



February 24, 1998  
Vol. 172, No. 8

## FOR THE RECORD

**Two-day meeting?**  
The Southern Baptist Convention will recommend a shorter format for its annual meeting. *Page 2.*

**Staff changes**  
The Kentucky Baptist Convention has welcomed three new staff members while saying goodbye to three others. *Page 3.*

**Editorial**  
Who will tell our children about Jesus? *Page 5.*

**Resources**  
Teenagers are less likely to be sexually active if they have loving parents, consider religion to be important and take a pledge of virginity. *Page 6.*

**Seminaries**  
The six Southern Baptist schools aren't sharing Cooperative Program wealth equally. *Page 7.*

**Promise Keepers**  
Financial shortfalls have forced the ministry to lay off all its salaried employees. *Page 10.*

**Music**  
Steven Curtis Chapman received nine Dove Award nominations. *Page 11.*

**Books**  
Reviews include a history of Christian music and John Grisham's "Street Lawyer." *Page 13.*

## Tom Elliff asks Baptists to be sure they know that they know

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

NASHVILLE—All who claim to be Christians should be certain they "know that they know" they are authentic Christians, according to Southern Baptist Convention President Tom Elliff.

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., made the appeal in a speech to the SBC Executive Committee Feb. 16.

"I believe every Southern Baptist ought to be called upon to look at his or her experience with Jesus Christ," Elliff said, explaining it is a biblical mandate to "certify our experience with Jesus."

He said every week of his two terms as SBC president someone has asked him a variation on the same question: "What do you consider to be the non-negotiables in the life of a person who truly knows Christ, who truly has repented?"

Elliff suggested three questions "every man and woman among us ought to ask" to evaluate the sincerity of his or her religious conversion. These, he said, represent the "non-negotiables":

■ *Am I on an upward path?* "Go back to the moment of your conversion," Elliff said, "and ask, from that moment on have I been growing in Christ? Are there signs of progress?"

He acknowledged that all Christians experience times of falling backward to some degree, but suggested that the overall pattern of an authentic Christian should be moving forward.

□ See Elliff wants ..., page 10

## Kentucky woman gains national audience

By Ken Walker  
State Correspondent

HOPKINSVILLE—Preparing to address a national women's conference last fall, Eva Self admits now that she was intimidated to be on the same platform as Anne Graham Lotz and the wife of radio commentator James Dobson.

"I was eight months pregnant at the time and in a wheelchair," said Self, a resident of Hopkinsville.

"I felt like the farmer who entered his mules in the Kentucky Derby. He said he didn't expect them to win but he thought the exposure would be good for them."

While Self devotes most of her time to raising two daughters, to thousands of people she has become an inspirational figure who represents God's faithfulness.

Self is one of a handful of people who are granted a national platform as speakers for "Renewing the Heart," a series of new women's conferences sponsored by Focus on the Family.

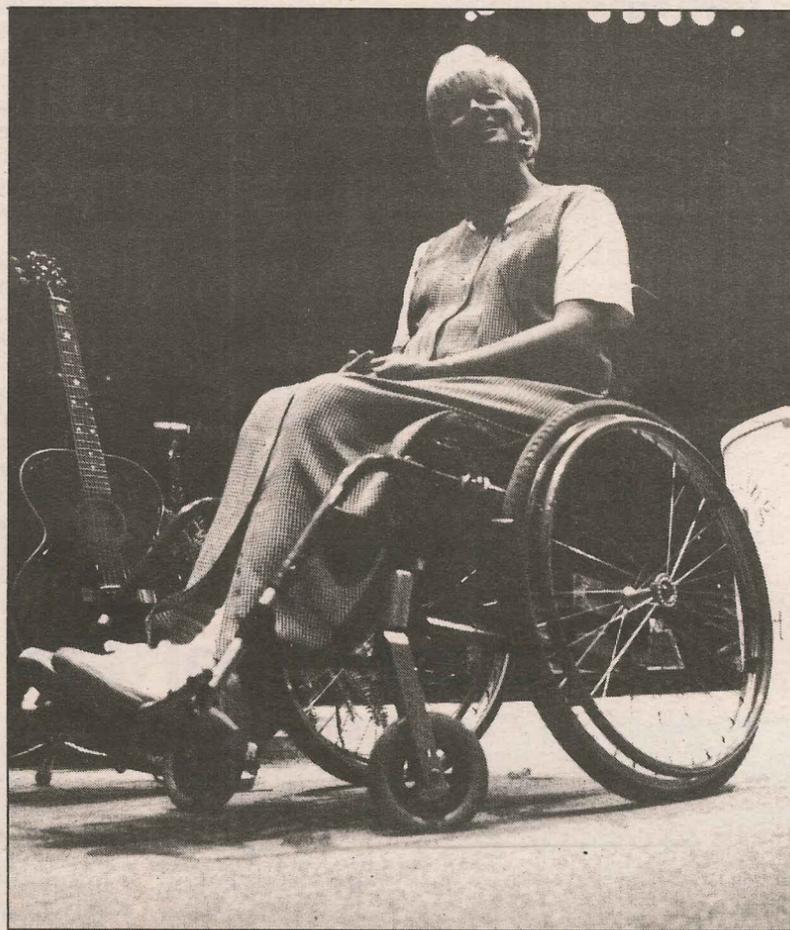
Paralyzed from the hips down by an accident in high school, Self received a standing ovation from 20,000 women at the inaugural "Renewing The Heart" last fall in Nashville.

"She is one of the most authentic presenters I have ever known," said Lisa Harper, director of women's outreach for Focus on the Family. "People never feel like she's selling them or giving them a canned presentation."

Based in Colorado Springs, Colo., Focus maintains nearly 80 ministries, including a daily, syndicated radio program hosted by James Dobson.

Harper met Self when both worked for Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Harper said she had seen Self impress teens during FCA meetings. Her story is a beautiful picture of God's faithfulness and sovereignty, Harper said.

Though the only speaker without



**ROLL MODEL** Paralyzed from the hips down by an accident in high school, Hopkinsville resident Eva Self received a standing ovation from 20,000 people at the inaugural "Renewing The Heart" women's conference last fall in Nashville.

a national profile, the member of First Baptist Church of Hopkinsville was invited to speak at this year's five conferences.

"Renewing The Heart" begins in June in Greensboro, N.C., and concludes with a November meeting in Tampa, Fla. It is aimed at equipping and encouraging Christians and evangelizing non-Christians, Harper said.

Among other speakers will be Shirley Dobson, wife of Focus on the Family's leader James Dobson, author Kay Arthur and humor evan-

gelist Dennis Swanberg. The keynote speaker for last fall's event was author and evangelist Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of evangelist Billy Graham.

"That was pretty intimidating," Self said.

Ironically, a few weeks before her life-changing accident, the North Carolina native watched the "Ten Commandments." Afterward, she prayed, "Lord, make me a Moses. I want to be an influence in many people's lives."

□ See Hopkinsville woman ..., page 8

## Minister in bi-racial church: 'I don't think God sees color'

By Todd Van Campen  
Lexington Herald-Leader

LEXINGTON—Chuck Fletcher is trying to get 13 teenagers to consider the question, "So you want to be a Christian?"

It looks like tough going.

One young man is working on his homework.

Another gets up and leaves the room while Fletcher is talking. A few people are whispering, a few people walk in late.

None of this fazes Fletcher, who gives the impression that he wouldn't be distracted unless the building caught fire.

By the end of his short talk, Fletcher is rewarded with his audience's undivided attention.

"Sometimes we got to yell at God," Fletcher is saying. "He's lis-

tening, but sometimes we got to yell at him: 'Are you there, God?'... Each one of us has struggles, and we just need to give them to the Lord."

Fletcher is the youth pastor for Trinity Baptist Church in Lexington.

Though the church has a racial mix, more than half its members are white, and Fletcher is the first black pastor the church has ever hired. He is one of only a few blacks to minister in a predominantly white Southern Baptist church in Kentucky.

That doesn't seem to matter to anyone at this Wednesday-night youth group meeting.

"I love him," said Trinity Baptist member Dean Lowe, who was picking up his son, 12-year-old Curtis, after the meeting. "He connects real well with the kids—better than most moms and dads."

"He's crazy, too," Curtis said.

Fletcher, 44, has spent the last 20 years ministering in white churches.

And though he has heard some derogatory comments secondhand, overall, "they have accepted me," he said.

"I know no matter where you go there will be people who will look at your skin and not look inward," Fletcher said.

"I don't think God sees color. We do, but he's blind to that. I want people to see what's inside a person is more important than what's outside."

Fletcher didn't set out to cross any color lines. It just turned out that way.

When Fletcher was a junior in high school, Juanita Anderson, a white youth minister with the predominantly white Macedonia Bap-

tist Church in Mount Sterling, invited him to the church's youth group. Fletcher accepted.

"She made the statement one day, 'Chuck, God is going to call you to be a youth minister,'" Fletcher recalls. "I said, 'No way, not me.'"

Fletcher went on to graduate from Cumberland College with a bachelor's degree in education and religious education.

He has taught at Anderson County High School in Frankfort for the last 17 years.

Fletcher was the youth pastor in 1978 and 1979 at the predominantly white Springfield Baptist Church.

"That was a learning experience for a lot of people," Fletcher said.

"There were remarks that were made that were unkind. I hate to say that because they made some changes.

□ See Fletcher: I don't think ..., page 8

Moving? See page 4 (0224)

# BAPTISTS

## SBC may change to two-day meeting

**"We're going to vote tonight on what we practice every June."**

*Frank Cox, a member of the study committee that recommended dropping the Thursday morning session at the SBC annual meeting*

NASHVILLE (ABP)—The Southern Baptist Convention will be shortened from two-and-a-half days to a two-day format, if recommendations by the SBC Executive Committee are approved.

An ad-hoc study committee proposed the shorter convention format to the Executive Committee Feb. 16. The Executive Committee will propose bylaw changes at this summer's SBC annual meeting to implement the shorter schedule beginning in 1999.

The current convention format opens on Tuesday morning and lasts until Thursday noon. In recent years, however, the closing session has been so poorly attended that at times business could not be conducted for lack of a quorum.

"We're going to vote tonight on what we practice every June," said Frank Cox, a member of an annual-meeting study committee appointed last fall.

The change would not cut into the amount of time scheduled for conducting business. Most of the savings would come from time formerly al-

located for reports by denominational agencies that were eliminated or merged in a recent SBC restructuring and by eliminating some sermons.

In other business at the Feb. 16-17 meeting in Nashville, the Executive Committee:

- Declined to recommend a new track for Cooperative Program giving. Ron Wilson, a pastor from California, made a motion at the SBC in 1997 calling for an additional track allowing churches to give money directly to the Executive Committee, which would split the funds and send 50 percent to the church's state convention. The motion was referred to the Executive Committee.

- Requested more information from the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission regarding an SBC motion to establish a proxy-vote system allowing Southern Baptists to exercise moral influence in corporations in which convention agencies own stock.

- Received as information a report of the North American Mission Board regarding the use of television and radio spots by Southern Baptists. An

SBC motion referred to the Executive Committee called on NAMB to develop TV and radio spots to "reach people for Christ, strengthen families and enhance the image of Southern Baptists across America."

NAMB President Robert Reccord said the motion's intent was for Southern Baptists to develop spots similar to those done by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

"At the North American Mission Board, we have no desire to do something the Mormons do," Reccord said. "We have the desire to do things as Southern Baptists do."

Reccord estimated it would cost between \$28 million and \$35 million a year to produce the spots.

Commercials are the primary way the Mormon church conducts home missions, while Southern Baptists emphasize missionary personnel, Reccord said. "Their whole home mission thrust is commercials. We Southern Baptists have said it works better when it is person to person, supported by media, not driven by media."

## 'Transitional' SBC budget remains intact

NASHVILLE—The Southern Baptist Convention budget that was carefully labeled "transitional" last year will be carried on for another year.

Members of the SBC Executive Committee voted Feb. 17 to recommend a \$155 million unified budget to the convention's annual meeting June 9-11 in Salt Lake City.

The proposed 1998-99 budget allocates 50 percent of Cooperative Program receipts to the SBC International Mission Board, nearly 23 percent to the North American Mission Board, 21 percent to seminaries and 1.5 percent to the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Other funds go to "facilitating ministries" including the Annuity Board, the SBC operating budget, SBC Foundation and the Baptist World Alliance.

Although total dollar amounts generally increase because the total budget will increase, the percentage split of SBC budget funds among the agencies and institutions remains largely unchanged.

That's a different picture than Executive Committee leaders painted last

year, when the current year's budget was developed and labeled "transitional." The budget developed last year was the first to take effect in the aftermath of a massive denominational restructuring that closed or consolidated several agencies.

Denominational restructuring was sold on the promise that cost-cutting would allow more money to go to "front-line" missions.

Critics of last year's budget said it should have given a greater percentage of Cooperative Program funds to the International Mission Board and the North American Mission Board. Executive Committee leaders at the time said such changes would be forthcoming in the next year's budget, after the dust had settled on restructuring.

The IMB has been kept at a steady rate of receiving 50 percent of SBC funds both before and after restructuring. NAMB was created by merging three other agencies, yet its budget percentage was set at a rate lower than what those three agencies previously

received.

The Executive Committee's Cooperative Program subcommittee studied and debated the budget proposal all day Feb. 16.

Budget debate in the Cooperative Program subcommittee was not open to the press, other than for two pool

reporters. Those reporters attended under background-only rules which prohibit the use of direct quotes or attribution of quotes.

As expected, agency heads made appeals for receiving a greater slice of the Cooperative Program pie. Among proposals considered was one to reduce NAMB's allocation by about 2 percentage points, giving the bulk of that money to the six seminaries.

Ultimately, that and other proposals were defeated, and the so-called "transitional" budget percentages used last year were kept intact.

In a related matter, the Executive Committee postponed until next February a vote on a new budgeting process proposed by another ad-hoc committee.

Under the new process, percentages allocated to various entities would remain in force for three years. Now, they are determined annually. The change would provide entities with more stability for long-range planning, the study committee said.

The new plan also called for any budget surpluses to be used for "special missions initiatives" such as projects for urban evangelism or international missions. Surplus funds now are used for capital needs at agencies and institutions.

Presidents of the six SBC seminaries said loss of those funds would create a financial crisis. After debate, the Executive Committee adopted a motion to postpone a vote pending further study.

*Based on Baptist Press and Associated Baptist Press reports*

## SBC will keep ties with Baptist World Alliance

NASHVILLE (ABP)—The Southern Baptist Convention will not pull out of the Baptist World Alliance, reported a committee named to investigate charges of liberalism within the worldwide Baptist fellowship.

Based on "good faith discussions" with BWA leaders, the study committee recommended that the SBC continue to fund the organization while calling for "ongoing review."

At the study committee's recommendation, the SBC Executive Committee approved \$425,000 in funding for the BWA in 1996-97, an increase from the \$417,838 budgeted this year. The budget, however, moves the BWA from a percentage allocation of the SBC's unified budget to a flat dollar amount.

Executive Committee Chairman James Merritt appointed an ad hoc committee last fall, at the request of the convention's president, Oklahoma pastor Tom Elliff, to "evaluate the relationship" between the SBC and BWA.

Prompting the study were "concerns and questions" raised by Southern Baptists about the BWA, according to a one-page written report of the study committee.

The BWA study committee "met on several occasions" with BWA leaders, Morris Chapman, Executive Committee president and chief executive officer, reported Feb. 17.

The study committee's written report listed three "observations" from discussions with BWA leaders:

- BWA personnel "affirmed a definite commitment to historic Baptist theology, particularly in reference to the Bible, the person and work of Christ, evangelism and missions."

- The BWA's constitution lists the organization's objective as, "To act as an agency for the expression of biblical faith and historically distinctive Baptist principles and practices." The BWA "has declared its intention to reflect that objective in its conference planning."

- BWA officers and staff "have indicated their desire for current Southern Baptist leaders to become more involved at all levels" of the organization.

The report concluded: "Without reservation, the committee affirms Southern Baptists' need to relate to Baptists of the world and strongly desires that this may be facilitated in part through participation in the Baptist World Alliance. Good stewardship requires the Southern Baptist Convention continually to evaluate and assess supporting relationships with non-SBC organizations."

### Proposed SBC budget allocations for 1998-99

International Mission Board .....	50.00%	\$77.5 million
North American Mission Board .....	22.79%	\$35.3 million
Theological education .....	21.64%	\$33.5 million
Southwestern Seminary .....	6.10%	\$9.4 million
Southern Seminary .....	4.09%	\$6.3 million
New Orleans Seminary .....	3.96%	\$6.1 million
Southeastern Seminary .....	3.48%	\$5.4 million
Golden Gate Seminary .....	1.99%	\$3.1 million
Midwestern Seminary .....	1.77%	\$2.7 million
Executive Committee .....	3.32%	\$5.1 million
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission .....	1.49%	\$2.3 million
Annuity Board (for annuitant relief) .....	0.76%	\$1.2 million

## Vigilance for evangelism needed, says retiring Jagers

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

In more than 40 years of ministry in Kentucky, Bill Jagers has seen plenty of change. He has seen evangelism and church growth fads and theories come and go.

But the one thing that never has changed, he said, is the basic need of humans to have a relationship with God. He quotes Augustine, who said, "Man is restless until his soul finds rest in God."

The facade of Kentuckians may have changed, but the underlying need is still the same, Jagers said in evaluating his tenure as a pastor and denominational leader.

Jagers recently retired as director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's evangelism office, a post he held for 10 years. Previously he worked in the KBC's missions unit and was pastor of several Kentucky churches.

This week's Evangelism Conference in Elizabethtown will be his 10th and final one to direct. Although he officially retired in December, he has

continued to work for the KBC on a part-time contract basis.

Jagers admits it is hard to do evangelism these days. "But I believe the response is better, if we'll do it," he added. "There are more people who are searching. We have great opportunity now to be a profound influence for Christ in America. It seems to me the Lord's giving us one more chance."

Although the context for doing evangelism may be harder today, the tools for evangelism are outstanding, Jagers noted. He's particularly struck by three: the work of Mission America, creation of the Mapping Center for Evangelism and mass distribution of the "Jesus" video.

Mission America is a collaborative effort between 212 evangelical groups to share the gospel with every person in America by the year 2000.

The Mapping Center for Evangelism helps local churches and associations identify unchurched areas in order to pray specifically for those who need the gospel and to knock on their doors with a witness.

The "Jesus" video, produced by Campus Crusade for Christ and used heavily overseas in the last decade, now is available in a shortened version on video cassette for home viewing. Churches and associations can purchase the videos for \$5 apiece. Jagers said this is one of the best tools he knows to present the gospel story in the homes of non-Christians.

As he leaves the full-time task of directing Kentucky Baptists' evangelism thrust, Jagers continues to sound themes he has attempted to hammer home all across the state.

Foremost among those ideas is his assertion that "the tendency is not toward evangelism but away from it." Evangelism "must be a discipline we pursue and follow," he said.

This is true for denominations, associations, churches and individuals, he explained. "The tendency is to do a lot of good things, even important things ... but to ignore evangelism."

This is a real danger in Kentucky, he said, because generally there's a respect for the church and the Bible among Kentuckians. But that also

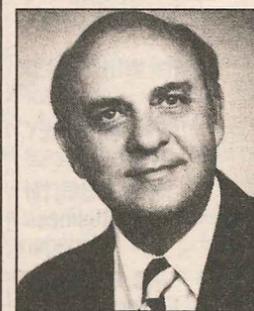
means there's a "hardening of people who have heard the gospel many times" but have not responded to it, he added.

Despite the doom and gloom many see in American society, Jagers said he remains hopeful. "I see hope because I know our Lord is eternal."

Jagers' partner in ministry across Kentucky has been his wife, Doty. Together they raised five children.

One of the most important lessons he has learned, he said, is the value of having a spouse who supports your ministry vision. "A mate committed to ministry with you is absolutely invaluable." The flip side, however, is that vocational ministers pay a terrible price if they sacrifice their families to ministry. "Anyone who does not give his family the time, love, discipline is sure cutting short his ministry, his effectiveness."

A final lesson, he said, is to remember not to take yourself too seriously. "Remember that you're not the last Christian stronghold the Lord might have and yours is not the last word the Lord might want to utter."



Jagers

## Kentucky Baptist Convention gains 3 staff while losing 3 others

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

The Kentucky Baptist Convention has gained three new staff leaders while losing three others.

Bill Mackey, the KBC's new executive secretary-treasurer, arrived on the job Feb. 1 and already has been traveling the state for speaking engagements and to meet Kentucky Baptists.

Mackey met with the KBC Executive Board's administrative committee for the first time Feb. 19. During that meeting, two other staff positions were filled.

Elected to the KBC staff were Wendy Johnson Dever as preschool and children's ministry associate and Michael Markham as associate for missions education with Kentucky Brotherhood.

Meanwhile, three other KBC staff members have retired or resigned recently: Bill Jagers, evangelism office director, retired at the end of December; Don Blaylock, student ministry department director, took early retirement effective in January; and Monty Carter, communications director, is leaving Feb. 28 to accept a pastorate in South Carolina.

Dever, 40, joins the KBC staff in the capacity previously held by Jewell Nelson, who retired last year. Since 1994, Dever has been preschool and children's minister at The Rock Baptist Church in Rex, Ga. She previously was minister of childhood education at Briarcliff Baptist Church in Atlanta and director of the after-school program for Crescent Hill Baptist Church in Louisville.

Before earning a master of arts degree in Christian education from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1992, she was a public school teacher for 10 years in Florida. She also holds the bachelor of arts degree in elementary education from the University of Florida.



Dever



Markham



Blaylock



Carter

Dever has been used widely as a conference leader and curriculum writer across the Southern Baptist Convention.

She is married to Barry Dever, a Louisville native and self-employed computer consultant. They are expecting their first child in May.

Markham, 39, joins the Brotherhood department in a newly adjusted position. Previously, the Brotherhood department had one director and one associate. Last year, a new director was hired and an associate was hired to direct disaster relief ministries. Markham's associate position carries many of the same responsibilities previously handled by the Brotherhood associate, with specific emphasis on coordinating camps, missions education programs, Kentucky Changers and World Changers projects.

Markham, a longtime member of Westport Road Baptist Church in Louisville, most recently has been a social service worker with BioMedical Applications of Louisville. He holds the master of education degree in family and community counseling and the bachelor of arts degree in psychology from the University of Louisville.

He is a former president of the Baptist Student Union at the University of Louisville and a former summer missionary with the KBC student department.

His wife, Connie, is a nurse at Norton Hospital in Louisville. They are the parents of three children, Michael, Shelley and Leslie.

Among the recent staff departures,

Blaylock has the longest tenure with the KBC, having served 25 years in various student ministry capacities. He had been director of the KBC student department since 1973.

Previously, he was campus minister at Morehead State University and an associate in the KBC student department. He is a graduate of Carson-Newman College in Jefferson City, Tenn., and Southern Seminary.

Jagers retired from the evangelism office post after 14 years with the KBC staff. He first joined the staff in 1984 as an associate in the direct missions department, then became evangelism director in 1988.

He is a former KBC president and former board member of the Western Recorder and Clear Creek Baptist Bible College. Before joining the KBC staff, he was pastor of Rowletts Baptist Church in Hart County, First Baptist Church of Jackson, Irene Cole Memorial Baptist Church in Prestonsburg and Cynthiana Baptist Church in Cynthiana.

He is a graduate of Georgetown College and Southern Seminary.

Carter joined the KBC staff in 1994, first as associate in the evangelism office before later being named the KBC's communications director. He came to vocational Christian ministry as a second career, after first working in secular broadcast media.

Prior to joining the KBC staff, Carter was pastor of Southern Heights Baptist Church in Lexington.

Carter leaves the KBC to become pastor of First Baptist Church of Easley, S.C.

## Committee won't print salaries

A request for the Kentucky Baptist Convention's Executive Board to publish a more detailed list of staff salaries is not feasible, the Executive Board's administrative committee has determined.

The request was presented by Executive Board member Gary King, pastor of Fairview Baptist Church in Waynesburg. King spoke on behalf of several pastors in Lincoln County Baptist Association, whom he said were concerned that an easy-to-follow listing of all staff salaries and benefits is not made available to Kentucky Baptists.

The administrative committee scheduled time to hear from King during their Feb. 19 meeting. The conversation was cordial on both sides, with King explaining his interest was not in gaining information about any particular staff member but in representing the principle that salary information ought to be published for all Kentucky Baptists to see, just as many pastors' salaries are published in church budgets.

After considerable discussion and consultation with the Executive Board's legal counsel, the administrative committee determined it could not publish any more information than already is made available.

Currently, salary ranges for each staff grade level are published annually, along with a list of all staff positions and what pay grade they are classified. This information is distributed every spring to Executive Board members and associational directors of missions.

While expressing sympathy with King's request, the administrative committee cited right-to-privacy provisions in Kentucky state law as one reason why detailed salary and benefit information could not be published.

In other action, the administrative committee:

■ Welcomed new Executive Secretary-Treasurer Bill Mackey.

■ Appointed a four-member committee to study the salary structure for KBC professional staff. The committee includes Shirley Taliaferro of Louisville, chair; Bill Patterson of Henderson; Herb Booth of Florence; and Bob Baker of Lexington.

■ Approved a 4 percent cost-of-living raise for KBC Executive Board employees in the 1998-99 fiscal year.

## WESTERN RECORDER

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

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## Election process

As I read the article "Merritt will nominate Patterson at SBC" (Feb. 10, page 2), I found it interesting to learn exactly how a person becomes the president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Silly me, I had previously thought a person is elected through the democratic process.

I have two questions for James Merritt and the SBC Executive Committee:

- 1) Why camouflage this election as being democratic and just?
- 2) Why not just proceed to appointing Paige Patterson to the presidency of the SBC?

Apparently it will be futile to go through the motion of the voting process, so my suggestion would save all concerned time, money and effort.

Connie Pruitt  
Louisville

## Audit report

The audit work group of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Executive Board's business and finance committee met Jan. 24 to perform its annual review and evaluation of the financial condition and practices of the KBC's affiliated entities and its Executive Board as reflected in their 1997 audited financial statements.

The entities include Campbellsville University, Cumberland College, Georgetown College, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Oneida Baptist Institute, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, Baptist Healthcare System, Woman's Missionary Union, Western Recorder and the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

This annual audit review process is one important way Kentucky Baptists receive an accountability report from the convention and its affiliated entities.

Kentucky Baptists can be pleased and encouraged with the sound financial condition and stability of their institutions and agencies and the level of cooperation demonstrated by them. Furthermore, Kentucky Baptists can be pleased that a procedure exists whereby the convention and its institutions and agencies can give an accounting of the stewardship of the resources entrusted in them.

## Praying for pastors

By Tom Ehrich

When pastors flock to Market Square Arena in Indianapolis for an upcoming regional conference hosted by Promise Keepers, laity will be in two adjacent rooms praying for them.

Prayers will be numerous, for the March 12 event is likely to draw a crowd. If the turnout of 4,000 pastors for a similar event in Charlotte, N.C., is any guide, the Christian men's movement will have been wise to rent a basketball arena.

The prayer vigil being organized by local laity has one purpose: "Pray that God would renew the pastors' hearts and use them to revive his church and to bring unity to his body."

Having been on both sides of the altar rail, I would offer these prayers for pastors who come seeking spiritual sustenance and renewed vocation:

The work group was most complimentary of the board and administrative leadership of the convention and each of its affiliated entities. Kentucky Baptists are encouraged to increase their support of these institutions and agencies prayerfully and financially.

Members of the audit work group were Herb Booth, Burlington; Mary Buck, Hawesville; Dean Holden, Georgetown; Gary Hughes, Auburn; Bill Messer, Ashland; Ralph Rascoe, Owensboro; Mike Watts, Hopkinsville; Business Manager Lowell Ashby; Accounting Services Director Cathi Roy-Sanders and Interim Executive Secretary-Treasurer Jim Hawkins. Bernie Backert, certified public accountant, also met with the work group.

The work group's report will be made to the full business and finance committee in March.

Mike Watts, chairperson  
KBC audit work group

## Farewell

Words cannot begin to express the gratitude my family and I have for you. While I have not personally met all of you, I am grateful for the support you have given us over the last few years. Whether you know it or not, you have left an indelible mark on our lives.

Beginning with our church membership during seminary, then serving on church staffs and now the Executive Board staff, your contributions to our faith developments and ministries are too numerous to mention. Bible study, retreats, Sunday school, corporate worship, missions education, choirs, countless conferences, camps, VBS and much more have shaped our children's lives and have enriched our personal relationships with Christ.

Thank you for your prayerful, physical and financial support through the Cooperative Program. Your contribution to our formative years in vocational ministry has been immeasurable. A special thanks to the Kentucky ministers in the generations ahead of me who paved the way so my path and that of my contemporaries

would be smoother. Thank you to the Executive Board, staff, the communications/media team and especially Jim Hawkins and Bill Mackey for praying and dialoguing with me about God's call over the last several months.

A special thanks to the saints of Memorial Baptist Church in Frankfort, and Southern Heights Baptist Church in Lexington for the joy of serving with you.

You will be in our prayers as we continue to live out God's call and claim upon our lives in South Carolina. On behalf of Teri, Casey and Sarah, thanks and may God bless Kentucky Baptists in their effort to reach the Commonwealth for Christ.

Monty Carter  
Director

KBC communications/media

## Thank you

Thank you is really not enough, but here goes from our hearts. On Oct. 9, 1996, during the first 30 minutes of Marilyn being awake, she lost all movement to her left side, lost her speech, her memory and all organizational skills. As a result of this sudden onset she had to retire on disability from teaching public school.

During the next year she nearly died on three different occasions. In May 1997 she was diagnosed as having Hashimoto's Encephalopathy, an extremely rare disease of the brain. There have only been 50-75 cases ever diagnosed in the world.

The support of Kentucky Baptists and the prayers of thousands all over the world have been the mainstay of our getting through a difficult daily life. Many times all we hear is bad or sad news. I have wonderful news to share with you today.

Marilyn is now in remission! She may not ever be what she was before, but God is continuing to use her and she drove her car again this week for the first time in over a year. Through your many prayers, God has seen fit to begin to return her health.

Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for being there. Prayer still works and

show the price of career success in ministry is high: exhaustion, stress at home, poor health, alienated children and compromise with the ideals that stirred you in the first place. That cost isn't from God.

I pray you will keep denomination and tradition in perspective. Jesus didn't die so Roman Catholics could lord it over Methodists, or Baptists over Episcopalians. Jesus gave his followers living bread, not doctrinal perfection. Be a searcher, not a dispenser of institutional answers.

I pray you won't believe what people say about you. If they say, "Nice sermon, pastor," know they didn't hear you. If they criticize you, know some criticism is warranted, but that many people use clergy as a projection screen for their own self-loathing. Just as those in therapy tend to fall in love with their therapists, laity tend both to idealize their clergy and

God is still in control. Please continue to remember us as you pray. God bless each of you.

Ron & Marilyn Wells  
Russellville

## British churches

I read with interest Mark Wingfield's story, "Brits want help with shrinking youth work" (Feb. 17, page 12). My wife and I lived in England during 1991-92 and learned a little about the situation.

I visited a state school and talked with the librarian, a nonconformist, that is, a member of a church other than the Anglican faith. She told me that religion is taught in the state schools—required, I believe. She said, though, that with various faiths and beliefs the religious training was so "watered down" it was of little value. So much for putting prayer and Bible reading back in our schools.

We usually attended an international community church which did have programs for young people. In fact, it had a Baptist youth minister. However, almost all those who attended were from the U.S. There were many weekends that we traveled, however, and we visited other churches, most Anglican, when we were on the road.

There is a real variation in what goes on in British churches. The most alive one we saw was at Marhamchurch, a small town in Cornwall. It was a Christmas Eve "Christingle Celebration" using a bulletin of The Children's Society. It was obvious the children were involved in much more than just the Christmas service.

We saw the other end of the spectrum at St. Mary the Virgin Church at Stoke Bruern near Northampton. The church was all but empty despite the fact a family—many of whom obviously had not been in church much—were having a baptism for a new baby. The over-worked pastor had several churches and we learned that this one, begun soon after the Norman Conquest, was going to be declared redundant.

Having said all this, an effort to reach more youth on both sides of the waters is in order.

Jon A. Whitfield  
Brandenburg

to see in them that which they reject in themselves.

I pray that you will see yourself as a partner in ministry, not a provider of ministry. Taken together, the baptized have more gifts for ministry than you do. Insist they use them. If you are gifted as a teacher, then teach, and let the laity provide pastoral care. Don't get hooked in the role of "club manager," as one lay person (himself a country club manager) put it. If a member says, in effect, that the greens need work, hand him a rake.

Finally, I pray you will go to those rooms next door where laity are praying for you and invite them to join you. The wall between clergy and laity isn't healthy for either. Orders of ministry were created because believers were squabbling. We mustn't enshrine those squabbles as divine purpose. (RNS)

Tom Ehrich is a former Wall Street Journal reporter who now is an Episcopal priest in Winston-Salem, N.C.

## COMMENTARY

I pray you will feel free to preach the gospel. It is a hard word. It was rejected by the religious establishment of Jesus' day and is no less offensive today. Jesus preached a radical departure from the religious norms of his day—"let the dead bury the dead"—norms modern believers tend to keep recreating as they search for order, control and a faith valuing prosperity.

I pray you will be strong in the face of rejection. Congregations invite you to nourish members' souls, but the ultimate words of nourishment—"the kingdom of God is near!"—rarely win much favor. Favor goes to those who soothe and please, not to those who send the rich away empty.

I pray you will let go of career aspirations. Every pastor I know started out wanting to be a bishop or pastor of a large congregation. Studies

## HE SAID/SHE SAID

### Where we've come from is about people shaped by places

#### HE SAID



Mark Wingfield

My grandfather sold his house this week, symbolizing the finality of his willing move to a nursing center where he can get the medical attention he needs.

Even though I'm several hundred miles away in Kentucky, it feels like a major chapter in our family history has closed. Due to the distance, Alison and I have not been back to Randlett, Okla., since we moved to Kentucky. And our boys never have been there. But that location is a significant point in our family history.

I still remember the day we moved Grandmother and T.L. (what everyone calls my grandfather) into their new house "in town." I was in the fifth grade and was amazed at the speedy way the auctioneer handled the sale of all the farm equipment and old household furnishings in preparation for the move off the farm—property my great-grandfather acquired partially in the Oklahoma Land Run.

The farewell I'm feeling isn't really about the house; actually my fondest childhood memories are of the farm house. And even that farm house wasn't the place my mother grew up, because my grandparents' house was blown away by tornadoes three times and rebuilt each time, the last after mother left home.

Maybe the loss that's reverberating through our family now is the breaking of the final tie to the humble, hard-working, rural roots that birthed us all. All the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are "city" folks. Most of us grandchildren wouldn't know how to milk a cow if we had to; and our children think milk originates in the back room at the grocery store.

While we've lost our direct link to the rural lifestyle that made America and our family strong, I hope we're able to carry on the values that shaped the better side of my grandparents' life: the hard work and determination to make something out of virtually nothing, the perseverance to rebuild and keep going every time disaster struck, knowing how to truly be thankful for our daily bread.

#### SHESAI



Alison Wingfield

I was lucky enough to enjoy my grandparents living in the same city as me growing up, along with multitudes of relatives.

Holiday get-togethers were feasts with the smell of turkey or ham or both wafting from my grandmother's kitchen. There were so many of us, we needed a big kids table and a little kids table in addition to the large table for adults. As a grandchild born somewhere in the middle, I seemed to be stuck at the little

kids table a long time.

My grandmother still lives in the house that holds fond memories for me. Easter egg hunts and Christmas dinners meld with playing on the monkey bars and sitting outside on the patio eating ice cream. It didn't matter if it was a special occasion, anytime someone dropped by my grandmother always had something ready to eat.

One of our family jokes is on my famous sense of smell. When I was in high school and college, whenever I dropped by for a visit my grandmother almost always was cooking a pot of pinto beans (one of my favorites). My timing was usually perfect for lunch or dinner.

When I look back, it's not the house that carries so many sentimental memories for me—it's what happened in the house. The love that was shared, the open hospitality, all happened because of my grandparents who lived there.

That's the way our churches should be. The building may be beautiful, but it's the love shared inside that makes God's house a home for all who enter.

## Who will tell our children about Jesus?

Tears welled up in my eyes last Thursday as Wendy Dever told the Kentucky Baptist Convention's administrative committee how she came to know about Jesus.

Wendy, the KBC's new preschool and children's ministry associate, explained that when she approached kindergarten age, her parents began looking for the best kindergarten in their community. Though they weren't churchgoers, they found the best kindergarten at First Baptist Church.

Wendy related how she loved everything about that kindergarten—her teacher, the games, the music—but especially the Bible stories and prayer times. She never had heard a Bible story or prayer, at least in a way she could understand.

Soon people from the church began inviting her family to church. After several weeks of contacts, her parents agreed to give it a try. Wendy got to hear more Bible stories and prayers, and she was thrilled.

Finally, she grew old enough to attend Girls in Action, a mission organization for elementary-age girls. There she heard the plan of salvation.

And then one Valentine's Day, the pastor came to her Sunday school class and talked about John 3:16, the Bible verse that says God loved the world so much that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes on him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Only instead of saying "the world," the pastor substituted the individual names of every boy and girl in the class. "When I heard 'For God so loved Wendy ...' I understood," she said. "Right then and there I asked Jesus to come into my heart."

As she told her story, it occurred to me that this is the purest expression of what we're all about: Our mission is to tell people by name that God loves them so much that he gave Jesus to die for their sins.

Thank God for the faithful pastor of that First Baptist Church who called the children in Wendy's class by name. Thank God for the faithful kindergarten, Sunday school and Girls in Action teachers who taught Wendy the Bible and how to pray. Thank God for a church with enough foresight to reach out into its community with a top-notch kindergarten full of faith.

Yet Wendy's story caused several other thoughts

to swirl in my head as well.

I thought of Brian Pearson, a mission leader among Christians in Britain whom I interviewed recently. He's spearheading a campaign to renew children's work among British churches. That's necessary because only 4 percent of all Britain's children currently have any connection to a church and only 20 percent of churches offer any programming for children and youth.

How did Britain get in such a condition? There are several reasons, but a primary one is that the church allowed two successive generations to slip away from its touch.

The church in America isn't in nearly such dire straits, but we ought to take heed because in many respects we're only one lost generation behind our British counterparts.

We have lost touch with a major portion of the baby boomers and an even greater portion of the baby busters. That's bad enough in itself. But there's more bitter fruit yet to come. As a result of this loss, our nation is full of children and youth who, like Wendy, never have heard a Bible story or a prayer.

America now is home to a generation that hasn't dropped out of church; they've never dropped in.

It has been said that God has no grandchildren; the church is always one generation away from extinction. We are seeing this truth all around us today.

The need to reach adults with Christ's message of hope is urgent. But the need to reach our nation's children and youth is even more urgent, because they are at the stage of life where evangelism efforts are most fruitful. They are more open now to hear of God's love than they ever will be again.

That's why volunteering as a children's Sunday school teacher or mission group leader may be the most important job you can take in the church. That's why churches must commit more of their resources to children's and youth ministries—especially to ministries that reach beyond the church to draw in the community. Sunday school alone will not cut it.

There are thousands of Wendys living right around you. How will they hear of God's love? Who will put their name in John 3:16?

—Mark Wingfield

### 'What good is this birthright?'

By Bill Crosby

"Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is this birthright to me?" (Genesis 25:32)

The term birthright refers to the right of the first-born. The Interpreter's Dictionary states that, "While all a man's sons had his protection and some benefits, the first-born son had a special inheritance." This was focused primarily upon receiving the principal inheritance of property and name. Through the first-born the family line was continued.

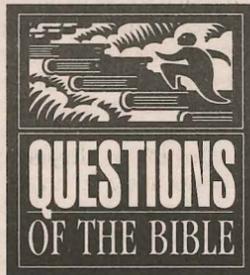
The contrast between the two brothers, Jacob and Esau, is clearly depicted in Genesis 25. Esau was the oldest son and Jacob the younger. Esau was an outdoorsman, and Jacob followed the more serene life of a shepherd. Esau was a hunter, and there were times when he was not successful and would come home with nothing.

Jacob is said to be a quiet man, and there was the issue of favoritism in the home. Isaac loved Esau, and Rebekah loved Jacob.

One day, after an unsuccessful hunt, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. Esau asked Jacob if he could eat some of the pottage because he was hungry. Jacob said, "Yes, but with a condition." The condition was that Esau must sell his birthright before he could eat the pottage.

Since Esau was the oldest, he stood to inherit most of the property and the family name. Without hesitation, Esau said, "I might as well sell you my birthright since I am going to die." Esau states, "Of what use is a birthright to me?"

Esau either did not understand or was indifferent to God's care for him. Esau was living just for the moment and did not consider the future. Esau was quick to sell God's future blessings for a bowl of vegetable soup.



Esau might not have understood the full implications of his birthright and he may not have cared. He was only concerned about satisfying his immediate needs. He wanted instant gratification.

Let us remember that Israel received the protection of her God, who made her his first-born (Exodus 4:22-23; Jeremiah 31:9). Esau did not grasp the providence and the care of God to meet his every need. He was willing to sell out in the short-term at the expense of being cared for by God.

We live in a time of instant gratification. Sometimes we do not have the foresight or the patience to wait upon the Lord. We sell out our inheritance because we want our selfish desires met immediately.

Let us remember that we have a birthright from God. When we are born again to eternal life, we have the promise of the care and providence of God forever. Yes, life may become difficult, but God calls us to trust and depend on him.



Bill Crosby is pastor of Erlanger Baptist Church.

# RESOURCES

**Q. I have noticed that several of our friends who have been married for years and raised their families are now getting divorces. What is happening to these marriages?**

**A.** Unfortunately, what you are observing is becoming a dangerous trend. Statistics indicate that the 55-up age group has the highest percentage increase in divorces of any age group.

It seems that the years of marriage for many seniors has focused on important priorities: pursuing a vocation and raising children. The husband generally has spent his time seeking to make a living to provide for the needs and wants of his family. The wife's needed and rewarding focus has been on raising the children.

Now the husband has retired or at least reached a level in his vocation where there will be no advancement. The children are grown and gone, and the empty nest remains.

We discovered that not only had our daughters determined our schedule, meals, activities and budget, but we rarely talked about anything else. After they left home, our conversation revolved around such things as "Did Dee call today?" or "I wonder what Tina is doing tonight."

Tragically, many couples have neglected the priority of establishing or maintaining their husband-wife relationships.

Perhaps we need to start courting each other again. Find hobbies or activities that both enjoy doing together. Attend marriage enrichment seminars. Talk with other couples in your age group who you feel have found renewed relationships in their marriage. Cultivate those wonderful joys that brought you together. — *Al Shackelford*



**Q. The Song of Solomon was recently in our Sunday school curriculum. What could this Scripture possibly have to say to single adults? It's cruel when Sunday school lessons just remind us of what we don't have.**

**A.** The Song of Solomon has been controversial throughout its history, often banned, allegorized, dramatized or explained away. The love poem extols the joys of a honeymoon. Since evangelical Christianity would see the intimate, sexual relationship as unique to marriage, your question is quite valid. What does the Song say to single adults?

Genesis 1 states, "Male and female he created them ... and God saw that it

was very good." It is important for single adults to recognize the gift of their sexuality, commit it to God and express it in appropriate ways. To deny what God has made you is to invite pressures from God-given drives to overwhelm you in inappropriate situations. What we deny often overpowers us in unanticipated ways.

The Song also teaches helpful principles for romantic relationships:

1) The principle of exclusivity in a courtship (verse 2:16a). Trust built well can carry on into marriage. "Cheating" before marriage would not portend well for a marriage's future.

2) Be spontaneous (2:8-10) and imaginative (7:11-13), two more characteristics exhibited in the Song. Creative dating can help you get to know a person much better than being in the rut of "dinner and a movie" for every date.

3) Sincere compliments (4:1-3; 5:10-13) show love and appreciation for someone with whom you are building a relationship. Affirm character traits and personality qualities at least as much as characteristics having to do with appearance.

A recurring theme in the book is timing (see 2:7). Trust in God's time and be the person he has called you to be. Then you'll be building foundations for long-lasting relationships. — *James Stillwell*

## FAMILY

### When should you drop your life insurance?

By Don Spencer

Does everyone need life insurance? The quick answer is no. However, the decision is complicated by tax consequences and the difficulty of analyzing a policy's real cost and value.

First, answer these questions: Why do you have the policy? Why did you purchase it? Why purpose does it serve today?

Prime candidates for dropping or reducing life insurance are healthy empty nesters who have their home paid for, have sufficient investment income to maintain their standard of living if either spouse were to die, and do not necessarily wish to leave a large sum of money to heirs.

Some policies that should be considered for dropping include:

- Policies that were not a good deal in the first place, like non-dividend paying whole-life policies that credit cash value at only 3 percent or 4 percent.

- Some universal life policies sold in the 1980s.

- Mortgage-life and credit-life policies bought by lenders.

- Insurance on your children.
- Term insurance purchases to cover debts that no longer exist.

A decision to scale back or abandon life insurance should be made with the same careful calculations made when the policy originally was purchased. Worksheets are available to help determine adequate life insurance needs. If the quotes tell you to drop or reduce coverage and you have a term policy (insurance with a death benefit but no related cash value), it's easy. Just cancel the policy and stop paying the premiums.

The decision to drop a cash-value policy is more complicated. These are part death protection, part investment and part tax shelter.

For cash value policies, issues to consider include: What are the tax consequences? What is your policy earning? Have you paid in more than you can take out?

After a policy has outlived its original purpose, one of the best reasons to keep it is to secure an estate. It can also be an effective means of funding a donation to charity.

Remember, if you cancel a policy and later decide to increase coverage, you may have to pay higher costs or you may be uninsurable.

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



## Study: Pledge of virginity most effective

**NASHVILLE (BP)**—Teenagers who take a pledge of virginity, have loving parents and regard religion and prayer as important are the least likely of all adolescents to report engaging in early sexual behavior, according to a recent study reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Conversely, teenagers who appear older than their peers, work 20 or more hours a week and have same-sex attractions or behaviors are more likely to have reported having sex at an earlier age, according to the federal funded National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (popularly referred to as Add Health).

The research was conducted to identify risks to adolescent health and to pinpoint specific factors that might guard against those risks. The Add Health study looked at the emotional health of teenagers and their inclination toward violence, substance abuse and sexual behavior. The group of 90,118 students who completed the initial questionnaire represented all U.S. students in grades seven through 12.

Approximately 17 percent of seventh- and eighth-graders surveyed and almost half (49.8 percent) of ninth- through 12th-graders said they had engaged in sexual intercourse.

However, those who reported they had taken a pledge of virginity until marriage were at "significantly lower risk of early age sexual debut"—a fact that did not seem to surprise the authors of the study.

"We expect that young people

who indicate they have taken a public or written virginity pledge hold a certain set of beliefs about themselves, about relationships," said Michael Resnick, director of the National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Research Center at the University of Minnesota, and one of the authors of the study. "We also expect that these young people would indeed be more likely than their counterparts to indicate a later age of first intercourse."

Nearly 16 percent of the females and 10 percent of the males reported making virginity pledges. Taking a pledge of virginity was the highest indicator that a teen would not engage in early sexual behavior, the study found.

"This research is the first major, secular study to document that making a promise of abstinence is a very powerful factor influencing teenager behavior," said Richard Ross, a founding official of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board's sexual abstinence campaign, True Love Waits.

Created in April 1993, True Love Waits is an international campaign that challenges teenagers and college students to remain sexually abstinent until marriage. Almost a million teens have signed the True Love Waits abstinence pledge, according to Ross.

Other factors the study found that contribute to teens postponing sexual activity include parental disapproval of teen sex and contraception; high levels of engagement or connectedness to parents, family

and school; high grade-point averages; appearing younger than peers; and the level of importance given to religion and prayer.

"Among the almost 88 percent who reported having a religion ... those who ascribed importance to religion and prayer tended to have a later age of sexual debut and were also less likely to use all substances," the study reported.

Meanwhile, teens who worked at least 20 hours a week and looked older than their friends were at higher health risks, the study claimed.

"Twenty or more hours per week of work during the teenage years is associated with higher levels of emotional distress, substance use and earlier age of sexual debut. ... Not only did those who perceived themselves as looking older than peers initiate intercourse at a younger age, but they were also more likely to use cigarettes, alcohol and marijuana."

Funded through a grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development with contributions from 17 other federal agencies, the Add Health study was conducted by researchers from the University of Minnesota and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. A total of 12,118 teens in grades seven through 12 completed a 90-minute, in-home interview. That group was drawn from a total group of 90,118 students from high schools across the country who completed a 30-minute questionnaire.

For more information about True Love Waits, call (800) LUV-WAIT.

**Taking a pledge of virginity was the highest indicator that a teen would not engage in early sexual behavior, the study found.**

# BAPTISTS

## SBC's 6 seminaries don't share the CP wealth equally

By Mark Wingfield  
Editor

NASHVILLE—While most Southern Baptist Convention agencies and institutions will receive about a 4.5 percent increase in Cooperative Program funding next year, the one institution located in Kentucky will receive less money.

Due to a pattern of declining enrollment, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary will receive about \$100,000 less in the 1998-99 fiscal year than it receives in the current year. That's about a 1.5 percent decrease.

Southern will get \$6.3 million in Cooperative Program funding, down from \$6.4 million this year. The SBC's five other seminaries will hold steady or increase: Southwestern Seminary, up from \$8.9 million to \$9.4 million; New Orleans Seminary up from \$5.9 million to \$6.1 million; Southeastern Seminary up from \$4.7 million to \$5.4 million; Golden Gate Seminary up from \$2.9 million to \$3.1 million; Midwestern Seminary holding steady at \$2.7 million.

The problem is not that the denomination's oldest seminary has fallen out of favor with SBC budget mak-

ers. Rather, the seminary is feeling the pinch of a complex formula by which the six SBC seminaries share a lump-sum allotment from the Cooperative Program.

The funding formula is driven by a tightly controlled accounting of average enrollment over a three-year period. While each seminary has various methods of calculating overall enrollment, the funding formula requires conformity with a method of measurement called full-time equivalents, known in shorthand as FTEs.

An FTE takes the total number of student hours taught during a year and divides it by a benchmark said to represent the course load of a full-time student. This method of enrollment reporting is considered by academic accrediting agencies to be the most accurate means of comparison.

The SBC funding formula also is weighted to give priority to students enrolled in a seminary's basic master's-level and doctoral-level degree programs. Some students counted in a seminary's general headcount are not allowed to be counted in the SBC funding formula, or must be counted at a discounted rate.

For this reason, there often is great disparity between the FTE measure

the SBC uses and the much-larger enrollment figures seminaries report in news releases and promotional publications.

For example, Southern Seminary's self-reported overall enrollment figures include students working toward certificates in Boyce Bible School as well as seminary wives enrolled in a new Seminary Wives Institute. About 120 seminary wives attend these one-night-a-week courses taught by wives of seminary faculty and administration on topics such as "The Ministry of Hospitality" and "MasterLife."

While the Seminary Wives Institute pumps up Southern's annual reporting of total headcount and new student enrollment, these same students cannot be counted fully in the SBC's formula for FTEs.

Other seminaries have their own programs that produce larger headcounts than the SBC funding formula will consider. But because the formula discounts all such programs equally, the resulting FTE count has been deemed the fairest possible comparison for money allocations.

According to this measure, Southern Seminary experienced a 6 percent decline in enrollment in 1997 (from 1,255 to 1,181) and has experienced

a 30 percent decline since 1994 (from 1,685 to 1,181).

The impact on funding at Southern has been worsened by the recent turnaround in enrollment at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

In the late 1980s, Southeastern experienced a dramatic drop in enrollment as conservatives took control of the school's trustee board and administration. That led to such a funding pinch that the SBC Executive Committee froze the funding formula to help the school stay afloat.

But in recent years, Southeastern has registered a growing FTE enrollment, meaning it has been gaining an increasing share of the SBC's allotment for theological education. Southeastern's FTEs grew 14 percent last year, from 993 to 1,135. Southeastern's FTEs have grown 63 percent since 1994, from 695 to 1,135.

The other four SBC seminaries have held relatively more steady, although each has shown ups and downs. FTE figures for 1997 for each of the other schools are: Golden Gate, up to 391 from 383 the year before; Midwestern, up to 346 from 325; Southwestern, up to 3,052 from 3,013; and New Orleans, down to 1,137 from 1,295 the year before.

# Christ's purpose for His church isn't hard to discover.

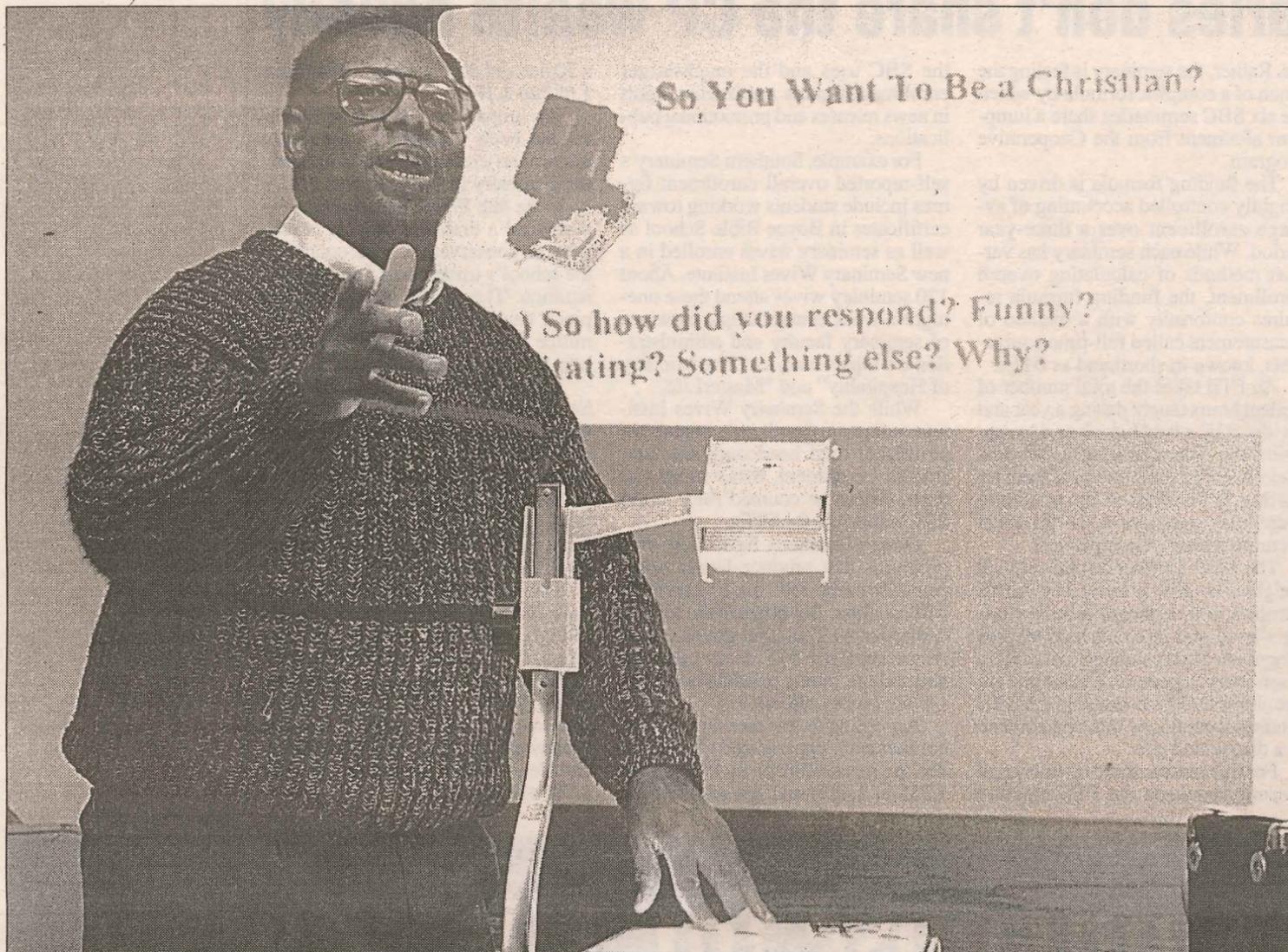
Acts 1:8

Neither is the way of accomplishing it:

## Giving through the Cooperative Program

For Cooperative Program promotion information, contact Denise Withers, KBC Communications/Media Department, at 502/245-4101, extension 212.





## Racism still a church issue, professor says

By Todd Van Campen  
Lexington Herald-Leader

LEXINGTON—Why aren't there more white pastors serving predominantly black churches? And why are so few black pastors serving white churches?

There are many reasons, said Charles Foster, professor of religion and education at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta.

But at the bottom line, "it really is rooted in patterns of racism," Foster said. "It's deeply embedded. Even though some of the overt forms of racism are breaking down, subtle patterns continue."

One church Foster studied, for example, had a "significant black presence," but only white people held keys to the building.

When a pastor changed the locks and redistributed the keys, some members left the church in disgust.

In Foster's observation of multiracial congregations, he has found that parents tend to pull out of such congregations as their children reach dating age. "For me, that's an indicator that there is a certain kind of fear that's still present," Foster said.

Differences in tradition and culture also play roles. Patterns rooted in Europe contrast with patterns rooted in Africa—particularly when it comes to the role of the pastor—even though these factors may be "hidden in the memory of people," Foster said.

Also, black congregations tend to relate to God as communities, Foster said, while white congregations tend to emphasize each individual's relationship to God.

That is one reason worship styles tend to differ between black and white churches, he said.

Ultimately, "it's who gets elected to the offices that really counts in terms of power and status" within a church, Foster said, and one racial group often is reluctant to yield that power to another.

**YOUTH PASTOR** Chuck Fletcher says the predominantly white churches he's worked in "have accepted me." (Lexington Herald-Leader photo by Don Knight)

## Fletcher: 'I don't think God sees color'

Continued from page 1

After I got there and settled in ... there was a lot of growth."

In 1980, he started attending Crestwood Baptist Church, a predominantly white church in Frankfort.

He took over as the church's youth pastor in 1983 and served there until accepting Trinity Baptist's call in October.

Fletcher, who is single, now commutes to Trinity from his home in Frankfort.

"I heard in Frankfort that (black) people reacted to me like, 'He's in a white church, why doesn't he come

and help us?' But I never got a phone call," Fletcher said.

When Fletcher goes into a new church, he said is careful not to make too many waves.

He stays in the background at first, watching, finding out how the church works. When he makes changes in the ministry, he does so gradually.

Fletcher said he has had to overcome his reluctance to visit white teenagers at their homes.

Finally, "I realized that if people accepted me, they accepted me ... I have never had any doors slammed in my face. I have never had anyone turn

me away."

Fletcher says he is writing a book about his experiences, and that one of the chapters will deal with the writings of Martin Luther King Jr.

"I think he was trying to draw the groups together," Fletcher said. "That's the way I see my life."

"I'm sure some people would say I'm losing my nationality as far as being an African-American. But that's not true—I'm proud of my heritage."

"But more importantly, I'm proud to be a Christian. That's the way I came to be like I am, because I'm a Christian."

**A few weeks before her life-changing accident, Self watched the "Ten Commandments." Afterward, she prayed, "Lord, make me a Moses. I want to be an influence in many people's lives."**

## Hopkinsville woman gains national audience at women's event

Continued from page 1

The mishap occurred March 2, 1978, during a sudden snowstorm, when her car skidded off the road and flipped over.

She had accepted Jesus as her Savior at the age of eight, but the accident tested that faith. At first she was angry at God—and at people who gave her books by Joni Eareckson Tada, an inspirational author who was paralyzed by a diving accident.

Self's frustration peaked when her doctor told her she never would walk again. She had thought her paralysis would be temporary.

"I remember screaming, 'Why, God, why? What have I done so ter-

rible to deserve this?" she recalled. "I had never smoked or drank. I was a pretty good kid."

More struggles followed, with her range of emotions including self-pity. At one point she told God, "I can't conceive of life in a wheelchair."

But, God made himself real to her, she said. After pouring out her heart in prayer each night, she said, she felt the peace described in Philippians 4:7, "that passes all understanding."

"That was the best counseling I could get," she said. "At the end I knew I had told the one who could understand. It was a comfort to know I could tell him."

Despite her injuries, she attended

high school graduation ceremonies and became the first member of her family to graduate from college.

After earning a music education degree at Gardner-Webb College, she became an area representative for Fellowship of Christian Athletes. During a regional athletic conference she met Hopkinsville attorney Andrew Self and formed a friendship that eventually turned romantic.

She moved to her husband's hometown after their marriage in 1991 and became active at First Baptist Church of Hopkinsville. Self teaches a women's Sunday school class and sings with the worship team. Her husband is Sunday school director.

"She's an amazing lady," said Jim McKenzie, her pastor. "She's an inspiration to a lot of young mothers who are struggling with rambunctious kids. Then they see Self who's moth-

ering her children so well in spite of her handicap."

A set of hand controls in her Buick LeSabre enable Self to drive her children—Abbey, 4; and Audrey, born Oct. 10—around town.

Self uses a sport chair to play tennis with her husband, and she also enjoys tossing a football and playing hide-and-seek. Her only limitations are not being able to climb steps or get in a swing with her oldest daughter.

"Abbey just looks at this chair like a big nose," she said. "If she asks me to do something and I say that I can't, she'll say, 'Watch me, then.'"

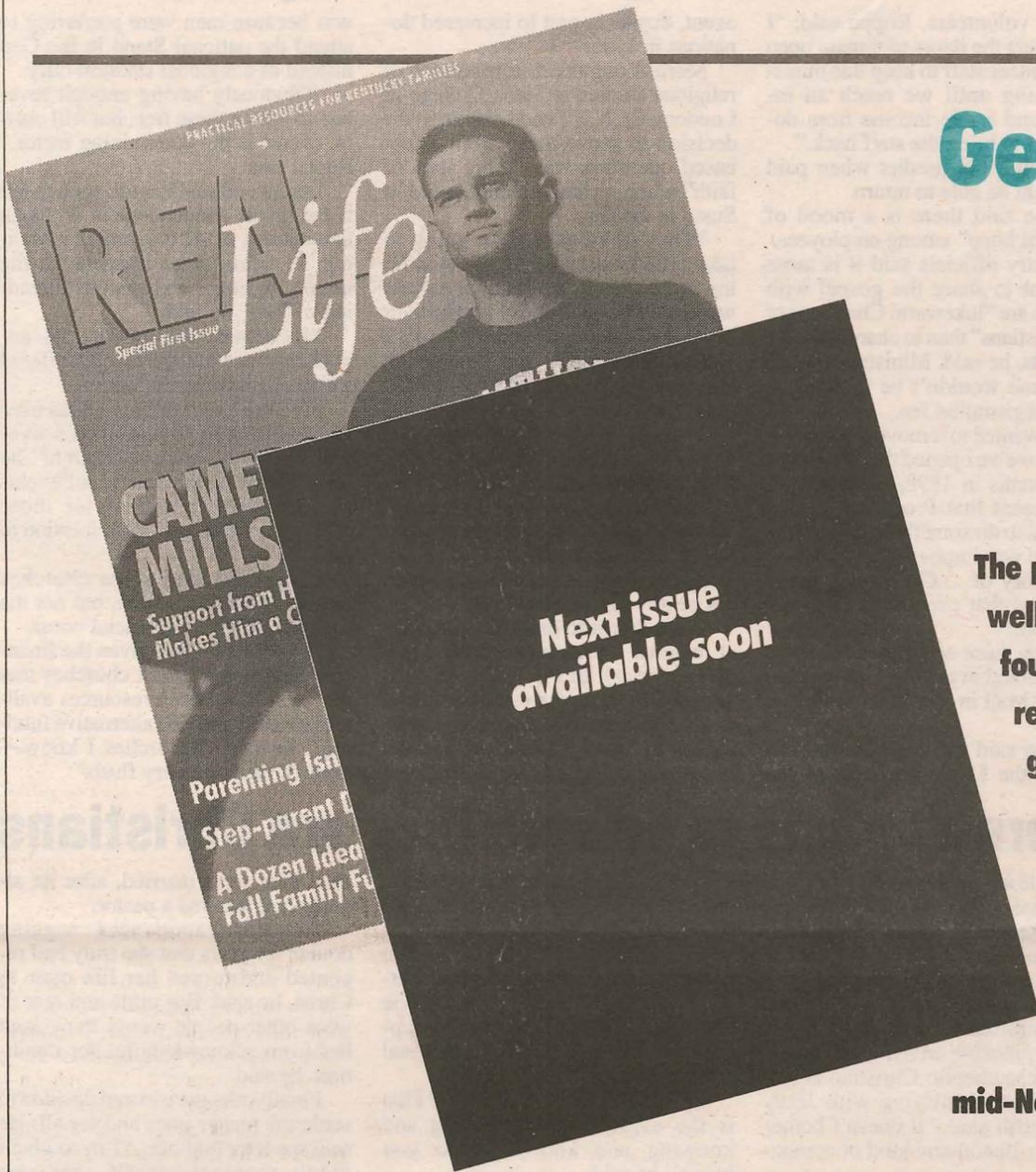
"I think this wheelchair is just a platform that God used to draw me to himself," she added. "The worst of times you can become the best of times because you come closer to knowing the Lord."



Self

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## Promise Keepers forced to lay off entire paid staff

By Virginia Culver & Adelle Banks  
Religion News Service

DENVER (RNS)—Promise Keepers, the evangelical Christian men's ministry, is laying off all of its 345 salaried employees effective March 31 because it doesn't have the money to pay them.

Promise Keepers officials said the decision to no longer charge fees for its conferences and rely solely on donations prompted the layoffs and the need to rely on volunteers.

But Steve Ruppe, director of public affairs for the ministry, said Feb. 19 the organization isn't folding and still plans to hold 19 men's conferences this year. The conferences will continue to encourage men to increase their commitment to God, family and church.

Bill McCartney, the former University of Colorado football coach who founded Promise Keepers in 1990, broke the startling news to staff at the Denver headquarters Feb. 18.

"I have a broken heart," he said. "But, I don't have a discouraged heart. I have a heart that is filled with hope."

Although it is too soon to tell how many salaried staff might choose to

work as volunteers, Ruppe said, "I fully expect the doors to remain open and volunteer staff to keep this ministry running until we reach an increased and stable income from donations ... to bring the staff back."

He could not predict when paid staff might be able to return.

Ruppe said there is a mood of "prayerful hope" among employees.

Ministry officials said it is more important to share the gospel with men who are "lukewarm Christians or non-Christians" than to charge \$60 for the events, he said. Ministry officials think some wouldn't be inclined to pay the registration fee.

"We wanted to remove that impediment so we've opened the gates to all of our events in 1998," Ruppe said. "That meant that Promise Keepers again had to do something that everybody said was impossible. We have a long history of ... God doing things through us that everybody said was impossible."

Among those was huge attendance for the "Stand in the Gap" rally at the National Mall in Washington Oct. 4, he said.

Ruppe said the organization has paid off the \$9 million cost of the

event, thanks in part to increased donations in 1997.

Merle Longwood, a professor of religious studies at Siena College in Loudonville, N.Y., said he thought the decision to move away from a fee-based operation was "a big leap of faith" when he heard it announced at Stand in the Gap.

"They obviously were going to take a risk to see whether or not moving in the direction of total donations would be a possible way to make their organization continue and the risk yielded this result," said Longwood, who studies the role of men in religious movements.

Promise Keepers officials had warned staff of possible cutbacks. Last July, after reaching a peak staff that exceeded 500, more than 100 people were laid off due to the loss of revenue from stadium events. McCartney said at the time he hoped there would not be any further staff cuts.

But a dramatic drop in attendance at regional events made further layoffs necessary. In 1997, 630,000 men attended 18 stadium events, compared to a 1.1 million total attendance at 22 events in 1996. Officials suggested last year that the decreased attendance

was because men were preferring to attend the national Stand in the Gap instead of a regional stadium rally.

"Obviously having enough revenue to put on these free, but still costly, events is the determining factor," Ruppe said.

Longwood said it is too soon to tell if the layoff announcement is a sign that interest in the movement is waning. "I guess what happens in the months to come will give us a reading of that," he said.

McCartney, in making his announcement about the layoffs, offered a challenge to church leaders.

"We have seen how God has used this ministry to change men's lives and lead them back to church," he said. "Now, as the fees to all events are removed, it is time for those churches to assist us in our mission to men."

Longwood said some churches may have the inclination, but not the capacity, to give a financial boost.

"I'm not sure that given the financial condition of most churches that they will have much resources available to really provide alternative funding," he said. "Churches I know—none of them are very flush."

### Mormons beating Baptist missions, authority says

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)—The missions efforts of Mormons are surpassing those of the Southern Baptist Convention largely because Mormons have created a culture that fosters world evangelism, according to the SBC North American Mission Board's director for interfaith witness. Phil Roberts said that in recent decades cult groups such as the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses have become a world missions force of staggering proportions.

"A little over 45 years ago, Latter-day Saints numbered less than a million members," said Roberts. "Today, their growth is approximately 10 million members." The vital element in the growth of the Mormon church, Roberts said, is efforts of traditional Mormon missionaries, usually male students of college age who spend two years living on the mission field at their own expense.

There are currently more than 50,000 full-time Mormon missionaries on the field, winning more than 300,000 converts a year, or roughly six converts per missionary.

"Now sociologists are talking about Mormonism being the next great world religion," Roberts said. "How is that possible? That is all possible because Mormonism has learned to create a mission culture—a culture where the exceptions are those who stay home and not the ones to go."

In contrast, he said, Southern Baptists, who number 16 million have about 4,000 overseas missionaries.

## Elliff wants Southern Baptists to be sure they are Christians

Continued from page 1

In a passing reference to President Bill Clinton, Elliff said just because a person claims to be a Christian doesn't mean that person shows evidence of a genuine conversion.

"There is a common misconception not only in the White House but in the church house, that there is a difference between becoming a Christian and being a Christian ... that you can become a Christian and after that have no concern about how you behave.

"Where's that in the Bible?" he asked.

"While we are not saved by works, neither are we saved by a faith that doesn't produce works," Elliff said. "You cannot meet Christ without being changed. Once the seed of God's word is sown in you, you no longer can be comfortable with sin."

■ *Am I making an outward profession?* An authentic Christian is not ashamed of identifying with Jesus Christ, Elliff said. "It doesn't bother me to say that in any kind of company."

This should give the Christian a conviction and desire to share his faith

with others, Elliff said. "True believers are unafraid to share about their faith."

He explained that Americans often talk about faith being a personal matter, implying it is therefore no one else's business. That's a misconception, he said. "Faith should be personal but not private."

■ *Do I have an inward peace?* This is the evidence of "knowing and knowing and knowing that you know," he said.

Elliff told the story of his wife's conversion as an adult several years

after they were married, after he already had become a pastor.

She had experienced nagging doubts for years that she truly had repented and turned her life over to Christ, he said. But pride and fear of what other people would think kept her from acknowledging her condition, he said.

Finally, she gave in and decided to settle the matter once and for all. He said she later told him, "I'm so glad I didn't convince myself—and you didn't convince me—that I was something I wasn't."

### CLASSIFIED ADS

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music, Tunnel Hill Baptist Church. Mail resumé to: Karen Dingess, 803 Old Tunnel Hill Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

**SEEKING:** First Baptist Church of LaCenter, Ky., is currently accepting resumé for a full-time minister of music, C/Y. Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 239, LaCenter, KY 42056.

**NEEDED:** Nursery attendants. We have immediate openings for paid nursery attendants to work during church services and other church activities. Starting pay is \$5.25 per hour. Send resumé to: Mike Schramm, Personnel Committee, Vs Baptist Church, 8 Thyme Court, Louisville, KY 40272.

**SEEKING:** The Pastor Search Committee of South County Baptist Church is accepting resumé for a full-time pastor. SCBC supports a broad range of mission projects and is currently sponsoring two developing church programs in addition to a Filipino congregation that meets in our facility. Send resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, 5115 Butler Spur Road, St. Louis, MO 63128.

**SEEKING:** Chevy Chase Baptist Church, Lexington, is looking for an energetic, spirit-led person for a part-time ministerial position. Emphasis will be on youth and education. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Chevy Chase Baptist Church, P.O. Box 22113, Lexington, KY 40502.

**SEEKING:** Red House Baptist Church is receiving resumé for the position of minister of education/music. Please submit your resumé to: Rev. Chris Kurtz, Red House Baptist Church, 2301 Red House Road, Richmond, KY 40475.

**SEEKING:** Bogota Baptist Chapel is searching for a pastor able to live and work in a cross-cultural situation. Must have heart for missions, be outgoing, people-person, like working with children of all ages. Feel the call? Please email Inge Ortiz at alortiz@impsat.net or Eric Leaver at leaverbunch@openway.com.

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

**SEEKING:** Youth minister for approximately 25 youth with good potential for growth in small southeastern community. Need to have genuine love for youth and a heart that desires to reach youth for Christ. Send inquiry or resumé to: Youth Search Committee, c/o First Baptist Church, 317 Madison St., Whitesburg, KY 41858. Telephone: (606) 633-2277.

**WANTED:** Music director to coordinate the music ministry of a local Baptist church. Please send resumé to: P.O. Box 67, Auburn, KY 42206.

**SEEKING:** Florida Baptist Children's Home in Tallahassee, Fla., is looking for a Christian couple to work with children ages 6-18 years. The base salary for a house parent is \$14,635. Florida Baptist Children's Home offers an excellent benefit package including retirement plan, medical/disability insurance and paid vacations. Our campus is a beautiful, 35-acre facility located at 8415 Buck Lake Road in Tallahassee. If you think you would be interested in a Christian ministry serving families and children, please contact Chris Kretschman at (904) 878-1458 in Tallahassee for more information.

**SEEKING:** Part-time minister of music and part-time youth minister for a healthy, growing church—two morning services. Send resumé to: P.O. Box 197, Rineyville, KY 40162, or call (502) 737-7361.

**SEEKING:** Far western Kentucky church accepting resumé for full-time pastor. Experience preferred, seminary degree needed. Send resumé to: Wickliffe First Baptist Church, P.O. 176, Wickliffe, KY 42087, Attn: Search Committee.

**RETREAT:** Myrtle Beach Ocean View Retreat. Youth, seniors and musical groups (groups of up to 50). 307 1st Ave., Myrtle Beach, SC 29577. Leave message: (803) 626-7069.

**SEEKING:** Pleasant Hill Baptist Church of Campbellsville, Ky., is currently receiving resumé for the full-time position of minister of youth and children. All interested may send their resumé to: Minister of Youth and Children Search Committee, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, 6380 Old Lebanon Road, Campbellsville, KY 42718. Resumé will be accepted until Feb. 28, 1998.

## Christian Coalition launches effort to deepen support

By Ira Rifkin  
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—The Christian Coalition said last week it will seek to involve 100,000 evangelical churches in a grassroots lobbying effort focused on the sort of conservative social issues that brought it to national prominence.

The strategy, dubbed "Families 2000," is designed to gain the congregations' support by connecting 100,000 volunteer "church liaisons" to local coalition chapters by November 2000. The coalition said the plan will "place family issues at the forefront in the next two election cycles and into the new century."

The Families 2000 blueprint included a "menu" of "issues for state and local action," around which the congregations can rally their efforts. Abortion, parental notification of government actions affecting children, school curriculums, homosexuality, legalized gambling, pornography, drugs and covenant marriage contracts were among the issues listed by the coalition.

Coalition spokesman Arne Owens said the "citizenship ministry" effort would focus on voter registration and

### Ashcroft heads early presidential poll

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. (RNS) Sen. John Ashcroft, R-Mo., emerged as the favored presidential candidate of state Christian Coalition leaders in a poll taken at the organization's mid-winter conference held Presidents Day weekend.

Ashcroft—an evangelical Christian closely associated with many of the same positions as the Christian Coalition—outpolled 45 Republicans, Democrats and others who have been mentioned as possible presidential candidates in the 2000 election.

Ashcroft was the first or second choice of 29 of the 65 coalition state chairs and executive directors who

were polled at the conference, the Washington Post reported Feb. 17.

Arkansas's Republican Gov. Mike Huckabee came in second with 16 first or second place ballots in the closed-door voting.

Other top choices were all Republicans. They included businessman Steve Forbes and Oklahoma Rep. J.C. Watts with 15 votes; Texas Gov. George W. Bush with 10 votes; and former Vice President Dan Quayle with eight votes.

Democrats—including Vice President Al Gore and House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt—received a total of zero first or second place mentions.

education, and avoid partisanship—a charge often leveled at the coalition by liberal critics.

Families 2000 was tested in Maine, where the coalition successfully led a petition drive to force a vote on legislation guaranteeing the civil rights of homosexuals. The measure was overturned in balloting earlier this month.

Owens said the coalition, based in Chesapeake, Va., added 100,000

names to its list of supporters by working with 900 Maine churches during the effort. The organization claims about 1.9 million supporters.

Despite its success in Maine, the coalition faces a struggle to regain its former clout, much of which evaporated with the departure last year of Ralph Reed, its media-savvy former executive director.

Fund-raising dropped from \$26.5

million in 1996 to \$17 million last year, forcing the coalition to lay off about a fifth of its employees, cease publishing its bi-monthly magazine and spin off a much-vaunted outreach effort to African-Americans and Hispanics.

The Internal Revenue Service also is reviewing the coalition's tax-exempt status and the Federal Election Commission has filed suit alleging the group violated election law by engaging in partisan political activity while promoting the candidacies of conservative Republicans.

But John Green, an expert on the Religious Right, said that despite the coalition's recent problems, the organization started by Pat Robertson remains "in better shape than its critics would have you believe. There's a lot of life left there."

Green, who directs the Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at the University of Akron, said coalition attempts initiated by Reed to broaden its base by appealing to blacks and other racial minorities, plus an earlier effort to involve Catholics, proved unsuccessful.

Now the coalition has decided to "deepen rather than attempt to broaden" its base of support, he added.

### Chapman soars to nine Dove nominations

NASHVILLE (RNS)—Contemporary Christian singer/songwriter Steven Curtis Chapman earned nine nominations—the highest number of any artist nominated—for the 29th Annual Dove Awards, officials announced last week.

Chapman was nominated for Artist, Male Vocalist and Songwriter of the Year—all categories in which he won Dove Awards in 1997. He also received nominations in other categories, including Pop/Contemporary Recorded Song of the Year, Long Form Music Video and Special Event Album of the Year.

The awards ceremony will be broadcast live from the Nashville Arena April 23 at 8 p.m. CDT on the Nashville Network.

Nominees among the 44 categories are:

**Artist of the Year:** Bob Carlisle, Steven Curtis Chapman, Jars of Clay, Rich Mullins, Point of Grace.

**Female Vocalist of the Year:** Crystal Lewis, Rebecca St. James, Kathy Troccoli, Jaci Velasquez, CeCe Winans.

**Male Vocalist of the Year:** Bob Carlisle, Steven Curtis Chapman, Rich Mullins, Jonathan Pierce, Chris Rice.

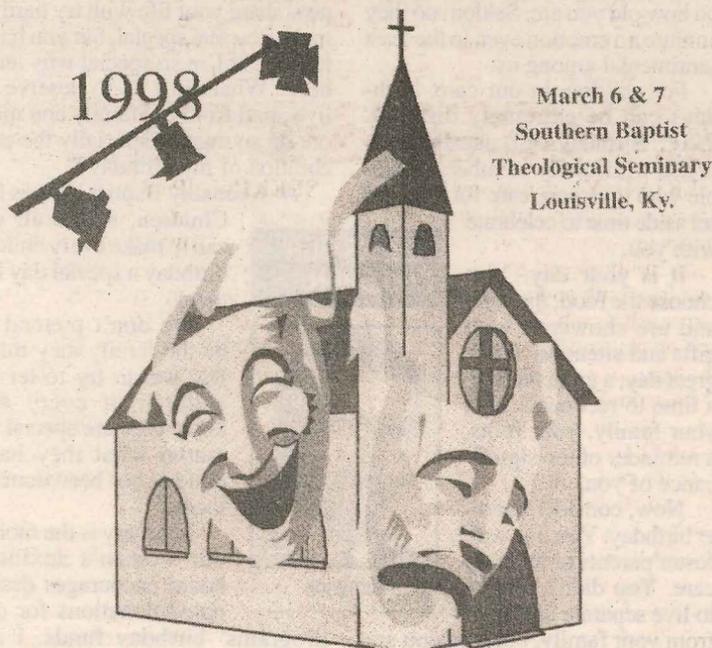
**Group of the Year:** 4HIM, dc Talk, God's Property, Jars of Clay, Point of Grace.

**New Artist of the Year:** Avalon, Caedmon's Call, God's Property, Chris Rice, Smalltown Poets.

**Song of the Year:** "A Baby's Prayer," "Free," "He Walked a Mile," "Hope to Carry on," "Let Us Pray," "Live the Life," "On My Knees," "People Get Ready ... Jesus is Comin'," "Shout to the Lord," "Stomp."

**Songwriter of the Year:** Steven Curtis Chapman, Toby McKeehan, Chris Rice, Michael W. Smith, Kathy Troccoli.

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### NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Gambling has silver bullet?** Just as anti-tobacco forces used subpoena power to prove tobacco companies knew their products were addictive, the same strategy may work with gambling, said Bernard Horn, communications director for the Coalition Against Legalized Gambling. "We believe that documents exist which prove that the leaders of the gambling industry are also fully aware of the nature of their product," he said. "They know that a huge percentage of their profits are earned from gambling addicts. And they respond by designing gambling games and establishments in ways to encourage and exploit this addiction."

■ **U.S. religion study ends.** Americans have tremendous religious freedom, but "no state is a paradise on earth," and religious intolerance does exist in this country, said a U.N. official who recently completed a study of religious intolerance. American Indians "feel they are simply not understood at all" while Muslims believe they suffer because of misconceptions about them held by many Americans, said Abdelfattah Amor, a Tunisian who serves as the U.N.'s special rapporteur on religious intolerance.

■ **Methodists giving increases.** United Methodists gave almost \$5 million more to churchwide causes in 1997 than in 1998, the denomination reported Feb. 13. Total giving to the church in 1997 was \$136.8 million. The increase in giving runs counter to the denomination's continued decline in U.S. membership during the last several decades. Although no figures are

yet available for 1997, the church had an estimated loss of 42,000 members in 1996, leaving about 8.5 million members in the United States.

■ **Leader of 2 denominations dies.** Thomas Kilgore Jr., one of the few men to lead two major national Baptist organizations, died Feb. 4. He was 84. A leading figure in the fight for racial justice, Kilgore was overwhelmingly elected as the first black president of the American Baptist Convention—now known as American Baptist Churches USA—in the late 1960s. He was installed in 1969 and served for a year. Later, he led the predominantly black Progressive National Baptist Convention, serving as president from 1976 to 1978.

■ **OR leader convicted.** Flip Benham, Operation Rescue International's director, was sentenced to six months in jail for his part in anti-abortion demonstrations outside a public school. Defense lawyers for Benham and two Liberty University students who also were convicted of trespassing said the three were using their free speech rights.

■ **Settlement reached in sex suit.** The Roman Catholic Diocese of Dallas has agreed to pay \$5 million to settle sexual abuse lawsuits involving two former priests. The cases are separate from yet a third, widely publicized Dallas case in which the diocese was held liable for \$154 million. In the current settlement, Associated Press reported, one former priest was accused of molesting four boys and another of molesting a girl.

## House committees act on abortion & alcohol bills

By David Winfrey  
News Director

FRANKFORT—Legislative committees have approved one bill that would tighten regulations regarding abortion and another bill that would make it easier for so-called "third-class" dry cities in Kentucky to have alcohol sales.

Last Thursday, the House Judiciary Committee passed House Bill 85, which would require abortion facilities to give clients information about abortions, including medical risks and alternatives, 24 hours before performance of an abortion.

The House Judiciary Committee also passed House Bill 293, which would include "unborn child" in the definition of a person. The bill would allow prosecution of someone responsible for terminating a pregnancy, excluding abortions.

Meanwhile, the House Cities Committee passed House Bill 323 regarding "third-class" city alcohol sales. The measure was approved despite the objections voiced by many Kentuckians who called committee members, according to the executive director of the Temperance League of Kentucky.

Claude Witt said committee Chairman Arnold Simpson of Covington admitted he had more than 200 callers who objected to the bill. If made

into law, it would allow dry "third-class" cities to have votes in a single precinct on whether to sell alcohol.

Cities affected by the measure include Somerset, Campbellsville, Corbin, Murray, Glasgow, Flatwoods and Mayfield.

Witt speculated that Simpson supported the bill as a favor to its sponsor, Joe Clarke of Danville, former speaker of the House.

Witt asked that Baptists contact their House representatives and Rules Committee Chairman Jody Richards of Bowling Green to attempt to defeat the bill. "If we can get enough calls to Jody Richards, he may decide that it isn't a good idea," Witt said.

Other bills of interest:  
**House Bill 327** would revise laws regarding driving while intoxicated, including reducing the legal blood alcohol content for DWI from 0.10 to 0.08. Passed by the House Judiciary Committee.

**Senate Bill 76** would allow someone convicted of an alcohol or drug offense to make a one-time contribution to a Drug Abuse Resistance Education program as part of their probation or conditional discharge. Passed 37-0 by the Senate.

**Senate Bill 287** was introduced. It would allow a local option election for sale of alcohol in a precinct that contains a private golf course club. In the Senate Licensing and Occupations Committee.

Kentucky  
General  
Assembly



## Following Christ

By Robert Dunston

On Monday, Feb. 16, students, staff and faculty came to chapel to hear René Rochester, executive director of Urban S.E.T., a program dedicated to strengthening, educating and training urban youth. Her presentation proved to be inspiring and challenging.

Rochester accepted Christ as her Savior at the University of Texas where she was a member of both the Lady Longhorn basketball and track teams. She was invited to participate in the Olympic trials in track for the 1980 Olympics, which were boycotted by the United States.

At the time she was crushed that her dreams of athletic success never would come true, but she soon realized God had given her a greater dream and a greater ministry. Today Rochester speaks across the nation and is completing work on a doctor's degree in health education.

Like many, Rochester believes today is a crucial time for young people. In our time of moral decay and ethical laxity, young people must focus on following Christ. Rochester encouraged us all to take a stand for Christ and not to be ashamed of the gospel. She knows

young people can make a difference as they prepare to lead our nation into the future.

We at Cumberland College believe the same thing. From the very beginning of our history our goal has been to provide a quality education with Christian values. Knowing information is useless without a desire to use that knowledge in the

CUMBERLAND  
COLLEGE



service of God and others. Having a career means nothing without the Christian ethical principles that provide integrity and direction in life.

Having Christ at the center is what makes a difference at Cumberland College and other Kentucky Baptist institutions of higher education. Our intent is to help young

people mature physically, mentally and spiritually so they can be servant-leaders in every profession and at every level of authority.

Our students already are making a difference on our campuses and beyond as they compete in academics and athletics and as they serve through a variety of missions programs. We know they will continue to make a difference for Christ in the future.

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

## Holocaust museum film 'un-Christian'?

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A 14-minute film on the roots of anti-Semitism shown at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington has been labeled anti-Christian.

Ironically, the charge was leveled not by Christians, but by a group of politically conservative Jews who work closely with conservative Christians on various religious and political issues.

The group has sent a letter to the museum urging it to re-evaluate the film.

In response, the museum has affirmed the appropriateness of the film, according to the Feb. 12 issue of Washington Jewish Week.

Among the letter signers are Michael Horowitz, director of Washington's Hudson Institute; Elliot Abrams of Washington's Ethics and Public Policy Center; and film critic Michael Medved. Horowitz is credited by many as the prime mover behind the current campaign to aid Christians who reportedly face religious persecution in China, some Muslim

nations and elsewhere.

The letter alleged that the film portrays "Christianity and the Christian leaders (as) the initial causes of anti-Semitism and have at all times been its major proponents. Indeed, the film clearly implies that Christianity was the proximate cause of the Holocaust itself."

Peggy Obrecht, the museum's director of church relations, said the film was produced with the aid of Christian scholars and "at this juncture there is no reason for us to do anything to change the film."

Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, president of the Chicago-based International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, told Washington Jewish Week he believes the film to be fair.

Dan Napolitano, who teaches a course on the Holocaust at Washington's Georgetown Preparatory School, a Roman Catholic institution, was quoted as saying: "My feeling is the film is hard hitting, but in light of the history, it's fair."



## McNeelys Host Spain Tour

This Oct. 15-24, June and I would like to introduce you to the land where we were missionaries for many years. Dehoney Travel has arranged a fascinating tour. Some Baptist work will be included. Write now for a brochure; receive \$50 discount if enrolled before April 1. Dr. Gerald McNeely, 10605 Ledbury Court, Louisville, KY 40243, (502) 244-3759.

## The 'specialness' of you

Birthdays. What does yours mean to you? Guess that depends on how old you are. Seldom do they conjure no emotion even in the least sentimental among us.

For children in our care, birthdays can be extremely difficult. Why? Birthdays are usually celebrated with family members—people who love you, care for you and set aside time to celebrate with you.

It is your day. You choose the food, the cake and are showered with gifts and attention. It is a great day, a great feeling, a time to reconnect with your family, your roots, a reminder of the significance of you.

Now, consider another birthday. You live with foster parents or in group care. You didn't choose to live separate and apart from your family, but here you are. You now live in someone else's home or with eight or ten other boys or girls in group care.

You share everything with these other kids—bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, food, TV, transportation, attention from workers, etc. The "specialness of you" can be lost no matter how hard others try to recover it.

On your birthday you may or may not hear from your "real" fam-

ily members. Your foster family or the group home kids and staff you now share your life with try hard to make you feel special, but you have to ask: "If I'm so special why am I here? What did I do to deserve to live apart from my family and miss out on so much, especially the celebration of my birthday?"

At Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, we do all we can to make every child's birthday a special day for them.

We don't pretend to be the family they miss. But we do try to let all children of every age know they are special no matter what they have done or has been done to them.

February is the month our women's auxiliary board encourages designated donations for our programs' birthday funds. I am grateful for their sensitivity to the need within all of us to have a special day.

Thanks to those of you who make this recognition part of your ministry to kids.

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

HOMES FOR  
CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

# BOOKS

**Call and Response: Biblical Foundations of a Theology of Evangelism.** Walter Klaiber. Abingdon Press, 1997. 272 pages. \$19.95. ♦♦♦♦♦ (out of five)

"Evangelism is not only a rescue operation for people who would otherwise be lost, and under no circumstances only membership recruitment for a certain institution, but above all a question of spiritual survival for Christianity itself."

With that statement, Walter Klaiber, a bishop of the German Area of the United Methodist Church, sets the stage for his discussion of the nature and role of evangelism in the life of the church. Fully recognizing that most Christians, for a variety of reasons, have trouble with either the idea of evangelism or its practice, Klaiber argues, "It is even more important to me to persuade those who regard evangelism skeptically to orient themselves by the fundamental biblical commission, and not to form their opinion on the basis of some problematic, isolated examples."

Throughout this engaging and in-depth examination of the evangelistic task of the church, Klaiber seeks to make readers struggle with and answer three questions: "What is the biblically justified message of evangelism, and how does it speak to the situation of those addressed?" "Is the hearer's response compatible with the message?" and "What is the motivation for preaching the gospel?"

There is much to chew on in this volume. I was intrigued by his discussion of what it means to be lost. His presentation of the four groups (the poor, the sick, sinners and the devout) to whom Jesus addressed the gospel will challenge the method(s) by which we do evangelism. Klaiber's book will take some time and effort to read, but I believe his contribution can help churches and Christians broaden and deepen our understanding and practice of evangelism. *Jim Holladay*

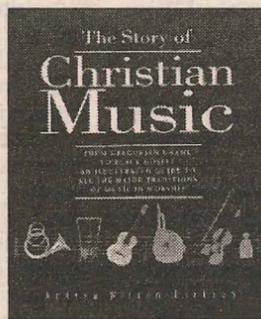
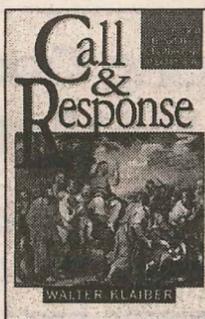
**The Knowledge of the Holy: The Attributes of God: Their Meaning in the Christian Life.** A. W. Tozer. Harper San Francisco, 1998. 120 pages. \$12 ♦♦♦

How long has it been since you focused any significant attention on the majesty and glory of God?

Forty years ago A. W. Tozer first published this collection of reflections on the attributes of God because he was concerned that a "decline in the knowledge of the holy" was causing the church to become anemic. At the time he contended that a wrong understanding of the holiness of God leads to idolatry. By proclaiming and worshipping a false God, the church leads its members and converts into a sub-Christian life, he said.

Written not for professional theologians, but for "plain persons," the book is a collection of 23 short reflections on the attributes of God. Tozer hoped to write not so much for the head as for the heart. Consequently,

cause he was concerned that a "decline in the knowledge of the holy" was causing the church to become anemic. At the time he contended that a wrong understanding of the holiness of God leads to idolatry. By proclaiming and worshipping a false God, the church leads its members and converts into a sub-Christian life, he said.



**The Story of Christian Music: From Gregorian Chant to Black Gospel.** Andrew Wilson-Dickson. Fortress Press, 1997. 256 pages. \$35. ♦♦♦

In recent years much discussion among church people has centered on musical style. This is clearly evident in the multitude of articles and books on worship.

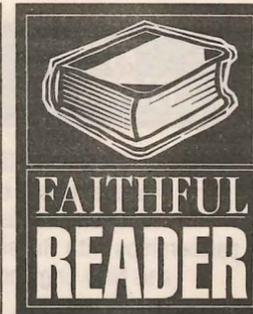
Wilson-Dickson's book clearly shows that this discussion is nothing new. From the early church the corporate character of the church has been determined by its worship, with music as a central factor. The breadth of material in this book is almost overwhelming. Reading as a non-musician, I can absorb only a few sections at a time without getting lost in the rapidity of change on the musical scene

of the church.

The book is divided into chronological sections by regions of the world: European, Eastern, Western, African and North American. Obviously this list leaves out some regions of the world in which astonishing growth is occurring: Far West and South/Latin American. But for the areas it covers, the book is highly readable and beautifully illustrated. By necessity, the author could not cover even one area completely, but tries to give a feel for the particular tradition. Even so, I was disappointed by the aspects of the North American tradition I found missing.

My main fault with the book is that it originally was published in 1992 in England. Even one who is marginally involved in church knows that the last five years have produced numerous new options and emphases in Christian music, even within the context of worship. An updating of the book before its re-publication would have been a welcome action. Picking up a "new" book, one would expect to find some contemporary analysis.

Also, realistically, the book could never deliver on its promise to cover all musical traditions. The attempt, however, makes the book worthwhile. The book is still a good resource and a book of interest. It definitely will increase understanding and hopefully will lead readers to other resources to fill in the gaps. *Wayne Hager*



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

## Our goal: 'Raving fans'

Wow. Two weeks ago, 22 inches of snow caught us by surprise, just as it did most everyone else. At Cedarmore, we were preparing for a busy weekend when the snow came.

We got all our roads cleared and paths shoveled by Thursday afternoon. Then, as many of you remember, there came another wave of heavy snow Thursday night and Friday morning, and we had to cancel the weekend's events.

The next weekend the deacon/pastor/spouse retreat, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church growth and administration division, was held at Cedarmore with a record attendance. To get ready for the crowd, our team shoveled and moved snow until we were weary, but it was worth every bit of the hard work.

It was a good example of how a team can work together under challenging circumstances and get a major job done. I was so proud of our staff. They rose to the occasion and went all out to get the job done. I hope all our guests that weekend had a great stay with us.

Our renovations continue at both Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore. Though it will take time for us to

get where we need to be, I promise you that every time you come to Jonathan Creek or Cedarmore you will see progress. And I commit to you that we will serve you in every way possible to make your stay more enjoyable.

Ken Blanchard wrote "Raving Fans: A Revolutionary Approach to Customer Service." Blanchard's

point is that today, customers are satisfied only because their expectations are so low and because no one else is doing better. He argues that just having satisfied customers isn't good enough anymore. If we really want a booming ministry, we must create "raving fans."

How does a service ministry like ours create "raving fans?" By doing

whatever it takes to make people feel at home and comfortable in a retreat, conference or camp setting, so that God can do what he wants to do while our guests are with us.

May God get all the glory and do a great work among us in the years ahead.

*Rusty Ellison is president of Kentucky Baptist Assemblies, Box 37, Bagdad, Ky. 40003. Call (502) 747-8911.*

## KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

## Grisham explores moral path of downward mobility

By Dale Hanson Bourke  
*Religion News Service*

Best-selling author John Grisham admits he knew nothing about homelessness until he began to conduct research for his latest book, "The Street Lawyer."

The novel is set near my own Washington, D.C., neighborhood and deals with the two groups of people I am certain to encounter every day: lawyers and street people. And based on my experience, Grisham moved from ignorance to profound insight in the development of this story.

"The Street Lawyer" is, in many ways, vintage Grisham. The characters are believable, the action well crafted. There is enough tension to make the reader turn pages quickly.

But in other ways, this Grisham book is different. It takes us through an education process that does more to shed light on the homeless than any organization or study or activist has ever done.

And by educating us while entertaining, Grisham takes a step toward assuming a different role for his books.

Grisham's main character, Mike Brock, is a likable, hard-working lawyer slaving away in a fancy law firm, hoping to make partner by billing more hours than the next guy. Had all gone according to plan, he would have traded in his Lexus for a Mercedes and his chic apartment in Georgetown for a sprawling Potomac mansion.

But he was rescued from such a safe, bourgeois existence by a chance encounter with a street person who threatens his life and starts a process that, in a different way, saves it.

Brock, like most of us, sees the homeless as a homogenous group of smelly, mentally ill or drug-dependent people who are down on their luck or simply have chosen to drop out of society.

But when he is held hostage by a street person and forced to understand the reasons for one individual's homelessness, he loses his ability to dismiss the entire group.

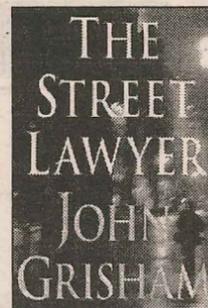
As he tries to assuage some of his emerging guilt by volunteering in a shelter, he encounters another casualty of society: the homeless children whose lives are neither valued nor protected.

At that point Brock is forced to decide if he will take a radical turn, leaving his lucrative practice to become a "street lawyer." To

Grisham's credit, he doesn't take this decision lightly. Brock is confronted with the loss of wealth, prestige and even his marriage.

Grisham seems very aware of the biblical challenge: "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

But within the layered story of "The Street Lawyer" is a thread of hope and a sense that the idealism we often feel at the start of a career can be reclaimed if we are willing to be downwardly mobile. The payoffs are far less tangible, but Grisham's skillful writing helps us understand their importance.



# PEOPLE

## PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ The church that began in Pavlosk, Russia, on Jan. 11. About 35 people attend each week.

■ Permanent facilities for two churches in small communities near St. Petersburg, Russia, that have been told they can no longer rent the buildings where they meet.

■ "Praises for our children's well-being," say Joe and Kimberly Knight in language school in Russia.

■ Kentucky Baptist pastors needed to conduct evangelistic meetings in New England April 18-23 or May 16-21.

■ Brad and Jeanine Horne in language school in Moscow.

## Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **AMARILLO, Texas**—Jerry Gray, 49, died Feb. 6. He was pastor of churches in Philpot, Pleasant Ridge and Guthrie. Survivors include his wife, Annetta, two daughters and one son.

■ **BEAVER DAM**—Beaver Dam Church will celebrate its 200th anniversary March 7 at 6 p.m. Special services are planned. Call (502) 274-7174 for more information. Glenn Armstrong is pastor.

■ **BOWLING GREEN**—Greenwood Church called Michael Welch as youth minister. He began his new ministry Jan. 1. Welch is a student at Western University.

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—Friendship Church recently called Heather MacInnes as youth minister. She is a student at Campbellsville University.

■ **EDMONTON**—Pink Ridge Church recently called Timothy Glass as pastor.

■ **LAWRENCEBURG**—Tyrone

Church called Mark Webb as pastor. He began his new ministry Jan. 1.

Alton Church ordained Howard Phillips to the deacon ministry Feb. 22.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—St. Matthews Church will host a half-day men's retreat March 7 with Jeb Magruder. Magruder will discuss his journey from being a Watergate conspirator to the spiritual renewal that changed his life. For information, call (502) 896-8882. Also, Rosemary Sutton of Melbourne, Australia, will be in concert March 1 at 6 p.m.

Cloverleaf Church will host the "Impacts" in a gospel music concert March 7 at 7 p.m. For more information, call (502) 367-0128. Geoffrey Lacefield is pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Temple Church will hold ground-breaking and site dedication for its new facility March 1 at 2:30 p.m. Call (502) 685-3108 for more information.

## Elliff to speak at Mid-Continent event

MAYFIELD—Southern Baptist Convention President Tom Elliff will be the keynote speaker for the annual Evangelism Conference of Mid-Continent Baptist College next week.

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church of Del City, Okla., will speak at 4 p.m. Thursday, March 5, at High Point Baptist Church in Mayfield.

The conference begins at 2 p.m. that day and is scheduled to conclude around 9 p.m. Dinner will be served between sessions.

Other speakers include Clark Brown of Greenfield, Tenn.; David Keyes of Grand Chain, Ill.; Ron Cruse of Hickory; and Mid-Continent President David Jester.

For information, call (502) 247-8521.



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## Experiencing God Weekend For Youth

April 24-25

Westside Baptist Church  
Murray, Kentucky

Special Worship Leaders: Dave Hunt,  
Tom Richter & Matt Johnson

Cost: \$10; \$5 for each additional person  
from same family (includes Saturday  
afternoon lunch and recreation)

Sponsored by the Baptist Student Union at Murray State  
University. For more information, call (502) 753-5771

## Come and see us

In a few short weeks Oneida will begin another spring season. Spring is extremely busy not only because of the normal day-to-day activities, but also because of preparations for our May graduation.

Spring is also a very busy time because of the many visitors who come to see us at this time of the year. It may be difficult for you to schedule your trip when the spring flowers are the most beautiful, but there is still much to see.

You do not need to plan far in advance; you may call and tell us you will be here next week. With few exceptions, there is no bad time to visit. Most groups who come choose to visit on a weekday. This is normally best because you can worship with us in our daily chapel service at 10:30 a.m. Travel time from Lexington, Pikeville, Monticello and Paintsville is about two and one-half hours. Louisville, Ashland, Cincinnati and Bowling Green are about three and one-half hours away.

If you can plan to arrive by 10:30 a.m. we will go right to chapel. In addition to the worship time in chapel, you also get to see all of our students in one group. Most visitors are surprised to see the number of students we have. After chapel, we will share a little about the Oneida ministry and begin our walking tour. We will try to get you to the dining room between our students' two lunch periods. If you ever have shared a meal with us, you know about our food. On more than a few occasions I have heard someone say after filling his tray, "Why did I get all of this food?" Soon I often will hear these words: "Honey, can you eat part of this for me?" Then the "honey" often will reply, "You embarrassed me with all of that food you got.

### THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

They'll think you haven't eaten in days." Oneida's lunches are famous for many things, including our wonderful desserts. You normally may choose from cakes, Jell-O, fruit, cookies, yogurt or pies. Trust me, no one ever goes away hungry.

Then the big challenge comes: trying to finish the walking tour on a full stomach. It can be difficult, but we normally are successful. Occasionally some men claim they need to go check something out in the van or bus. I think they slip back to take a quick nap. This is especially true when we head for the craft shop. If the men weren't sleepy before, they are now.

The ladies get very excited about the items available in our craft shop and can spend hours looking around. Many of the men choose to take a ride to the farm while the ladies are shopping. More than a few stories are told about "When I was a kid growing up on the farm." We always are reminded how things were different then. The work was harder, hours were longer, winters were colder, summers were hotter ... well, you get the idea. No matter how things were "back then," they all agree Oneida has a splendid agriculture program.

A walk through the farrowing house always is enjoyed by young and old, men and women. Seeing a dozen or more huge sows nursing 10 or 12 piglets each brings smiles. Most are impressed with our students' involvement in this program.

If you can't come on a weekday, there is always Saturday. The only thing you will miss is chapel. And if you can't get a group to come, come by yourself. You are always welcome.

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

## Faith is the victory

Much of Clear Creek's beginning relates to Pineville First Baptist Church. I sometimes call the congregation our "mother church." The congregation recently added another page to its significant history. The result left a positive influence on our campus family.

Like many churches in a community with declining population and high unemployment, First Baptist has experienced an unmet budget. Some say we budget as the church we used to be more than the church we are.

The proceeds of an estate gift included a 10-year restriction in the use of funds that would eliminate all the church debt. The deficit climbed and the bank balance dwindled until the finance committee proposed an additional \$22,000 loan for cash flow and to consolidate bills. The reasonable plan even came with a lower interest rate.

On a Sunday morning, the plan was explained to members. Finance committee chair Ernest Slusher issued a challenge on biblical stewardship. A handout showed the categories of our resources: tithe, tax, family needs, debts, surplus. We sang, "How Great Thou Art," and heard our new Education-Youth

Minister John Birchett preach a message on Titanic faith.

"Iceberg size problems endanger us but Christ is the victory. We must put our faith in him," he said.

The Lord dealt with me. I had a little surplus. Why should we earn tax-free interest while the Lord's church paid interest? Why should the church borrow money to pay bills rather than its members give to help solve the problem?

After the benediction some members remained for a discussion of the finance proposal. Pros and cons came and questions received answers. A member called for prayer and then knelt at the altar. A spontaneous appeal came to "celebrate a victory today by making a commitment above the tithe to meet the need."

The plate came back with more than \$14,000 in commitments. Tears flowed, hugs exchanged, apologies spoken. We sang, "Victory in Jesus." Student Todd Buck testified, "I'm proud to say my church is a can-do church. We can do what Christ desires." A financial problem became a spiritual victory.

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

### CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

## Marriage chaplain seeks personal touch 500 times a year

By Yvonne White  
Religion News Service

NASHVILLE (RNS)—You might say Perry "Red" Michel is married to his work.

The retired Baptist minister not only serves as Opryland Hotel chaplain, but he also is chaplain at Bridal Path Wedding Chapel here. Last year he married 528 couples, including 51 on Valentine's Day.

"I did a wedding out here one day and the next day the (Opryland) wedding consultant asked me if I would do one if they called me and I said yes," said the jovial, red-haired minister. "Then it was just word-of-mouth, and soon I was doing it all the time."

Michel has served as Opryland chaplain for more than 12 years, beginning his hotel ministry while still pastor at the 2,000-member Belmont Heights Baptist Church in Nashville.

"I have really seen the hotel grow and it has been amazing to watch it develop," he said. "It's just an unbelievable place." Opryland Hotel bills itself as the largest convention hotel in the world.

Michel said the toughest part of his job is trying to avoid making a wedding an assembly-line ceremony.

"It's a real struggle to keep it personal," he said. "I've never forgotten a name, but I have had to think about it for a few seconds."

Michel said last year's Valentine's Day marathon of 51 weddings was performed at the Bridal Path Wedding Chapel, not far from the hotel. Free wedding services were offered to people from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. that day.

"I couldn't find a parking place when I arrived that morning," he recalled. "We did weddings about every five minutes."

Some couples he has married recall Michel with fondness.

Last summer, he performed the wedding ceremony of Bill and Venice Lee, who now live in Arizona. They met in Raleigh, N.C., but decided to get married at Opryland Hotel.

"When Bill first saw it, he fell in love with the Opryland Hotel," said Venice. "He thought it was very romantic and perfect for our fairy-tale type of wedding."

The Opryland wedding coordinator gave them Michel's name. "We called and talked with him and had a real good feeling about him," said Venice. "We met with him the night before we got married. I was in an accident that day and wasn't sure I was going to be able to walk down the aisle, but he was very reassuring. He was very professional in the ceremony, but also had a real human touch. He was the icing on the cake."

Michel has seen all types of wedding parties and attire.

"We've had weddings ranging from really large ones with 10 or 12 attendants to just the couple," said Michel. "I've had people getting married in everything from shorts and T-shirts to formal gowns. We do a lot of cowboy weddings since Nashville is known for its country music."

He also recalls a wedding in which the bridesmaid fainted, and another when the groom passed out a couple of times—having to finish the ceremony sitting in a chair.

Michel said he has mixed emotions about performing weddings outside a church but views it as an opportunity "to reach someone who is unchurched. I wish everyone was in church and loved the Lord and went to him for all their needs."

"But that's not going to happen, so I look at it as having an opportunity



LOTS OF "I DO'S" Perry "Red" Michel married 528 couples last year as chaplain for Opryland Hotel's Bridal Path Wedding Chapel. He said the job allows him to meet lots of people who aren't going to church. "I view it as a mission field."

to share my Christian witness. I view it as a mission field," he said.

Michel said he likes to counsel couples before he performs the ceremony but acknowledged it is not always possible.

"Sometimes it happens pretty quick, so we don't have much time to talk with them," he said. "Usually by the time they get to us, counseling isn't going to be very effective. I do give them a copy of my marriage covenant and tell them if they commit themselves to doing the five things on it, they can live happily together for

100 years."

The covenant includes commitments to grow together, communicate, resolve anger, build a joint emotional bank account and attend the church of their choice.

Michel said he performs many second and third marriages, although many ministers refuse to do so.

"We have made a whipping post out of divorce," he said. "Why should we not have another opportunity at happiness? God's got a loving spirit and he didn't intend for adultery to be the only grounds for divorce."

"I've never forgotten a name, but I have had to think about it for a few seconds."

Perry "Red" Michel, chaplain at Opryland Hotel's Bridal Path Wedding Chapel

## England's fox hunting condemned as un-Christian

By Robert Nowell  
Religion News Service

LONDON (RNS)—A small but influential English religious group, which counts Prime Minister Tony Blair among its members, has ruffled the feathers of the British gentry by condemning fox hunting and other forms of killing animals for sport.

"The use of power to control and kill, diverted into pleasure, is a fundamental betrayal of the power which the (biblical) creation story tells us is God-given," reads a pamphlet published by the Christian Socialist Movement, a group that counts a number of cabinet members and top church officials, as well as Blair, among its supporters and members.

"As the early saints showed, hunting for pleasure and Christianity cannot be bedfellows," the pamphlet said.

Church observers said that while a century ago it could be assumed most Church of England priests at rural parishes would have ridden to the hounds along with their gentry neighbors, there are today only about 50 clergy who hunt regularly.

The group's condemnation of fox hunting and other killing for pleasure was written by Martin Palmer, reli-

gious adviser to the Worldwide Fund for Nature. It drew the endorsement—in a letter to The (London) Times—of nine Anglican church leaders.

The church leaders called the Christian Socialist Movement's statement "an important contribution to this ethical debate" and expressed the hope that this will be the last hunting season "when the savage and terrifying death of an animal is treated as a sport."

But Hugh Montefiore, former Anglican bishop of Birmingham, said he was "saddened to have been asked to sign" the letter.

He argued that fox hunting abolitionists had a "prior duty to prevent stress and suffering" among domesticated rather than wild animals.

"I would pay more attention to the predominantly urban abolitionists of fox hunting if they gave priority in their publicity to the stress suffered by millions of hens in batteries (coops) rather than the comparatively few foxes in the hunting field," he said.

The ethics of fox hunting is being debated widely in English society. Last November, the House of Commons passed a bill banning hunting with hounds by a 411-151 vote, but the bill is unlikely to become law be-

cause the Blair government is not prepared to commit the time to pushing it through Parliament.

In the pamphlet, Palmer argued pleasure hunting is wrong because it involves humans taking pleasure in an activity leading to the death of animals.

On the basis of the Genesis creation story he concluded that, for better or worse, humanity exercised the power of life and death over most of creation.

"The uncomfortable fact which the Bible confronts us with uncompromisingly is that we are not the same as other species," Palmer said. "No other species has so transformed their environment. No other species literally holds the existence of so many other species in its hands."

He said the central question is how such power is exercised.

"If we believe we are here to have dominance over all creation, we will act in one way," Palmer said. "If we believe we are here to manage creation as stewards, we will act in another way. And if we believe we are here to have a sacramental relationship with God and creation, to be a source of blessing to all life, then we will act in a different way again."

## Agreement reached in 'Devil's Advocate,' cathedral dispute

LOS ANGELES (RNS)—A copyright dispute between Warner Bros. and the sculptor of work at the Washington National Cathedral has been resolved, allowing distribution of the video version of "Devil's Advocate" to move forward.

Sculptor Frederick Hart and the cathedral had filed suit in federal court alleging that a sculpture that comes to life in the movie was copied illegally from Hart's bas-relief that adorns the main entrance of the cathedral.

Warner Bros., the studio that produced the film, denied using the artist's work but said it "regrets any confusion created as to the origins of the artwork in the film," the Washington Post reported.

Under the agreement, Warner Bros. will place stickers on packages of the videotape version of "Devil's Advocate" that will disclaim any relationship to or endorsement by Washington National Cathedral or Hart. The studio also will change some of the disputed scenes before the movie is shown on network or cable television.

Hart's attorney Campbell Killefer said his client "is thrilled" with the settlement. But Killefer declined to say whether the agreement included any monetary award.

Warner Bros. spokeswoman Barbara Brogliatti said the specific changes that will be made in the movie have not yet been designed.

"We're going to have to get a director in there and people with computers," she said. "It's going to be very expensive."

# 1998 Season of North American Missions

- ◆ Mission Study of the Mississippi River Ministry
- ◆ Eight-day Week of Prayer for North American Missions – March 1-8
- ◆ North American Missions Day in Sunday School – March 8
- ◆ Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions

National Goal: \$42 million (Kentucky churches gave \$1,289,804 in 1996-97)

The North American Mission Board has 4,679 missions personnel appointed to a variety of categories and divisions of work. Twenty-nine serve in Kentucky (see list).

Need additional information?

- ◆ Request prayer guides, envelopes or posters from Kentucky WMU, P.O. Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253. Fax: (502) 244-6486.
- ◆ Contact Tony Hough or Randy Jones, Kentucky Baptist Convention, P.O. Box 43433, Louisville, KY 40253. (502) 245-4101.
- ◆ See March issue, *Missions Mosaic*, pages 32-43.
- ◆ See the *Master Planning Guide for the 1998 Season of North American Missions* which has been mailed to pastors and WMU directors by the North American Mission Board.

Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union, Peggy Hicks, president; Brenda Price, interim executive director-treasurer, P.O. Box 436569, Louisville, KY 40253. Phone: (888) 254-5726

## North American Missionaries Serving in Kentucky

Lawrence and Martha Baldrige, Caney Baptist Center, Pippa Passes

Greg and Alice Whitetree, Freeda Harris Center, Lookout

Charles and Margie Wilson, Baptist Center, Wheelwright

Micki Davis and Jay Robison, Elkhorn Association, Lexington

Sandra Williams, Elkhorn Association, Lexington

Martin and Rebecca Hogg, Freeda Harris Center, Lookout

Jennifer Landrum, Semester Missionary, Freeda Harris Center, Lookout

Stuart and Donna Perkins, Multi-Housing Ministry, Florence

Jesus and Marcela Pacheco, Central Region Hispanic Ministry

Ken and Jealetta Roberts, South-Central Region Hispanic Ministry

Lincoln and Lillian Bingham, Cooperative Ministries Consultant, Kentucky Baptist Convention

Lee and Sarah Going, Long Run Baptist Association, Louisville

Johnnie and Evelyn Clark, Baptist Fellowship Center, Louisville

Shelly Johns, Associate, Office of Evangelism, Kentucky Baptist Convention

David and Wanda Aker, Mountain Missions Director, Town & County Missions Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention

Tony and Patty Hough, Metropolitan Missions Department Director, Kentucky Baptist Convention