



# WESTERN RECORDER

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## McNeal: 'We have churches more worldly than the culture'

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

BOWLING GREEN—Making churches culturally relevant in order to reach people does not require watering down the gospel, according to church growth consultant Reggie McNeal.

McNeal, a consultant with the South Carolina Baptist Convention, was keynote speaker for a session on numerical growth during the Church Health Summit Oct. 10-11 at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green.

"People say to be culturally relevant somehow waters down the gospel," McNeal noted. "That is erroneous and against the Spirit of Jesus."

The irony, he said, is "we have many churches that are more worldly than the culture."

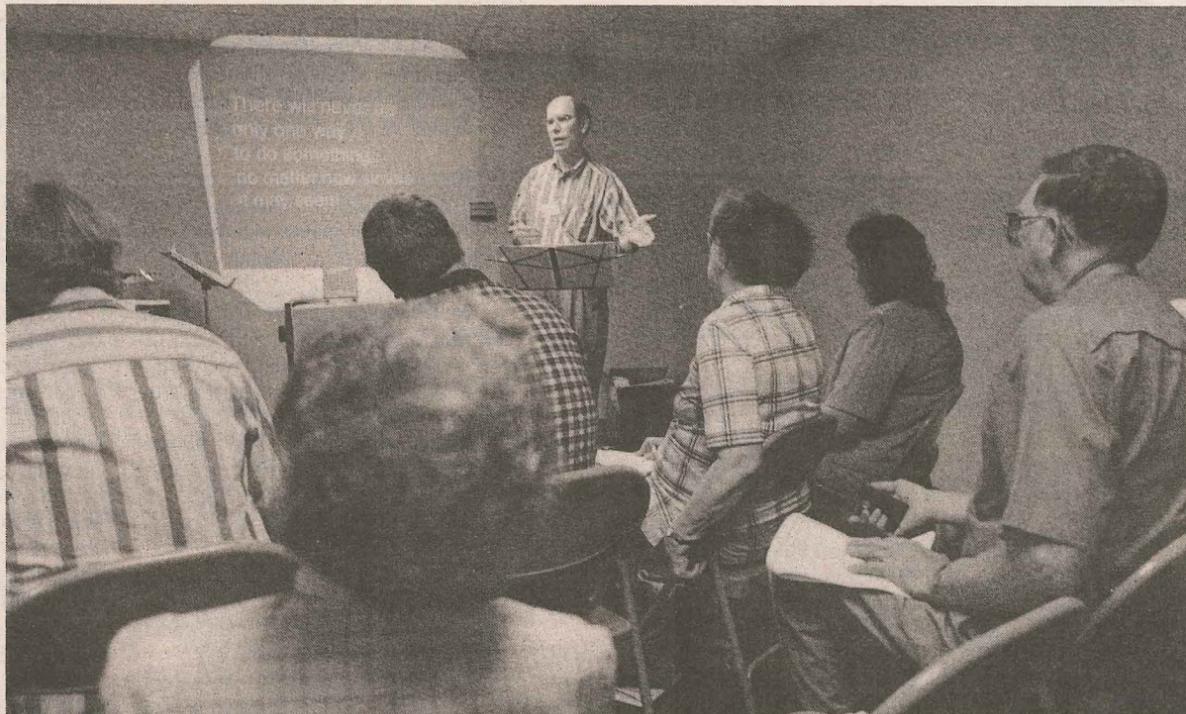
In reality, churches that shun making themselves culturally relevant are "self-centered," he explained. "I don't know anything more greedy than Christians who are sitting in a church saying, 'Feed me! Feed me! Feed me!' when there are thousands of hungry people outside."

Churches that want to reach people with the gospel will understand the modern culture and seek to relate to people in that culture, McNeal said. He cited several examples of issues churches must understand, beginning with convenience.

"Convenience is a driving force" in modern society, he said. "Churches that want to connect better pay attention to that."

McNeal recalled a member of a church which he previously served as pastor telling him, "I'm not so sure it ought to be convenient to come to church."

□ See Churches urged ..., page 10



**CHURCH HEALTH CONFERENCE** David Stancil, an associate pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, leads a conference on church decision-making during the Church Health Summit, Oct. 10-11 at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green. "A good decision made through a bad process is a bad decision," Stancil said. More than 620 people attended the two-day conference at First Baptist Church of Bowling Green. Stories on pages 7-10.

## Anderson: Where is your church headed?

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

BOWLING GREEN—Just as he only boards an airplane when assured it will reach its destination, Leith Anderson said churches must know where they are going.

The pastor of Wooddale Church in Minneapolis said the journey's success depends on the congregation answering a crucial question: "Why?"

"Why does your church exist?" asked Anderson, a keynote speaker at the Church Health Summit in Bowling Green, Oct. 10-11. "Every connecting flight I get on, I ask if it goes where I want to go. I want a pilot who knows where we're going and what the trip will look like."

A church should set forth its mission in a statement of purpose, Anderson said. Wooddale states its purpose

is: "To honor God by making disciples for Jesus Christ."

After a church determines its mission it should contemplate its vision. That means determining what the church will look like in 10 years if its purpose is fulfilled, he said.

"In business everyone has a vision," said Anderson. "In the airline business they have a word for a person who doesn't share their vision. He's called a hijacker."

"Those who have a divergent vision from the airplane or the church ought to be brought into the central vision or get off," he added.

The problem with many churches is not a few dissidents, he said. Instead, a church with 100 members often will have 107 visions. Thus, leaders must have a clear vision and communicate it to members, Anderson said.

However, he cautioned leaders from expecting people to understand the vision easily.

When he arrived at a church in Colorado, Anderson said, there were relatively few new converts. Though

his initial efforts at evangelism were disastrous, when a couple finally became Christians it changed everyone's outlook, he said.

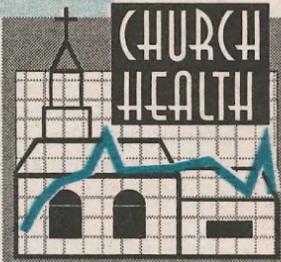
"It was wonderful," he recalled. "It became a transforming experience for the church. They didn't get it until they could see it."

Churches must reach decisions in a healthy manner, he said, adding that many churches allow dysfunctional members to make their decisions.

When members meekly go along with dissenters who gripe the loudest, the whole church then becomes dysfunctional, he said.

By contrast, he said, a healthy church reaches sound decisions by lining up with a common purpose and vision.

"We now have a picture of healthy decision-making" at Wooddale, Anderson said. "We read the same books, see the same videos and watch the same dramas. When we make healthy decisions it is transforming, powerful and wonderful. It honors Jesus Christ and makes disciples for him."



## Nearly half of Americans rarely engage in religious activity

By Marv Knox  
Texas Baptist Standard

OXNARD, Calif.—Nearly half of Americans are church "non-members" who "rarely engage in religious endeavor," according to groupings in a study that gauge the religious involvement of U.S. adults.

A study by the Angus Reid Group divided Americans into six categories according to their religious involvement.

Forty-seven percent were described as "non-members," those who rarely engage in religious activities or contribute to charitable causes. They

tend to have limited education and do not keep up with current events, the study also found. Other groupings identified by Reid researchers were:

■ "Religion first," about 17 percent. These people are church members and they also participate in several "religious-oriented efforts," such as Sunday school and community service.

"These people are older than average, possess moderate levels of education and are the most likely to regularly engage in personal spiritual activities," according to the study, which was profiled in the Barna Report newsletter.

■ "Community and church," 10

percent. Members of this group generously volunteer their time and services and "exhibit a balance between faith and community work," Barna noted.

■ "Limited involvement," 9 percent. These people volunteer sparingly, and don't get involved in church-related efforts," the survey found.

■ "Jobs and culture," also 9 percent. These people are active in at least one professional or career-related organization, and they also tend to participate in educational or cultural non-profit organizations, the research revealed. However, their religious involvement is "limited, if at all exist-

tent."

■ "Service and seniors," about 8 percent. "One of the most widely involved groups are the elder citizens," the Barna Report noted. "Religious activity is one of their top priorities, but it competes for their attention with social service, senior citizens programs and support groups."

In addition to describing the nation's religious makeup, researchers polled Americans on possible priorities for the government to address.

"Promoting family" was the No. 1 cause, cited by 31 percent. Second was "raising moral standards," 18 percent.

# BAPTISTS

## BAPTIST BITS

■ **James Edwards** resigned Oct. 6 as chancellor and chief executive officer of William Carey College in Hattiesburg, Miss., in the aftermath of an investigation that concluded he "falsely represented" information on a 1994 federal grant application. Trustees of the Baptist-affiliated school have agreed to a \$345,666 settlement with the federal government.

■ **"The Mormon Puzzle,"** a 70-minute video produced by the Southern Baptist Convention's North American Mission Board, is being mailed free to every SBC church by the Sunday School Board. NAMB produced the video to educate Southern Baptists about Mormonism prior to next summer's SBC annual meeting in Salt Lake City.

■ **Al Mohler**, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, has become a monthly columnist for *World* magazine, a weekly national news magazine catering to a politically and religiously conservative audience. Mohler's first column for the magazine ran in the Oct. 18 issue.

## Southern Seminary to launch 4-year Bible college

By David Winfrey  
News Director

LOUISVILLE—Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will transform its Boyce Bible School into a Bible college that offers a bachelor's degree in biblical studies starting next fall.

Seminary trustees approved the proposal on a voice vote with no opposition during their fall meeting Oct. 13-14.

The plan drew mixed responses from Kentucky Baptist leaders, some of whom questioned whether the new program would compete with existing schools.

Plans call for Boyce Bible School to be renamed the James P. Boyce College of the Bible, after the seminary's founding president.

Currently, Boyce Bible School offers a two-year associate's degree, and Campbellsville University works with the seminary to offer a bachelor of arts in Christian studies on the seminary campus.

The new degree would specifically target students seeking training for ministry in a church, said Danny Akin, seminary vice president for academic administration.

"This is a niche degree for those who already sense God's call to full-time ministry," said Akin, who added that some students want all four years of their undergraduate careers to be focused on Bible studies. "We can do that now."

A preliminary curriculum is divided into four categories of study: theology, Bible, ministry and general, which includes classes on English, "great books" and computer science.

Akin will begin looking to hire a dean for the college, which soon will begin accepting applications for next fall, according to information distributed to trustees.

Mohler said the concept furthers the desire of James Boyce that Southern would accept and train ministers who had no undergraduate education.

"This is a distinctly Baptist vision of theological education for it recognizes that our churches and ministers require differing levels of study and education," he said.

Mohler said Southern's on-campus Bible college will be the first South-

ern Baptist program of its kind, although at least two other seminaries already offer bachelor's degrees through on-campus colleges.

The New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary College of Undergraduate Studies began in 1992, said Debbie Moore of the seminary's news office.

Students can pursue four years of education for either a bachelor of arts or a bachelor of general studies, specializing in pastoral ministry, Christian education or music, she said.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., offers a bachelor of arts degree in biblical studies through its two-year Southern Baptist Theological College.

Students must have 58 hours of prerequisite classes before they enter the senior college, said Lee Weeks of the seminary's news and information office.

Southeastern's college began in 1995 with 100 students, Weeks said. Enrollment doubled last year, and is up again this year, he said.

That school also offers an associate's degree, but it is limited to students age 30 and older, Weeks said.

A distinction between the Boyce program and the other two seminaries is the age at which students can enroll.

Boyce will accept students as young as 18. The prerequisite courses required for Southeastern's program means most students are at least age 20 before entering, and New Orleans Seminary requires undergraduate students be at least 21.

In material presented to trustees, Southern officials said they don't expect their college to compete with liberal arts colleges. "The very tight focus on biblical studies for ministry is the unique hallmark of the Boyce College of the Bible," the material stated.

But Kentucky Baptist Convention President Floyd Price called the new Boyce college further evidence of eroding trust between the national Baptist agencies and state Baptist agencies.

"This appears to be one more break in the tie that used to bind us," said Price, pastor of Scottsville Baptist Church. "Why are we competing with

ourselves? We have three colleges and one Bible college in Kentucky. Why does Southern wish to do this rather than recruit out of the other institutions. Is this a move to dominate?"

Price noted that until recently colleges, Bible colleges and seminaries hadn't offered degrees available at other types of institutions.

"The bottom line is the trend moves us toward a diminishing of cooperation," he said. "I don't think it's healthy, but I think it's the way we're going."

Officials at Campbellsville, which has offered a bachelor's degree at Southern for several years, declined to comment.

"Until we ... have had communications with officials at Southern Seminary, any comment from us concerning the new Boyce College of the Bible would be premature," said Marc Whitt, vice president for advancement at Campbellsville.

Enrollment has grown gradually for the Campbellsville program, and currently is up to 40, Whitt said.

Seminary leaders said they hope the Campbellsville program will continue on campus.

"So far as we are concerned, the Boyce-Campbellsville partnership leading to the B.A. should continue," seminary leaders said in material distributed to trustees. "This offers an excellent means of gaining a liberal arts B.A. for those who wish to pursue that option."

Boyce College of the Bible would be the third Baptist Bible college in Kentucky. Mid-Continent Baptist Bible College in Mayfield is a joint-venture of 11 Baptist associations in Western Kentucky and adjoining states. Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville is supported by the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

Regarding Clear Creek, Akin said, "We want to say that we are here not to compete but to complement."

Southern would not expect to draw students from Clear Creek's traditional base in Appalachia, he said. "We'll draw from other areas geographically."

Clear Creek President Bill Whittaker said he's happy any time someone is being trained for the ministry, but added Boyce could attract students

who might otherwise attend Clear Creek.

"This will affect us some because we are pulling from the same area," he said, noting that Clear Creek currently has students from 18 states, including Kentucky, Ohio, Tennessee and Indiana. The school has a current enrollment of 159, up 12 percent from last year.

Regarding the target audience of ministers, he added: "This is the same kind of student we've been seeking since 1926."

Whittaker noted that seminaries traditionally have limited themselves to graduate education, but added many Baptist colleges now offer graduate theological training. "We used to get transfers from Boyce."

One strength of Clear Creek is its focus on families, he added. "I think we'll still have a strong pull for families."

The Boyce College will be housed in the Carver Hall complex on the west end of the seminary's campus. Upgrading and renovation projects are scheduled to be completed by next summer.

In other matters, Seminary trustees approved the formation of a task force of trustees and faculty to study tenure tracks for professors. Akin will chair that group.

Trustees learned that Harold Best has been hired to teach as a senior professor in the seminary's school of church music and worship. Best, a non-Baptist, will teach at the seminary through Dec. 31, 1999.

Board Chairman Jerry Johnson announced a charter review committee will consider phasing down the number of seminary trustees from 65 to between 30 and 40. Meetings currently cost between \$3,000-\$5,000 annually per trustee, and the board is almost double the size any other seminary's, he noted.

Dennis Williams, dean of the school of Christian education and leadership, told trustees that his school is developing two new doctoral degrees: a doctor of education in leadership and a doctor of education ministries.

Seminary officials also dedicated the new \$3.57 million Chiles Conference facility and dining hall.

## Foundation divests money held for seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas (ABP)—A foundation established in 1990 to support theological education in the Southern Baptist Convention while bypassing the convention's conservative leadership has dissolved and redistributed its remaining funds.

Alumni and Friends of Theological Education was established in 1990 to "keep money coming into Southern Baptist Theological Seminary," one of six SBC seminaries. The seminary had just come under control of the SBC's conservative leadership, said Steve Shoemaker, pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and president of the organization.

"The future of Southern Seminary was extremely uncertain at that point," said Shoemaker, who at the

time was pastor of Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville, two blocks from the Southern Seminary campus.

"Individuals and churches who loved the seminary wished to give to its support," Shoemaker said. "But they did not want to commit these monies to the seminary without a provision which could redistribute the funds if Southern Seminary left its heritage and went a new way. This foundation gave them a way to give to Southern Seminary in an uncertain time."

But subsequently, the faculty and administration have undergone "almost a complete overhaul," Shoemaker noted, leading the foundation's board of directors to act upon a charter provision allowing funds

to be redirected when Southern Seminary "no longer fulfills its mission in a manner consistent with the heritage of the institution during the first century and a quarter of its history."

The foundation has disbursed about \$2,500 each to five causes, Shoemaker said. They are:

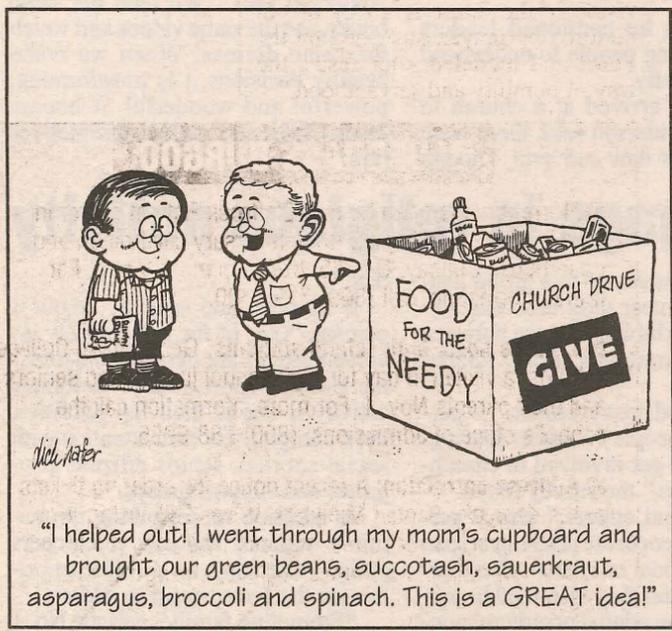
■ Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Va.

■ Mercer University Divinity School in Atlanta.

■ Baylor University's George W. Truett Theological Seminary in Waco, Texas.

■ Wake Forest University Divinity School in Winston-Salem, N.C.

■ Kentucky Baptists who are planning to create a new seminary option in that state.



## KBC Executive Board hires associate for disaster relief

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

Hiring a new Brotherhood associate to coordinate disaster relief ministries and discussing how to make child care available during Kentucky Baptist Convention annual meetings topped the agenda of the KBC Executive Board's administrative committee Oct. 14.

Larry Koch, pastor of Lowell Avenue Baptist Church in Campbellsville since 1986 and a veteran disaster relief worker, was hired as an associate in the KBC's Brotherhood department.

Interim Executive Secretary-treasurer Jim Hawkins explained that Koch technically will fill the associate position recently vacated by John Lott, who left to take a Louisville pastorate. However, the job description has been changed to make Koch the coordinator of disaster relief ministries through Kentucky Brotherhood. That responsibility previously had been held by the state Brotherhood director.

Larry Martin, director of the missions and evangelism division, said disaster relief needed to be separated from the department director's job because in the past whenever Kentucky Baptists responded to a disaster, everything else in the Brotherhood department had to be put on hold until the disaster was over. Disaster relief ministry also represents a growing part of Brotherhood work in Kentucky

and needs increased year-round leadership, he said.

In addition to the disaster relief role, Koch will have responsibilities related to Baptist Builders, Campers on Mission, Habitat for Humanity and other Brotherhood ministries.

Hawkins said he anticipates coming back to the administrative committee at a later date and requesting creation of a second Brotherhood associate position to handle more of the responsibilities Lott previously carried.

Koch, 55, previously was pastor of Salvisa Baptist Church in Salvisa. He is a graduate of Wayland Baptist University with a bachelor of arts degree and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary with a master of divinity degree.

He has logged more than 2,500 hours in disaster relief ministry, many of those as an on-site coordinator. He and his wife, Elaine, have been the KBC's primary trainers for new disaster relief volunteers. He also has served as chaplain to Taylor County emergency services for 10 years.

The administrative committee spent a major part of its meeting discussing how to respond to concerns expressed at last year's KBC annual meeting about the lack of child care for messengers with babies and preschoolers. A motion was made during the annual meeting that the KBC arrange for child care for those attending the 1997 convention and an-

nounce those arrangements prior to the meeting.

Hawkins reported that for the past 12 years the KBC has provided child care only for volunteers who are working during the convention, and then only for babies through kindergartners. After consulting with the KBC's attorney, he reported that the KBC would open itself to legal liabilities by sponsoring a full-fledged child-care program using volunteers it had not screened for criminal backgrounds.

This liability would not be an issue if the host church of the annual meeting volunteered to provide child care using its own workers, Hawkins said. He also reported that Porter Memorial Baptist Church in Lexington, host of this year's annual meeting, has volunteered to provide such a service.

Members of the committee expressed a desire to do whatever could be done to provide child care for messengers, because they believe that would encourage younger adults to attend the annual meetings.

The committee affirmed the voluntary offer of Porter Memorial Baptist Church for this year's meeting and then adopted two motions related to the policy issue.

One motion asserts that the Executive Board's policy should be to leave the decision for provision of child care during annual meetings to the host church, with the understanding that the KBC will "underwrite the

costs of providing such child care if requested."

The second motion asked staff to further investigate how voluntary child-care arrangements might arise at future conventions which are scheduled to be held in convention centers rather than churches.

Hawkins reported that anyone desiring child care for babies through 5-year-olds during this year's KBC annual meeting should contact Porter Memorial Baptist Church at (606) 272-3441 to reserve space on a first-come, first-served basis.

In other action, the administrative committee:

■ Hired Bill Tiemann, former minister of music at three Kentucky Baptist churches, as a part-time consultant in adult and associational projects with the KBC church music department. Tiemann most recently has been minister of music at Buena Vista Baptist Church in Owensboro and currently works as a building contractor.

■ Reaffirmed the need for a study of the salary scale for the Executive Board's professional-level employees and asked the committee chairman to appoint some members to work with staff to do preliminary research. A salary structure study, which has not been done in 15 years, was about to begin in 1996 when Executive Secretary-treasurer Bill Marshall announced his retirement. Because of the upcoming interim period, that study was put on hold.



Koch

## Kentucky Baptist Fellowship to hire full-time coordinator

LOUISVILLE—The Kentucky Baptist Fellowship voted at its fall gathering to hire a full-time coordinator to direct its work.

"It's time for us to move to the next level," KBF Moderator Bob DeFoor told about 125 people attending the Oct. 11 meeting at Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville.

The KBF, which now has two part-time staff members, plans to eliminate their positions Dec. 31 in order to hire the coordinator. Both employees, Harold Skags, network coordinator, and Carolyn Hale, communications coordinator, support establishing the full-time position, said DeFoor, pastor of Harrodsburg Baptist Church.

DeFoor said he hoped the coordinator would be hired in early 1998, but added the KBF must increase its budget to fund the position.

No salary package has been developed, but DeFoor said another state fellowship organization had budgeted \$70,000-\$75,000 annually to pay the salary, benefits and expenses of a coordinator. KBF board members are soliciting churches and individuals to raise funds for the position, he said.

KBF is the Kentucky expression of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, a national organization that funds a missions program, theological education and other ventures for moderate Southern Baptists. Approximately 100 Kentucky Baptist churches contribute to the CBF, but only 27 of those churches give money to the KBF.

Although the CBF was formed because of dissatisfaction with the conservative direction of the Southern Baptist Convention, DeFoor said the

KBF has no quarrel with the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"We are friends of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and we want to make sure the Kentucky Baptist Convention stays strong and is not overwhelmed by fundamentalists," DeFoor said.

In an address to the gathering, CBF Coordinator Daniel Vestal presented a three-pronged vision for the future of the CBF.

First, he said, "personal spiritual integrity" must be a consistent hallmark of moderate Baptist life.

"A future that is worth creating and blessing will be a future where as individuals, as congregations and as a fellowship we exhibit integrity, in spite of the fact that there are those who oppose us and in spite of the fact that we must suffer for our integrity,"

Vestal said.

Second, he emphasized the need for spiritual unity. He noted the group spans a wide geographic spectrum and is diverse in worship styles and approaches to ministry. "But let's bless a future where diversity is celebrated and love for one another is not just rhetoric or not just talk."

Finally, Vestal said the future for moderate Baptists must be marked by servanthood and humility.

"Our vision for the future is a fellowship of Baptist Christians and Baptist churches who do not seek the praise of people or the power that people give, where competition and rivalry is our way of life," he said. "Our vision of the future is a way of life nurtured by prayer, sustained by the Spirit and modeled after Jesus, the way of humility and servanthood."

## Foster: Spiritual focus 'essential' to Brotherhood

HOPKINSVILLE—Maintaining a spiritual focus is an "absolute essential" as Kentucky Brotherhood builds on its past and plans for the future, a Brotherhood leader told more than 200 men gathered for the annual meeting Oct. 3-4 at Second Baptist Church in Hopkinsville.

In the future Kentucky Brotherhood will continue existing ministries, but be intentional about lifting up its spiritual distinctive, said Kentucky Brotherhood Director Randy Foster.

"We must have a realization of total dependency upon God as we respond in prayer and faithfulness" to the needs of the world, Foster said in

his first address to the group since assuming leadership in September.

Kentucky Brotherhood encompasses at least 23 ministries, including disaster relief, Royal Ambassadors, Baptist Builders, Kentucky Changers, World Changers, equestrian ministries, camping programs and Experiencing God weekends, Foster said.

In other action, conferees recognized John Lott for eight years of service as an associate in the Kentucky Brotherhood department. He recently resigned to become pastor of Eastern Parkway Baptist Church in Louisville.

The conference also featured "level two" training for Red Cross disas-

ter relief work. More than 150 people participated. Larry Koch, Kentucky Brotherhood disaster relief director, coordinated the training, which equipped the volunteers to lead feeding, sanitation, chain saw, mud-out and crisis counseling units.

During the meeting's business session, the group elected the following officers:

■ President Mike Melloan, Yellow Creek Baptist Church, Owensboro;

■ Vice President: Gary King, Pleasant View Baptist Church, Waynesburg.

■ Secretary: John Lott, Eastern Parkway Baptist Church, Louisville.

### BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Retreat hosts open house.** Cleftrock Retreat center in Mt. Vernon is hosting a 25th anniversary celebration and open house Sunday, Oct. 26, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call (800) 719-0600.

■ **College hosts high school students.** Georgetown College will host a visitation day for high school juniors and seniors and their parents Nov. 1. For more information call the school's office of admissions, (800) 788-9985.

■ **Address correction:** A recent notice for ordering tickets to the Kentucky Baptist Ministers' Wives Fellowship, Nov. 11, listed an incorrect street address. The correct address: Debbie Overton, 1235 Bordeaux Drive, Lexington, Ky. 40504.

## WESTERN RECORDER

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**MARK WINGFIELD**  
Editor

**DAVID WINFREY**  
News Director

**MAURI SMITH**  
Marketing & Business  
Manager

**C.R. DALEY**  
Editor Emeritus

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

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## On pastoral authority

Let me say a word of appreciation for the entire issue of the Western Recorder of Oct. 7. The articles were very informative and were on target, especially the articles concerning the termination of pastors. I hope all the young ministers will read those articles and begin to do research on their own as to why termination happens. It will help them prepare for what may be ahead in their own ministry and at the very least they will learn some ways to deal with issues that arise in churches.

Also, I appreciated the news item concerning the gay pride day at Kings Island (Sept. 16, page 11). A lot of Baptist people go to Kings Island for outings. Had I been planning to take a group of youth on that particular day and not known the above facts, it would have placed us in an uncomfortable position.

The flip side to the letter on "Open season on pastors" is that neither should pastors declare "open season" on churches. From your editorial I gathered that the church let the pastor go because he was teaching "limited atonement," which is contrary to the belief and practices of said church from its very founding. The only authority for faith and practice in a Baptist church is the Lord Jesus himself alone. The pastor is not the authority. It is Jesus and then the congregation at large. The pastor is to be a servant leader.

Donald R. Cole  
Brandenburg

## What was Elliff's role?

The dismissal of Paul Debusman (Oct. 7, page 2) raises serious questions of both protocol and personal conduct. If, as reported, Debusman's letter to Tom Elliff was personal correspondence, then one might well question the propriety of Elliff's hav-

ing communicated the content of the letter to anyone, including seminary administration. (The article seemed to indicate Debusman himself did not divulge the contents of his letter to anyone other than Elliff.)

Second, Elliff's reported response ("This is, apparently, a matter concerning the personnel policies at Southern Seminary") appears disingenuous at best. If indeed Elliff saw fit to communicate the contents of the letter to the seminary administration, then he cannot legitimately dismiss the entire issue as merely a matter of internal seminary policy of which he has no concern or interest.

Nowhere did the article report that either Elliff or anyone else disputed the accuracy of Debusman's assertions concerning the nature of past speakers at Southern Seminary. If one cannot speak truth to a fellow Christian without

fear of reprisal, then our freedom in Christ to admonish one another becomes a hollow relic of the past. Even if Elliff had found fault with the accuracy of any part of Debusman's letter, his first duty should have been to communicate directly with his brother in Christ and attempt to reconcile any perceived differences.

Just how the letter brings injury to Southern Seminary is another issue. From Debusman's perspective, the letter was intended as a personal correspondence. It could only potentially bring injury to the seminary if someone made the letter "other than private correspondence." The role and responsibility of that person cannot and should not be overlooked.

Luther McIntyre  
Louisville

## The news hurts

When I read the headline "Seminary librarian fired after writing letter to Elliff," I cried, "Lord no, Lord." I then read the article with the same

kind of curious dread that one uses when seeing a bad traffic accident.

Unfortunately, my fears were confirmed. I again cried out to the Lord, "These are my brothers, my sisters. Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh." I ache for this situation; I ache for the people involved, even though I have become a Californian.

I am not so naive to think that this sort of thing never happens inside the church; I've seen it before. Still, it bothers me a lot. In a time when "Father" is a dirty word to some children; when people cannot read; when there are people inside of church who do not have a relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ; when Christians are being persecuted just because they are Christians—to see men, whose charge is to teach men and women who are to be church leaders, using their best battle skills against each other hurts. I wonder how God thinks and feels about this.

Anna Abell  
Lake Forest, Calif.

## Beyond comprehension

Just when I thought I could no longer be surprised by what takes place at Southern Seminary, I read of the firing of reference librarian Paul Debusman.

As a two-time graduate of the seminary, I have watched with great sadness as this once-outstanding school has become only a shadow of its former self. Wonderful faculty members have departed or been forced out, the school's social work program has been destroyed and women are told the call of God in their lives must be narrowly limited in how they are permitted to do ministry. That has not been enough, sadly, as such stringent orthodoxy is now being enforced that a person cannot express his or her opinion and keep a job.

It is beyond my comprehension that a person can be fired from a Christian institution simply for following his conscience in accordance with biblical instruction. If such behavior is indeed "harmful" to the seminary,

then it is a sign the seminary has deteriorated far more than I ever dreamed possible.

Dave Charlton  
New Castle

## The main thing

I read the Oct. 7 issue of the Western Recorder with more than casual interest. Seldom have I seen such a contrast of news in one publication.

I have been impressed by the philosophy followed by Promise Keepers to stay focused on the important themes and avoid being sidetracked by lesser issues. They appear to have been successful at focusing on Jesus Christ as Lord and the need of every person for the grace that only he can give. By maintaining their focus, I believe Christ has been exalted in full view of our entire nation.

Unfortunately, in the same issue, I read that a devoted employee of Southern Seminary was fired for privately and personally expressing a view that apparently did not agree with that of our convention president. Further, I read that one of our associations is asking for the reprimand and/or dismissal of the editor of our Baptist newspaper—again because of a difference of opinion.

Tying these news items together, I believe all the Baptists involved in these differences of opinion would have no trouble in agreeing that Jesus Christ is Lord. It is the lesser things on which we disagree that are limiting our effectiveness.

Surely among all those at the Promise Keepers meeting there must have been Baptists from lots of Baptist churches. One has to wonder if these same Baptists could gather at a meeting led by our own convention without having differences of opinion on the lesser things cloud the major theme about which we can agree—that Jesus Christ is Lord. I believe we as Baptists can learn something from the Promise Keepers about leadership and cooperation.

Don Dobson  
Versailles

## Delusional power claims of orthodoxy

By Tom Ehrich

In making my journey from the pulpit to the pew, I have had to contend with three powerful forces: the energetic few who tend to run churches, the power of church property to distort a sense of mission and the delusional attitude called orthodoxy.

I want to deal today with the third of those forces. By orthodoxy I don't mean the particular Christian or Jewish tradition called Orthodox, but that attitude which says, "We know the truth, we know God's will, and because we are right, we must exercise power."

Orthodoxy seems to serve three purposes.

One is our insatiable lust for power. Over the years, religious people have engaged in unspeakable cruelty in the name of God. The cruel have used faith to justify torture chambers, death camps, slaughter-the-heathen crusades and hostilities like the Thirty Years War. European invaders lusting for gold prayed

first, then murdered and stole, then built churches.

It seems an axiom of history that manipulative leaders will become theologians to disguise their aggressions, and followers will become true-believers to justify their enjoyment of cruelty.

In a similar vein, clever merchants use "Christian" telephone directories to paint business competitors as unworthy, and politicians chase votes at prayer breakfasts.

A second purpose of orthodoxy seems to be avoidance. Jesus taught in parables, not theological assertions, definitions or laws. Parables are intentionally obscure, more like lenses into the realm of God than crisp pictures. They invite reflection and, upon reflection, tend to become disturbing.

True-believers would rather adore their own words and the power of human intellect. They will argue over

how much water to use in baptism, not because Jesus had anything to say on the subject, but because the subject can be comprehended, whereas God's realm defies comprehension, and because arguing about fluid ounces avoids the larger question of "baptism into what?" Into the death of Jesus? Into radical submission to a power outside oneself?

Religious leaders have responded to immense faith issues growing out of scientific discoveries and societal changes by focusing their flock's attention on small theological notes: Wine vs. grape juice, NIV vs. NRSV, men-only leadership vs. gender-inclusive, entire sermons built on the meaning of 2,000-year-old Greek words. And all the while people are reeling from vast changes in the human condition.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, Hiroshima and mechanization, questions about human life vault far beyond narrow biblical interpretations and liturgical revision.

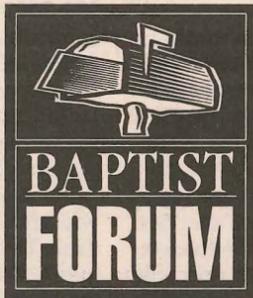
Finally, orthodoxy blots out sur-

prise and thereby undermines trust. By continually referring to the past, the orthodox behave like the Hebrews trying to hoard God's manna. They store up ancient words and feast on tidy arguments, while the real challenge is to trust God's providence each morning. The orthodox argue God is unchanging, and therefore assenting to ancient verities is the essence of faith—and proprietors of those verities deserve to retain control.

The ancients knew God; so did the Reformation theologian who penned the Augsburg Confession. But God hasn't stopped revealing himself or providing fresh manna. Nor has that daily bread ever come without the challenge to trust in it, rather than in storehouses made by human hands.

Religious orthodoxy, it seems to me, is both lazy—easy, predictable, self-serving—and obstructive. Far more essential is submitting one's life, including one's opinions, to a God whose fullness has never been corralled by human intellect or weaponry. (RNS)

Tom Ehrich is an Episcopal priest in Winston-Salem, N.C., an author and former Wall Street Journal reporter.



## HE SAID/SHE SAID

### Does anybody have a cure for our sons' selective deafness?

#### HESAIID



Mark Wingfield

After several years of research in the trenches, I have finally come to this profound conclusion: Both our children must be deaf and we never knew it.

I now realize this because of the pattern that has developed in our house. I talk plain English in simple sentences to give instructions. Both our 5-year-olds appear to be listening. But within seconds, they proceed to do exactly the thing I have just asked them not to do.

Amazing? Well, there's more. It's not just me. I have witnessed the same transaction between Alison and the boys.

Surely this phenomenon cannot be happening in households across America, or my parents would have called to tell us they saw it on "Dateline." Therefore, I conclude that our children have a profound hearing problem.

Let me illustrate. Recently I took both boys with me to a department store where I was shopping for pants. Not wanting them to tear the mannequins limb from limb while I wasn't looking, I took them in the dressing room with me.

My first words of instruction, spoken as clearly as a parent not wanting to be humiliated knows how, were to stay in our stall and not crawl underneath the dividers into someone else's stall. They nodded their heads, then Luke immediately laid down on the floor and began peering up into the adjoining stall.

"What did I just ask you to do?" I said with exasperation. Blank stare from underneath the divider.

"Stay here. Please don't crawl under the dividers and look in the other stalls," I said again.

"But why?" Luke asked innocently.

I then had to deliver a lengthy speech about why it was rude and improper to peek into someone's dressing stall.

Did it work? No way. But hopefully my lecture was loud enough that anyone nearby who Luke popped in on at least knew I knew what was going on. Seems that's the best a parent can hope for sometimes.

#### SHESAID



Alison Wingfield

It's amazing how the boys' hearing is so selective.

They come home and tell me all about what they did in school and what the science teacher or the music teacher or the gym teacher and even their regular teacher all said. So I know they can hear and comprehend quite well.

The minute they hit the car, something happens. They go from learning and listening mode to ignoring and avoiding mode.

Brick walls come to mind.

The main word they don't seem to understand, at least when it comes out of mom or dad's mouth, is "No."

I try really hard to let my no mean no, and my yes mean yes. But the boys still seem to think no is just a temporary setback. If whining doesn't work, and eventually they figure out that they're digging a deeper hole with their wailing and gnashing of teeth, then they resort to a flowery dissertation on why they need something or want something right now.

"But Mommy, I'm hungry for only a cookie and not anything else. My tummy doesn't want any fruit or crackers."

And if that doesn't work, they resort to subterfuge—in other words downright disobedience—and try to get that extra cookie when my back is turned.

I try not to be too negative, but apparently I do say no to them rather frequently. The boys like to write words on sticky notes and place them on me or themselves. Some have my name on them and some have "I love you" written on them. Luke pasted a sticky note on me the other day. It said "No."

Maybe I need to listen to myself more often.

## What you believe about God shapes life

Baptists put a heavy emphasis on what people believe about Jesus Christ, and rightly so. The revivalism of Southern Baptists in particular has been fueled by a conviction that Jesus Christ is God's only Son, that he sacrificed his life on a cross to pay for our sins, defeated death and the grave by his resurrection and now offers an eternally restored relationship with God to all who will believe on Jesus' name.

What a person believes about Jesus—his virgin birth, sinless life, incarnation on earth as fully human and fully divine, death and resurrection—is basic Christian doctrine. You couldn't get elected assistant Sunday school secretary in most Baptist churches without believing the right things about Jesus.

It is important to teach and talk about what we believe about Jesus; no doubt about it. What you believe about Jesus shapes your whole approach to the Christian life.

Amazingly, we talk much less about what we believe about God, even though that is an even more fundamental building block for faith and life. Although we seldom think about it, what a person believes about God makes a profound difference on how that person views life and relates to others. It also determines how you apply what you believe about Jesus.

What you believe about the nature and character of God shapes the way you perceive most everything.

For example, if you view God only as an angry judge ready to mete out punishment to one and all, you are not likely to act with compassion toward others. Instead, you are likely to enlist as God's special deputy to warn the world of its transgressions.

On the other hand, if you view God only as a loving Father who could not bring punishment on a wayward creation, you are not likely to call people to repentance—or to think you need to repent. Instead, you are likely to make sure people stop and smell the roses along the way, showering them with warm fuzzies and positive thinking.

If you believe God has given everyone the opportunity to repent of sins and accept his gift of redemption through Jesus, you are likely to live an evangelistic lifestyle, whether you preach on street corners or

not. You are likely to view the human struggle as a quest to find peace with God. In your best moments, you are likely to see the spark of God's light in every person, even the most unlovable. That might shape your view of the homeless, the poor, even of capital punishment.

On the other hand, if you believe God only seeks to redeem some people who are preprogrammed to be drawn to faith in Christ, you are likely to view the human condition as much less affected by earthly choices.

Even in your best moments you are not likely to see the spark of God's light in some people who appear to be reaping God's judgment on earth. Thus it is easier to believe that poor people are that way for reasons you can't change or that some people are inherently "bad."

If you believe God has set your life on a free-ranging course in which your decisions and actions make a daily difference in outcomes, you are likely to approach prayer with pleading urgency, particularly in times of crisis. You also are more likely to feel responsibility for how you relate to others and to believe anyone's negative patterns of behavior can be changed.

On the other hand, if you believe God has set your life on a predestined course in which you have little room for deviation, you are likely to approach prayer and other people differently. There is no need to plead with God to change a situation. And there is little incentive to be personally accountable for your actions.

Obviously, real people fall into various combinations of these positions about belief in God; these examples only illustrate several polar opposites.

But these illustrations help us see that what we believe about God makes a difference in how we live, how we relate to others, how we pray and how we think of ourselves.

Have you ever thought about where you got your view of God? Is it from the Bible, from family tradition, from self-serving assumptions?

What do you believe about God? Take a serious look and you could change your outlook on life.

— Mark Wingfield

### The Trinity

By Carey Newman

I sat down next to my friend at the end of the pew. He was carefully studying the order of worship. He looked up and remarked, "I just don't get it. We set aside at least one day a year to focus on the Trinity. Not only do I not understand the doctrine, but I don't see why it's relevant. What is so crucial about believing in the Trinity?"

On the surface the Trinity does appear more like a logical puzzle to be solved than an integral part of the Christian experience. It takes some considerable mental gymnastics to state with clarity how you can believe in three divine persons and yet still affirm their oneness. On the one hand, there is the risk of making the Father, Son and Spirit three separate gods (tritheism). While on the other hand,

there is the threat of collapsing all distinctions between them (Unitarianism).

Many of the confessing church's best theologians have turned their minds to this problem. Few have said it better than the great creeds of the church. Like other parts of the faith, however, most Christians accept the fact of the Trinity as a mystery and are willing to simply leave it at that. More troubling is that we see no relationship between our daily experience and the Trinity.

The crucial nature of the Trinity comes into focus when we examine the central events of our salvation—the death and resurrection of Jesus:

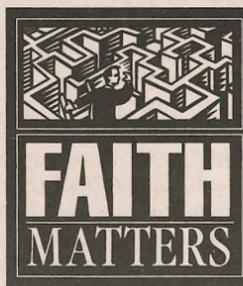
(1) Because we believe that Jesus is an incarnation of God, we must also affirm that God was in Christ at the cross. In some real sense, God suffered right alongside and with Jesus.

This has tremendous implications for our experience. Because of our incorporation through Christ, we have the knowledge that God is still with us, even in our sufferings. Paul can even say that his sufferings somehow fell up or complete the sufferings of Christ. And we know that God is right alongside and with us.

(2) God vindicated Jesus' obedience through resurrection. By the power of his Spirit, God raised Jesus, and it is this same Spirit of resurrection that Jesus now shares with us. The power that snapped the chains of death is the power that allows us to regain life.

The church's most visible symbol of the Trinity is baptism. In that event we publicly acknowledge our identification with Christ; we pledge our trust to the God who raises the dead; and we, with joy, celebrate the reception of the Spirit which breathes life into us. It is no surprise that the earliest Trinitarian confessions were also baptismal confessions.

I told my friend to sleep well and to re-live his baptism every day.



## Mohler: E.Y. Mullins led SBC to 'doctrinal ambiguity'

By James A. Smith Sr.  
Southern Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP)—Reckoning him as "one of the towering figures of Southern Baptist history," Al Mohler has compiled various writings of E.Y. Mullins under the title "The Axioms of Religion" in Broadman & Holman's "Library of Baptist Classics."

Mohler, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's current president, analyzes the life and ministry of Mullins, the fourth president of Southern Baptists' oldest seminary, in a 32-page introduction.

While celebrating the contributions of the denominational statesman, Mohler notes Mullins' theological legacy was his focus on individual experience as central to his theological method. This method, Mohler wrote, has contributed to a present state of theological "anemia" among Southern Baptists.

"Mullins' attempt to forge a mediating theological paradigm for Southern Baptists eventually failed because mediating positions are inherently unstable," Mohler wrote. "Delicate compromises established in one generation are often abandoned in short order as new generations assume leadership."

Edgar Young Mullins was the central figure of Southern Baptist life in the first half of the 20th century, Mohler wrote in the introduction.

In addition to his noteworthy 28-

year tenure as president of Southern Seminary, Mullins also served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention from 1921-24 and played a formative role in founding the Baptist World Alliance. Mullins also chaired the SBC committee which in 1925 produced the denomination's first statement of faith, "The Baptist Faith and Message."

"Largely as a result of his efforts and leadership, Southern Baptists emerged in the 20th century as a vital, growing and ambitious denomination," Mohler wrote.

Although Mullins' greatness as a denominational leader is "secure," his theological legacy cannot be ignored, Mohler asserts.

"The central thrust of E.Y. Mullins' theological legacy is his focus on individual experience," Mohler wrote. "Whatever his intention, this massive methodological shift in theology set the stage for doctrinal ambiguity and theological minimalism. The compromise Mullins sought to forge in the 1920s was significantly altered by later generations, with personal experience inevitably gaining ground at the expense of revealed truth."

"Once the autonomous individual is made the central authority in

matters of theology—a move made necessary by Mullins' emphasis on religious experience—the authority of Scripture becomes secondary at best, regardless of what may be claimed in honor of Scripture's pre-eminence," Mohler wrote. "Either personal experience will be submitted to revelation, or revelation will be submitted to personal experience. There is no escape from this theological dilemma, and every theologian must choose between these two methodological options."

Although Mohler is careful to note Mullins "was no liberal in terms of doctrine," the Baptist leader was "near the liberals in terms of method. The generations to follow would be tempted to make the shift in doctrine, as well as method."

Southern Seminary's newest church history professor agrees with Mohler's assessment of Mullins' impact on Southern Baptist life.

"Mullins brought Southern Seminary into the 20th century and molded its direction for the largest part of the century," said Tom Nettles, professor of historical theology. "The current president, God willing, will lead the seminary into the 21st century and could shape its influence for years to come. Mohler

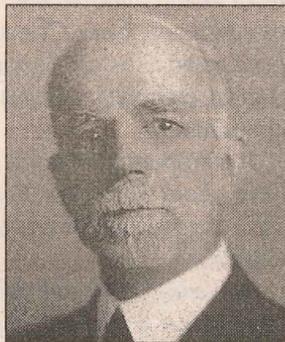
on Mullins is quite an appropriate project."

Among the writings compiled by Mohler in the new volume is "The Axioms of Religion: A New Interpretation of the Baptist Faith." The "Axioms" volume was and continues to be the book for which most Southern Baptists know Mullins, Mohler said.

"Faced with numerous opportunities to interpret Baptist identity, Mullins believed that a new interpretation was needed, timed to meet the needs of the early 20th century," Mohler wrote. "His purpose was to interpret Baptists to the world and to assist Baptists in the development of a worldwide sense of denominational identity."

"The great central concept Mullins declared to be the 'historical significance of the Baptists' was soul competency, and the 'Axioms' may be read as an attempt to explicate the full meaning of soul competency applied comprehensively," Mohler wrote.

"The emphasis on soul competency is, as Mullins must have both hoped and expected, the most enduring element of Mullins' legacy," Mohler continued. "The concept does underscore the necessity of personal religious experience—including repentance and faith—to the Christian life. But soul competency also serves as an acid dissolving religious authority, congregationalism, confessionalism and mutual theological accountability."



E.Y. Mullins

**"Soul competency also serves as an acid dissolving religious authority, congregationalism, confessionalism and mutual theological accountability."**

*Al Mohler, critiquing the influence of the doctrine of soul competency as taught by E.Y. Mullins*

**"A theological system that holds soul competency in low regard easily degenerates into loveless, graceless legalism. It extends to no one else the freedom to think creatively under the tutelage of the Spirit, and is quick to rebuke actions that refuse to walk in lock step to its narrow expectations."**

*Mike Clingenpeel*

### Soul competency takes a vacation

By Mike Clingenpeel

The battle for the soul of the Southern Baptist Convention ended several years ago. Conservatives bested moderates in a winner-take-all contest.

The battle was over power, said some, not theology. On the surface they were correct. It was a struggle to gain control over the institutions, money and processes of the SBC.

Secretly, however, many people feared it was what conservatives said it was—an issue of theology. The two groups were far from ideological and theological twins, and the winner earned the right to stamp its theology into the hearts and minds of current and future Baptists. Power, after all, is the ability to achieve purpose. The purpose, the end goal, was theological.

I thought of this when I read a recent release from Baptist Press. The story described publication of a new book compiling selected writings of E.Y. Mullins, who in the first quarter of this century was president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and president of the SBC. Current Southern Seminary President Al Mohler is the compiler of the articles, which are being published by Broadman & Holman, the publishing arm of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

In 1908 Mullins wrote "The Axioms of Religion," in which he enunciated the doctrine of soul competency, claiming it as the "historical significance of the Baptists."

Soul competency is the idea that every human being is free and responsible before God for his or her faith or the lack of it. The idea is at least as old as the Bible's concepts of God and humanity. God is revealed in general and specific ways to human beings. Human beings, created in God's likeness, have the capacity to choose or reject God, and we are responsible for our decision.

Soul competency does not mean we are sufficient apart from God, or that we can believe anything we want. It recognizes dependence upon Scripture as the primary means of God's revelation, and acknowledges Jesus Christ as the fullest revelation of God.

Mullins recognized soul competency as the hub of Baptist theology and practice. Everything else—priesthood of the believer, local church autonomy, separation of church and state, regenerant church membership, believer's baptism—was spoke and rim.

According to the Baptist Press story, Mohler blames Mullins for

much of Baptists' reputed theological drift. Mullins elevated personal experience above revelation, according to Mohler, making the authority of Scripture secondary. Mullins, who in 1925 chaired the committee that produced the original "Baptist Faith and Message statement," "set the stage for doctrinal ambiguity and theological minimalism," the story quotes Mohler as writing. Soul competency, he continues, is "an acid dissolving religious authority, congregationalism, confessionalism, and mutual theological accountability."

Don't miss what's happening here. Conservatives won control of the SBC—power. Ideologues like Mohler now direct the work of institutions that are reshaping the theological and ecclesiastical identity of Southern Baptists—theology.

The new Southern Baptists will be champions of doctrinal correctness, but the new orthodoxy comes at the expense of freedom of the individual conscience. Without Mullins' emphasis on soul competency Mohler's rigid Calvinist orthodoxy will likely stamp out an assembly line of Southern Seminary graduates who easily recite the arcane intricacies of a pre-approved theological system, but who lack an appreciation for the liberating mysteries of the Spirit and the humbling freshness of

grace.

In the end, a theological system that holds soul competency in low regard easily degenerates into loveless, graceless legalism. It extends to no one else the freedom to think creatively under the tutelage of the Spirit, and is quick to rebuke actions that refuse to walk in lock step to its narrow expectations.

Perhaps that is the only explanation for Mohler's recent decision to fire a 35-year employee of his seminary, whose principal transgression was to disagree with a statement made during a chapel address given by the current SBC president. When the employee, librarian Paul Debusman, wrote a letter to Tom Elliff questioning his statement that conservatives like himself would not have been allowed to speak in chapel prior to Mohler's administration, Mohler fired him for actions "harmful" to the seminary.

Students at Southern Seminary, like all theological students, learn from the writings and behavior of their mentors. The past three generations learned theology and faith from theologians like E.Y. Mullins. Future Southern Baptists will have their leaders mentored by theologians like Al Mohler.

What a pity.

*Mike Clingenpeel is editor of the Virginia Religious Herald and is a graduate of Southern Seminary*

### COMMENTARY

# CHURCHES

## Maturational growth can be hardest to accomplish

By David Winfrey  
News Director

BOWLING GREEN—Maturational growth is the most important growth for a congregation, but it also is the most difficult to define and accomplish, Leith Anderson told those attending the KBC church growth conference.

"Maturity and health can be extremely difficult to grasp," said Anderson, an author and pastor of Wooddale Church in Minneapolis.

"To mature is to grow up," he said. "It is to behave and live in a way that is appropriate to the age of that person."

But not all members are at the same level of maturity or ready to grow at the same rate or times, said Anderson, author of "Dying for Change" and "A Church for the 21st Century."

Anderson outlined six principles for churches seeking maturational growth:

■ *Maturing churches make disciples of Jesus Christ.* Anderson distinguished between those with a knowl-

edge of Christian teachings and those who are willing to follow them. "A disciple is not one who intellectually knows but (one who) behaviorally obeys the commandments of Jesus Christ."

■ *People grow when the season comes.* Churches are in danger of acting like Pharisees if they expect others to be mature spiritually immediately in all matters, Anderson said.

Churches should be continually encouraging growth and discipleship and seizing opportunities when they arise, he said.

"The reality is most maturation comes in spurts," he said, adding that those spurts often are connected to crises or changes in life stages. "We need to be there and ready when that occurs."

■ *Relationships are important.* According to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 80 percent of adults coming to faith in Jesus Christ do so as a result of the influence of a friend, Anderson said.

If churches are to mature, it will occur more as a result of relationships

than programming, he said. "That is not to say that programs are not important. It is to say that relationships are extremely important."

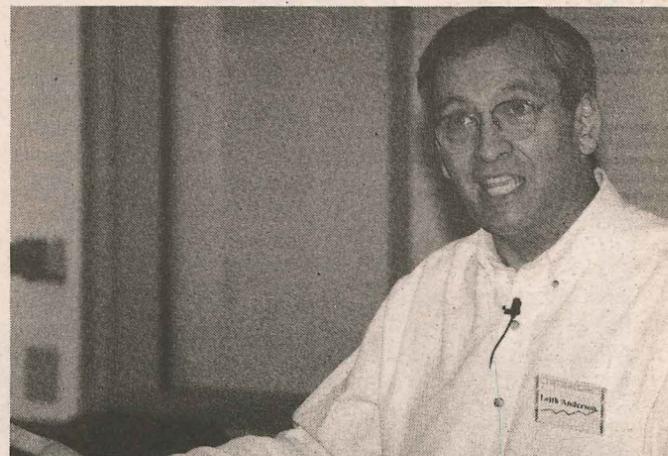
In churches that are spiritually mature, members extend to include other people in their relationships, he added.

■ *To grow maturationally, find mentoring churches.* Anderson suggested a church looking to grow in health should find another church that had similar characteristics, surroundings and challenges and now has matured.

Take church leaders to that church for a weekend visit and observe what happened as that congregation matured, he said. "The transformation takes place on the van ride on the way home."

Members won't be able to say it couldn't work back at their church because they already will have seen that it did work for a similar congregation. "You begin to catch the vision of what can be and how it can occur," he said.

■ *Grow the leaders to grow the church.* "The leaders may not be the ones who hold the offices," he noted. "The leaders are those who influence others."

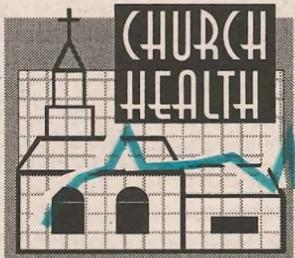


When leaders make growth, prayer or evangelism a priority, then the church will grow, pray and evangelize, he said.

■ *Build from islands of health and strength.* Churches would do better to maximize the things they do well rather than try to fix all their problems, he said.

Anderson drew a parallel from an admonition from a farmer about his weed-filled lawn: "If you grow grass and you do a good enough job of growing grass, you don't have to worry about the weeds."

**LEITH ANDERSON** The pastor of Wooddale Church in Minnesota recommended churches build from islands of health and strength. "If you grow grass and you do a good enough job of growing grass, you don't have to worry about the weeds," he said.



The Southern Baptist  
Theological Seminary

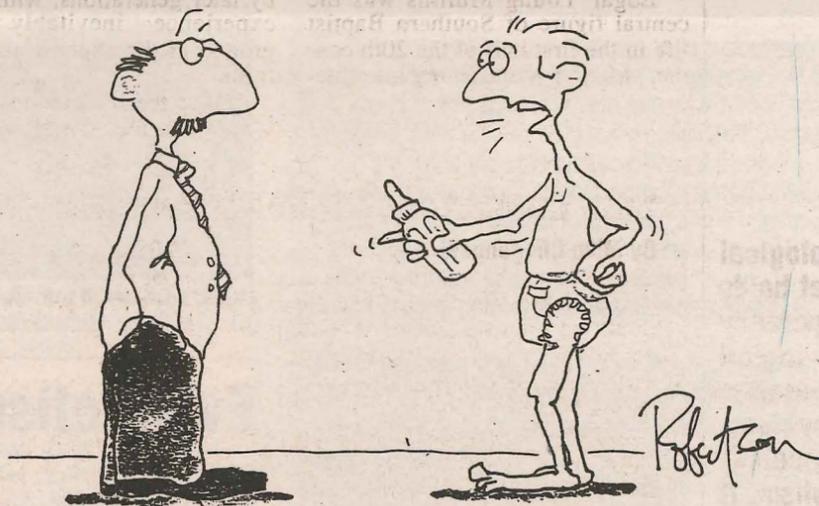
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# CHURCHES

## Church size often dictates pastor's responsibilities

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

**BOWLING GREEN**—If the pastor of your church had a limited amount of additional time available, would you prefer the pastor do more visiting with shut-ins or put more time into sermon preparation?

How you answer that question may be an indicator of what type of church you attend, according to Alan Witham, pastor of Hyland Baptist Church in Henderson.

Witham led a session on "What Kind of Church is Ours?" during the Church Health Summit Oct. 10-11 in Bowling Green. Material for the session was based on an Alban Institute book, "Discovering Your Congregation's Future," and research by Arlin Rothage.

This model classifies churches as falling into four types: family church-

es, pastoral churches, program churches and corporation churches.

Although not strictly categorized by numbers, churches tend to fall into these categories based on average worship attendance, Witham said. For example, family churches usually average 50 or fewer people in attendance; pastoral churches 50 to 150; program churches 150 to 350; and corporation churches 350 or more.

With the median average worship attendance in Kentucky Baptist Convention churches being 76, Witham noted, a large percentage of KBC churches fall into the family church or pastoral church model.

Understanding these models could help both pastors and laity see the ex-

pectations present within the congregation and how those may become sources of conflict, Witham said. Often, conflict arises when a growing church is moving from one model to another and members don't understand why the demands on the pastor's time are changing, he said.

For example, in a family church, the pastor is expected to be a chaplain to the members, while leadership roles are assumed by patriarchs and matriarchs in the congregation, Witham said.

But in a pastoral church, the primary expectation of the pastor is to serve as a manager of the leadership team, he added. In this model, the pastor must be at the center of most church activities and must attend all

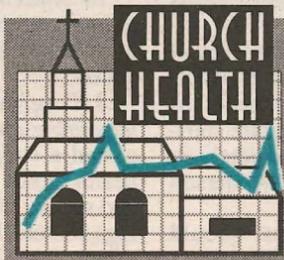
functions.

In a program church, the pastor is expected to be a planner who works with other key leaders to ensure high-quality programs, Witham said.

In a corporation church, the congregation's personal connection with the pastor often is sacrificed due to the size of the church, he said. The pastor's emphasis shifts to planning for "quality worship."

Witham noted that every church has strengths, and no model is better than another. What's important, he said, is to understand the dynamics that make a church fit one particular model and not another.

Otherwise, problems could result, he predicted. "If a church that has been a program church is moving to become a pastoral church but keeps trying to function as a program church, the leaders are going to experience burnout."



## Nashville pastor: It's time for church to disciple its converts

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

**BOWLING GREEN**—After more than a decade of emphasizing conversion to Christianity, Pastor Frank Lewis said he believes pastors should devote more sermons to instructing converts.

A shift to discipleship represents the next big wave in the body of Christ, said Lewis, the new senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Nashville.

Formerly a preaching and worship consultant for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board, Lewis said more Southern Baptists should know the essentials of their faith.

"Are any of you apprehensive about what will happen next June when we head to Salt Lake?" he asked, referring to the site of next year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

"I think the Mormons are going to be well-prepared for us. A lot of people are going to come away saying, 'They're just like us' because we haven't done a good job of preparing our people."

Part of this task can be accomplished through discipling sermons, he said. Such sermons show people how to grow, offer a rich doctrinal foundation and give a balanced view of spiritual disciplines, he said.

Instead of thinking every message must lead to an evangelistic invitation, Lewis said pastors should be equally concerned with explaining the Christian life.

"I'm all for an invitation, but I think we've gotten trapped in a Charles Finney mode," he said, referring to the legendary 19th century evangelist. "Think about being in a first-century mode, like the apostles, teaching people what it means to be counter-cultural."

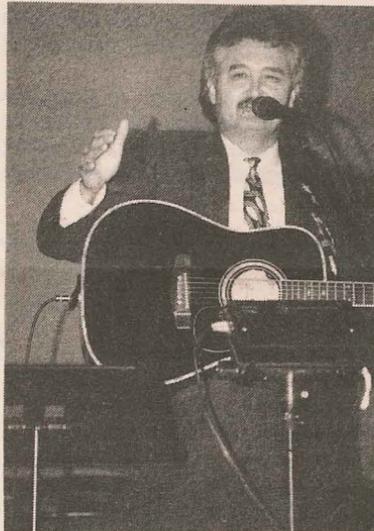
He also suggested pastors limit sermons to one central theme to increase their effectiveness and connect with today's culture.

Preachers are the only people who talk in three alliterative points, but most audiences aren't trained to listen to sermons that way any more, Lewis said.

Discipleship extends beyond preaching, he added, lamenting a spreading "CEO mentality" that suggests pastors don't need to get involved in such hands-on ministry as hospital visitation.

"There is a hunger people have," he said. "They want relationship. I think you'll see your discipling increase if you'll make that commitment."

"We have more mega-churches today than ever. But somewhere he (the senior pastor) still has a body he ministers to so he can model shepherding."



**MUSIC & DRAMA** ■ Left: Musician Keith Longbotham of Brentwood, Tenn., leads music during a session of the Church Health Summit, Oct. 10-11. ■ Right: Matt and Darlene Tullos present a skit. Matt Tullos is a drama consultant for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.



## Evangelism styles should match personalities

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

**BOWLING GREEN**—In the same way diverse personalities make up the church, there are many different ways to do evangelism, according to a leadership consultant with the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.

Despite multiple personalities and learning styles, Ron Pratt said Christians generally have relied on one method to spread Christianity.

"If we learn differently and act differently, why do we think there is only one way to reach people for Christ?" asked Pratt, who outlined five strategies for evangelism.

"Only one in four people have the personality that drives them to do visitation," he said. "Only one in four feel comfortable doing confrontational evangelism" such as passing out tracts or visiting prospects at home.

Confrontational evangelism isn't wrong, and churches should hold training sessions for it, he said. But it is not the only way to lead others to Christ, he added.

Another form is relational evangelism, in which believers build friendships in hopes of eventually witness-

ing.

The problem with most Christians is they don't have any unsaved friends, said Pratt, who meets the lost by refereeing community basketball games and coaching a soccer team. He recommended churches encourage members to build such relationships.

There also is "vocational" evangelism through sharing one's Christian faith at work. He said congregations can further it by enlisting Christian attorneys and businessmen for panel discussions on legal issues and witnessing in the marketplace.

"There's almost no resources for people to share their faith at work," he said. "We're so afraid of the ACLU ... that we don't even use our rights. We can have Bible studies in our office before work starts. We can pray."

Everyone can take part in invitational evangelism, he said. It means inviting others to an event where the gospel will be shared, such as a concert, church picnic or crusade.

These opportunities can be scheduled several times a year, such as the Super Bowl "family huddles" his church sponsors. Watching the game with non-Christian guests allows the host to show an evangelistic video at



**PRATT** "If we learn differently and act differently, why do we think there is only one way to reach people for Christ?"

halftime.

Pratt called the fifth form of evangelism the foundational method of prayer. Churches can form teams for prayer and other home-based contacts, he said.

"We have people who can pray, write cards and do phone calls and never leave the house, but still participate in evangelism."

# CHURCHES

## Healthy churches have common mission

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

BOWLING GREEN—Whether healthy churches are in urban, suburban or rural areas, they all have a common mission to reach the non-Christians, said Ralph Hodge.

However, "most churches are focused on everything else," said Hodge, a church innovation consultant for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. "They're focused on what 'we' need, what 'we' want and what pleases 'us.'"

"We tell our communities a lot, but seldom do I find churches who are asking people why they don't come to church and what they need."

Formerly a pastor in Louisville and Hopkinsville for 25 years, Hodge led a workshop at the Church Health Summit titled "Getting The North-

bound Train Going North." In it, he identified three characteristics of healthy churches:

■ *They are focused.* Unhealthy churches lack this kind of concentration, which revolves around God's purpose for the congregation, he said.

"I don't know of any focus for God's church other than the Great Commission," he said. "You hear about seeker and purpose-driven churches, but they're all saying the same thing," he said. "Our people are to have a heart for witnessing. It's not to be a department of the church."

■ *They intentionally lower cultural barriers.* Anything that hinders a church from reaching non-Christians should be scuttled, he said, noting that churches often equate cultural traditions with biblical mandates.

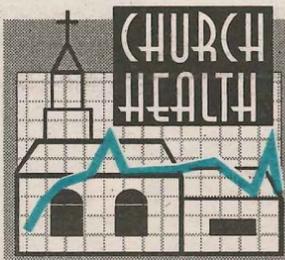
This leads to what Hodge called

the two "black holes" of church health. The first is "preservationism," trying to keep dying traditions alive. The other is "revitalizationism," seeking to resurrect old programs, only to discover they are ineffective.

"I don't find many churches are lazy," Hodge said. "Pastors are exhausted and people are worn out, trying to do 'stuff.' Churches badger people and promote things and it still doesn't work."

■ *They intentionally assimilate newcomers into church life.* People come from different cultural backgrounds and have different expectations; churches must learn who they are and not "pigeonhole" them, he said. A healthy church is also concerned with transforming lives, not just conforming people to church life, Hodge added.

"Henry Blackaby says if you help people draw closer to Jesus, you won't have to have a stewardship campaign or a witnessing campaign, you won't be able to contain them."



## Speak to their hearts, they'll give the money

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

BOWLING GREEN—After seeing his church's weekly budget rise nearly five-fold since 1989, Brad Johnson says the answer to increased giving comes from emphasizing Jesus.

In a workshop on developing financial stewards without offending people, the pastor of Living Hope Baptist Church said churches struggling financially shouldn't focus on money.

"Too often we only talk about money," said the Bowling Green pastor. "Talking about money only speaks to people's minds. It won't touch their hearts."

"Once you have people's hearts, it's a short step to their pocketbooks. We never talk about money without talking about our love for Christ."

While many churches think more money would solve all their prob-

lems, Johnson said that may not be the case. If a congregation isn't already missions-minded, more income won't transform it, he explained.

Living Hope puts the spotlight on God's work by inviting members to give testimonies of how God changed their lives or provided for their needs. Those testimonies reinforce the idea that giving supports ministry, he said.

Additionally, visitors want to know churches care more about them than their money, he noted. Despite some initial objections, several years ago the Johnson began telling newcomers they weren't expected to give when the offering plate is passed.

Those who do give need to know how their donations are spent, he said.

"Help people understand the end point of their dollars," Johnson said. "Help people see it's not about money. Our budget team is called the ministry planning team. It's not about dollars, it's about discipleship."

Nor should pastors fear preaching about stewardship, he said, adding that he leads a series on that topic at the start of each budget year.

However, he said, churches must also be careful to let people know exactly how their money is spent—even if staff members are uncomfortable with everyone knowing their salary.

Among his other tips:

■ *Leaders should give generously.* While they must be careful to avoid "bragging," Johnson said people must know God meets the needs of people who tithe.

■ *Be discerning in the level of support given to various offerings.* Leaders can't put the same emphasis on every appeal or people will stop listening, he said.

■ *Be willing to bend.* If someone wants to start a new ministry in the middle of the year, see if funds can be shifted from other departments.

■ *When facing difficult spending decisions, fast and pray.*

## 5 M's have replaced SBC's 5-point program

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

BOWLING GREEN—Today's healthy churches look more like the early New Testament church than those familiar to most Southern Baptists, said a Baptist Sunday School Board representative.

Healthy churches are growing numerically and spiritually as well as starting new ministries and missions, Alan Tungett told a group during the Church Health Summit in Bowling Green. But their main concern is preparing believers to carry on in the future, he said.

Southern Baptists long have relied on a five-point program of Sunday school, discipleship training, Brotherhood, WMU and music, said Tungett, leader of the board's general-associational leadership team.

But that model started breaking down in the late 1960s and early '70s,

he said, with many members "voting with their feet" by no longer coming on Sunday nights.

He said the business of today's church is the five M's:

■ *Mission to make disciples and evangelize the lost.*

■ *Membership growth through baptizing and enlisting new believers into the fellowship.*

■ *Maturing members by teaching and helping them become doers of the word.*

■ *Magnifying God through worship.*

■ *Ministering by loving one's neighbor and equipping people to serve others.*

"In a healthy church, it is very natural to reach out," he said.

Healthy churches treat every Christian as a member of the family, maintain interpersonal relationships and stress that every believer is a minister and a missionary, Tungett said.

These theological underpinnings lead to a unified community of servants exercising their spiritual gifts, which is the first benchmark of a healthy church, he said.

In these congregations full devotion to Christ is considered normal, members are concerned for the lost—which leads them to be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure—and anointed biblical teaching is the catalyst to transforming lives.

Other benchmarks of a healthy church, Tungett said, include:

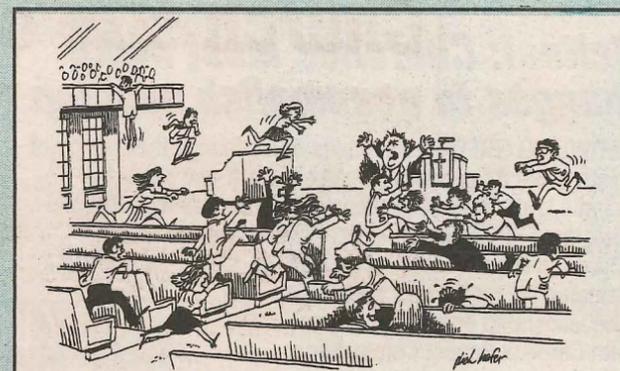
■ *Members who display integrity and yearn for spiritual growth.*

■ *Loving relationships that permeate church life.*

■ *The promotion of small groups by the church to help change lives.*

■ *Excellence that honors God and inspires people.*

■ *Leaders who have the gift of leadership.*



"Pastor Cartwright is a master of the altar call."

## Use invitations for more than just conversions, pastor says

By David Winfrey  
News Director

BOWLING GREEN—An altar call is not just for inviting people to become Christians, according to one Kentucky pastor speaking at the Church Health Summit.

"We don't use the altar enough," said Billy Compton, pastor of Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown. Compton led a session on making invitations more inviting during worship services.

Invitations can be offered for a variety of reasons, including asking Christians to come forward and pray for forgiveness, healing in a relationship or for strength in dealing with grief or loss, he said.

Invitations are a biblical method for responding to a call from God, Compton said. "If you follow the ministry of Jesus, the word 'come' is a significant word."

Invitations also are a logical and practical conclusion to a sermon because they give people an opportunity to respond to the information presented, he said.

"If you make a private decision and you make a commitment publicly, it gives strength to the commitment," he said. "It helps the person drive down a spiritual stake."

In addition to the variety of reasons people may respond to an invitation, Compton listed a multitude of ways a speaker may invite audience members to respond: raising a hand, standing, coming forward, praying at one's seat, making a verbal confession at one's seat, remaining and talking to a church leader after the service, and signing a commitment card.

Combination or progressive invitations also can be effective, Compton noted.

He recalled a youth evangelism service in which members of the audience were asked to stand when he called out the decade of their life when they became a Christian, starting in the 70s and progressing younger.

The teenage years drew the largest response and the speaker encouraged other teens to join those who already had made a decision to become a Christian.

"And in that environment ... three girls had the encouragement to respond," he said.



PRAISE Owensboro soloist Alma Randolph sings during an evening concert sponsored by the Western Recorder during the Church Health Summit.

# CHURCHES

## McNeal: Churches must make changes to accomplish mission

BOWLING GREEN—Christians must change their vision of ministry from a top-down concept to a flat-line shared version if churches are to accomplish their mission, Reggie McNeal told those attending the Church Health Summit.

"We still have basically clergy-driven, clergy-led, clergy-dominated ministry," said McNeal, director of the leadership development team of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Such a strategy leaves too many Christians on the sidelines cheering clergy on to burnout and depression, he said.

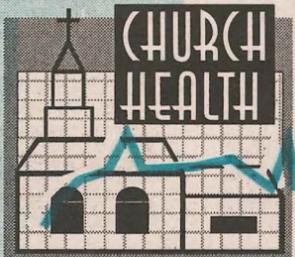
"If real revival comes, if we move outside the walls, it will be when all God's people realize they are called, gifted and empowered to do God's ministry," he said.

Other changes that must be made McNeal said, are:

- Focusing church members' attention outside the church walls. "The typical church still believes the building is where it happens," McNeal said. Instead, he said, a church must dedicate most of its money, energy and concern to where non-Christians work and live.

- Focusing church services and programs to reach the unchurched. Too many congregations are saying, "Come and get it," McNeal said, "And 'it' is what we like. When will we have the courage to say 'We will meet you where you are?'"

- Stop distinguishing between the sacred and the secular. "God is at work not only in the church, but he is at work profoundly in the world," he said.



## Churches urged to reach 24-hour, 7-day society

Continued from page 1

McNeal's response: "Where does it say in the word of God to make it difficult for people to come to God?"

He warned church leaders that people who visit their churches make quick decisions about whether they will return or not. Such decisions are made about 10 minutes after hitting the parking lot, he said, meaning what happens long before the sermon is of great importance in making a good impression.

He cited issues such as parking, directional signs and appearance of the facilities as initial indicators.

Meeting modern expectations for convenience also should drive churches to offer more than one worship time and worship style, McNeal said. "This is a 24-hour, seven-day society."

Due to work demands and other scheduling conflict, "some people never will come to your church on Sunday morning," he reported. "Or maybe we need to let them get out a little early to go get our food warmed up. ... Who's reaching them?"

McNeal admonished churches to plan their programs and activities with unchurched people in mind. "Here we



MCNEAL Boomers are leaving the church, he said, because, "they've not been allowed into leadership."

are with the stewardship of the eternal gospel, and we've got to start planning with someone besides us in mind. ... I dream of the day churches stop planning with calendars and budgets and start with people."

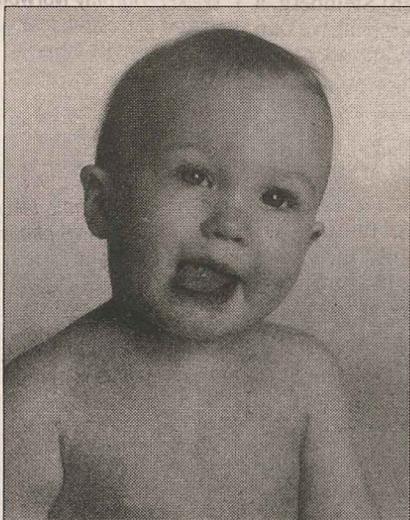
He also spoke of the need for churches to cross generational lines.

Many boomers who came back to church to provide moral instruction for their children now are leaving the church because entrenched leadership has not created a place for the boomers to assume leadership roles, McNeal

said. They're leaving "because they've not had the same impact on the church they've had everywhere else. They've not been allowed into leadership."

Reaching "Generation X," the youngest adult generation alive today, is another problem, he said. "We are not reaching this generation."

One reason, he suggested, is they don't see the church living out what it claims to teach and preach. "They're saying the church is too racist and too homogeneous."



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# MUSIC

## Gospel Music Hall of Fame celebrates genre's heritage

By Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

DETROIT (RNS)—Legendary singer Shirley Caesar and prolific composer Thomas Dorsey were among 16 individuals and groups inducted earlier this month into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame, a new organization to honor significant contributions to the gospel music genre.

"We felt if they could have a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, we needed one for gospel music," said Sherry DuPree, a member of the board of directors. "We felt that many of our people never receive any type of recognition that will last after they are older or after they're deceased."

About 300 people were expected for the dinner in Detroit celebrating the heritage of black gospel music, organizers said. Artists or their representatives accepted trophies marking the occasion.

The honorees included luminaries from the black gospel world such as Dorsey, who died in 1993. Dorsey, considered the father of gospel music, was a prolific writer—he composed more than 500 gospel tunes—and is best known for "Precious Lord, Take My Hand," which he wrote in 1932

after his wife's death. It remains a staple in the repertoire of many singers.

Another honoree, the late Rosetta Tharpe was one of the first gospel singers to sell a million records—and to cross over from religious to secular audiences. In the late 1930s, she recorded a Dorsey song called "Hide Me in Thy Bosom" which was re-released in a more lively "street" version called "Rock Me." Some fans were angered by her effort to reach the secular world and declared "she wasn't Christian anymore," DuPree said.

Another of those honored, the late Mahalia Jackson, had several hits selling more than a million copies. Jackson's first million-seller was "Move on Up a Little Higher" in 1947. Later, in 1961, Jackson, known as the queen of gospel music, gained wide fame when she performed at the inauguration of President John Kennedy.

Caesar has won nine Grammy awards, including one for her album, "Put Your Hand in the Hands of the Man from Galilee," recorded in the early 1970s. In addition to her singing, Caesar is pastor of the 800-member Mount Calvary Word of Faith Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C.

Additional musicians will be in-



ducted once a year, said DuPree, author of "African-American Good News (Gospel) Music."

Organizers for the hall of fame said they hope to open a museum in 1998 in downtown Detroit that will house materials about the inductees.

In 1995, the hall of fame's board members started meeting, setting guidelines for potential inductees and gathering items for the museum. They have been working to build interest in the black gospel legends by featuring different artists on their web site ([www.gmf.org](http://www.gmf.org)).

Other first-round inductees include: Pastor James Cleveland of Chicago, founder of the Gospel Music Workshop of America; the late Charles Nicks & the Young Adult



Choir of St. James Missionary Baptist Church in Detroit; the late Mattie Moss Clark of Detroit; Albertina Walker of Chicago; Dorothy Norwood of New Jersey; the late Clara Ward of Chicago; the Fairfield Four of Tennessee; Dorothy Love Coats of Alabama; the Caravans of Chicago; Martha Jean (the Queen) Steinberg, a Detroit gospel radio personality; Dan Underwood, a Detroit gospel music promoter; and Edward Smith, a Detroit gospel event coordinator.

### HALL OF FAMERS

■ Above: The Caravans (above), a now-defunct gospel group, are among the first inductees into the Gospel Music Hall of Fame. Members of the group (from left) Albertina Walker, Dorothy Norwood, James Cleveland, Inez Andrews and Shirley Caesar, also have been inducted individually.

■ Left: Rosetta Tharpe, one of the first gospel singers to sell a million records, in a photo taken circa 1949. (RNS photos)



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## The 10 biggest estate planning errors

As we speak to various church groups and confer privately with individuals about their estate plans, we have discovered some common errors.

**1. Not executing a will.** If you don't do it, you accept the will the Commonwealth of Kentucky has made for you.

**2. Wanting just a simple will.** Some people leave a surviving spouse everything regardless of the estate's size because the spouse will not have to pay taxes. That may only delay the tax until the surviving spouse dies. For estates over \$600,000 in 1997, that could be costly.

**3. Putting everything into joint tenancy.** While it avoids probate, between spouses it has the same danger as a simple will. If you own property jointly with non-spouses, like children, it may become subject to the claims of the child's creditors, and you may get taxed on your own property if they accidentally die before you.

**4. Thinking that avoiding probate will avoid taxes.** It doesn't always.

**5. Leaving property to one child to "work things out."** If you leave property to one child, that child is not obligated to give it to

other members in the family. It may even cost that child in taxes if he or she wanted to redistribute things as you would have wanted it.

**6. Letting your children "take care of" your grandchildren.** It may cost less for you to leave property to grandchildren directly rather than let your children do it through their own estate plans.

**7. Failing to have a plan in place for how your affairs will be handled if you are incapacitated.**

**8. Not using trusts to help beneficiaries handle their inherited wealth.** You can ease beneficiaries into the management of inherited wealth.

**9. Not planning for taxes that may be due at your death.**

**10. Procrastination.** The government will love you for this.

Please call Laurie Valentine, our trust counsel, at (502) 244-6466 to help you avoid making any of these errors in your Christian estate planning.

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

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Barry Allen

## Bill seeks to keep tithe out of reach of bankruptcy creditors

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Legislation that aims to protect churches and charities from bankruptcy claims recently was introduced in both the U.S. House and Senate.

Rep. Ron Packard, R-Calif., and Sen. Charles Grassley, R-Iowa, introduced the Religious Liberty and Charitable Donation Protection Act, as a response to churches and charities who have been requested to turn over to creditors contributions from bankrupt members.

"This is having an absolutely devastating effect on churches and charities across the nation," Packard said in a statement.

"Lawyers are well aware that most churches and charities don't have the resources to fight a creditor in court," he added. "Without protection, every offering plate in America is at risk."

The legislation prevents 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.

Current bankruptcy law, according to the lawmakers, allows Chapter 13 bankruptcy filers to spend money on travel, liquor, casino gambling and 1-900 telephone numbers but not tithing and charity donations.

"Our legislation makes it absolutely clear that churches and charities are not 'cash cows' for bankruptcy lawyers," Packard said. "Targeting churches and charities is extortion at its very worst. It is simply indefensible."

The bill would apply to cases in the courts now, said Adam Schwartz, a spokesman for Packard.

In recent years, churches in Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Texas have faced actions by federal bankruptcy trustees.

## Religion amendment predicted to fail

By Greg Warner  
Associated Baptist Press

WASHINGTON (ABP)—The Religious Freedom Amendment, which would write new religious protections into the U.S. Constitution, probably won't pass in the House of Representatives, according to the chairman of the subcommittee handling the amendment.

"This is one that right now isn't going to make it," Rep. Charles Canady (R-Fla.) said of H.J. Res. 78, introduced last May by Rep. Ernest Istook, R-Okla. Canady is chairman of the Constitution subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee.

Proponents say the Istook amendment is necessary because the U.S. government—particularly the court

system—has overstepped its authority in restricting religious practices, such as school prayer and aid to religious schools.

Critics say the amendment is unnecessary and would have undesirable consequences, such as allowing state governments to endorse one religion over others and forcing taxpayers to support religious institutions.

Supporters of the amendment include the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, Christian Coalition and the National Association of Evangelicals. Opponents include the Baptist Joint Committee, the National Council of Churches and various Jewish, Muslim and African-American groups.

"I think the amendment, possibly changed, will pass the subcommittee

and full committee sometime next year," said Canady. "I think it will be on the floor of the House and it will fail to pass the House by the requisite two-thirds majority. I think its going to be difficult to put together the votes for that effort."

Speaking to directors of the Baptist Joint Committee, the conservative Florida congressman did not say whether he supports or opposes the amendment. Canady said he is supportive of Istook's concerns for religious liberty but has not signed on as a co-sponsor of the amendment.

Canady noted constitutional amendments are intentionally difficult to pass. "The founding fathers very wisely put in place mechanisms that make it difficult to change the basic document."

## Persecution bill won't help, says U.S. official

WASHINGTON (ABP)—Something should be done about the growing problem of religious persecution worldwide, but legislation to impose U.S. economic sanctions on offending governments is not the solution, said a top State Department official.

To automatically impose sanctions on governments that allow persecution would have "a severe negative impact" on religious freedom, said John Shattuck, assistant secretary of the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor.

The Freedom From Religious Persecution Act, introduced in Congress by Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., and Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., would impose sanctions on nations that condone religious persecution.

But Shattuck said the "one-size-fits-all" approach of the Wolf-Specter bill would nullify other methods of influencing governments and prompt "retaliation" against persecuted faith groups. He proposed changes to make the bill more acceptable.

The issue of religious persecution has "skyrocketed" to a much higher place on the State Department's agen-

da in recent years, Shattuck said.

The United States can have a role in reducing such persecution, he said, "but we need to do it in a way that helps the people we want to help, rather than make the situation worse."

Particularly in places like the Sudan, Egypt, China, Tibet and the Middle East, sanctions would only bring more persecution, Shattuck said. As in the case of Egypt, he added, it may not be the government causing the problem but the larger society. Punishing those governments would weaken their ability to make improvements, he said.

## Chris Jones

By Robert Dunston

Chris Jones went Down Under this summer. Jones, the son of Truman and Carol Jones of Harlan, spent his summer as a summer missionary in the city of Perth, Australia. He worked in a recreation center located about 15 kilometers south of downtown Perth.

Sports and recreation are very popular in Australia, but schools do not field sports teams. Instead, every neighborhood has its own recreation center and its own sports schools, uniforms and statistics. Between 6,000-7,000 people each week passed through the center where Jones worked, so the task of ministering to people often seemed overwhelming.

Jones performed a variety of duties at the center. He was a basketball coach and teacher to a variety of teams ranging in age from small children to middle-aged adults. In addition, he played basketball, officiated games and wrote about basketball and other activities for the center's newsletter. Saturdays were especially busy for Jones as he played with the Baptist league from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The center also served as a church. On Sunday mornings 300-

400 people entered the facility to worship God and exercise their spiritual muscles.

Not every waking moment was spent at the center. Jones and his two partners took a three-day sight-seeing trip along the western coast of Australia. They caught crawfish and ate them for supper and helped some local farmers whose crops

were being destroyed by rabbits and kangaroos.

The supervisors who worked with Jones and his two partners scheduled time each week for personal spiritual development. They encouraged the summer missionaries to spend quiet time in Bible study and contemplation. Jones said he needed this time.

"I learned to depend on God, to lean on God more. Being 45 hours away from family and friends, I had to learn to depend more on God."

Jones wants to return to Australia. This semester at Cumberland College he has added a public health major to his business administration major. He said his passion is "to see people healthy, both spiritually and physically; the whole-person concept of health."

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



## 'Yes, you can!'

"I can't do it."

Our staff hears this a lot from our kids. Discouragement is a major enemy, brought to the battle because of abuse, neglect and poor choices.

Part of our mission is to help children and families realize they can. They can make the grade; they can save their marriage; they can learn to swim; they can discipline their children; they can forgive themselves; they can be forgiven.

"I can't" comes from somewhere else, however. It comes from singles, couples and families who cannot imagine being foster parents, adoptive parents or visiting resource parents. These are people with love in their hearts, who want to reach out, but who are afraid of being hurt—just like some of our kids.

"I couldn't let go," the prospective foster parent says, imagining the day when the child returns home or is adopted. "What happens when she goes to college?" ask the visiting resource parents who open their homes on weekends and holidays to a child, making her part of the family. "What if I adopt this child and he gets sick, or has problems in school? What would my family

say if I brought a bi-racial baby home?"

I hear the pain in these statements and questions. There is an answer, although it is anything but easy. Whenever I think of separation and loss, I think of how Jesus' friends must have felt after he returned to heaven. These people knew him as friend, brother, son—and then had to say goodbye. What loss. And yet, through the Comforter left behind, these same people endured and thrived.

Believers have that same comfort as a resource. What sustained Peter, John and Mary in the dark days of loss was not simply the memory of Jesus, but his continued presence in their hearts.

Part of our work is to help all of our prospective parents—even the most "temporary"—realize they can make these commitments. Our ministry is not just to the child, but to those who would open their arms to her.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

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

## FAMILY

### Lower rates for long-term capital gains

By Jeremy White

The new Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 reduces the tax rate for long-term capital gains. The reduction is not as much as some of the political hype, but every bit helps.

If you sell stocks, mutual funds, rental property or other capital assets at a gain after May 6, 1977, then your tax rate on that gain is lower than your regular rates. If you are in the 15 percent tax bracket, then your tax on the capital gain is now 10 percent. If you are in the 28 percent tax bracket, then your tax gain is now 20 percent.

To qualify for the lower rate, you must own the capital asset for 18 months. If you buy a stock, hold it for one year, and then sell it at a gain, you will pay your regular tax rate. As before, you can still deduct only a net capital loss up to \$3,000 (the rest carries forward to future years).

It gets even better for long-term investors. After the year 2000, if you sell a capital asset at a gain held for five years or more, then your tax rate is 8 percent for taxpayers in the lowest (15 percent) tax bracket. For all other taxpayers, a capital asset must be bought after 2000 and held for five years to qualify for a lower rate of 18 percent (instead of 20 percent).

If you own mutual funds (outside of retirement plans), then your year-end tax statement from the mutual fund company will detail any short-term capital gain and long-term capital gains before and after May 6, 1997.

Here are some planning tips:

- Pay close attention to your holding periods (rather than selling a stock held for 17 months, wait a few weeks to sell at a long-term gain with a lower rate).

- Take capital losses (in excess of \$3,000) when you have capital gains to offset them.

- Try not to take capital gains in high income years that would push you into income levels where other credits and deductions are phased out.

- Be careful about buying mutual funds outside of retirement plans in November and December. Many funds make a distribution then. You could end up with a quick tax bill with no benefit.

Jeremy White is a certified public accountant in Paducah. He presents financial seminars and workshops at churches and conferences.



## NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Abortion foes pledge fight.** Opponents of legal abortion say President Clinton's veto on Oct. 10 of a bill outlawing a controversial late-term abortion procedure will only intensify their efforts to ban the procedure. Clinton's veto of the bill was the second time he has struck down the legislation. Last year, Congress was unable to muster the votes to override the veto.

■ **Regent University eyes D.C. campus.** Regent University, founded by religious broadcaster Pat Robertson, says it plans to launch a Washington, D.C., campus in the spring as part of its Robertson School of Government. University officials say they want to further the institution's mission of training leaders "to support the advances of the pro-family movement."

■ **Teachers alter evolution statement.** The National Association of Biology Teachers has dropped the words "unsupervised" and "impersonal" from its official definition of evolution. The group's eight-person board of directors voted unanimously to alter the definition after religion scholars argued that inclusion of the two words constituted a theological judgment about the non-existence of God going beyond the boundaries of empirical science.

■ **House backs school vouchers for D.C.** By the narrowest of margins—Speaker Newt Gingrich's tie-breaking vote—the House of Representatives approved a District of

Columbia spending bill that includes a school voucher plan. Despite the 203-202 House vote, the measure's final approval appears unlikely. The Senate version of the bill contains no voucher provision, and President Clinton has vowed to veto the measure should it come to him with the voucher plan intact.

■ **Religious immigration law renewed.** Congress has renewed a provision of American immigration law allowing foreign religious workers to enter and remain in the United States for extended periods of time but the lawmakers refused to make the provision permanent. Earlier this month, just as the provision was expiring, the Senate acted to extend the law allowing up to 10,000 religious workers to enter the United States every year to work in such ministries as soup kitchens, shelters, AIDS hospices and other religiously-run charities.

■ **Court won't hear suicide challenge.** The U.S. Supreme Court has refused to hear a challenge to Oregon's physician-assisted suicide law, but the status of the measure is still uncertain. Justices in June ruled that terminally ill people do not have a constitutional right to doctor-assisted suicide. In 1994, Oregon made physician-assisted suicide legal, but the voter initiative never took effect because of legal challenges. Oregon voters are scheduled to take up the measure again on Nov. 4, to decide whether to repeal the law.

■ **Graham reaches out to gays at crusade.** Evangelist Billy Graham welcomed people of all sexual orientations to his recent crusade in San Francisco, but also affirmed heterosexual marriage in an address to young people. "Whatever your racial background or your sexual orientation—we welcome all of you tonight in the name of Christ," Graham told crowds that averaged 17,150 people each night of the three-day crusade held Oct. 9-11 at the Cow Palace arena. "As for sex," Graham said during a youth night, "there's nothing wrong with it—as long as it takes place between a man and a woman who are married."

■ **Nobel goes to land mine opponents.** The International Campaign to Ban Landmines, under the direction of its U.S. leader and co-winner Jody Williams, has been awarded the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize. The award, announced Oct. 10, was swiftly hailed by religious groups active in the campaign, which is close to its goal of making banning the weapons a feasible reality.

■ **Scandal falls Christian network founder.** The founder of a Florida-based network of Christian television stations has resigned after it was disclosed a secretary with whom he had an affair was given a secret payment. Robert D'Andrea submitted his resignation from the board of the Christian Television Network Oct. 8, five days after donors to the network filed suit claiming network money was used to pay the woman.

## 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:** 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, Sunday School Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253-0433.

**TOUR:** 12 days Israel and Egypt including Mt. Sinai, March 28-Apr. 8, all only \$2,289. Call Pastor Jack R. Studie (502) 247-8331.

**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.

**SEEKING:** Preschool teachers. Fern Creek Baptist Child Development Center is currently looking for preschool teachers for the 1997-98 school year. Hours are MWF, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. We offer competitive wages, a friendly environment and other benefits. Please contact Debbie Gorbandt or Linda Barnes at (502) 239-0316.

**FOR SALE:** Baldwin Interlude Organ. Like-new—includes bench and instructions; \$995. Great Christmas gift or nice organ for a small church. Springdale Church, 4601 Springdale Road, Louisville, Ky. (502) 228-7726.

**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.

**ATTENTION:** Pastors, ministers of music, ministers of education, ministers of youth and all other staff members. Hundreds of churches call us each month looking for a pastor or staff member. Call (800) 917-9599 for your confidential information packet. Southern Baptist Ministers Staffing Service, P.O. Box 198726, Nashville, TN 37219-8726. Regional office: New Orleans, La. <http://www.ministerservices.com>.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music. Send resumé to: Search Committee, New Bethel Baptist Church, P.O. Box 100, Verona, KY 41092.

**SEEKING:** Minister to youth. First Baptist, 301 Oak St., Carmi, IL. Contact: Sherry Gholson, (618) 382-2022.

**WANTED:** Used handbells. Please contact Bagdad Baptist Church at (502) 747-8933. If no answer, please leave a message.

**SEEKING:** Youth minister at Fairlane Baptist Church in Grants Lick, Ky. Please contact Jim Macht at (606) 635-1973 after 6 p.m.

**SEEKING:** Ambitious, energetic people who desire a career in a marketing and distribution organization with a Christian emphasis. Phone: (502) 622-7308.

# PEOPLE

## PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Ed and Teri Tarleton, missionaries in Moscow, as they seek opportunities to share their Christian faith.

■ Jaime and Kimberly Knight in language school in Kursk, Russia.

■ Baptist Convention of New England staff and Kentucky Baptist Convention missions and evangelism division staff as they meet to pray and plan Oct. 25-29 in Northboro, Mass.

■ Ann Lawrence, new Woman's Missionary Union and missions ministry leader for the Baptist Convention of New England.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **CENTRAL CITY**—Cherry Hill Church recently called **Chris Odle** as pastor.

■ **CLINTON**—First Church recently ordained **Danny Kimbell** to the deacon ministry.

■ **CORINTH**—New Columbus Church called **David Foley** as pastor. Foley is a graduate of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. He previously served at Oneida Baptist Institute and was bivocational pastor at Royal Oak Church in Booneville.

■ **COVINGTON**—Oak Ridge Church recently called **Troy Cates** of Amarillo, Texas, as minister of youth and education. Cates began his new ministry Sept. 21.

■ **FORT MITCHELL**—Fort Mitchell Church called **French Harmon** as pastor. He previously was pastor at First Church in Allen. He will begin his new ministry Nov. 16.

■ **LAWRENCEBURG**—Southern Seminary Professor **Timothy Beoug-**

**her** will be the evangelist for an Anderson County interdenominational revival meeting Nov. 14-17. Services will be held nightly at 7 p.m. at Anderson County Middle School in Lawrenceburg.

■ **LEXINGTON**—**Chuck Bass** recently resigned as pastor at Boone's Creek Church.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—A 25th anniversary presentation of the musical *Celebrate Life* will be held at Crescent Hill Church Oct. 26, at 10:50 a.m. Call (502) 896-4425 for more information.

Highland Park First Church recently ordained **David Cox** and **Ron Schumacher** as deacons.

Farmdale Church called **Terry Keith** as minister of music and education. He will begin his new ministry Nov. 2. Keith previously was part-time minister of music at Grace Church in Lexington.

Cloverleaf Church will host the Sons of Liberty of Stanton in a gospel

music concert Nov. 1 at 7 p.m. Call (502) 367-0218 for more information.

Gethsemane Church ordained **Richard Preasmyer** to the deacon ministry Oct. 5. Also, Pastor **David Livingston** will hold a gospel concert at Buckner Church Oct. 26 at 7 p.m.

■ **RUSSELLVILLE**—Second Church honored **Jimmy Prince** as church organist Oct. 5.

■ **UPTON**—Lucas Grove Church called **DeWayne Chadwick** as pastor. He began his new ministry Oct. 12. Chadwick will be ordained to the

gospel ministry Oct. 26.

■ **WARSAW**—Bramlette Church declared Sept. 28 as "**James Ray Day**." Ray served more than 40 years as Sunday school director. Dinner was held in his honor.

■ **WINCHESTER**—Central Church called **Morris Anderson** as pastor. He previously was pastor at First Church in Pigeon Forge, Tenn. He will begin his new ministry in mid October. Also, **Tony Cecil** recently resigned as associate pastor for youth to attend New Orleans Seminary.

## Campbellsville University

invites you to the

### Robertson Worship Workshop

"Worship: Wrestling with the Angel"

(Worship as Rest and Effort)

Thursday, Oct. 23 7 p.m.

### Lowell Avenue Baptist Church

Campbellsville, Ky.

Featuring Dr. Browning Ware, Austin, Texas &

D.E. Adams, Louisville

Everyone is invited!

For more information:

Contact: Dr. Ken Martin - (502) 789-5340



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## A special treat

Between opening the mail and answering the phone, I can be assured something unusual is going to happen nearly every day. This past summer, one phone call and one letter brought this point to mind very clearly.

I received a letter from some friends of Oneida. In the letter, a couple from Louisville shared a desire to spend September with us as volunteers. They were limited somewhat in areas of service, but they were willing to do about anything they could to help. She expressed a desire to tutor in our special help program, and he asked if he could work in our flower gardens. We are always grateful for those who want to help, and we never have run out of work for volunteers. Normally all that is required is a willing heart. This couple came the first of September and helped in the areas we had discussed.

The second special treat came in a phone call from California. Yes, California. Two couples had heard about Oneida and also wanted to come and volunteer for the month of September. I must confess I was a little intrigued as

to why they wanted to come all the way from California to Kentucky for a mission trip. They told me it was not a practical joke and they really wanted to come if we could use them. I assured them there would be no shortage of things to do and that I looked forward to meeting them.

They were to fly into the Lexington airport and then rent a car for the trip to Oneida. I strongly objected and assured them we would be happy to pick them up. Reluctantly, they agreed for us to pick them up at the airport.

When these two couples arrived on our campus, I was still a little inquisitive about why they

chose to fly clear across the United States to spend a month with us. They explained that while they were on a mission trip in Kodiak, Alaska, they met a lady at a church service who told them about Oneida. We are not sure who they spoke to, but we think it may have been a former employee who moved to Alaska several years ago. She told them that if they enjoyed volunteer mission work, they would really enjoy going to Oneida. I hope they were blessed by being here. We certainly were

blessed by their presence.

The two men were willing to do about anything and had many skills to share. The first several days they helped remodel a double-wide mobile home, a project we did not think we would be able to get done until next spring.

With that project completed in record time, one of the men spent the last week on the farm, helping to bring in our fall harvest of corn. He also mowed and did other farm chores.

The other man teamed up with the Kentucky chapter of Campers on Mission and helped install the steel joist and decking for the new print shop being

constructed down the street.

The ladies helped with painting, but they also helped in the library and craft house.

This was the first time these three couples had done any volunteer work on our campus. While the couple from Louisville had visited Oneida several times, the two couples from California had never even been to Kentucky before. I find it truly remarkable how God brings the talents and gifts of others from across the United States to meet our needs. He is truly an awesome God.

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

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

## Planting and reaping

The 65-acre farm on Highway 1643 in Pulaski County where Jewell and Christine Hail live is near the place where he was reared. They are now members of Buck Creek Church where he was converted and baptized in November 1944 at the age of 17. Theirs was the first wedding in the history of the church. May 27 marked their 50th anniversary.

After 40 years of preaching, Hail's biggest adjustment is "not getting to preach much." Hail retired in September 1996 after 10 years as pastor of Pleasant View Church near Somerset. "This also was the first year I haven't had a garden since we left Clear Creek in 1958," he said.

In 1952 the Hails left a new home and moved to Indianapolis to find

employment. Hail worked for a company selling billboard advertisements. They became active members of Pleasant Heights Church. Hail was Sunday school director and treasurer. In 1956 he answered the call to ministry and knew "it also was a call to prepare." His father was a longtime supporter of Clear Creek, and Pulaski Association built two student cottages on the campus, so it seemed natural to come here.

Typical of most students, Hail combined classroom work with practical experience. On weekends he commuted to Glenwood Church in Pulaski County; the church ordained him on Easter Sunday 1957. In 1959 they moved back to Indiana for two years of mission work that resulted in the organization of North Madison Baptist Church in

Camby. Other pastoral work included half-time work with Sinking Valley and Hopewell churches, 1963-64; full-time at Sinking Valley, 1966-71; Pleasant Run, 1971-79; First Bronston, 1979-86; and Pleasant View, 1986-1996. Ten men responded to the call for ministry in these churches, including the Hails' two sons. Michael is pastor of Northside in Tampa, Fla., and J.E. Jr. is pastor of Calvary Church in Greenfield, Ind.

While Hail was at Pleasant View, attendance grew from 40 to 100. I asked his advice to students.

"A pastor must love the people and work with them. Sometimes it is like clearing a field; you can't clear it all at once. Some stumps you just have to work around."

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

## Five years after state legalized casinos, ministry staying busy

By William Perkins Jr. & Carl White  
Mississippi Baptist Record

GULFPORT, Miss. (BP)—At the fifth anniversary of legalized gambling in Mississippi, gamblers continue to flock to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, bringing their problems with them.

When they've hit rock bottom during those years, a helping hand has been available.

"We're staying busy," said John Landrum, who resigned his church shortly after the first casino opened to begin a full-time ministry. With his wife, Linda, he established "Chaplain to the Mississippi Beach."

"The (local) economy is booming. You can't get around that," Landrum said. "But the human needs that go along with legalized gambling are also rising."

"There are a lot of marital problems, among both casino patrons and casino employees," he said. "We know the stress that gambling can place on a patron's marriage, but we don't often consider the stress on a casino employee's marriage."

"Their personal problems are heightened because of the pressure under which they work," Landrum noted. "You wouldn't believe all the government and casino regulations they must follow to the letter."

It's not at all unusual for his ministry to be working with several Southern Baptist problem gamblers, Landrum added.

"Most of our pastors and churches on the coast had not dealt directly with gambling before it was legalized in 1992—maybe just a case or two when someone got in trouble during a 'junket flight' to Las Vegas," he said. "Now, many of our churches have felt the direct, personal impact of gambling."

Landrum's advice to communities considering legalized gambling is simple: "Do everything you can to keep it out. If it's there, do everything you can to minister to people affected by it."

"Everywhere there is a casino, there should be someone who sees the situation as a ministry," Landrum said. "The hard part is 'changing hats' from condemning gamblers to being able to minister effectively to people and families in trouble because of it."

"I liken it to other ministry opportunities that have been put before us as Christians," he added. "You can have a ministry to homosexuals without agreeing with the lifestyle; the focus of any ministry should be to bring lost people to salvation through Jesus Christ."

## Pastor recalls his hitchhiking conversion

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)—Fifty years ago, when hitchhiking was a relatively safe practice, preacher boys frequently gave a guy a ride on their way from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary to churches in Oklahoma and Texas.

Roger Foree of Pasadena, Texas, never forgot the preacher boy who picked him up in 1949, the weekend of the Oklahoma-Texas game.

Foree was a 14-year-old runaway at the time. "I thought I knew more than my dad, and when he pulled off his belt to take care of my problem, I took off running, got to the road, stuck out my thumb and was on my way," Foree recounted.

An alert was sent to officials in three states. Meanwhile Foree was riding with a trucker from Houston

carrying a load of beans to a prison in Huntsville, Texas, where Foree helped the trucker unload.

Back hitchhiking, an old, blue 1936 Ford pulled over north of Dallas and the driver motioned Foree into the back seat. Foree recalled thinking that the two men up front had to be friends, the way they were talking. But when the driver stopped to let out the passenger in the front seat, Foree realized he was another hitchhiker.

Now it was Foree's turn to sit up front, and somewhere between that point and Tushka, Okla., Foree heard the gospel message for the first time. Two months later he made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as his personal Savior.

Foree, now a bivocational minister, has talked for 48 years about that

chance encounter that changed his life, and he has wondered about the man whose witness made such an impression on him as a runaway kid.

Recently while driving through Tushka, Foree stopped to inquire whether anyone might know the name of the student pastor of Tushka Baptist Church in 1949.

Someone sent him to the home of Charley and Georgia Mae Ezell.

"Do we remember him?" they said. "That's Brother Carl Nelson. He came to our home one evening and won us both to Christ!"

Foree and Nelson met over the phone that evening, and recently Foree visited Nelson in his home near Blanchard, Okla. Foree called the reunion as joyful as that of long-lost family.

**Foree, now a bivocational minister, has talked for 48 years about that chance encounter that changed his life.**

## Opinions mixed on Chinese religious freedom

By Steve Chambers  
Religion News Service

HONG KONG—A light rain was falling outside Hop Yat Church, but the Christians arriving for a Sunday morning service soon filled every pew in the two-story sanctuary.

As 500 worshipers, accompanied by a white-robed choir, boomed a Cantonese rendition of "Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken," their voices drifted out the open doors and into the residential street.

"We're not afraid of the changes," Elizabeth Wong, a lifelong Hong Kong resident, said minutes before the Church of Christ in China service began. "The faith is how you face change. We don't worry about the politics. It's a spiritual reaction."

Three months after this former British colony reunited with mainland Communist China, worship services continue unfettered. Religious leaders say it's business as usual and the Chinese government, true to its word, has kept hands off in this unusual place where East meets West.

However, the peaceful transition here coincides with public criticism in the United States of China's crackdown on religious freedom elsewhere. In July, the U.S. State Department released a report on religious freedom accusing China of suppressing underground Christian groups.

The attacks have exasperated those who argue more can be accomplished through negotiation and by praising the quiet revolution in religious freedom they say is blossoming on the mainland.

"In no way do I excuse the problems in that country, but in the church and in society, most Chinese will tell you that relative to what they lived through up until 10 years ago, this is like paradise," said Sister Janet Carroll, a former missionary in Taiwan who heads the U.S. Catholic China Bureau, an educational organization based at Seton Hall University in South Orange, N.J.

Religious groups still must register with the Chinese government, but many experts say those who follow this requirement are being awarded increased freedom. Others dispute the degree of tolerance, pointing to a

crackdown on underground churches.

"Right now in Hong Kong there is a very vibrant Christian community involved in all kinds of social outreach, none of which is permitted in China," said Nina Shea, director of Freedom House's Puebla Project on Religious Freedom. "You can't establish Catholic hospitals or Protestant-run soup kitchens. All that is threatened."

Hong Kong's 500,000 Christians, about half of them Roman Catholic, are clearly a minority of the 6.3 million residents, but they play an integral role in the new Special Administrative Region. Churches run half the high schools, 40 percent of the elementary schools and countless social service agencies.

Yet the Chinese government, aware of religion's role in the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, is hostile to Western interference.

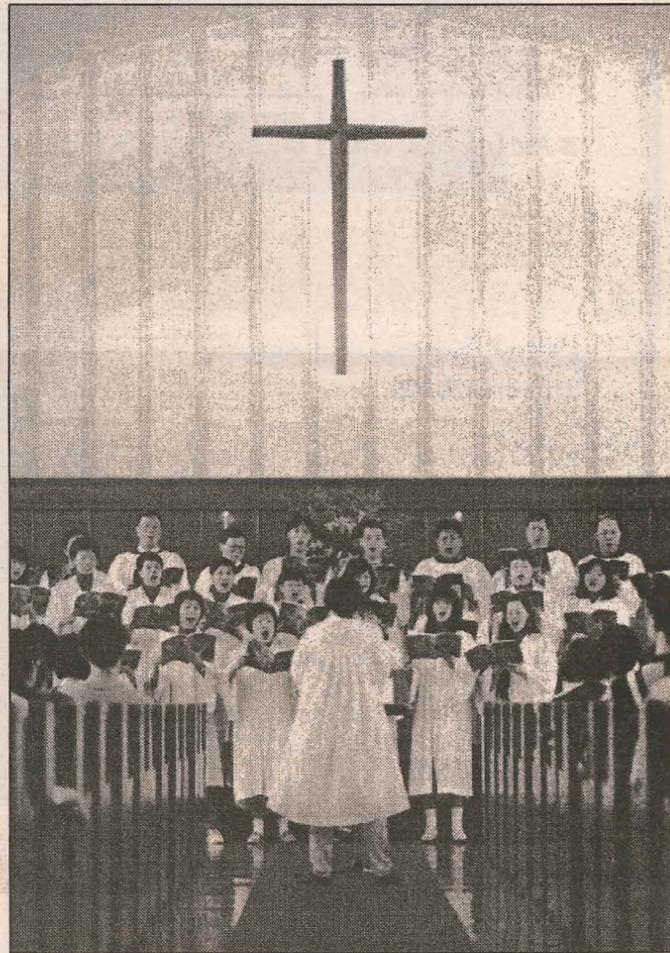
For several decades after they seized power in 1949, the Communists crushed organized religion. Catholics and other Christians who refused to cooperate with the state were imprisoned, tortured and killed.

In the past decade, however, as the Communists moved toward a more capitalist economy and citizens were permitted freer movement, the government has given religious leaders a wider berth. Approximately 10 million Catholics and a larger number of Protestants are estimated to be worshipping in the nation of 1.2 billion.

Self-imposed control may be a problem, according to Lee Ching Chee. Lee is associate general secretary of the Church of Christ in China, a 25,500-member denomination and one of the largest Christian groups in Hong Kong. She also is vice chairwoman of the Hong Kong Christian Council, the region's most influential ecumenical religious organization.

"Most people in Hong Kong, including church people, are quite comfortable with the new government," Lee said. "After the changeover some people were expecting explosions, but nothing happened."

Optimistic about China's future, Lee nonetheless has noted a reluctance by fellow clergy to criticize the government. There was less participation this year, for example, in an annual



vigil for Tiananmen Square protesters killed in 1989.

"I'm not afraid they will clamp down on us," Lee said. "I'm afraid we will keep our mouths shut ourselves, and the churches will become social clubs where people come on Sunday to meet and sing."

Carroll said China's new openness has in effect invited scrutiny of its policies toward religion.

"Having been excluded for 40 years, critics are looking only at what is wrong," she said. "Critics must look at what the Chinese people lived through with interminable patience to understand their conviction that eventually they will triumph."

"Religious experience has grown to such a point in China that most of us feel there is no way (for the government) to put the genie back in the bottle."

**WORSHIP TIME** The choir at Hop Yat Church in Hong Kong sings during a service. Leaders say communist China has thus far kept its word not to limit religious expression in Hong Kong. (RNS photo by Vincent Yu)

# Mountain Outreach Builds Three Homes

Cumberland College would like to salute these churches for their assistance in helping to construct homes this summer in the Williamsburg area for three deserving families. Since the program began in 1982, Cumberland College students and volunteers have constructed a total of 82 homes for needy families.



**All Saints Episcopal Church  
Richmond, VA**

**Buffat Heights Baptist Church  
Knoxville, TN**

**Cleary Baptist Church  
Florence, MS**

**College Park Baptist Church  
Winston-Salem, NC**



**Knollwood Baptist Church  
Winston-Salem, NC**

**South Fork Baptist Church  
Winston-Salem, NC**

**Unity Baptist Church  
Knoxville, TN**

**Weatherly Heights Baptist Church  
Knoxville, TN**

**Woolsey Baptist Church  
Fayetteville, GA**

*for information on how you can become involved in the program contact:*



**Al Laird  
Mountain Outreach Director  
Cumberland College  
Williamsburg, Kentucky 40769  
(606) 539-4346**

