."

Sowders and other Hope Net organizers said they want to counteract the negative experiences some pastors have from their churches during divorce.

They offer counseling and other assistance to divorced pastors and their families, including several women who meet with ex-wives of clergy. Hope Net leaders hope to

□ See *Divorced Bluegrass ...*, page 12

Moving? See page 4 (0408)

# BAPTISTS

## Nettles and others praised as new seminary faculty

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

LOUISVILLE—One of the scholars whose writings on biblical inerrancy laid much of the academic underpinnings for the Southern Baptist Convention's conservative movement is among four new professors named at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary April 22.

Tom Nettles will join Southern's faculty under presidential appointment as professor of historical theology. He moves from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., where he has been professor of church history since 1989.

Nettles, 51, taught at another SBC school—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas—from 1976-1982 before moving for six years to Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, an independently operated Baptist school in Memphis, Tenn., and then to Trinity, an Evangelical Free Church school.

One Southern trustee described Nettles' appointment at Southern as representing his "coming home" to the SBC.

His 1980 book "Baptists and Bible" provided a backbone for the battle for belief in biblical inerrancy that ultimately carried conservative forces to power within the SBC.

Nettles also has been an ardent defender among Baptists of a theological system known as Calvinism. His 1986 book "By His Grace and for His

Glory" is an apologetic for Calvinism.

Nettles is among four professors who will join Southern's faculty next fall. At the same time, six elected faculty members have been elected to new teaching posts for the fall.

The group of new appointments and elections was a highlight of the April 21-22 meeting of Southern Seminary's trustees.

**Report on seminary trustee meeting, page 15**

Trustees and administrators alike spoke in superlatives to describe the new class of faculty.

President Al Mohler told trustees they were helping build "the foremost faculty of any evangelical institution."

Mohler called the faculty additions "a quantum leap forward" for the seminary, which has lost more than 70 percent of its faculty during four years of campus turmoil.

Others new to Southern's faculty include Herschael York, Robert Stein and Thomas Schreiner.

York, who has been pastor of Ashland Avenue Baptist Church in Lexington since 1990, received a presidential appointment as associate professor of Christian preaching. He holds both the bachelor of arts and master of arts degrees from the University of Kentucky and the master of divinity and doctor of philosophy degrees from Mid-America Seminary.

York, 37, also has served as chancellor of Lexington Baptist College, a Bible school affiliated with Ashland Avenue Baptist Church.

Stein, 62, since 1980 has been a

New Testament professor at Bethel Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. At Southern he will be professor of New Testament interpretation.

He holds the bachelor of arts degree from Rutgers University, the bachelor of divinity degree from Fuller Theological Seminary, the master of sacred theology degree from Andover Newton Theological Seminary and the doctor of philosophy degree from Princeton Seminary.

Danny Akin, Southern's vice president for academic administration, called Stein "one of the premier evangelical synoptic gospel scholars in the world today."

Schreiner, 43, also comes from Bethel Theological Seminary, where he has been a New Testament professor since 1986. He has received a presidential appointment at Southern as professor of New Testament interpretation.

He holds the bachelor of science degree from Western Oregon State College, the master of divinity and master of theology degrees from Western Conservative Baptist Seminary and the doctor of philosophy degree from Fuller Seminary.

Schreiner is considered an authority on the writings of the Apostle Paul, and has written four books on related topics.

In addition to these newcomers to Southern's faculty, five current faculty members have been named to new posts or granted tenure:

Timothy Beougher was elected with tenure as associate professor of

evangelism. Before moving to Southern last fall, Beougher taught at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Ill. He also serves as associate dean of Southern's Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth.

Paul House was elected with tenure as professor of Old Testament interpretation. Prior to moving to Southern last fall, he taught at Taylor University in Upland, Ind. He also serves as editor of Southern's new theological journal.

George Martin was elected associate professor of Christian missions. A former Southern Baptist missionary to Indonesia, Martin previously taught at North Greenville College in Tigerville, S.C.

Esther Rothenbusch was elected assistant professor of church music. She has taught at Southern since 1994 and is associate dean for professional studies.

Mark Simpson was elected associate professor of Christian education and leadership. He has been Southern's associate dean of Christian education since 1995, coming from Trinity Evangelical Seminary and Trinity International University in Deerfield, Ill.

Also during the April 21-22 trustee meeting, T. Vaughn Walker, professor of black church studies, was granted tenure, making him the first African-American to receive tenure at Southern Seminary. Walker also serves as pastor of First Gethsemane Baptist Church in Louisville.

## Presidential nominee Reccord says NAMB will serve churches

ATLANTA—In his first meeting with the press since being nominated to head the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, Bob Reccord said the new agency's approach will be to serve churches.

"We will ask, 'What do you in the field need?'" Reccord explained in a news conference April 24. "We will work in harmony with state conventions and fellowships and associations, so that it's not just a top-down, prepackaged item that we hand down."

Reccord said the new agency will be better suited than its predecessors to do mission work in the years ahead.

"The world has changed since the three agencies were created."

NAMB will be created officially June 19 and will replace three existing agencies which will be dissolved: the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio & Television Commission.

Reccord has been chairman of an implementation task force appointed by the SBC Executive Committee to oversee creation of the new mission board.

Reccord acknowledged some Southern Baptists may question his selection, since he chaired the group that helped shape the agency he will now lead. He said such concern is "logical" but he hopes Southern Baptists will give him a chance.

"I am as surprised as anybody to be sitting here," he said.

He resigned as chairman of the implementation task force in late February when the search committee identified him as the leading candidate.

However, Reccord's wife, Cheryl, told their current congregation April 20 that she knew three years ago her husband might be called to lead the new agency.

Recounting a discussion she and Bob Reccord had about SBC restructuring one day over lunch, she said, "At that table, on that day, it was as though God sat down and said, 'This is where you must be ready to go.' It startled me. Since that day, I've prayed, 'God, make me willing.'"

Mrs. Reccord shared her journey with members of First Baptist Church of Norfolk, Va., during a Sunday evening service in which Reccord announced he will resign as pastor if elected to the NAMB post.

At the Atlanta news conference four days later, other Baptist leaders defended the process that produced Reccord's nomination.

"There was no reward system or anything of that nature," said Bill Hogue, chairman of the presidential search committee. The group entered the process with a "blank sheet," he told reporters.

While Reccord's work with the implementation task force "was not a consideration," Hogue said, "the knowledge that he attained through his leadership role" will help him in the NAMB job.

Standing before his Norfolk congregation April 20, Reccord said, "I know I must be obedient to what God is saying to me at this point. Tonight I would like to ask you a big favor: Please love us enough to grant us a release to take that step, because we feel like it's a step we must take."

Members of the congregation then joined Reccord and his wife at the altar for a time of prayer.

During the Atlanta news conference, Reccord said the policy of secrecy he adopted as leader of the implementation task force, which conducted all its meetings in private and issued only occasional news releases, will not be repeated at NAMB. "Those

are two different animals," he said.

Meanwhile, Reccord and other task force officials offered little additional information about the ongoing process of naming staff members for the new agency.

In recent weeks, many staff members at all three existing agencies either have been terminated or offered positions with NAMB, but others have heard no word of their fates. A three-member subgroup of the implementation task force has made most decisions about who will be offered jobs and who will be released.

NAMB is slated to employ 350 workers, 165 fewer than the combined payrolls of the three agencies it replaces.

John Yarbrough, pastor of First Baptist Church of Perry, Ga., and Reccord's successor as chairman of the task force, said about 300 of those jobs have been offered to current employees of the three agencies. Another 30-plus employees have been told they may be offered jobs that others decide not to take, but they must wait until May 1 to find out.

Those offered jobs include about 20 current Brotherhood employees, about 70 at the RTVC and approximately 210 at the HMB, he said. Other positions will be filled by newcomers.

Reccord will nominate the five vice presidents in the new structure, but only after his own election in June.

Based on Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press reports



# KENTUCKY

## Hyde asks for compassion in abortion issue

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

LOUISVILLE—Women facing the possibility of abortions deserve compassion, not condemnation, Congressman Henry Hyde told an anti-abortion banquet audience April 18.

"I've heard the decision described in some cases as an animal in a steel trap having to chew off his own leg to escape—it's that tough," he said. "And it can be."

"That's the time the pro-life movement has to be there to help and provide care and nurture."

Hyde was the keynote speaker at the annual banquet of Kentucky Right to Life. It was the Illinois Republican's third appearance before the group since 1978.

The turnout of 700 marked the largest since 900 heard him in 1981, according to Executive Director Margie Montgomery.

While acknowledging he was "preaching to the converted," Hyde said the audience needed reinforcement. Anti-abortion advocates get few rewards, usually reaping exhaustion and vilification, he said.

"People need to be told what they're doing is terribly important," said Hyde, who led Congress to ban federal funding for abortions.

"I get weary, too, but we win. We have stopped federal funding of abortion. (The House of Representatives) twice passed a bill outlawing partial birth abortion. Those are substantial achievements."

The proposed ban on a late-term abortion procedure termed 'partial-birth abortion' by its opponents soon will go before the Senate.

The margin of victory in the House of Representatives would be sufficient to represent a veto, but Hyde didn't speculate about the Senate vote. He encouraged citizens who oppose abortion to contact their senators soon.

Hyde was joined at the head table by three Kentucky congressional representatives and Sen. Mitch McConnell.

During his speech, Hyde criticized abortion advocates' "pro-choice" language, saying everyone supports choice, but with pregnancy the choice is whether a baby will live or die.

The abortion battle is tough because it marks a struggle between Judeo-Christian ethics and humanist ideals, he said.

"We hold that all men are equal in the essentials. Each of us was created by God in his likeness. Secular humanists say man is a tool-making animal," he said.

"The sanctity of life holds that every life is sacred. Intelligent and well-meaning people support abortion because they don't make the connection between life and the life in the womb, because it's so small."

Hyde said the Declaration of Independence guarantees everyone the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Abortion is wrong, he said, because it denies the smallest members of the human family their right to life.

Hyde claimed the pro-abortion movement was built on lies, beginning with the allegation that 10,000 women annually sought "back-alley," illegal abortions before they were legal.

Hyde noted that in *Roe vs. Wade*, in which the Supreme Court legalized abortion, the plaintiff lied, claiming to have been raped.

In the debate about "partial-birth" abortions, supporters claimed the procedure was rare and only done to protect the health of mothers, Hyde said. This year, however, Ron Fitzsimons, executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, said the procedure is done "for the most part" on healthy mothers and healthy fetuses.

Hyde also noted that critics say anti-abortion advocates only care about babies until they are born. "But there are more than 3,000 pregnancy centers (nationwide) to help unwed mothers with their needs."

Hyde lauded those who work against abortion, calling this movement history's greatest because it doesn't have any self-interest.

"It loves people who can't love them back," Hyde said.

The audience included 11 members of Fern Creek Baptist Church. Deacon Marty Childress, a Right to Life board member, said he hopes to encourage more Baptist participation in the group.

"For quite a while this has been a place for a lot of the Catholic faith to get involved," he said. "But it's a bigger issue than that."

public realm, they would be aghast," said Fletcher, who is still a member of Ninth and O.

Much of the discussion centered on the Supreme Court's impact on school prayer. Holladay claimed prayer has never been removed from schools.

A 1962 decision that ended state-led prayer simply said the state had no business prescribing daily devotional practices or their content, he said.

A ruling in 1963 also decried by many Christians overturned mandatory Bible readings and recitations of the Lord's Prayer in Pennsylvania and Maryland schools, the pastor added.

He said the justices called this "religious devotions" that shouldn't be led by state authorities. The Supreme Court said the state could neither advance nor inhibit religion because freedom of religion is never subject to a vote, he said.

"I don't think anybody in our community doubts a relationship with God is necessary to be a whole person. But the court said government had to be neutral. It couldn't promote religion. If they do, the question becomes whose religion is favored."

However, Fletcher argued the Supreme Court departed from 170 years of legal precedents in its 1962 ruling that stopped New York students from reciting a prayer.

That decision marked the first time the court had ever defined a separation between church and state—words that don't appear in the Constitution, he said.

That ruling quoted from Thomas Jefferson's 1802 letter to a group of Baptists from Danbury, Va., he said. They were concerned about potential state recognition of the Congregational church.

But the Supreme Court lifted words from this letter out of context, Fletcher said. Previously, the court had used Jefferson's message to support Christian practices in public, he said.

"The world of our founding fathers is not the world we live in," he said. "When we talk about establishment and intent, we have to be careful we don't take our 20th century interpretations with us."

"I'm contending the exclusion of Christian principles and practices (in public places) is a 180-degree turn from the culture of the men who established the nation."

During the comment period after Holladay and Fletcher's talks, two observers said the emphasis on returning prayer in public schools is misplaced. Lee Going said prayers were part of his school life, but his faith stemmed from the training he received at home.

A.B. Harmon, a member of St. Matthews Baptist Church, cited the growing presence of Muslims as a danger in endorsing one faith over another.

"If we give Christianity the play you propose," he asked Fletcher, "what will happen to Christians 200 years down the road when the Muslim religion is dominant?"

## Pulaski Association rescinds rule barring female messengers

SOMERSET—Pulaski Baptist Association has ended a 66-year-old tradition of allowing only males to serve as messengers to associational meetings.

The word "male" was removed from the article on messengers in the association's constitution by a 58-28 vote April 10. The vote was taken during the association's annual spring meeting, held at Woodstock Baptist Church.

Pulaski had been among a small number of Kentucky Baptist associations that prohibit women from serving as messengers. The vast majority of associations allow local churches to send both male and female messengers to associational meetings.

Clyde Strunk, moderator of Pulaski Association and pastor of Buena Vista Baptist Church in Somerset, said the males-only requirement had been a source of disagreement in the association for more than a decade.

The last attempt at changing the requirement, about eight years ago, was defeated by a narrow margin, he said. A constitutional amendment requires a two-thirds vote.

Even with the affirmative vote for change this time, significant opposition remained, Strunk said.

"Before I called the session to order, I just made the statement that we have a very diverse association," he explained. "Even myself and our associate moderator were on opposite sides of the fence but still had respect for one another."

During debate on the motion, three messengers spoke in favor of the change and one spoke against it, he said.

The association had not always banned female messengers, according to Jimmy McKinney, pastor of New Enterprise Baptist Church in Somerset and author of the association's history.

At the time of its founding in 1904, Pulaski Association placed no gender requirement on messengers. Between 1904 and 1930, 19 churches sent women as messengers to associational meetings, he said.

The word "male" was inserted in the constitution in 1931. McKinney said he could find no historical record of why the change was made.

## Louisville Baptists discuss church-state issues

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

LOUISVILLE—School prayer, church-state separation and the intent of the framers of the Constitution were among the topics discussed by Baptists in Louisville's Long Run Baptist Association April 21.

The association's Christian life committee sponsored a public forum on prayer in public schools. The April 21 forum at Third Avenue Baptist Church drew about 12 people.

The danger of state-sponsored religious prayer, according to Jim Holladay, is that it aligns religious practices with different majorities in different regions.

As a result, Baptist prayer would prevail in Georgia, Mormon prayer in Salt Lake City and "Lord only knows what" in Los Angeles, said Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church.

"If you think government promoting religion is a good thing, just go to England," he said. "Churches are dying all over the place."

But David Fletcher said framers of the U.S. Constitution never intended to separate Christian principles from government.

Many of the founding fathers believed in Christ, said Fletcher, who until recently was youth pastor at Ninth and O Baptist Church. The Constitution's framers desired to avoid the Protestant and Catholic-dominated politics they experienced in Europe.

"If they saw a government that barred Christian expression in the

## Kentucky Baptist Brotherhood Director Bob Simpkins resigns

Bob Simpkins has resigned as director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Brotherhood department, according to a statement released April 25 by Jim Hawkins, interim executive secretary-treasurer.

The statement explained that Simpkins was leaving the KBC staff for "personal reasons."

Simpkins came to the Brotherhood position in 1987 from the pastorate of South Fork Baptist Church in Hodgenville. He previously served Loyola Baptist Church in Loyola, Sulphur Spring Baptist Church in Mexico, Pleasant Valley Baptist Church in Uno, Knoxes Creek Baptist Church in Linwood and First Baptist Church of Forest Hills.

Hawkins noted that Kentucky Brotherhood made significant advances under Simpkins' leadership.

"Bob Simpkins has led the Brotherhood ministries into the areas of disaster relief, Habitat for Humanity, Kentucky Changers and a host of other mission-action ministries that have creatively involved Kentucky Baptist men and women," Hawkins said. "In the coming year, we are committed to continuing these ministries in the most effective ways possible."

Larry Martin, director of the KBC's missions and evangelism division, echoed those sentiments. "The past several years of Brotherhood work have witnessed significant growth in many areas of ministry. We will continue our commitment to these crucial ministries."

Hawkins said Martin and John Lott, Brotherhood department associate, will direct the department's work until further arrangements are made.

# OPINION

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Inaccurate and unfair

I was both excited and then confused by Mark Wingfield's editorial, er, story, about Hershael York's appointment to the faculty of Southern Seminary (April 15, page 2). Excited, because I thought I would probably learn how God had used this man to take a declining church and see it grow 18 percent per year for the last six years. Excited, because I thought I might discover how this man graduated from Michigan State with honors, how he earned an M.A. in classical languages from U.K., how he finished his M.Div. from Mid-America in record time, and how he had led a very traditional church to start new and innovative ministries that would make Wilcox Creek envious.

I was confused, though, because as I read the editorial, er, story, I thought, No, this is an article about Ross Range (three paragraphs). Then I read further, and came to the conclusion, No, I get it now—it's an article about Landmarkism (five paragraphs). Then I thought I really understood: It's a story about W.H. Whitsitt and the 1897 Whitsitt controversy (three paragraphs).

In all, only six paragraphs, discussed Hershael York, and they read as if they could have been taken from a resume.

I have greatly enjoyed Mark's leadership of the Western Recorder. He brings a fairness to the paper that was missing before, but I feel that in this instance, his biases got in the way of objective reporting. It seemed the intent of the editorial, er, story, was to link York with an extreme element of Landmarkism. This implication is both inaccurate and unfair.

Bruce Truman  
Owingsville

## Wrong focus

How disheartening to see the April 15 Western Recorder choose to overlook the important issues and news pertaining to Ashland Avenue Baptist Church returning to the Southern Baptist Convention and its pastor, Hershael York, resigning to join the faculty at Southern Seminary.

I believe it says something about the focus of the Western Recorder that a secular newspaper, the Lexington Herald-Leader, carried a front page story that dealt more with spiritual matters than the Western Recorder story.

The Western Recorder's account dwelled on a letter by the previous Ashland Avenue pastor that was written when York was 10 years old, and on a century-old booklet, "The Trail of Blood."

You failed to mention the more pertinent issues, such as Ashland Avenue's diligence in evangelizing its community and its reputation as a conservative church that cares about people.

The Herald-Leader talked about the difficulty of York's decision—

of leaving a church he loves greatly, a church where his parents were saved, baptized and married, and a church where he has labored faithfully and diligently. That account also noted that as a professor of preaching at Southern Seminary, he will have the opportunity to influence many seminary students and directly touch thousands of lives.

It's hard to imagine how the Western Recorder could have put a more negative slant on what is positive news—a gifted young man, successful in his ministry, going to Southern Seminary to do what he sincerely believes God is leading him to do—and a strong church going back into the Southern Baptist Convention.

It's unfortunate the Western Recorder didn't handle this story in a more appropriate manner.

Chip Hutcherson  
Princeton

## Disagree on Ali

As a Jewish man married to a Southern Baptist woman, I read with interest your editorial, "Ali's appeal for tolerance is intolerant," (April 1, page 5).

I will not dispute your belief that there is only one way to God (through Jesus) or your right to express that belief. I would only ask that you consider potential consequences of such a belief.

I agree that evangelical Christianity is exclusive in that it considers itself the only way for one to be reconciled to God, or to be "saved." The implication, however, is that those who do not choose Christianity are denied not only salvation for the hereafter, but validation for the here and now ("...he who does not believe is condemned already.") Christian believers are included in God's plan for salvation, but non-believers are marginalized, and, in some cases, even demonized. This sets the stage for persecution.

Most evangelical Christians are men and women of goodwill who would not want to see harm befall other human beings. But when the idea of Christian supremacy is institutionalized by the Southern Baptist Convention, it is not difficult to understand why they would pass a resolution to convert the Jews, most of whom are unwilling converts.

It bears frightening resemblance to the Spanish Inquisition of 1492, where 200,000 Jews were expelled from Spain because of their religious beliefs. The Catholics of the day were not so much interested in winning the Jews to Christ as to devolve them of their political, economic and cultural influence, which threatened the church's own power.

I would remind the evangelical Christian community that the Catholic Inquisition labeled not only Jews as heretics, but Protestants as well. I hope you would consider that the next time you use John 3:18 to "condemn" those of us who believe differently than you.

David Marwil  
Lexington

## Infant baptism

There has been ample counsel regarding child evangelism across the years for those who looked for it. A current capsule of advice was in Western Recorder's Family Forum column by Jewell Nelson (Feb. 25, page 4). The question was: "My 4-year-old wants to be baptized. How do I know when he is ready?"

The counselor answered by a probing question in turn: Ask why he wants to be baptized. Further, ask questions that cannot be answered by yes or no.

The basic error in feverish evangelism, whether for children or adults, is a faulty theology and a dogmatic way of interpreting the Bible. When this anxiety about souls is traced to origins and sources, it is biblical literalism. In this case, it's sacramental religion, or baptismal regeneration. In short, this literalism insists that baptism saves.

In the slippery slope of bad theology, human rationalizing comes in. An early church father is quoted as saying, "There are infants in hell not a span long for the want of baptism."

A New Testament professor from Campbellite background years ago said, "When you miss what the Scripture really teaches, you back yourself into all kinds of ridiculous corners." He had witnessed many babies "baptized" and knew the absurdity.

But a worse commentary is that many Baptists for decades have had a right interpretation of Scripture regarding baptism (believer's baptism), yet bowed to expediency and some form of political and religious correctness in other ways.

An anxiety about childhood decisions for salvation usually springs from the basic error of biblical literalism just as the sacramentalists do. It's also a lack of faith.

Again, Jewell Nelson puts it well: "When the Holy Spirit deals with your son, the Spirit will know when your son is ready, and so will you."

To ignore such scriptural counseling is to foster more backlash that won't quit.

Don Cassidy  
Premium

## God does know

James Clark stated (April 22, page 4), "Has God limited himself to not knowing what a believer will be doing tomorrow? Yes."

I disagree. If Clark would read 1 Chronicles 28:9, Isaiah 25:1, Romans 8:28 and others, he would see that God knows all.

I do agree that God made us free to choose, but he knows which way we will choose.

Why would God choose Saul as Israel's first king? After all, he didn't turn out so well. However, God works out his will in the lives of people, even in their hurts and disappointments and in the good times.

But Clark never answers the question "Does God cause disaster?" Read Isaiah 43:2, Ecclesiastes 8:9-14 and 2 Corinthians 7:10.

Why does God let things happen? I do not know, but I do know God is with me.

Bill Taylor  
Elizabethtown

## AGING

### How to live to reach 100

By John Lepper

"If I had known I was going to live so long, I would have taken better care of myself."

So goes the quip which reminds us that "taking care of ourselves" needs to begin early in life.

The book "100 Ways to Live to 100" provides practical ways of making life-style contribute to life span. Some

predictable subjects point to the importance of proper nutrition, good medical care and maintaining a sound body.

What the reader might not expect is that entire sections are devoted to such subjects as heredity, safety and environment. The authors maintain that accidents do not come about by fate. Instead, accidents are predetermined by carelessly setting optimal conditions for accidents to happen. We can go about making accidents not happen by not taking chances, by paying attention, by practicing safety first.

You may have been disturbed by toxic wastes or polluted air, but you may not have thought about how these negatively affect your own life span. Admittedly, solutions to some environmental problems are too big for individuals to control. We can, to some extent, however, control the environment we expose ourselves to. We can banish cigarette smoke from our homes. We can protect our skin from damaging rays of the sun by using sunscreen. We can test our tap water for toxins.

Heredity—how can we control that? If we're working toward living to 100, it's a bit late to choose our ancestors! Even so, we can do much in the area of heredity. By learning about the medical histories of our blood relatives, we can aid in early detection and treatment of life-threatening conditions. By doing some research about the medical histories of our relatives, we can assist our doctor in drawing conclusions about our areas of vulnerability. We also can alter our lifestyles to prevent diseases to which we are susceptible.

Even clean and healthy living provides no guarantee of long life. We cannot choose all the changes and chances which befall us in life. As stewards of God's gift of life, we are called to make wise and healthy choices which can contribute to a long life.

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



## HE SAID/SHE SAID

### Way things look where you are depends on where you've been

#### SHESAI



Alison Wingfield

After living in Kentucky for almost six years, I am beginning to get the lay of the land.

Whenever you move to a new place, particularly in a different part of the country, it can seem like a foreign land. Just moving from Albuquerque, N.M., where I grew up, to Fort Worth, Texas, was a bit of a shock. Texas is a country unto itself.

But I was in for a bigger shock when we moved from Fort Worth to Atlanta.

On our way there, we stopped at a Wendy's somewhere in Alabama. When I asked for iced tea, the order taker said what sounded like: "Swait, ohr uhnswait?" Once I unraveled all the vowels, I realized she was asking if I wanted sweet or unsweet tea. Welcome to the South.

Although Kentucky's Southern roots are evident, it has a different flavor than Georgia. For one thing, it is easier to understand people here. But then again, what really is the proper pronunciation for "Louisville?"

There are all sorts of idiosyncrasies we've had to get used to. When you ask a native Kentuckian where she is from, she usually doesn't name a city or town. It is always, "I'm from so-and-so county." Not being a native, I usually don't have the faintest idea where they mean.

Like any state, Kentucky consists of some strange bedfellows. A recent article describing the results of a hot air balloon contest during the Kentucky Derby Festival highlights this. The winners were, in this order, a Baptist church balloon, a balloon for a liquor company, and the Kentucky Lotto balloon. I'm glad the Baptists came in first. Baptists, booze and betting. Just don't get the three mixed up.

But the best thing about Kentucky and particularly Kentucky Baptists, is their acceptance of people, Mark and me included.

When they play "My Old Kentucky Home," I can sing and cry right along with the best of them, because this is my home now too.

#### HESAI



Mark Wingfield

As a non-native who now gladly claims Kentucky as home, I'm still confused about one thing: Why does everyone insist on saying the word "Kentucky" after the name of their hometown?

You could be standing in downtown Lexington and have this conversation:

"Where are you from?"

"Lexington, Kentucky."

Maybe it's just pride for the commonwealth or maybe it's because

Kentucky has so many cities and towns with names duplicated in other states. (I'm sure Kentucky claimed them first.) Although I do think the accent alone would be a dead giveaway that you're not from London, England.

Having logged a significant number of miles on Kentucky's highways in the last six years, I know the state best by its road signs. If you live anywhere along I-65, I-64, the West Kentucky Parkway or I-75, I know your exit.

And if there's a Dairy Queen in your hometown along the highway, I've been there. I know every Blizzard outlet in the state. (Incidentally, if there are any DQ execs reading this, it's a long way from Louisville to Munfordsville. I-65 needs more Dairy Queens.)

Having been raised in the Southwest where Baptist churches are relatively young, one of the most amazing things to me about Kentucky is the number of churches that are 150, 200 or more years old. That's a remarkable legacy.

It's clear that Baptists have a home in Kentucky. Let's keep working together to make sure Kentuckians can find a home among Baptists.

## World history shows amendment not wise

The persecution of Christians is on the rise worldwide today. Many evil factors have conspired to create this situation, but one of those factors often is overlooked by Americans.

Some of the most severe persecution and hatred toward Christians is happening in countries where Christianity and Christian missionaries once enjoyed a privileged status under colonial rule. Now that colonial rule has ended, the privileges have been withdrawn with a vengeance.

In these countries, the Christian church often rode on the coattails of political power and took advantage of special benefits. Those who didn't have such special benefits, or who witnessed the abuse of these benefits in the name of God, didn't forget. Now the tables have been turned.

Like Esau, Christian missionaries and other church leaders sold their birthrights for bowls of porridge in these countries. The short-term benefits have become the source of a long-term hindrance to the gospel.

This is a lesson America's religious community would do well to remember in our ongoing debate over the meaning of religious liberty. What may appear expedient for religious gain today could tomorrow become a hindrance to the very gospel we seek to advance. By claiming special privilege or taking special benefits, we could be unwittingly sowing animosity toward our faith.

This dilemma is seen clearly today in an effort by some ultra-conservatives to amend the United States Constitution. A so-called "Religious Liberty Amendment" put forth by Rep. Ernest Istook and now endorsed by the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission would amend the Constitution to provide further interpretation of the First Amendment.

While couched in language of religious liberty, this proposed amendment really is about gaining a constitutional foothold for school prayer and school vouchers. What religious ultra-conservatives have not been able to gain through court order they now seek to demand through a constitutional amendment.

A statement of intent included with the Istook amendment interprets the First Amendment this way: "The establishment clause ... would not bar a voucher system

that permitted a parent to select a school of their choice for their children, which includes a religious school if they so choose."

And the main text of the Istook amendment says in part: "The people's right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs, heritage or traditions on public property, including schools, shall not be infringed."

It adds that while government "shall not require any person to join in prayer or other religious activity, initiate or designate school prayers (or) discriminate against religion," government also must not deny "a benefit due to religion."

#### EDITORIAL

Is religion entitled to any "benefit" from government? Not according to the traditional interpretation of the First Amendment, which begins, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof ..."

Istook and his allies argue that government doesn't establish religion so long as it hands out benefits to all religions equally. But how can that be accomplished without creating another government bureaucracy? And who's going to determine what's a legitimate religion and whether it receives equal treatment?

And, more importantly, why does religion need government's help anyway?

The Bible teaches us that Jesus said to "render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's." But nowhere do we hear Jesus admonishing his disciples to take from Caesar when it benefits the cause.

And besides, seeking special status or benefit is the antithesis of the way Jesus taught us to live. Paul and Timothy, in their letter to the Philippians, said we should imitate Jesus, who made himself of no account, who humbled himself, who took the nature of a servant. Jesus never asked government to aid his cause.

Granted, government should not be hostile toward religion and should allow free exercise of religion. But Christians have no right to expect government to accommodate or benefit their religion.

Those points are adequately covered in the First Amendment. For the sake of this and future generations of believers, no further amendment is necessary.

— Mark Wingfield

## 911

By Carey Newman

The forceful rapping awakened me from my slumber. I was surprised to discover my friend on the other side of the door, looking agitated. He had just returned from a hastily called meeting of community leaders (he was there representing the PTA) where the issue of racism was addressed.

The two-hour, heated debate only illustrated the undercurrent of strong feelings. While everyone bemoaned the recent escalation of violence, no one had any substantive suggestions. In frustration, he looked at me and said, "How can the church sit idly by when so much is at stake?"

The Old Testament is replete with commissioning stories. God commanded Adam to be fruitful and multiply. He called Abraham out of Ur and promised him posterity. He specifically chose Moses, the judges and the prophets.

The same is true in the New Testament. Peter, Paul and John are all prime examples of those who received God's special commissioning. From

beginning to end, the Bible consistently depicts God as giving certain individuals some great task to perform.

However, the mandates God gives to individuals may cause us to miss a most important feature of the Bible. God commissioned a whole nation, Israel, to take an active part in extending his grace to those outside the bounds of Judaism. God reissued this same assignment to the disciples: in the power of the Spirit, the risen Jesus told them to go to the ends of the earth with the good news.

Whether issued to individuals or to a group, God has given his people a great task—to live in and care for this world just as God would.

An unprecedented amount of rain in a 24-hour period (12 inches) placed Leanne and myself in a difficult position. We watched with great distress as the sump pump in our newly renovated basement began to lose the war against the rising water. The situation became desperate when water began to flood out of the laundry room and onto the carpet and furniture.

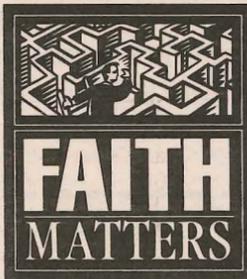
When this occurred we did not

summon an expert on sump pumps. Nor did we consult authorities on basements. Neither did we convene a symposium of flood veterans to address the emotional havoc wreaked by losing carpet and furniture.

We simply grabbed the first object in sight and began to bail water. Only after a few trips up the stairs and out the door did we abandon our little buckets and grab the garbage cans. The urgency of the moment demanded that all other concerns be shelved so that all energies could be focused on one great task—saving the basement.

No question about it: God has given his Spirit and gifted people to the church for her own enjoyment and benefit. But there is not even the slightest doubt that there is an urgent need in the world, and the church sins each and every time it does not throw itself headlong into the task of healing broken lives and changing oppressive structures.

God's people never can sit idly by, for he has given us a great, urgent and all-consuming task. I told my friend to grab a bucket. *Not only should the church be a community which prefigures all that is true and good about the Kingdom, but the church is also the people to whom God has given the pressing assignment of transforming the world.*



## Point: Resurgent Calvinism leads to 'dunghill'

By W.R. Estep

**"To say that God created some for damnation and others for salvation is to deny that all have been created in the image of God."**

Only the most out-of-touch Southern Baptist could be unaware of the attempt on the part of some within our ranks to promote a 19th century version of Calvinism among Southern Baptists as a return to the original theology of the first English Baptists.

This newfound fascination with Calvin and the system of theology that bears his name is both an intriguing and puzzling development, since most of the ardent advocates of this movement have only a slight knowledge of Calvin or his system as set forth in the "Institutes of the Christian Religion." They simply borrow that which they assume to be both biblical and baptistic without adequate research. This is essentially what James P. Boyce did, as reflected in his "Abstract of Systematic Theology."

Charles Hodge, the most influential of the Princetonian theologians of the 19th century (d. 1878), was Boyce's mentor at Princeton (1849-1851). Thoroughly enamored with Hodge and his three-volume "Systematic Theology," Boyce taught Hodge's version of Calvinism at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, which Basil Manly also incorporated in modified form in the seminary's "Abstract of Principles" (1858).

These documents provide the pretense upon which Ernest Reisinger has attempted to call Southern Baptists back to what he conceives to have been their Calvinistic roots. This assumption must be challenged on the basis of the original Baptist vision and its theological insights.

■ **John Calvin (1509-1564).** Calvin is best known for his "Institutes," which first appeared in 1536. After several revisions, the definitive edition was published in 1559 in four volumes. He was also the Reformer of Geneva.

Trained in law, Calvin attempted to

form a church-state for which he drew up laws and set up a "Consistory," not unlike courts of the Inquisition in the medieval Catholic Church. This church court condemned many for "heresy" (spiritual crimes), some of whom were executed by the civil authorities and others were exiled. Among those condemned, Michael Servetus was burned at the stake for disagreeing with Calvin on the nature of the Trinity and "anabaptism." Jerome Bolsec was exiled for disagreeing with Calvin on the doctrine of predestination.

Admittedly, this was the 16th century and the pressures on Calvin were enormous; but when all of these factors, political, sociological, and religious, are considered, Calvin cannot be exonerated. He was no advocate of religious freedom, but an autocrat who often mistook his own will for the will of God.

Calvin never was able to free himself from his Roman Catholic heritage. The tenacity with which he held to infant baptism, a church-state in which a sin against the church became a crime against the state and the use of the civil government to enforce conformity to the Genevan theocracy reflect his adherence to the "Codex Justinian." His Old Testament hermeneutics and his own uncontrollable temper ascribed to his intolerance of those who disagreed with him. A case in point was his quarrel with Jerome Bolsec over predestination.

■ **Controversy over predestination.** While it is difficult to state briefly Calvin's view of predestination, perhaps the best summary is that given by

Calvin himself: "By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death."

Bolsec could not accept Calvin's position, which seemed to erect a whole

system of theology on "eternal decrees" without any reference to Christ or the love that caused God to offer his Son as a sacrifice for sinful humanity. Bolsec did not deny man's sinful nature or the

need of salvation, but his view of election focused on Christ and the grace made available to believers through faith in Christ.

He also recognized the individual's ability to respond in faith or to reject God's gift of salvation. In doing so, there was no room in Geneva for Jerome Bolsec. He was expelled from the city.

■ **Baptists and Calvinism.** Baptists arose out of the English Puritan-Separatist movement, which was Calvinistic, but they modified their Calvinistic heritage to a considerable degree. The first English Baptists of record (c. 1608), came to be known as "General Baptists," since they held that Christ died for all and not just for the elect. Their Calvinism almost completely vanished under Anabaptist-Mennonite influence.

The "Particular Baptists" (c. 1641) were so designated because they held with the English Puritans that Christ died only for the elect. But they also modified their Calvinism, as Glen Stassen has shown, under the influence of Menno Simons' "Foundation Book," which they quoted, at times, verbatim in the First London Confession of 1644. Its revision in 1646 reveals a further departure from Calvinism in their rejection of the fourfold ministry of John Calvin's invention and by greatly enlarging article 43 on religious freedom and the separation of church and state.

While Baptists rarely have been doctrinaire Calvinists, as a careful study of the literary sources reveal, there have been some Baptists from time to time who have advocated such a position. When John Ryland Sr. called William Carey "a miserable enthusiast" and told him to sit down and that God "would save the heathen without your help or mine," he reflected the hyper-Calvinism of John Gill, who set forth his position in numerous works and prided himself on never extending an invitation for a sinner to trust Christ during his entire London pastorate of more than 50 years.

Andrew Fuller wrote "The Gospel Worthy of all Acceptation" against Gill's Calvinism, concluding: "Had matters gone on but a few years, the Baptists would have become a perfect dunghill in society." It was Fuller's modification of Calvinism among the Baptists that made possible the foreign mission movement of which Carey became the catalyst.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon often has been cited by Baptists as a staunch Calvinist. At times the young Spurgeon claimed to be exactly that, but at other times, it is clear that he was neither a hyper-Calvinist nor even a consistent Calvinist. A.C. Underwood, in "A History of English Baptists," writes that Spurgeon's "rejection of a limited atonement would have horrified John Calvin."

According to Underwood, Spurgeon often prayed, "Hasten to bring in all thine elect, and then elect some more." The mature Spurgeon confided in Archbishop Benson, "I'm a very bad Calvinist, quite a Calvinist—I look on to the time when the elect will be all the world." Upon this occasion the archbishop wrote in his diary: "This I don't understand, I fear."

■ **Problems with Calvinism.** Apparently Baptists always have had problems with an unmodified Calvinism. Only a few can be mentioned here.

First: It is a system of theology without biblical support. It assumes to know more about God and the eternal decrees upon which it is based than God has chosen to reveal in Scripture or in Christ. To say that God created some for damnation and others for salvation is to deny that all have been created in the image of God.

It also reflects upon both God's holiness and justice, as portrayed in the Bible. Further, Calvinism appears to deny John 3:16; John 1:12; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:9,10; Ephesians 2:8-10 and numerous other passages of Scripture that indicate, as Baptist confessions have consistently stated, that salvation comes to those who respond to God's grace in faith.

Second: Calvinism's God resembles Allah, the god of Islam, more than the God of grace and redeeming love revealed in Jesus Christ.

Third: It robs the individual of responsibility for his or her own conduct, making a person into a puppet on a string or a robot programmed from birth to death with no will of his/her own.

Fourth: Historically, Calvinism has been marked by intolerance and a haughty spirit. Calvin's Geneva, the Synod of Dort (1618-1619), and the Regular Baptists (Hardshells, Primitives and Two Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists) are only some of numerous examples of this Calvinistic blight.

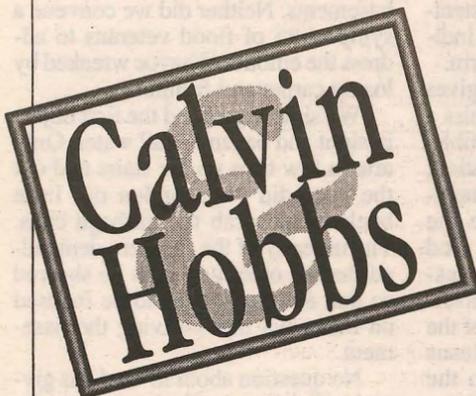
Fifth: Logically, Calvinism is anti-missionary. The Great Commission is meaningless if every person already is programmed for salvation or damnation, for evangelism and missionary efforts are exercises in futility.

Apparently, Calvinism is an excursion into speculative theology with predictable results, which we as Southern Baptists can ill afford. It introduces another divisive element in a badly divided denomination. If the Calvinizing of Southern Baptists continues unabated, we are in danger of becoming "a perfect dunghill" in American society, to borrow a phrase from Andrew Fuller.

*W.R. Estep is distinguished professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He holds degrees from Berea College, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southwestern Seminary. A native of Williamsburg, he previously served pastorates at Viney Fork Baptist Church near Richmond and First Baptist Church of Cold Spring.*



### Reprints available



In November 1994, the Western Recorder published a series of articles explaining the tenets of Calvinism and exploring the influence of modern-day Calvinists in Southern Baptist life. Due to high demand, back copies of this Western Recorder issue have sold out. However, the articles as they first appeared have been repackaged in a special reprint edition in a convenient 8 1/2 by 11 inch format.

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## Counterpoint: Calvinism leads to renewal in SBC

By Al Mohler

One of the most promising signs of renewal in Southern Baptist life is the emergence of genuine theological discussion and historical interest. After decades marked by the absence of significant interest in many doctrines, Southern Baptists are awakening to historic doctrinal debates in a new key.

As if awakened from doctrinal amnesia, the denomination faces the promise of both renewal and reformation. In this process, we may recover our theological heritage even as we address our modern context of ministry.

William Estep, one of Southern Baptists' most distinguished historians, has recently directed attention to a resurgent Calvinism in Southern Baptist life. The "Calvinism" of the Southern Baptist Convention, he fears, is a dangerous development.

I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond and to present a very different understanding of what is at stake. Though vitriolic and harsh in tone, Estep's article deserves a respectful and thoughtful response.

First, let me state at the onset that if Calvinism is accurately represented by Estep's treatment, I will have nothing to do with it. Nevertheless, few of Calvin's friends or enemies will recognize Calvinism as presented in Estep's article.

**Calvin and Calvinism.** Calvinism clearly draws its name from John Calvin, the 16th century reformer whose towering intellect and biblical preaching gave birth to the "Reformed" tradition as one of the central streams of the Reformation. Calvin's mission was to establish the Church on the basis of Scripture, with its doctrine and practice drawn from Scripture itself.

His "Institutes of the Christian Religion," first published in 1536, was his effort to set forth the doctrine revealed in the Bible. Few works have come close to the "Institutes" in terms of influence in the Church. Elsewhere, Estep has described the "Institutes" as "one of Protestantism's greatest attempts at erecting a systematic theology." Calvinism is simply a Reformation tradition which is associated most closely with Calvin.

Estep presents a very severe portrait of Calvin the reformer, and those looking for severity in Calvin need not look far. He was a 16th century man who bore many of the prejudices and political dispositions common to his day. He would not understand the notion of religious liberty, and he was ready to use the arm of the law to enforce correct doctrine.

No Calvinist I know would advocate Calvin's position on these issues, any more than modern Lutherans would endorse Martin Luther's anti-Semitism. Baptists who quickly reject Calvin's theology because of his shortcomings on other issues must, if honest, reject virtually any influence from previous centuries. This holds true for Estep's treasured Anabaptists as well.

Calvin is not fairly depicted in Estep's article, but that is not the real issue. The issue is not Calvin, but the truth or falsehood of the doctrines he taught, and the doctrines now associated with his name.

**The heart of the matter.** The central tenet of Calvinism is the sovereignty of God. This is the starting point and the highest principle of Reformed the-

ology. Calvinism is God-centered and draws its understanding of God directly from his self-revelation in Scripture. The God revealed in the Bible is the sovereign Creator, Ruler and Redeemer. His omnipotence, omniscience and governance over all things set this God of the Bible apart from all false gods.

The God of the Bible is the holy, ruling, limitless, acting, all-powerful God who makes nations rise and fall, who accomplishes his purpose, and who redeems his people. Arminianism—the theological system opposed to Calvinism—necessarily holds to a very different understanding of God, his power and his government over all things.

Calvinism is most closely and accurately associated with the so-called "doctrines of grace," which summarize the teaching of Scripture concerning the gospel. The Bible teaches us that we are born sinners, and are thus spiritually dead. Dead in our sins, we cannot on our own even respond to God's grace. Thus, as Jesus told his disciples, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to me, unless it has been granted him from the Father" (John 6:65).

Further, the Bible makes clear that God has chosen a people "chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father" (1 Peter 1:2). Paul, in writing to the Ephesian church, states that the Father has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, and "predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:3-5). The New Testament resounds with words including "chosen," "election" and "predestination." The issue is not whether these are taught by Calvin, but whether they are taught in Scripture.

We would like to think that we are smart enough, spiritually sensitive enough and responsive enough to choose to confess Christ without prior work of God in our hearts. Unfortunately for our pride, this is not at all what the Bible reveals. God chooses us before we choose him. As Southern Seminary President E.Y. Mullins stated, "God's choice of a person is prior to that person's choice of God, since God is infinite in wisdom and knowledge and will not make the success of the divine kingdom dependent on the contingent choices of people."

Calvinism is nothing more and nothing less than the simple assertion that salvation is all of grace, from the beginning to the end. God saves sinners. Jesus Christ died for sinners. As Scripture promises, all those who call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

The God of the Bible saves sinners and holds those he has redeemed to the end. The vast majority of Southern Baptists hold to the doctrine known as the "perseverance of the saints," but that precious promise makes sense only in terms of the "doctrines of grace." Our choice of Christ is indeed necessary, but he has first chosen us—and he will keep us to the end.

Many Southern Baptists find predestination and other doctrines difficult to understand and even offensive to our pride. But we cannot read the New Testament without coming again and again

to these doctrines.

**Calvinism and evangelism.** Estep charges that a revival of Calvinism will lead to a lessening of evangelistic commitment and missionary vision. This is a common charge, but it is reckless and without foundation. Indeed, many of the most significant missionary and evangelistic movements in the history of the Church have been led by those who held to the very doctrines Estep laments.

These have included Charles Spurgeon, the greatest Baptist preacher of the last century, whose ministry at London's Metropolitan Tabernacle was among the most evangelistic in the history of Christianity. Spurgeon openly and consistently advocated all the distinctive doctrines of

Calvinism and publicly identified himself as a Calvinist. In a day of doctrinal decline, Spurgeon sounded the alarm for a recovery of biblical truth and the "doctrines of grace." When asked how he reconciled his Calvinism and fervent evangelism, he responded, "I do not try to reconcile friends."

Estep claims Andrew Fuller as an opponent of Calvinism, yet Fuller also held to the "doctrines of grace." He clearly advocated the doctrine of election. In "The Gospel Worthy of All Acceptation," cited by Estep, Fuller affirms that "none ever did or will believe in Christ but those who are chosen of God from eternity."

William Carey, the father of modern missions, was himself a Calvinist, as were leaders such as Jonathan Edwards and the great George Whitefield. The Evangelism Explosion program used by so many Southern Baptist churches was developed by a Calvinist.

If Calvinism is an enemy to missions and evangelism, it is an enemy to the gospel itself. The Great Commission and the task of evangelism are assigned to every congregation and every believer. The charge that Calvinism is opposed to evangelism simply will not stick—it is a false argument. The "doctrines of grace" are nothing less than a statement of the gospel itself. Through the substitutionary work of Christ, God saves sinners. The great promise is that whosoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

**Calvinism and the Southern Baptist Convention.** Even the opponents of Calvinism must admit, if historically informed, that Calvinism is the theological tradition into which the Baptist movement was born. The same is true of the Southern Baptist Convention. The most influential Baptist churches, leaders, confessions of faith and theologians of the founding era were Calvinistic.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary was born of this Calvinistic tradition, as reflected in its "Abstract of Principles." James P. Boyce, in calling for the seminary's founding, charged it to oppose all heresies, including Arminianism.

It was not until well into the 20th century that any knowledgeable person could claim that Southern Baptists were anything but Calvinists. In referring to early Southern Baptists (especially James P. Boyce), Estep charges that

they misunderstood Calvinism. This is a strange and innovative charge, considering that Boyce, for example, had been trained at Princeton Theological Seminary—the fountainhead of Calvinism in 19th century America.

Boyce's colleague John Broadus—the greatest Baptist preacher of his day—was so certain that Calvinism was revealed in the Bible that he challenged those who sneer at Calvinism to "sneer at Mount Blanc." Broadus was certain that the doctrines known as Calvinism were those preached by Paul and the other apostles and were revealed in Holy Scripture.

Other Southern Baptist leaders were also well-identified Calvinists. These included J.B. Gambrell and B.H. Carroll, the founder of Southwestern Seminary.

Calvinism was the mainstream tradition in the Southern Baptist Convention until the turn of the century. The rise of modern notions of individual liberty and the general spirit of the age have led to an accommodation of historic doctrines in some circles.

Estep is correct in noting the modifications to Calvinism which have occurred among Southern Baptists. Most Baptists hold to at least part of Calvinism, while generally unaware of the whole.

As Southern Baptists seek to recover our theological inheritance and the essence of biblical Christianity, I believe we will see a return to a more Calvinistic understanding of the gospel and a recognition of the absolute sovereignty of God.

Nevertheless, my main concern is not that Southern Baptists return to Calvinism—or to any human theological system. Our main concern must be to see Southern Baptists return to theological health and biblical fidelity. This theological reformation will, I am certain, also lead to a blazing recovery of missionary zeal and evangelistic fervor—and to the renewal of our churches and denomination. Southern Baptists will truly be headed for a well-deserved dunghill only when we retreat from biblical truth and withdraw from evangelism and missions.

We stand at a historic threshold. Now is the time for Southern Baptists to stand together on the great truths of God's word and on the front lines of God's redemptive purpose. As Charles Spurgeon reminds us, we would rejoice whenever the gospel is preached and shared—whether by Calvinist or non-Calvinist.

My personal agenda is not driven by Calvinism, but by the hope that Southern Baptists will embrace, confess, preach and teach the truths of God's word—and share the gospel of Jesus Christ with every man, woman and child on the earth. In this hope and vision we should all stand together.

As a dear friend has well stated, the real issue is not whether John Calvin is your personal theologian, but whether Jesus Christ is your personal Savior. By God's grace, may we see genuine reformation and renewal in our churches—and a Great Commission vision in our hearts.

*Al Mohler is president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. A graduate of Samford University and Southern Seminary, Mohler previously served as editor of Georgia Baptists' Christian Index and as pastor of Union Grove Baptist Church in Bedford.*

**"As Southern Baptists seek to recover our theological inheritance and the essence of biblical Christianity, I believe we will see a return to a more Calvinistic understanding of the gospel and a recognition of the absolute sovereignty of God."**



# ISSUES

## Ethicist: Discussion of values better than living will

**"If we do this work early, the end of life questions, while difficult, won't be nearly as painful."**

*Joan Gibson, director of the health sciences ethics program at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque*

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

LOUISVILLE—The best way to ensure your wishes are carried out at the end of life is to communicate to family and friends your values, suggests a pioneering medical ethicist.

"Values talk is the way we start getting at what matters to us," said Joan Gibson, director of the health sciences ethics program at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

Gibson was keynote speaker for an April 17-18 conference on making life and death decisions sponsored by the Wayne Oates Institute and the University of Louisville. The conference brought together clergy, physicians, nurses and ethicists to discuss the difficult choices often faced at the end of life.

Gibson, who also sits on the ethics committee at St. Joseph's Hospital in Albuquerque, was an early and outspoken advocate of living wills and other advance directives.

While admitting she had been called the "Queen of Advance Directives," Gibson said she now believes such measures may not be the best way to ensure a person's desires are carried out.

Living wills are legal documents in which a person outlines preferences on major health care decisions to be followed in the event that person becomes unable to speak for himself. For example, a living will may state that the person does not want to be kept alive on a ventilator or feeding

tube.

Gibson said she now realizes no person can anticipate every possible medical decision that might have to be made in the future. And advance directives often are forgotten or ignored.

Further, living wills that are too black-and-white can tie the hands of family members when circumstances change, she added.

"My first (living will) was very detailed," she recalled. "My second one stopped the details and talked about goals ... and my last one has none of that. I realized I didn't want those last decisions to enslave my family. ... They are the ones who are going to have to navigate that new territory."

While living wills remain an important tool, what's more important is to talk with family and friends today about the values you would apply to life and death decisions later, Gibson said.

Another helpful tool, she suggested, is to name a health care surrogate, someone who will have legal responsibility to make decisions about medical treatment if you become incapable of making such decisions. That person should understand not only your specific desires but the values behind those desires, she said.

For example, many people when

asked whether they would want a certain treatment performed on them answer, "It depends," Gibson noted. Talking about values gets behind the question to find out on what factors it depends.

Working with her colleagues at St. Joseph's Hospital in Albuquerque, Gibson developed a means for helping people talk about such values. The "Values History Form" is a set of open-ended questions designed to stimulate discussion more than to be written down and notarized.

These types of values questions should be used in conversations between family members and in brief interviews between patients and medical personnel, she said.

"Not all these conversations have to take place with medical personnel," Gibson advised. "These are the kinds of conversations I want to talk with my family about."

And the sooner such a conversation takes place, the better, she added. "If we do this work early, the end of life questions, while difficult, won't be nearly as painful."

Ideally, such conversations should move beyond end-of-life topics to include a person's values related to disability, Gibson said. "Self-sufficiency and living environment are more difficult to talk about than dying."

Even as accustomed as she is to

frank talk about death, she said she was not prepared for a conversation she had with her husband about his chronic arthritis.

"One day I screwed up the courage to ask him what scares him the most," she recalled.

"When I can't put on my own pants," he replied.

Hearing his response, the wife and medical ethicist who talks freely about death every day had to leave the room to regain her composure, she recounted.

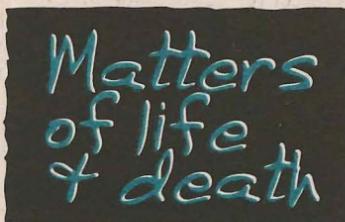
As difficult as it may be, this is the place to start, Gibson admonished. "This is where we start: not at the end, but right now."

While people often hesitate to talk about many aspects of dying, the one topic people talk about most freely is finances, Gibson said.

For example, she recalled one terminally ill woman telling her, "Please don't spend down what little I have to leave my family."

Talking about religious values also is important, but a task many people find difficult, Gibson said. "We don't know how to invite discussion around matters of faith and spirituality. And we certainly don't know how to integrate that into the delivery of health care."

Within a family or among friends, the best way to initiate a discussion on life-and-death values is to tell your own story first, Gibson advised. "The best way is not by asking someone else what they think, but by talking about it yourself."



### VALUES HISTORY FORM

This "Values History Form" was developed at the Center for Law and Ethics of the University of New Mexico's law school. Although not a legal form, written answers to the questions may be used to supplement a living will, durable power of attorney for health care or a health care proxy.

The form may be used to create a written statement or may be used as the means of facilitating an oral discussion with family, friends or medical providers.

#### Overall attitude toward life and health

- What would you like to say to someone reading this document about your overall attitude toward life?
- What goals do you have for the future?
- How satisfied are you with what you have achieved in your life?
- What, for you, makes life worth living?
- What do you fear most? What frightens or upsets you?
- What activities do you enjoy?
- How would you describe your current state of health?
- If you currently have any health problems or disabilities, how do they affect you, your family, your work, your ability to function?
- Do you have difficulties in getting through the day with activities such as eating, preparing food, sleeping, dressing and bathing?

- What would you like to say to someone reading this document about your general health?

#### Personal Relationships

- What role do family and friends play in your life?
- How do you expect friends, family and others to support your decisions regarding medical treatment you may need now or in the future?
- Have you made any arrangements for family or friends to make medical treatment decisions on your behalf? If so, who has agreed to make decisions for you and in what circumstances?
- What general comments would you like to make about the personal relationships in your life?

#### Independence and self-sufficiency

- How does independence or dependence affect your life?
- If you were to experience decreased physical and mental abilities, how would that affect your attitude toward independence and self-sufficiency?
- If your current physical or mental health gets worse, how would you feel?

#### Living environment

- Have you lived alone or with others over

the last 10 years?

- How comfortable have you been in your surroundings? How might illness, disability or age affect this?
- What general comments would you like to make about your surroundings?

#### Religious backgrounds and beliefs

- What is your religious/spiritual background?
- How do your beliefs affect your feelings toward serious, chronic or terminal illness?
- How does your faith community, church or synagogue support you?
- What general comments would you like to make about your beliefs?

#### Relationships with doctors and health care givers

- How do you relate to your doctors? Please comment on trust, decision making, time for satisfactory communication, respectful treatment.
- How do you feel about other caregivers, including nurses, therapists, chaplains, social workers?
- What else would you like to say about doctors and other caregivers?

#### Illness, dying and death

- What general comments would you like

to make about illness, dying and death?

- What will be important to you when you are dying? Physical comfort? No pain? Family present?
- Where would you prefer to die?
- How do you feel about the use of life-sustaining measures if you were suffering from an irreversible chronic illness, terminally ill or in a permanent coma?
- What general comments would you like to make about medical treatment?

#### Finances

- What general comments would you like to make about your finances and the cost of health care?
- What are your feelings about having enough money to provide for your care?

#### Funeral plans

- What general comments would you like to make about your funeral, burial or cremation?
- Have you made your funeral arrangements? If so, with whom?

#### Optional questions

- How would you like your obituary to read?
- Write yourself a brief eulogy.
- What would you like to say to someone reading this Values History Form?

## Christian Life Commission backs religious amendment

By Adelle Banks & Kim Lawton  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Overcoming deep divisions, a Southern Baptist agency and Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla., have worked out compromise language for a proposed constitutional amendment on religious liberty.

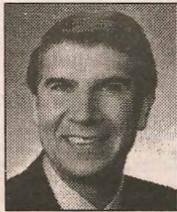
The Christian Life Commission, the Southern Baptist Convention's public policy arm, announced April 21 its support of the new language for Istook's Religious Freedom Amendment. The congressman hopes the amendment will solidify constitutional protections for religious expression in public places, including the controversial arena of public schools.

"I don't think there's any question there's been a real breakthrough in terms of understanding, in terms of clarifying legitimate concerns," said CLC President Richard Land.

The compromise follows recent contentious debates between Land and Istook, culminating in several faxes to members of Congress about their positions on the issue. Now, Istook says, he expects to introduce the current language later this month.

Other conservative groups that have withheld support for Istook's previous proposals have yet to take a position on the latest wording. Representatives of the National Association of Evangelicals and the Christian Legal Society said April 22 they still were reviewing the latest proposal.

Many conservative Christians say some kind of amendment is necessary to protect religious expression in public places, but there has been a deep division among them



Istook



Land

over the exact wording. Those who have not yet agreed with Istook's language voiced concern that his previous wording would protect religious majorities but not religious minorities.

Now, they have yet another version to consider:

"To secure the people's right to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience: The people's right to pray and to recognize their religious beliefs, heritage or traditions on public property, including schools, shall not be infringed. The government shall not require any person to join in prayer or other religious activity, initiate or designate school prayers, discriminate against religion, or deny a benefit due to religion."

The addition of the words, "according to the dictates of conscience," made a difference to the Christian Life Commission.

"That phrase encapsulates in summary form the Baptist conviction that every man and every woman has a God-given right to express and practice his or her faith in accordance with their own conscience without interference from or guidance by the government," Land said.

Also Istook agreed to include the following statement of intent when he introduces the amendment to Congress:

"Our intent is not to diminish the

Establishment Clause of the First Amendment, but to clarify and correct misinterpretations, reasserting and restoring the strength of the Free Exercise Clause which has been damaged by years of court decisions. Following the dictates of conscience would be preserved and protected.

"The Establishment Clause would still provide its protections against any attempts to impose an official religion upon Americans. For example, it would still bar direct public money for any sectarian religious purpose, but would not bar a voucher system that permitted a parent to select a school of their choice for their children, which includes a religious school if they so chose."

Other groups still are mulling over the new wording.

"I'm not in a position to comment yet because it's still being processed by our staff," said NAE President Don Argue.

Istook attended NAE's board meeting in March and lobbied for support for his amendment, but the board referred the matter to its resolutions committee for further study.

Steven McFarland, director of the Christian Legal Society's Center for Law and Religious Freedom, said the new language is "headed in the right direction," but he still questioned whether the amendment would encourage government promotion of particular religions.

McFarland said he's studying the new language and has submitted to Istook a list of questions for clarification.

Istook said Tuesday he does not intend his amendment to allow "any particular religion" to be promoted by government.

"That has never been a part of any language that we've had," he said. "There's a crucial difference between recognizing and acknowledging something and promoting it."

Istook said the wording changes do not represent a shift in the intent of the amendment.

"I think it's a question of making the safeguards which we already had even clearer or more explicit," he said.

A spokesman for the Christian Coalition, which joined Istook's effort when the congressman announced previous revisions in March, welcomed the additional support.

But the Baptist Joint Committee criticized Istook's amendment.

"The amendment, in our opinion, is and continues to be unnecessary and dangerous," said Melissa Rogers, associate general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee.

Rogers said the amendment is dangerous because it opens the door for public endorsement of religious messages and public funding of religious activities.

Barry Lynn, executive director of the liberal Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said the Constitution already adequately protects religious liberty and that protection would be damaged by Istook's proposal.

"It's still the most radical revision of the Bill of Rights in modern history," Lynn said.

Land disagreed.

"The First Amendment should be fine as it is, but it's been so brutalized and marginalized by the current judiciary that the courts need further instruction on how we would be governed," he said.

With additional information from Baptist Press

**"The First Amendment should be fine as it is, but it's been so brutalized and marginalized by the current judiciary that the courts need further instruction on how we would be governed."**

*Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission*

**"The amendment, in our opinion, is and continues to be unnecessary and dangerous."**

*Melissa Rogers, associate general counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee*

### Coalition's Reed resigns to start consulting firm

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Ralph Reed, the boyish-looking executive director who turned the Christian Coalition into the Religious Right's pre-eminent political force, announced last week he will leave the organization to form a new campaign consulting firm and to work with charitable groups.

In announcing his resignation after more than seven years in the job, Reed, 35, credited the coalition with turning religious conservatives from a "marginal" group to "one of the most potent and well-organized political forces in all of American politics."

Speaking at a news conference, Reed said the coalition's efforts will continue after he departs the organization.

Reed, whose resignation is effective Sept. 1, did not rule out running for political office in the future but said for now he will concentrate on helping the coalition find a successor.

## Military Oks peyote for religious ceremonies

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Military officials said this month they will allow American-Indian soldiers to use the hallucinogenic plant peyote in their religious ceremonies.

American Indians who use peyote for religious purposes say they believe it brings peace of mind, helps them think good thoughts and heals illnesses.

Peyote use has been forbidden in the military because of its classification as a drug with psychedelic properties.

Guidelines regarding its use are being revised to bring them in line with a 1994 Supreme Court decision allowing American Indians to use peyote as a religious sacrament. The issue of peyote use in worship by American Indians has been a long-running dispute.

"If they're using peyote in their religious practice, it's a sacrament, not a drug," said Air Force Maj. Monica Aloisio, a Pentagon spokeswoman.

Chaplain Capt. Mel Ferguson, ex-

ecutive director of the Armed Forces Chaplain's Board, said he's telling chaplains to let American Indians use peyote in their services while the guidelines are being finalized.

"When people are allowed to practice their faith and nourish the spiritual dimension of their lives, that promotes and enhances military readiness," Ferguson said.

The new peyote policy applies to the 9,262 American Indians now in the Armed forces, or 0.6 percent of the military population.

## Faith-healing parents found guilty in kid's death

HOLLIDAYSBURG, Pa. (RNS)—A Pennsylvania couple who believe in faith healing were convicted last week of involuntary manslaughter and child endangerment in the death of their 16-year-old daughter.

Shannon Nixon, daughter of Dennis and Lorie Nixon, died last June of treatable diabetes after her parents relied on prayer instead of medicine for a cure.

It was the Nixons' second conviction in the death of an untreated child.

The Nixons have eight surviving

children, and Lorie Nixon is pregnant.

"God is the giver and taker of life," Lorie Nixon testified April 22.

The Nixons belong to Faith Tabernacle Congregation, a church that advocates prayer instead of medicine.

Prosecutors charged the family with violating a Pennsylvania state law requiring parents to protect their children until age 18.

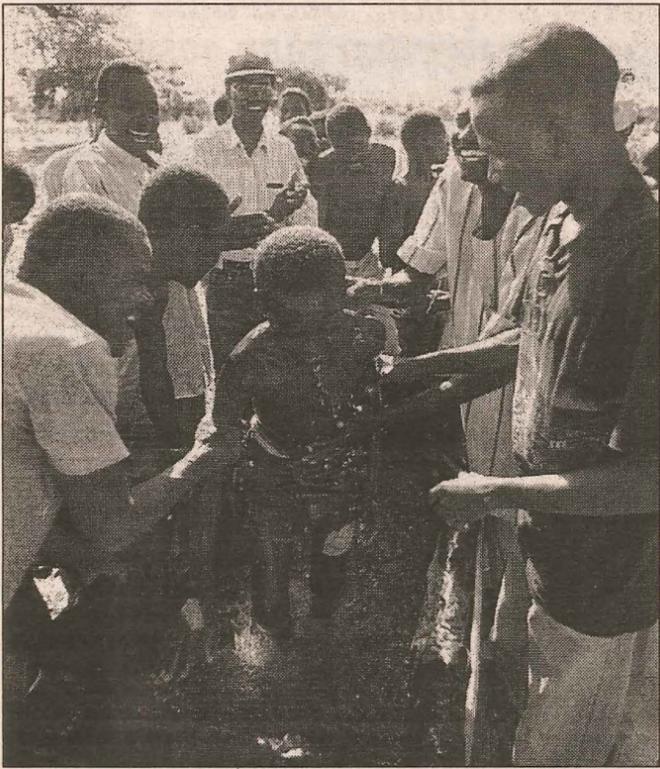
Judge Norman Callan told the jury Shannon's parents had a responsibility to protect her health and safety, even though the defense ar-

gued Shannon was old enough to make her own decisions and had not requested a doctor.

Callan said the defense that the Nixons were following their religious beliefs was not valid under Pennsylvania law, the Associated Press reported.

The couple will be sentenced to no more than a year in jail, said District Attorney William Haberstroh.

In 1991, their 8-year-old son Clayton died of an untreated ear infection. The Nixons pleaded no contest and were given probation and required to perform community service.



**NEW TO THE KINGDOM** This boy was one of nine baptized during a recent service in the village of Banijiti, Niger, in West Africa. Last year Southern Baptist foreign missionaries and local Baptists with whom they worked started 2,367 churches and baptized 283,674 new Christians, according to the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. (BP photo by Roy Burroughs)

## WORLD VIEW

■ **Being a Jew in Australia costs.** Synagogue fees, the high price of kosher foods, and the expense of educating children at private religious schools are adding to the financial burden of Australian Jews, a study recently reported. "For some the cost of being and remaining Jewish is a turn-off and the inability to keep up at even a relatively modest level has driven them away," said the report by the state's Jewish Board of Deputies.

■ **Bardot blasts sacrifices.** Animal rights activist and former film star Brigitte Bardot faces trial before the Paris Court of Appeals for allegedly "provoking hatred and racial discrimination" by her comments about French Muslims. Bardot criticized their practice of slaughtering sheep for the Feast of Sacrifice. "They've slit the throats of women and children, of our monks, our officials, our tourists, and our sheep. They'll slit our throats one day and we'll deserve it," she said in a statement.

■ **Scientologists organize to fight government.** The Church of Scientology unveiled a new interfaith coalition to fight what it calls human rights abuses against it and other non-traditional or non-Christian religious groups in Germany. The coalition, called Freedom for Religions in Germany, issued an open letter to Germany's minister of justice demanding an investigation into discrimination against Scientologists, Islamic communities, charismatic Christian groups and Jehovah's Witnesses.

■ **Islamic militants suspected in murders.** A Coptic Christian farmer and two policemen were murdered last week in southern Egypt by suspected members of a militant Islamic group. Members of Gama'a al-Islamiya have targeted Coptic Christians and police since 1992 in their battle to topple the government and form a new state governed by Islamic law. More than 1,000 people have been killed in the violence. Coptic Christians, once a majority in Egypt, now make up only 10 percent of Egypt's 60 million population.

■ **In a related item...** The leader of Egypt's largest Muslim fundamentalist group has called for a purge of Christians from the Egyptian army, saying they represent a threat to national security. Mustafa Mashoor, the supreme guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, told the weekly magazine *Rose El Youssef* that Coptic Christians also should be required to pay a religious tax that once was levied on Jews and Christians in the Muslim world.

## Baptist work growing in eastern Russia

KHABAROVSK, Russia (BP)—On the far eastern side of Russia, the number of Baptist churches has more than doubled in recent years.

Southern Baptist foreign missionaries Randy and Robin Covington said they are elated at the growth they've seen in both student work and church planting during the two years they have been in Khabarovsk.

"Four years ago there may have been 24 Baptist churches in the far east of Russia. Now there are more than 60," Randy Covington said.

Fewer restrictions is one reason for the growth, he said. Evangelicals in eastern Russia don't face the opposition from other religious groups experienced by their counterparts in the west, Covington said.

Another reason may be youthful curiosity. Khabarovsk, a city of 750,000 people, is home to a dozen major schools, and there are tens of

thousands of students in the city.

Through their student center, the Covingtons work every week with dozens of students who range in age from 12 to 27. Bible studies, fellowship times and other student-related activities have helped him share the gospel with many students.

"There are no anti-American feelings here, and things are fairly open," he said.

"At first the students seek contact with English speakers so they can improve their English. But as they attend the meetings and are exposed to the Bible, they begin to develop an interest in religious things. In time they are generally drawn into a personal relationship with Christ," Covington said.

Through his student ministry, Covington launched Transformation Baptist Church. Currently, 80 percent of the members are students, but Coving-

ton said they are beginning to reach families and hope to have a strong Baptist congregation.

Covington said he is comfortable in this kind of work. Before being appointed foreign missionaries in 1993, he and Robin helped start churches in Alaska.

Covington said one of his biggest victories is Roma Alexev, a young man who is showing leadership promise. Covington said he hopes Alexev will assume leadership of the church, freeing Covington to focus on another church start.

The Covingtons live seven time zones from Moscow in a part of the world where winter leaves snow on the ground six months each year. But he dismissed any suggestion that they and their son and daughter are suffering by living in Khabarovsk. He said he's excited about what the future holds.

## Opposition growing on bill to ban evangelism in Israel

TEL AVIV, Israel (BP)—Israeli embassies in some countries are feeling pressure concerning a proposed law that could severely limit freedom of religion in Israel.

Bill S757-1996 proposes to set a one-year jail term for printing, copying, distributing or sharing tracts, or for advertising "things in which there is an inducement for religious conversion."

"In Finland ... we have just heard of 7,000 signatures to a letter of protest, and of a planned interview with the Israeli ambassador there," said Baruch Maoz, a Messianic Jewish pastor helping rally forces against the bill.

The governments of Norway and Denmark also have questioned the bill, Maoz said.

The bill was introduced as a "private member's bill" after it failed to win support from the government committee that represents the ruling coalition in the Israeli legislature, said Baruch Binah, minister-counselor for public and inter-religious affairs at the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

Binah said he understands from those knowledgeable about the bill that without endorsement from leaders in the ruling coalition, the proposal has only a remote chance of success.

The coalition committee rejected the bill twice, probably "on its merits," Binah said. "I'm pretty sure

they simply looked at it and decided it's a bill that shouldn't pass. While we don't welcome proselytizing, it's not illegal."

Maoz, however, dismissed the statements from Israel's Foreign Ministry. Embassies are "seeking to orchestrate a response that will lull protesters into believing that their concern has been addressed and appropriately resolved," he said.

Binah said that although Jews in Israel generally resist evangelism—and are even personally offended by it at times—Israel has laws that protect free speech. To validate the proposed law, legislators would have to change laws already on the books, he added.

The proposal, passed in the first of four readings, now is under consideration by a legal committee which, among other things, checks proposed bills to conform with existing laws.

Maoz said the government's own press office reported 78 of 120 Knesset members support the bill. He also charged that some of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's own staff, including the finance minister, publicly have backed the bill.

Messianic Jews fear the bill could curtail evangelism and might be used to ban even the New Testament, severely restricting growth of some 60 Messianic Jewish congregations across Israel.

## Groups buy slaves to set them free

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Two Christian groups claimed recently to have bought the freedom of more than 300 women and children said to have been sold into slavery by a government-backed Sudanese militia.

The Canadian-based Crossroad Christian Communications Inc. said it paid slave traders \$21,600, donated from across Canada, to redeem 200 slaves.

The other slaves were bought

back by Christian Solidarity International, the human rights group based in Great Britain and Switzerland, and Sudanese villagers who raised funds to free relatives, said Carl Bombay, vice president of Crossroads.

The freeing of the slaves was telecast last month on Crossroad's "100 Huntley Street" program.

The TV crew entered Sudan with the help of the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army, Bombay said.

## Church getting flak for taking donation from weapons maker

LONDON (RNS)—St. Paul's Cathedral, one of London's most well-known landmarks, has been criticized for taking a \$24,000 sponsorship from Lockheed Martin, one of the world's largest arms suppliers.

Lockheed Martin, which makes stealth bombers and nuclear missiles for Trident submarines, offered the money to sponsor a concert at St. Paul's in exchange for use of the cathedral for corporate hospitality functions involving other defense firms.

Some Church of England clergy and arms opponents charged that the arrangement is immoral and has sullied the cathedral's reputation.

The 18th-century domed cathedral survived World War II and was the setting of the 1981 wedding of Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

Canon John Halliburton, chairman of the committee that approved the sponsorship, defended the decision.

"Lockheed Martin (is) not selling arms to revolutionary governments ... but to countries which need to defend themselves," he said.

Arms opponents said by accepting the deal, the church has rewritten the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill."

"For a church of the profile of St. Paul's to accept money that is tainted, at least in the eyes of substantial members of the church, gives a completely wrong message," said Canon Paul Oestricher of Coventry Cathedral.

Last year, St. Paul's made another controversial decision when it permitted its famed cupola to bear a large purple and gold ad for a new candy bar.

# MISSIONS

## Baptist volunteers helping flood victims

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (ABP)—Southern Baptist disaster relief workers from Texas, Ohio and Oklahoma currently are working in Grand Forks after flooding forced more than 50,000 residents from their homes.

In their first three days of relief ministry, Texas Baptist volunteers prepared more than 20,000 meals for flood victims and emergency personnel who rallied to their aid.

Baptist volunteers cooked meals delivered by American Red Cross workers to evacuees housed in a three-bay hangar at the Grand Forks Air Force Base and other shelters.

Several members of Calvary Baptist Church, which is about 90 percent military personnel, were assigned by their commanding officers to aid the Texas volunteers. Many came during their off-duty hours to help.

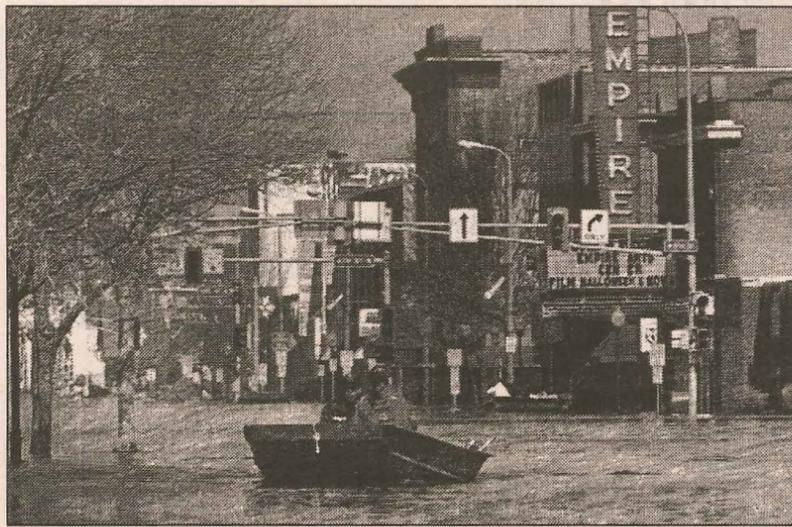
Oklahoma Baptist disaster-relief workers prepared more than 900 meals in their first two days across the river in Red Lake Falls, Minn. Ohio Baptists set up emergency food service at Temple Baptist Church in Fargo, N.D.

Jerry Bob Taylor of Brownwood, Texas, served as on-site coordinator for Baptist relief efforts.

Taylor noted that many evacuees were staying with relatives outside the flood area or with families in the region who opened their homes to complete strangers.

When the flood victims return to find their homes inhabitable, shelters are likely to be filled, he predicted.

"When the water goes down and the roads open back up, people will try to get back into their homes and start cleaning up. That will take weeks and weeks, and for a while they're going to find polluted water, no sew-



**FLOODED** ■ Above The U.S. Coast Guard patrols downtown Grand Forks after the town's 50,000 residents were forced to evacuate because of flooding from the Red River. ■ Below Rosie Cunningham reads the local coverage of the flooding in Grand Forks at the evacuation center at the Grand Forks Air Force Base. Nearly 3,000 residents are staying at the base, where Baptist volunteers are responsible for feeding. (Reuters photos)



er and no electricity," Taylor said. "That's when these red and white ERVs (American Red Cross emergency response vehicles) will really be running their wheels off."

In the meantime, Baptists try to provide comfort to those in shelters and private homes.

"Just about every other family in our church has taken someone into their home," said Michael Waters,

pastor of Calvary Baptist of Emerald, N.D. "I don't know of any who haven't helped one way or another."

At least 70 percent of the 10.5-square-mile city was under water April 21.

Eleven downtown buildings were gutted by fire. Officials suspect a gas leak started the fire, which firefighters were hampered from battling because most of the area was five feet under water.

These two disasters followed an April 5 ice storm. That turned into a blizzard with 60-mph winds snapping nearly 2,000 telephone poles like matchsticks. It was the ninth blizzard of the season and the worst snow storm in 50 years.

With additional information from Baptist Press

## FMB's Rankin: Coca-Cola often reaches farther than gospel

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)—Back in the faraway reaches of the Himalaya Mountains in the center of the Hindu kingdom of Nepal, a conspicuous sign boldly states: "Drink Coca-Cola."

This measure of capitalistic tenacity and resolve by a major American soft drink maker serves as an indictment on Christians in the United States, Foreign Mission Board Jerry Rankin said during a recent address at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

"What an indictment," Jerry Rankin said, "that those (who) market a refreshing drink with a zeal for ... monetary profit would carry their product to the ends of the world (where) we as God's people have not yet carried the most gracious commodity of all—the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Noting that 1.7 billion people in the world have yet to hear the name of Christ, Rankin urged students to consider involvement in foreign missions.

"Who is going to the uttermost? Who is sending their resume, responding to (the) search committee for the Kanuri (4 million people) in West Africa, the Berbers (5 million people) in Algeria, the Bhojpuri (43 million people) in north India, the Zhuang (15.5 million people) and Uygurs (7 million people) in western China?"



## 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:** 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.

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

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

**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.

**SEEKING:** Full-time minister of education and youth for First Baptist Church, Pineville, Ky. Seminary training or college graduate preferred. Full-time benefit package offered. Send resumé to: Minister of Youth/Education Search Committee, c/o First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 710, Pineville, KY 40977.

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

**SEEKING:** Buck Creek Baptist Church in search of full-time pastor. Send inquiries to: R. Thomasson, 892 Browns Valley Road, Utica, Kentucky 42376, or RThoma316@aol.com.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music and activities. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Maple Grove Baptist Church, 5911 E. Manslick Road, Louisville, KY 40219. (502) 964-7314.

**SEEKING:** Daviess-McLean Baptist Association is accepting resumés for the position of director of missions. The association consists of 58 churches in Daviess and McLean counties in western Kentucky. Please mail resumé to: Daviess-McLean Baptist Association, c/o Chairperson Dr. Marilyn Sanders, 1003 Scherm Road, Owensboro, KY 42301. Deadline for resumés is June 6, 1997.

**FREE:** Pleasant View Baptist Church in Waynesburg, Ky., has 200 1975 hymnals to donate to a flooded church. Call Mike at (606) 365-3737.

**SEEKING:** Audubon Baptist Church of Henderson, Ky., is prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of music and youth to provide dynamic leadership in these vital church ministries in concert with the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ. This beautifully modern church is located in a dynamic and growing community along the Ohio River in the western Kentucky home of naturalist and wildlife artist John James Audubon. Audubon Baptist Church is committed to meeting the spiritual needs of our young people and active music programs. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Audubon Baptist Church, 3440 Zion Road, Henderson, KY 42420. Deadline for resumés is June 30, 1997.

**SEEKING:** Bardstown Baptist Church is currently accepting resumés for a full-time minister. Resumés will be accepted until June 1, 1997. Send resumé with a cover letter claiming your statement of faith to the Pastor Search Committee, Bardstown Baptist Church, 101 West Brashear, Bardstown, KY 40004.

**BEEN THERE, DONE THAT**  
Volunteers who served on West Kentucky Baptist Association partnership mission teams during the past 10 years share experiences at a missions fair April 15 at First Baptist Church in Clinton. More than 300 people enjoyed 22 displays representing the association's ministry in Washington State, Utah, Ohio, Russia and eastern Kentucky. (Photo by Calvin Wilkins)

# MINISTRY

## Divorced Bluegrass pastors form network for support

**"Chuck Colson said the church is the only place that shoots their wounded, and unfortunately the pastors are some of the wounded being shot."**

*Paul Sowders, pastor of Gilead Baptist Church in Richmond*

*Continued from page 1*

sponsored a divorce recovery workshop later this year.

"I'm dreaming some day of having a fund to help them out financially," Sowders said.

"We also would like to identify some churches that might be willing to take a divorced pastor in as an associate. That would allow him to stay in ministry, but with less demands."

Sowders contends many divorced pastors should stay in ministry, referring to Romans 11:29, which says God's gifts and calling are irrevocable.

He adds that a pastor who's blatantly wrong (in an affair, for example) should be confronted within biblical guidelines and possibly expelled. "Other than that, they're simply condoning the sin," he said.

But divorce alone should not be grounds for dismissal, he said.

"God hates divorce. I will even go so far as saying divorce is a sin," said Sowders, who preached on divorce during his second Sunday back at Gilead.

"But God forgives all sin. God can use divorced people as well as he can use any other sinner."

Even a pastor expelled from a church for his sin, if truly repentant, can be used by God again, Sowders said.

"When Peter denied Jesus three times, he spiritually divorced him," Sowders said. Yet Jesus was not done with Peter, he added.

Sowders notes that of all the characters listed in the New Testament, he found only four happily-married couples.

"Divorce is not the unpardonable sin," he said. As evidence, he offers Gilead Baptist Church. After returning to the pulpit, the 35-member church baptized 13 people during the last half of 1994. It ranked among Kentucky Baptists' top 100 churches for per capita baptisms. "That was a real confirmation."

Eric Fruge, another of Hope Net's founders, said the most important goal for the new network is restoring pastors' spirits.

"If they're eventually going to be brought back to a healthy life, it's through a right relationship with God," said Fruge, minister of singles at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington. "What happens after that is up to God."

Formerly a missionary to France, Fruge's marriage crumbled six years ago. He returned to his hometown of Owensboro, where he lived with his parents and worked minimum-wage, part-time jobs before Calvary offered him a position.

Many people think a defrocked minister simply can go sell insurance or do other things to earn a living, but it isn't that simple to escape the stigma, he said.

"Hopefully we will be a voice of compassion," said Fruge. "It needs to be there for ministers and wives, someone who can say, 'God still loves

you.' I'm going to encourage them to aim high and shoot for the best."

Guy Futral, director of church support for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said the group has some good things to offer. "There's not a lot of candidates for their service, but they are available to be supportive."

Hope Net is one of a growing number of ministries supporting pastors in various ways, according to Bert Moore, the president of Pastor Care, based in Raleigh, N.C.

"There are literally thousands across the country," said Moore, who founded the referral network two years ago. "Every week we hear of several more."

Pastor Care tries to link hurting pastors and families with resources close to home, he said, so they don't have to spend a lot of money on travel and other expenses when they need help.

And though the group assists ministers with such needs as medical insurance, jobs and legal advice, many of its pleas for help concern strained marriages.

"We got a call recently from a pastor who came home and found his wife and furniture gone," said Moore, formerly a Presbyterian minister. "He was afraid to call his denomination."

In Southern Baptist circles, pastors are more likely to fear their congregation's reaction, said the author of divorce-recovery material.

Harold Ivan Smith, who wrote the study guide "A Time for Healing,"

### For more information:

■ Paul Sowders of Hope Net: (606) 623-7086.

■ Bert Moore of Pastor Care: (919) 787-7024.

knows hundreds of pastors whose churches displayed little grace in their time of distress.

"Many have great pain and anger for what happened to them," said the former director of singles ministry for the Church of the Nazarene. "I talked to a guy (recently) who is over his divorce but can't get over the fact his church hurt him."

"There are some divorces where pastors make bad decisions," said Smith, who never remarried after his divorce. "But there are some where it's not black and white. It's not that simple."

Many Baptist churches are losing a precious resource because they quickly expel pastors without knowing all the facts, he added.

He cited a case where the wife of the pastor of a large church discovered he was having homosexual affairs and refused to stop. She left him, but the reason never became public knowledge.

"The public reasons for divorce and the private reasons aren't always the same," Smith said.

*With additional reporting by News Director David Winfrey*

### Spring missions

**By Robert Dunston**

Not every Cumberland College student goes home or to the beach for spring break. This year 28 of our students traveled with sponsors to South Carolina for an exhausting but exhilarating week.

First stop on the mission trip was Tucapau Baptist Church in Startex, S.C. On Saturday March 15 the students led a symbolic Easter egg hunt. Plastic eggs were filled not with candy, but with items that symbolized Jesus' death on the cross.

As students talked to the children and youth, they explained Jesus' great love and sacrifice. That night the students led a fellowship for the church youth.

The next morning, our students presented their testimonies during Sunday school in the youth department. Students shared with the church youth how they had grown spiritually while in college.

Morning worship was led by a creative arts team of our students coordinated by Mykie Brinegar, a junior. Teddy Hardy, a junior, spoke during the service.

By Monday March 17 the students were in Charleston, S.C. Each morning and early afternoon our students worked preparing and painting the exteriors of two houses

belonging to low-income families. These families had applied to the city of Charleston for help with the improvements.

After they were accepted, materials were supplied by an enterprise zone grant, and Charleston Baptists supplied and coordinated the volunteer labor to make the repairs and improvements.

In the later afternoon, after cleaning up, the students worked in three teams. The creative arts team performed at the open air market in the historic district.

The children's ministry and sports teams led a backyard Bible club in a multi-housing neighborhood.

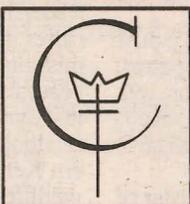
Evenings and Friday were reserved for rest and touring, including a visit to Fort Sumter.

Our students returned Saturday March 22 with greater self-confidence and a deeper closeness to one another and to God. They had tried new avenues of ministry and strengthened their witness to the world.

We are grateful for their dedication and faith.

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

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*Matthew 25:35*

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# BAPTISTS

## Seminary entering 'spring,' but budget still tight

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

LOUISVILLE—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is entering a "season of spring" that brings renewal, but the effects of a hard season of winter will prevent faculty and staff from getting pay raises next year, President Al Mohler said April 22.

Addressing seminary trustees and presenting a budget proposal for 1997-98, Mohler said signs of renewal can be seen all over Southern's campus. He cited a positive spirit among faculty and students as an example.

However, the painful reality of a declining enrollment during a "season of definition" has put a pinch on the

seminary's current finances, Mohler said. This difficult period was necessary to turn the seminary in a new direction, he said.

The Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program unified budget provides a major source of funding for the seminary, one of six affiliated with the SBC. Cooperative Program funds are distributed to those six seminaries according to a complex formula that creates a rolling average of student enrollments over the previous three years.

Measured by the standard of full-time equivalent enrollments used in the funding formula, Southern's enrollment has declined from 1,685 in 1993-94 to 1,255 in 1995-96. Southern's loss in the funding formula is

compounded by the fact that during the same period, two other SBC seminaries—New Orleans and Southeastern—have experienced enrollment gains.

Southern Seminary officials say the enrollment decline has stabilized, but figures comparable to those used in the funding formula have not yet been released. However, even if enrollment were up this year or next, the effect of the recent decline still will weigh against Southern in the funding formula for two more years.

"We are headed into the two years most likely to cause us budgetary restrictions," Mohler told trustees.

Although expressing frustration with the seminary's inability to provide salary increases, trustees adopted the proposed 1997-98 budget of \$16.95 million without opposition.

The new budget represents an increase of 1.1 percent over the current year. A major source of change in the budget comes from reallocation of \$234,390 previously allocated to the Carver School of Church Social Work, which is closing. However, the closing of that school also contributes to a projected decrease of \$181,717 in student fees and \$132,932 in student housing fees.

Several trustees questioned the absence of salary increases.

David Wilson of Texas said, "I wish there were some way we could express to the faculty that this is not what we want to do." Wilson suggested that if additional funds become available later in the year they be applied toward bonuses.

Rick White of Tennessee, who was trustee chairman during three of Southern's most tumultuous years, admonished fellow trustees to return to their churches and push for "more money to leave the state."

He advised trustees either to advocate for change in the way Cooperative Program funds are divided between state conventions and the SBC or to bypass state conventions entirely with Cooperative Program contributions from local churches.

The Cooperative Program is both a state and national program. Normally, local churches send money to state conventions, which keep more than half for use in-state and forward the remainder to the SBC for national and international causes.

Conservatives who now control the SBC have been frustrated because they have not been able to gain the same control of most state Baptist conventions. That has caused some conservative churches to begin bypassing state conventions by sending money directly to the SBC or to certain SBC agencies.

Most laypeople, White contended, are more concerned with the work of the SBC than with the work of state conventions. "They don't think so much in terms of state conventions as national agencies and boards."

Current trustee chairman Jerry Johnson of Colorado echoed White's admonition, explaining that the church he serves as pastor sends some money directly to the SBC Executive Committee, bypassing the state convention.

Also during the April 21-22 meet-

ing, trustees revised two controversial documents related to faculty discipline.

A "Policy on Constructive Relationships" adopted in April 1995 during the heat of a crisis over the Carver School of Church Social Work was amended to require that all faculty and staff relate "positively" to the seminary, its policies and administration. The word "positively" was substituted for "constructively."

A line that previously said faculty and staff must not "act in ways that are injurious or detrimental to the seminary's relationship with the denomination, donors or other constituencies" was altered. It now states that faculty and staff "should seek to relate constructively to the denomination, donors and other constituencies."

Unchanged in the policy is a line that asserts: "Faculty members may not use class time (or any other forum designated for instructional purposes) for the purpose of undermining or obstructing the policies of this institution."

A policy on "Disciplinary Action Short of Dismissal," also adopted in April 1995, was amended at several points.

The primary change is the addition of a five-point preamble outlining "guiding principles" to be used in disciplinary cases. The preamble requires that complaints against faculty members must be written and presented to the accused faculty member.

Both documents originally were adopted by trustees in 1995 upon recommendation of the president, but faculty members at the time said they had not had sufficient input. These two policies were among a list of concerns presented by faculty to the Association of Theological Schools in 1995.

Because of those concerns, ATS and two other accrediting agencies made a joint visit to the campus in late 1995. Ultimately, ATS gave the seminary a notation and planned a series of follow-up visits to monitor the situation.

The most recent of those ATS visits was the week before the trustee meeting, trustee chairman Johnson reported. Johnson said he could not speak in detail about the visit, but he described it as "excellent" and noted the accrediting team "sensed it was a new day here."

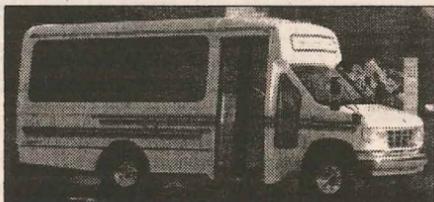
In other action, Southern's trustees:

■ Re-elected three officers and named one new officer. Johnson was re-elected chairman; Ruffin Snow of Oklahoma was re-elected first vice chairman; Fred Caffey of Virginia was elected second vice chairman; and John Hicks of Kentucky was re-elected secretary.

■ Heard reports of high levels of initial interest in a new doctor of ministry degree in church growth to be offered through the Billy Graham School. Mohler said 400 pastors already have expressed "active interest" in the program.

■ Heard that plans are being developed for a new doctor of ministry degree in expository preaching. Mohler said classes and seminars would be taught by "the leading expository preachers of this convention."

**"We are headed into the two years most likely to cause us budgetary restrictions."**  
Seminary President Al Mohler



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Jonathan Creek Baptist Assembly



### CHALLENGERS AND ADULTS

May 9-10, 1997

Cedarmore Baptist Assembly

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Randall Rogers: 502-932-7267

### FOR FRIDAY NIGHT ACCOMODATIONS CALL:

Jonathan Creek: 502-354-8355

Cedarmore: 502-747-8911

# PEOPLE

## PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Brad Senter, who arrived in Moscow April 2, to work with missionaries Clay and Connie Cartwright.

■ Believers at Moscow Cultural Center Church who are learning how to share their faith.

■ David Cook in Gotchna, Russia, as he plans summer youth camps.

■ Ken Lyle, executive director of the Baptist Convention of New England.

■ Dale Atlas, a Mission Service Corps volunteer who serves as communications coordinator for Greater Boston Baptist Association.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ COLUMBIA—Steve Lewis resigned as pastor of New Victory Church.

■ HARRODSBURG—Harrodsburg Church will host a senior adult revival May 4-7 with Ted Sisk as evangelist. Monday-Wednesday services will be at 11 a.m. Senior adult choirs from Highview and St. Matthews churches in Louisville and Calvary Church in Lexington will perform.

■ LONDON—David Walters, staff evangelist at Glendale Church in Bowling Green, is available for revivals and Bible conferences. He can be contacted at 563 Delmas Gilliam Rd., London, Ky. 40741, (606) 864-0800.

■ LOUISVILLE—Crescent Hill Church will host a handbell and in-

strumental concert performed by Crescent Hill Church, Highland Church and Harvey Browne Presbyterian Church May 4 at 6:30 p.m. Call (502) 896-4425 for more information.

■ MIDDLESBORO—First Church called Suzanne Lee as interim music director.

■ OWENSBORO—Walnut Memorial Church ordained Terry Shutt as deacon April 20. Odell Beauchamp is pastor.

T.A. Prickett recently celebrated 32 years as pastor at Seven Hills Church.

Donald Bratcher, 73, died April 2. He was pastor of Lamp Lite Mission and a chaplain at Daviess County Detention Center. Survivors include

## Republican leader claims Christian conversion

WASHINGTON (RNS)—House Republican Majority Leader Dick Arme, R-Texas, said both his life and his work have been profoundly changed by a spiritual awakening two years ago when he "accepted Christ for my Savior."

The second highest-ranking Republican in the House of Representatives said since then he has gained confidence and become more conciliatory—although those qualities have prompted new criticism from some conservative Republicans who call Arme's support of GOP moderates a sell-out.

In an interview published last week

in USA Today, Arme spoke candidly about his religious beliefs.

"I accepted Christ for my Savior two years ago, and my life's been getting better ever since," Arme said.

Arme described his religious experience as a growing awareness prompted by a sermon, rather than "a road to Damascus thing."

"It was just basically getting over being stubborn and prideful and having a compulsive need to believe I was self-sufficient," he said.

Ken Rogers of Lewisville Bible Church, an independent evangelical church north of Dallas, preached the sermon that sparked Arme's new-

found faith. The sermon pinpointed self-sufficiency as one of the attitudes that keep people away from God.

Some colleagues said Arme's newly established alliances with GOP moderates mean he has mellowed his tone too much, but Arme insists his core beliefs have not changed.

"I think all of us in public life need to have a greater willingness to accept that differences of opinion are legitimate," Arme said.

"We've got some folks who feel like it's got to be absolutely perfect or it can't move forward. They lose their chance to participate in building any of the good," he added.

his wife, Jodie; a son, two daughters and nine grandchildren.

■ OWINGSVILLE—Owingsville Church called Jamie McDaniel as youth director. McDaniel will begin his new ministry May 4.

■ PLEASUREVILLE—Pleasureville Church called part-time minister of youth and children Kevin Whitt as associate pastor/minister of youth and children effective May 1. Jim Lowe is pastor.

■ RUSSELL SPRINGS—David Renfro resigned as pastor at Welfare Church, effective April 6.

■ RUSSELLVILLE—New Union Church called John Walsh as pastor. He previously was associate pastor/minister of youth at Concord Church in Hopkinsville. Walsh will begin his new ministry May 11.

■ SYMSONIA—Elva Church recently licensed Tim Franklin to the gospel ministry.

## Auto accident kills missionary

FLORIANOPOLIS, Brazil (BP)—Wendell "Boots" Blackwell, Southern Baptist foreign missionary to Brazil, died April 20, in a traffic accident in Brazil.

Blackwell, 52, served as director of the evangelism and missions department of the Baptist state board in Santa Catarina, Brazil. He was returning from a preaching engagement when a vehicle reportedly crossed the highway center line and struck his car.

A former construction engineer and a native of Baton Rouge, La., Blackwell and his wife, Sherry, were appointed in 1981 by the Foreign Mission Board. Blackwell served as associate pastor and minister of education at Lanier Baptist Church in Baton Rouge prior to missionary appointment.

"This was a great, kind, hard-working servant of our Lord. He will be missed by many," said Ann Fallaw, associate director of the board's work in Brazil. "Our prayers are for his dear wife and their five children."

He is survived by his wife, the former Sherry Weeks of Mansfield, La.; two sons, Jonathan, 17, and Joshua, 14; three daughters, Jennifer, 19, Jodi, 15, and Jill, 12.

A memorial service was held April 21 in Florianopolis, Brazil.

## Oneida's highest award

Every April, our faculty and academic staff meet to decide which students deserve special recognition for accomplishments during their time at Oneida. Some of these students are completing their first year here, while others may have been with us for as many as seven years. The awards for students in grades six through 12 will be presented in a special service in chapel the last Friday of school. Seniors will receive their awards during the commencement ceremonies.

The highest honor given to an Oneida student is the William A. Evans Award. This award is given each year to the most outstanding senior. Evans was a wonderful friend of Oneida during the 1930s and '40s. While a middle school principal in Cincinnati, Evans made many trips to Oneida Baptist Institute to volunteer during the summers.

To receive this award, the student must be a Christian and must show excellence in every area of his or her life. The recipient must be a good citizen, must be a good scholar, must be sensitive to the needs of others and must have an appreciation for Oneida. There should be obvious evidence of outstanding Christian character in the student's daily life. The most difficult aspect of this award is that usually we would like to honor three or four students, but we must choose one.

The second highest honor is the John Michael Davis Award. This award is given in honor of a long-time trustee's son, who was killed in a hunting accident. The Davis Cup is given to the senior who is an outstanding citizen, is well known for his or her concern for others and is prominent in service to others. This person understands the

Christian principle of "ministering rather than being ministered to."

Finally, we select one boy and one girl from each grade, six through 12, to receive the Most Improved Award. This award is especially exciting to present, as we evaluate the progress of virtually every Oneida student. We are looking for improvement in every area of their lives. These students may not be honor roll students but have made improvements in academics. We are also

looking for improvements in study habits, including turning in homework that rarely may have been turned in before. We want to see improvements in their attitudes and character. There have been many times when the progress has been so gradual it almost may go unnoticed.

When a teacher or staff member nominates a student, you often hear a comment like: "You know, I never thought about him/her." Many times it takes another person to remind us of the progress a student has made. Most of the time, nearly everyone who has

daily contact with this student will agree that he or she has made progress. For some, the improvements have been more noticeable in one area than in others. There are other times when it is agreed that progress has in fact been made, but there is still a sufficient deficiency in other areas.

All in all, it is a wonderful day. It is good to hear about the progress so many students are making. It is important to be reminded that God is not finished with any of us yet. We are grateful for the progress these and many other students have made.

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

## Remembering R.P. Mahon

The strength of our work today partly rests on the faithful labor of those who began this ministry in 1926.

The campus family remembered one of those pioneers, R.P. Mahon, during a recent chapel. Terry Lester, pastor of First Baptist Church of London, used Mahon as an example of Christian concern that results

in positive action to change lives. He challenged students and faculty continually to renew concern for a world in need of the gospel.

Mahon came to Clear Creek for the first summer institute of 1926. He returned each summer through 1942. That year he resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church of London to devote his full energies to Clear

Creek. He served the school in many capacities—professor, business manager and dean. Mahon gave 23 years to Clear Creek and lived to see the work develop from 12 students under a tent to a high enrollment in 1957, when he died at the age of 91.

First Baptist Church of London shared Mahon's concern for Clear Creek. The church provided a major gift to help construct Mahon Hall, a faculty apartment building. For longer than my nine years here,

the church has gone the second mile in support with a monthly check. Members have provided vital leadership as trustees. The longest tenure belongs to Dyché Jones who remembers signing the charter when the state convention assumed responsibility for the ministry. Most recently Ruth Milby completed a term.

Mahon exemplifies the kind of faculty we continue to recruit for Clear Creek. He was a pastor for 14 years, a missionary to Mexico for 13 years and a professor at Baptist Bible Institute (which now is New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) for 10 years. President Emeritus D.M. Aldridge wrote, "L.C. Kelly and R.P. Mahon recognized

the value of a significant movement they had begun and resolved to enlarge upon it. Neither could have so successfully carried the school through its struggles for existence without the sacrificial cooperation of the other. They planted and watered both wisely and well. Clear Creek is truly the 'lengthening shadow' of these two Christian brothers."

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

## Historian & futurist: Wesley needed in today's churches

By Greg Garrison  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—When theologian Leonard Sweet talks about how to spark a renewal in U.S. churches, he sums it up in one word: Wesley.

And when syndicated columnist and church historian Diana Butler Bass talks about how to reverse the shrinking memberships of today's mainline Protestant churches, she points to one man: John Wesley.

"A tornado touches down and stirs things up—that's the way the church needs to be today," said Sweet, dean of Drew Theological Seminary in Madison, N.J., and author of "Eleven Gateways to a Spiritual Awakening," to be published later this year.

Sweet ranks among the most influential historians and futurists in the United Methodist Church, which traces its founding to Wesley, the 18th-century British cleric.

But Methodist churches today

rarely exemplify their Wesleyan roots, he said.

"We're out of touch with our own heritage. We don't get it," said Sweet.

Bass echoes Sweet, saying American churches need what Wesley and his brother Charles, the hymnwriter, gave to the United Kingdom more than 200 years ago.

"John and Charles Wesley's Christian compassion transformed England," said Bass, a visiting assistant professor of religious studies at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn., and author of "Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in 19th-Century America."

But, she said, John Wesley was not always a spiritual giant. Like many churches today, he too needed to undergo a spiritual awakening.

During a trip to North America, Wesley showed his stunted spiritual growth by refusing Holy Communion to a woman who had rebuffed his romantic overtures, said

Bass, who grew up Methodist and is now Episcopalian.

The episode, which got Wesley ejected from Georgia, caused him to confront his spiritual shortcomings, she said. In 1738, Wesley returned to England and had a spiritual reawakening in which he confronted his "evil and unbelief," she said.

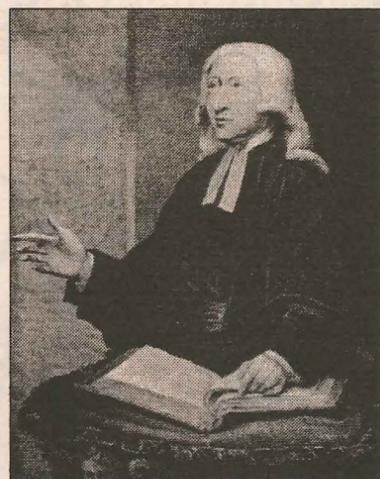
From then on, he began to transform his actions to be consistent with his beliefs.

"Wesley knew his faith was more than words," Bass said. "He was constantly giving away money to people who had none."

The Wesleyan revival renewed the Christian church in England and America, and created a wave of compassion that helped alleviate the suffering of the poor. "It was a faith that transformed the world," she said.

If Wesley were alive today, he would have the right approach to reach modern America, Sweet said.

"God gave Wesley an insight into what it means to proclaim the gospel in a post-modern world," he said, add-



WESLEY WANTED? The 18th-century cleric.

ing churches should recapture Wesley's emphasis on small groups, Bible study, prayer and solid theology.

"Our churches think big and simple," said Sweet. "Wesley's approach was think small and think complicated."

**"God gave Wesley an insight into what it means to proclaim the gospel in a post-modern world."**  
Methodist futurist  
Leonard Sweet

## Sawdust servants dedicated to helping others

SUGAR HILL, Ga. (BP)—It's 32 degrees at 7 a.m. as the wind blows harshly through the loose fittings of Miss Mattie's windows.

She strains to read the gas bill. Much too high, she thinks. But men from First Baptist Church of Sugar Hill are coming today to winterize her home.

The 10 men she is waiting for gather at a local restaurant for an early breakfast. Their truck beds and car trunks hold flashlights, smoke detector batteries, insulation and plastic sheeting.

They are managers, salesmen, a program analyst, a postmaster, the church choir director. Only one is a builder by profession. They range in age from 20s to 50s.

They are First Baptist's Sawdust Servants, men who commit to giving one Saturday a month for at least a year to help anyone. They are governed by minimal criteria: They accept no pay for labor or supplies. Anyone who needs help gets it.

"Last month, we made repairs on a church building where the congregation is elderly. Next month, we plan to help Gwinnett Metro Baptist Association repair one of its buildings," says Charlie Tanksley, the group's coordinator.

But this month, they're helping 15 shut-ins. Their checklist includes setting dates for church youth to do yard work, replacing batteries in smoke detectors, closing crawl space vents, wrapping exposed pipes, weather

stripping doors, covering windows with plastic and replacing furnace filters.

The furnace filter turns out to be Miss Mattie's biggest problem. When Danny Henderson and Tommy Henry crawl under the house and remove the filter, it disintegrates.

They replace the filter, repair a window screen, carry a frozen garden hose onto the carport. Miss Mattie watches from the window. Is she surprised the men would spend their Saturday helping her?

"Not really," she reflects. "That's the way people are at First Baptist."

*This story originally appeared in the March-April edition of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's magazine MissionsUSA.*

## Fear of immersion gaffes leads to invention of baptismal chair

LAKE CITY, Tenn. (BP)—While it has not happened in all his years in the ministry, pastor Tom Byrge has worried about someone losing his or her balance while being baptized and thrashing around out of control.

"I tell people not to panic. I have never drowned someone yet," said Byrge, pastor of Clinch River Baptist Church in Lake City, Tenn.

Some people have a fear of water, Byrge noted, and some baptism subjects momentarily lose control when their feet come off the bottom during immersion. "People at times reach up to grab the edge of the baptistry to stabilize themselves," the pastor said.

Byrge mentioned his concern last year to church member Cormey Shultz, who just happens to dabble with inventions. Shultz immediately began experimenting on a device to help the pastor and the person being baptized to maintain control.

The result is a baptism seat, which sits in the pool unnoticed by those in the congregation and can be used for adults or children.

The invention provides a seat for the person being baptized, complete with a handhold and a brace for the feet.

The device was completed last year and Byrge already has used it twice.

"It is safer and makes the baptismal service more reverent," Byrge said, noting it is easier to dip the person into the water, with no ripples or splashing.

Shultz took on the challenge because he enjoys inventing things and working with metal. "I enjoy trying to make something to make things work better," he said.

A retired truck driver, Shultz's latest device currently is going through the patent process, which normally takes about six months, he said.

He already has secured a local company to manufacture the device. He plans on marketing it on a limited basis while the patent is pending.

The device is 30 inches wide, 72 inches in length and fits easily into baptismal pools. It is lightweight and could be moved to a pond or creek, Shultz noted.

While the exact cost has not been determined, Shultz anticipates it selling for less than \$400.

Shultz hopes his idea will be received well by other churches and that his baptismal aid device will become widely used. If it doesn't, however, he said he's happy to have made something his pastor suggested would be helpful in his work.

## Pastor offers his retreat to others ministers seeking solitude

SNEEDVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—If Jesus constantly retreated to pray, then other ministers should too, according to Seven Gibson.

Gibson has founded Earth's Beulah Land, a pastors' retreat nestled atop Newman Ridge in northeast Tennessee.

The 100-acre tract has a cabin and a prayer garden for pastors to spend a relaxed, quiet time seeking God.

"One of the most difficult things a busy pastor has to do is find time to refresh his soul, renew his vision and reaffirm God's plan for his life," Gibson said.

The bivocational pastor speaks from experience.

About three years ago, Gibson was studying the Gospel of Luke and was struck by the fact that Jesus constantly went to the mountains to pray.

"Being an old mountain man myself, I thought that might be a good place for me," Gibson said.

He knew exactly where to go—

the old homeplace of his grandparents.

"I came here. It was the only place in the county where I knew no one could find me," he said.

Gibson began going regularly to Newman Ridge to pray. Not long afterward, his church "began to take on new life. I saw movement I had not seen before."

He noted the experience was like "a shot in the arm."

He credits divine inspiration for the idea of turning the property into a retreat.

"It was nothing I had planned," he said, adding it looked like "an impossible undertaking."

The land was no longer in his family. It was owned by a man in California.

Others had tried to buy the land but to no avail.

Gibson wrote the owner and told him he would like to buy the land.

To his surprise, the owner called and asked him, "Are you

going to do something for the Lord on that mountain?"

Gibson told of his concept for a retreat cabin for pastors, and the owner responded that he would pray about it.

Even if the answer was yes, Gibson was not sure he could afford the property. He knew the man had been offered as much as \$60,000 for the land.

The owner called and told Gibson he would sell the land. All he wanted was the \$24,000 he had paid for the property 17 years before.

After that, everything began to fall in place.

Though located in Tennessee the site is accessible to pastors in Kentucky, Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia and other states, he said.

"My hope is that the pastor down on his luck who needs to get alone with God will come and use it," Gibson said.

More information is available from Gibson at (423) 733-4800.



## Have I told you about the kids lately?

If you haven't heard about the kids at Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children lately, we'd love to come share the exciting ways in which God is working in young lives! Our Speakers Bureau has talented speakers who can share about the overall children's ministry or about individual programs like Family Foster Care, Cornerstone Counseling, First Step Pregnancy Counseling and Adoption, and any of the campus programs.

Getting a speaker is easy. Just call us at the number below. There's never any charge and speakers are available for church services, small group meetings, mission fairs, children's events, and other activities.

For more information or to schedule a speaker, call us at:

**1-800-456-1386**

or (502) 245-2101

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