



WESTERN RECORDER

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RFRA advocates look for options after Supreme Court decision

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Legislation, more court cases and a possible constitutional amendment are among the options considered by religious freedom advocates stung by the Supreme Court's decision overturning the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

The 4-year-old law had forced the government to show a compelling interest before it could interfere with religious practices. It was passed in reaction to a 1990 Supreme Court decision that permitted government officials to overlook the compelling interest criteria.

But, by a vote of 6-3, the high court ruled Congress unconstitutionally usurped power belonging to federal courts and the states when it passed the measure.

"It is this court's precedent ... which must control," wrote Justice Anthony M. Kennedy for the majority.

Some religious groups and other RFRA supporters hope the court will take the dissenting advice of O'Connor and Breyer, who suggested the court reconsider its 1990 Oregon vs. Smith decision. That ruling said state anti-drug rules could stop American Indians from using peyote, a hallucinogenic drug, as part of a religious ceremony.

"If Smith gets fixed, then you don't need RFRA," said Brent Walker general counsel of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs.

In writing for the minority, O'Connor said, "The historical evidence casts doubt on the

□ See Religious freedom ..., page 10

Youth Fest draws teens & commitments



By David Winfrey
News Director

LOUISVILLE—At least 74 youth made first-time professions of faith in Christ during the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annual youth evangelism conference June 27-28.

Dubbed "Youth Fest '97," the event drew about 7,000 teenagers to Louisville's Freedom Hall, said Bill Jagers, director of the KBC's evangelism department. Also, 5,800 people attended the following Joy Jam concert.

Inspirational speaker Buster Soaries told those attending that the devil uses tricks to get smart people to do dumb things. Among those dumb things, he said, are pre-marital sex, drug abuse, gang involvement and suicide.

"You're the smartest generation in the history of the world," said Soaries, pastor of First Baptist Church of Lincoln Garden in New Jersey. "Smart people do dumb things, not because they get dumb, but because they get tricked."

Soaries, who speaks to youth groups around the country and at Promise Keepers rallies, said he addressed a high school in Indiana where 32 girls got pregnant in one school year.

"We wonder why our kids don't know the difference between sex and love. It's because they've been tricked," he said, adding that a commitment to Christ is the answer to be smart in both action as well as knowledge.

"The solutions to the problems we have can't be learned in school. They have to be dealt with through Christ," he said.

Soaries encouraged Christians to look at Jesus' example to know how to live.

"What God did was come here and say, 'Watch me. I'm going to show you how to have the power I intended

□ See Youth Fest ..., page 7



YOUTH FEST & JOY JAM ■ Top: Michael W. Smith headlined the annual Joy Jam festival June 28 at Louisville's Freedom Hall. ■ Middle Left: Buster Soaries was the primary speaker earlier at Youth Fest, June 27-28. ■ Bottom Right: A KBC Son team sings during Youth Fest. ■ Bottom Left: Point of Grace at Joy Jam.

Electric bill ignited Kentuckian's advocacy for children

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

LOUISVILLE—Kathy Taylor opened her electric bill and found an answer to prayer.

For a long time, Taylor had felt a growing burden to help abused children, but she had not found a way to make a difference.

"It seems each time I watched the news, another child had been victimized one way or another," she said. "My heart became very heavy as I prayed to God for wisdom in combating this problem."

She knew she couldn't take on every abused child, but she had to do more than "tearfully watch the news."

Then her February 1996 electric bill arrived.

Tucked in with the bill was a plea for volunteers to work as Court Appointed Special Advocates for children in Jefferson County.

CASA is a private, non-profit organization which provides trained volunteers to serve as advocates for abused and neglected children involved in family court.

CASA of Jefferson County is one of 13 CASA groups in Kentucky and is part of the national movement which includes 610 CASA programs in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

A CASA volunteer is assigned by a judge to work with one child as fact finder, facilitator and friend, said Shari Londrigan, coordinator of CASA volunteers in Jefferson County.

That power bill plea was just the spark needed, said Taylor, who became a CASA volunteer.

"I knew God was being very clear to me about what his wishes were," she said. "I felt if I could help at least one child at a time that would be one less child suffering."

□ See Electric bill ..., page 12



ADVOCATE Kathy Taylor serves as a volunteer court appointed special advocate for children in Jefferson County. Despite its rewards, the work isn't easy, she said. "Sometimes I don't sleep at night."

Moving? See page 4 (0701)

BAPTISTS

Accrediting agency removes Southern's notation

Reccord calls NAMB employees to war

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)—In his first chapel address to employees of the North American Mission Board, President Bob Reccord urged them to go to war for the soul of North America. "Much of the Christian community is acting like we're at peace rather than at war," Reccord said in June 25 chapel service. "Many of us are in that war, but not at war, and we're losing the spiritual battle for this nation. We better get in a war mentality if we're to see lives changed for Christ."

Reccord announced two requirements for every NAMB employee to "get in the game." "Everybody at NAMB will be trained to give away their faith. Everybody," he said. "If we can't effectively share our faith, we have no business being at the North American Mission Board. That is a requirement." Every employee also will be required to give one week a year to a mission project, Reccord said. "It is ludicrous for us to say we're a mission board if every one of us is not on mission ... It is critical that we walk the walk and not just talk the talk."

Acknowledging some employees may resist the two requirements, Reccord said, "That's fine. That means God has another place of service for them. We must get in the battle of reaching our world for Christ." Reccord told employees God called them to NAMB as their place of service before they or the world were created.

"No one is here by accident. God called you here by name before the foundation of the world," he said. Reccord also announced all employees will participate in three days of prayer and renewal Sept. 9-11.

LOUISVILLE—A serious notation on the accreditation of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has been removed by the Association of Theological Schools, the seminary announced June 25.

President Al Mohler said he received a letter dated June 19 from an official with ATS which reported the agency's Commission on Accrediting voted to remove the notation at its June 1997 meeting in Pittsburgh.

The notation, the most serious given by ATS short of probation, was imposed in January 1996. It stated that the "general tone of the school impairs the capacity to provide significant theological education and ministerial training."

The notation was given after months of turmoil on the seminary's Louisville campus, primarily related to a transition in power as conservatives gained control of the trustee board and hired Mohler as president, marking a sharp turn to the right in ideology.

Amid that backdrop, Mohler fired Diana Garland as dean of the Carver School of Church Social Work after she publicly criticized his new policies on faculty hiring. Trustees then codified those changes in hiring policies and put the faculty and staff under a virtual gag order that prohibited the expression of views deemed neg-

ative toward the administration.

The faculty complained to ATS, which visited the campus along with two other accrediting agencies.

Two of the stickiest points of contention in the matter were that the faculty had no input into the new policies and that the new policies changed the hiring and tenure requirements in mid-stream for some non-tenured faculty members who had been hired on tenurable tracks.

Mohler said the news that ATS has removed the notation signals a more peaceful time on the seminary campus.

"This decision underlines the excellence which has characterized Southern Seminary from 1859 to the present," he said. "It also makes very clear that the process of institutional reorientation and transformation which has occurred over the last several years has reached a constructive and productive stage."

Based on information provided to the news media by the seminary, the latest ATS report notes improvements in several areas. The full ATS report was not released to the press.

Regarding academic freedom, the report notes: "Fully aware that the seminary has undergone great turmoil during the process of reshaping itself in a conservative evangelical direction, all agreed that the changes have

not diminished academic standards or the quality of teaching and research. Most importantly, they also agreed the president and vice president for academic administration have given very good leadership in designing deliberative and collaborative processes in which the faculty has ample opportunity for participation."

The report cites specific actions that have been taken since the earlier ATS visit, including dialogue between the president and faculty on the hiring policies and faculty-initiated modifications in the policy on faculty discipline.

On the status of contract and tenure-track faculty, the report notes: "The committee understood the focus of this concern to be those full-time or regular faculty who were not tenured at the time of the November 1995 (focused visit), but who had been appointed to contract or tenure-track positions prior to the April 1995 action of the seminary board of trustees specifying additional criteria for faculty appointments."

Among other things, the new criteria mandated opposition to abortion, homosexuality and women serving as pastors. The latter point—requiring absolute confidence that God never would call a woman as a pastor—created a sticking point for most of the non-tenured faculty members who

had been hired to their tenurable-track positions under different guidelines, even though they had been hailed as "conservative evangelical" scholars.

The ATS report acknowledged this change in hiring policies "prevented the retention of some of the junior faculty." However, it cited the faculty committee as being encouraged by the administration's attempt to seek "creative alternatives to make it possible for some of this group to stay" in different capacities.

Most of the faculty members who fell in this in-between category have left their seminary positions since the hiring policies were changed. Some have been eased out by special arrangements that removed them from the classroom by reassigning them as research professors for a specified time before their departures.

The ATS report cited "dramatic changes" in faculty due to the seminary's turmoil. "Of the 67 full-time faculty members listed in fall 1994, only 33 remain in spring 1997, five semesters later," the report noted, adding that "progress in the institution noted in this report must be understood within the context of a faculty that has been largely re-configured."

The ATS report also cited improvements in issues of shared governance and communication between administration, trustees and faculty.

For first time, SBC recognizes two conventions in one state

RICHMOND, Va. (ABP)—For the first time in history, the Southern Baptist Convention has recognized relationships with two Baptist conventions in the same state.

In one of its final acts before being merged into the North American Mission Board, the SBC Home Mission Board's executive committee established a formal relationship with Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia was formed last year as a conservative alternative to the existing state Baptist convention, the Baptist General Association of Virginia.

The last-minute recognition by the HMB allows NAMB as its successor to begin providing joint funds for missionaries and ministries with the new state convention.

While Virginia Baptist officials said they were not surprised by the action, they expressed fear it could create conflicts in Virginia's district associations if NAMB matching funds are distributed unfairly between the two conventions.

Currently the Baptist General Association of Virginia and NAMB jointly support 50 missionaries who serve in Virginia. Last year the HMB sent \$238,937 from Cooperative Pro-

gram funds to the state convention for this cost-sharing arrangement.

No indication has been given about how much money the new state convention will receive from NAMB and whether that money will be taken away from existing state conventions.

"I do not think the intention is to take money from any other state conventions," said Marty King, NAMB spokesman. But King added that there is a finite amount of money available for the states, and it is doled out on a basis of priorities defined by NAMB.

King said the agreement with the new Virginia convention is similar to agreements with other state conven-

tions. But the newly-signed agreement does not specify the ratio of support to be given from NAMB. Similar agreements with all existing state or regional conventions include a ratio of support for jointly funded projects or personnel. For example, in Kentucky jointly funded projects are supported 60 percent by the Kentucky Baptist Convention and 40 percent by NAMB.

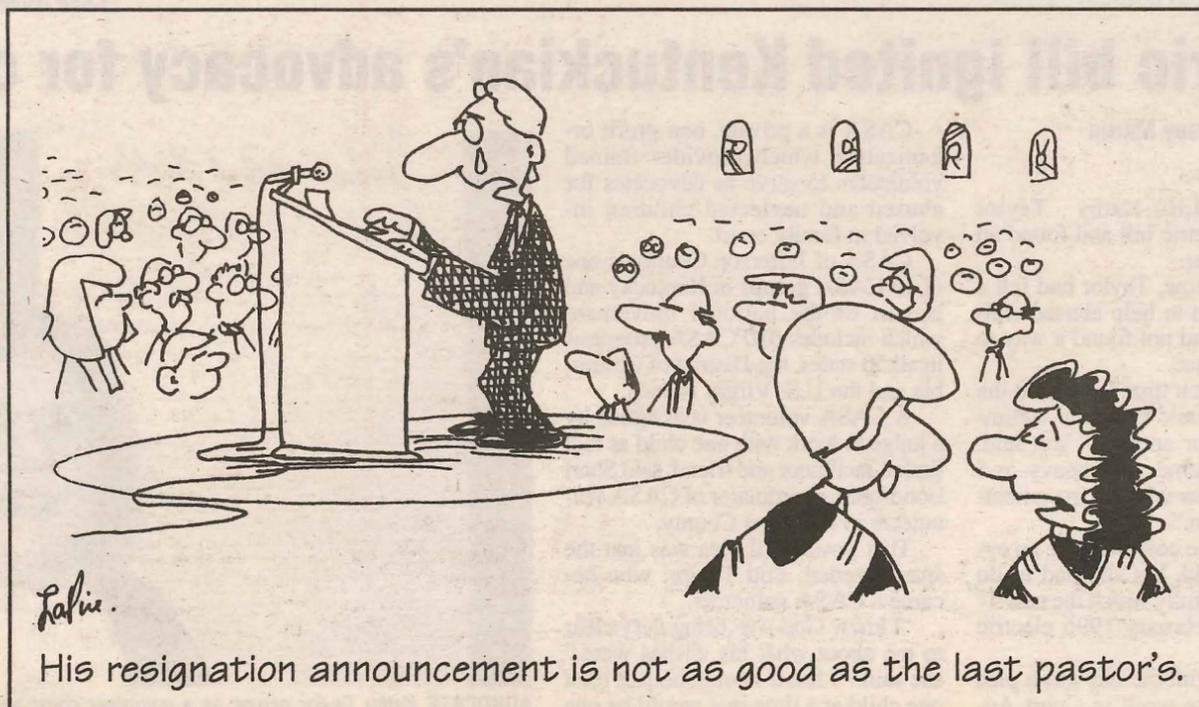
Both Virginia conventions have announced a priority on church planting. This could spell trouble in district associations, said Reginald McDonough, executive director of the established state convention.

"I never want politics to squelch the advancement of the kingdom," McDonough said. "However, fairness and equity are two very important principles in order to make relations between various Baptist bodies work."

Other SBC agencies also are establishing ties to the new convention. Jimmy Draper, president of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, said his agency will provide financial support similar to what is offered to the existing state convention.

The new convention also has established formal ties with the SBC Annuity Board.

However, the new convention has not yet been able to establish a formal partnership agreement with the SBC's International Mission Board, according to President Jerry Rankin. "We told them we can assign projects like we would do with any entity such as a church or association, but that a unique state partnership would not be appropriate. They accepted that and they did organize several projects."



Black and white Baptists build house, relationships

By Leslie Scanlon
Louisville Courier-Journal

LOUISVILLE—Lincoln Bingham of Smoketown wanted to show his community that when people move to the suburbs, they don't lose their compassion.

Stephen Hadden of Crestwood wanted to show his suburban community that Jesus' followers will be known "not by who you boycott, but how you love one another."

And the end result is a new Multi-Ministry Mission House constructed last week across from St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church, Bingham's inner-city congregation. It will be used for church and community gatherings and to house visiting missionaries.

To accomplish this, white Baptists from Crestwood Baptist Church worked side by side on East Lampson Street with blacks from Bingham's congregation.

"We're not a mission project for

somebody," Bingham said. "It diminishes the integrity of the person if you just feel like you're on the receiving end of it. ... We're equal partners in all of it. ... We're equal in giving, but equal in sacrifice."

Members of St. Paul, for example, were entirely responsible for negotiating the purchase of the land. Teenagers and adults from both congregations—along with helpers from Crescent Hill Baptist Church and Broadway Baptist Church, plus volunteers from South Carolina and elsewhere—pounded nails and pulled weeds and helped shingle the roof.

When Hadden learned that a network of Baptist moderates called the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship would be holding its annual meeting in Louisville last week, he called Louisvillians Alice Marshall and Ray Schnur, who were in charge of local mission projects associated with the gathering. Hadden asked whether the Fellowship would consider sponsor-

ing the Smoketown project. The Fellowship agreed, kicking in \$20,000, and on June 14 construction began.

A member of Hadden's church bought stock for \$10,000, waited until it appreciated, then sold it the week before construction began for a profit and donated the entire amount to the project. A desperately needed plumber—hired at the last minute after other arrangements fell through—was so impressed by what he saw that he wrote a \$200 check.

Hadden said he has seen "kind of a glow" in the eyes of the Crestwood volunteers—"a sense of pride. I think people want to make a difference and make the world a better place, but they don't know how to get going."

Bingham wants his neighborhood to see an example of what caring Christians can do. The people of Smoketown usually are "suspicious of anyone with resources," saying "we've been studied and evaluated" over and over, "but nobody does anything," Bingham said.

About two years ago, when Hadden was moving from Georgetown to Oldham County, his real-estate agent suggested he contact a man named Doug Beasley to negotiate a mortgage loan. When they spoke, Beasley had just returned from a meeting of the Christian men's group Promise Keepers, where he'd made a promise to work to further racial reconciliation.

Hadden told Beasley, "If you're going to work for racial reconciliation, you need to meet Lincoln Bingham," whom he knew slightly because Bingham has worked for 16 years for the Kentucky Baptist Convention developing cooperation and partnerships between black and white Baptists.

So the three men met at St. Paul Church, where Bingham explained to them his vision for his church and the neighborhood. When he pointed out the lot across the street, Hadden sug-

gested building a Habitat for Humanity house, but Bingham responded that he'd rather the churches themselves take on a project—in part to be a sign to the neighborhood that black and white Christians could and would work side by side.

In the neighborhood, "most people believe that white Christians have moved out of the inner city with no concern" and have "deserted" the blacks who live there, Bingham said. "That's not really the case. ... There are many churches who would welcome the opportunity to work with inner-city churches. You don't have to reside to participate."

So the men committed to work together, then stood on a porch in the middle of a rainstorm, clasped hands and prayed that the seeds of their plan might some day bear fruit.

It took time, but this year the church bought the lot from the city of Louisville for about \$1,500. It used to be the site of "an old neglected house," Bingham said. "Vacant. Boarded up. Weeds. It was an eyesore."

Acquiring that lot was part of a larger plan St. Paul has for making an impact in Smoketown. Last summer, the church completed an expansion costing roughly \$400,000.

Before they ever hammered a nail, members of the two churches got to know each other through shared worship services, exchanges of their pastors, joint youth programs and the like. "Out of this have come friendships, friendships we feel will last," with "genuine camaraderie, not just lip service" to getting along, said Fred Johnson, a member of St. Paul and a supervisor at Philip Morris USA.

"Especially when you deal with black and white issues," Johnson said, "it's refreshing to see how the kingdom of God can be decisively different."

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HOUSE RAISING Black and white Baptists work together on the multi-ministry house of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church in Louisville. (Photo by John Swain)

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Bob Dunston**, professor and chairman of the religion and philosophy department at Cumberland College, has been named national recipient of the Leader of the Year award from Theta Alpha Kappa, the national honor society for religious studies and theology.

■ **Campbellsville** University has three new billboards greeting travelers on U.S. 68 and state Highway 55. The boards emphasize Campbellsville's new status as a university and the school's new slogan, "A New Standard of Excellence."

■ **Cornerstone** Counseling, a joint ministry of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children and local churches and associations, has opened its newest office in Stanford. The office, operated in partnership with Lincoln County Baptist Association, is at 4160 Highway 27 South. The phone number is (606) 365-1060.

■ **Bill and Jean Moore** of Owensboro recently spent almost three weeks in Liberia witnessing the trauma the nation has experienced as a result of a seven-year war. They were part of a Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America delegation working in cooperation with Liberation Witness for Peace. During the May 21-June 6 trip, the group participated in a conflict resolution workshop for Christian leaders, preached in six churches and led two chapel services.

■ **First Baptist Church** of Whitesburg needs volunteer teams to help with vacation Bible schools and backyard Bible clubs planned for various mission points in Three Forks Baptist Association. Two scheduled volunteer teams have cancelled. Contact Tony Brown at (606) 633-2277 or (606) 633-0210.

Orange wants to help bivocationalists bear more fruit

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

LOUISVILLE—Kentucky's new regional consultant for bivocational ministry hopes to use his position to better train bivocationalists while affirming their importance.

"One thing I'll do is let them know they're not alone," said Larry Orange, one of three such volunteers in the nation. Appointed in May as a Mission Service Corps volunteer, he will cover a six-state region.

"One of the big frustrations (bivocationalists) face is not being able to relate to the association and convention because of when meetings are held," said Orange, a bivocational minister nearly half his 32 years as a pastor. "Pastors' conferences are usually held on Monday mornings, and they're working."

The former pastor and current member of West Broadway Baptist Church in Louisville will begin teaching a course on bivocational ministry this fall at Boyce Bible School on the campus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He already has led two seminars

and is available for individual consultations. His wife, Janet, counsels with pastors' spouses.

Orange and Vernon Beacham, a West Virginia engineer who also was appointed to a similar role in May, are helping plan the first Appalachian celebration for bivocationalists in southeastern Kentucky. It will be held in the fall of 1998 and will draw bivocational pastors from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina.

Orange's status gives him a better understanding of the pressures bivocationalists face. He spends half his week in Morgantown, where he serves as director of missions for Gasper River Baptist Association.

Besides their inability to attend most convention meetings, many bivocational pastors mistakenly believe there is no training available for them, Orange said.

However, off-campus courses can be completed through Judson College, Thomas State College and various Boyce extension centers, he said. Boyce also offers a tie-in with Campbellsville University for those wanting a four-year degree, he said.

Kentucky Baptist Convention officials have estimated that bivocational pastors represent 25 percent to 28 percent of all KBC pastors. But Orange believes the actual figures are much higher.

Of just over 2,100 Kentucky Baptist churches, only 900 have receipts of more than \$50,000 a year, he noted, an indication that many pastors have secondary incomes or working spouses.

The same is true nationally, according to Dale Holloway, the Southern Baptist Convention's national missionary for bivocational ministry.

"Nationally, 30 to 35 percent of all pastors fall into this category," said Holloway, who is based in Jackson, Miss. "It's going up, but it's gradual. The significant number is the number of new congregations pastored by bivocationalists, which is 90 percent."

"Baptisms, average Sunday school attendance per 100 members and donations to associations are higher in these churches."

He said such numbers show the need for strengthening this form of pulpit ministry. Whether more region-

al missionaries to assist bivocationalists will be appointed depends on the direction of the new North American Mission Board. But Holloway hopes to see three more bivocational consultants appointed this year.

For years the SBC has pushed the idea that churches retaining a fully-salaried pastor are somehow superior to those who don't, Orange said. Thus, many small congregations prefer to cling to that designation even if it means paying a poverty-level wage, he added.

"The church was always intended to be a lay organization. The SBC needs to put out material to say to churches it's OK if they need to go bivocational."

"To many churches it's a stigma to have one. But 8 percent of all (SBC) churches with more than 1,000 members have bivocational pastors."

Such leaders include Leon Wilson, who was the first consultant appointed through Mission Service Corps last year. He is pastor of South Park Baptist Church in Oklahoma City.

For more information about Orange's ministry to bivocationalists, call (502) 267-6233.

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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Abolish death penalty

The death penalty should be abolished in our country. Only an all-knowing God is righteous and can administer true justice; therefore, only Creator God has the moral authority to take a life.

The maximum penalty imperfect human-kind should be able to mete out to another imperfect brother or sister guilty of committing a heinous capital crime is life imprisonment without parole.

How many legislators, state gov-

ernors, presidents, judges, attorneys and citizens are righteous enough to play God by favoring and implementing capital punishment?

How many of us would be in favor of the death penalty if it were our guilty son or daughter who was sentenced to die?

Paul L. Whiteley Sr.
Louisville

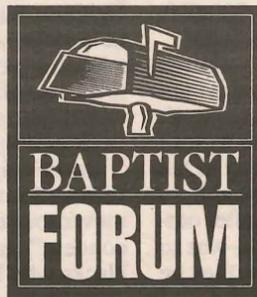
Why Calvinists?

I consider my personal theology to be conservative. I believe the Bible is God's word to a lost and dying world. I be-

lieve God's word is without error. I believe God must take the initiative in convicting us of our sins. I believe whosoever will may accept or reject God's call. I believe God has given his church the privilege of proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ to the entire world.

My personal beliefs would place me outside the Calvinist and Arminian camps. What puzzles me is why those who appoint our seminary presidents are under the impression we need Calvinists, when the overwhelming majority of Southern Baptists are not Calvinists in their personal theology.

Pete Taylor
Whitesville



SBC '97: Where were the messengers?

By Trennis Henderson

Amid all the attention focused on Disney, convention restructuring and world missions, at least one story was virtually ignored during this year's Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Dallas. The question that was quietly avoided remains unanswered: Where were all the messengers?

Following last year's SBC registration of only 13,706 in New Orleans, convention officials projected a messenger total of 15,000 when Southern Baptists returned to Dallas. As it turned out, that projection was far too optimistic. By the end of the annual meeting, a mere 12,418 messengers had registered—2,500 fewer than expected.

To place those numbers in context, the last time the SBC was held in Dallas, a record 45,519 messengers attended. Of course, that was in 1985 at

the height of the struggle between the conservatives and moderates for control of the convention. A dozen years later, things are much quieter at the annual meeting.

But this much quieter? This year's messengers total was the lowest in 23 years, the lowest in a Southern state in 38 years and the lowest in Texas since 1958. That's low!

According to SBC President Tom Elliff, the meager messenger totals of the past two years are no cause for alarm. "Our conventions are issue-oriented," he remarked. "If there are no issues raging," individual Baptists must make a conscious decision about "how they will use this week."

While that certainly sounds plausible, the fact remains that a key aspect of Southern Baptist cooperation is active, personal participation on the grassroots level. Not only did fewer than 12,500 messengers register for

COMMENTARY

Hong Kong and the church

By Tony Campolo

I just returned from Hong Kong, and my mind is spinning with the images and impressions I gathered there. If there is a need to prove the success of capitalism, that need can be met on the streets of this royal colony. Ironically, this citadel of capitalism is about to be taken over by Communist China.

As I came away from Hong Kong, I was troubled. I found the churches of the colony are mostly led by young ministers in their twenties or early thirties. Many of the older church leaders have left to avoid the consequences of the communist takeover. They are shepherds who have abandoned their flocks in the face of impending danger, and the Bible has something to say about shepherds like that.

Another troubling sign is that the mainline churches of Hong Kong show signs of having been seduced by the affluence of the colony, and of having lost their zeal for evangelism. Non-traditional churches also are a cause for concern. For instance, Pentecostal churches seem to have bought into a prosperity theology.

What especially disturbed me about the churches of Hong Kong was

the extent to which their people had reduced the gospel to an individualistic salvation weak on issues of social justice. As a case in point, I was extremely upset to find there are about 150,000 Filipino maids in Hong Kong

COMMENTARY



Tony Campolo

who experience incredible racial discrimination and scandalous sexual harassment from their employers—many of them "Christians." The church leaders in Hong Kong have had little say against these injustices, and have done almost nothing to change the laws to provide protection.

On the last Sunday I was in Hong Kong I preached for a Filipino congregation. It was one of the most unusual experiences of my life. There were approximately 1,000 women and only two men present. Many of these women had left husbands and children behind, often at the encouragement of their husbands, who wanted the extra money that could be made.

Before I make any further judgments, I suppose I ought to say something about how the U.S. is about to impact people in both Hong Kong and China. We are about to once again grant Most Favored Nation status to China. This will guarantee free trade between our nations; which in turn is supposed to benefit both them and us.

SINGLES

Singles can make a big difference

By James Stillwell

Q. Sometimes a person needs to know he or she can make a difference. Do you have any suggestions on how a single adult could make an impact that would be life changing both for the giver and the recipient?

A. Missions is God's big work for the church, and no one is better qualified to participate in missions than single adults.



A look at Scripture (especially the book of Acts) as well as church history (the founders of the Jesuit movement, for example) will show that single adults can make a big difference in places and situations where it is sometimes more difficult for those with marital obligations.

Some of my church's single adult group just returned from a World Changers mission trip to the Caribbean island of Antigua. World Changers was created by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission as an innovative approach to coeducational missions and is now part of the Southern Baptist Convention's North American and International mission boards.

We participated in the most ambitious World Changers project to date, putting up a second story on an educational building in just one week. Other projects accomplished by our team of 85 (mostly single) adults included repair and additions to two houses and a complete painting of another church.

The impact on the national Christians in the host country is phenomenal. By exposing the community to the work being done by the short-term missionaries, the national church can double its ability to reach out to its neighborhood. The satisfaction felt by missions participants is tremendous.

Americans export much to other countries that is not good. It sends a powerful message to those who have much less than us when we care enough to give of ourselves significantly for a week.

Even more significant is the dramatic change that happens in the lives of participants. You are shaken out of your complacency and given a new spirit of thankfulness and unparalleled camaraderie with single adults from across the country.

For information on World Changers, call (901) 381-9228.

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

HE SAID/SHE SAID

Don't believe in original sin? Just look at your sneaky kids

HESAI



Mark Wingfield

Anyone who has trouble understanding the doctrine of original sin ought to have children. Our children remind us that Adam's "Are you looking for me, God?" routine has been carried from generation to generation. And sneakiness must be either innate or inherited.

The other afternoon, our 5-year-old boys were playing in the backyard, where they had turned their drinking water cups into half the ingredients for mud pies. Alison had told them not to make mud with their water, but they did anyway.

Soon after, they entered the back door through the kitchen, where Alison was preparing dinner. From the hallway I watched each of them hide their drinking cups behind their backs and shuffle across the floor with their backs against the counter. Our little smugglers were headed for the bathroom sink.

At first, I laughed. Then I found myself wondering: Where did they learn this trick? Have we taught them to be sneaky, or does it just come naturally?

Before the second child had made it past the kitchen door to the hallway, my laughter betrayed him. Alison caught Garrett in the act and laid down the law again. (Meanwhile, Luke continued to fill his cup at the bathroom sink, thinking his brother had offered himself up as a cloaking device.)

The child caught in the act began to cry as Alison reiterated the rules. "I'm not feeling good!" he wailed in the most tearful and trembling voice he could work up. "You hurt my feelings." Alison was not moved. She had heard those exact lines too many times before, spewed forth as predictably as pushing the button on Buzz Lightyear and hearing "I come in peace!"

I kept my distance from the fray, staying in the hallway to ponder the theological underpinnings of this whole episode. Where did those boys learn to be so sneaky?

SHESAID



Alison Wingfield

It used to be easier to catch the boys in their sneakiness.

Whenever they were doing something they knew they weren't supposed to do, they told me, "Close your eyes, Mommy," or "Don't come in, Mommy!" It was easy to nip in the bud whatever scheme they had in mind with that kind of forewarning.

Of course, this time-honored parenting advice still works: "When it gets quiet, start worrying."

I also worry when I hear whispering. It doesn't always mean they are up to no good, but my ears definitely perk up when they don't want me to hear what they are saying.

When it comes to natural instincts versus heredity, I think both come to play in our sneaky boys. Some of those sneaky genes had to be inherited from their uncle, my brother, the king of sneak.

Like many younger sisters, I suffered (in silence, of course) through numerous sneak attacks from my brother and his friends. From being thrown into an unheated pool, to locking me in my closet, to the everyday hiding behind doors and jumping out and scaring me, my brother was full of mischief. In the closet episode, he pushed my bed in front of the closet so I couldn't get out, and then, in the midst of my screaming at him, he pushed the bed from the door and snuck away. It took me at least 15 minutes before I realized I could get out.

God does that. He unlocks the doors of our own imprisonment, if only we will stop complaining long enough to turn the knob and find redemption.

Isn't that sneaky.

Court action threatens religious liberty

For much of the last two centuries, Americans have taken religious liberty for granted. We have protested religious oppression in far-away lands, while smugly believing our own rights were secure.

Southern Baptists have observed a religious liberty emphasis in this week before the Fourth of July for years. We have paid our respect to the First Amendment, but on the whole we have marked the commemoration with a complacency that would shock our nation's founding fathers.

This year we have plenty of reason to change our viewpoint. Religious liberty is threatened not only around the world but on our shores as well. In fact, within the space of the last week, we have witnessed perhaps the most profound convergence of threats to religious liberty seen in our world this century. Take a brief tour around the world:

■ This week, Hong Kong reverts to control of communist China, with no one certain what religious freedoms really will be tolerated over the long haul.

■ Last week, the Russian congress approved a bill that could severely restrict the work of Baptists and other religions not under the thumb of the Russian Orthodox Church. President Boris Yeltsin holds in his pen the fate of this measure.

■ The Israeli Knesset continues to push for passage of a bill that would make proselytizing a crime, with jail sentences perhaps mandated for anyone convicted of carrying a New Testament.

■ Across the globe, particularly in communist-run and Muslim-dominated countries, Christians are being martyred in greater numbers than ever before.

■ In the United States, the Supreme Court last week dealt a fatal blow to a pivotal piece of legislation ensuring religious liberty. By declaring the Religious Freedom Restoration Act unconstitutional, the court has reopened the door for thousands of churches to be sued for attempting to extend their witness and for individual Christians to be hampered in their expressions of faith.

How can America continue to serve as an example to the world of the value of religious liberty when our highest court has taken an unprecedented position inhibiting

religious expression? And how can Baptists continue to tout our rich heritage as advocates of liberty for all if we do not speak up at this pivotal moment?

Although Americans still enjoy far more religious freedom than can be found in places like China or Russia or Israel, last week's court ruling dealt a serious wound to the free exercise clause of the First Amendment, which says government may not "inhibit" the free exercise of religion.

Before 1990, the Supreme Court enforced a high level of protection for free exercise of religion by using a two-pronged test. Accord-

ing to this test, religious expression could be restricted only (1) when government could demonstrate a compelling interest and (2) when the restriction allowed was the least-restrictive means of furthering that interest.

The court blew apart that test, however, in a 1990 decision called *Employment Division vs. Smith*. It ruled that the state of Oregon may restrict Native Americans from using the hallucinogenic drug peyote in religious ceremonies. That ruling opened the door to many attempts by local and state governments to restrict the religious practice of churches and individual Christians.

RFRA was drafted as a legislative remedy to the change in the court's attitude. The legislation reinstated the same "compelling interest" standard previously used by the court.

Last week the court said Congress had no right to take such action, accusing Congress of wrongly "interpreting" the Constitution.

Now rather than just making one mess, the Supreme Court has made two. Had the ill-reasoned *Employment Division vs. Smith* ruling not been written, RFRA would not have been necessary. Rather than striking down RFRA and leaving the gate wide open for intimidation of religious expression, the court should have reversed its 1990 ruling.

Until that happens, or until Congress or the states find another way around the problem, religion will suffer in America and we'll erode our moral authority to demand that other nations embrace religious liberty.

— Mark Wingfield

EDITORIAL

Do you believe in miracles?

By Carey Newman

My friend had just returned from the hospital. His face was all aglow.

"One of my wife's best friends had recently been diagnosed with cancer.

The most recent examination today, however, revealed that it had all disappeared—mysteriously. Her doctors are at a complete loss to explain it. My wife believes God miraculously healed her friend in response to the earnest and faithful prayer of her friend's church and a discipleship group to which she belongs. What do you think?"

A miracle is typically defined as a supernatural event. That is, an event which confounds the so-called laws of nature and which only can be explained as a direct act of God.

The Bible is full of miracles. In the largest sense, the creation of the world is a miracle. Miracles punctuate the entire exodus story—from the preservation of Moses, to the burning bush, to the Passover and the crossing of the Red Sea.

In the New Testament the Gospels consistently portray Jesus as a mira-

cle worker: he commands nature, casts out demons and heals sickness, deformity and disease. Since conversion is grounded in the greatest miracle of all—the Resurrection—to embrace Christianity is to accept the idea that

God did (and still can) enter into human affairs to do things which can't otherwise be explained.

However, this idea has been severely critiqued. Some have said that what primitive peoples call miracles we now call science. Others have questioned the relationship between cause and effect with regard to miracles. If we can't really say what causes something in normal experience, then how can we say anything confidently about the miraculous? Another approach has been to subject the miracles to the test of the "historical analogy." Are the biblical miracles observable, measurable and repeatable? All of these approaches arrogantly assume that all human experience must conform to rationale explanation.

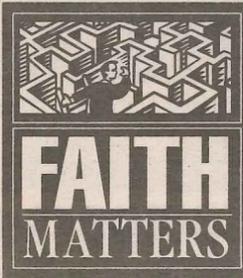
A more prudent (and more biblical) approach is never to judge a case before all the evidence is in, and, regarding miracles, not all the

evidence is in. It may be discovered, to the great surprise and dismay of many, in the great Kingdom of God which lies ahead of us, that what we call miracles are regular occurrences—the blind receive their sight, the lame begin to walk and the dead are raised.

However, a word of caution is in order for those who believe God did, does and will yet again enter into human affairs. There is no such thing as an un-interpreted miracle. There is the event (in the this case, the surprise of cancer disappearing) and its interpretation (this must surely be an act of God). We must remember that just because a certain occurrence can't be explained does not necessarily make that event a direct intervention of God.

When reading the Bible it is easy to see that the healing of the blind man was a direct intervention of God—the Bible clearly tells us so. When looking at contemporary experience, however, we have no such sure and certain guide. We thus must remain humble in our attempts to attribute events to God.

I told my friend that he and his wife should thank God and continue to pray, for earnest prayer avails much. *A miracle is the direct intervention of God into our lives, the greatest of which is, no doubt, the Resurrection of Jesus.*



KENTUCKY

Annual events drill Bible verses into kids' memories

"God can call the appropriate Scripture passage to mind right when it is needed to deal with any temptation the youth may face."
Jim Lowe

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

PLEASUREVILLE—Imagine being called on to locate a verse in the Bible in 10 seconds or less. Now imagine trying to do this as dozens of people watch your fingers fly across the pages.

Or imagine sitting with your hand on a buzzer, poised to be the first to ring in to answer a Bible question posed by a quizmaster.

Sound intimidating? Not to more than 800 children and youth from Kentucky Baptist churches who participated in Bible quizzes across the commonwealth this spring.

After months of hard work, these young people demonstrated their Bible knowledge, memory skills and skills in handling the Bible.

Across Kentucky, 553 children participated in the Children's Bible Drill and 106 in the Youth Bible Drill sponsored annually by the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Another 150 Kentucky Baptist children participated in Junior Bible Quiz sponsored by the Assemblies of God for children in kindergarten through sixth grade.

While the methodology of the two efforts is different, the goal is the same, leaders said. Both programs are designed to give children a solid foundation in the Bible.

The Bible "comes alive" for participants in KBC Bible drills, said Jim Lowe, pastor of Pleasureville Baptist Church. Over the past three years, Lowe has spearheaded the effort to

revive participation in KBC-sponsored Bible drills in Henry County. There had been no participants in the Bible drill there for about 20 years, he said.

This year, 23 children from four churches in Henry County participated: Pleasureville, Newcastle First, Smithfield and Port Royal.

Preparing for and participating in Bible drills makes a lifelong impact on the participants, he said.

"God can call the appropriate Scripture passage to mind right when it is needed to deal with any temptation the youth may face," Lowe said, recalling his own experience of participating in the Youth Bible Drill almost two decades ago.

Lilybeth Parrent agrees. She is coach for Junior Bible Quizzers at First Baptist Church in Bowling Green. Living Hope Baptist Church and Eastwood Baptist Church in Bowling Green, along with Scottsville Baptist Church, participated in Junior Bible Quiz this year.

Bible drills and quizzes provide a "window of opportunity to learn Scripture at an age when it will stay with a child," she said. It's like learning multiplication tables: "Years from now, they will still be able to recall what they have learned."

Knowing Scripture also develops confidence, Parrent said. The study and discipline required in the drills are "very good lessons for life. There is a direct correlation between what participants put in and what they get out."

Diligent study and hard work are ingredients in the Baptist and the As-



READY TO DRILL Participants in the Children's Bible Drill for Henry County Baptist Association prepare to be tested.

semblies of God programs.

Participants in Children's Bible Drill memorize 25 Bible verses, learn 10 key passages and the books of the Bible. The verse list rotates in three-year cycles, so participants for three consecutive years learn 75 verses.

Children quote Scripture passages, and use their Bibles to locate Bible books and key passages. Those who qualify in church and association drills advance to the state drill. Children do not compete against each other.

Youth Bible Drill, for teens in grades seven through nine, encompasses all materials used by the younger group, but with attention given to doctrinal and ethical passages. Youth compete against each other in church, association and state drills.

Each year, two high scorers in Youth Bible Drill represent Kentucky during discipleship and family development weeks at Glorieta and Ridgecrest conference centers. This year, Joy Howard of Elliotville Baptist Church in Bracken Baptist Association and Melissa Milliken of Middleton Baptist Church in Franklin are Kentucky's representatives.

Junior Bible Quizzers study from a group of 576 Bible-related questions based on a brief survey of the Bible. At the beginning of quiz season in October, questions start with Genesis; by the end of the season in April, questions focus on Revelation.

The quiz includes questions about the Bible, verse references or verse quotations and completions.

A lot of the questions are "why" questions, according to Steve Owens, who directs 50 quizzers at Living Hope Baptist Church. This, he said,

gives opportunity for parents and quizzers to engage in conversation about Bible passages.

While the materials are prepared by the Assemblies of God, Owens said he has found only four questions he does not feel fit Baptist theology. He removes the questions dealing with speaking in tongues and losing one's salvation.

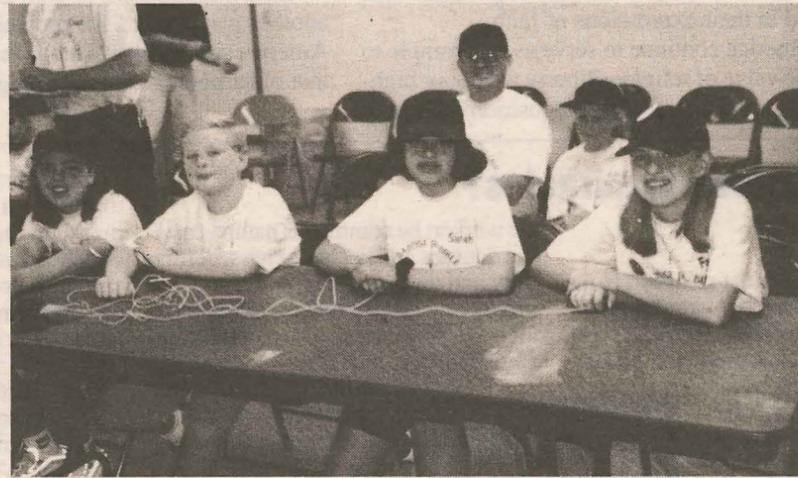
Children play on church teams and then compete against teams from other churches. State winners advance to national competition.

During the October-April season, quizzers spent from 30 minutes to three hours a week studying at home, Parrent said. Church teams often practice twice a week. Once a month, church teams compete against each other. The inter-church competition keeps participants motivated, she said.

This year, the "Duelling Disciples" team from First Baptist Church in Bowling Green and the "Beanie Baby Buzzers" of First Assembly of God in Lexington advanced to national competition in Illinois in June. The First Baptist team was the only Baptist team among the 56 finalist teams from across the country, according to Parrent. The group had hoped to top last year's 12th place showing, but finished in 40th place.

For information on the 1998 Bible Drills, contact the discipleship training department of the Kentucky Baptist Convention at (502) 245-4101.

For information on Junior Bible Quiz, contact Steve Owens of Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green at (502) 782-0914 or Lilybeth Parrent of First Baptist Church in Bowling Green at (502) 782-5088.

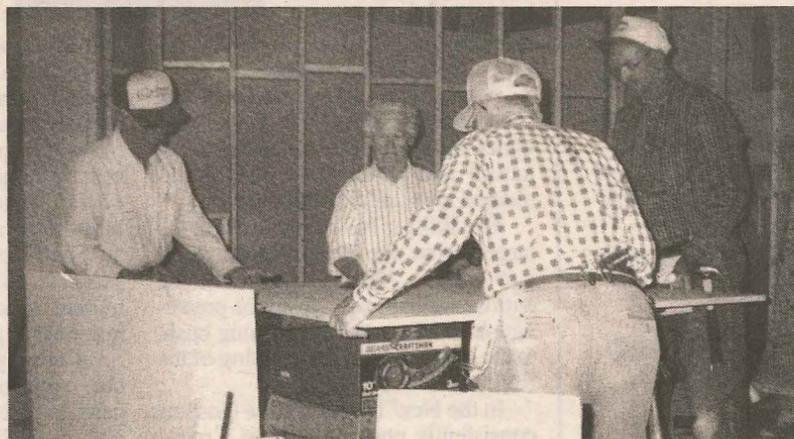


READY TO QUIZ Members of the Bible Quiz team from First Baptist Church of Bowling Green prepare to compete at the national finals.

CAMPERS AT WORK
Members of the Kentucky Campers on Mission chapter pose in the sanctuary of Faith Baptist Church in Wickliffe where they recently spent a work working.



Campers on Mission help Wickliffe church



WICKLIFFE—The Kentucky chapter of Campers on Mission recently held its spring rally at Faith Baptist Church in Wickliffe.

Thirty Campers on Mission members spent a week installing drywall, electrical components and insulation as well as doing general carpentry on the church's building.

Campers on Mission is a national organization sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board.

For information about the Kentucky chapter, contact Guy King at 4058 Edgelake Court, Villa Hills, Ky. 41017-3612.

KENTUCKY

Youth Fest results in 74 new professions of faith

Continued from page 1
you to have.”

Many Christians, however, fail to study God's plan, Soaries added.

“Many of you know your horoscope, but you don't know Matthew, Mark, Luke and John,” he said. “Read your owner's manual.”

The annual youth evangelism conference has three goals, said Jaggers.

First is evangelism. In addition to the new Christians, this year's event also resulted in 153 recommitments by teens to their Christian faith. Another seven committed themselves to a vocation in Christian service.

The second goal is evangelism training, Jaggers said. Those attending this year's conference received a laminated card teaching them to share their beliefs with others.

“The third thing is we want them to have a good time,” he said, “and remind them that being a Christian is not always being dour, sour and

without power.”

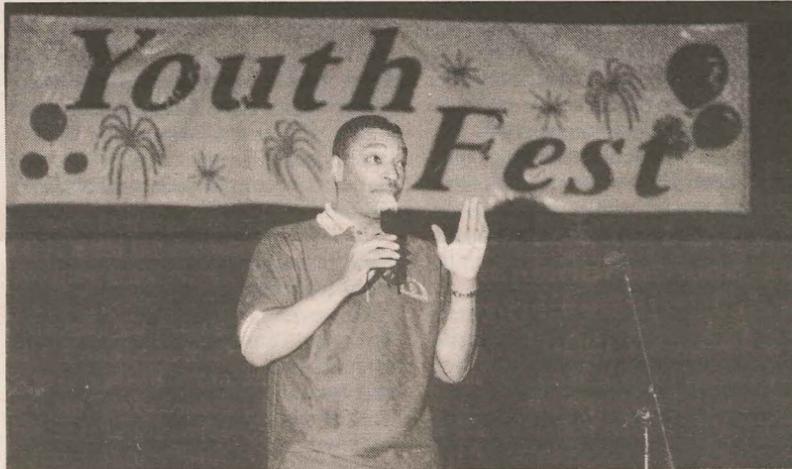
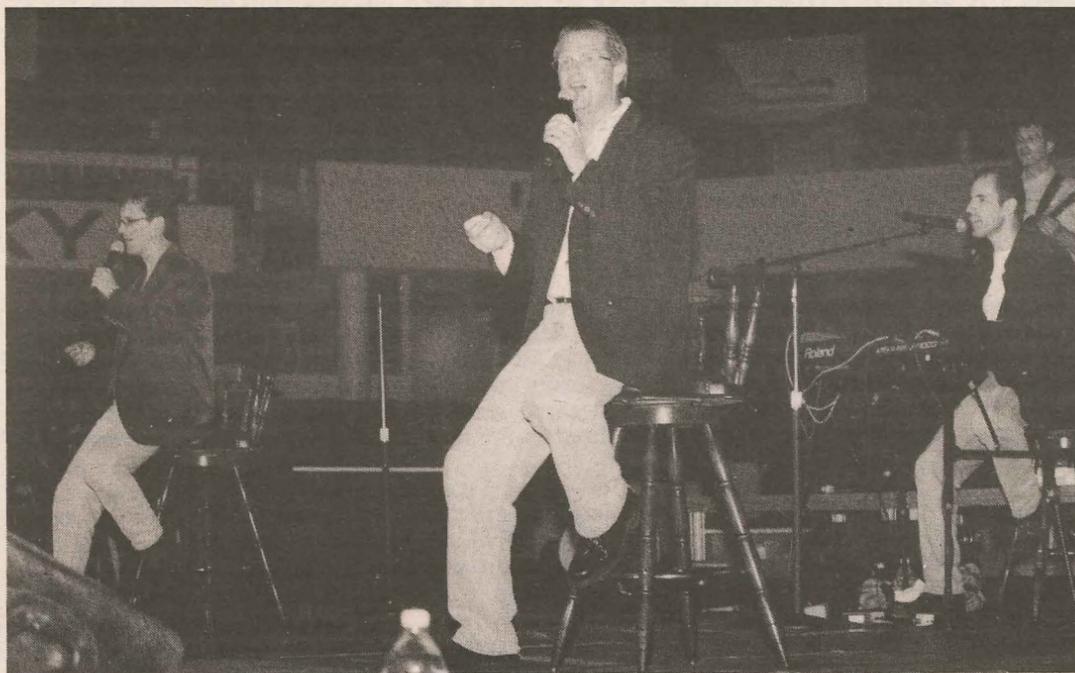
Soaries said that since beginning his preaching career in 1975, the challenges of communicating with youth have not changed.

“You have such diverse needs. The biggest challenge is to establish a relationship with kids so they'll listen long enough to be able to identify what you're saying to their needs,” he said.

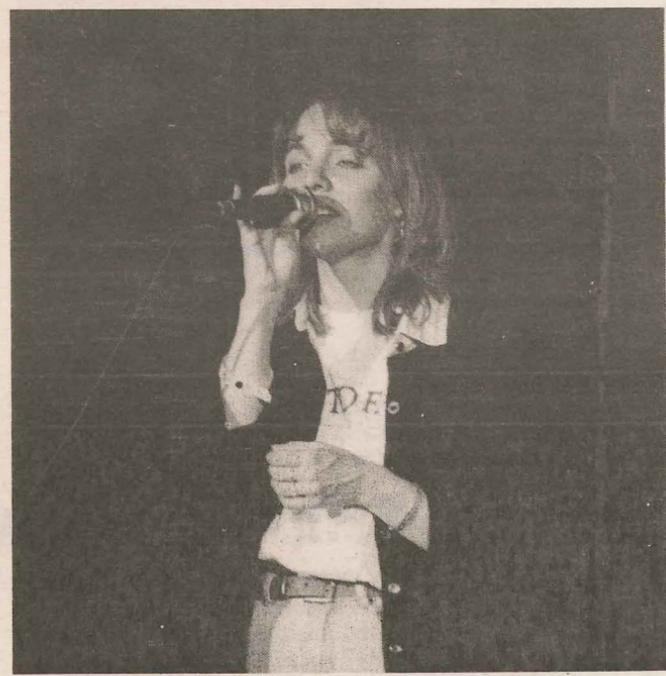
“I want them, before they realize that I'm preaching, already listening to my sermon,” he said.

Soaries said his one message to youth ministers is to teach the Bible and avoid what he calls a parachurch model of youth ministry that's event oriented.

“We're telling Christian jokes, singing Christian songs, playing Christian games,” Soaries said. As a result, “Christian kids are biblically illiterate,” he said. “Kids will have fun without us. Our job is to teach kids what the Bible says.”



IMAGES ■ Above: Phillips Craig & Dean sing during Youth Fest '97. ■ Far Left: Michael W. Smith on stage at Joy Jam. ■ Left: Buster Soaries delivers one of his two messages during Youth Fest. At least 234 decisions were made, including 74 new professions of faith, 153 recommitments by Christians to their faith and seven who committed themselves to vocational ministry. ■ Bottom Left: About 5,800 people attended Joy Jam concerts after Youth Fest. ■ Bottom Middle: Denise Jones of Point of Grace signs an autograph for Adam Marcum, 9, who attends Eastwood Baptist Church of Bowling Green. ■ Bottom Right: Rebecca Robbins, a native of Lancaster and a member of the performance group Face to Face, sings.



Poor turnout puts Joy Jam concerts in financial jeopardy

LOUISVILLE—After Michael W. Smith finished the last set for Joy Jam '97, the event's organizer Tab Brockman thanked the audience and said, “See you next year.”

Afterward, he admitted that's optimistic.

“We're going to lose nearly \$60,000,” said Brockman, who revived the all-day Christian music event three years ago.

Since then, it had averaged 10,000 in attendance the past three years.

Despite moving indoors to an air-conditioned facility and offering a strong lineup of performers, this year's Joy Jam attracted just 5,800

people.

“That's a very tough pill for me to swallow personally because we felt like we did things right,” said Brockman. “Quite frankly, we're scratching our heads.”

In addition to Smith, this year's schedule included Point of Grace and Big Tent Revival.

Kentucky Baptists accounted for at least 4,400 of those in attendance, but those were purchased at half-price in connection with Youth Fest, the annual youth evangelism convention.

Bill Jaggers, evangelism director for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said his event has benefited from link-

ing the two events, but hosting Youth Fest at Freedom Hall alone would be expensive. “It would be very difficult for us to be able to pay for all of Freedom Hall. It might be out of our financial ball park.”

Joy Jam is sponsored by the Louisville Redbirds. Brockman, former assistant general manager for the Redbirds, said the team would be content for Joy Jam to break even.

“However, with this kind of loss I would say it certainly throws the future of it into question,” said Brockman, who recently became assistant athletic director for Murray State University.



THAT'S ALL FOLKS? Michael W. Smith closes Joy Jam '97.

BAPTISTS

Vestal says he had to 'repent' for view on women

"Time is on truth's side. For some of us it takes time. We're slow learners. All of us need to be patient with each other."

Daniel Vestal

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

LOUISVILLE—In his first major speech before the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship since becoming its coordinator, Daniel Vestal confessed he's had to repent for previously opposing women serving as pastors.

Vestal, who assumed the Fellowship's top staff position seven months ago, said he believes the moderate Baptist group's commitment to women in ministry "will attract Baptists who want to see the whole church mobilized for mission and ministry."

But that wasn't always his view, he said in a keynote address to the Fellowship's general assembly June 26 and in a breakout session and news conference the next day.

"There was a time when I didn't believe in women deacons" or pastors, Vestal said. He did not identify a specific date when his view on this issue changed, but he talked about a progressive change of understanding.

"I've not only changed, but I've had to repent and ask God to forgive me," Vestal explained in his speech to the general assembly. "I have not only been shown grace by God but by so many of you, and I'm grateful."

His own transformation on the women's issue was "first and foremost a spiritual process," he said. "It was not political; there was not pressure."

His journey began with a review of B.H. Carroll's interpretation of 1 Timothy 3, he said. Carroll was the founder and first president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, now located in Fort Worth, Texas. Carroll had female deacons in the church which he served as pastor in Waco, Texas, around the turn of the century, Vestal said.

Even after accepting the validity of women serving as deacons, Vestal said he still struggled with the role of women in pastoral ministry.

The turning point came when he first met a woman pastor face to face and realized she "didn't have horns growing out of her head," he said. "That flesh and blood encounter made me confront my position."

Despite his own conversion on this issue, Vestal admonished Fellowship members to be patient with others who have not made the same progression.

"Time is on truth's side," he advised. "For some of us it takes time. We're slow learners. All of us need to be patient with each other."

Vestal cited support for women in ministry as one of three reasons why he believes "the Spirit of God is at work" within the Fellowship.

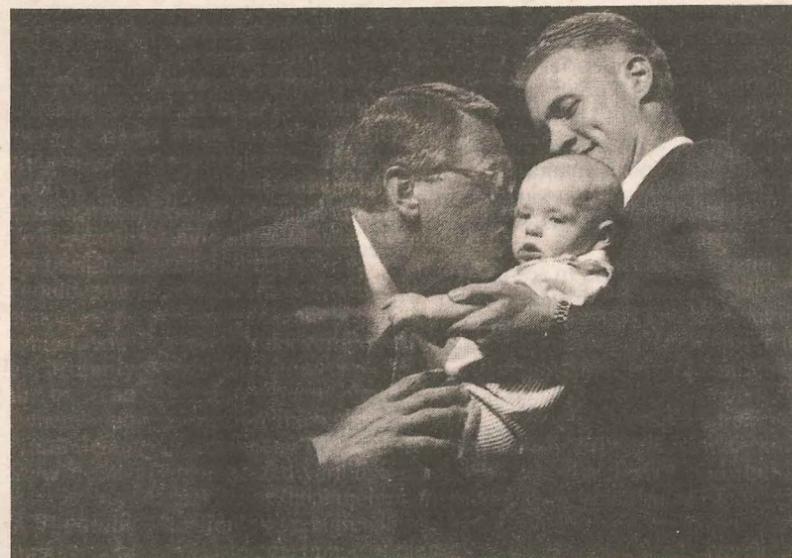
"The wind of the Spirit of God is blowing across the world, calling women, and they are responding," he said. "This fellowship will attract an increasing number of Baptists because we believe in that movement of the Spirit."

Critics of the Fellowship, particularly the new conservative leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention, often criticize the Fellowship as the home of liberal Baptists who embrace women pastors and homosexuals.

Although Vestal follows the pattern of other Fellowship leaders who have expressed public support for women in all areas of ministry, he said the tag of being an advocate of homosexuality does not fit.

The Fellowship never has taken a public stance in favor of homosexuality, although some of its leaders have been accused by conservative critics of being too lenient on the subject. Last year the group's Coordinating Council voted to defund the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America for declaring itself a "welcoming place" for gays and lesbians. That action left open the possibility of future funding for projects of the peace advocacy group. This year's CBF budget does include funding for one Peace Fellowship event.

When asked in the news conference to describe his own position, Vestal referred to the gospel story of



THREE GENERATIONS Daniel Vestal, coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, kisses his grandson, Brice, as members of the Vestal family are introduced during the Fellowship's general assembly last week. Brice is held by his father, Philip Vestal. Philip Vestal and his wife, Shantel, were among 11 missionaries commissioned by the Fellowship the next night.

the woman caught in adultery who was brought before Jesus by religious leaders who wanted to stone her. Jesus turned to the angry crowd and declared, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

In reference to homosexuals, he said, "It seems to me we don't want to throw stones at anybody."

However, he quickly added that he "will not do anything that encourages a gay/lesbian lifestyle" because he believes such a lifestyle "violates biblical standards and societal standards."

"I will not do anything that will undercut God's institution of marriage, but neither will I throw stones," he explained.

Rather than embracing homosexuality or throwing stones at homosexuals, he said, the Fellowship "should show grace to those who violate God's standard for marriage."

In the breakout session, Vestal also addressed another question that has dogged the Fellowship from its inception seven years ago: Will the loose-

knit organization of moderate Southern Baptists become a separate convention or denomination?

"Our mission is not to be a convention, but to be a network," he said, emphasizing the need to connect individuals and churches in ministry without producing uniform programming.

A convention is "a bureaucratic, top-down model" and an old paradigm, Vestal said. Instead of that, the Fellowship emphasizes a three-dimensional "molecular structure" of networking and providing resources.

The goal of this model is "to mobilize Baptist Christians and Baptist ministries," Vestal said.

Understanding this requires a different way of thinking than Southern Baptists have known in the past, he added. "In the convention model, the primary way we cooperated was through owning institutions. In the Fellowship model, we do not own and operate institutions. The key word is partnering."

Fellowship now a 'religious endorsing body' for chaplains

LOUISVILLE (ABP)—The Cooperative Baptist Fellowship declared itself a "religious endorsing body" June 28, allowing the group of moderate Southern Baptists to endorse chaplains.

The vote, recommended by the Fellowship's Coordinating Council after a two-year study, resolves the thorny question of chaplain endorsement without taking the step of forming a denomination.

In other business at the June 26-28 general assembly in Louisville, the Fellowship elected Missouri layman John Tyler as moderator-elect, approved a \$14.3 million budget, and urged members to skip meals and send funds for famine victims in North Korea.

Registration for the meeting, the seventh general assembly and first in Kentucky, totaled 3,565. The largest crowd, at a service recognizing missionaries, was estimated at

4,500.

Generally, denominations or conventions endorse chaplains, who then are hired to work in hospitals, the military and other specialized settings. But the Fellowship, a loose-knit organization of individuals and churches, has resisted declaring itself a convention.

A motion introduced at the Fellowship's general assembly in 1995 would have declared the group a new Baptist convention for the purpose of chaplain endorsement. The motion was rejected, and a subsequent year-long study concluded there was not sufficient interest among Fellowship members to pursue that course.

Ed Beddingfield of North Carolina, who led the study group, said that step is not necessary. "We would not have to declare ourselves a denomination in order to endorse chaplains," he said.

The specific language of "religious endorsing body" meets criteria established by the Congress on Ministry in Specialized Settings, Beddingfield said. Whether or not the U.S. military will accept Fellowship endorsements remains to be seen, he said.

The Fellowship will assign endorsement authority to its global missions office, which will screen and recommend chaplains.

Chaplaincy has become an issue for some moderate Baptists who prefer not to seek endorsement through the North American Mission Board, an agency of the Southern Baptist Convention. Other moderate chaplain candidates have expressed fear that they might not be given endorsement through the SBC.

The Fellowship also approved a \$14.3 million budget for next year. The largest portion of the spending plan, \$9.7 million, funds a global missions program. It also includes

\$20,000 for the Baptist World Alliance, partially restoring funds cut in an earlier draft of the budget.

The Coordinating Council, which contributes to the BWA but is not a member, will continue to study the Fellowship's relationship with the worldwide Baptist group.

Fellowship members unanimously approved a motion to urge individuals to skip one meal a week and send the cost equivalent for famine relief in North Korea.

The Fellowship does not pass resolutions but wanted to make "a meaningful response" to the crisis, said Pat Anderson, a past moderator of the Fellowship.

Martha Teague Smith of Gastonia, N.C., will lead the Fellowship in 1997-98, succeeding Oklahoma pastor Lavonn Brown as the group's moderator. John Tyler, a Bell Telephone executive from St. Louis, was chosen as moderator-elect.

The vote resolves the thorny question of chaplain endorsement without taking the step of forming a denomination.

BAPTISTS

Kentucky hosts missionary commissioning service

LOUISVILLE—For only the second time in 10 years, Kentucky last week hosted a commissioning service for Southern Baptists to serve as global missionaries.

Only this time, the missionaries were commissioned not by the Southern Baptist Convention but by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a splinter group of SBC moderates who support their own missionary force in addition to the SBC's International Mission Board.

In 1987, more than 14,000 Kentucky Baptists filled Rupp Arena in Lexington for a service in which the SBC's Foreign Mission Board commissioned 49 missionaries for worldwide service. Much has changed in the SBC since then, including the fracture between conservatives and moderates that led to formation of the Fellowship in 1991.

A much smaller crowd (4,500) participated in last week's commissioning, and the Fellowship's missionary force of 150 is a fraction of the 4,000 missionaries claimed by the SBC's official mission board.

But one thing was the same: Keith Parks was at the microphone, blessing the new missionaries by name and urging others in the audience to consider a life of missionary service. Parks, who was president of the SBC's mission board for 12 years, now is global missions coordinator for the Fellowship.

Christians can change the world with a towel, not a sword, Parks said during last week's commissioning service.

On the night before Christ's crucifixion, he took a towel and washed his disciples' feet in an act of humble service, Parks reminded 11 new missionaries who were appointed

during the Fellowship's 1997 general assembly.

"Jesus picked up a towel, not a Torah (the Hebrew scriptures) or even a sword" to demonstrate what the gospel was all about, he said. And Christians can do the same thing today, he added.

Parks told about a missionary who had invested his life in steadfastly getting to know and serve the needs of a community of non-Christians in a foreign country. The missionary visited with a native resident of the area who thanked him for his love and service and told him, "That is the way this village will be won to Jesus."

And that is the way the world will be won to Christ, Parks added. Admonishing the new missionaries to demonstrate God's love through humble service, he told them: "You may preach powerful sermons and demonstrate amazing technology. ... But the people of the world will be impacted more when you pick up your towel and get down on your knees than at any other time."

The Fellowship particularly has targeted the gospel at unreached people groups in "World A," the nations and regions most closed to the Christian gospel. The laws and customs of many of those countries are designed to keep the gospel out of their lands, but Christian love is stronger, Parks said.

Government officials and anti-Christian leaders in those places "cannot stop you from revealing God's love through acts of kindness," he stressed. Besides, if humble service "is good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for his followers," he added.

Participants in the Fellowship

meeting saw a living demonstration of that as they heard Bert and Debbie Ayers and their children. For the past four years, the Ayerses have served in Albania, the formerly communist Eastern European country once known as the most atheistic nation on earth.

Time after time, Albanian people would ask the Ayerses why well-off Americans would leave the comforts of their country to live in impoverished Albania, Ayers reported. The missionaries always told them, "We are here because Jesus first loved us, and now we love you."

The Ayerses, the first missionaries appointed by the Fellowship in 1993, were greeted by a prolonged standing ovation as they introduced themselves at the Friday night service.

With tears in her eyes, Debbie Ayers thanked the Baptist audience for their prayers that she said sustained her family as they fled Albania in February. Her husband recounted how Debbie Ayers had been caught in the crossfire of civil war there, taking a bullet through the back of her scalp and receiving miraculous assistance from a mysterious man they never saw again.

Two couples commissioned in last week's service will serve in technology roles, using computers to develop a secure means of communication with missionaries and other Christians in World A.

Two native Kentuckians were among the new appointees as well. Laquita and Larry Wynn will serve in Miami, directing the Touching Miami With Love ministry center in one of the city's poorest communities. He is a Crittenden native and a former Kentucky pastor.

Kentuckians make meeting work

LOUISVILLE—About 400 Kentucky Baptist volunteers worked behind the scenes last week to make sure the general assembly of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship went off as planned.

"It went very well," said Reba Sloan Cobb, chairwoman of the general assembly steering committee and a member of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville. "The volunteers have been tremendous."

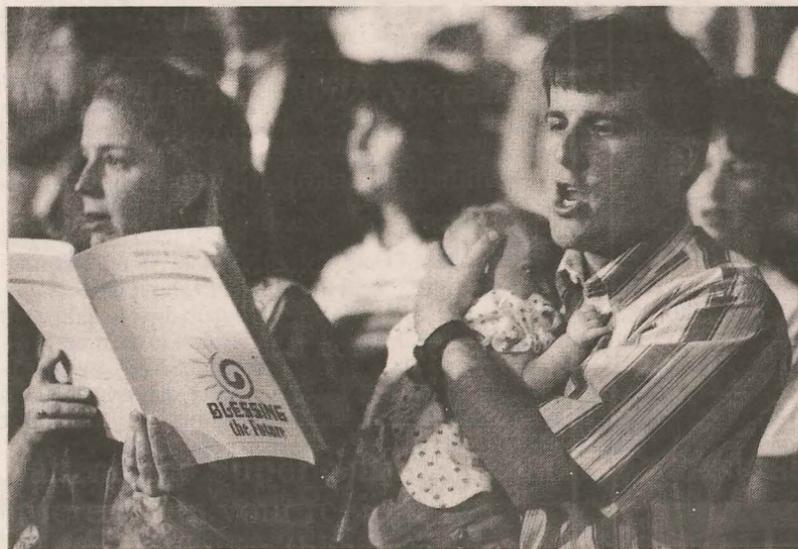
Volunteers from across the state served as ushers, staffed registration and information booths, hauled materials, provided child care, helped set up and break down conferences and exhibits and performed a variety of other unseen tasks.

Sloan was assisted by three other Kentuckians among the larger steering committee: David and Viola Britt and Tami Ruckman, all of Louisville. Kentucky's three representatives on the Fellowship's Coordinating Council also played a key role: Suzy Thurman of Lexington, Bob DeFoor of Harrodsburg and John Barnett of Bagdad.

Kentuckians on the program included Les and Vicki Hollon of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, who gave a theme interpretation; June and Louie Bailey of Crescent Hill Baptist Church, who led musical groups; Bill Marshall, former executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, who delivered an invocation; Lauren Scott of Louisville, who read Scripture; Donald Hustad of Louisville, who played the organ; Jo Garnett of Lexington Avenue Baptist Church in Danville, who spoke about the Fellowship's mission; Linda Barnes of Fern Creek Baptist Church in Louisville, who led a prayer; Colleen Burroughs of Louisville, who gave the blessing and prayer for new missionaries; and Alice Marshall of Louisville, who read Scripture.

Sloan said she hopes the involvement of so many Kentuckians in the general assembly will further energize Kentucky Baptists' involvement with Fellowship and the related state organization called the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship. The state organization has planned an Oct. 11 picnic in Louisville as a thank-you to all who worked at the general assembly.

During last week's general assembly Kentucky gained two additional members on the national Fellowship's coordinating council. In addition to the three permanent positions for Kentucky representation, two Kentuckians were named to at-large positions: David Burroughs and Hugh McElrath, both of Louisville.



BLESSING THE FUTURE A family attending the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship general assembly in Louisville last week (at left) appears to epitomize the meeting's theme, "Blessing the Future." The meeting was held in Commonwealth Convention Center in Louisville and drew 4,500 people at its largest session.



■ Above: June Bailey of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville leads a Louisville-area children's choir in the opening session. ■ Far left: Keith Parks, global missions coordinator for the Fellowship, welcomes retired and active missionaries to a reception in their honor. ■ Left: A Kentucky volunteer serves punch during a reception after one of the evening sessions of the general assembly.



WELCOME TO KENTUCKY Reba Sloan Cobb, chairwoman of the general assembly steering committee, welcomes members of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship to Kentucky in the opening session June 26.

Presbyterians again alter rule on leadership in churches

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (RNS)—The General Assembly of the 2.7 million-member Presbyterian Church (USA), in a startling reversal, has adopted a new proposed amendment to its rule book that would significantly weaken a restrictive ban on gays and lesbians in the church's ordained leadership.

In a 328-217 vote, commissioners to the church's 209th General Assembly approved a proposed amendment to the church's Book of Order that would require church officers—elders, deacons and clergy—to demonstrate "fidelity and integrity in marriage or singleness."

That language would replace a requirement that church officers live "in fidelity within the covenant of marriage of a man and a woman or chastity in singleness." That rule was adopted by last year's General Assembly and ratified by the denomination's presbyteries—local clusters of congregations—earlier this spring.

The denomination has been debating the issue of the role of gays in the church for 20 years, and speakers during the long, dignified but passionate debate indicated the new proposal is also unlikely to bring closure to the issue.

Supporters of the new amendment argued the "fidelity and chastity" rule, passed by last year's General Assembly by a 57-43 percent margin and ratified by the 172 presbyteries this spring in a 97-74-1 vote, was creating turmoil in the denomination. The new amendment passed by a slightly larger margin—60-40 percent.

Opponents of the new amendment, however, predicted it, too, will not bring peace.

During the June 14-21 meeting, delegates also:

- Urged increased aid from the U.S. government to meet the needs of famine-stricken North Korea.

- Called for Presbyterians to mark the Sunday before Epiphany (Jan. 6) as a day of prayer for those persecuted because of their faith.

- Offered a "word of counsel" to the church and culture on the controversial late-term abortion procedure known by its opponents as "partial-birth" abortion. The "counsel" said the procedure is of "grave concern" and should be considered only if the mother's physical life is endangered by the pregnancy.

Tax-funded aid for religious schools OK

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Supreme Court, overturning its own 1985 decision, said last week it is constitutionally permissible for public school teachers to offer remedial aid at church-run schools.

In a 5-4 ruling written by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, the court said that "a federally funded program providing supplemental remedial instruction to disadvantaged children on a neutral basis is not invalid."

Analysts studied the decision carefully for possible application to the ongoing debate over whether the Constitution permits the use of tax dollars for "vouchers" for students to pay tuition at private and parochial schools.

While the court seemed to be more open to permitting some aid to flow to religious schools, the opinion did not address the idea of vouchers.

O'Connor noted that services in the Title I program are not distributed directly to the religious schools. "No Title I funds ever reach the coffers of religious schools."

O'Connor's opinion stated the program did not run afoul of the court's three-pronged test for judging whether government programs advance religion. She said it did not result in government indoctrination, did not define recipients by reference to religion or create an excessive entanglement between religion and government.

The ruling overturned a 1985 decision by the court, called *Aguilar vs. Felton*, in which it ruled that while public school teachers could help parochial school students under a federal remedial aid program, they were barred from teaching inside religiously affiliated schools because it would excessively entangle religion and government.

Since that ruling, remedial aid has been offered in vans parked outside

Jewish support growing for vouchers

WASHINGTON—Last year, when Cleveland launched a school voucher program allowing inner-city public school students to use taxpayer dollars to pay private secular or religious school tuition, the city's Jewish federation went on record as opposing the plan.

That was no surprise, given the majority of the American Jewish community's historical opposition to vouchers based on support for public education and concern over weakening the wall between church and state.

But if the voucher plan had directly affected Cleveland's Jewish community, Jewish reaction might have been different, said Daniel Blain of the Cleveland Jewish Community Federation.

"We think clearly there would be support within the (Cleveland) Jewish community for people and groups that advocate vouchers," he said.

Blain's comment is indicative of

a growing shift within the American Jewish community on the issue of school vouchers. It's a change that could have important ramifications for a host of Jewish organizations, given the past prominence Jewish groups have had among those opposed to them.

Another example of the shift is the year-long re-evaluation of the issue recently begun by the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, an umbrella agency for a host of Jewish groups. The council has been a vociferous opponent of vouchers.

"The organized Jewish community as a whole is recognizing that there is a voice within the community supportive of using vouchers," said Craig Sumberg, the council's director of public affairs.

Vouchers are seen as an effective way to help Jewish families afford the cost of private Jewish day schools, which many view as a way to strengthen Jewish identities in the face of growing assimilation.

parochial schools. New York state has estimated the extra costs associated with the strict separation at \$100 million since 1985.

The Center for Law and Religious Freedom, a national association of Christian attorneys and law students, applauded the decision for rejecting the idea that religious participation in public life creates a "symbolic union" between church and state.

Yet director Steven McFarland said the decision did not go far enough. He called for the court to adopt a neutrality test so as to insure religious participation in government

aid programs is allocated on "neutral, secular criteria that neither favor nor disfavor religion."

An official with Churches and State called the decision a "serious blow" to church-state separation.

"The ruling today is a disappointment, but it would be wrong to read it as a blanket approval for government aid to religious schools," said Barry Lynn, the organization's director. "The court conceded that church-state safeguards are still essential."

With additional information from Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press.

Religious freedom advocates considering post RFRA options

Continued from page 1

Court's current interpretation of the Free Exercise Clause. The record instead reveals that its drafters and ratifiers more likely viewed the Free Exercise Clause as a guarantee that government may not unnecessarily hinder believers from freely practicing their religion, a position consistent with our pre-Smith jurisprudence."

Others religious freedom advocates expect to encourage legislation similar to RFRA at the state levels.

And there may also be support for a constitutional amendment. Rep. Charles Canady, R-Fla., announced that the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution has scheduled a July 14 hearing to consider future action.

Members of the coalition that supported RFRA voiced collective disappointment. The decision, they said, removes legal protection for religious groups whose practices conflict with state and local regulations.

"Our free exercise rights as American citizens are in peril," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. Land called the decision "the worst religious liberty decision of the last 50 years."

Walker and others said there was

so much support for RFRA across the religious spectrum that they could not think of a single religious option. "Basically, what the court has done is to sacrifice religious freedom on the altar of states' rights," he said.

Said Forest Montgomery, general counsel of the National Association of Evangelicals: "We lost about as bad as we can lose."

The decision came in a case stemming from the desire of officials at St. Peter the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Boerne, Texas, to rebuild their 74-year-old sanctuary to accommodate a growing congregation. The city prevented the expansion because the church is in a historic district and renovations would violate local preservation laws.

The church sued the city in 1994, arguing that the preservation code violated RFRA and an appellate court agreed. But the city appealed the case to the Supreme Court.

Tony Cummins, pastor of the church, said he was disappointed but will continue to pursue his church's case using options other than RFRA.

Historic preservationists, prison officials and atheists were among the others who cheered the decision.

Preservationists didn't want religious structures to have exemptions

from laws regarding landmarks. Prison officials had been hit with many lawsuits from religious groups that formed within their walls and were trying to circumvent prison rules.

Marc Stern, legal director of the American Jewish Congress, said the RFRA decision may be more about the balance of powers between the government and the states, but it also reflects a societal cynicism about organized religion.

"I don't think ... institutionalized religion occupies for many Americans quite the same sacrosanct status as it

once did," said Stern. "The fact is that the public officials in Boerne felt comfortable spending a lot of money taking a church to court and stopping a church's ability to convert a church into a more useful structure."

Loren Mead, a church strategist and founder of the Alban Institute, said the decision will require congregations to live up to their potential for making a difference in their community if they are to receive special considerations. "We cannot be a religious club and expect that the government will give us special privileges."

CHAIR OF CHURCH MUSIC CHARLESTON SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

This 10-month position (beginning Aug. 1, 1997) includes responsibilities for directing the church music program, advising church music majors, conducting Christian outreach ensembles, teaching at the undergraduate level and conducting workshops for church musicians throughout the state. Qualified applicants will have a minimum of a master's degree in music, music education or a related area. A doctorate is preferred. This individual will be an experienced church musician and preferably have experience teaching on a college campus. Resumes and letters of interest should be sent to Dr. A.K. Bonnette, Provost, Charleston Southern University, 9200 University Boulevard, Charleston, SC 29423.

"Promoting Academic Excellence in a Christian Environment"

Supreme Court says there's no 'right to die'

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Supreme Court, in a unanimous decision, June 26 upheld state laws forbidding doctor-assisted euthanasia.

"The states' assisted suicide bans are not innovations. Rather they are long-standing expressions of states' commitment to the protection and preservation of human life," Chief Justice William Rehnquist wrote in the court's opinion.

The court upheld laws in Washington and New York states that make it a crime for doctors to give life-ending drugs to mentally competent but terminally ill patients who no longer want to live.

"The history of the law's treatment of assisted suicide in this country has been and continues to be one of the rejection of nearly all efforts to permit it," Rehnquist wrote. "That being the case, our decisions lead us to conclude that the asserted 'right' to assistance in committing suicide is not a fundamental liberty interest protected by the due-process clause" of the Constitution.

In a separate concurring opinion, David Souter suggested he could change his mind if Congress or state legislatures enacted laws allowing assisted suicide.

Christians split on China MFN trade status

By Kim Lawton
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Their goal is the same: ending the religious repression suffered by millions of evangelical Protestants and Catholics in China. But as Congress gears up for its annual debate over granting trade privileges to China, conservative Christians are discovering that moving from principle to policy remedies can be a complex endeavor.

Sharp disagreements have emerged among several Christian groups about whether renewing China's preferential trade benefit, known as "Most Favored Nation" status, will help or hurt Chinese churches.

During the past year, several evangelical groups have urged Congress and the Clinton administration to develop new policy initiatives to combat religious persecution worldwide.

Four influential conservative advocacy and religious groups—the Family Research Council, Focus on the Family, the American Family Association and the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission—have told congressional leaders they believe revoking China's MFN status would be one effective way to do that.

But several evangelical organizations and mission agencies criticize the anti-MFN effort, saying it will result in more religious persecution.

In a Feb. 27 letter to House and Senate leaders, Family Research Council President Gary Bauer said his coalition opposes renewal of MFN for China out of concern not only for

Chinese Christians, but also the Chinese government's suppression of Muslim Uighurs and Tibetan Buddhists.

"China, bluntly, is an equal opportunity brutalizer of people of faith," Bauer said. "I am unwilling that economic interests claimed by some influential groups should trump vital questions of human rights."

Countries with MFN status are able to ship goods to the United States with the lowest possible tariffs. The status is reviewed annually. Generally, MFN votes are pro forma, but in recent years, several congressional human rights advocates have urged revocation of China's status. A vote is expected this month on the issue.

Although Republicans usually favor free trade and business, increasing numbers of GOP social conservatives are urging economic leverage be used against nations violating religious freedom.

Meanwhile, the anti-MFN campaign has drawn fire from the China Service Coordinating Office, a Wheaton, Ill.-based umbrella group representing more than 100 evangelical organizations working in China.

"However well-intentioned such political activism may be, a public Christian stance against MFN status for China is not in the interest of the church in China," the group said.

"This will likely result in greater persecution of Christians inside China and will close doors of opportunity for witness and service from outside China," it said.

"Christians ought not to be mak-

ing a high profile MFN statement because this just reinforces the perception in the minds of Chinese leaders and the Chinese people as a whole that Christians are a threat and are anti-China," said Brent Fulton, executive director of the China Service Coordinating Office and managing director of the Institute for Chinese Studies at Wheaton College's Billy Graham Center.

On Capitol Hill, similar disagreements are emerging as well. One leader of the movement to revoke MFN is Rep. Chris Smith, R-N.J., a congressional religious liberty advocate.

"For years, we've been told that if we cut trade off or use any MFN leverage, things would get worse, but what we've actually seen is that each year, we grant MFN and human rights and religious freedom deteriorate. On the other hand, we've never had the opportunity to try revoking MFN to see if it would indeed bring about change in China," said Stan DeBoe, a Roman Catholic priest and legislative aid to Smith.

DeBoe said because of the broad coalition being created around the issue, he is optimistic the anti-MFN effort may be successful this year.

But Rep. Joseph Pitts, R-Pa., a frequent Smith ally, won't be part of this effort. Pitts, who also has been outspoken against the global persecution of Christians, said he fears revoking MFN would put the United States "in a confrontational mode" inhibiting its ability to make human rights appeals. "We don't need to enter into a Cold War with China."

"We've never had the opportunity to try revoking MFN to see if it would indeed bring about change in China."
Legislative aid Stan DeBoe

"We don't need to enter into a Cold War with China."
Rep. Joseph Pitts, R-Pa.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Clinton disagrees with Disney boycott.** President Bill Clinton—a Southern Baptist already at odds with his denomination over the abortion issue—said June 19 he would not go along with the Southern Baptist Convention's call for a boycott of all Disney products to protest the company's acceptance of homosexuality in some of its TV programming and films, theme park and employment policies. The president didn't explain his opposition, but simply said "no" when asked in the midst of a photo session if he would abide by the boycott.

■ **Chapel weddings halted over gay issue.** Emory University, which is affiliated with the United Methodist Church, has temporarily halted all weddings at campus chapels until it sets a firm policy on homosexual "commitment ceremonies." When the Atlanta university canceled a commitment ceremony scheduled for Emory's Oxford College chapel, President William Chace apologized to the two men involved. That prompted the North Georgia Methodist conference to say Chace was being disrespectful of Methodist opposition to gay marriages.

■ **RCA, Presbyterians OK pact.** Governing bodies for the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the Reformed Church in America have approved a pact that would establish "full communion" between them and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

and the United Church of Christ. Approval of the Lutheran-Reformed agreement culminates official theological talks between Lutherans and churches in the Reformed tradition that stretch back to 1962. The United Church of Christ will vote on the measure in early July and the ELCA in mid-August.

■ **No calling God "mother."** Delegates to the Christian Reformed Church's highest decision-making body adopted recommendations ruling out the use of inclusive language for God and saying God cannot be called "mother" or "she." Delegates also refused to allow opponents of women's ordination to establish their own local jurisdictions, that would have been based on shared opposition to women pastors rather than geography.

■ **St. Meinrad's censured.** The St. Meinrad School of Theology in St. Meinrad, Ind., was censured by the American Association of University Professors over the school's firing of Carmel McEnroy, who signed a letter supporting the ordination of women to the Roman Catholic priesthood. McEnroy contends she was acting as a private citizen in signing the letter and says she was denied a fair hearing to try to save her job. St. Meinrad officials said she violated canon law. McEnroy now teaches part time at Lexington

Theological Seminary, a school affiliated with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

■ **Women hit "stained glass ceiling."** After being able to be ordained to the ministry for nearly 40 years, clergywomen in the United Methodist church are hitting a "stained glass ceiling" and denied the opportunity to become senior pastors in large membership churches, according to an official of the United Methodist Board of Higher Education and Ministry. Lynn Scott said just 1.4 percent of churches with a membership of 1,000 or more are served by women as senior or lead pastors.

■ **Montana abortions require doctors.** The Supreme Court ruled Montana—and other states—may ban abortions by non-physicians. In a 6-3 decision, the justices reversed a federal appeals court ruling that had blocked passage of the 1995 law banning physician assistants from performing abortions. In a separate case, the court rejected, without comment, Utah's bid to revive its invalidated law that would bar most abortions for women more than 20 weeks pregnant.

■ **White lawmakers call for apology.** A dozen white members of Congress have introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives calling on Congress to apologize to black Americans whose

ancestors were enslaved. "My resolution will not fix the lingering injustice resulting from slavery but reconciliation begins with an apology," the Associated Press quoted Rep. Tony Hall, D-Ohio, as saying. "I hope this apology will be a start of new healing between the races." Ten years ago, Congress formally apologized for herding Japanese-Americans into internment camps during World War II.

■ **Focus pulls children's Bible.** Focus on the Family, the Christian organization that offers a radio broadcast and other resources supporting families, has pulled its "Adventures in Odyssey Bible" from distribution after discovering it included "gender-inclusive" language. The move follows the announcement by the International Bible Society that it has scrapped a proposed NIV Bible that would substitute gender-neutral words for some gender-specific ones.

■ **Randall Terry running for Congress.** Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry, who took his militant anti-abortion message from the streets to talk radio, announced he will seek a seat in Congress. Terry, a 38-year-old Republican, launched a 1998 bid for New York's 26th congressional seat now held by Democrat Maurice Hinchey. Terry said he would focus his candidacy on freeing Americans from "oppressive" federal taxation.

MINISTRY

Electric bill ignited Kentuckian's advocacy for children

Continued from page 1

After a thorough screening which included written references, an interview, a criminal record check, and a child abuse and adult protection registry check, Taylor completed 20 hours of intense training. Then she took on her first case.

She became an advocate for a 3-year-old child.

Typical of many CASA children, "Zachary" had not received the love and attention he needed, she said. He had spent most of his short life in foster care. Already, his case file was 12-inches thick. (Confidentiality requirements prevent using "Zachary's" real name.)

As Taylor studied Zachary's file, she said she was stunned at the things that had fallen through the cracks of the social service and court systems. Attorneys and social workers who represent children like Zachary are so overloaded "it's humanly impossible to take care of each little thing related to each child," she said.

Taylor's role is to make sure nothing is neglected.

She is Zachary's case manager. She is his voice. She is the expert on his case, Londrigan said.

And Taylor provides continuity, Londrigan said. Often by the time a case closes, the only parties who have been involved from the beginning are the child and the CASA volunteer,

Londrigan said.

As fact finder, Taylor is putting together the story of Zachary's life. She talks regularly with everyone involved in his case: social workers, school personnel, day care workers, parents, foster care workers and court personnel.

As facilitator, Taylor and her supervisor make court appearances on Zachary's behalf. Then she monitors the case to see that court orders are followed.

As friend, Taylor spends time weekly with Zachary. She visits him at his foster home and his day care center. She takes him out to eat. CASA volunteers agree to spend one hour a week on their cases, but Taylor often spends much more than that.

Taylor provides one-on-one, personal touches social services and court systems can't provide, Londrigan said.

Zachary still is not functioning on a 3-year-old level, but he has made significant progress in the few short months Taylor has worked with him.

Now, instead of hiding every time she sees him, he runs to her for hugs and attention, she said.

"He knows he's the cat's meow to me," she said. "I have a feeling he knows I am there to help him."

Being a CASA volunteer isn't always easy, Taylor admitted. Making decisions that will affect Zachary for

the rest of his life is a heavy responsibility, she said. "Sometimes I don't sleep at night."

But then she remembers that electric bill and how God opened the door

for her minister. She knows she is not alone. "I feel God has called me to CASA," she said. "It is not my love, but it's God's love I'm giving to Zachary."

What is CASA?

CASA is a private, non-profit organization providing trained volunteers to serve as advocates for abused and neglected children involved in family court.

The Kentucky General Assembly enacted legislation in 1985 authorizing Court Appointed Special Advocates to operate in the commonwealth. Local judiciaries appoint CASA volunteers. To date, 13 CASA programs exist in Kentucky.

CASA volunteers do not need a background in social work or the legal system, according to Shari Londrigan, who coordinates the work of CASA volunteers in Jef-

erson County. "Commitment and compassion for children" are the most important qualities volunteers need, she said. Kentucky law KRS 620.525 lists qualifications required of CASA volunteers:

- At least 18 years of age.
- Good moral character.
- Successfully complete screening which includes a written application, written references, personal interview, criminal record check, and a child abuse and adult protection registry check.
- Successfully complete 20 hours of intense training.
- Take oath of confidentiality.

Kentucky CASA projects

■ **Bardstown:** NELCASA, Inc.; (502) 349-0558

■ **Burlington:** Boone County CASA Inc.; (606) 334-3154

■ **Covington:** Children's Law Center CASA Program; (606) 431-3313

■ **Elizabethtown:** Hardin County CASA Program, Inc.; (502) 763-1016

■ **Henderson:** Henderson County CASA; (502) 830-8400

■ **Lexington:** CASA Project of Lexington; (606) 253-1581

■ **Lookout:** Project of Pike CASA Program; (606) 433-7681

■ **Louisville:** CASA Project of Jefferson County; (502) 595-4911

■ **Madisonville:** Family Advocacy Center Inc.; (502) 825-1582

■ **Owensboro:** CASA of Daviess County; (502) 683-2138

■ **Owingsville:** Gateway CASA Project; (606) 674-6396

■ **Paducah:** CASA Project of McCracken County; (502) 443-1440

■ **Paintsville:** CASA Project of Johnson County; (606) 265-4572

Uh-oh!

A Super Saturday conference was inadvertently left out of the brochure. Please forgive us for any confusion. The following conference will be taught at Super Saturday:

"Ministry to Individuals with Special Needs"

Special diet, hard of hearing, learning disabilities, advanced abilities, color blindness, hyperactive, non-reading adults, requires wheelchair--these are a few of the special needs you can find in your community. Learn ways to meet needs of these special people.

Plan to attend the **Super Saturday Conference** in your region. Training is available for those working in Music, Discipleship Training, Sunday School, Family Ministry, Church Media Library, and MORE!

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MEDIA

Anytime, Anywhere: Sharing Faith Jesus Style. William Turner. Judson Press, 1997. 88 pages. ♦♦♦♦♦

William Turner's little book is about a big subject. Its subject matter is as old as the New Testament and as current as "seeker services." Turner's work is based on three assumptions: (1) the kingdom of God grows in large part because of the witness of its members, (2) American Christians now find themselves in a true first-century situation and (3) Jesus can help us learn to share our faith and extend God's kingdom. Based upon these assumptions, Turner seeks to point out the ways in which Jesus shared his faith as a model for how we should respond to the task of evangelism today.



any church member will find manageable. Besides, what Turner says is not only simple and accurate, it is presented in an interesting way. Pastors will be encouraged to preach on sharing Jesus as they read these well-crafted expositions of events in Jesus' life. As soon as I put the book down I thought how it might be just the book to study in a small group on personal witnessing, perhaps even a Sunday school class. The chapters are more interesting than most Sunday school lessons and provide a number of places where a teacher could jump into more discussion.

Whether as an individual or in a group, I highly encourage you to read "Anytime, Anywhere" and begin sharing faith Jesus style. *Wayne Hager*

In order to accomplish this task, Turner presents nine chapters which could best be described as sermon-like expositions of events in the life of Jesus where he shared his faith. The chapters use sound biblical interpretation, current understandings of the shape of the church and society, and ample illustrations from Turner's own pastoral experience.

Do not let the size of this book diminish its importance. Turner covers a wide variety of evangelistic situations and concerns in a way almost

Christ the Reconciler: A Theology for Opposites, Differences, and Enemies. Peter Schmiechen. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996. 179 pages. ♦♦♦♦♦

Imagine two wolves. One travels from the rugged mountains in search of food. The other scours the prairie. Somewhere near the base of the mountain both fall into the same trap. After becoming aware of each other's presence, the two wolves begin to argue with each other about who took

the best road to the trap, who is more authentically a wolf and who has more a right to be in the trap.

Schmiechen contends both liberal and conservative Protestants in America have fallen into the same trap. Both are captive to the two cardinal principles of American culture: individualism and functionalism. In different ways, and with different language, different denominations and groups within the American religious scene preach a gospel that proclaims the individual and his/her wants and needs to be the highest value. With our eye toward meeting individual needs, American churches worship at the altar of "whatever works for me."

This cultural captivity of American churches results in division, strife, exclusion and a warfare of words between left and right, different denominations and various groups who are seeking to stake their claim on the attention of a congregation.

Using the image of the "household of God," Schmiechen turns to Paul's letter to the Corinthians to develop a theology of reconciliation based on the crucified and risen person of Jesus Christ.

Rarely do I read a book that challenges all my perceptions about church, society and the ministry to which we are called. Schmiechen's perceptive critique of our religious context and his searing insight into the nature of the gospel are not easily dismissed. Page after page he reminded me that, like the wolves, the American church has fallen into a trap that will eventually kill us. Rather than seeking a way out, we have accepted the trap and turned on each other. *Jim Holladay*

"Worship and the Story of Salvation," "Worship and the Response of God's People" and "Biblical Institutions of Worship." The personal study and group discussion guides are the strongest parts of this volume. If, as Webber contends, there is a dearth of teaching material on worship, then the background reading provided is like a drop of water on a parched tongue.

He corrects this problem in the second volume. "Rediscovering the Missing Jewel" provides an overview of the various streams and traditions of worship from the beginning of the church until today. This is a great resource, not only to help expose us to other traditions, but to challenge us to find ways to enrich our own.

While I cannot imagine many of us would lead a 26-week, or eventually a 91-week study of worship, Webber's study guides will provide a rich resource for helping all of us gain a new appreciation and perspective on our roles as worship leaders and participants. *Jim Holladay*

Living Alone. Herbert Anderson and Freda Gardner. Westminster/John Knox Press, 1997. 140 pages. \$13. ♦♦♦♦♦

"Living Alone" wraps up the five-book series titled "Family Living in Pastoral Perspective." Other titles in the series are "Leaving Home," "Becoming Married," "Regarding Children" and "Promising Again." Each book in the series addresses a particular stage of the family life cycle. The most recent book addresses primarily the time when a person who has been living with someone faces life without that individual because of death.

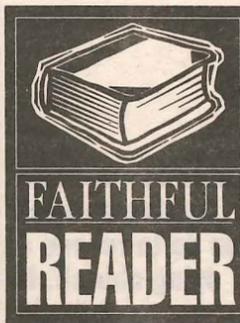
The main focus of the book was to address those who are living alone after the death of a spouse. The book does address other situations of living alone. Besides the situation of always living alone, the book addresses the special situations of commuter marriages and separation due to prolonged illness, either mental or physical. This last category divides into two possibilities: separation with or without hope of return.

The authors have included an abundance of personal statements that examine areas of grief, loneliness, solitude, dependency, sexuality and more. This is a book to put in the hands of someone living alone in hopes he/she will find a passage that will bring a new perspective or an affirmation to life.

The book also is written for pastors and other professional ministers who are seeking to understand nearly one-fourth of all American households.

In addition, the book suggests vital ways for the church to minister to those living alone as well as benefit from their own ministry in return. In a straightforward and effective way, the authors show that the true measure of one's life is how it is lived, not whether it is lived with someone else.

The final chapter of the book is an epilogue to the entire series. The focus of this end-of-series review is to propose issues which the series' authors deem critical for the future of the family. *Wayne Hager*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Midlane Park Baptist Church in Louisville, and Jim Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville. Holladay and Hager welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews. Contact them via e-mail at: docholladay@juno.com or jwhager@juno.com



Learning to Worship with All Your Heart: A Study in the Biblical Foundations of Christian Worship. Robert Webber. Hendrickson Publishers, 1996. 103 pages. \$7.95. ♦♦♦♦♦ and **Rediscovering the Missing Jewel: A Study in Worship Through the Centuries.** ♦♦♦♦♦

Robert Webber's mission in life is to renew the worship of American churches. This has led him to compile The Complete Library of Christian Worship, a multiple volume resource on the history, theology and practice of worship. He helped develop the Institute for Worship Studies, through which pastors and church leaders can gain training and earn the doctorate of ministry or M.T.S. in worship studies.

The two volumes "Learning to Worship" and "Rediscovering the Missing Jewel" represent the first two installments in a seven-volume series designed for laypeople. The intent is to provide basic instruction and insight into the theology, history, background, styles and components of worship. Each study guide has 13 lessons. Each lesson has three parts: reading material on the subject, personal study activities and instructions for group discussion of the material.

As the first volume in the study, "Learning to Worship" seeks to provide an overview of the role of worship in the life of the church. The 13 sessions are divided into three parts:

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CHURCHES

Leader cites seven habits that are killing churches

By Michael Clingenpeel
Virginia Baptist Herald

RICHMOND, Va.—Several years ago Steve Welch sat in the stifling hot sanctuary of a church that was holding its final service. Welch was riveted by the pastor's words as he told his congregation that the death of the church was not from outside forces, but from decisions made by the congregation 10, 20, 30 years before.

That stunning admission led Welch, director of church strategies for Mount Vernon Baptist Association in Northern Virginia, on a quest to understand why each year almost 4,000 churches close in the United States, and why 78 percent of Virginia Baptist churches are plateaued or declining.

"I won't conclude that the gospel isn't powerful enough. So what are we doing wrong?"

Based on his work with churches and more than 15 years in business, Welch concluded that only a few plateaued, declining and dying churches have little chance for success. Most are located "where they ought to be growing, thriving and impacting the kingdom in mighty ways."

These churches, he discovered, have developed at least seven deadly habits which can kill them if left unaddressed. Welch discussed the traits in a conference at the Virginia Baptist Resource Center June 3.

"We are all susceptible to embracing bad habits," Welch said, but churches must accept responsibility for changing them. "There is not much outside entities can do to rescue a dying church. It must begin inside."

The seven deadly habits:

■ *Providing little cutting edge training or continuing education for key leadership.* "There is no organization in America that has such little expectations of its members as the local church. This creates a climate of apathy and little energy," Welch said.

He added that churches should expect lay leaders to attend at least one conference every three years, budget more money for lay leadership training and insist on sabbaticals for clergy. "Churches that are growing will find a way to get their members to cutting edge training events," he said.

■ *Secretly resenting the success of other churches.* Rather than celebrate their successes, plateaued and declining churches "fall in a trap of comparing their perceived weaknesses with other churches' perceived strengths."

They also find excuses to explain why other churches are doing so well and they are not, Welch said. "Dying churches are jealous churches, and that's not healthy."

■ *Failing to define and commit to a common purpose.* Welch recalled asking 20 or 30 people in a plateaued church to describe their church's purpose. Each had a different answer.

"If people have a conflicted sense of what they ought to be about you are in trouble. This will kill a church," he advised.

Welch suggested that churches

enter a strategy planning process to uncover the church's identity, then be prepared to change it every five years if necessary.

■ *Accepting a structure that hinders creativity.* Declining churches "place a greater emphasis on process rather than product," Welch explained. Members get excited about a new ministry and "by the time they get permission to do it they have expended all their energy and enthusiasm." This can be avoided by designing structure that is "quick and flexible."

■ *Expressing desire for church growth but not being committed to it.* There is a difference between being "interested" in church growth and being "committed" to it, Welch said. "Most of our churches consist of people who have lost their passion about being God's people in God's time."

■ *Desperately wanting the church to survive.* Declining churches focus on survival strategies rather than impact strategies, Welch noted. For them survival becomes an "obsession."

He encouraged replacing the word "opportunity" with "responsibility." "When we use the term opportunity we imply that the unchurched and lost are really objects toward some sort of goal of helping our church ... The unchurched and lost are not there to save your church; they are there as your responsibility."

■ *Not liking unchurched people.* "Of all the habits, this is one that comes the closest to bringing a tear in God's eye and is a sin," Welch said. He urged pastors and laity to see the unchurched as the future of the church. "See everyone not as prospects, but as potential brothers and sisters in Christ."

"There is not much outside entities can do to rescue a dying church. It must begin inside."
Steve Welch

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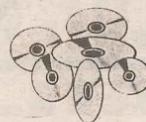


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MONEY

ANNUITY

Making sense of your retirement plan

By Don Spencer

Do you participate in a retirement plan at your place of work? Is it a 401(k) plan, a 403(b) plan, an IRA or some other kind of plan? Do you feel overwhelmed by details of your retirement plan? Here are some tips to help you manage your retirement plan investments:



FINANCIAL FORUM

■ **Set a long-range target.** Choose investments in your retirement plan that fit your target goal.

■ **Diversify to reduce risk.** This is another way of saying, "Don't put all your eggs in one basket." No single investment is foolproof.

■ **Ignore the copy machine "guru."** He or she probably doesn't know what's best for you. If you're uncomfortable making your own investment choices, seek help from a professional.

■ **Choose investments appropriate for your age.** But don't invest too cautiously as you get older. Many of today's retirees will live 20 or more years into retirement. This allows time to keep some of your money invested aggressively.

■ **Study each investment's objectives.** Also study the fund's long-term track record and potential.

■ **Balance your investments.** Make sure your retirement investments complement any financial resources you have outside your retirement plan.

■ **Invest for growth to stay ahead of inflation and taxes.** Fear and greed drive stock prices in the short term. Their prices will fluctuate. But historically, stocks have outperformed other investments.

■ **Don't "micromanage."** Don't make frequent changes in your investment choices. Use time, not timing. Take the long view. Don't be tempted to move money with every rise and fall of the stock market. Think of them as bumps along the road, not reasons to get off the highway.

■ **Review your asset allocation annually.** Make sure your investment mix still fits your long-term objective.

One final reminder: "It's daring and challenging to be young and poor, but never old and poor. Whatever resources of good health, character and fortitude you bring to retirement, remember to bring money."

Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annuity department.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Part-time minister of youth. Send resumé to: Youth Search Committee, Double Springs Baptist Church, P.O. Box 70, Waynesburg, KY 40489.

FOR SALE: One Tokai baby grand piano, one Baldwin Aerosonic piano; excellent condition, reasonably priced. Louisville, (502) 366-4318 or (502) 969-0704.

FUNDING: Churches in need of funding, contact Tim Kendrick at (502) 895-8825 by July 15. Any amount considered.

SEEKING: Minister of music and youth for medium-sized church. God has been good to us; we have a wonderful family life center complete with all the extras. Our church has very gifted and talented musicians/accompanists. Are you looking for a place to grow? A challenge? A place to serve where God is beginning to shower down his blessings? Do you feel God is leading you to seek opportunities? Qualified people with experience please send resumé to: P.O. Box 108, Corydon, KY 42406. (502) 533-0060.

FOR SALE: Thirty choir robes—gold, excellent condition, washable. Sizes: 12 large; nine medium; nine small. \$25 each. Please call Dobie Rider at (606) 567-2362 or 567-2401. Warsaw Baptist Church, Warsaw, Ky.

SEEKING: Pastor for dually aligned (CBF/SBC) Baptist church in a growing suburb. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Ridgewood Baptist Church, 6209 Greenwood Road, Louisville, KY 40258.

NEEDED: Bookkeeper (full charge) for large Lexington church. Send resumé with references and salary requirement to: Immanuel Baptist Church, 3100 Bates Creek Road, Lexington, KY 40502, Attn: Minister of church administration.

SEEKING: Turner Ridge Baptist Church in Northern Kentucky is searching for a part-time minister of youth. If interested, please send resumé to: Turner Ridge Baptist Church, Rt. 5, Box 283, Falmouth, KY 41040.

NEEDED: David C. Cook curriculum, teacher's book only. Children's Church Worshipping God I for 2- & 3-year-olds. Jackie, Kenwood Heights Christian Church, (502) 366-3712.

SEEKING: Associate pastor/youth. Ridgewood Baptist Church, Louisville (CBF-affiliated), is seeking a part-time minister to youth. Send resumé to: Ridgewood Baptist Church, 6209 Greenwood Road, Louisville, KY 40258.

SEEKING: Minister of youth, children and education. Primary responsibility: youth work with established layleaders. Submit resumé by July 18 to: Personnel Committee, Central Baptist Church, 829 High St., Paris, KY 40361.

SEEKING: High Point Baptist Church in Mayfield, Ky., is seeking a full-time associate pastor with primary responsibilities in youth and children's ministry. Send resumé to: Search Committee, High Point Baptist Church, 220 Farthing St., Mayfield, KY 42066.

NEEDED: Senior adult groups—fall mission trips in Atlanta, Leesburg, New Orleans. Activities include fellowship, mission work, Bible study, sightseeing. Call Mission Adventures, (800) 299-0385.

SEEKING: Full-time youth/music minister, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Somerset, Ky. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, D. Wheelton, sec., Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, 1815 Clifty Road, Somerset, KY 42503.

FOR SALE: 12 church pews, oak, medium-dark stain, 11 feet long, removeable seat cushions, \$100 each. Louisville (502) 935-1690.

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.

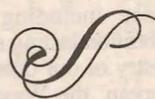
FOR RENT: Sanibel Island, Florida: 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo available for vacation rental. Large pool, tennis courts, bikes, canoe, kayak, screened porch, lovely secluded beach. Weekly rates May through mid-December: \$595. Call Pat Owen, (502) 895-8752 (home) or (502) 897-5079 (office).

SEEKING: Beacon Hill Baptist is now accepting resúmes for a full-time minister of students (children, youth and coordinator of college). Send resúmes to: Search Committee, Beacon Hill Baptist Church, 274 Old Monticello Road, Somerset, KY 42503. Deadline for resúmes is July 31.

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NOW OPEN

Though unseen, faith groups aid North Korean famine

"What's missing—livestock, smoke from factory smokestacks—is as telling as what you can see."
Rep. Tony Hall, D-Ohio, who visited North Korea

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Few people know that starvation threatens more than 5 million North Koreans this summer.

But Yung Koo does. Quietly, his Brecksville, Ohio, congregation of 350 has raised thousands of dollars in food aid this spring. Men all bowed their heads and prayed—in Korean and English—for the deliverance of their kinfolk.

Similar campaigns across the country have petitioned God and raised money at other churches with Korean-American congregations.

"You can see the least of people sending money," said Maria Kim, an accountant who worships at St. Andrew Kim Catholic Church in Cleveland. "Our little children gave the coins from their piggy banks."

Their efforts are none too soon. A United Nations team that entered North Korea in late May reports its food supply has deteriorated sharply since November.

"The emergence of pre-famine indicators suggest that starvation will

ensue in segments of the population before the next harvest, unless remedial action is taken urgently," the U.N. World Food Program team reported. "A few households visited reported deaths due to starvation, while a number of children and adults observed had symptoms of wasting."

Livestock are gone. Bakeries have closed. Chinese traders who regularly cross the border say fear of cannibalism is now delaying North Korean burials. The traders report that women and girls stand beside the road to offer sex for food.

"What's missing—livestock, smoke from factory smokestacks—is as telling as what you can see," said Rep. Tony Hall, D-Ohio, who toured the region in April. "The suffering of parents and grandparents who went without food so their children would eat is hidden, too. The absence of children's laughter and energy is many of their grandparents is easy to miss."

Also missing are the TV pictures that shocked the world into action in other crises. North Koreans, living un-

der one of the most secretive regimes in the world, are kept from view.

The fact that North Korea wields a standing army of 1.2 million soldiers—fifth largest in the world—impedes aid. "We have heard rumors if we send rice it will go to the military," said Koo, the minister. "We all know they are preparing for war against South Korea. So we send corn, which the soldiers don't like so much."

A large segment of the Korean-American community detests the repressive communist regime that rules their homeland above the 38th parallel.

The United Nations estimates North Korea requires at least 1 million tons of food aid this year. The

United States has pledged \$25 million, about 10 percent of the amount needed. Critics charge this is a puny sum compared to the historic U.S. response to famine. But it's too much for others who argue North Korea's repressive government should get nothing.

Even though the famine has not struck a chord with the American public, a number of faith-based U.S. relief agencies are involved in relief.

Southern Baptists have been on the ground for 18 months, helped by the goodwill created by former President Jimmy Carter and Billy Graham. They provide one meal per day to 3,500 children in an orphanage and to 50,000 residents of one town.

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Kentucky Baptists' organ

Webster defines an "organ" as (a) a musical instrument, (b) a biological instrument (heart), (c) an organizational instrumentality or (d) a periodical.

We Kentucky Baptists are fortunate to have our own "organ," which is an instrument through which we communicate with one another. Although its origin can be traced back to 1825, the Western Recorder has been the "denominational organ" of Kentucky Baptists only since the late nineteenth century.

According to the Covenant Agreement between the Kentucky Baptist Convention and the Western Recorder, the primary recorder of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's support of the Western Recorder is to advance the kingdom of God in providing and disseminating information and activities concerning Baptists in Kentucky and around the world.

In keeping with the historic Baptist principle of a free Baptist press, the purposes of the Western Recorder can be stated best as:

- To advance the cause of Christ;
- To inform Kentucky Baptists about matters of general interest to the churches;
- To describe, interpret, promote

and cooperate with the programs and ministries of the KBC; and

■ To provide a forum for the exchange of ideas of interest to Kentucky Baptists.

As we celebrate the liberty and freedom we enjoy in America this July 4, let us also celebrate the freedom for which Christ set us free (Galatians 5:1), and let us recom-

mit ourselves to sharing Christ with those who do not know him so they too can be set free.

The Western Recorder facilitates our individual and collective efforts with its inspirational and informative reports and stories of what God is doing through fellow Christians, and with its practical Christian living articles.

I encourage you to consider including in your July 4 celebration lasting support of the ministry of our distinctively Baptist organ, the Western Recorder.

Give me a call at (502) 244-6466 to discover how you can make a lasting difference through this unique instrument.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223.

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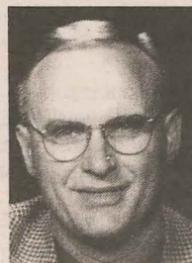


Barry Allen

Dr. Bobby Boyles

Victory Crusade

July 21 and 22
7:00 p.m.



Westside Baptist Church
1001 Johnny Robertson Rd.
Murray, Kentucky



Sponsored by BRBC First Place a cooperative ministry of churches in Calloway and Marshall Counties

Wish you could've been there

Went to church the other night. Didn't mean to. We didn't read from the Scriptures, sing a hymn or pass the offering plate. There wasn't an ordained minister leading the congregation, no stained glass windows. Yet I worshiped God and considered the place and the event holy.

Each year we recognize our children for their accomplishments. Giving our kids a pat on the back whenever we can is part of our ministry. I am proud when our young people—whether from one of our residential homes, from foster care or from an independent living program—finish the school year, the sporting season or involve themselves in their church. Finishing what we begin is worthy of recognition.

Particularly was I moved by the high school graduates at Glen Dale Children's Home. Each senior was given a bouquet of eight flowers which they, in turn, presented to a significant individual in their life. There were many wet eyes, including mine, as these young people shared how peers and staff helped them believe in themselves, trust in God and love each other.

There in the dining hall we wor-

shipped together. God was held high and love flowed.

As I looked around the packed room, there were other younger boys and girls, some of them new to Glen Dale. What a witness for these newcomers to see others just like them so successful, happy and free.

And then I thought of you, our supporters, who help make it all possible for kids who otherwise would never ascend to the glorious heights they celebrated that night. I wish each of you could have been there.

A new school year will be here soon. Once again our kids around the state will have the opportunity to set new goals for themselves and become achievers. And once again, we need your support with school supplies, prayers and gifts so that we can have this same kind of worship time again next spring.

Went to church the other night and it was great. Thanks.

Bill Smithwick president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Rd., Middletown, Ky. 40243. Call (800) 456-1386. KBHC's Internet address is: <http://www.iglou.com/kbhc/>

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

Netanyahu expresses opposition to proselytizing bill

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has announced his opposition to a bill in the Knesset, or parliament, that would criminalize the possession of materials intended to induce religious conversion.

The bill has been opposed by evangelical Christians and Messianic Jews, who view it as a violation of religious freedom and an attempt to stifle their missionary activities among Israeli Jews. The bill carries a one-year prison term for violators.

Netanyahu's announcement came in a letter to Elwood McQuaid, executive director of Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry in Bellmawr, N.J. Naor Yerushalmi, interreligious affairs spokesman at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, confirmed Netanyahu's

intentions in an interview June 17.

In his letter to McQuaid—dated June 3 and released by McQuaid—Netanyahu said, "I would like to assure you that this bill does not have the support of the Israeli government. ... The government strenuously objects to this bill and will act to ensure that it does not pass."

However Baruch Maoz, chairman of the Messianic Congregational Action Committee, which is leading the opposition to the bill within Israel, said that despite the letter, Netanyahu as yet has done nothing to sidetrack the legislation. Messianic Jews believe Jesus is the Messiah but maintain they are still ethnic Jews.

Netanyahu "has studiously avoided making any statements within Israel or taking any action in regard to

this bill," Maoz said in a telephone interview. "He has said one thing to supporters abroad, but nothing that might upset his Orthodox (Jewish) supporters in Israel."

An Orthodox member of the Knesset, joined by a member of the opposition Labor Party, introduced the bill earlier this year after hundreds of thousands of Jewish Israelis received a mailing sent by San Diego-based televangelist Morris Cerullo urging them to accept Jesus as the Messiah.

Opponents claim the bill is so broad as to make it illegal in Israel even to possess a copy of the New Testament. The bill's sponsors deny that, and say they only want to put a halt to well-financed, large-scale missionary activities intended to bring about mass conversions of Jews.

The bill has received the first of four necessary approvals in the Knesset and is currently in committee, where modifications are expected.

Yerushalmi said that Netanyahu's opposition to the bill could change if modifications meet his approval.

Netanyahu's opposition might also be tested if the Orthodox political parties that account for one-third of his ruling coalition refuse to withdraw their support. However, evangelical Christians are among the Jewish state's staunchest foreign supporters and most frequent tourists, providing the bill's opponents with some political counterweight.

"Ultimately, this bill will pass or fail based on which side maintains the political pressure most strongly and the longest," said Maoz.

"The government strenuously objects to this bill and will act to ensure that it does not pass."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Agreement could resolve Israel's 'Who's a Jew?' debate

JERUSALEM (RNS)—Israeli government officials have reached what may be a historic agreement with leaders of Judaism's Orthodox, Reform and Conservative movements to sponsor negotiations between the three rival streams over the controversial "Who is a Jew" issue.

The agreement may avert a major crisis between the Jewish state and its largely non-Orthodox American Jewish base of support over Israel's treatment of Conservative and Reform converts to Judaism.

Under the terms of the agree-

ment, a joint team of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox representatives would seek to resolve by October 1997 the controversial question of how to register non-Orthodox converts in Israel's Population Registry, according to Orthodox Knesset member Alex Lubotzky.

Lubotzky was one of the leaders of the government team that met June 17 with a delegation of Reform and Conservative rabbis from the United States and Israel to hammer out the agreement.

The Conservative and Reform rabbinical delegation met earlier in the

day with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and received his support in principle for the agreement.

Until now, Israel's state-appointed Orthodox authorities generally have refused to register as Jews those Israelis who undergo non-Orthodox conversions in Israel—although non-Orthodox converts from abroad have been registered after lengthy court battles.

The state-sponsored talks to resolve such disputes would accord Israel's tiny Conservative and Reform movements an unprecedented form of recognition in the Jewish state, where

personal status affairs of birth, death, marriage and conversion long have been the exclusive domain of Orthodoxy.

"It's potentially a historic moment," said Rabbi Uri Regev, a representative of Israel's Progressive (Reform) Movement.

"Of course the proof of the pie will be in the eating, and the proof of the agreement will be in the ability of the process to reach a mutually agreed-upon solution. But I think that the closeness of minds and the will that we have seen is unprecedented," Regev said.

Staying busy

By Robert Dunston

When the spring semester ends and Cumberland College's graduates have received their degrees, Cumberland does not close. One undergraduate term and two graduate terms during the summer bring students to campus and allow professors to try new teaching methods. Academic activities keep us busy enough but far more happens at Cumberland College during the summer.

During the second week of June, Kentucky Girls State met on Cumberland's campus. More than 200 high school girls came to explore and participate in the process of government. The third week of June brought a group of 26 people in the first of our two summer Elderhostel programs. The week's courses focused on Appalachian literature, music and religion. The second Elderhostel week is scheduled for the last of July and first of August. At the end of July Cumberland College will host the Miss Whitley County Fair Pageant.

A variety of athletic camps are offered this summer. A basketball camp during June will be followed by a basketball Big Man camp early in July. At the end of July, a girls basketball team camp and a soccer

camp will draw more visitors to Cumberland's campus.

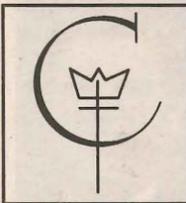
Two summer orientations for new students will provide an opportunity for the Cumberland College family to welcome entering freshmen and transfer students. Sessions on Friday evening and Saturday help prepare new students and their parents for college life. These sessions will be in late June and mid-July.

Adults and youth from 15 churches will be coming to campus to work with Mountain Outreach or Appalachian Ministries or to hold spiritual enrichment programs. Our annual Pastor/Staff and Family Conference, July 21-23, also will provide spiritual refreshment to those who attend.

By the time all these activities are over, students will be making their way back to Cumberland for the fall semester and the campus will be humming with even more activity. But that is why Cumberland College is here. Throughout the year we try to make a difference for Christ in the lives of people through varying programs and ministries.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



A brother's love

By Robin Oldham, director
Baptist Healthcare Foundation

Christian writer David Needham tells the true story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. According to Needham, the doctor explained that the sister had the same disease her little brother had recovered from two years earlier. The young girl's only hope for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the brother and sister had the same rare blood type, the boy was an ideal donor.

The doctor asked the boy, "Would you give your blood to Sarah?"

Little Josh hesitated. His lower lip began to tremble. Then he said, "Sure, for my sister."

The transfusion began as the brother and sister both watched the blood flow from Josh to his sister.

With the procedure almost completed, Josh's voice broke the silence: "Doctor, when do I die?"

The author states that "only then did the doctor realize why Josh had hesitated, why his lower lip had trembled when he agreed to donate his blood. He thought giving his blood to his sister would mean giving up his life. In that brief moment,

he had made his great decision."

Though not every experience is as dramatic as the one described by Needham, each day physicians, nurses, technicians, chaplains, other staff members and volunteers at the five Baptist hospitals in Kentucky minister to literally hundreds of patients and families experiencing some of life's most demanding challenges. You can be a part of helping others in need by making a gift to the Baptist hospital of your choice through Baptist Healthcare Foundation. Please remember that every dollar given to Baptist Healthcare through Baptist Healthcare Foundation goes directly to patient care.

For more information about the hospitals' current needs, the importance of thoughtful estate planning or other stewardship matters, please contact Baptist Healthcare Foundation. We will be happy to provide the information at no cost or obligation.

Any questions or comments concerning this article, Baptist Healthcare System or Baptist Healthcare Foundation should be directed to Charles W. Cox Jr., president of Baptist Healthcare Foundation, 4007 Kresge Way, Louisville, Ky. 40207. (502) 896-5003 or (800) 224-4745.

BAPTIST HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION



Robin Oldham

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Missionary Matt Spann as he assists with two church starts in Moscow.

■ J.P. and Angie Manley in language school in Moscow preparing to work with students.

■ Jenny Charleton, International Service Corps volunteer, as she completes her tour of service and prepares to return to the States this month.

■ A newly-formed Bible study in Green, Maine, led by church planter Mark Bryant.

■ Collaborative church planting efforts planned by Maine Baptist Association and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ EDMONTON—Grace Union Church will celebrate homecoming July 13. An all-day event is planned.

■ LA CENTER—First Church called **B.H. Kendrick** as associate pastor for senior adult ministry. He began his new ministry June 15. Kendrick previously was interim pastor at Buchanan West Church in Buchanan Dam, Texas. **Mark Bond** is pastor.

■ LOUISVILLE—**Eric Garvey** resigned as pastor at Cardinal Hill Church effective June 29.

Cloverleaf Church will host the "Mike Speck Trio" of Lebanon, Tenn., in a gospel music concert July 18 at 7:30 p.m. Call (502) 367-0218 for information.

■ MADISONVILLE—Park Avenue Church called **Brian Gatlin** as minister of youth. Also, the church will celebrate its 25th anniversary Aug. 17. All former members are invited.

■ MILTON—**David Menser** recently resigned as pastor at Corn Creek Church.

■ MURRAY—First Church called **Mike Crook** as minister of music. He previously was minister of music at First Church in Corinth, Miss. Crook will begin his new ministry July 27.

■ PRINCETON—Calvary Church called **Stuart Wilcox** as part-time minister of youth. He previously was minister of youth at Park Avenue Church in Madisonville



WELCOME TO KENTUCKY Bill Smithwick, new president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, greets Judy and Ken Reinhardt of Louisville at a recent reception at Spring Meadows Children's Home. Ken Reinhardt is a member of the child care agency's board, as is Mary Ann Ratcliffe, standing to Smithwick's right.

Injured missionary Wade Watts making progress in Memphis

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP)—Southern Baptist missionary Wade Watts has come home to his wife, Nancy, and their two sons, Marcus and Joshua, after 15 months in hospitals.

In February 1996 the family was injured in a car wreck on a mountainous road in Peru, where they had served as International Mission Board missionaries since 1986. Wade and Marcus Watts suffered severe brain injuries and lingered in comas. Doctors at first were uncertain the pair would live, then offered little hope they would come out of their comas.

By November 1996, however,

Marcus Watts had made a miraculous recovery. Now 10, he successfully completed his fourth-grade year in a Memphis school and has been released from physical therapy.

And in May, Wade Watts was released from a rehabilitation center after dramatic improvements in his physical condition.

"A few weeks ago, we were hoping Wade would be able to move just one finger so he would be able to control an electric wheelchair," said Travis White, an IMB physician who has monitored the Watts case. "A computer had been ordered that

would speak for him when he blinked his eye."

But now, Watts is feeding himself and speaking, White said. The computer order was canceled.

"God has answered our prayers," said Nancy Watts. "We've been praying Wade would be able to speak again so he could witness and preach, and the Lord has given him back his voice. Wade likes to eat, and now he's about to eat us out of house and home."

Watts still requires around-the-clock care, and his homecoming has set off a new round of adjustments in their family life. But everyone is glad

for the opportunity to make them.

Nancy Watts dates the turnaround in her husband's recent dramatic improvement to an open house in April for a home provided for the family by Highland Heights Baptist Church of Memphis. Bedfast, Wade Watts was able to attend the event, where he was greeted by dozens of longtime friends and supporters.

"It was that day he started picking up momentum. I think it made a difference," Nancy Watts said.

Now Watts is using his right hand, enabling him to feed himself and even comb his hair and brush his teeth. He is able to sit up for short periods.

Volunteers—what a blessing!

So far this spring, about 20 different groups of volunteers have donated hundreds of hours of labor. Some groups have consisted of just three or four people, while others have had as many as 60. Kentucky has provided the largest number of volunteers, followed by Alabama and Florida. Others have come from North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arizona, Illinois, and Georgia. Twenty-three additional groups are scheduled to come from now through the first of August. You cannot fully comprehend the blessing these wonderful friends are to us unless you are here to see all they do. Several groups called months ago to reserve a date to help, while others called just a day or two before coming.

Two couples were traveling from Illinois back to Florida from a disappointing mission trip. They stopped in Paducah to phone us. The call went something like this:

"Dr. Underwood, you do not know me, but I have heard a lot about Oneida. Another couple and my wife and I have two weeks to do some volunteer work if there is anything for us to do." I assured the caller there was plenty to do and we would be happy to have them. They arrived the next evening and spent two weeks helping with some greatly needed projects.

I never cease to marvel at the number of people who come to Oneida under such circumstances. Many help with volunteer work. Others come to visit our school for the first time. Often donors who have supported us for years will see our campus for the first time. On more than a few occasions, Oneida has been the recipient of a bequest from a friend who has heard about our school but has never visited our campus.

One of the joys of working with volunteers is their willingness to do about anything we ask. Some groups come and begin a project one week while another group comes the next week to complete the work. One of our older apartment buildings is getting a major overhaul this summer. All the exterior wood is being removed and replaced with vinyl siding. The roof has been extended to help keep the rain from running down the sides of the building and into the windows. The outside

steps leading to the second story have always been exposed to the elements. Keeping them free of snow and ice has been a challenge. The steps are now covered with a roof. The windows have been removed and repaired. Rotten wood has been replaced with treated materials that will not deteriorate like untreated wood.

Another much-needed project is remodeling our mobile homes. Oneida provides housing for most faculty and staff. Part of that housing consists of 24 mobile homes. Most are about 15 years old, but some are nearly 30 years old. Last summer we began a five-year

project to make major improvements with these homes. Old, leaky windows are being replaced with new vinyl windows. Doors are also being replaced with doors of better quality. Additional insulation is being added to the exterior walls, along with vinyl siding, which will greatly improve the appearance. Flat roofs have been replaced with hip roofs and lots of additional insulation. These changes not only improve the appearance of the home, but will substantially reduce maintenance and utility costs.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Faithful service where you ought to be

Go through Prestonsburg, turn right at Cow Creek and proceed to Slick Rock. You'll see Benedict Baptist Church. Sixteen pews wait for members to come from surrounding hills. The building reflects recent remodeling completed by men of the church. The congregation averages 38 in Bible study.

Pastor Gordon Fitch greeted me at the executive board meeting of Enterprise Association. "I never thought the turkey man would be in my church," he said with a smile. Fitch told the group about my delivering turkeys at Christmas during his student days. He became pastor of Benedict in 1979. Sheriff Doug Lewis was an early convert and when Fitch went to Clear Creek, Lewis became pastor. "They called me back about two months before graduation in 1981; I've been here ever since."

Fitch answered the call to preach at age 33. "My wife, Brenda, joined the Baptists the same day. I grew up being told a person didn't need to go to church until they were about age 20. Folks were opposed to educated preachers. When I decided to attend Clear Creek, many said

'They'll ruin you. They won't let you hit the pulpit if you go there.' I knew the Lord called me and wanted me to go to school. Of course, none of what they said about Clear Creek was true."

What's the secret to 16 years in one church? "I try to laugh a lot. It doesn't do any good to take everything so seriously. What's most meaningful? Seeing people grow, not so much in numbers but in spiritual growth. That doesn't happen overnight. When I baptize a 9-year-old boy, now that's where it's at. Think about his potential."

Member Betty Gayheart edits a church newsletter. "I tell Brother Fitch he may get long-winded sometimes, but he's never boring." Fitch had sent word through Director of Missions Jim Smith to bring a college catalog. A member needs Clear Creek.

The miles back home included many thoughts of Fitch and other alumni who faithfully serve in what some consider isolated places. I recalled Fitch's words, "It isn't so much where you're at, but where you ought to be."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

BAPTISTS

Pinson notes challenges for Baptist associations

DALLAS (BP)—Baptist associations and state conventions can relate to each other constructively, but they must always remember that the church relates to each of them independently, Bill Pinson told associational directors of missions.

Pinson, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, spoke to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Directors of Missions June 15-16.

"Commitment to Baptist polity ... is essential," Pinson said. "A church relates directly to the association, directly to the state convention and directly to any other Baptist entity. The churches do not need to go through any of these to the other; nor do any of these need to go through the other to the churches.

"Thus it is inappropriate to speak of 'levels' of Baptist organization, (such as) the associational level, the state convention level, the national convention level," he said.

"Apart from the local church, all are on the same level. Each is equal to the other. None is more important than the other. ... Each Baptist entity is autonomous and relates to others only through voluntary cooperation," he

said.

Baptists should remember that associations existed historically more than a century prior to the founding of the first state convention in the South, Pinson said.

As changes in the role of associations began to occur, associations became more organized with staff members who often were hired in cooperation with state and national conventions, Pinson said.

Associations were expected to help administer and promote state and national emphases, but Pinson indicated the expectations were not always readily accepted.

"Many associations began to rebel against this approach of being primarily a channel for programs of state and national denominational agencies and started to assert more and more autonomy in planning for the needs of churches," Pinson observed. "This change has affected the role of director of missions."

As examples, Pinson cited simul-

taneous pressures on associational officials both to promote denominational programs and to provide customized attention to the needs of local churches.

"Many directors of missions and associational staffs are focusing on being consultants to churches rather than administrators," Pinson said. "This is a 'church first' approach, which recognizes the

needs to assist each church in the development of its vision."

Pinson listed eight key issues that will determine the nature and effectiveness of future partnerships between associations and state conventions:

■ What is the role and/or responsibility of each member of the partnership in light of the vast changes taking place in churches, the denomination and the society in general?

■ How will associations relate to the multiple state and national denominational bodies with which churches in the association are affiliated?

■ How will state conventions relate to the increasing number of associations likely to be formed out of the diversity in Southern Baptist life? New associations are being formed not on the basis of geography, but on the basis of racial, cultural and theological affinity among churches, he noted.

■ How will today's increase in the "society" approach to financing Baptist ministries affect the partnerships?

■ How will the decline in denominational loyalty affect the partnership?

■ How will the mega-church phenomenon affect the partnership? "Could it be we should place a special emphasis on relating to these mega-churches and their pastors, encouraging them to understand the importance of partnership and cooperation for the sake of the gospel?" Pinson asked.

■ How can the missions aspect of the association-state convention partnership be kept strong, with such concentrated attention focused on meeting the needs of churches?

■ How can state conventions relate effectively to numerous associations, each with a different set of priorities, strategies and philosophies of ministry?

"It is inappropriate to speak of 'levels' of Baptist organization, (such as) the associational level, the state convention level, the national convention level. ... Apart from the local church, all are on the same level."

Bill Pinson



SBC RELATED MEETINGS

■ **DOMs delay vote.** The Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Directors of Missions has delayed a vote on changing the organization's name and broadening its mission. During its annual meeting in Dallas June 15-16, the organization discussed the first draft of a committee proposal with the intention of presenting the report for final approval at their 1998 meeting in Salt Lake City.

After some expressed concern about a final vote being taken in 1998 when attendance might be lower due to longer travel distances, a motion was adopted to refer the proposal back to the committee for further revisions.

The committee's proposal called for the group to change its name to the National Conference of Southern Baptist Associational Staff, which would allow any full-time associational employees to join.

Officers elected for 1997-98 are David Dean, Metropolitan New York Baptist Association, president; Ed Gilman, Suncoast Baptist Association in Largo, Fla., first vice president; Harry Watson, Southern Nevada Baptist Association, second vice president; Ernest Sadler, Jackson Baptist Association in Pascagoula, Miss., secretary; Charles Nunn Jr., retired DOM from Richmond (Va.) Baptist Association, treasurer; Gerald Jeffries, Dixon Baptist Association in Bland, Mo., editor of the group's newsletter; and Dan Walker, Salt Lake City Baptist Association, host director of the 1998 annual meeting.

■ **Chaplains look to new day.** Looking back and ahead, about 100 Southern Baptist chaplains and pastoral counselors met June 16 at Baylor Medical Center in Dallas for their last convocation held under the

auspices of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Participants learned about the place of chaplaincy ministries in the structure of the new North American Mission Board, which is being created by a merger of the HMB and two other agencies. Chaplaincy will fall under an "evangelization group" headed by a director of "ministry evangelism."

Huey Perry, director of the HMB chaplaincy division, confirmed that he has been offered the position of chaplaincy manager within the new structure, subject to board approval. Perry said he is confident the agency's Chaplain's Commission will retain its authority to endorse qualified Southern Baptist ministers as chaplains, a privilege granted by action of the SBC in 1941. He also offered assurances that the stringent requirements for initial endorsement will not be weakened.

Currently, more than 2,500 endorsed Southern Baptist chaplains serve in all 50 states and U.S. territories and in more than 25 countries.

■ **Messianic Fellowship looks to Christ.** Christ's self-effacing pattern is the key for effective witness, noted Michael Smith, president of the Southern Baptist Messianic Fellowship, in his address to the group June 16.

Citing Philippians 2:5-11, Smith said: "Christ used the servant model to effectively train his disciples. His self-effacing approach reached into the hearts of his disciples. He charged them with growing functions—to plant the congregations."

Smith spoke with passion as he encouraged the crowd to "serve the people with humility. Jesus washed the feet of his disciples to teach servanthood."

Such a servant mentality could overcome the strife that has developed between the Jewish community and the Southern Baptist Convention after the SBC last year passed a resolution on Jewish evangelism.

■ **Musicians examine change.** Equipping church musicians to meet changing needs in changing times was the focus of sessions during the June 15-16 Southern Baptist Church Music Conference at First Baptist Church of Richardson, Texas.

As many state conventions are restructuring, one impact on church musicians is how to access resources for their major function, worship, said Dan Johnson of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's music ministries department. Johnson led a seminar on "Restructuring the Church Music Department."

One of the best ways for church musicians to obtain resources still is to utilize the network of their local associations, he said.

■ **Research cites life of church.** The life expectancy of an urban church in its original setting is 40-50 years, according to new research by Gary Farley, former director of town and country missions with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Farley reported to the Southern Baptist Research Fellowship June 14 about a 50-year study of churches in the Raytown, Mo., area.

Pastors who recognize the life-span issue can be proactive, take advantage of the dynamics and not become discouraged when the churches approach the end of their life spans, Farley said. "Sometimes people have a lot of guilt. But if they can look across time and understand that places change, they can take advantage of the opportunities before them."

Churches wanting to extend their life span have the choice of relocating or changing into

a congregation that reflects area residents, Farley said.

■ **Hispanics focus on state missions.** A goal of attempting to include Hispanics in all of Southern Baptist Convention life has been narrowed to encourage a more intense focus on state and local missions, according to Roberto Lopez, newly elected president of the National Southern Baptist Hispanic Fellowship.

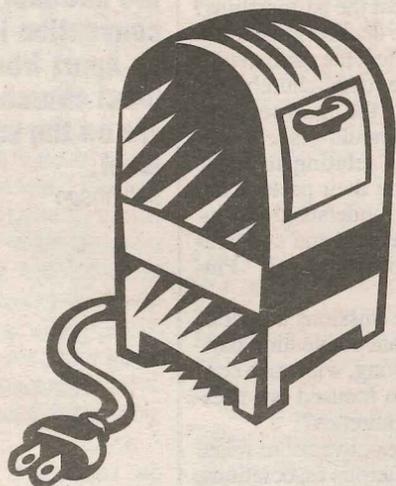
Lopez, pastor of Bethel Baptist Church in Henderson, Nev., said the fellowship's leaders "want to create a better relationship between the National Hispanic Fellowship and the state conventions."

Incorporated in 1996, the fellowship serves 21 state Hispanic fellowships, encompassing 3,800 Hispanic churches with nearly 500,000 members, according to its leaders.

■ **Schools association goes solo.** Members of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools met in annual session June 8-10 for the first time as an independent organization, ending a 48-year partnership with the Southern Baptist Education Commission which closed Dec. 31, 1996.

About 60 presidents and chief academic officers took steps to chart a new course for the organization whose 68 member institutions include Southern Baptist-related seminaries, colleges, universities, Bible colleges and high school academies.

The association also revised membership qualifications for schools wishing to apply for membership. The new qualifications limit membership to post-secondary institutions.



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