



WESTERN RECORDER

October 14, 1997
Vol. 171, No. 40**FOR THE RECORD**

Cooperative Program
Gifts to the Southern Baptist Convention surpassed its budget by \$10 million. *Page 2.*

Chaplain
Former University of Louisville player taking gospel to the gridiron. *Page 3.*

Missions
America is in danger of losing its missions base, says Keith Parks. *Page 3.*

Editorial
Where does your church begin when making decisions? *Page 5.*

Church leadership integrity

Former Louisville Pastor John Claypool and former First Baptist Church of Dallas Pastor Joel Gregory spoke at the Baptist Center for Ethics' recent conference. *Pages 8-9.*

Nation
A veteran U.S. Supreme Court reporter says the court is in disarray over religion. *Page 10.*

Books
Ray Bakke's "A Theology as Big as the City" and two biographies of C.S. Lewis. *Page 12.*

Financial Forum
How churches can develop good stewards. *Page 13.*

Moving? See page 4 (1014)

'Counsel' kids to help them make right decisions

WACO, Texas (ABP)—Child-rearing calls neither for "helicopter" parents who hover over their children and then swoop down to rescue them nor "drill sergeant" parents who bark orders and tell children their only responsibility is to obey, says a Texas educator.

Both parenting styles teach children they are incapable of deciding for themselves, Brenda Bird, lead parent educator with the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District, said at a seminar sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union of Texas.

Instead, Bird said, parents should adopt a "consultant" parenting style in which they point children in the right direction and then let them suffer consequences for bad choices, unless they pose physical harm.

"It's knowing when to step in and when to step back, and that's a hard dance for some of us to learn," Bird said.

To help parents develop more of a "consultant" style, Bird offered seven "C's" for what she called a blueprint for strong families:

■ **Choices.** Instead of making threats or rescue attempts, give children "non-threatening choices you can live with."

■ **Control.** Teaching children to make choices empowers them and gives them more control over their lives as they grow older.

■ **Consequences.** Allow children to "own" their problems by helping them to see that the choices they make have real consequences.

■ **Count.** "Kids must know that they count—that they matter to someone." For children in homes where they are not valued, adults in the church may be able to provide them that sense of value, she said.

■ **Capable.** Teach children that they are capable by giving them tasks, allowing them to make mistakes and letting them learn from those mistakes. "Then give them the same task again, showing them that we trust them and that they are capable."

■ **Connections.** Children need to feel connected to someone older, preferably a responsible parent or a positive adult role model at church. "If kids don't feel that they count, if they don't feel capable, and if they don't feel connected at home or at church, they'll find it someplace else—probably in a gang."

■ **Courage.** By encouraging children, adults can inspire them to have the courage to learn new things, make new friends and take risks.

Faith often hard with unbelieving mate

By Julia Lieblich
Religion News Service

DICKERSON, Md.—Yvonne Mulgrew, 40, rarely mentions God at home. She cannot discuss the subject she cares most about—her evangelical Christian faith—with the man she loves the most, her husband.

"It becomes extremely lonely," she said. "I long to be able to talk to my husband about spiritual things."

Jerry Mulgrew, 50, has gone to church with his wife on occasion if only to bring her comfort. But Vietnam convinced him years ago that God does not intervene in human affairs. He tries to assure her that as a baptized Catholic he's already been saved. She's unconvinced.

"I pray constantly," she said, "for his soul and salvation."

The Apostle Paul warned Christian believers against becoming unequally yoked by marrying non-believers. Just what defines a believer, Jerry Mulgrew argues, is open to discussion, but tensions can arise in any marriage when one partner adheres strongly to a tradition the other rejects.

The conflict takes on added urgency for evangelical Christians who fear their "unbelieving partners" will spend eternity in hell.

Spouses of "unbelievers" can be found in every church, said Michael Fanstone, co-author of the books "Praying for Your Unbelieving Husband" and "Unbelieving Husbands and the Wives Who Love Them."

Christian psychologist James Dobson, president of Focus on the Family, "gets huge volumes of mail" on the subject, and he's hosted radio shows with titles like "Beloved Unbelievers"

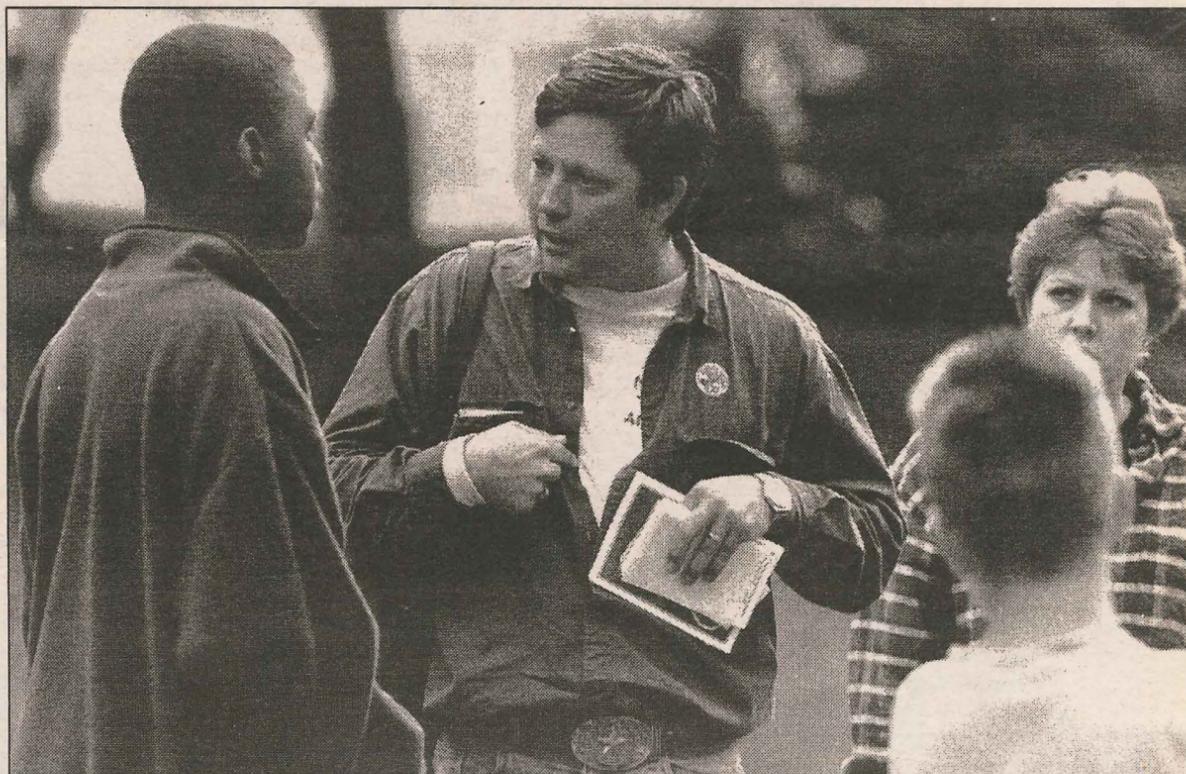
and "Unequally Yoked."

The vast majority of unequally yoked Christians are women, said Fanstone, senior pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Gravesend, England. Some report marrying men who pretended to be Christians during the courtship only to reveal their religious indifference after the wedding. Far more common are wives like Jennifer Miller, who become "born-again" Christians after they marry.

Miller, 46, a graphic designer in Gravesend, hadn't thought much about religion until a local church member came to her house to invite her to a service.

"When I opened the door I started crying, and I was not unhappy," she said. "All week I felt I had to go to church." Her first day of worship "was an incredible experience," which she

□ See *Mates of unbelieving ...*, page 7



BLOCK PARTY Travis Johnson (center) shares his Christian faith with a young man on a basketball court in Portland, Ore., during a block party sponsored by Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Portland. The party was held during a School of Evangelism training event, sponsored by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. More than 50 people committed their lives to Christ during the block parties and a "saturation evangelism" project of door-to-door witnessing the same evening. (BP photo By James Dotson.)

Sunday night church isn't what it used to be

By David Winfrey
News Director

In many Kentucky Baptist churches, Sunday night services just aren't what they used to be.

Sometimes that's good, say pastors and other church leaders who have revamped their Sunday night meetings to target specific needs.

But sometimes that's bad, say others who point to a decline in both attendance and excitement for a scaled-down version of Sunday morning worship.

"Many of the people I know on church staff would prefer not to have Sunday night services," said Bill Leonard, a church historian and dean of Wake Forest University's divinity

school in North Carolina.

Interviews with a dozen pastors, seminary professors and Kentucky Baptist Convention leaders found

most reporting that Sunday evening services have fallen to third in importance and attendance behind Sunday morning and Wednesday evening for a majority of churches.

"Many churches can't get a third or fourth of their members back on Sunday night," said Chip Miller, a consultant with the KBC church growth and administration division.

Among the churches most likely to

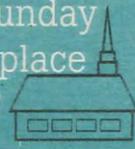
stop meeting on Sunday evening are small rural churches that can't afford a full-time pastor and inner-city churches, where safety concerns pre-

vent people from driving into town at night, said Gary Farley, an authority on rural and small churches.

"I think you could say well over 90 percent of Baptist churches had worship twice on Sunday from the mid to late '50s to the mid '80s, and then there's begun to be a moving away from that," Farley said. "I think there are a lot of new churches that don't ever begin a Sunday night

□ See *Sunday night isn't ...*, page 11

CHURCH
The Sunday
night place
to be?



BAPTISTS

BAPTIST BITS

■ **Roberta Mae** "Honey" Patterson, mother of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Paige Patterson, died Oct. 1 in Topeka, Kan. She was 89.

■ **Huey Perry**, chaplaincy manager for the North American Mission Board, will retire Oct. 15. He worked with chaplaincy through the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board for 20 years.

■ **The Southern Baptist** Convention has been dismissed from a gift annuities lawsuit filed in a Texas federal court more than two years ago. Attorneys for the plaintiff, Boyd Richie, agreed to dismiss the SBC after meeting with Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, Aug. 12 in Dallas.

■ **Youth Mission** Exchange is seeking Baptist youth groups to participate in missions exchange programs with Cooperative Baptist Fellowship missionaries next summer. For details, call (800) 769-0210.

SBC gifts exceed budget by \$10 million

NASHVILLE (BP)—Gifts to the Southern Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program surpassed budget by nearly \$10 million in the fiscal year just ended, SBC officials reported.

Total gifts of \$155 million showed an increase of nearly \$7 million (4.6 percent) over the previous year's giving.

This marks the fourth consecutive year for SBC Cooperative Program totals to set new records.

"Southern Baptists continue to demonstrate their love for missions

and our cooperative efforts in sending missionaries, planting churches and educating ministers," said Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, which administers all Cooperative Program funds. "This fourth record year in a row is a testimony to the health of our convention and will allow our continued witness to people all over the world of the good news of Jesus Christ.

"As the result of exceeding the budget by nearly \$10 million, our two mission boards will receive an addi-

tional \$3.6 million more than called for in the regular budget. This is an amazing story reflecting the heartbeat of Southern Baptists, their love for missions," Chapman said.

Designated gifts also set a record, topping last year's designated gifts by \$3 million, or 2.24 percent. The 1996-97 designated gifts total is \$141.55 million. Designated gifts include special offerings such as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions.

Southwestern settles with ousted professor

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP)—Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary apparently has avoided a faculty trial by coming to terms with a professor removed from his classroom for criticizing seminary administrators.

Jeff Pool, 45, an assistant professor of systematic theology, will not return to the classroom. But he will receive salary and benefits through the current academic year, which ends next July 31.

Administrators at the seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, pulled Pool from his teaching duties just before the seminary's fall term started in late August. That move closely followed Pool's public charges of "academic censorship" against the seminary.

"I really was removed from teaching not because of my teaching, but because I voiced dissent about actions of the administrators of this institution," Pool said.

On the advice of the seminary's attorney, the dean of the seminary's School of Theology, Tommy Lea, limited his response to a prepared statement.

"The seminary guidelines require that personnel matters be handled confidentially," Lea said. "The administration has acted in the best interests of the seminary and Dr. Pool in accordance with the seminary's policies

and procedures.

"Dr. Pool has shown himself to be a capable scholar in his discipline of systematic theology. He has demonstrated commendable interest in his students.

"However, the parties have agreed that Dr. Pool should exercise his teaching ministry in another institutional setting," Lea said. "The seminary has attempted to provide Dr. Pool and his family financial security to allow him to find another position without interruption of income or loss of benefits important to his family."

The controversy began last year, when Pool edited an issue of the seminary's "Southwestern Journal of Theology." The disputed issue of the journal examined the Southern Baptist Convention's "Baptist Faith and Message" doctrinal statement.

Seminary administrators objected to Pool's use of authors identified as SBC moderates, fearing it would alienate trustees and other conservative convention leaders. The seminary suspended publication of the journal.

Pool offered the articles to Smyth & Helwys Publishing of Macon, Ga., which published them in a book called "Sacred Mandates of Conscience: Interpretations of the Baptist Faith and Message."

In a preface to the book and in subsequent interviews, Pool called Southwestern's refusal to publish the journal "academic censorship."

Seminary officials have denied the

and procedures. First, they noted they waived the rights to the rejected articles, freeing their authors to publish them. Second, they said the decision not to publish the journal was made by an editorial board comprised of faculty.

Pool acknowledged not all Southwestern faculty agree with him, but he contended the journal's editorial board was coerced by pressure from Southwestern President Ken Hemphill and academic administrators.

And that pressure is pushing the seminary into an increasingly narrow spectrum from which it can operate, Pool charged.

"Academic freedom here certainly is under significant threat," he said. "It's always been tenuous; this is a very, very conservative place. ... But Southwestern is being rapidly aligned with the 'new SBC' and the SBC structure."

President Hemphill was selected by trustees elected during the theological/political campaign to turn the SBC sharply to the right, shortly after those trustees fired former President Russell Dilday, Pool noted.

"There is an agenda for the seminary to follow," which includes hushing all forms of disagreement or dissent, he claimed.

His ouster from the classroom sends a signal to faculty and potential faculty that "self criticism" within the institution will not be tolerated, Pool said.

BJC opposes Religious Freedom Amendment

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Board members of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs spoke out Oct. 7 against the proposed Religious Freedom Amendment and public-school tuition vouchers, called for changes in a proposed bill targeting religious persecution abroad, and asked Congress to enact new legislation to guarantee religious liberty as a "fundamental right" in the United States.

Those actions came in resolutions adopted during the Baptist Joint Committee's annual meeting Oct. 6-7.

One resolution opposed the "Religious Freedom Amendment" to the U.S. Constitution proposed by Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla. The proposal would use tax dollars to fund religious enterprises and would allow for "religious coercion" in public schools, the resolution stated.

"This amendment is dangerous and unfaithful to our Baptist heritage," the resolution said.

"Government-sponsored prayer in the classroom and government-endorsed religious expression in public places are inherently coercive and would relegate religious minorities to the status of outsiders and second-class citizens if they did not participate in worshipping the god of the majority," it continued.

Government funding of religion "violates the conscience of taxpayers who rightfully expect the government to remain neutral in religious matters," the resolution also stated.

Government subsidies for religious institutions diminish the "independence and integrity" of religion, it noted, because the state "always seeks to control what it funds."

Several directors expressed concern the resolution could cause a stir, since some BJC directors represent Baptist groups that have endorsed the Istook amendment and others serve as directors of the National Association

157 churches join Virginia's new convention

ROANOKE, Va.—More than 100 Virginia Baptist churches have officially broken with the Baptist General Association of Virginia to assume exclusive ties to a new state convention formed by conservatives.

That represents about 6 percent of the 1,550 churches formerly aligned with the Baptist General Association.

Another 49 churches established dual relationships with the Baptist General Association and the new group, Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia.

Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia approved the unique and dual affiliations of those 157 churches during the organization's first annual meeting Sept. 29 at Green Ridge Baptist Church in Roanoke.

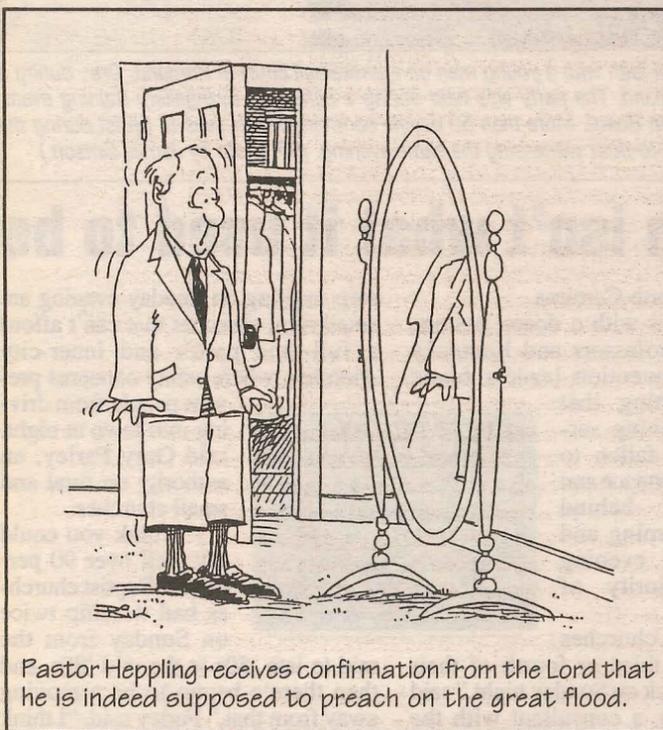
The meeting was attended by 462 voting messengers.

Among the Virginia churches approved for exclusive alignment with the new conservative convention is Jerry Falwell's church, Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg.

In business during the convention, three resolutions were adopted, one endorsing the Southern Baptist Convention's boycott of the Disney Co., another declaring it "unscriptural for women to serve as pastors or deacons" and another voicing "strong opposition to religious persecution" across the world.

Messengers also approved a recommendation to hire a missions coordinator to interface with the North American Mission Board in church planting, an education and church programs coordinator to interface with the SBC Sunday School Board, an evangelism assistant and an administrative assistant.

Based on a Baptist Press report



Pastor Heppling receives confirmation from the Lord that he is indeed supposed to preach on the great flood.

Former player taking gospel to gridiron as chaplain

By William Chandler
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP)—He once spent his Saturday afternoons tackling ball carriers and attempting to intercept passes from opposing quarterbacks. But this fall, William Blackford is helping young men tackle spiritual problems by passing along the gospel.

Blackford, a master of divinity student at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, still remains close to the gridiron by serving as chaplain for the University of Louisville's football team—the same Cardinals team for which he played defensive cornerback from 1987-92. Blackford said his call to ministry has strengthened his desire to remain connected to the game that has played a large role in his life.

"I understand the game of football and I understand what sacrifice it takes to succeed as a player," said Blackford, who came to the University of Louisville as a walk-on player and led the team in interceptions in 1990. "I know the joy of winning

and the disappointment of losing. I think that has given me some credibility and respect."

But more than admiration and respect, Blackford said he wants team members to know he's concerned about their personal and spiritual lives more than their athletic ability.

"I am a fan, but not in the strict sense of always wearing team colors and dressing up my children in Cardinal outfits," he said. "I am a fan in the sense that I want to see these young men succeed in life."

Blackford's primary duties for the team include "spending time and developing relationships (with the players) so that they have someone with whom they can share their concerns." He also delivers game-day devotional messages and prays with the team before they take the field.

Blackford, who became chaplain this fall after serving as assistant to former team chaplain Bob Bailey, is now assisted in the ministry by another Southern student, Kyle McClellan, who formerly played defensive end at Taylor University in Upland, Ind.

The two former football players are

gratified by the results they see in their ministry to University of Louisville players.

"We have had a wonderful response from the athletes and coaching staff," Blackford said. "In the end, I believe we are going to see God doing a great work as some of these young men give their lives to Christ."

Rico Williams, a junior running back for the Cardinals, said he sees God's hand in Blackford's work with the team.

"I think he was sent to this team for a purpose," Williams said. "It's hard for some people to relate to all the different types of guys we have on this team, but William seems to be able to reach just about anyone. He used to play this game, so he knows what we go through every day."

Blackford plans to graduate this spring, so he will remain the Cardinals' chaplain only through the end of the present season. After graduation, Blackford will pursue pastoral ministry.

In the meantime, Blackford's chaplaincy for the football team is a ministry that's making a difference



WALKING THE SIDELINES

Chaplains William Blackford (left) and Kyle McClellan walk the sidelines during a recent University of Louisville home football game.

with young men.

Running back Williams said Blackford helps him and his fellow players keep things in perspective. "We may not play a better game just because we have faith in the Lord. But, as William tells us, we have to put our faith in the Lord if we expect to be first in the things that are most important in this life. And that's much bigger than football."



STUDENT CONVENTION Revelation, a group from Eastern Kentucky University, sings at the 70th annual Kentucky Baptist Student Convention held Oct. 3-5 at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville. Revelation was among several music and drama groups performing before the 885 registrants. The students also heard four messages from Mike Thompson, a professor at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., attended seminars on a variety of topics and voted to raise \$98,000 to support 61 summer missionaries. (Photo by Pat Cole)

BLUEGRASS BURGEOO

■ **KBHC gets \$25,000 grant.** Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children has received a \$25,000 grant from Lake Cumberland Regional Hospital to expand services for children and families in southern Kentucky. The gift will assist construction of a lodge and three log cabins for KBHC's Wilderness Camping Treatment Program.

■ **Missions fund-raising begins.** Cumberland College's Baptist Student Union raised \$905 for missions at its recent "dream date auction." The proceeds will help send student missionaries on assignments. With a goal of \$10,500,

other fundraising events include exam survival kit sales, a spring formal, volleyball tournament and penny wars between dorms.

■ **PK task force started.** A Hardin County task force in support of Promise Keepers would like to establish points of contact with churches throughout Hardin County and adjacent counties. The group also would like to document testimonies by participants and family members from the recent "Stand in the Gap" event in Washington. For more information, contact Glen Meade at (502) 737-8004.

■ **Floyd Price to speak.** Georgetown College will host an address by Kentucky Baptist Convention President Floyd Price Oct. 21 at 11 a.m. The speech by Price, pastor of Scottsville Baptist Church, will be part of the school's Kentucky Baptist Convention Day.

■ **Recital fund-raiser hosted.** An organ recital by Richard Dwyer will be hosted at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington to raise funds for the church's Interfaith Samaritan Counseling Center. Admission is free to the Oct. 19 concert at 7:30 p.m., but an offering will be collected.

Parks tells students: America could lose its missionary base

GEORGETOWN—America will lose its foothold as a missionary base unless American Christians boldly reassert their belief in the singular truth of the gospel to change lives, Keith Parks told students at Georgetown College Sept. 23.

Parks, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention Foreign Mission Board and current missions coordinator with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, delivered the inaugural address for the college's Marshall Center Day.

The Marshall Center Day is part of the new ministry of Georgetown's Marshall Center for Christian Ministry. As the speaker for this event, Parks addressed a chapel service, spoke in four classes and was keynote speaker at a dinner for Marshall Center board members and guests.



Parks

"It is becoming more difficult to find spiritual truth," Parks told Georgetown students. "There's a growing reluctance to say one can know the truth about God in a distinctive, singular way."

While others want to say any belief is equally valid to another, "I don't believe that," Parks said, "because of

what I believe Scripture teaches."

He then drew upon Scripture and his experience as a missionary in Indonesia to cite three "singular truths" of Christianity not encountered anywhere else:

■ Christianity is the only religion where God is "searching for us." All other religions focus only on people searching for a god.

■ God has provided the only way of destroying the power of sin through the person of Jesus Christ.

■ Only Christianity offers the fullness of an eternal creator God indwelling and living within humans and giving direction to their lives.

Parks called on Georgetown students not only to believe the Christian gospel but to proclaim it. Unless American Christians are willing fearlessly to proclaim what they believe, America no longer will be a power for Christian missions, he said.

"You and your generation will decide whether Christian missions will reach out to the world or just give up and deny your allegiance to Jesus Christ."

WESTERN RECORDER

P.O. Box 43969
Louisville, Ky. 40253
(ISSN 0043-4132)

MARK WINGFIELD
Editor

DAVID WINFREY
News Director

MAURI SMITH
Marketing & Business
Manager

C.R. DALEY
Editor Emeritus

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

Western Recorder is published weekly by Western Recorder Inc., an agency of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253, except for one week in July and December. For general information, call (502) 244-6470. Fax: (502) 244-6474. Send e-mail to CompuServe 102667,1300, and the Internet, wesrec@ntr.net. Periodicals postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

To subscribe: Send \$10.60 for a one-year, individual subscription. Group subscriptions on the church budget plan are \$8.50 per year. An additional church newsletter service is available for churches of all sizes. All subscriptions are payable in advance, except church accounts, which require a tax exemption number.

To register change of address: Send the mailing label from page 1, along with your new address, to the subscription department at the Western Recorder address.

To give news tips: Call (502) 244-6471, fax to (502) 244-6474 or write the editor or news director.

To submit a letter: Letters on any subject will be considered for publication, provided they do not make a personal attack on anyone. Letters are limited to 300 words and may be edited for length.

To place an advertisement: Rates are available upon request by calling (502) 244-6470. Institutional columns on an inside page are paid space. Claims made by advertisers are not necessarily those of the Western Recorder's staff and directors.

Directors: Bill Thurman, Lexington, chairman; Rusty Ellison, Louisville, vice chairman; Jim Abernathy, Covington, secretary; Laura Beville, Bowling Green; Mark Boes, Cecilia; Tom Curry, Louisville; Mike Harmon, Princeton; Frank Hatfield, Shepherdsville; Barry Howard, Corbin; June B. Rice, Paintsville; Kenneth Wells, Somerset; Charles Midkiff, Greenville.

In last week's issue, we invited response from participants in the Promise Keepers "Stand in the Gap" rally Oct. 4 in Washington.

This is radical?

I was humbled by the number of men who gathered in the name of Christ to confess both our personal sins and the sins of our nation. I pray that our petitions were a sweet sound to the ears of Almighty God and that he will indeed "heal our land" and forgive us for our lack of reverence and responsibility.

Though the assembly was sacred, there seemed to be groups who opposed the idea of men taking responsibility for their actions. Terms such as "radical" and "macho" were often used to describe the display of unity. I would like to respond by saying if uniting as one body of Christ for the purpose of repentance is radical, I want to be the leader. Furthermore, if weeping openly and crying out to God because of personal convictions is an act of being "macho," I am guilty.

I urge all my brothers and sisters in Christ to continue to pray for our country and its leaders as well as those who hold such a disheartening view of the Promise Keepers movement, so that they too may experience the fullness of Christ's love and come to a saving knowledge of him, our Lord and Savior.

*John Martin
Frankfort*

Came home renewed

My group found a place adjacent to a major pedestrian traffic lane, before 5 a.m. For most of the seven hours preceding the sounding of the shofar, I met men from all over the

United States, men of every skin color and Christian tradition.

I joined in as we sang "Holy, Holy, Holy," "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" and "I Pledge Allegiance to the Lamb." I knelt. I cried. I was renewed and revived. I stood. I embraced brethren whom I'd never met and whom I won't see again until glory. I rejoiced.

I came home cognizant of this: As great as it was, as wonderful as the outpouring of God's Spirit was, it was meaningless if the impact ended at 6 p.m. Saturday when we began to disperse. Or if the impact lasts only as long as the media continues to talk about it, the assembly will have failed.

The success of "Stand in the Gap" will only be revealed in glory when the Book of Life is opened and names are found there because men returned home to be the husbands, fathers, church members and servant evangelists they covenanted to be that day.

I came home committed anew to be faithful to that call. Pray that we all will.

*Glen Meade
Severns Valley Baptist Church
Elizabethtown*

Revival's coming

The Promise Keepers prayer gathering in Washington represents the highlight of my spiritual pilgrimage. Words can't adequately express the thrill of being there.

The sense of the Holy Spirit and the mall's peaceful atmosphere were evidence of God's presence. I believe "Stand in the Gap" will help usher in a revival that will sweep this nation in a powerful and dramatic way.

*Ken Walker
Clifton Baptist Church
Louisville*

Happy to admit I was wrong

By Samuel Atchison

Like many African-Americans, I have a dim view of anything even remotely connected with the Religious Right. I have often decried the apparent dissonance between the movement's biblical views and what appears to be a racist political agenda. And I find it abhorrent that they are often promoted as two sides of the same coin.

Thus, it was with a skeptical eye that I first began to observe Promise Keepers.

As a husband, father and pastor, I resonated with the group's central message—men should love their wives and children, nurturing them in the fear of the Lord. However, as a black man, I kept waiting for the other—the political—shoe to drop.

Thankfully, I am still waiting. To my surprise, Promise Keepers' agenda apparently is more concerned with personal integrity than politics. The theme of the Oct. 4 gathering, "Stand in the Gap: A Sacred Assembly of Men," embodied this thought.

COMMENTARY



Samuel Atchison

"Stand in the Gap" refers to a biblical text in the Old Testament book of Ezekiel (22:30): "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it."

The text evokes the image of the protective walls that typically surrounded ancient cities. But in this instance the sinfulness of the city's inhabitants symbolically caused a breach (or gap) in the wall, making it vulnerable to God's wrath.

God says—as an act of mercy—he looked for a godly man to stand in the gap to stay his judgment on the people, but there was no one to be found.

By convening on the National Mall, the Promise Keepers were proclaiming to God and country their intention to stand in the gap for the nation. They seem to realize, as many of us do not, that at the root many of the nation's problems are spiritual.

Most social service programs, for example, are based on the assumption that people want to change. The pur-

Great experience

I did attend and had a great experience:

■ Free water bottles from women in passing auto as we walked from our buses to the mall.

■ Interviewed by a George Washington University senior as I walked back to the buses after the event. She had been mingling in the crowd all day.

■ Saw thousands of men on their faces before God.

*Tony Rodgers
Yellow Creek Baptist Church
Owensboro*

Sea of praise

One of the speakers asked everyone to yell out their denomination ... Baptists yell "Baptist," Catholics yell "Catholic," etc. What followed was a loud, unintelligible noise. The speaker then asked everyone to shout out the name of their Lord and Savior.

One, two, three ... "JESUS CHRIST!"

That glorious name rang out in unison over the mall followed by a half second of silence before the echos resonated back on the crowd. What a joyful noise. Steve, my usually sedate Sunday school teacher, leapt out of his seat in praise, calling for more.

Every person attending the event was given a copy of the New Testament. At one point a speaker asked everyone to hold up and wave their Bible or New Testament. Looking across and down the mall back toward the Washington Monument it looked like the surface of the ocean on a windy afternoon. Hundreds of thousands of men praising God and thanking him for the sacrifice of his Son for our sins ... a powerful sight indeed.

*Rex E. Graft
Erlanger Baptist Church*

■ More Baptist Forum on page 6

pose of these programs is to improve the quality of life of those who need them. The programs assume clients are willing to learn the habits and patterns necessary to sustain this change.

However, those of us who run these programs know the truth: Many people fail to improve their lot simply because they are not willing to change.

Similarly, legal and political approaches to many social problems assume people can be forced to change. Yet more than 30 years after the passage of the Civil Rights Act, racism remains pervasive, even in the church.

The Promise Keepers, however, have chosen to take first things first. Like the prophets of old, they have repented of their sins as well as for those of the nation. In so doing, they have taken responsibility for the problems in their homes and the resulting social ills.

Scripture affirms that God honors the prayers of those who, in sincerity, repent of their sins.

As for me, I'm happy to admit I was wrong about the Promise Keepers. Humble pie never tasted so good. (RNS)

Samuel Atchison is an ordained minister and has worked as a policy analyst and social worker to the homeless. He currently is a prison chaplain in Trenton, N.J.

MARRIAGE

Christian couples have winning edge

By John Lepper

A minister once said, tongue in cheek, "I never believed in a personal devil until I got married." He quickly clarified by saying he was not referring to his wife as the devil. Rather, it seemed that just as things were going well, some outside force interfered in the marriage.

In our private thoughts, we may feel that because

we are Christians we should be immune to problems, conflict or crisis. Our hearts' desires and deepest prayers often are for the safety, well-being and success of our families. We may wish for a magic pill to immunize ourselves from marital difficulties, but we know this is impossible.

We know God does not always spare us from difficulties or exempt us from situations that arise in other families. However, having a personal and growing relationship with God through Jesus Christ does give us an edge.

Numerous studies suggest that a strong faith makes a difference in the health of a family. There seems to be a direct correlation between spiritual well-being and marital stability. While Christian couples are not immune to difficulties, spiritual wellness does seem to provide a much-needed advantage.

How can spiritual wellness be measured? Jesus' words in Matthew 7:16 are instructive: "You will know them by their fruits." Perhaps the presence of the fruit of the Spirit is a mark of spiritual wellness.

While not talking specifically about families, Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23): love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. The fruit of the Spirit comes as a result of walking in the Spirit. These are, in effect, ideals for Christians to practice in all relationships. Family relationships are primary, so we keep faith with Paul's intention in these verses by applying them to the marriage relationship.

Christian couples bear this fruit of the Spirit by staying connected to the vine—Jesus Christ. Paying attention to the way we cultivate the fruit of the Spirit can make a big difference in our marriages. In coming weeks we'll look more closely at specific ways we can nurture the fruit of the Spirit in our marriages.

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



HE SAID/SHE SAID

If men need Promise Keepers, women need No More Promises

HESAI



Mark Wingfield

The soccer moms were talking about the state of women's lives. I was the only dad sitting on the sidelines during last week's practice, so I couldn't help but listen. (Three other dads were helping coach that week, but they must have known intuitively not to ask my assistance.)

All parents of 4- or 5-year-olds, plus additional children of various ages, these thirtysomething women were frazzled. Except for the ones holding babies or chasing toddlers around the field, they said they enjoyed this one hour every week of just sitting. Soccer practice might be the most peaceful hour of their week, they suggested.

One woman related the disgust she felt several years ago upon hearing news reports of Deborah Norville's trauma in juggling her firstborn child and a career. The NBC newswoman said she often cried herself to sleep because of all the pressure. Well, she got no supporting tears from this crowd of women, given the fact that she had a nanny and lots of other help they never dreamed of having.

Being a sensitive male, I knew not to jump into this discussion without risking dire consequences. I was sympathetic, however, and their impromptu therapy session caused me to think.

Having just returned from covering the Promise Keepers rally in Washington, I wondered to myself what would meet the same need in women's lives as Promise Keepers appears to be meeting in many men's lives. (Having promise-keeping husbands at home doing their share is a good start, but I suspect there's more.)

Maybe soccer practice is the answer. It's supposed to be for our kids, but where else can you find an hour of nearly free time with a built-in support group?

SHESAID



Alison Wingfield

This kind of group therapy among women doesn't just happen at soccer practice. Anywhere you see two or more women with a little time on their hands, you'll probably find an interesting discussion going on.

I find myself talking with women at the kids' school who have just dropped off their kids, with women in long grocery lines and with women in a preschool Sunday school meeting. This is something most men don't do.

We know how to talk. And we know how to share more than just the weather or the latest sports scores. I think most women find it easier to relate to each other than men do, and we find common ground faster.

I don't know that women need an equivalent to Promise Keepers. Women have been involved in any number of grassroots movements, as well as holding down the fort at church and home. Promise Keepers is more like a two-by-four over the head of men, who like sheep need a whack to get them going in the right direction.

But we also could benefit from a deliberate gathering of women. A women's retreat can be a refreshing experience.

I remember attending one such retreat several years ago. The spiritual food was great, but the best part of it was the camaraderie. Staying up till the wee hours of the night talking, with no work, kids or husband responsibilities beckoning us was sheer delight. We giggled and laughed like teenagers—without the angst that goes with being one.

Instead of a rally to encourage us to make and keep promises, women need a chance to get away from all the responsibilities we already have to juggle every day. Perhaps we need a No More Promises rally.

Church's mission should be on people

What is the starting point for making decisions about your church's ministry and mission?

Ask any well-entrenched Baptist that question and you're likely to get one answer: the Bible.

Good answer, but is it really true? And even if it is true, is it the right answer?

During last week's Kentucky Baptist Convention Church Health Summit in Bowling Green, one of the keynote speakers pointed out that Jesus' ministry started at the point of people's needs.

For example, take the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus began by talking with her about living water, drawing an analogy from the circumstances in which they had just met. Then he moved to a discussion of her home life, the point of her need.

He did not shower her with a prepackaged Scripture presentation, but instead began probing at the rough edges of her life experience, seeking to find the right connections to bring her toward the Scripture. In modern talk, we would say Jesus made the Scripture relevant to the contemporary setting.

What a novel idea.

Yet as Reggie McNeal reminded everyone at the Church Health Summit, many of us denounce any effort to make the church relevant to our culture as one step short of heresy. Some are even brazen enough to say people ought to learn to like the way we do church if they want to hear our gospel message anyway.

We proudly proclaim that our churches are "biblical," yet in reality we operate in ways based more on tradition and self-interest than anything else.

For example, where in the Bible does it say churches have to meet at 11 a.m. on Sundays? Where does it say every worship service should have three hymns, two prayers and a sermon with three points and a poem? Where does it say men have to wear suits and women have to wear fancy dresses? Where does it say all Bible study classes have to use the same literature? Where does it say you have to sing out of a hymnal?

The Great Angel

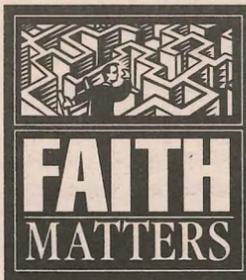
By Carey Newman

I paid for the coffee and bagels—as usual. My friend was already at the table. "I had a really strange experience the other night," he said. "We had been invited to some friends' house. When it came time for dinner, my host, besides asking for God's blessing, prayed to the angel Yaeol for guidance and protection. Needless to say, I never had heard a prayer offered to an angel before then. I was very uncomfortable with this, but I'm not really sure why.

Can you fill me in on what this angel hubbub is all about?"

While, from time to time, angels do figure prominently in the Bible, they more often than not remain in the shadows. They are part of the many helpers—heavenly and earthly—God uses to accomplish his purposes. God uses specially chosen humans, like Abraham, Moses and the prophets. God also employs mysterious figures

like Melchizedek, the one like a son of man and Michael. The fact that the Bible recounts how these angelic figures intervene into human affairs should caution us about summarily dismissing them as unimportant or simply the creations of someone's



imagination. The Bible indicates that angels offered real help to real people. However, we should never confuse angels—however important and powerful—with Jesus.

In sharp distinction from angels, Jesus manifests what can be termed a 'triple pattern'

of divine help. Jesus' substitutionary death and life-giving resurrection represent a pattern emphasizing the benefits of his past deeds. Jesus' continuing role as an advocate with God the Father reveals a pattern emphasizing the efficacy of his present deeds. And the revelation of Jesus at his Second Coming as a righteous judge and the world's true King emphasizes the forensic character of his future deeds.

If we would live up to our pretensions and really base our church ministry and missions decisions on the Bible, we'd make a positive step forward from where many churches are today.

But the truth is, the Bible alone may not be the best starting place. Don't get me wrong. This is not an attempt to play down the value, importance or inspiration of the Bible. Clearly, our goal is to lead people to the Bible. But we must admit that not everyone in our increasingly unchurched culture can start with a full round of Bible Trivia.

The Bible is not defective or ineffective, but the way we package and present the Bible often is. The problem is with us, not with God.

If we really were to follow Jesus' model, as McNeal suggested, and begin planning the church's work based on meeting people's needs, what would that look like?

What would happen to schedules that are designed to fit in every program promoted out of Nashville? What would happen to budgets that are designed to build bigger buildings and make life more comfortable for those already in the church? What would happen to worship styles that are designed to keep the converted content? What would happen to long-range planning committees that may never venture outside the walls of the church to gather any data?

McNeal drove this point home with another potent reminder: It is the height of selfishness to sit on our padded pews week after week crying "Feed me!" when a whole world is waiting outside the church, starving to death because they don't know where to find spiritual nourishment or can't jump over the human barriers we've erected in front of God's banquet table.

Pass the soul food, but remember to prepare it in a way that's edible by those who need it most.

—Mark Wingfield

■ Next week's Recorder will offer full coverage of the Church Health Summit.

Thus, while Jesus is similar to the angels, the deeds ascribed to him represent a significant innovation: the concentration of the triple pattern of mediation in Jesus—past, present and future—highlights his unique status.

This ties into a second uniqueness of Jesus. On the one hand, angels are never worshipped. In fact, the Bible consistently prohibits the worship of angelic figures—a fact which should caution all Christians about praying to angels. On the other hand, the New Testament not only endorses but commands the veneration of the risen Christ. This goes right to the heart of the difference. Angels are merely helpers of God. Jesus, however, is qualitatively different. He is a unique embodiment of God.

Thus, while both Jesus and angles are pictured as God's helpers, only Jesus is positioned as worthy of worship. The angels are not only subordinate to God, they are subordinate to Jesus. Christianity thus places Jesus—and not angelic figures—at the very epicenter of God's activity.

I told my friend to sleep well, for by offering his prayers to the risen Jesus, he is appealing to the greatest power in all the world.

When anyone focuses on only one specific feature in Scripture to the exclusion of all others, the result is a shallow, narrow, lopsided theological caricature of God's redemptive plan.

*Ron Kafer
Owensboro*

Unwritten policy?

Plenty of ink has been spilled over the controversy between First Baptist Church of Drakesboro and Muhlenberg County Association. However, I do have one observation: A recent article (Sept. 30, page 3) stated, "The association also voted to place the Drakesboro church under watchcare status for one year, during which time it could come in line with the association's unwritten policy against the ordination of women or be expelled from the association."

Unwritten policy? Though I am not camping out on either side, I do wonder why, if something is a policy, it would remain unwritten? How many more "unwritten policies" will come up in the future? How many policies will be written to cover every possible scenario that might arise? Who decides which policies are written? Who decides which policies are held, but not written down?

These are troubling questions.

*Johnny W. Collett
Mansfield, Ohio*

No distinction

One of the most controversial issues in the Baptist church is whether women should serve God as pastors and deacons.

Those who oppose women serving God in this capacity like to quote what Paul said, just like the Pharisees would quote Moses to Jesus.

The God I know taught me that all are equal, regardless of gender. In the Gospels, we read that Jesus made no distinction between a man and a woman. Jesus had as much love for the Samaritan woman as he did Nicodemus. In the last chapter of Romans, Paul acknowledges those who helped him in his ministry. Phoebe was the pastor of the church at Cenchrea, and Priscilla and Aquila were well known apostles.

The greatest threat Southern Baptists face today is that we have men who want to control everything in our Baptist institutions and in our churches, and if this happens, then we will have a cult. Discrimination against women has no place in the church. Taking verses out of context, and using them to hurt people, must stop.

There have always been ignorant and selfish men in our churches who want to force their will upon us, but by listening to God and doing what he tells us to do, we can overcome these injustices, prejudices and bigotry. Some churches have ordained women as pastors and deaconess, and I believe more will follow suit. Then hopefully some day divorced people who are Christians will no longer be treated as second-class members. Once we remove these barriers, then people who do not attend church will know they are welcome and wanted in our churches, and our churches will grow and prosper and we will live in the radiance of God's love.

*Carliss C. Farmer
Louisville*

Precious memories

I grew up in typical but small Southern Baptist churches. I have good memories, but I also have some other vivid memories:

■ About the age of "accountability" boys were no longer taught by women, but by men, usually deacons. Women could not be responsible for the serious task of preparing boys for important leadership roles in the church.

■ When, as a young girl, I expressed my belief that God was calling me to do something special, my pastor told me God must want me to become a missionary. As a female, I was presented no other options for consideration or prayer.

■ In all my growing up years I never heard a woman's voice in the worship service reading the Bible, praying or even making the announcements. Women could sing and play the piano, but not all of us had that gift.

■ We sang songs about men, brothers and fathers. When the Bible was read we heard how God wanted to save men, not people, humans or everyone, but men.

■ Never has a woman's hand reached out to offer communion to me in a Baptist church. The first time I experienced this in another setting, I wept at the loss that, until then, I did not know I had suffered.

As a denomination, we either attack or ignore those with whom we disagree or are uncomfortable. Rarely do we follow the example of Jesus Christ who ministered to, communicated with and loved all people regardless of gender, lifestyle, health or marital status.

How dare we go about telling the "heathen" how to live when we have not learned even to respect one another. How dare we warn of the "cults" who accept the human beings we reject. While we fight about five-point Calvinism, boycott Mickey Mouse, ban churches that list ordained women on the rolls and push our political agendas, Baptist children and young people are making their lifetime memories, forming their permanent self-images and making decisions with eternal ramifications. Should we be surprised when they chose to align with a group that offers them support and acceptance rather than bigotry and turmoil?

*Sue Baugh Mattingly
Louisville*

Who's ox?

As Southern Baptists faced the '50s, survived the '60s, and shaped the '70s, there was increased concern among an odd company of self-styled conservatives about convention life. These folks saw statements from a few professors in some colleges and seminaries (all lumped for them as "SBC"), raising doubts about the Bible.

This mix of people who could be called independents, Landmarkers, fundamentalists, reformed/Calvinistic, post- and a-millennialists, Southern gospel, anti-intellectual, King James only, neo-charismatics, dispensationalist, inerrantists, and some who refused (or did not fit) any label, had one thing in common besides the name Baptist: they all saw the Bible as final. Many strongly opposed any

creed; others felt the 1963 adoption of a slightly revised "Baptist Faith and Message" statement would solve all the problems. It was not easy for these folks to work together, but when they heard (or mis-heard) some positions presented in some of our schools, they joined to elect several conservative SBC presidents from the late '50s into the '70s. But little changed.

So about 1979, this coalition of strange bedfellows managed to unite enough to elect a series of convention presidents (every one since!) committed

to restructuring the system to bring about change.

Before 1979, almost unanimously, state and SBC leaders and editors deplored dissension in the ranks, on the grounds that public controversy would hurt missions and evangelism. Our leaders and teachers, after all, were fine

people who loved the Lord, and Baptists have never fully agreed; just keep on supporting the Cooperative Program.

But since "the takeover," at least one thing changed. Our editors seem more willing to criticize SBC leadership, regardless of possible cost to the Cooperative Program. No longer is it just missions and evangelism that is important; suddenly doctrine matters. Calvinism will ruin us, we hear. Dispensationalism is a heresy, inerrancy an impossible concept and proper church authority divisive.

What happened?

Were our editors correct earlier in calling us to unity across doctrinal differences? Are they right now in encouraging criticism? Or does it "all depend on whose ox is being gored?"

*Charles Blair
Clinton*

Doctrinal integrity

A lot of people, including myself, find comfort in the concept of "doctrinal integrity." However, the way Tom Ascol (Sept. 23, page 6) uses the term and the resulting ramifications are disturbing.

First, what does Ascol mean by "doctrinal integrity?" I thought the closest document Southern Baptists have to a doctrinal statement is the 1963 "Baptist Faith and Message."

Ascol speaks in terms of the Abstract of Principles. As a Southern Baptist, I am concerned with the Abstract only in so far as it upholds the principles of the "Baptist Faith and Message." In this regard, it seems Ascol is not concerned with the Abstract or the "Baptist Faith and Message" but only that everyone interpret these documents as he believes they should be interpreted. He lives under the illusion that his interpretation is the only correct interpretation.

One need not be a Calvinist to maintain the integrity of the "Baptist Faith and Message."

The second problem I have is with Ascol's understanding of interpretation. No doubt there are Scriptures which Calvinists use to anchor their position, but there are Scriptures contrary to the Calvinist position.

If Ascol believes Calvinism is the only plausible approach to biblical

interpretation he commits a tragic error. When anyone focuses on only one specific feature in Scripture to the exclusion of all others, the result is a shallow, narrow, lopsided theological caricature of God's redemptive plan. I find no integrity in this approach.

My third concern with Ascol's concept of doctrinal integrity rests in its exclusive nature. Because of his narrow interpretation of Scripture, Ascol and his associates label anything which conflicts with their understanding as liberal and therefore must be purged from the system.

This is called academic censorship, and by Ascol's own admission and before our eyes this is taking place as professors are being removed from the classroom simply because they differ in their interpretation of the Abstract. The tragedy here is that academic censorship reduces our seminaries from educational institutions to mere indoctrination centers. Again I find no integrity in this type of system.

While many of us might find comfort in the concept of doctrinal integrity, Ascol has shown us that the concept can be employed in a very destructive and disturbing way.

*Ron Kafer
Owensboro*

On election

Why is there this unending, almost violent, opposition to the biblical doctrine of election? In the opinion section of every issue there is someone railing against it. They obviously do not understand.

Now, I don't know what the five points of Calvinism are, but I do know what election is. It can be summed up in one word: sovereignty. Do you think God doesn't know who will follow him? Do you think he elects people who won't follow him? Do you think you can surprise God: "Boy, I never thought that guy would worship me?" No, certainly not.

You may cry "whosoever will may come!" This is certainly true. The point of election is that "whosoever" cannot "will" to come unless he is first chosen by God to be moved by his Holy Spirit to follow Christ. It is that simple.

No, God does not elect people he knows will not follow him. No, God does not exclude people who wish to follow him. No, God does not elect us to sit on our haunches and not preach, for his Spirit is to move through us and we are the method by which the elect are reached. (Alas, some do hold that God excludes believers, to my sorrow.)

The entire Bible tells of God's sovereignty. Nothing happens without his direct authority, from the rebellion of Satan, to the fall of man, to our redemption. Do you think you follow Christ because you decided on your own to do so? No, you were led by him.

Why then does he allow pain, suffering, sin, rebellion and false doctrine? Simply because he is the sovereign Lord and all things are done to suit his good pleasure.

Why does he choose this method? Why did he create us all? I don't know. All I know is this is what he has revealed through his word.

*Chris Immel
Elkton*

Mates of unbelieving spouses face faith questions

Continued from page 1

was eager to share with her husband, Neil.

Neil Miller, 48, a former fireman, was not so enthused.

"I was a bit resentful about it. I thought I was going to lose a part of her," he said. "I was pleased she found people she felt so at one with. I was disappointed I was not giving her all that she needed. ... As far as I was concerned, the church was taking Jenny away from me."

He never belittled his wife to her face. Behind her back, though, he said, "I used to call her a 'born-again donut,' a friendly term for slightly not stable."

Evangelical ministers who see marriage as a lifelong commitment try to advise "unequally yoked" couples on how to live with their differences. Ironically, the first counsel offered in most Christian self-help books is: Don't evangelize, at least not directly.

A wife "won't get anywhere trying to bully her husband into the kingdom," Fanstone said. Her "responsibility is to live as a Christian, on occasion share her faith in a non-preachy way, and to keep praying for him and trusting God for his salvation."

He recommends wives not use expressions such as "being saved" or "washed in the blood of the lamb" in front of their husbands. To someone who isn't Christian, such language "sounds like gobbledygook," he said. "It can also be very pushy (and) sound superior."

Jerry Mulgrew supported his wife's spiritual search a year into the marriage. "She was looking for comfort; she was seeking." He reacted

negatively, however, to the teachings of her non-denominational Christian church.

"They picture any other religion as not being true," he said, "even though most of the time ... they have no idea what's in the Koran or what Buddhists believe. ... If your God condemns everybody out of ignorance I don't want that church. That creed goes against everything I am."

Discussions in the early days, Yvonne Mulgrew recalled, quickly turned into arguments. "He used to get furious. One day he said, 'I don't like you and I don't like your God.'"

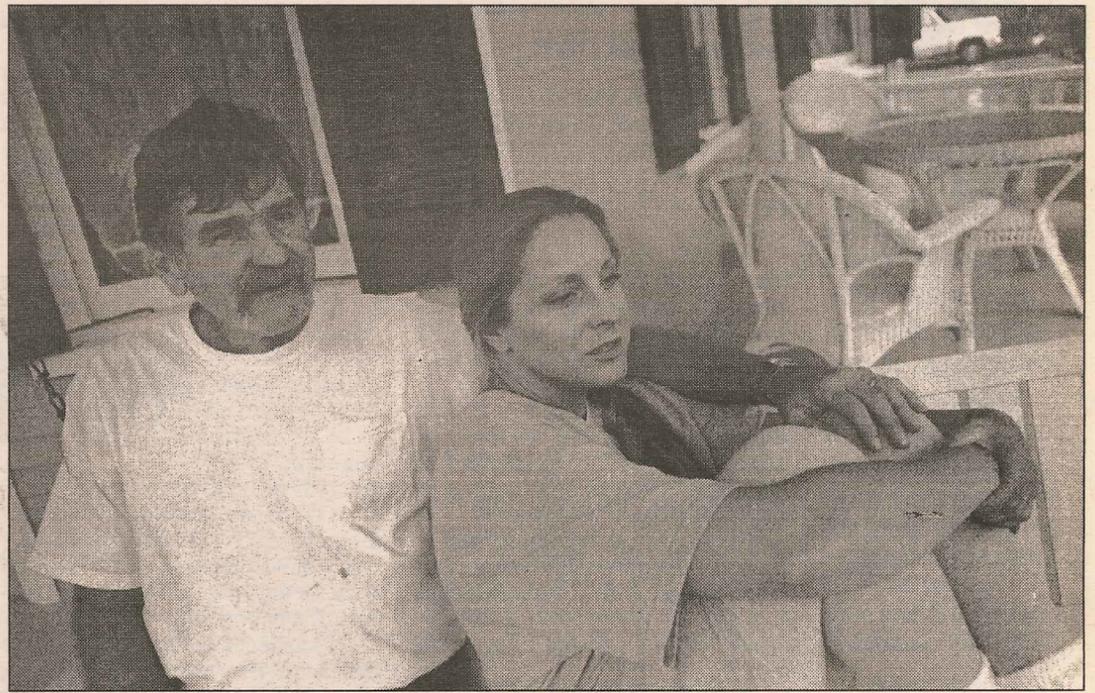
Such friction, wives say, can lead to intense feelings of isolation.

"Neil was my husband and it's like he was separated from me," said Jennifer Miller. Even more disturbing is a woman's fear her partner is not saved, and if he were killed suddenly they would be separated for eternity.

"I pray constantly about it in my morning devotion," Yvonne Mulgrew said, and with added urgency when her husband, a sheet metal worker, is beginning a dangerous job. "I was so petrified about a certain job that before he left the house I asked him to pray with me for his safety."

Her husband complied. "She's my wife and I love her," he said. He may be doubtful, but "she believes God is hearing me."

Husbands, Fanstone maintains, are deserving of respect as head of the household whether they are Christian or not. He encourages wives not to idealize Christian marriages, which may be fraught with other problems. And he tells them it is better to miss an occasional Sunday service and mid-week prayer service than alien-



ate a partner who is feeling neglected.

"I say, 'Look, you're not making it any easier for your husband to believe if you become obsessive about your faith,'" he said. "Wives have no choice but to be accommodating."

While more churches are offering literature and support groups for the unequally yoked, "unbelievers" lack an arsenal of books and tapes on how to get along with their beloved believers.

Jerry Mulgrew keeps it simple. He recommends cultivating tolerance and avoiding discussions of faith. "Just don't argue religion and you'll be happy," he said.

Still, for many Christians, the ulti-

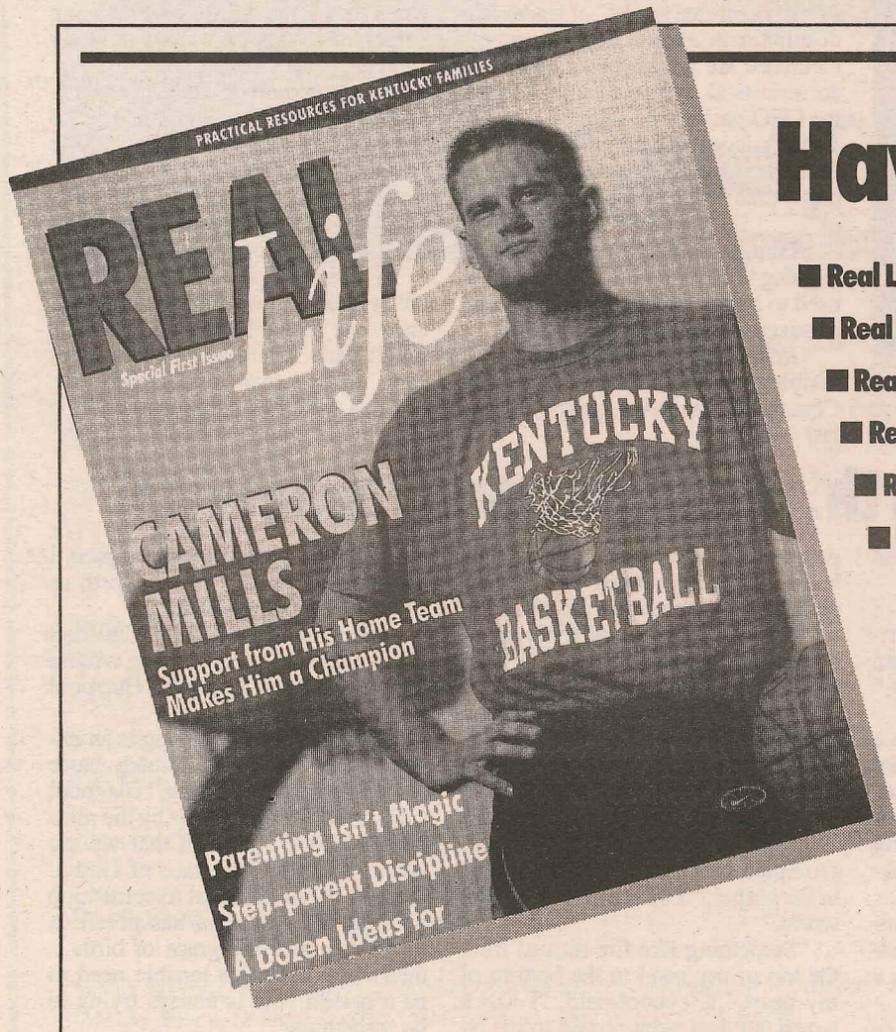
mate goal remains winning over the opposition. And persistence, they say, occasionally pays off. Initially resistant to his wife's religiosity, Neil Miller had his own conversion experience after his parents' death.

"It's a lot easier really," he said of his Christian marriage. "I think we're both thinking on the same level. Quite often Jenny will say something and I will say, 'I was just thinking that.'"

Jerry Mulgrew envisions no conversion, but he appreciates the changes in his wife since she embraced Christianity. "She's a lot happier than when she was younger. It does wonders for her. I wouldn't take it away from her."

PRAYER FOR PARTNER

Yvonne Mulgrew, 40, is an evangelical Christian, a faith not shared by her husband, Jerry Mulgrew, 50. "I pray constantly for his soul and salvation," she says. (RNS photo by Michelle Frankfurter)



Have you seen Real Life?

- Real Life is a new magazine for Kentucky families produced by the Western Recorder
- Real Life is a faith-based magazine with stories about real Kentucky people
- Real Life is positive, uplifting and inspirational
- Real Life is ideal for churches to provide as a resource for member families
- Real Life can be customized on the back cover to give a church identity
- Real Life is ideal for churches to use as an outreach tool in the community

If you haven't yet seen the premiere issue of Real Life, stop by the Western Recorder office and pick up a copy. Or call us at (502) 244-6470.

Then give us your feedback. We want to know how Real Life could be used in your church and community.

Act now to become a charter church subscriber before regular publication begins in 1998

Gregory wishes he hadn't taken sides in SBC fight

"There were those of us who felt like Southern Baptists would be best served if every last person was not completely camped up. There were others who felt like this was cowardice, it was abandoning the ship. If you were not with us, you were against us."

Joel Gregory, explaining the pressure he felt—against his better judgment—to take sides in the SBC controversy

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP)—Seven years later, fallen insider Joel Gregory says he now regrets his efforts to help a conservative faction gain charge of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Gregory, 49, told a conference in Birmingham, Ala., last week that he reluctantly entered the fray and only because leaders of the conservative faction pledged to "broaden the tent" of denominational leadership.

But conservative leaders did not keep that promise, Gregory told ministers at an Oct. 6-7 "Leadership with Integrity" conference sponsored by the Baptist Center for Ethics.

The bigger tent "obviously was an illusion," Gregory said during a dialogue session at the conference held at Vestavia Hills Baptist Church. "And I wish I had been out of the tent."

Gregory told of being pressured by both sides as moderates and conservatives battled during the 1980s for control of the nation's largest non-Catholic faith group.

"With visibility in Southern Baptist life in the '80s came an increasing pressure to do something," he said.

Gregory said a few prominent con-

servative ministers endured criticism for resisting that pressure.

"There were those of us who felt like Southern Baptists would be best served if every last person was not completely camped up," Gregory said. "There were others who felt like this was cowardice, it was abandoning the ship. If you were not with us, you were against us."

During a key presidential election in 1990, Gregory said he sided with conservatives based on "a promise that there was going to be a broader coalition, the tent was going to be enlarged."

"Obviously that didn't happen," Gregory said. "That was regrettable. I don't mind saying at all I have little taste for any of it. It's not my inclination. It's not my gift."

"I look back on that now from the distance of five years being totally out of it, looking at the larger issues churches face, human beings face, the isolation of my own life, I really do feel a lot of us were like Don Quixote tilting at windmills amid the larger issues of our day."

Even at First Baptist Church of Dallas, generally regarded as the "epicenter" of Baptist conservatism, the

controversy was rarely an issue, Gregory said. "It wasn't mentioned in the pulpit. It wasn't discussed in the Sunday school rooms."

Gregory said even the conservative movement's patriarch, W.A. Criswell, confided to him: "Ah, lad, no, no, I keep that out of the church."

"Which I think is a very telling observation that what that whole thing did inside congregations wasn't necessarily a good outcome," he said.

"I wish I had never touched it, regardless of whether I'd been identified as a life-long fence

sitter," he said.

In response to a question about whether he would ever again preach regularly, Gregory confessed, "I don't know what to do about that."

After Gregory's shocking resignation from First Baptist Church in Dallas in 1992, he said he received a few invitations to preach. Those gradually fell off and ceased completely after the publication of his 1994 book "Too Great a Temptation," which chronicles his rise and fall at Dallas First Baptist Church.

Gregory, who now works for a publishing company, acknowledged "more recently, either by curiosity or providence, I am being asked to preach." He said he is accepting, but not seeking, such opportunities.

"I think I may help people in the pews more with my preaching now than I did at some other times," Gregory said. "That is very much a pilgrimage."

On another topic, Gregory called for preachers to develop alternatives to "the corporate model" of leadership dominant in evangelical churches. Churches are treated as "a corporate ecclesiastical structure" and "you are the CEO/pastor," he said.

He suggested validating ministry based on person-to-person contacts rather than in "the anonymity of masses."

"I think any redefinition of success is going to have to come back to what used to be the definition of ministers, of pastors—the curer of souls."

Gregory said he believes the most visible manifestation of corporate Christianity, the mega-church, will not last.

"I have a feeling that the super church phenomenon is part of contemporary American culture and will not last. And that's not to pronounce doom on it. I'm not the one to do that. It's not to say people are not helped by that because I frankly know people who are."

"You can't damn them and say they are all bad, but I do think ... they are a measure of American cultural success. If you take the sweep of church history, they are anomalies."

For most of history, Gregory said, the "parish church" has been the dominant expression of Christianity and the "faithful pastor with a flock" the primary ministerial model.

Gregory said the first test of whether mega-churches will survive will come when current pastors step aside.

"There has yet to be a really successful succession in a super church," he said. Most are led by a "patriarch/visionary" founder or someone who "reinvents" a vision for an existing church.

"A lot of these men, if they hadn't been in religion, would have been senators, would have been in government, they would have been CEOs of major companies. Here you have these fabulously gifted individuals who are patriarchs and visionaries of these huge institutions. Who's going to follow them? I know that (challenge) from the inside. I was just a fair country preacher. It ate me up."

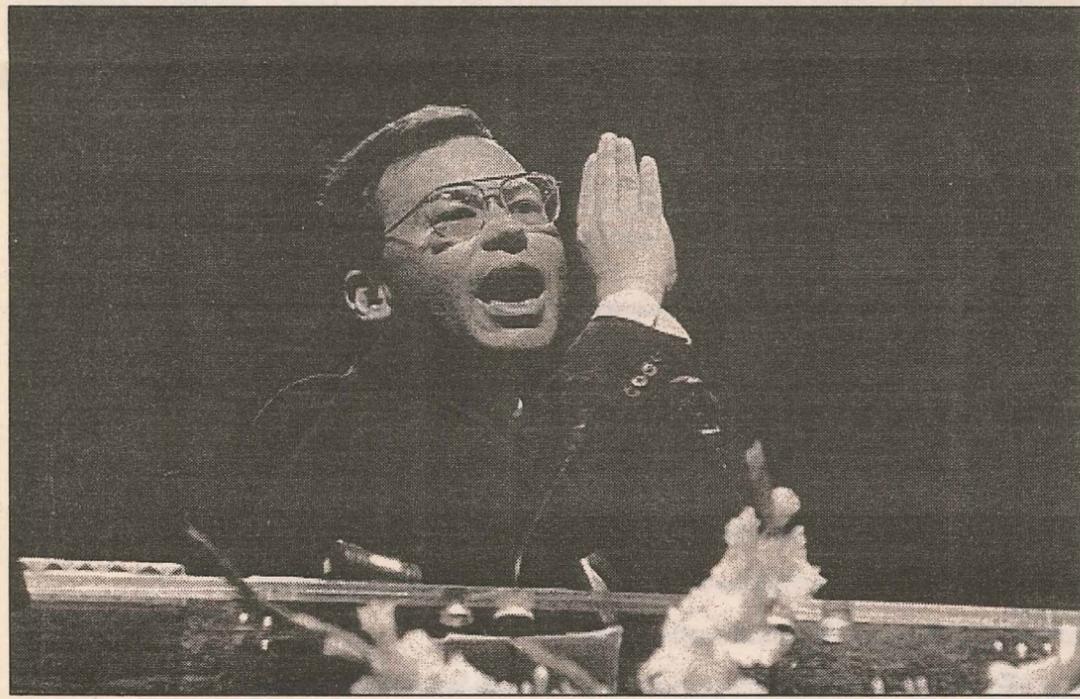
"If you've got a problem of succession, you've got a problem of existence in those churches," Gregory said. "It hasn't happened yet successfully."

Gregory also talked of disappointment over being shunned by friends when he left the ministry while being surprised by support from unlikely sources.

"Some people for whom I ecclesiastically opened my veins and bled to enfranchise them, for them I became non-existent," Gregory said. "Now don't interpret that as a right-left thing. It's not left and right in Baptist life. It's all over the map."

"There were people who I thought either didn't know me, or if they did know me probably despise me, have found ways to embrace me in ways even to their own loss. There were people I thought would run to my side for whom I seemed to cease to exist."

Church leadership
integrity



GREAT MINISTRY? Joel Gregory says he now sees upon reflection that the highlight of his ministry was not preaching at the annual sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention (shown here from 1988 in San Antonio) but the moments of one-on-one help he gave individuals. (BP photo)

Claypool: Realize your worth, then become a servant

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP)—To be effective leaders, ministers must overcome the desire to dominate others, a former Kentucky Baptist pastor turned Episcopal priest told a conference on leadership ethics.

John Claypool, rector of Birmingham's St. Luke's Episcopal Church and former pastor of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, said the urge both to dominate and to be dominated is part of human nature, but Jesus rejected that model in relating to his followers.

In the gospel, Jesus told his disciples, "This is the way the pagans choose to relate to each other ... but it's not to be that way with you," Claypool said at an Oct. 6-7 "Leadership

with Integrity" conference sponsored by the Baptist Center for Ethics.

"Jesus poses another definition of leadership that is incredibly more authentic, but it is still rare in our fallen human culture—being a servant," Claypool said.

"The one who is willing to be a servant ... learns about the person he or she is working with," Claypool said. "Leadership, growing out of being a servant, becomes a gift-giving kind of enterprise and not a domination," he said.

Ironically, Claypool said, the leader is unable to give the gift of servanthood unless he or she possesses a sense of worth.

Claypool described "memories of

profound inadequacy" from childhood that he channeled into a competitive drive to always be No. 1. "I was using every situation to try to enhance that sagging sense of self," he said.

Claypool said he found liberation when a minister confessed before a group, "What you and I need more than anything else is to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ down in our guts."

Those words, Claypool said, prompted him to recall Jesus' words in the gospel, "You are the light of the world."

"Something like fire moved from the top of my head to the bottom of my heart," Claypool said. "I had a worth that had been placed in me by

God and did not have to be earned. I had been given the gift of worth as surely as the gift of birth."

"The great genius of the Christian life is what is inside and being willing to give that away as a gift," Claypool said.

"I guess what I'm saying is an experience of grace is absolutely basic to a ministry of gift-giving," Claypool said. "Until it comes to us by the ministry of the Holy Spirit that we are what we are by the grace of God ... that we already amount to something because of what God has given us beginning with the grace of birth ... then we'll have this terrible need to be a person who is always trying to be something."

ISSUES

Gregory recounts how he got 'upside down in ministry'

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (ABP)—Five years after getting off the "treadmill of ambition, gift and providence" that won him the coveted pastorate of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Joel Gregory offered observations "from the peanut gallery of Baptist life" at a conference in Birmingham, Ala.

Gregory, who documented his rise to one of America's most prestigious pulpits and his abrupt resignation in his 1994 book, "Too Great a Temptation," spoke at an Oct. 6-7 Leadership with Integrity conference at Vestavia Hills Baptist Church.

The meeting was sponsored by the Baptist Center for Ethics, a network of clergy and educators providing resources on ethical and social issues for Baptist churches.

Once among the most visible preachers in the Southern Baptist Convention, it was Gregory's first conference since he shocked observers by leaving the Dallas church after two years in 1992 when his predecessor, the legendary W. A. Criswell, refused to retire.

"I am profoundly grateful to be here," Gregory said. "I have not addressed a gathering of any clergy the

last five years. Before that, Baptists could hardly have a barn-raising without me being present."

Gregory shared perspectives on the ministry gained by his ride "up the ecclesiastical escalator" and the "something of a free fall" that followed. After leaving First Baptist Church, Gregory worked as a door-to-door salesman for pre-planned funerals. Now he works for a publishing firm and preaches only occasionally.

He offered ministers the following insights:

■ "I have learned, let success happen by providence and by gift. Don't try to force it." Gregory said he would have "enjoyed all the success I wanted, needed or deserved" if he had been satisfied with his strengths of biblical interpretation and preaching.

"Let the success that God gives you be what flows from his providence and from his gifts. If you do not, you can get upside down, as I often did in ministry."

■ "Avoid the 'encore syndrome.' Gregory borrowed the term from the pressure in business "that every year has to be better than the previous year" and applied it to the ministry. While

climbing the ladder to mega-church fame, Gregory said he "lived with a crushing pressure of achievement" and was "addicted to always having to preach a little better the next sermon, the next conference."

■ "Subordinate quantification to everything else in your ministry." Gregory noted that Jesus Christ said little about numbers. "Buildings, budgets and baptisms," Gregory mused. "As I look back on it now, my own life, it is sad to say, that was as much an act of unfaith as it was an act of faith.

"If faith has to do with the substance and evidence of things that are unseen and future, why is it then we have to get our validation from the things that are present and visible?" he queried. "Quantification was not the end of faith for Jesus.

"I subordinated my best gifts to the drive for quantification and because of that did not enjoy the journey as much as I would have enjoyed it," Gregory said.

■ "Assume the success of the kingdom, but do not take any local church with ultimate seriousness." Gregory warned against the tendency to "absolutize" the local church so that its

success or failure is equated with success or failure of God's plan.

"I would have done better if I had believed some of my own preaching about the kingdom of God," Gregory said. "Jesus gave it to us; we do not have to build it."

■ "Succeed with individuals and not with masses." Gregory said, reflecting on the breadth of his ministry, his most satisfying memory is, as a student at Baylor serving as pastor of "slum church" in Waco, sharing the gospel message one-on-one to an African-American child.

"I look back on ministry to masses and individuals and I would say, 'Succeed with people and not the masses of people and in the providence of God the kingdom will take care of itself,'" Gregory said.

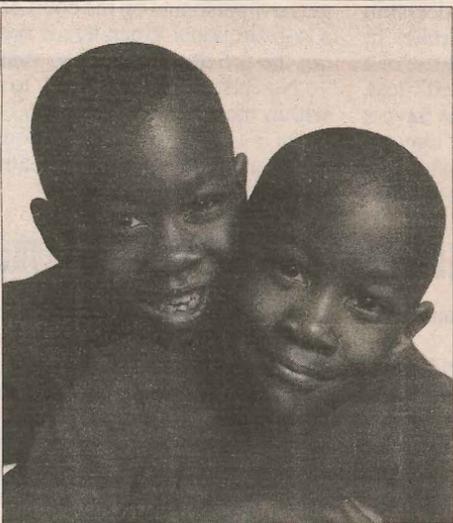
Later, in a smaller dialogue session, Gregory contrasted that quiet encounter to one of the most visible moments of his career, when he preached the annual sermon at the SBC meeting in 1988 in San Antonio.

When it was over, "I remember leaving that platform tired, just tired, just tired. I didn't feel great. Didn't feel down. I just felt worn out. But in terms of feeling like this is a great act of ministry, it didn't feel that way. I felt that way with individuals."

"I would have done better if I had believed some of my own preaching about the kingdom of God. Jesus gave it to us; we do not have to build it."

Joel Gregory

Church leadership
integrity



Good for you.

If you get Kentucky Medicaid and you live in Jefferson County,* a change is coming in your health care. A change that is good for you. Passport Health Plan, an HMO, is a newer way of getting health care. With Passport Health Plan, you will have your own doctor who takes care of your health. You also get more benefits than you received with KenPAC, including health education classes.

You'll be hearing more about the health care plan that is good for you in the next few months.

Passport Health Plan. Good for you.

*or Breckinridge, Bullitt, Carroll, Grayson, Hardin, Henry, Jefferson, Larue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, Trimble and Washington Counties

If you have questions about

Passport Health Plan, call us.

Our Member Services

department is available from

8:00 am to 8:00 pm,

Monday to Friday. Just call

1-800-578-0603.

TDD/TTY: 1-800-691-5566



Good for you.

© 1997 Passport Health Plan Passport Health Plan is sponsored by University Health Care and the Region 3 Partnership. Administered by AmeriHealth Mercy Health Plan.

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Legislation aimed at protecting churches and charities from bankruptcy claims was introduced in Congress recently. The Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act would prevent bankruptcy trustees from recapturing tithes and monetary donations made up to one year prior to filing for bankruptcy. It also says debtors can tithe to their church or religious organization while they pay their debt.**

■ **The Supreme Court rejected Oct. 6 a challenge to a college's practice of having a minister offer two prayers at the school's graduation exercises each year. Without comment, the justices—on the first day of the new court term—turned away arguments that the custom at Indiana University violates the separation of church and state.**

■ **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has announced plans to construct five more temples. Two full-sized temples were announced for Houston and Porto Alegre, Brazil. Smaller temples will be built in Anchorage, Alaska; Monticello, Utah; and at a site in northern Mexico. The church currently has about 50 operating temples around the world, with another dozen previously-announced temples under construction.**

■ **A national telephone survey for a conservative media watchdog group has found that 80 percent of Americans want stricter enforcement of federal obscenity laws against hard-core pornography. The Wirthlin Worldwide telephone poll also found 68 percent of respondents said the government is not doing enough to enforce pornography laws.**

Supreme Court in disarray over religion, reporter says

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

WASHINGTON—The United States Supreme Court is in a state of "profound disarray" on issues of religion and the First Amendment, according to a veteran reporter covering the court.

"Religion cases are very heavy labor for this court. There is no part of its work that so certainly ties it in knots as do the cases testing the meaning of the First Amendment's establishment clause and free exercise clause," said Lyle Denniston, a reporter for the Baltimore Sun who has covered the Supreme Court for nearly 30 years.

"In this sector of First Amendment law, the court's doctrine is in a state of profound disarray," he said. "The court finds it nearly impossible to develop consistent patterns of constitutional reasoning in this area."

Denniston spoke Oct. 5 to Baptist journalists during a briefing sponsored by the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The briefing was held at Riverside Baptist Church in Washington.

As one illustration of his point about doctrinal disarray on religion cases, Denniston cited the confusing status of the so-called "Lemon test."

This test, created by the Supreme Court in 1971 as a means for weighing establishment clause cases, asks three questions to determine whether government may restrict a religious activity. The test says government may not restrict a religious activity if: (1) government acts with a religious or anti-religious purpose; (2) the ac-

tion inhibits religion; or (3) the action entangles government in religious affairs.

"For a good many years, that seemed to work fine as a constitutional rationale," Denniston explained. "But more recently, no one can be sure whether the Lemon test survives, in what form it survives or what might replace it if it were to be cast aside explicitly."

"No observer of the court knows, when any new establishment clause case arises, whether the court will or will not use the Lemon test. It continues to be under very heavy attack from Justice Antonin Scalia, and his aggressiveness has made most of the other justices wary about their continuing embrace of the formula."

Denniston said the court sometimes appears ready to replace the Lemon test with a "coercion test," that government acts unconstitutionally toward religion only when it coerces someone to believe or not believe a tenet of religion. Then at other times, he said, the court appears ready to replace Lemon with an "endorsement" test, that government acts unconstitutionally toward religion only when it seems to be lending an official stamp of approval to a religiously motivated practice.

"But neither formulation seems able to attract a majority of five justices," he explained. "And in fact, the idea of abandoning the Lemon test altogether never has commanded five votes."

The court's conflicting view of the establishment clause and religion cases also explains "why the court has

lately been making a mess of the controversy over school prayer, and why it is displaying such a reluctance to return to that issue in new cases," Denniston suggested.

The court's disarray has resulted in lower courts taking differing positions on student-initiated prayers in public schools, he said, noting that the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals has allowed them, the 9th Circuit Court has forbidden them and the 11th Circuit Court has allowed them only at graduation ceremonies.

"This clearly is a constitutional question that cries out for resolution by the Supreme Court, yet it refuses to get involved," Denniston said.

He argued that the court has refused to get involved in such cases because it "simply does not trust itself to 'get it right' should it take on that question."

He said an unnamed justice told him last year that until it appeared likely the court could speak with clarity on this issue, that justice never would vote to hear another school prayer case.

On the other side of the First Amendment, the court also reflects confusion over the free exercise clause, Denniston said.

To illustrate he cited a chain of events that have occurred since the court's controversial 1990 decision *Employment Division vs. Smith*. In that case the court abandoned use of a so-called "compelling interest" test, which said government must have a compelling interest before it may restrict the free exercise of religion.

That decision, which most reli-

gious bodies in the United States have criticized as taking away constitutional protection shielding religion from government regulation, sparked congressional action to adopt the Religious Freedom Restoration Act as a cure.

However, the Supreme Court in its last term ruled RFRA unconstitutional in a case called *Boerne vs. Flores*.

Some critics of the Smith decision saw the Boerne case as an opportunity for the court to revisit the Smith decision and overturn it. Instead, the court ignored the concerns about the Smith decision and invalidated RFRA, saying Congress had no right to pass legislation to counter a Supreme Court decision.

The division of the court shows up clearly in the Boerne decision, Denniston said. "There definitely are three justices who believe strongly that the court was wrong in 1990 in the Smith decision . . . But it would have taken the votes of five for the court even to consider overruling Smith, and it was clear the effort to garner those five in the Boerne case had been made but fell short."

In a question-and-answer session after his speech, Denniston said he does not see the Smith decision being overturned anytime soon. "The only way Smith will be taken down is to get new personnel on the court or pass a constitutional amendment spelling out the pre-Smith view," he said.

No current justice is likely to retire within the next two years, and Congress is not likely to pass a constitutional amendment of any nature, he predicted.

Documentary: School boards are new religious battlegrounds

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Local public school boards are emerging as a key battleground in the culture wars between religious liberals and conservatives, according to a forthcoming TV documentary and a recent report by a watchdog group critical of the Religious Right.

"New School Order," a documentary scheduled to air in Public Broadcasting Service markets Oct. 3, seeks to show the complexity of cultural, religious and philosophical clashes as school boards make decisions on such issues as multicultural and sex education courses, library policies and textbook selection.

"I wanted people to come away

with an understanding of how important school board races have become," said Gini Reticker, producer and director of the hour-long film. "There's a real fight over who's going to control the schools."

The film, which focuses on turmoil in the North Penn School District in Lansdale, Pa., opens with a quote from Ralph Reed, former Christian Coalition executive director: "I would rather elect 1,000 school board members than a single president because the future of America will be determined by the principal's office, not the Oval Office."

A more adversarial look at local school board struggles comes from People For the American Way, a frequent critic of the Christian Coalition, in its report, "A Right Wing and a

Prayer: The Religious Right and Your Public Schools."

The report, which was published earlier this month, accuses the Religious Right of an "assault" on the public schools in areas ranging from school reform and censorship to fights over teaching creation science and vouchers.

Matthew Freeman, senior vice president of People for the American Way, said the group hopes to alert people about what he called the "divisive impact" religious conservative are having on some communities.

Christian Coalition spokesman Arne Owens, who was not familiar with the documentary but had seen People for the American Way's report, defended conservative Christian activism on local school boards.

"For a long time our supporters were not actively involved," he said. "That may be part of the reason for public education going off in the direction that it's gone, so our position is that there needs to be more involvement at the local level and we strongly encourage our supporters to become involved at the local level."

Both the People for the American Way report and the documentary, which was produced by the Independent Television Service, highlight Christian conservative successes in winning school board races and directing local education policy.

Both said the conservatives have won by stressing issues unrelated to their religious values and because of the apathy of the general population.

Christian Coalition's Robertson wants 'winner' in presidential race

ATLANTA (RNS)—Religious broadcaster Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, told a private meeting of 100 coalition activists that he wants "a winner" in the next presidential election.

Robertson's remarks were tape-recorded in September in Atlanta by Americans United for Separation of Church and State, a group that frequently has been critical of the Christian Coalition. Americans United says the coalition is a partisan political organization that does not deserve tax-

exempt status.

At the beginning of his speech, Robertson made clear his remarks were not for public consumption.

"This is sort of speaking in the family," he said. "If there's any press here, would you please shoot yourself? Leave. Do something."

Robertson then went on to speak favorably of Tammany Hall, the former political machine in New York, and the political machines in other big cities as models for the coalition's activities.

In the speech, Robertson mocked Vice President Al Gore as "Ozone Al" and said House Democratic leader Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., was unelectable.

"So I don't think at this time and juncture the Democrats are going to be able to take the White House unless we throw it away," he said. "But we have to get a responsible person and we have to realize some strategy."

Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United, said the tape showed that the Christian Coalition "is

nothing but a hardball Republican political machine with a thin veneer of religiosity. . . . The IRS should move promptly to remove the Christian Coalition's provisional tax-exempt status."

Arne Owens, the coalition's communications director, confirmed the accuracy of the remarks but said Robertson was speaking as "a private citizen."

The Christian Coalition, he said, "will not endorse a candidate. We do not tell people how to vote."

CHURCHES

Sunday night options successful in state's churches

Where did the tradition start?

WAKE FOREST, N.C.—A mixture of urban and rural factors have resulted in the traditional Sunday evening worship service many churches have today, say church historians and analysts.

"The services that we had were based on a rural church experience largely," said Baptist historian Bill Leonard, dean of Wake Forest University's divinity school. "With pastors who were half time or quarter time, the morning and evening (church meeting) times were built around the work schedule on Sunday."

As lighting and heating became prevalent in urban churches, Sunday evening services were more prominent, said Gary Farley, a small and rural church specialist who formerly worked with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"Generally, the Sunday morning service was seen as a service for worship and primarily for the congregation itself, and then Sunday night was seen as an evangelistic service," he said. "Basically, what's happened in our churches the last 25-30 years is we've reversed that."

"It was part of the culture that unsaved people would come to

church, sometimes, on Sunday night," he continued. "I think the culture's changed, and what has been forced is to have a bloodless imitation of Sunday morning, which kind of becomes self-defeating."

Churches must continue to schedule specific times for members to meet for evangelism, worship, nurturing and fellowship, said Leon McBeth, distinguished professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. "If they can find a better time to do it, I'm for it, but I

do think it's important that we meet for all those purposes," he said. "We need each other, and we need to stay in touch."

Leonard said home prayer and Bible study groups, as well as Saturday night worship services, are good responses by the church to meet members' needs despite their busy schedules.

"The services we inherited—the spring and fall revivals, the Sunday morning and Sunday night—grew out of a peculiar response to a rural frontier culture," he said. "The worst thing we could do is think that because it's tradition we have to keep that and can't be as creative as our forebears."

CHURCH
The Sunday
night place
to be?



By David Winfrey
News Director

Sunday night meetings that focus on discipleship rather than worship can have attractive byproducts, say leaders at two churches that have changed their Sunday night format.

"We're able to attract people who would not otherwise come on Sunday night," said Hank Ellington, minister of education at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington.

"Variety can really be the spice of Christian life sometime," added Rick Howerton, associate pastor at Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green.

Both churches started offering discipleship courses on Sunday evenings about three years ago. The six- to 12-week courses range from the "Experiencing God" Bible study and marriage enrichment to training for Sunday School teachers and Spanish lessons for members wanting to work in Hispanic ministries.

"We have seen here at Living Hope that people are excited to attend the course of their choice," said Howerton, who compared the variety of courses to a college curriculum.

"I think for so long we've had Sunday morning preaching, Sunday night preaching, Wednesday night preaching, but what about my family that is falling apart?" he said.

Howerton said Pastor Brad Johnson's sermons are practical, but "these can even go a bit further." On Sunday mornings, "we tell them to do things, and then on Sunday night we tell them how to do things."

Ellington called Calvary's discipleship courses an extension to worship. "I believe personally that Bible study and spiritual growth is a form of worship."

The Sunday night discipleship fo-

cus has added flexibility to the church's approach to discipleship, he said. "It's worked very well for us. The added part of that is the tremendous fellowship for people who are in class together."

Because members assemble by interest rather than age group, "one of the great byproducts is they get to know each other," he said.

A byproduct at Living Hope has been greater attendance on Sunday nights, "although numbers are not our goal," Howerton said.

The church was averaging 160 on Sunday nights before the new format. Enrollment for the first semester of courses was 250.

More churches are offering discipleship options on Sunday and Wednesday nights, said Doug Strader, director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention discipleship department. And many discipleship materials have been adapted to fit people's schedules, he added.

The popular "MasterLife" Bible study series, which originally was two 13-week sessions, is now offered in four six-week sessions, he said. "They've gotten in touch with the fact that some people just aren't going to be committed to 13-week studies any longer."

Howerton said another benefit to the discipleship option has been the involvement of lay leadership for courses. "There are so many gifted people who don't have an opportunity to get down to brass tacks with their passion," he said.

As one example, he cited a husband and wife who are leading an eight-week course for couples on communication. "You're getting the best of those people's lives because God's planted a deep passion in their lives," he said. "That's been a beautiful deal to watch."

Living Hope Baptist Church was averaging 160 on Sunday nights before the new format. Enrollment for the first semester of training courses was 250.

Sunday night isn't what it used to be in Baptist churches

Continued from page 1
worship experience."

But not everyone is seeing the demise of Sunday night worship.

Kevin Ezell, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, said as many as 750 people still attend the Sunday evening service there, and the

format is similar to Sunday morning worship.

Ezell said he thinks Sunday night worship service will have high attendance if it is well planned.

But some churches, he said, are in a catch-22. "People aren't coming for a reason, and sometimes I think it's

because of the quality of what we offer," he said. "They don't prepare well enough, so it's not as good, so people don't come back."

Because Highview has three Sunday morning services, the Sunday evening service provides one opportunity for the whole church to worship together, he said.

"It's really one of the most fun services we have," Ezell explained. "Having everybody together at one time adds an element we really need. It helps me cast a vision for the church family."

Other churches that have strong Sunday evening attendance have changed the format from worship to discipleship.

Living Hope Baptist Church in Bowling Green and Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington are among those that offer six- to 12-week classes on topics ranging from evangelism and Bible study to marriage enrichment and Sunday school teacher workshops.

The KBC's Miller said it's important for churches to have a clear purpose in mind for what they want to accomplish on Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening.

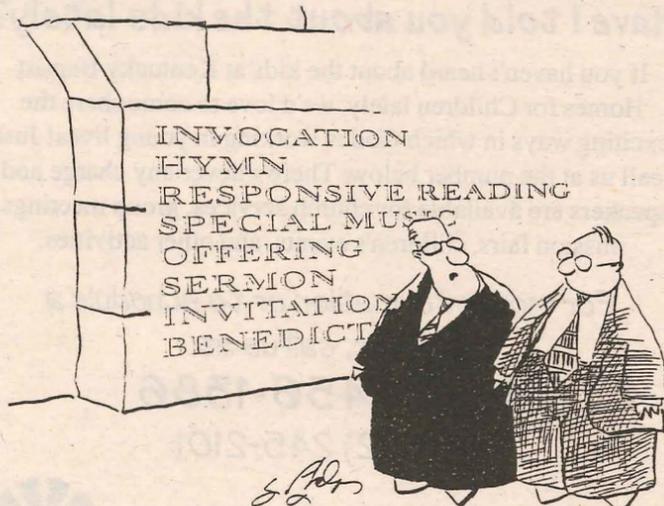
"I'm not sure many church staff people have thought through how they use those three blocks of time and how they fit into their mission and vision," he said.

A poor option, Farley said, is to stop having Sunday evening services and not look for another option to offer. "I fear any kind of sluffing off of Sunday night being a kind of moving away from the church really putting some expectations on people," he said.

"The concern I have is when I look at the Disciples of Christ or the Presbyterians or the Methodists, who killed off their Sunday night services three or four decades ago and became low-demand churches," he said. "Then this became a kind of a vicious circle of their demise."

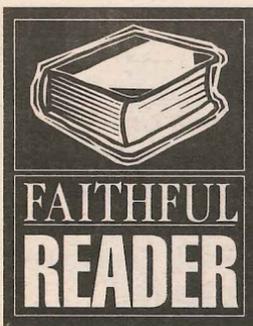
Leonard said some churches are offering house meetings and Saturday evening worship services in the same creative way Sunday night worship was birthed years ago.

"I don't think Sunday night ought to be a test of Christian orthodoxy," he said. "The church ought to give multiple options. I think we do have to find ways to adapt to the changing schedules of our people in the same way that they did on the frontier."



"It's the order of worship."

BOOKS



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

A Theology as Big as the City. Ray Bakke. *Intervarsity Press, 1997. 221 pages. \$12.99* ♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

For more than 20 years, Ray Bakke has been calling the church to engagement with the city. From his position within evangelical Christianity, which for the most part has fled the problems and people of the city for the suburbs, Bakke often has been a prophetic voice, reminding us of the biblical imperative to turn around and engage the powers that oppress.

In "A Theology as Big as the City," Bakke reminds those of us who think we can flee from the impact and problems of the city, "...there is no place to hide. The city ... and its presence will impact everyone eventually. ... Sorry, you have an urban future, whether you like it or not."

Bakke writes his latest book in the hope that he can inspire a new generation of church leaders to join him in discovering God's word for the church in a "rapidly urbanizing world." Arguing that most of us still do theology and church from a rural perspective, Bakke contends (as he always has) that we need to develop an urban lens through which to view theology and the structures of our church life.

This book is not so much a systematic theology of the city as it is a survey of biblical narratives. Bakke begins at the beginning and preaches from Genesis through Revelation. The 26 chapters of this book do not present a fully developed, integrated theology. Rather they offer fod-

der on which we can chew as we struggle with how we will engage our urban world. *Jim Holladay*

C.S. Lewis: Life at the Center. Perry Bramlett. *Peake Road, 1996. 87 pages. \$9.95.* ♦♦♦♦ and **The Man Who Created Narnia: The Story of C.S. Lewis.** Michael Coren. *Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996. 140 pages. \$20.* ♦♦♦♦

Almost 34 years after his death, C.S. Lewis is still a best-selling author and object of considerable study. Works such as "The Screwtape Letters," "The Chronicles of Narnia" and "Mere Christianity" continue to touch many lives, as the list of Lewis fans continues to grow. The Belfast, Ireland-born Oxford professor, turned Christian apologist and children's author, remains one of the most fascinating studies of one moving into and maturing in Christian faith.

Bramlett's book analyzes different aspects of Lewis' life and writings. Bramlett is passionate about Lewis and his friendships, view of the Bible, prayer life and maturing Christianity. More than just trying to relay the facts of Lewis' life, Bramlett draws from Lewis' life practical insights that will inspire the reader in his or her own journey with Christ. This is not to say, however, that one does not get a historical sense of Lewis' life through Bramlett's presentation.

Bramlett's book is an accomplished study in how Lewis balanced his life as an academic with the basics of his faith in order to live "life at the center." Through his presentation, Bramlett succeeds in showing Lewis'

authentic piety as it shines through Lewis' writings and remembrances of friends. Bramlett follows Lewis' example and, through his study of Lewis, presents a cogent argument for faith in Jesus Christ.

The book will appeal not only to Lewis fans but to those who are on the verge of joining Lewis as a "reluctant convert."

Coren's book takes a different approach to Lewis. Coren begins with Lewis' early life and moves chronologically through the major aspects of Lewis' life, to his death in 1963. Coren's narrative is generously enhanced by pictures from Lewis' life.

Coren seeks to wed Lewis' land of Narnia to the reality of Lewis' own life. The book never quite succeeds at making this connection because the theme is not consistently explored. Coren does spend effort explaining the world of Narnia. In addition, his comments on some aspects of Christianity which are key to understanding Lewis are helpful for the non-Christian. Coren's narrative is crisp and flows along easily and will find a more receptive audience among young readers. The more mature readers will be rewarded by Bramlett's depth of understanding of previously little-explored areas of Lewis' life. *Wayne Hager*

Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace. James Torrance. *Intervarsity Press, 1997. 130 pages. \$12.99.* ♦♦♦♦

"Probably the most common and widely spread view is that worship is something we, religious people, do—

mainly in church on Sunday morning. ... We need God's grace to help us do it. We do it because Jesus taught us to do it. ... But worship is what we do before God."

Do you agree with James Torrance's interpretation of most contemporary worship practice and understanding? Most likely you do, because most of us have been influenced heavily by Soren Keirkegaard's observation that in worship God is the audience, we are the actors and the worship leaders are the prompters.

However, Torrance argues that this understanding of worship is human-centered and ultimately non-nourishing for the Christian soul. In its place, he offers the following view of worship: "It is the gift of participating through the Spirit in the incarnate Son's communion with the Father."

Torrance argues that this definition presents a three-dimensional view of worship, which stands in stark contrast to our current two-dimensional understanding.

The brevity of this book belies its depth. I found myself not being able just to sit down and read through it. I constantly had to pause and spend some time in reflection and digesting the material before I could move on. Yet, I was always stimulated and challenged by his critique and suggestions.

Though I did not always agree with everything, Torrance has broadened significantly both my understanding of Jesus as the Great High Priest, as well as what it means to "worship in Spirit and in truth." *Jim Holladay*

Travis Masters

By Robert Dunston

Travis Masters, the son of Ernest and Belinda Masters of Miamisburg, Ohio, was the other Cumberland College student who accompanied Carol York and Jane Carter, associate professor of business administration, to China this past summer.

Masters' classes at Beijing University kept him busy, but he enjoyed learning some of the Mandarin Chinese language.

Like York, Masters enjoyed the side trips, especially the visit to the Great Wall. But the event that stands out in his mind was their visit to a Chinese church. Here is how he described the experience:

"They [the Chinese Christians] were so unashamed to be considered Christians despite the discrimination they face. They get passed over for jobs. Here, if the church was full, we'd turn around and go home. Not the Chinese Christians. There were hundreds outside the building and in school buildings behind the church listening over a PA system and watching over a television so they could see."

Masters explained that to get to the church, their group had to walk down an alley in a poor section of

the city. As they got closer to the church they could hear the sound of singing. While he could not understand the words the Chinese Christians were singing, he did recognize the hymn as "Washed in the Blood of Jesus." In his words, "It was awesome."

While Masters was struck by the poverty and the overbearing Communist system, he was impressed by the way people genuinely cared for one another.

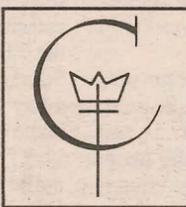
Masters said he feels led to a career in public service. As a Christian, he believes he can make a difference for Christ as he serves his country.

Masters recommends Cumberland's China program to others but encourages them to enter the program only after much prayer. He said the program is for the "adventurous" and involves a lot of hard work in a very different culture where you do not know the language. Still, he would like to return.

Masters is committed to making a difference for Christ. So are our many other students. We are proud of them all.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Have I told you about the kids lately?

If you haven't heard about the kids at Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children lately, we'd love to come share the exciting ways in which God is working in young lives! Just call us at the number below. There's never any charge and speakers are available for church services, group meetings, mission fairs, children's events, and other activities.

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

1-800-456-1386

or (502) 245-2101

Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children
<http://www.iglou.com/kbhc/>



CHURCH

How churches can develop good stewards

By Doug Strader

If there was ever a time when good stewards were developed automatically in churches, that day has long since passed. If we are to have good stewards we must intentionally develop them. How can we do that?

■ *Have a special emphasis on worship.* Our churches must do a better job of worshipping through our giving. One resource for that is a book by Talmadge Williams called "The Worshipgiver."

■ *Preach more than once each year on giving.* George Barna, Herb Miller and others have conducted surveys that prove church people are open to sermons on giving, tithing, stewardship and their responsibility as Christian stewards. Somehow, we have been led to believe church people do not want the pastor to preach about money.

That is not necessarily true. Most people want to know how the money is spent and what good is being accomplished with the money they give.

■ *Provide special Sunday school lessons at least quarterly to help people know the biblical teachings about tithing and giving.* This should be done for all age groups, including preschoolers. If Sunday school lessons are not used, have a study that teaches our stewardship opportunities and responsibilities.

■ *Have testimonies once a quarter or even more often.* Have variety in the testimonies. Have someone give a testimony about how the money given by the church helps do different kinds of ministry. Use the 'Missionary Moments' readings before the offering is received to show how the money given helps our missionaries at home and around the world. Do not assume everyone in your worship service is knowledgeable about our Southern Baptist Cooperative Program work around the world. ("Missionary Moments" can be ordered from the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Cooperative Program office.)

■ *Find ways to say 'thank you' to your faithful stewards.* This can be done by the pastor from the pulpit. It can be done by the stewardship/budget committee by writing 'thank you' notes.

Doug Strader is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's stewardship department.



CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Progressive, rural church seeks part-time minister of youth. Send resumé to: Oakland Baptist Church, P.O. Box 154, Oakland, KY 42159.

WANTED: Organ player. Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Old Frankfort Pike, Versailles, Ky. Please contact: Judy, (606) 873-8240.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Louisa, Ky., is searching for a full-time minister of youth. Send resumé to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 301 West Pike St., Louisa, KY 41230, or fax: (606) 686-3072.

SEEKING: Growing church seeks full-time music worship leader. Forest Park Baptist Church, Bowling Green, KY 42101. (502) 843-3419; Fax: (502) 843-3434.

NEEDED: Mothers day out director for two-days-per-week program at Rockford Lane Baptist Church. If interested, or for more information, contact Ron Abrams, pastor, at (502) 447-2591.

MEDICAL: Diabetics with Medicare or insurance, get your diabetic supplies mailed to your home. Insulin-dependent only call: (800) 337-4144.

SEEKING: Wonderful opportunity for minister of music and youth at a well-established Southern Baptist

church with a large family life center. Qualified persons with experience please send resumé to: P.O. Box 3705, Highway 266, Corydon, KY 42406.

NEEDED: Youth minister for well-established, dynamic program. Excellent opportunity for part-timer. Resumé to: Evergreen Baptist Church, 2698 Evergreen Road, Frankfort, KY 40601.

SEEKING: Minister of music/outreach for Northern Kentucky Southern Baptist church. Resumés must be received by Nov. 15. Grant's Lick Baptist Church, 175 W. Clay Ridge Road, Alexandria, KY 41001. Call (606) 635-2444. Dr. Paul E. Broyles, pastor-teacher.

SEEKING: Memorial Baptist Church of Columbia, Mo., is seeking a full-time minister of education. Qualifications include five years experience as a full-time minister of education and a master's of religious education degree. Resumé may be mailed to: Dr. Bob Webb, Memorial Baptist Church, 1634 Paris Road, Columbia, MO 65201.

SEEKING: Full-time secretary for the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Position requires word processing and secretarial experience. Attractive benefit package. Send resumé and references to: Darryl Wilson, director, Sun-

day School Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433.

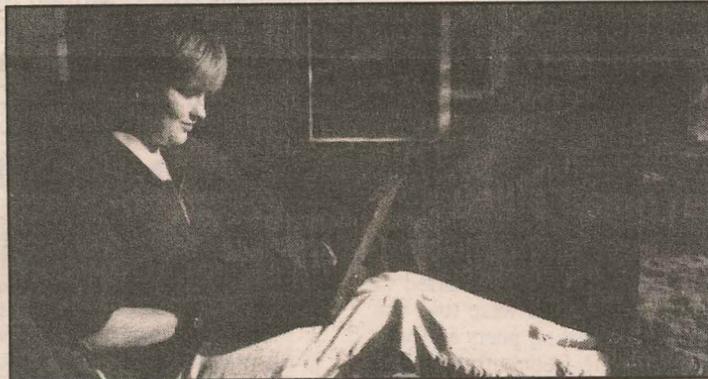
SEEKING: A full-time pastor for youthful, active, growing church in central Illinois. Send resumé to: CTR-BC, c/o Jack M. Crystal, R1 Box 128, Oreana, IL 62554.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of New Castle, Ky., is seeking an individual for a part-time minister of music position. Responsibilities include directing sanctuary choir, children's, youth and handbell choirs. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 126, New Castle, KY 40050, or call (502) 845-2355.

SEEKING: A well-established, dynamic, growing Southern Baptist church is seeking a full-time minister of youth and activities. Candidates with a master's in religious education and previous experience preferred. Interested persons may submit a resumé by Oct. 31 to: Second Baptist Church, Youth Search Committee, 720 West Seventh St., Hopkinsville, KY 42240.

WANTED: Part-time food service positions, prep. and servers open at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Including Sundays, \$6.04/hour. Apply in person to the personnel office, Carver 201, (502) 897-4721.

WANTED: A set of Deagon Chimes for electronic organ; 21-note or 25-note, any condition. Reg Hodges, 308 Old Shady Grove Road, Marion, KY 42064. (502) 965-3296.



Good Ground: Visit Georgetown College

Good ground for your education. That's what Georgetown College delivers, a values-rich, stimulating and innovative academic program. At Georgetown, you are considered an evolving scholar, working closely with other scholars.

If you think Georgetown might be good ground for you, come visit campus during our Visit In Person Open House on Saturday, Nov. 1. Tour our scenic campus, see our new athletic complex and fine arts building and watch the Georgetown College Tigers in an exciting football game. Call today to make your reservations, 800-788-9985.

GEORGETOWN

COLLEGE

GEORGETOWN, KENTUCKY

800-788-9985

www.gtc.georgetown.ky.us

RETIRING SOON?

If you've been offered early retirement or you're retiring soon, you can't afford to make a wrong decision now that will affect you for the rest of your life. You should read this free booklet right away...

"What you Ought To Know Before You Receive Your Retirement Distribution"

Don't fall into one of the many hidden tax traps the IRS has waiting for you. Be informed and fight back!

For Your FREE Copy,
Call Now.

Darlys S.
Harmon-Vaught
Senior Vice President
Financial Consultant
(502) 326-9677

HILLIARD
LYONS
J.J.B. Hilliard, W.L. Lyons, Inc.
Member NYSE and SIPC

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ The selection of a new International Mission Board mission administrator in Russia.

■ Diligence and perseverance for Brad and Jeanine Horne as they continue Russian language studies.

■ Randy and Robin Covington as they minister in Khabarovsk, Russia.

■ New Colony Baptist Church in Billerica, Mass., as the congregation completes a new building. Several Kentucky churches have worked on the facility.

■ Calvary Baptist Church in Caribou, Maine, as the church seeks a pastor.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **BATTLETOWN**—Wolf Creek Church will celebrate its 176th anniversary Oct. 19. Former Pastor **Ronnie Melton** will be guest speaker. The Lighthouse quartet of Shepherdsville will perform in the afternoon program. Call Sandy Taylor at (502) 968-6491 for information.

■ **CORBIN**—**Mary Griffith** recently celebrated 25 years as secretary at First Church.

■ **FISHERVILLE**—Fisherville Church called **Eric Timerding** as minister of music. Timerding is a graduate of Southern Seminary. He began his new ministry Oct. 12. Also, his wife, **Becky**, was called as church accompanist.

■ **KEVIL**—Spring Bayou Church recently called former Pastor **Bob Jones** as interim pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Jeffersontown Church celebrated its 152nd homecoming Oct. 12.

■ **MONTICELLO**—Mount Zion Church will celebrate its 50th homecoming Oct. 26. An all-day event is planned. Call (606) 348-1463 for information. **John McPheron** is pastor.

14 Days - Treasures of Italy
Rome - Sorrento - Capri - Assisi
Venice - Lake District - Florence
March 17-30, 1998. \$2,488 from Atlanta;
1st class hotels and most meals. Led by
Harold Opal Anderson—More than 30 years
experience in worldwide Christian tours.
Call (334) 281-5700

■ **MORGANFIELD**—Morganfield Church ordained **Doug Johnson, Jonathan Vincent** and **Bill Holbrook** as deacons Sept. 28. **Mark Galloway** is pastor.

■ **NANCY**—Bethlehem Church called **Lester Caldwell** as pastor. He previously was pastor at Northside Church in Mount Vernon. Caldwell began his new ministry Sept. 21.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Hall Street Church called **Bill Combs** as pas-

tor. Combs previously was pastor at Uniontown Church.

■ **PADUCAH**—**Larry Van Hook** resigned as minister of adults and visitation at Lone Oak First Church to explore opportunity to minister in the Fort Worth-Dallas area.

■ **PIKEVILLE**—Meta Church called **Charles Higgins Jr.** as minister of music and youth. He began his new ministry Oct. 6. He previously was minister of youth and music at Midland Church in Locust, N.C. **Ron Spurgeon** is pastor.

■ **RADCLIFF**—Stithon Church will host a 12-week Weigh Down Workshop seminar, beginning with a free orientation session Oct. 22 at 9:30 a.m. and Oct. 23 at 7 p.m. Call (502) 351-6055 for information.

■ **WESTPORT**—Westport Church called **Ashley Mofield** as minister of youth and children. He began his new ministry Oct. 8. **Lynn Traylor** is pastor.

■ **WHITESBURG**—Whitesburg Church ordained **Tim Smith** as deacon Sept. 28.

Church Pew Upholstery

Upholster your existing hardwood pews or change the fabric and padding on your upholstered pews. More than 70 colors of quality fabrics to choose from to add beauty and comfort to your church sanctuary. Our quality workmanship and competitive prices have kept us in business for over 35 years. Call the specialists today for a free price quote.

Workman's Upholstery
The Church Pew
Upholstery Specialists
P.O. Box 631
Hopkinsville, Ky. 42241
Call toll-free (888) 577-1001



Available in 20' to 30' Models
(12 to 35 passengers)

Guaranteed Buy-Back Program • We Buy Used Buses

Church Buses Rental Buses

(New & Used)

Carpenter Bus Sales Inc.

Brentwood, Tenn.

(800) 370-6180

(615) 376-2287

Nominations for Associational Missionary

Nominations for the position of associational missionary for the Genesee Baptist Association, Flint, Michigan, may be mailed to Chairman Roy G. Adams, 10158 S. State Road, Goodrich, MI 48438. Include cover with resumé. Nominations will be accepted through Dec. 1, 1997.

What qualifies a school as 'Christian'?

It will surprise most of our readers to know that Oneida is criticized often for claiming to be a "Christian" school when so many of our students are not Christians. The discussion will go something like this: "Dr. Underwood, you know you cannot have a 'Christian' school when the majority of your students are not Christians." It is true that most of our students are not Christians at the beginning of any school year, but by the end of the year the majority have made professions of faith in Christ.

We have just completed our fall revival. About 40 students made professions of faith during that revival, and the Oneida Baptist Church had the privilege of baptizing 37 of these last Sunday. I thought you would like to know a little about some of the students who were baptized.

"Chuck" (not his real name) came to Oneida in August of this year as a freshman. His brother is an Oneida graduate, so he has known about Oneida for a long time. He primarily wanted to come because his brother liked Oneida so well. Chuck came from a broken home, but was doing well in his

classes. He had no drug history or other problems to speak of. During the orientation interview Chuck told us he loved church and had been baptized, but he was not sure he was a Christian. During the revival the Holy Spirit spoke to Chuck and he invited the Lord into his heart.

"Joyce" came to us during summer school as a sophomore. She had been allowing peers to exert a little too much influence over her daily decisions. Her grades were average, and there was no history of drug abuse. She got along well in school but wanted to attend a Christian boarding school. Joyce also felt the Holy Spirit speaking to her

during the revival, so she accepted Jesus as her Savior and Lord.

"Becky" came to us when school started in August as an eighth grader. We were told she spent too much time with wrong peers and was sometimes belligerent. She frequently skipped school and was not always honest. When I asked her about her grades, she told me that most of her grades were D's. When I asked her what she wanted to accomplish at Oneida, she said "I want to make better grades and have a better attitude."

Finally, there is "Henry" who came as a freshman during summer school. He had been having many problems in school. Henry was making very poor grades and was getting into a lot of trouble in class. He told me he really tried hard to make better grades but he simply could not understand math and was a very poor reader. We also knew that he had a pretty bad temper and would kick and slam doors.

We accepted these students into our "Christian" school even though they may not have met the enrollment criteria for many Christian schools. As I talked to these and many other students,

I must confess that I was not able to discern whether or not each of these young people represented "good" soil or "hard" soil. I am grateful Jesus commissioned us to be "fishers of men" and not "soil inspectors."

Yes, it is true that many other students have enrolled recently in our "Christian" school and have not made professions of faith in Jesus. We simply catch the fish and let the Lord do the cleaning. We thank God for these and many others who gave their lives to Christ during the revival.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

'I want to do all I can as long as I can'

The Pine Mountain range that runs through Letcher, Harlan and Bell counties reaches a height of 3,000 feet. Second-year student Florence Dingus holds two special memories of crossing the mountain.

After her conversion at age 12, she was baptized at First Church in Jenkins. "About age 13 when someone was needed to work with the little ones, they would come and get me," she said. "About 1949 as a GA counselor, I brought 15 girls to Clear Creek for camp. As we crossed the mountain in a Greyhound bus, all the girls became sick. We passed out paper sacks like the airlines!"

The first week in December 1995 she went to Letcher County school to ask if all the school buses had made it across Pine Mountain. "When I heard they were all in, I

decided it was the day to visit Clear Creek," she said. "I had only been driving for three years and it was scary going over the mountain. I pulled over occasionally to let cars go by. I remembered the song, 'My God is so big, so strong and so mighty.' I must have sung it 50 times! I arrived at chapel on time and heard all those men singing Christmas carols."

Dingus has crossed other mountains. In 1993 she accompanied her

son's Indiana youth camp to Venezuela and helped with construction and children's work. "I want to do all I can as long as I can." Dingus said. She has signed up for next summer's Russian mission team.

In Kelly Hall, Dingus often helps our younger students cross emotional mountains and talk through problems and stress. "They call me Mom and Grandma," she said. "It's wonderful; I love it."

Her first day of classes, she was struck with Bell's Palsy. Before that was gone, shingles made it very difficult to lay her head on a pillow. "I had problems with arthritis last semester," she said. "The doctor told me the problem was thinking I was still 45 rather than 66! God is so good; he can take our lives and make them as exciting as people in the Bible."

I asked Dingus her plans for the future. "I asked the Lord if two years were enough, since it was getting harder," she said. "He hasn't said it is time to leave. I want to work with children. I can still see that little boy's glow when he read his first sentence. It is such a joy to work with children."

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

Groups help churches say 'Thank you' to pastors

By Barbara Woerner
Baptist Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (BP)—Looking for new ways to say thanks to your pastor and his family? How long has it been since appreciating and thanking him occupied a top-10 spot on your to-do list?

North Carolina Baptist Men hopes thousands of Baptists look no further than their refrigerator door for a reminder to do just that.

The organization has published a small booklet with a magnet attached to the back called "40 Ways To Say Thanks To Your Pastor."

The colorful, witty booklet is filled with practical ideas for individuals, families and congregations to minister to pastors and other church pastoral staff members.

"We felt like there had to be a way for Baptist men and their families on a church-wide basis to show appreciation to their pastors," said Richard Brunson, the state Baptist Men executive director.

"Our communications department actually questioned 100 pastors across the state of North Carolina in putting this together," Brunson recounted. "We actually based our ideas on what the pastors said to us."

The booklet is divided into seven categories, ranging from ways to minister to pastors' spouses to the top 10 things pastors said they would love their congregations to do.

"We just wanted to raise awareness because we don't say thanks often enough," Brunson said. "So

many pastors are hurting and we need to express our thanks to them for what they do."

More than 20,000 copies of the booklet have been distributed, and they continue to be available for about \$1 apiece. Information about ordering the booklet may be obtained by contacting North Carolina Baptist Men at (919) 467-5100, Ext. 331.

Meanwhile, Under His Wings Ministries of Williamsport, Pa., is promoting the second Sunday in October as Clergy Appreciation Day.

"The idea came about after a time of prayer," said Jerry Frear Jr., executive director of Under His Wings Ministries. "We were looking for a way to lay a foundation of encouraging pastors."

He said the idea of Clergy Appreciation Day took hold when he gazed at the calendar and noticed Groundhog Day.

"If there's a day set aside for groundhogs, why can't we set one aside for honoring our pastors?" Frear asked.

"A lot of congregations spend way too much time tearing their pastor down when they ought to be building him up. We hope this day will help turn those kinds of situations around," he said.

Among other initiatives of Under His Wings are a toll-free help line for pastors needing encouragement, a web page, e-mail messages of encouragement for pastors and a Pastor of the Year essay contest.

Contact Under His Wings Ministries at (800) 875-4388 or on the Internet at <http://www.clergy.org>.

"If there's a day set aside for groundhogs, why can't we set one aside for honoring our pastors?"

Jerry Frear Jr., executive director of Under His Wings Ministries

El Nino could worsen need for hunger funds

By Steven Nelson
SBC International Mission Board

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Severe disruptions to normal weather patterns of countries around the Pacific Ocean threaten to add to the millions who are facing famine conditions this year.

The Southern Baptist International Mission is preparing contingency plans for the expected effects of El Nino, the Pacific warming of water off the western coast of South America which causes dramatic shifts in weather patterns.

"If this thing is anything like the predictions, in many areas there will be additional needs for hunger relief," reported Bill Cashion, human needs consultant with the IMB.

In Honduras, a drought has virtually eliminated any hope of a harvest for many farmers. Requests for hunger funds are being processed to

assist 27 churches in helping 436 families with beans and corn for food as well as seeds for planting.

IMB missionaries Tim and Dorcas Patterson have traveled this road before. During a drought in 1994, hunger funds were used by 12 churches to build silos and to loan seed to their members. The members were to pay back the seed plus 10 percent more. This harvest was kept in storage silos for future needs. The success of this previous effort is evidenced in that none of those 12 churches are seeking help during this drought.

On the island of New Guinea, 250 people are reported to have died due to starvation and cholera since mid-August, according to wire services.

Also, thick clouds of smoke from brush fires make breathing difficult in New Guinea and other Pacific nations including Malaysia, Singapore and the Southern Philippines.

Massive brush fires have also been reported in Australia. In Indonesia, aid officials say up to one million people are in danger of famine due to El Nino.

Said Cashion, "The effects already being felt from El Nino coupled with the terrible famine in North Korea could easily result in a need for at least two to three million dollars in additional hunger funds for Southern Baptists responses to these catastrophes."

Hunger ministries sponsored by Southern Baptists are funded through special gifts to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund. While supervised by SBC missionaries and mission volunteers, hunger ministries do not receive Cooperative Program, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering or Annie Armstrong Easter Offering funds.

Gifts to the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund are used 100 percent for hunger ministry with nothing taken for administration or promotion.

Progress slow for Pentecostals' reconciliation

By Denise Hawkins
Religion News Service

FORT WASHINGTON, Md. (RNS)—It's been three years since the nation's largest African-American and white Pentecostal denominations decided to end decades of racial division and seek to overcome the barriers of sex and class in their churches.

In October 1994 in Memphis, Tenn., the world watched as white and black Pentecostal believers linked arms, repented and performed a biblically-based foot washing. But beyond that dramatic symbolism, leaders of the two groups acknowledge, there has been little progress. Prayer and meetings have continued, but few visible signs point to their unification.

Taking action takes time and "getting to know each other," said Ronald Williams, a spokesman for the newly-formed Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches of North America and an organizer of the historic meeting in Memphis.

"The first step to true reconciliation is to have a relationship with each other," Williams added. "That's why we've chosen to gather together to

dialogue, and to get to know each other."

Leaders from more than 23 denominations gathered Oct. 1-3, for the third conference of the PCCNA since its formation three years ago.

"It may not seem like we have done anything, but you have to realize that these denominations have been divided for more than eight decades along racial lines," Williams said.

The executive committee of the PCCNA plans to meet in December to set a strategic plan for the organization moving it past the words of reconciliation.

"The question we want to answer with this type of strategic plan is 'How can we take reconciliation to the grassroots level and out to every single church?'" Williams said.

The PCCNA was born from the merger of the Pentecostal Fellowship of North America, a largely white group of churches including the Assemblies of God, the Pentecostal Holiness Church and 19 other denominations, and black denominations including the nation's largest black Pentecostal denomination, the Church of

God in Christ.

In 1994, that group dissolved as Pentecostal and charismatic believers gathered in Memphis to overcome racial and cultural divisions. That gathering has come to be called "The Memphis Miracle" by those who attended.

During the three-day conference held recently at the National Church of God, PCCNA leaders also announced plans to shift the focus of the association from meetings to social and moral action.

"The issues of our world and our community are too important to waste with insignificant meetings," said T.L. Lowery, local PCCNA chairman and head of the National Church of God.

Although the PCCNA has plans to expand its focus, it currently operates and does business without a staff or central office. A handful of member denominations, including the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, to which Williams belongs, have created offices devoted to the work of the PCCNA.

Williams said: "Until we set up an agenda, there is no need for a national paid staff."

True Love Waits gets trivial by being included in game card

By Terri Lackey
SBC Sunday School Board

NASHVILLE (BP)—With its induction into the Parker Brothers' game Trivial Pursuit, Genus III edition, True Love Waits has found a place in history.

Literally.

A game card's "History" question asks, "What did teenagers pledge not to do when they signed Southern Baptist pledge cards in the 1990s?"

And the answer? "Have sex before marriage."

Richard Ross, a founder of the sexual abstinence-before-marriage program, noted, "It is one thing to discuss True Love Waits within the four walls of the church. It is quite another thing to see it spilling over into mainstream culture.

"When True Love Waits shows up in Rolling Stone magazine, on the big screen in 'Escape From L.A.' and even in Playboy, we can be sure the secular world is taking note," Ross said. "The Trivial Pursuit card is just another affirmation that True Love Waits is anything but trivial."

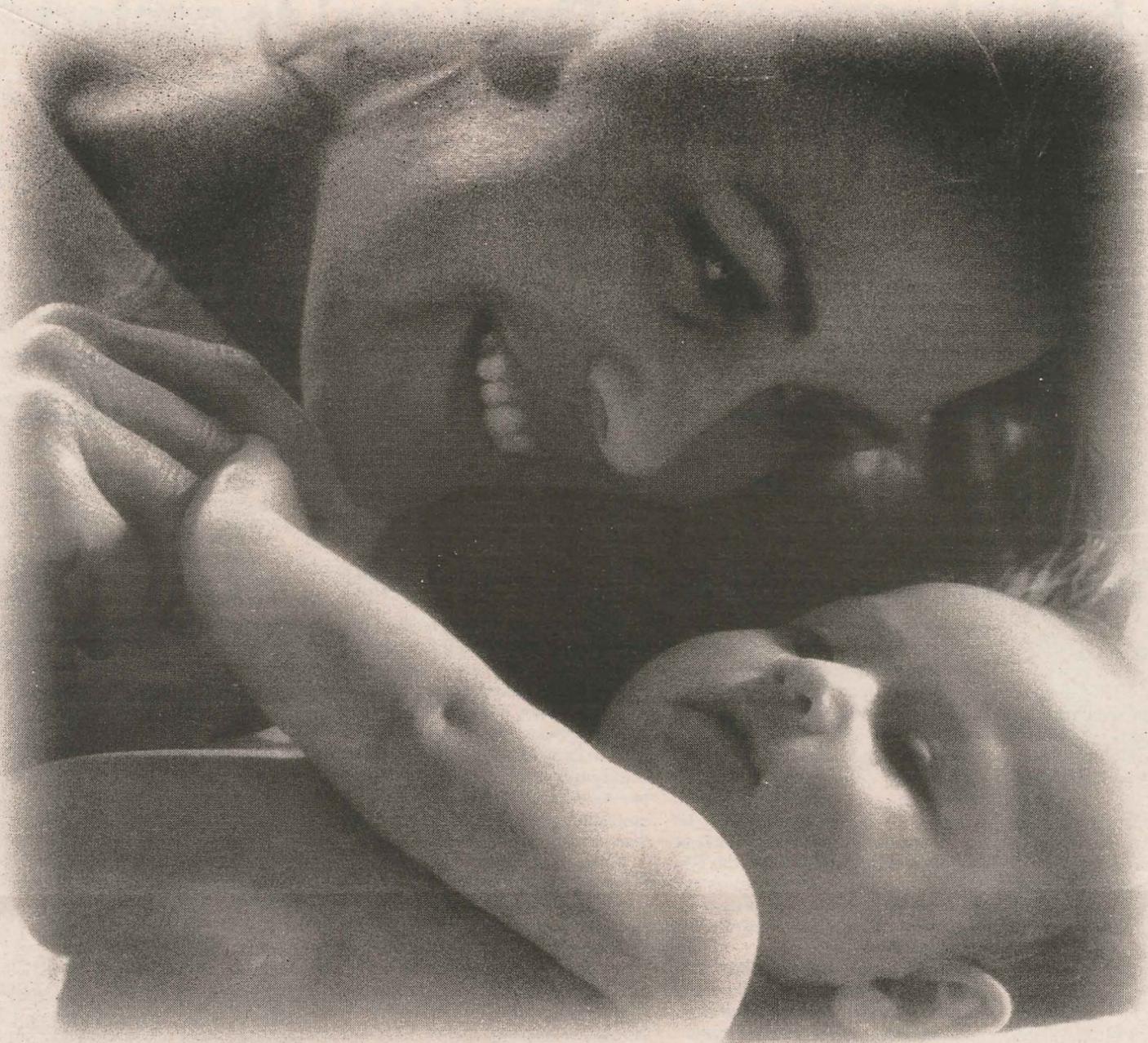
The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board-sponsored sexual abstinence campaign was launched in April 1993, and since, hundreds of thousands of young people have signed a covenant to remain sexually pure until marriage. The campaign continues with an annual Valentine's Day celebration on high school and college campuses across

the country.

On April 14, 1998, True Love Waits leaders will go to Washington D.C., to report to the president, state governors and key state and national leaders on the results of the 1998 Valentine's Day sexual abstinence campaign.



We listen to our mothers.



From the moment you discover you're pregnant through your delivery and beyond, our friendly staff at The Women's Center of Tri-County Baptist Hospital will listen to your needs. We will work closely with you and your doctor to personalize your birth experience. And make



the delivery as unique as the package.

Helpful Hints for New Parents

Expectant parents often don't know what to expect. The Women's Center at Tri-County Baptist Hospital offers several classes to help you make the choices that are right for you and right for your baby - from prenatal care to

breastfeeding tips and sibling classes.

All-Private Rooms

For parents who prefer a little more privacy, The Women's Center offers beautifully renovated, all-private rooms. Family members can visit you and your baby in the comfort of your own spacious room. You can even have baby stay with you at night if you choose. The Women's Center

provides the comforts of home with the reassurance of a qualified, attentive nursing staff.

One-On-One Attention

You'll have your very own team of nurses who will be with you throughout the entire delivery process, from labor to recovery.

For more information, call 222-DOCS(3627) or toll free 1-888-222-8071.

TRI-COUNTY BAPTIST HOSPITAL

La Grange, KY