



WESTERN RECORDER

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Warren: Church growth requires riding waves of God's movement

SAN DIEGO (BP)—The secret to a vibrant, growing church lies in the surfing skills of its members—their ability to “catch the waves” of what God is doing, said pastor and church growth expert Rick Warren.

“If you want your church to explode with growth, you have to stop praying, ‘Lord bless what I’m doing,’ and instead start praying, ‘Lord, help me to do what you are blessing,’” he told participants during a national conference on evangelism and church planting.

Warren, author of “The Purpose-Driven Church” and other books, is pastor of the 14,000-member Saddleback Valley Community Church in Orange County, Calif.

Effective churches can be found in all shapes and sizes, he said.

“It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people,” he said. “We’ve baptized 5,000 new believers in the past five years. Why? Because we’re somebody special? No. We’re just a church that tries to look for waves, and we ride them. And then we try to do it with balance.”

Catching the wave means first determining what God is doing, Warren said, and one of Jesus’ favorite topics in Scripture was the kingdom of God.

“We have to start thinking kingdom-building mentality, not church-building mentality, denomination-building mentality or political-party-building mentality,” Warren said.

One of the most direct references to the timing of Jesus’ second coming was in Matthew 24, he added.

“Jesus said I am going to come back after the gospel has been shared with everyone who it’s supposed to be shared with,” he said. “The moment that last person has stepped across the line who God knows is going to enter his kingdom, then bam, it’s finished.”

Warren spoke of a recent visit to China to illustrate how rapidly he believes that day is approaching.

One of Saddleback’s missionaries was able to meet with top Christian and government leaders in China, resulting in an invitation for Warren to teach his “Purpose-Driven Church” seminar in three cities in China.

“In our meetings with the highest government leaders, they are open,” Warren said. “They are spiritually hungry, and there are incredible waves taking place in China.”

Moving? See page 4 (0922)

Kentuckians commissioned to serve

By David Winfrey
News Director

LOUISVILLE—Gerald Murphy knows the difference Kentucky’s partnership mission trips can have on a person’s life.

The pastor of Munfordville Baptist Church credits his three mission trips through the Kentucky-Russia Baptist partnership with spurring him toward committing his life to full-time missions service in Russia.

“It was in those three life-changing investments that I have come to know God’s call,” Murphy told a packed chapel auditorium at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Sept. 15 during a commissioning service for the Southern Baptist International Mission Board.

Murphy and his wife, Shelia, were two of 11 people with ties to Kentucky who were among the 67 missionaries commissioned to serve around the world.

An estimated 1,600 people attended the service.

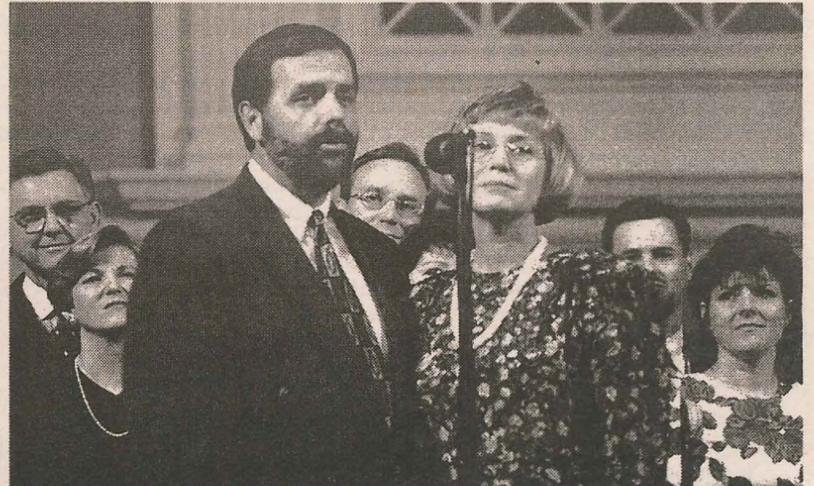
Some of the missionaries from Kentucky referred to the last commissioning service in the Bluegrass State—in 1987 at Lexington’s Rupp Arena—as influencing them to consider becoming missionaries.

All of the missionaries talked about their call to missions.

Mitzi Golden said she and her husband, Carroll, have packed 50 years of their lives into 10 boxes for their move to Mexico. Answering the call to missions requires leaving behind parents, children and grandchildren, she added.

“But God has made Mexico our hearts’ home and we’re homesick,” she said.

Kathy Kelly recalled being challenged by former IMB President Keith Parks at a foreign missions



RUSSIA BOUND Gerald and Shelia Murphy give their testimony during the missionary commissioning service at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Sept. 15. Murphy, pastor of Munfordville Baptist Church, said his mission trips to Russia convinced him to serve full time.

emphasis week. Parks said that 90 percent of the world’s Christians are focused on evangelizing 10 percent of the world’s population. She and her husband, Howard, will serve in Southeast Asia.

IMB President Jerry Rankin reminded the audience that the newly commissioned workers are “your missionaries.”

“It’s your gifts that support them financially. It’s your prayer that sustains them,” he said.

Rankin told the missionaries that the IMB can prepare them for the language barriers they will face as well as the work they are to do involving evangelism, church planting and Christian education.

But “we cannot prepare you for the smells,” he said. Missionaries will work among people who rarely bathe and be asked to eat things they aren’t sure are edible, he reminded them.

But Rankin challenged the missionaries, “God’s word tells us that you’re going out to improve the smell.”

Paul wrote to the Corinthians describing Christians’ lives and witness as the fragrance of Christ.

“That’s what your life is to be in a lost and dying world,” he said. “It will be like a beautiful fragrance, like a perfume that fills the room.”

Rankin reminded the audience that the need is still great for missionaries.

“We’re sending out 67 missionaries. But what are 67 missionaries among 1.7 billion people under the condemnation of death for their sins who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ?” he asked.

Missionaries are no more special than any other Christians, Rankin added. “The only thing that’s special is their obedience to surrender.”

More photos and information about Kentuckians commissioned are on page 11.

Churches differ on ideas of member discipline

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

If Bill Clinton were a member of Mount Union Baptist Church in Somerset, he’d probably be facing formal church discipline right now.

If he were a member of Midway Baptist Church near Lexington, he most likely would be in private conversation with the pastor but would not face expulsion from the church.

These Kentucky churches illustrate two distinct ways Southern Baptist congregations relate to members who commit sins such as adultery.

Clinton’s admission of an illicit sexual relationship with a White House intern has brought this subject to the attention of the nation. Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville,

has made an appeal via national media to Clinton’s home church, Immanuel Baptist in Little Rock, Ark., to exercise formal discipline against him.

After weeks of silence on the subject, Immanuel’s pastor, Rex Horne, told ABC News Sept. 12 that his church does not intend to take formal action against the president. This process, sometimes called “churching”

a member for short, involves revoking the church membership of the per-

son until full confession is made and repentance is evidenced.

Mohler’s comments about what he thinks the president’s church should do ignited a national debate among Baptists over the biblical basis and practical wisdom of exercising church discipline today. The comments also sparked a debate over whether a denominational official has the right to

- Urban growth, gray areas make accountability harder. *Page 9.*
- Many churches don’t discipline biblically, some say. *Page 9.*
- Church discipline debate both timely and historic. *Page 10.*

call on a faraway church to take any such action.

Finding a Southern Baptist church that actively practices public church discipline today is difficult; the vast majority have not since the 19th century or early 20th century.

But Bill Meece, pastor of Mount Union Baptist Church in Somerset, said his congregation continues the practice, one he defends as mandated by the Bible.

“I believe it works,” he said. “People are scared of it, but it must be done in love.”

“Love” and “discipline” may not be two words the average person would expect to hear a pastor use in the same sentence, but Meece insists the two are related.

□ See Kentucky churches ..., page 9



Is church discipline dead?

BAPTISTS

BAPTIST BITS

■ **Lonnie Wilkey**, associate editor of the Baptist & Reflector since 1988, has been named editor of the Tennessee Baptist newspaper. He succeeds Fletcher Allen, who recently retired.

■ **A new video series** designed for use in local churches to explain international missions has been produced by the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board. "On Mission with God" provides four products on one videotape each month. The segments include a message from IMB President Jerry Rankin, an educational segment for use in classes and mission groups, a segment for children and a segment designed for use in worship services.

■ **Housing reservations** for the 1999 Southern Baptist annual meeting in Atlanta will be available for the first time this year on the Internet. The housing guide and form may be found at www.sbc.net. SBC hotel registration will begin Oct. 1. In addition the SBC housing guide and request form is now available at state Baptist convention offices and the Executive Committee in Nashville.

Richmond seminary names chair for Chafin

By Michael Clingenpeel
Virginia Religious Herald

RICHMOND, Va.—Reflecting on his roots in a broken home, poor early education and crippling arthritis, Ken Chafin urged students at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond not to be held captive to their past, but to find themselves in their relationship with Christ and their calling as ministers.

On the day Chafin was honored by BTR by having an endowed chair in preaching named in his honor, the educator and pastor reflected on his struggle to let loose of the past. Using Philippians 3:13-14 as his model, Chafin described the difficulty of giving up old ideas, emotions, failures and conflicts in order to embrace the new.

"Each of us is trapped, whether we know it or not, in where we are from," he said. "Turning loose of what you have held onto is not easy. I have turned loose of more in the past decade than I have in the previous four decades of my life."

Releasing the past to embrace the new is difficult because it leaves

people without a familiar source of stability, Chafin said. Ministers have a right to be concerned about this, because they fear losing their "authority for ministry."

This authority, he said, comes from one's personal relationship with Jesus Christ, not from old ideas about religion. "It is in this relationship that calling comes. Calling tells you why you are here. It guides you, sustains you in the difficult years of ministry."

He also told students that in addition to their calling, they would find "the possibility of compassion" in this relationship with Jesus. Compassion, not holiness, is the "controlling characteristic of God," Chafin cautioned the gathering of students, faculty and Baptists from the community.

During the chapel service Sept. 15, BTR President Thomas Graves announced gifts of more than \$250,000 had been given by Chafin's friends in Louisville and Houston to establish the Kenneth Chafin Chair of Preaching at the 8-year-old school. BTR was started by moderate Baptists displeased with the conservative takeover of Southern

Baptist Convention agencies and institutions, including three which once employed Chafin.

Chafin taught preaching and evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, served as Billy Graham professor of evangelism and later professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and directed the evangelism department at the former SBC Home Mission Board. He also was pastor at two prominent Southern Baptist churches, South Main in Houston and Walnut Street in Louisville.

The Chafin chair in preaching will be held initially by Charles Bugg, who was Chafin's successor as preaching professor at Southern Seminary.

Chafin, 71, also directed the Billy Graham Association's schools of evangelism for more than a decade and convened the first Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974.

He also chaired the board of trustees at Southwestern Seminary. He and his wife, Barbara, are the parents of three children and live in Louisville.

Parks retiring as CBF missions coordinator

ATLANTA—After five years as coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's global missions program, Keith Parks plans to retire, move to Texas and begin a writing career.

Parks, who will be 71 in October, announced his retirement Sept. 18 during a CBF advisory council meeting. His retirement date is set for Feb. 28, 1999.

"It just felt like the time has come," Parks said of his decision. "I have no health problems, and nobody's asking me to leave."

"But," he added, "I did have some fear about staying beyond the time I was productive."

Parks has been a widely-recognized leader in Baptist missions for several decades, including a dozen years as president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board). He is perhaps best known to Southern Baptists for his personal challenges to missionaries as they are being commissioned—messages that invariably impact others in the audience.

"As a college student, I heard Keith preach for the first time, and it was a turning point in my life," said Daniel Vestal, CBF coordinator. "It awakened in me a missions consciousness that has been a central part of my ministry through the years."

"Keith Parks has been on the cutting edge of world evangelization for more than four decades, calling Baptists to obedience and sacrifice, yet he has not lost touch with the individual missionary or the local church," Vestal added.

Parks began his missions career as a Southern Baptist missionary in Indonesia in 1954. He and his wife, Helen Jean, served there 14 years before joining the administrative staff of the FMB in Richmond, Va. He was elected FMB president in 1980.

Parks chose to retire in 1992 when dramatic leadership changes in the SBC meant "I could not influence decisions for the good of missions and could not lead foreign missions according to our Baptist heritage of freedom and persuasion rather than conformity and control," he said.

Parks took the CBF missions coordinator position a few months lat-

er because "the Fellowship's ambitious plan for global missions was so similar to what we thought ought to be done in a new global era."

Those missions strategies, which Parks has championed and enlarged during the past five years, include focusing on people groups who have little or no access to the gospel, missionaries working in teams with no dichotomy between home and foreign missions, assigning missionaries to people groups rather than geographic areas and working in partnership with other Christians committed to the Great Commission.

"Keith Parks was the right person at the right time for CBF," said John Tyler, CBF moderator, the organization's highest elected official. "He came with a vision of what it takes to be faithful and effective in the 1990s, and he knew how to implement that vision. No other person could have come to a fledgling organization and built so quickly an effective global missions program."

The Fellowship has more than 140 missionaries and an 11-member missions staff in its Atlanta offices. Its 1998-99 ministry budget includes \$9.3 million for global missions.

Trustees want more CP dollars to flow to IMB

LOUISVILLE (BP)—A strong plea to direct a greater portion of Cooperative Program money to international missions was expressed by trustees of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Board.

Meeting in Louisville Sept. 15, IMB trustees adopted a resolution urging the SBC Executive Committee "to fulfill the original intent of the 'Covenant for a New Century' and include the IMB among those SBC entities

which will share in an increased percentage allocation of Cooperative Program funds which have been made available through greater efficiencies in the work of the convention."

Though the resolution itself drew no discussion or debate, at a previous board meeting trustees criticized the Executive Committee for failing to increase the percentage of funds allocated to the IMB. Executive Committee officials repeatedly have said last

Association rebukes Mohler, cites autonomy

LITTLE ROCK, Ark.—No outsiders have a right to call upon President Clinton's home church to discipline him, the executive board of Little Rock's Pulaski Baptist Association declared Sept. 15.

A resolution adopted unanimously by the association's executive board states: "In response to the calls of certain Southern Baptists upon Immanuel Baptist Church of Little Rock to 'discipline' one of her own, we support our sister congregation and her pastor, Rex Horne, in allowing them to conduct their ministry as they see fit under the direction of God's Holy Spirit."

The resolution further declares that "no one outside that congregation has the right, nor the privilege, of trying to coerce Immanuel Baptist to do otherwise."

Over the past month, Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, has used a national media platform to call on Immanuel Baptist Church to discipline Clinton for his admitted sexual indiscretion with a White House intern.

"Bill Clinton's repeated pattern of sexual sin is something the nation can no longer ignore," Mohler wrote in a nationally distributed commentary. "How can the church in which he holds membership ignore what even the secular world considers scandalous?"

Mohler admonished that "Southern Baptists will be watching the Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock to see if it musters the courage to make clear its own convictions."

Mohler's call for church discipline was affirmed by Southern Baptist Convention President Paige Patterson.

The Pulaski Association resolution does not express support for Clinton, nor does it speak to the issue of whether public church discipline is good or bad. Its stated intent is to "go on record as intending in firm support of our cherished doctrine of the autonomy of the local church."



Kentucky CP sets record; gifts rise on most fronts

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

Giving to almost all Kentucky Baptist Convention causes increased in the fiscal year just ended, with gifts to the Cooperative Program, the convention's main indicator of support, rising 6 percent over the previous year.

Undesignated Cooperative Program gifts totaled \$19.9 million for the year ending Aug. 31, an increase of \$1.12 million over the previous year. That figure is 3.5 percent, or 675,474, over the KBC's Cooperative Program budget.

This is the largest amount ever given through the Kentucky Cooperative Program and creates the largest budget surplus the KBC has experienced since 1983. Giving patterns have been relatively flat over most of the past decade.

"Kentucky Baptists are responding to unprecedented opportunities for kingdom growth here and around the world with record giving," said Bill Mackey, KBC executive secretary-treasurer. "I praise God for their financial generosity and commitment to missions and world evangelization through the Cooperative Program and cooperative gifts."

Undesignated Cooperative Program gifts sent from churches to the

KBC are divided, with a portion forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee for worldwide causes and a portion retained by the KBC for state missions support. During the just-ended fiscal year, the KBC sent \$6.96 million to the SBC, an increase of \$17,588 over the previous year.

The remaining \$12.9 million in Cooperative Program gifts was channeled into KBC causes such as support for state missionaries, programs to support church and associational ministries, the KBC's five schools, Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children and other KBC agencies and institutions.

In addition to the Cooperative Program dollars, the KBC also received \$468,115 in "restricted Kentucky only" contributions. These gifts are sent by churches which desire to support the work of the KBC without forwarding a portion of their money to the SBC.

When the \$12.9 million in Kentucky's portion of Cooperative Program money was combined with the \$468,115 in "restricted Kentucky only" donations, the KBC had a total of \$13.4 million available for in-state use. That was \$567,173 (4.4 percent) over the combined budget projection.

Although "restricted Kentucky only" gifts represent less than 4 per-

Overview of KBC giving

	1997-98	1996-97
Cooperative Program gifts received by KBC:	\$19,895,196	\$18,772,246
Amount forwarded to SBC:	\$ 6,963,319	\$ 6,945,731
Amount kept by KBC:	\$12,931,877	\$11,826,515
Undesignated income to KBC ministry budget:	\$13,399,992	\$12,223,763
Amount from Cooperative Program:	\$12,931,877	\$11,826,515
Amount from "restricted Kentucky only":	\$ 468,115	\$ 397,248
Designated gifts channeled through KBC*		
Thanksgiving Offering (children's home):	\$ 913,226	\$ 854,918
Mother's Day hospital charity:	\$ 9,664	\$ 12,279
Lottie Moon Christmas Offering:	\$ 3,139,247	\$ 2,967,325
Annie Armstrong Easter Offering:	\$ 1,440,763	\$ 1,318,216
Eliza Broadus State Missions Offering:	\$ 802,205	\$ 713,501
Barkley Moore Father's Day Offering:	\$ 15,442	\$ 16,741

* Not all gifts from Kentucky Baptist churches to designated offerings are channeled through the KBC, thus the actual amounts given by Kentucky churches to these causes will be higher than the amount shown.

cent of the KBC's total useable income, these restricted gifts were the fastest-growing category of KBC income last year, increasing at nearly three times the rate of general Cooperative Program gifts.

Other categories of designated giving to KBC causes also increased. Gifts to the Eliza Broadus State Missions Offering gained 12.4 percent for

the year, totaling \$802,205.

Gifts to the two special offerings taken each year for Southern Baptist missions causes also increased. Gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American missions increased 9.3 percent, to \$1.44 million. Gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for international missions increased 5.8 percent to \$3.14 million.

Greenup woman quilts to give children a tangible expression of God's love

By Dannah Prather
Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children

GREENUP—For kids living at the Baptist Youth Shelter in Morehead, Barbara Quillen's goal is as tangible as the quilts she sews.

"We need to let those kids know they're loved," said Quillen.

For children at the youth shelter, this need is great. Victims of abuse, neglect or family crisis, they are faced with uncertain futures. Quillen wants to give them a tangible reminder of God's constant love through quilts.

"I made my first quilt when I was 5 years old," said Quillen. Since then her skill has become her companion, and a ministry. "There have been times in my life when I would sit and sew because I couldn't do anything else."

Through the years, Quillen said, her home became cluttered with quilting projects inherited from other people and material left from previous pieces.

What some people might have considered an annoyance, Quillen saw as a blessing.

"God has blessed me with all of this and given me the talent. All I had to do was put it to use," she said.

In just a few months, Quillen took the scraps of material and pieced 16 unique bedspreads for the girls living at the shelter.

A friend donated the quilting, and members of Pollard Baptist Church, where Quillen is a member, delivered the finished products



QUILTS OF LOVE Barbara Quillen has sewn at least 16 quilts for residents of the Baptist Youth Shelter in Morehead. (KBHC photo by Dannah Prather)

to Morehead.

Pollard's history of support for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children drew Quillen to the Morehead shelter. According to Deacon Carl Riddle, seven years ago the church began encouraging members to make a donation to Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children in honor of each member's birthday or wedding anniversary. "Our giving (to Homes for Children) has quadrupled because of it."

Quillen said the Morehead project has caught on throughout the Pollard congregation, her family, friends and casual acquaintances. People now are asking her how they can help the children.

"People want to get involved when they know how," she said. "All you need is the idea."

Campbellsville realigns units to match new university structure

CAMPBELLSVILLE—Campbellsville University has realigned its academic units into a structure of colleges and schools.

The move follows last year's change from calling the Baptist school a college to calling it a university.

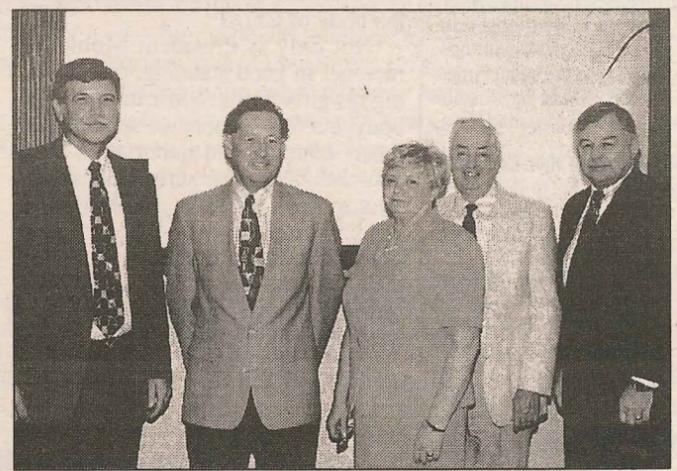
"One of the reasons for us moving to a university was to posture and prepare us for extending our offerings at the graduate levels," said President Ken Winters. "One of the side effects of moving to a university status was the realignment of our academic units into a college and schools."

Under the new structure, the university has one college and four schools. The College of Arts and Sciences is the broad-based administrative academic unit; each of the schools is a sub-unit with a narrower focus of specialization.

The College of Arts and Sciences will include the former Christian studies division, humanities division, science division, social science division, art department, health promotion, human performance and leisure studies department. Frank Cheathan will serve as dean.

Winters said the university might create more schools as the remaining divisions and departments move into graduate studies. All the newly named schools offer graduate programs, except the School of Business, which is developing a graduate program.

The four schools are the School of Business and Economics, the School of Education, the School of



Music and the Carver School of Church Social Work.

John Cox has been named dean of the School of Business and Economics. He recently moved from Our Lady of the Lake University in Dallas, where he was director of the master of business administration degree program.

Linda Cundiff has been named dean of the School of Education. A teacher at Campbellsville six years, she previously was chair of the education division.

Robert Gaddis is dean of the School of Music. He previously was chairman of the division of fine arts and has been a music professor at Campbellsville 16 years.

A search currently is underway for a dean of the Carver School. Winters said the new graduate program in social work is on track to begin as early as January 1999 but no later than August 1999.

CAMPBELLSVILLE LEADERS Under the new structure Campbellsville University will change its academic departments to one college and four schools. Leaders include (from left) Robert Gaddis, dean of the School of Music; Frank Cheathan, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences; Linda Cundiff, dean of the School of Education; Robert Clark, vice president for academic affairs; and John Cox, dean of the School of Business.

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

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Discipline Mohler

In response to the Southern Seminary faculty resolution in Sept. 8 Western Recorder: If Mark Wingfield was wrong in criticizing Al Mohler's call for Clinton's church to discipline Clinton, then I call on Mohler's church to discipline Mohler. The manner in which Diana Garland, Paul Debusman and Molly Marshall were fired and other outstanding professors pressured off the faculty deserved at least censure.

Mohler brought shame to Baptists in general and to hundreds of us alumni in particular by destroying (closing) the only school of its kind in the nation, the Carver School of Church Social Work. That situation was further aggravated in his attempts to sell the school, particularly the questionable keeping of the endowment originally provided by Woman's Missionary Union.

But we who might have called for discipline for Mohler believe in autonomy. Therefore we have opted to support the 11 (so far) new theological schools that have sprung up.

Prophecy: The courageous three who voted against the resolution won't be at Southern very long.

*Bill Moore
Owensboro*

Highview responds

On Sept. 1, the editor of the Western Recorder wrote a reckless and un-Christian editorial with respect to a member of our congregation, Al Mohler. The tone of the editorial was un-Christlike and in no way did it serve any useful service in building up the body of Christ.

Not only is President Mohler a member in good standing, gladly using his gifts for the edification of this body, but furthermore we applaud his moral courage and exhortation that churches obey clear scriptural principles to deal with sin. Mark Wingfield's comparison of Mohler's actions at Southern Seminary to President Clinton's confessed and open moral failure is insulting both to Mohler and to this church.

Though the editor may have freedom under the law to say whatever he wishes, we feel that liberty should be tempered by Christian principles of love and kindness. In his criticism of Mohler's admonition to another church, we feel the editor of the Western Recorder crossed that line. This was a shameful display of irresponsible journalism and an embarrassment to Kentucky Baptists.

While the editor of the Western Recorder may criticize Mohler, Highview Baptist Church wishes to go on record as commending him. He has distinguished himself as a man of Christian character and integrity and his stand for the truth has made us proud. We are honored that he and his family are a part of our fellowship.

*Highview Baptist Church
Louisville*

Distant target

President Al Mohler has made such a point of castigating President Clinton's church should discipline Clinton for his improper sexual relationship. As I recall, he is a member of a church where a former pastor resigned over a sexual scandal.

Did he make public pronouncements concerning his former pastor? I do not recall him publicly censoring the former pastor. Where were his public proclamations and righteous indignation there?

Or is it just easier to get righteous indignation of another fallen Christian at a distance rather than close to home?

*Donna Smith
Louisville*

No mercy

When my actions necessitated biblical discipline, Al Mohler's response was abandonment and detachment. His written and spoken words regarding church discipline and restoration will reflect authenticity and credibility when he walks his talk.

I wish he could have found time in his schedule and compassion in his heart to have demonstrated mercy and grace toward me when I needed it the most.

*Bill Hancock
Louisville*

Wounded liberalism

I have read with curious interest your editorial of Sept. 1, along with the letters written by Harold Mauney, Ken Chafin and John Dunaway, all attacking Al Mohler's suggestion that President Clinton's home church should call him to account for his unchristian behavior reported by the special prosecutor and admitted to by the president.

Mohler, in my opinion, did not tell the church in Little Rock what it must do, but rather expressed his views on what that church or any church in similar circumstances should do. I believe as Mohler does on this issue, but I'm not telling the Arkansas church what to do.

However, in my opinion this statement of Mohler regarding the Little Rock church wasn't the basis of your editorial or the letters of criticism. The real reason, I believe, for this criticism of the Southern Seminary presidents inflicted on liberalism when Molly Marshall, Diana Garland and others were called to account by Mohler and the trustees at Southern. The blood from these wounds mingles with the ink that wrote the letters of criticism of Mohler, and any fair-minded reader can so ascertain.

*Lawrence H. Langford
Cincinnati*

Wheat and tares

Several years ago while participating in an advanced seminar on biblical interpretation, the question was asked by the professor, "How do we

reconcile some of the statements in the Old Testament with others that seem to be opposite in the New Testament?" An example could be Exodus 21:24, where it calls for an eye for an eye as opposed to what Jesus said in Luke 9:51-56, where the disciples asked Jesus if they should call down fire on those who did not receive him. Jesus stated that he had not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

In response to the professor's question I replied that all teachings of the Bible must be balanced with what Jesus said and taught. Even the words of Paul must be balanced and reconciled with what Jesus said.

In regard to recent writings about church discipline, I submit the following. In the parable of the wheat and tares in Matthew 13:24-30 Jesus said, "Let the wheat and tares grow together and in the harvest they will be separated." Jesus said that if you destroy the tares before the harvest you will also destroy some of the good wheat.

Also we need to read again Matthew 18:15-20, where our first reaction as Christians should be to reach out in love and compassion. Even Paul said, "that if anyone find another overtaken in a fault those who are spiritual should seek to restore the individual" (Galatians 6:1). Many times I have to remind myself of what Jesus said, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone."

There is a quotation and I do not know the source to give credit to it would serve us well to listen to it. "There is enough evil in all of us that it ill behooves any of us to criticize the rest of us."

*Donald Cole
Brandenburg*

Ironing out wrinkles

I am deeply saddened by the actions of the Western Recorder editor toward Al Mohler. I am more saddened that other Baptists find his slanderous remarks "courageous." Mark Wingfield was neither courageous nor accurate in his Sept. 1 editorial against Mohler.

□ *Continued on page 7*

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Annual association meetings

This is the time of year when more Baptists will gather together as associations than at any other time. The annual association meetings usually are a wonderful time of food, fellowship, ministry reports and inspirational preaching.

There are occasional exceptions to this good spirit when disagreements arise over a point of doctrine or church polity, but most association meetings stay focused on the things Baptists have in common—missions and evangelism. This desire to work together in missions is a theme I heard repeatedly in recent focus group sessions conducted with Kentucky Baptists across the state.

I wish all Kentucky Baptists could travel with me to the 22 annual meetings on my schedule this fall. There's just nothing like the blessing I receive when I see associations so excited

about what God is doing in their churches and communities. We are truly at our best as Kentucky Baptists when facing a special ministry challenge, a worthy mission opportunity or an exciting evangelism outreach project.

Let me tell you about a few:

■ In Anderson Association, there was excitement over well-organized ministries and a pastors/wives retreat.

■ Calvary Baptist Church, host for Muhlenberg's associational meeting, was filled with people and inspiration, as well as delicious food.

■ A bivocational pastor in Russell Creek Association preached a strong, helpful, Bible-based message. The association voted to inves-

tigate the purchase of a Greensburg building to serve as an office.

■ On a recent Friday night, I was at Big Creek Baptist Church in Booneville Association for the annual meeting. They were having the most fun I have experienced in an annual meeting. I experienced the presence and joy of the Lord with them.

Fifty-five of our 70 associations have a director of missions who works with associational officers in developing and implementing a missions strategy. The DOMs are God-called, gifted and experienced leaders who assist the churches.

Their strategies are influenced by such ministry opportunities in the associations as college campuses, race tracks, language groups, population growth area, resorts, etc. The



Bill Mackey

Kentucky Baptist Convention is a partner with associations in sponsoring various ministries like new language churches, disaster relief, equestrian ministries, church development, campus ministries, multi-housing ministries, Mission Service Corps, literacy missions, resort missions and many others.

In a number of ways, the North American Mission Board also is a partner with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and associations. For example, NAMB and the KBC might provide salary and benefits for a language worker and local associations may provide program funds.

Associational meetings provide an excellent opportunity for Baptists to learn about state, domestic and international missions and ministries. If your association meeting has not been held yet, I encourage you to attend. You'll be blessed.

Bill Mackey is executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

HE SAID/SHE SAID

We hate to be picky, but breaking our kids' bad habits is a booger

HESAIID



Mark Wingfield

This week's column carries a humor advisory. If you were offended a couple of years ago when we wrote about potty training, stop right here. Do not proceed any further, or you'll probably feel compelled to clip out this column and write me another note around the edges about "poor taste" and mail it in.

If, on the other hand, you find desperate parental humor in things like potty training, proceed at your own risk.

This is important because one of the most frustrating things about being a parent is not being able to convince your children to stop doing things that are crude and socially unacceptable.

I'm convinced both our boys will walk across the platform of their college commencements and face an enormous decision. Each child will have one hand stuck firmly in his nostril and with the other he will be groping his crotch. The difficult decision will be which hand to move to accept the diploma.

Both of these habits seem to be a natural state of posture for our 6-year-olds, and there are times I wonder if they'll ever outgrow it. Why is it they can learn bad habits so easily but have such a hard time learning good habits? Like staying seated at the table or putting the napkins in their laps when they eat?

I heard an old James Dobson program the other night in which he addressed this very problem of napkins. I was delighted to learn we aren't the only ones struggling to train ill-mannered children.

I just wish that instead of all the yelling and cajoling we've put ourselves through we had thought of as clever a solution as he suggested: making it a game. When his kids were young, his family made a rule that anyone who took a bite of food without first putting the napkin in his or her lap had to go to his or her bedroom and count to 25.

The kids never forgot again, and it was the parents who did all the counting, he said. That's a small price to pay.

SHESAIID



Alison Wingfield

Adding to the list of bad habits, the boys' latest bad habit is proof there is something to those theories of genetics. They haven't been around their Uncle Mark long enough to learn his bad habit of extremely loud belching by example, so they must have inherited this particular accomplishment. Or maybe they're just boys.

The scary part about bad habits is that I often find my own less-than-appropriate behavior showing up in my children. Our little mirrors reveal more than we care to admit about ourselves.

Picking things up is not my calling in life. My two extremely neatnik parents must have despaired of ever teaching me to pick up after myself. I'm sure if she can see us, Mom is laughing from heaven everytime I pick up toys or a pair of the boys' shoes. I've had to train myself to pick up better so that I can train the boys. Mark still quietly puts my shoes on the stairs after finding them in various places in the house. I'm improving, but I didn't say I was perfect.

We have a choice of training ourselves to do what's right rather than what's wrong. It takes discipline and sometimes someone nearby helping us pick up the pieces when we fall. But the more we practice doing good deeds, the greater the chance they will become a natural part of our lives.

That's why Paul urged the church at Philippi to make a habit of thinking about good and holy things and of practicing good deeds: "Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you."

In untimely death, God welcomed her home

Editor's note: Bob Terry, editor of the Alabama Baptist and former associate editor of the Western Recorder, wrote this piece for the Alabama Baptist concerning the recent death of his wife, Eleanor.

By Bob Terry

As news of our accident in Durban, South Africa, spread, hundreds and then thousands went to God in prayer on our behalf. When Eleanor's heart stopped and her life lay in the balance, family members and friends fasted and prayed asking God to heal her. By the time our medical evacuation airplane landed in Birmingham, tens of thousands of people on six continents were praying for us. They prayed especially that Eleanor's life would be spared.

But Eleanor died. She died despite the fasting and prayers. She died despite the best that medical science could offer. She died despite all that could be done for her from a human standpoint.

Are we angry with God that he did not honor the prayers and fasting of people around the world? Are we angry that God called Eleanor home at the height of life when all was good? No.

While I do not understand the mystery between the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man, I am convinced that neither the accident on July 11 nor Eleanor's death nine days later were part of God's perfect will for her. The God made known in Jesus Christ is a God of love. He is one who desires the best for us. He demonstrated that when Jesus died for our sins on Calvary.

God does not work his perfect will through drivers racing through downtown streets or those who ignore traffic signals. God does not work his perfect will through bombs in Kenya or Tanzania or Northern Ireland. These are the result of evil. It is evil that has been in rebellion against God since the beginning of creation. It is the evil cast out of heaven to earth. This evil stalks the earth like a roaring lion, Scripture says, seeking those whom it may devour.

This evil is a haughty spirit. It revels in the chaos and destruction it wreaks in lives and in the world. It is a selfish spirit that causes people to act in ways which

ignore the impact of their deeds on others. It is a rebellious spirit that is against God and the community of saints God intended at creation and recreated on the cross of Christ.

Though this evil desires to replace God, it has already been judged. On that great judgment day, this evil will be cast out forever and forever. It will be punished for its rebellion against God and its work against mankind.

The evil that caused a driver to ignore a red light and crash broadside into our taxi at more than 70 miles an hour set in motion a series of natural laws that eventually claimed Eleanor's life. Yes, these events passed through

the permissive will of God, but they were not God's perfect will for her. I am convinced God's perfect will was for her to joy in the wonderful things happening in our lives—the children moving nearby; the birth of Drayton, our first grandchild; her service to the kingdom of God; our time together; and much more.

God did not call Eleanor home. He did not say, "It is your time" or "I need another angel" or other such things we often put in God's mouth. But God was there to welcome her home, even when she arrived prior to his perfect will.

Since that day as a child that she accepted Jesus as her personal Savior, Eleanor walked with God and God walked with her. His spirit guided her through her nearly 56 years, and on July 20, 1998, God's arms opened wide to welcome his precious child into his eternal presence.

For us there was not miracle-like intervention, though we prayed for it to the end. But God was faithful to us in every way. He never promised the road would be easy. He never promised health or wealth. He never promised a life free from pain and sorrow or even death. What he did promise is that he would be with us to the end. He promised to comfort us and strengthen us in every circumstance. And he promised to welcome us into his presence whether we arrive according to his perfect will or sometimes prior.

God welcomed Eleanor home. Someday he will welcome me. I hope you know God through Jesus Christ so you too will know the joy of God's arms wrapped around you when life is over.

GUEST EDITORIAL

'Is there no balm in Gilead?'

By Ron Ford

Since my people are crushed, I am crushed; I mourn, and horror grips me. Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? When then is there no healing for the wound of my people? (Jeremiah 8:21-22)

Jeremiah has just preached in the gate of the temple of Jerusalem. He tells the people in plain and simple language things are coming to a halt. The temple, the city and the nation face certain ruin. Moral corruption and spiritual neglect have led to this point. The people know all is not well.

The superficiality of the people's religion is being rapidly magnified by this suffering prophet. Too long, they have trusted in the outward form of religion without its corresponding inner power. Too long, they have combined the religion of Yahweh with whatever seems to be popular at the time.

Now, in the end, they face paying the price. Sometimes the cheapest

things in life are the most expensive.

The sad truth is, bad theology is not just bad theology, it's bad life. It has no power to heal the pain of existence. Pain, at heart, is theological as the prophet recognizes. The snorts of the enemy's horses can be heard from Dan, the army is approaching and these people's cherished beliefs and practices hold no power. Eventually, we all confront a final exam of our cherished theological assumptions.

Cracks begin to appear in the foundations of these people's lives, and if the foundations are not repaired quickly the cracks will become chasms. Suddenly, the depth of the tragedy of bad theology becomes evident. "The harvest is past, the summer has ended and we are not saved." The crops that normally produced the grain have failed, but surely the fruit trees will be plentiful. In a systems age, we convince ourselves that all our systems will never fail at the same time. But the fruit trees also are barren.

Find a cure! A cure gets people excited. It's harder to get excited when

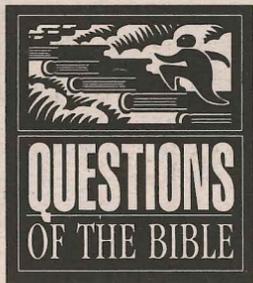
the first sign of pain rises. After all, it's easier to ignore pain than to deal with it. And, what if there is pain for which there is no solution? "Is there no balm in Gilead?" The answer is yes. There is medicine at the pharmacy. "Is there no physician there?" The answer is yes. There is a doctor on duty at the clinic. So what's the problem? Why then is no healing? That's the real question. How can there be so many remedies around and no one taking the medicine? How can there be plenty of doctors around, but no one listening to what they are saying?

The disease has progressed too far. False remedies have been applied, quick fixes have been attempted, but the root of the illness never has been treated. The time has passed for a real remedy. How sad. How revealing of time. False theology provided a simple, short-term solution, when in reality there are no simple short-term solutions to the deepest questions of life.

There are times in life when there doesn't seem to be any balm in Gilead. When there isn't any end to the pain,

what will you do? That's what Jeremiah is saying. What will you do?

Ron Ford is former pastor of Hurstbourne Baptist Church in Louisville



RESOURCES

This week's questions:

- How can I guide my child's faith development?
- If my marriage is OK, why should I attend a marriage enrichment weekend?

Q. My child is asking about becoming a Christian. What should I do to guide her faith development correctly?

■ Affirm her interest. Tell her how happy you are that she wants to know more about what it means to be a Christian.

■ Tell about your own conversion experience. Use simple, everyday language. Relate specific dates and places. Tell about the person who helped you understand what it means to be a Christian.

■ Don't be in a hurry. Let your child set the pace. Interest will often ebb and flow in response to specific events, such as baptism, the Lord's Supper or a special service.

■ Keep a diary of questions your child asks and conversations you have. This record will be a wonderful gift later in life that will enable your child to see and remember the process she went through in making a commitment to Christ.

■ Emphasize the unconditional love of God as expressed through Jesus. At the same time, look for an age-appropriate awareness of sinfulness,

evidence of repentance and a desire to be forgiven. These must precede true conversion at any age.

■ Be alert for opportunities to talk casually about the difference Jesus makes in your everyday life. Look for ways to help your child connect belief and behavior.

■ Pray. Ask God to bring your child in the right way at the right time to a place where she can make a commitment to Christ that will make a difference in how she lives.

■ Call for reinforcements. Plan a meeting with a minister or Sunday school teacher. Make sure they are aware of what is going on so they can support you and pray with you and for your child. —

David Garrard



Q. My wife wants me to attend a marriage enrichment weekend that our church is planning, but I don't see the point. We aren't having marital problems. What could we gain from this?

Marriage enrichments usually are geared toward couples, but who would like to further develop or "en-

rich" their marriages. The fact that you are not having marital problems might make you and your wife good candidates for a marriage enrichment experience.

In a manner of speaking, a marriage enrichment is preventive care, similar to what you do for your physical body when you exercise or have a physical examination even when you are not sick.

Marriage enrichment events vary, but will lead couples in exploring such issues as communication, conflict management, sexuality or problem-solving skills with the goal being to make good marriages better. Today with divorce so prevalent, marriage enrichments can help couples assess their strengths and weaknesses and work on weak areas before problems arise in the relationship. —

Susan Howell
Family Forum writers are David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; Susan Howell, assistant professor of psychology at Campbellsville University; Wade Rowatt, director of the St. Matthews Pastoral Counseling Center in Louisville; and Al Shackelford, editor of *Mature Living* magazine. Send questions for Family Forum to *Western Recorder*, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253 or e-mail us at wesrec@ntr.net.

STEWARDSHIP

Ways to give to Baptist causes

By Laurie Valentine

Your church, association and the Kentucky Baptist Convention and its institutions have a wide variety of exciting ministries that need financial support to

launch them into reality or continue and/or expand their existing programming. The methods by which you may support these important causes through gifts of capital assets are also wide-ranging.

An outright gift of cash, appreciated securities or real estate is probably the most common, and simplest, way to make gifts during your lifetime.

Other methods of lifetime giving, such as charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder trusts, allow you to provide a future benefit to one or more Baptist causes, while retaining an annual income for your lifetime or a term of years.

There also are a variety of methods you can arrange now that will benefit the causes of your choice at your death. The most common is a bequest in your will or living trust. Another possibility is to name a Baptist cause as the beneficiary of some portion of your retirement plan death benefit or a beneficiary of a life insurance policy that is no longer needed for family security.

You may want to designate that your gift be used for a specific ministry or program, rather than giving the organization the choice of how to use your gift. You may also want to permit the organization to use only the income generated by the gifted property (this type of arrangement is called an "endowment fund").

Gifts may be made directly to the benefiting organization or may be given to a third party, such as the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, to manage for the designated beneficiary cause or causes.

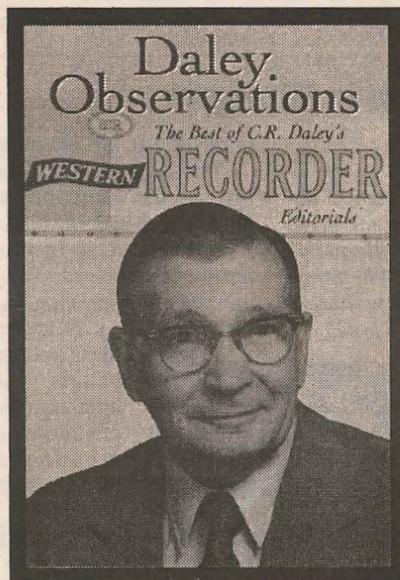
Whether you wish to make gifts during your lifetime and/or at your death, there are a variety of ways to make gifts that will allow you to make a lasting difference for the cause of Christ.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

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A.B. Colvin

"This collection will light the fires of memory for some and introduce to new generations this teacher, preacher, prophet and poet who wrote what he saw, felt and believed about almost everything that mattered most to Kentucky Baptists."
Bill Marshall



This new book presents the best of C.R. Daley's editorials during his 27-year tenure as editor of the *Western Recorder*. He wrote during pivotal times in Baptist life and American life, prophetically addressing such issues as civil rights while at the same time penning lyric remembrances of Kentucky's great outdoors. Daley Observations is a treasure of Kentucky Baptist history, yet contains insight relevant to Baptist clergy and laity alike today.

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OPINION

Continued from page 4

Mohler was not arrogant, unbiblical, "unBaptist," or "ungracious" in his remarks relating to President Clinton. Mohler was simply replying to a question related to church discipline. He responded with a clear recitation of the biblical pattern. Mohler was acting the way a godly theologian should act—zealous for the bride of Christ. Let us all make our appeals to Scripture and the commands of the Lord instead of to cheap, unfounded insults.

When we appeal to Scripture, we find that nine of Paul's letters were written by him for the purpose of instructing churches in Christian living. Of course, Paul was an apostle, and Mohler is not. But what about Acts 15? There we find Paul and Barnabas debating with the men from the church in Jerusalem over the issue of circumcision. Then, the church at Antioch voted to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to tell another church what to do in the matter of circumcision. Are we to conclude that Barnabas and the church at Antioch are also arrogant and unloving?

Instead of staying on Mohler's back, it would be more noble and beneficial for all of us to attend to the unity of Christ's body. Christ's church will be presented back to him one day "having no spot or wrinkle." Men like Mohler are equipped by God to press out the wrinkles of nearly a century of wayward doctrine.

When Mohler stood for the truth of church discipline, he did so with the authority of Christ. No church has the right to abandon the word of God and still claim the name Christian.

Gregory Cochran
Henderson

Discipline needed

After reading the article on Al Mohler's comments concerning Pres-

ident Clinton and his home church, along with the editor's rebuttal (Sept. 1, pages 2 and 5), I am convinced that the issue of authority in the SBC has yet to be resolved.

We have no hierarchical system, and I do not believe Mohler is suggesting he has authority over an autonomous Southern Baptist church.

The authority of which I speak is the conflict between the authority of the Bible and the authority of tradition. When the authority of tradition supercedes that of the Bible, we are in grave danger as Southern Baptists. The autonomy of the local church is not in question.

Southern's president was expressing the fact the churches in general, and Immanuel specifically, have failed in their responsibility to follow Christ's instruction concerning church discipline for the purpose of reconciliation (Matthew 18:15-17).

I recall reading about a Christian leader who wrote an open letter to an autonomous local church, instructing them about the proper way to discipline a "brother" who was blatant in his sexual immorality. This leader instructed the local church not to associate with this "brother." What right did this leader have to tell the local church what to do? Strictly adhering to the dogma of Southern Baptist tradition, the answer is none.

But I believe the Apostle Paul not only had the right, but the responsibility to encourage the church at Corinth to withdraw fellowship from one whose indefensible immorality affected the testimony of the local church and Christians at large. I believe Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., has the responsibility to practice church discipline as de-

scribed in Matthew 18. I also believe that only that local church can make the determination as to whether they will or not.

Doug Wilson
Orchard Park, N.Y.

Church to judge

Regarding Mark Wingfield's editorial and Al Mohler's comments reported in the Sept. 1 Western Recorder: I agree that a local body of believers has a right to govern their own body and no other church should dictate to them what they can or can't do, although each local church should be living by the rules God has given us to obey. His rules for disciplinary actions are very clear in 1 Corinthians 5.

Of course, the first thing people want to say is, "Who has the right to judge?" God knew someone would have to carry on the work of the church, so he told the Christians to judge them who are within the body and he would judge those on the outside (1 Corinthians 5:12-13). These verses are very clear on how a situation like this is to be handled. A Christian needs to be very careful in following God's word on immorality, so as not to let God down. If one does not follow God's rules, he stands in danger of being punished and causes chastisement of the church. The question is, should we be men pleasers or God pleasers?

Sometimes if a local church is failing in carrying out God's word, then it may be good for them to be reminded of the dangers they face. Revelation 2:5 says he could come quickly and remove the candlestick (church). A lot of churches are already dead

because of disobedience but are just going through the motions, which is useless. Compromise is going to be the downfall of the church.

Wanda Howard
Penrod

No intrusion

Ken Chafin (Sept. 8, page 4) conveniently forgot that all local churches have been unequivocally "told what to do" by the New Testament with regard to any professed believer practicing immorality, just as they have been "told what to do" about the restoration of the truly repentant.

Mohler's "effort" was not based on "his ideas," but on what God has already said. If, as Chafin said, it was right for Mohler to say that a church should "seek to restore," it was right for him to remind any church that God has said to deal with a member who shows no signs of repentance.

Paul crossed "sea lanes" to say to an autonomous church: "I wrote to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of immorality ... no, not even to eat with such a one."

If I understand correctly, the plain sense of Scripture always outweighs any supposed "historic Baptist principles." It's either that or creedalism.

The same church by the same apostle was also instructed to "forgive and comfort" and to "reaffirm (their) love" to the member after he gives evidence of repentance.

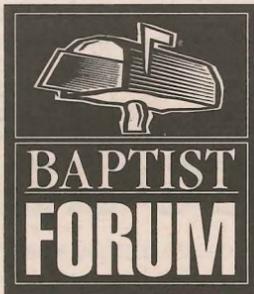
The local church can act and make its own decision, but it is no infringement on that autonomy for it to be reminded of what the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write, any more than for a church not practicing immersion to be told what the New Testament teaches on the subject.

Donald MacDonald
Louisville

its faculty is committed. In brief compass the "Abstract" is that body of divinity which students may expect their faculty to hold. Thus, students do not enter the classroom wondering about the theological commitments of their professors. They may have confidence that their professors "profess" the faith.

Finally, we signed the "Abstract" to affirm our confessional identities as scholars and teachers. The "Abstract" frees us to declare our theological presuppositions and theoretical assumptions from the start of every class. We are free to engage our various disciplines with intellectual honesty in the light of a Christian worldview. Thus, the "Abstract" sets appropriate boundaries for both the faculty and the administration. We seek to preserve these freedoms for ourselves and our colleagues.

Though we represent a variety of disciplines and backgrounds, signing the "Abstract of Principles" was a momentous event both in our personal and professional lives. We owe a debt of gratitude to the founders of Southern Seminary for their fidelity to the "faith once for all delivered to the saints." It is our desire to serve our Savior through our ministry at Southern Baptist's first seminary with the same vigor and integrity as those founders. They were not infallible, but their God is. Soli Deo Gloria.



The "Abstract of Principles": Why we signed it

Editor's note: Several months ago, the Western Recorder published an opinion piece by Henlee Barnette, former professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, containing his explanation of why he signed the seminary's "Abstract of Principles." The following is a response to that piece by seven new seminary faculty members who recently signed the "Abstract": George Martin, associate professor of Christian missions; Ben Mitchell, assistant professor of Christian ethics; Esther Rothenbusch, assistant professor of church music; Mark Seifrid, associate professor of New Testament interpretation; Mark Simpson, associate professor of Christian education and leadership; Thomas Schreiner, professor of New Testament; and Bruce Ware, professor of Christian theology.

On Aug. 25, seven faculty members of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary signed the seminary's governing theological statement, the "Abstract of Principles." We had the solemn privilege of affixing our signature to a document which was written by the founders of the seminary and which has served her well since 1859. It was James Petigru Boyce's original vision for the seminary that all professors be required to teach "in accor-

dance with and not contrary to" the "Abstract of Principles."

We signed the "Abstract," first of all, because we are not ashamed of the gospel. While the seminary's doctrinal affirmation is not regarded as having scriptural authority, we believe it is a faithful summary of gospel truth. We believe its declarations about God, humankind, the nature of salvation, the church and its ordinances, religious liberty, the resurrection and the world to come

are accurate reflections of what the Bible teaches. We signed the "Abstract" because we gladly affirm the truths contained therein.

Furthermore, we signed the "Abstract" because we are part of a lengthy theological tradition. In very important ways the seminary's doctrinal statement is consistent with many of the historic creeds and confessions of the church, including the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and later Baptist confessions such as the first and second London Baptist Confessions of Faith, the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, the Charleston Baptist Confession of Faith and the New Hampshire Baptist Confession. We humbly join the legacy of those who have gone before us.

Those of us who signed the "Ab-

stract" also see ourselves as members of a discreet community of faith—the Southern Seminary family—a community whose commitment to Christ and his teaching is paramount. We delight in knowing and serving the Christ who has called us and for whose glory we teach. While we share saving faith in Christ and his glorious gospel in common with all Christians everywhere, we have a unique bond with those who affirm the principles outlined in the "Abstract."

Moreover, signing the "Abstract" is evidence of the realization that we are accountable to others. We are accountable to God first. Next we are accountable to Southern Baptists through the trustees of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Southern Baptists have given of their energy, time and money to build a seminary which stands for those truths delineated in the "Abstract." Since the "Abstract of Principles" was part of the founding documents of Southern Baptist's first seminary, we have every reason to believe our brothers and sisters expect us to teach "in accordance with and not contrary to" the doctrines contained therein. Additionally, we are accountable to a student body which deserves to know that to which

COMMENTARY

Mohler's right

Every week when I pick up my Western Distorter, I can always count on two things. First, the liberal slant in reporting that is a part of our state Baptist paper's history. Second, the regular attacks on the president of Southern Seminary, Al Mohler.

For years our flagship seminary taught heresy and the effects, as with the personal attacks on Mohler, will be felt for years to come. But the tone and deep personal nature of so many of the letters to the editor are troubling. They are erroneous in their basis and cruel in their content.

The teaching of Scripture on discipline in the body of Christ is not debatable. Either you believe it or not. For those who do not understand it, the goal of discipline is redemption. My church practices it, lovingly, and it works. People do come back to the fellowship of believers.

It is so refreshing to see, finally, a theologian, who happens also to be the leader of our finest seminary, give us the truth of Scripture without the usual sugar coating.

Being a student at Clear Creek Baptist College, I know something about what young preachers and pastors are thinking. Everyone I've heard comment on Mohler supports him enthusiastically. We wish there were more Baptist leaders who had the courage he shows.

You liberal Baptists may control Kentucky, but nationally, your watered-down, lukewarm gospel is a thing of the past. I just wish Mohler got half the prayer support from Kentucky Baptists as Bill Clinton.

Bill Meece
Somerset

Urban growth, gray areas make accountability harder

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

"We pay very little attention to the word 'discipline,' which is very close to the word 'disciple.' We've done very little to discipline them."

Lloyd Allen, professor of church history at Mercer University's school of theology in Atlanta

A funny thing happened on the way from the 19th century to the 20th century: Churches began to be larger, more people moved from rural settings to big cities and a growing number of churches offered people multiple options for membership.

While good for the church, these very factors, combined with a fading line between absolute right and absolute wrong, led to the diminishing practice of church discipline, some Baptist historians and theologians contend.

"In small communities, there could be very clear definitions of what is right and wrong," said Tim Weber, a church historian and dean of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary near Chicago. "But as churches got larger, and especially in cities, it became hard to draw a clear line."

Weber cites the research of Greg Wills, assistant professor of church history at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, as demonstrating that "churches stopped disciplining when the congregations got so big that people didn't know each other well, definitions got cloudy and competition got fierce."

In frontier-era communities, Weber said, there often was only one church of a particular denomination. When a church member fell into sin, "there wasn't anyplace else to go," he noted. "You had to face these people, and you had to take it."

Not so today. Many churches are so large that most members don't know all the other members. And even if a person were expelled from

one church, he could go down the street and join another.

It's hard to exercise church discipline on people you don't know and have no means of holding to accountability, Weber said.

Another factor was the revivalism of the 19th century, added Curtis Freeman, who teaches historical theology at Houston Baptist University.

"In 18th and early 19th century America, conversion was a process and it was a guided process, so that you didn't just go off to a camp meet-

ing and come back and say, 'I'm converted,'" Freeman said. "It was a process that might go on for years. You weren't ever converted until you testified of your faith and others reached the conclusion that you were converted."

"In the 19th century with the revival movements and the second awakening, religion becomes much more an individual experience, less a guided experience and more of an event," he said. "I the converted person become the judge of whether I'm truly converted, not the church."

By making the door to church membership open more easily, Baptists and others made it more difficult to hold church members accountable for upholding certain standards, Freeman said.

For example, in the baptismal covenants of earlier centuries, new converts pledged to uphold certain standards and agreed to submit to church

discipline if they sinned, he explained.

"When people began to assume the content of church membership was mainly based on the entry experience, they paid less attention to the discipling or nurturing aspect," said Lloyd Allen, professor of church history at Mercer University's school of theology in Atlanta.

As a result, "what we have done with church discipline is intervene only when it's too late usually to redirect or restore balance in the person's spiritual life," Allen said. "Churches

are quick to fire someone who has committed infidelity, but they're not quick to have given that person a place to

work on problems like infidelity prior to its public expression.

"We pay very little attention to the word 'discipline,' which is very close to the word 'disciple.' We've done very little to discipline them."

Ironically, a Southern Baptist church that does pay attention both to disciplining and discipline is one that personifies the very aspects of the 20th century church credited with making church discipline extinct.

Saddleback Valley Community Church in Southern California not only is big, it's huge, attracting more than 10,000 people each week to worship. It's also highly urban, located in the sprawling metropolis of Los Angeles and San Diego.

Because of these factors, it might appear impossible to administer church discipline at Saddleback. Not

so, said Pastor Rick Warren.

"I believe the practice of church discipline is essential for a healthy church," he said. "We have practiced it since the very beginning of our congregation."

But as in churches of previous centuries, this modern-day mega church has linked church discipline to a more restrictive form of church membership. Anyone who wants to join first must take a course called "Membership 101" and sign a membership covenant. Part of that covenant is a commitment to "protect the testimony of our church by living a godly life."

"We take this seriously," Warren said. "Every year members are removed if they do not repent and make restitution for issues such as not paying bad debts owed to other members of the church; walking out on a spouse and family; sexual sins such as adultery, homosexuality, bisexuality or child abuse; spousal abuse, etc."

Saddleback's first attempt to get the errant member into recovery or counseling programs. "Our goal is always restoration, not punishment," Warren said.

Ninety-five percent of the time this is handled privately by the church's nine elders because the sin is not widely known, Warren said. "But in those few cases where the whole church knows about it, we've used letters of the membership to notify them of our actions."

Warren said he "hates" doing church discipline, "but we do it because we want God's blessing on Saddleback. ... We had many examples of people who were disciplined and later repented, came back and thanked us for doing the right thing."



Clinton picks spiritual advisers

WASHINGTON (RNS)—President Clinton, who has confessed to having "sinned" in his relationship with former White House adviser Monica Lewinsky, has chosen two former spiritual advisers—including evangelist and sociologist Tony Campolo and Pastor Gordon McDonald—to meet and pray with him weekly as he seeks to reform his ways.

Both Campolo, a Baptist from Eastern College, St. David's, Pa., and McDonald, senior pastor at the non-denominational Grace Chapel in Lexington, Mass., are friends of Clinton from the early years of his White House tenure.

The New York Times, which first reported Clinton's choice of the two to be spiritual advisers, said both men were defensive about whether they were being used by the president for political damage control rather than genuine religious purposes.

"There are those who will say that Gordon and I are being used and manipulated," Campolo said in a statement. "Should this be true, it would not be the first time that Christians have been taken in."

"But we would rather be men of faith who believe that God is working in the life of the president than to join that army of cynics, many of whom are religious leaders who cannot accept a plea for forgiveness at face value."

McDonald, the Times noted, has faced his own major sin—an extramarital affair—and sought redemption. He has written a book, "Rebuilding Your Broken World," about his experience and Clinton told the pastor he has read the book twice.

A third minister named is Philip Wogaman, pastor of Foundry United Methodist Church in Washington, D.C.

Many churches don't discipline biblically, some say

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

More church discipline is done in the wrong way than in the right way, according to some pastors, historians and theologians well-versed in the issue.

"A lot of churches exercising church discipline are not doing it biblically," said Charles Quarles, who teaches New Testament and Greek at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College in Pineville.

As a advocate of future ministers, Quarles advocates proper use of church discipline as an essential part of church life. As a pastor, he has practiced church discipline.

"One safety factor is to limit the exercise of discipline to issues that come under the grounds spelled out by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 and by Christ in the Gospel of Matthew," Quarles said. "Another is that the process should only be entered into prayerfully."

"Motivation is key. It should be entered into with grief and not with delight," he explained. "Sometimes the exercise of church discipline lacks the humility that Scripture demands."

Among misconceptions about what's biblical, Quarles said, is the belief that churches have a biblical

mandate to expel inactive members. Not so, he said, because that's not one of the specific sins listed by Paul in his counsel to the church at Corinth.

In 1 Corinthians 5, the apostle addresses a problem of a man in the church who is having sexual relations with his stepmother. In addition to sexual immorality as grounds for expelling a person from the church, Paul lists greed, idolatry, slander, drunkenness and swindling.

"Some argue that Paul did not intend this list to be exhaustive, but I believe in many ways it is," Quarles said. The reason, he explained, is because Paul's list parallels the reasons given in the Old Testament for expulsion from the community.

Another common mistake churches make in exercising discipline is when "pastors undertake it in their own authority and without submitting the issue to a church for an official vote in a corporate business session," Quarles said. "In 2 Corinthians, Paul says church discipline is exercised by the vote of the majority. It's not something that a pastor who's offered by a deacon can use as a club in his fist."

Further, to be biblical the purpose of discipline must always be redemptive, Quarles said.

Other theologians, historians and

pastors interviewed on this topic offered an additional caution.

Discipline is a matter for the local church only, several said. "In the failing of public figures, we can point out where we see those failings and we can decry them, but I can no more tell a public figure's church how to respond to that than I could tell the public figure's therapist how to treat it," said Lloyd Allen, professor of church history at Mercer University's school of theology in Atlanta.

"People who have not been in the process with the erring member really don't have a place to stand in prescribing the correction," he added. "It has to do with pastoral care and spiritual care. It's not just a matter of reading the law book. This is a matter of discernment that cannot be done with confidence from the outside."

Mark Johnson, pastor of Midway Baptist Church in Midway, concurred, pointing to the Apostle Paul's admonition to the church at Corinth as the result of a unique relationship. Paul started the church at Corinth and stayed with the church nearly two years, Johnson noted.

"Paul's advice to the church at Corinth was valid because he knew them intimately and they asked for his advice," he said.

ISSUES

Kentucky churches differ on ideas of member discipline

Continued from page 1

During his 18 months as the church's pastor, no formal action has been taken against an erring member, he said, although the church had disciplined people shortly before his arrival and has a long history of doing so. However, since he has been pastor, three individuals who had been expelled from church membership have come back, confessed, shown evidence of repentance and been reinstated, he said.

One of those was a woman expelled because she was "living openly in sin" in a sexual situation, Meece said.

"She came back and told us that she had repented, that she had recognized that what she had done was wrong," he explained. "She wanted fellowship restored between her and the church, and she wanted to get married. It was one of the best services I've ever been in. ... Tears of joy were streaming down her cheeks. The church gladly restored her. It was a joyous occasion."

This story illustrates what a loving congregation he serves, Meece said, explaining his church loves people enough to confront them when they sin and loves them enough to take

them back when they repent. "I've never been in a church that is as loving."

Mount Union Baptist Church doesn't discipline members for just any sin, Meece said. The action is reserved only for "situations unbecoming a Christian and that bring dishonor upon the church, the body of Christ."

The way his church understands the biblical commands to hold each other accountable, the pastor and chairman of deacons begin the discipline process by speaking privately with the person accused of bringing shame to the church. If the person does not repent, the matter is brought before the entire church for action.

To be restored, the disciplined member must stand before the small congregation, confess the sin and indicate a desire to repent, he said.

About 75 miles north of Somerset, in the small town of Midway, situa-

tions of potential church discipline are handled differently.

"There are occasions in the minutes when someone has been churched for dancing or public intoxication," Pastor Mark Johnson explained. "But it's been at least 80 years if not 100."

The Midway church believes in discipline, just discipline administered in a different manner.

"The church is made up of sinners who have been redeemed in Jesus Christ," Johnson said. "We deal with issues of discipline,

then, as those who need discipline as well as administer it. Our posture is never condemnation but redemption.

"Discipline rightly used in a church is always redemptively managed," he said. "The goal is always redemption."

At Midway, the pastor might engage in "private conversations" with a person known to be living in sin, "seeking ways to redeem the person without publicly humiliating them,"

Johnson said. That may include allowing a person to resign leadership positions in the church and helping the person get the proper counseling needed to address a problem, he added.

The lack of formal expulsions from church membership does not mean the Midway church believes Christians can or should get away with an "anything goes" mentality, Johnson said. "We must with clarity deal with situations but we must redemptively deal with persons."

One problem with expelling people from church membership is knowing where to draw the line on which sins are "big" and which are "little," Johnson said.

"A better biblical understanding of sin is not to identify four or five things as those that are the main sins, but to realize we all are sinners and have a multiplicity of sins with which we live," he said.

Though the Mount Union and Midway churches see their responsibilities for church discipline differently, the pastors of both congregations said their ultimate goals are the same: bringing people into the kingdom of God and helping them grow into mature disciples.

Clinton getting sympathy from black churches

ATLANTA (RNS)—President Clinton is getting a good amount of forgiveness and sympathy these days from a group he has long identified with—African-American Christians.

Clinton has long had a special political and spiritual connection with many African-Americans of other denominations.

For those outside African-American church circles, the seemingly bottomless forgiveness may be hard to understand. But for insiders, it's a simple matter of theology and history.

They might not agree with what Clinton has done, but when it comes to forgiving the president African-Americans tend to rely on their longstanding tradition of empathy and redemption. They believe the Bible tells them to forgive those they believe have done wrong—a mandate they say they have been practicing for centuries.

"We are quick to forgive, first of all, because we had to practice deception to survive," said Bishop John Hurst Adams, senior bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church. "We had to treat our slave master like we liked him. ... We've been forgiving folks who have treated us wrong for a long time."

Riggins Earl, a professor of ethics and theology at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, calls the focus on forgiveness among African-American Christians "a kind of theology for the underdog."



SINNER COURT

Is church discipline dead?

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Church discipline debate both timely and historic

By Mark Wingfield
Editor

"It is ironic that one of the only things Luther maintained out of the Catholic tradition was confession. But he said priests are not the only ones who can hear confession."

Tim Weber, church historian and dean of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago

Debate over how strict church discipline should be is as old as the church itself, according to Baptist historians and theologians.

"In the persecution of the early church, there were a lot of folks who lapsed, and there was a problem of what to do with people who had not been true to the faith," explained Loyd Allen, professor of church history at Mercer University's school of theology in Atlanta.

Some in the first century church leaned toward forgiving those who lapsed, while others leaned toward condemnation, he said.

"In the early church there was considerable debate between those who wanted to take (sinners) back as soon as they fully repent. Others said if you are a traitor to the faith you should never be let back in," Allen explained.

Both then and now, the call for church discipline must find balance between the two extremes, he said.

"Church discipline had two aims in the early church. One was maintaining the purity of the church. When that goes off to an extreme, it is too rigorous and legalistic. The second aim was a restoration of the offender. When that fails, it becomes too lax.

"The tension of those two is what we're looking at" as a recurring struggle in the church through the ages, Allen said.

Because of this struggle, the Chris-

tian church in time developed a formal system of discipline known as penitence.

"If a person committed a major sin, called a mortal sin, ... then that person had to confess his or her sins in front of the community of faith and the church leaders would ascribe a penance," said Tim Weber, a church historian and dean of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary in Chicago.

The reason for demanding penance was because "talk is cheap," Weber said. "How do we know you mean it?"

Thus, the required performance of some assigned action, became a way of a repentant person proving his or her intention, Weber explained. "In some of the early churches, penitents, those who were under penance, would sit in a particular part of the church. After their penance was absolved, they were restored."

To many modern Baptists, this may sound like Roman Catholic doctrine. While the Roman Catholic church has carried this tradition forward more than modern Baptists, there is a shared heritage at this point, Weber said.

The road diverged later, when a need was perceived to speed up the

penitential process. "It was too cumbersome to manage," Weber said. "So public confession became private. Absolution was given before the penance was performed. ... By the middle ages after this change in order came about, the church got faced with the question of whether a person has been absolved of sin if they haven't performed an adequate penance."

That's where the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory comes in, he said. "You still owe God something, therefore you've got to go to purgatory and work it off."

That also led to the problem of the Catholic church in the middle ages selling indulgences to let people off the hook for the time they owed God in purgatory, he said.

Based on a common rootage, the modern Roman Catholic church, Eastern Orthodox church and Protestant

church movement all carried forward some elements of this formal system of discipline, Weber said.

"It is ironic that one of the only things Luther maintained out of the Catholic tradition was confession. But he said priests are not the only ones who can hear confession."

Within Protestant circles, the concept of church discipline went various directions, both Weber and Allen said. The concept was a major part of both Calvinist and Arminian traditions, although people sometimes link it more often with the Calvinist tradition, Weber said.

But non-Calvinist groups such as Methodists and Mennonites have a strong tradition of exercising church discipline.

The practice of formal church discipline was common in Baptist churches in America through the 19th century, Weber and Allen said.

People often were "churched" for major infractions such as adultery and drunkenness, but also for what today might appear lesser offenses, such as irregular attendance, dancing and card-playing.



SINNER COURT

Is church discipline dead?

Experiencing God at Jonathan Creek

A few nights ago I spent the night at Jonathan Creek and awakened before dawn for a walk around the grounds, along the lake.

I was alone on the 100 or so acres. It was a beautiful, quiet morning, and I sensed God's presence in a marvelous way. Just to walk down close to the lake, to look out across Jonathan Creek, I felt God drawing me close to him.

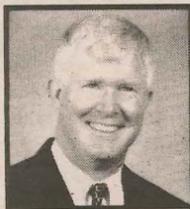
I walked for about 45 minutes or so. That morning I stood and watched deer grazing peacefully close by. I looked closely at a mama deer and her young fawn. I stopped my walk, and they stared back. They didn't move far, just stayed put. So eventually I walked on, not wanting to disturb their early morning breakfast time.

Then I saw four wild turkeys scurrying across a field right in front of me. They stopped at the edge of the woods and waited to see what I was going to do. I did nothing. They went on about their business. Later, I came across a coyote, which was nervously and intently watching my every move. It was a great stroll around grounds virtually overflowing with beauty.

I say all this to remind all of us

that Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore are more than "hotels or motels." Sometimes we are compared to secular facilities, both in accommodations and in rate structure. But I would suggest that if you view either place purely on the basis of our present facilities, you are missing much of what we are about. Both Cedarmore and Jonathan Creek are

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

places at which you can come and experience God in wonderful ways.

This is not to say you cannot experience him at secular places, because obviously you can and frequently do. But it is to say that our mission in service is to "provide an environment in which all our guests can come to know Christ and more fully experience him."

To be certain, that physical environment will be improved in the days and years ahead. We're behind, but we are catching up, thanks to efforts on the part of many groups of people.

But on that morning, as I walked around the grounds and the banks of Kentucky Lake, I experienced God. I wish you'd been there.

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

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MISSIONS

Missionaries have Kentucky connections

LOUISVILLE—Southern Baptist missionaries from Kentucky who were appointed to service during the International Mission Board's commissioning service at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Sept. 15 were:

■ **Mark and Jackie DeVine.** The DeVines will live in Thailand, where the Thailand Baptist Mission has a goal of starting 10 new churches and opening work in 20 new locations by the year 2000.



DeVine, a former pastor of Black Lick Baptist Church in Glen Dean, will teach theology at a seminary and start and develop churches. Mrs. DeVine, who grew up in Mentor, will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries. She was campus minister for Elizabethtown Community College and interim director of campus ministries at Campbellsville University.

■ **Loren and Karen Dickey.** The Dickeyes will live in Nicaragua. Southern Baptist missionaries have helped establish a Baptist radio station, construct more than nine chapels, open a seminary extension center and plant several churches.



Dickey, a native of Flemingsburg, will start and develop churches, and Mrs. Dickey will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

■ **Ed and Pamela Engles.** The Engles will live in Venezuela. Missionaries and national Christians working together have made the country a model for Christian work among Latin American countries.



Engles, who considers Louisville his hometown, will start and develop churches and Mrs. Engles will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

■ **Judy Miller.** Miller, a native of Hardinsburg, will live in Benin, where IMB missionaries have a commitment to establish church growth movements in every people group found there. She will work as a business facilitator and be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.



She considers First Baptist Church in Marion and Panther Creek Baptist in Owensboro to be her home churches. New Bethel Baptist Church in Hardinsburg also was influential in her Christian growth, she said.

■ **Gerald and Shelia Murphy.** As missionary associates, the Murphys will live in Russia.

Baptists from America and Russia have worked together to help start more than 250 new churches since 1993. Murphy, a native of Somerset, has been pastor of Munfordville Baptist Church since 1993. He also served as pastor of Ovesen Heights Baptist Church in Hodgenville.

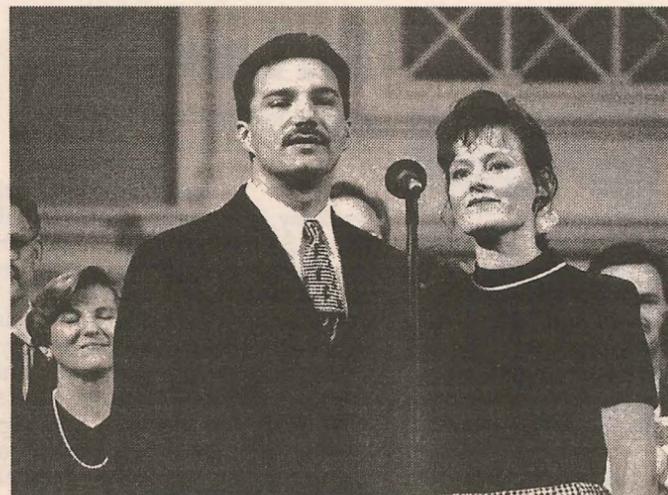


He will start and develop churches and Mrs. Murphy will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.

■ **Jeff and Deana Perkins.** The Perkinses will live in Germany. For at least 97 percent of Germans, church is a place where the cultural history of Germany can be viewed, but not a place of worship.



Perkins grew up in Erlanger and Petersburg. He considers Petersburg his hometown and First Baptist Church in Highland Heights his home church. Bullittsburg Baptist Church in Burlington also was influential in his Christian growth. He will start and develop churches and Mrs. Perkins will be involved in a variety of outreach ministries.



MISSION MOMENTS About 1,600 people attended the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's commissioning service Sept. 15, at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. ■ **Above:** Jeff and Deana Perkins were among the Kentucky Baptists commissioned. They will serve in Germany. ■ **Left:** James Garland, IMB trustee and interim pastor at Wice Memorial Baptist Church in Paducah, gives the benediction prayer for the 67 missionaries who were commissioned.

Welcome new faculty

By Robert Dunston

As we begin our 1998-1999 academic year, we welcome a group of outstanding teachers to our Cumberland College family.

These individuals come to us from colleges and universities around the nation eager to join us as we seek to provide a quality liberal arts education with strong Christian values.

Deborah Adkins joins us in the communication and theater arts department, teaching television production and managing TV-3, Cumberland's local cable channel. Lydia Allen takes over our program in French, bringing outstanding credentials and enthusiasm

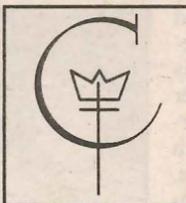
to the program. Dana Biggs leads the Cumberland College Marching Band and has plans for making the program bigger and better.

Patricia Bishop is our new English-as-a-second-language intern and is busily helping international students improve their English skills so they can function to their full potential. Jennifer Brueckner joins the biology department, adding further excellence to an ever-expanding program that is already recognized as excellent. Sharlene Dzugan returns to our chemistry department after several years of rais-

ing her young children to school age.

Jesse Kidd joins our computer information systems department after helping our campus network get off the ground last year. Mike LaGrone teaches in the business department, adding his expertise to a recognized program. Noelle Weirsma adds her knowledge and

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



enthusiasm to the psychology department to guide an ever-growing number of students hoping to bring healing to the mind and spirit.

Glen Coffey and James Smith join us in sociology and mathematics, respectively, as visiting faculty. Theresa Dickman moves from staff to faculty in the English department and Marianne Worthington moves from adjunct faculty to full-time faculty in the communication department.

We also congratulate Joe Lundy of computer information systems and Jeb Briley of business for recently completing their doctoral work. They join the many professors at Cumberland who have earned doctorates.

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

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

Corn dogs and the 'hard stuff'

"Mommy, what does Jesus smell like?"

Struggling for a response, the young mother said, "I don't know, but I'm sure it's something pleasant."

After some thought, the five year-old speculated, "I bet he smells like corn dogs."

One of the many things I like about kids is that you never know what they're going to say. An essay contest is part of our annual Child Care Day at Spring Meadows. I'd like to share with you the unguarded insights of two boys. For the purposes of this column, I've changed their names.

"Spring Meadows has helped me in all kinds of ways," wrote Jerome, who is 12.

"When I first came here I use to throw stuff when I got mad. When people talked smart to me, I would go off and try to hit them. When I was at home, my family didn't teach me any manners, so I wouldn't put my napkin in my lap. I used to lie a lot and not talk in group and be sneaky, and I'm still working on that one. Now this is the way Spring Meadows helped me out. When I didn't talk in group, the group leaders en-

couraged me to talk about the hard stuff from my past and it took me almost all year to get me to talk about it and now I am finally talking about it and I have good manners now. I say please and thank you and I eat with my fork, knife and spoon."

Daryl is 14 and recently accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. "God has made some big changes in my life. I'm a living witness. I went from six years of foster homes and placements to (planning on) going home with my grandmother. I love God for what he has done for me in my life, plus, he never holds a grudge on any of his children and that's what the phrase 'God is love' means to me."

Victories take many forms. Jerome has learned table manners and how to talk about "the hard stuff." Daryl knows the love of Jesus and the joy of reunion. With your help, we can celebrate many more victories together.

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

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

Dr. Laura has opinion for Bill and anyone else who'll listen

By Dale Hanson Bourke
Religion News Service



If a guy named Bill with a big title and even bigger problems were to give her a call, she'd know exactly what to say: "You've made a mess of your life and a mess of the country. Get out now."

NEW YORK (RNS)—Each weekday, thousands of people call Laura Schlessinger hoping to be chosen to pour their heart out on national radio and have "Dr. Laura," offer a blunt prescription that is part common sense, part shock therapy.

Never at a loss for words and rarely accused of being subtle, Schlessinger, a licensed marriage and family counselor, is wont to jar her callers by responding to their troubles with the likes of: "Are you crazy?" or "Could you have been any more stupid?"

So if a guy named Bill with a big title and even bigger problems were to give her a call, she'd know exactly what to say: "You've made a mess of your life and a mess of the country. Get out now."

Actually, President Clinton need not call. She's offering that advice on her own.

Schlessinger doesn't like to talk about politics. Instead, she prefers to talk about morality, a subject she finds grossly undervalued in the culture.

But since her new book on the Ten Commandments has come out at a time when, in Schlessinger's view, Clinton has broken a fair number of them, she's more than willing to offer her opinions on the subject.

Using the Hebrew Bible's numbering of the commandments,

Schlessinger said, "He probably started out by breaking the 10th one—'Thou shalt not covet'—needing more power or whatever he needed from a 21-year-old. ... Then he moved on to the seventh—adultery—and the ninth, when he lied."

What really ticks her off is her belief Clinton also dissed the third commandment—what many call the "swearing commandment;" the one about taking God's name in vain.

Schlessinger said that commandment is violated any time we shame our God, especially when we have a position of authority.

So by bringing disrespect to his office, Clinton "took God's name in vain," toppling yet another commandment. Number four and counting.

Not that any of this mess surprises the Los Angeles-based Schlessinger.

"People sin because it's fun. It feels good. It's instant gratification. Let's be honest," she said during a recent stop in New York, gesturing with all the drama of a preacher.

But Schlessinger is no minister and she thinks little of the majority of those who use the title.

"They've become a bunch of camp counselors instead of moral leaders," she declared. "They follow instead of leading. They are pop psychologists who tell people it is all right to do whatever they feel like doing."

In other words, they have abdicated their moral authority, said Schlessinger, who views her top-rated radio show as one way to stem the

moral decline she feels permeates contemporary culture.

With millions of people tuning in daily in the U.S., she must be on to something. She's the stern mother most of us never had—and many are happy they didn't—who will tell you exactly when she thinks you're making a fool of yourself.

For the many people who follow her guidance, Schlessinger is a god-send. They call back to report they are straightening out, following through on commitments, cleaning up their act. And they thank her for being there when no one else told them what they needed to hear.

And she is an unabashed defender of the type of conservative values commonly heard in evangelical churches.

Yet Schlessinger herself is Jewish, a late-in-life convert who embraced her father's heritage with fervor after she and her son watched a television show on the Holocaust. She first converted to Conservative Judaism, but later—taking her Episcopalian husband along with her—she became an Orthodox Jew.

"It's not easy," she said about her faith, referring to both observing Jewish law and the quest to move closer to God. "But I'd rather put up with a few things now than deal with God later."

Before she was actively involved in her faith she said she felt "aimless."

"Life had no context," she said. "I was caught up in being good at doing things, but I didn't really know why."

Now she says her life has purpose, although she admits some days are better than others and talks with awe about friends who seem to have the ability to communicate with God in a way that is personal.

She encourages everyone to embrace faith—any faith—and jokes that she has sent more people to the Roman Catholic Church than the pope.

And as far as Monica Lewinsky is concerned, Schlessinger thinks she should embrace her own Jewish roots, start following the Ten Commandments and get an honest job.

"She is a product of her choices," Schlessinger said with no discernible sympathy.

It is no surprise that Schlessinger has her critics, folks who wonder who appointed her the cosmic hall monitor.

A recent profile in *Vanity Fair* pointed out her own moral lapses; colleagues labeled her a back-stabbing hypocrite, which she denied being. The magazine quoted so-called friends who seemed to be searching for something decent to say.

Schlessinger doesn't pretend to be perfect and knows her advice is part entertainment and part therapy. But she also believes her radio show is one way of balancing a world that she sees as tipping dangerously away from God's truth.

And for those who would rather just enjoy themselves, Schlessinger offers one last piece of advice: "Even if they never get caught, they will have to deal with God."

One of those special evenings

Last week I told you about the special chapel service we had when UK basketball star Cameron Mills spoke on a Friday. Normally our Friday chapel service is a praise and worship time, which our students say is the best service of the week.

The timing of Cameron's message could not have been better. Friday evening is the time we set aside for our Baptist Student Union meetings. Our BSU was organized in 1949 by then Ms. Martha Bain. Oneida Baptist Institute has the oldest high school BSU in the nation.

After Friday's chapel, students who had come forward were given a special invitation to BSU. Usually BSU meets in our campus ministry center, but with a large number of students expected we moved to the chapel.

About 125 to 150 students attended. The program began with praise and worship songs. It is always refreshing to hear such a large group of students sing. The students were then given the opportunity to share a word of testimony. Several stood to share with the rest of the group. I was impressed with one of the younger boys who spoke. He had just been here for three weeks and was one of the smallest boys in our middle school. It took a lot of courage for this little fellow to stand before his middle school peers and also the high school students. After a few testimonies, we sang more songs and then gave others a chance to share their thoughts. Later some students led in songs of praise.

Near the end of the service several BSU small group leaders went to various spots in the chapel so the rest of the students could join them for a prayer time. Small group leaders are Christian students who have shown leadership qualities and a

deep spiritual dedication to the Lord. Just as in the adult world, it is not always easy for young people to lead spirit-filled lives among their peers. These students have been hand picked by our school chaplain, who is also our BSU leader.

A dozen groups of six to eight people formed. This is their special time to share prayer concerns with one another. They typically share about a spiritual need in their lives or a family member's life. A parent, grandparent or friend might have a

physical need, or the prayer concern may be a roommate who is not a Christian. When I am a part of one of these groups, it is always a blessing to hear their prayer requests.

After the service, students who had made professions of faith in Jesus that morning were encouraged to stay and talk with our pastor. He explained the importance of their decision and of spending special time with the Lord each day. He encouraged them to follow the Lord's command to be baptized. There are always some students who want to be baptized in their local churches, and we honor their requests.

However, many of our students have no home church because they might not come from Christian backgrounds. Most of those students choose to be baptized in Oneida Baptist Church. Because the church is being remodeled, our students are being baptized in the school's pool. I was not able to attend the baptismal service, but my wife and others were blessed to see 16 young people baptized. We are grateful for the moving of the Holy Spirit in these students' lives.

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Emily and Mrs. Whittaker

By Bill Whittaker

Emily Smith is a pretty, black-haired 3-year-old whose world has expanded since coming to Clear Creek in January with her parents, Barry and Eileen Smith. Events during these months illustrate how God works in all things for the good of those who love him and are called according to his purpose.

Eileen Smith expected to teach school while her husband completed his studies. She sent resumes to various schools but soon discovered her Tennessee teaching certificate wouldn't even permit her to substitute. The process for a Kentucky certificate takes two months. While she waited, Mrs. Smith substituted for student workers in the campus library. Emily received care at the Irene Peterson Child Development Center, a short walk from the library.

Child development center Director Rebecca Whittaker noticed Emily had some difficulty in walking and maintaining balance. Whittaker recommended that Emily have an evaluation and referred her parents to First Steps, an early intervention program for children ages newborn through 3 years.

An evaluator made a home visit and asked many questions. Mrs. Smith commented, "She also blinks a lot when she's watching television." They agreed to a vision test and heard the surprising news that Emily had 20/400 vision. In the following weeks Emily had physical and occupational therapy. She wore a patch on one eye to strengthen the

other eye. One Sunday during that time, I kept the nursery at First Baptist and Emily was present. A wall speaker brought the sound of familiar hymns from the worship service and Emily sang with them.

Emily's therapy came while Mrs. Smith waited for a teaching job. "God worked it all out for good. I needed to be at home with her," she said.

Emily now has 20/30 vision with her glasses. She loves to draw and read.

A few weeks ago, an appreciation dinner was held for Whittaker. Mrs. Smith tearfully expressed the thanks of her family for an alert and compassionate child care director. Emily is one of many children blessed during Whittaker's nine years as director.

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



New model offered for religion in schools

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

ARLINGTON, Va. (RNS)—Two experts on the controversial relationship between religion and the public schools say it is unconstitutional for educators to exclude religion from the curricula of the nation's schools.

The two—Warren Nord, philosophy of religion professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Charles Haynes, senior scholar at the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center in Arlington, Va.—said they are looking for something in between the “naked public school” and the “sacred public school.”

In a new book, “Taking Religion Seriously Across the Curriculum,” published by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the two outline a way they say it can be done. They discussed the book and their proposal at a recent meeting at the Freedom Forum First Amendment Center.

Haynes and Nord said it is inherently unfair to exclude religion from curricula. “It’s a violation of the neutrality required by the First Amendment,” said Haynes.

Both the “sacred public school,” where overt Protestantism dominates, and the “naked public school,” where all discussion of religion is excluded, are “failed models,” he said.

They are proposing an alternative: the “civil public school,” where people of all faiths and those who have

none will get fair treatment.

Efforts toward such a model have been supported in recent years by officials of organizations ranging from the Christian Coalition to People for the American Way as well as educational associations and groups representing Christians, Jews and Muslims.

In 1995, 21 religious and educational groups issued a booklet, “Religious Liberty, Public Education and the Future of American Democracy: A Statement of Principles,” which asserted that “public schools may not inculcate nor inhibit religion” but called for study about religion where appropriate.

Outside the areas of history and social studies, religion is rarely mentioned in curricula, Nord said, and, indeed, “is conspicuous by its absence.”

He cited economics as an example of an area of the curriculum that barely touches on such religious perspectives as “work as a calling” and various other theories by theologians regarding poverty and justice.

Elliot Mincberg, legal director of People for the American Way, and one of several on a panel discussing the authors’ ideas, said training is needed if schools decide to include more religion in their course offerings.

Mincberg spoke from his experience of working to counter instances such as a case where a school “treated the Resurrection like it was the Gettysburg Address.”

Diane Berreth, deputy executive director of the Association for Super-

vision and Curriculum Development, called the authors’ challenge to educators an “extremely difficult task,” but said, “I do believe that schools are capable of this work.”

She said pilot programs are needed to encourage others to consider the duo’s ideas.

“Schools are inherently conservative institutions,” she said. “Even private religious schools don’t reflect the worldview of Charles (Haynes) and Warren (Nord).”

Nord said that despite the challenges, institutions can change. Before World War II, most universities didn’t have religious studies departments and now they are considered “legitimate” in higher education.

“The field of religious studies can be developed in public schools,” he said.

An audience member who identified himself as a longtime Lebanese journalist voiced concern that teaching more about religion in schools could lead to conflict and even bloodshed.

But Haynes said helping explain the world’s diverse religions might prevent violence.

“If we don’t do what we’re suggesting, we might argue that what you are pointing to is more likely,” he said. “We are heading down a road in the United States where illiteracy in religion is becoming dangerous.”

Nord agreed: “The way to keep people together is to take everybody seriously.”

NATIONAL NOTES

■ **U.S. House draws attention to missionaries.** The U.S. House of Representatives passed the New Tribes Mission Resolution to bring added international attention to the Jan. 31, 1993, abduction of three American missionaries in southern Panama. The three missionaries were kidnapped from their homes in southern Panama by Colombian revolutionaries more than six years ago. They are believed to be the longest-held American hostages in Colombia. The resolution encourages anyone knowing the location of the missionaries to come forward. It also calls for President Clinton and other American officials to raise the issue to foreign governments, religious institutions and other private organizations.

■ **AP doubles religion-reporting staff.** Associated Press, the world’s largest news-gathering organization, has named two new full-time religion writers, doubling its personnel devoted to religion coverage. The new AP religion writers are Richard Ostling, senior correspondent with Time magazine specializing in religion coverage, and Julia Lieblich, national correspondent for Newhouse News Service specializing in religion and ethics. Ostling said the move indicates that religion is “an important and big beat that American newspapers want covered and covered well.”

■ **Magazine looks at religion in media.** A magazine launched this summer examines how stories involving religion are reported by the news media. Supported by a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, Religion in the News magazine is published three times a year by the Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life at Trinity College in Hartford, Conn. The premiere issue in June examined preachers and the Clinton scandal, Promise Keepers, religion and the post-welfare state, charitable choice, the McCaughey babies, Islam in Virginia and more.

■ **Cross-carrying evangelist ends trek.** Florida evangelist Arthur Blessitt has completed his 29-year ambition to carry a 12-foot cross to every nation on earth. Blessitt, 57, of North Fort Myers, Fla., completed a walk Sept. 1 in North Korea, the 277th and final country on his pilgrimage which began in 1969. “Jesus did it, and it is all for the glory of God,” said Blessitt, who said he started the effort in response to a call from God. Blessitt has been arrested 24 times while walking 32,580 miles. He has walked with Billy Graham, met Pope John Paul II and been welcomed to Beirut by Yasser Arafat. He is listed in the Guinness Book of Records for the “world’s longest walk.”

■ **Mormon president disavows polygamy.** President Gordon Hinckley of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has said modern-day polygamy in Mormon splinter groups is in no way condoned by his church. In a rare TV interview, Hinckley said on “Larry King Live” Sept. 8 that “these people who practice polygamy are not members of this church. Any man or woman who becomes involved in it is excommunicated.” Mainstream Mormons, including church leaders, practiced polygamy until 1890, when it was banned as part of Utah’s acceptance as a state. However, about 30,000 polygamists reportedly exist in Utah and other states.

■ **Lutherans collect more than \$2 billion.** The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s 10,889 congregations had incomes totaling more than \$2 billion in 1997, an increase of \$133.4 million, the denomination reported. The average regular giving per confirmed member increased from \$401.39 in 1996 to \$423.23 in 1997.

■ **Black Baptist leader apologizes.** Henry Lyons, embattled president of the National Baptist Convention, USA, apologized to church members and began a fund-raising effort to fight federal and state charges of illegal financial dealings. Lyons, who faces 56 federal charges, including extortion and money laundering, has admitted to an “improper relationship” with a woman.

Abortion foes criticize FDA approved ‘morning-after’ contraception kits

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Abortion foes offered harsh criticism for a new “morning-after” contraceptive Sept. 3, the day after the Food and Drug Administration said a New Jersey company may begin selling the drugs.

The contraception kits, called PREVEN, include a combination of four pills long known to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex and a home pregnancy test. The kits, which can only be obtained with a prescription, will be sold by Gynetics Inc. of Somerville, N.J., and are expected to become available by the end of the month.

The pills are 75 percent effective at preventing pregnancy when taken within three days of sex. Because sperm remains in the uterus for some time, pregnancy can occur days after sex. But the morning-after pills delay or prevent the egg from entering the uterus for fertilization.

However, if an egg is fertilized during that time, the pills apparently alter the uterine lining, making it difficult for the egg to attach itself and develop into an embryo.

The FDA has said this scenario is hard to prove, according to an Associated Press report.

But it’s this scenario that most

concerns abortion foes who believe life begins at fertilization.

Helen Alvare, spokeswoman for the U.S. Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities, called the drug combination an “abortifacient.”

“We know that in all cases it works to make the womb hostile,” she said.

The only reason the FDA claims it prevents pregnancy is “because they redefine pregnancy,” she added. “This is all a semantic game; it really reacts only after a new life has begun.”

Carrie Gordon, bioethics analyst for Focus on the Family, expressed similar concerns.

The PREVEN kits are “being marketed and labeled as an emergency contraceptive ... but there is evidence that this use of drugs can actually prevent a fertilized egg from developing,” she said. “That is not contraception but abortion.”

The American Life League called on all anti-abortion groups to condemn the new drugs.

“Any group that fails to condemn the morning-after pill really isn’t pro-life,” said Judie Brown, the group’s president. “It is very clear that pregnancy begins at fertilization, not an arbitrary point selected by the abortion-minded.”

Senate fails to override veto of abortion bill

WASHINGTON (BP)—The U.S. Senate came three votes short of overriding President Clinton’s veto of a ban for a controversial late-term abortion procedure.

Senators voted 64-36 Sept. 18 to override Clinton’s veto of the Partial-birth Abortion Ban Act but still fell short of the two-thirds majority necessary.

The vote total was the same that the Senate accumulated when it last voted on the bill in May 1997. No senators changed their votes.

The U.S. House of Representatives voted 296-132 July 23 in favor of overriding the veto. It is the second time in two years the House has achieved a two-thirds majority but the Senate has not.

The head of the ethics agency of Clinton’s own denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, said Clinton bears “sole responsibility” for the continuation of a “barbaric practice.”

In vetoing the bill twice, Clinton has called for an exception to protect the mother’s health.

The American Medical Association, however, endorsed the legislation before his veto last year. More than 400 physicians have said the procedure “is never medically necessary to protect a mother’s health or her future fertility.”

PEOPLE

PRAYER PARTNERS

- Pray for these specific needs related to Kentucky Baptist partnerships with Russia, Poland, Tanzania and New England:
- Svetlana, Vera, Vasilli and Dima as they work in the Moscow partnership office.
- The new church starts around Moscow and Mel and Nancy Skinner as they oversee them.
- Dick and Marilyn Beadoin, business managers of the Moscow mission.
- Follow up to the ministry of 34 Native Americans from North Carolina who led a backyard Bible club on the Passamaquoddy reservation in Calais, Maine, this summer.
- Byron Basset, new volunteerism awareness and recruitment director for Greater Boston Baptist Association.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **CORBIN**—First Church celebrated 15 years of ministry by Paul Sims, minister of music and education. Barry Howard is pastor.

■ **DANVILLE**—James Stevens recently began his ministry at Calvary Church as minister of music and senior adults. He formerly served with First Church, Grand Cayman Islands, and Central Church in Winchester.

■ **FRANKLIN**—First Church has called Joseph Sustarsic as minister of education.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Boone's Creek Church's new pastor, Donald Embry began his ministry Sept. 13.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Valley Station Church recently honored its pastor and his wife, Don and Carol Zuberer, on the fifth anniversary of their ministry with the church. East Audubon Church will celebrate its 75th anniversary Oct. 4. Leon Boyd will speak at the 10:45 a.m. service. The afternoon service will begin at 2 p.m. Dinner will be served. All former members and pastors are invited. For more information call (502) 458-3535. William Page is pastor.

Gethsemane Church will hold its fall revival Oct. 4-7. Scott Gower will be the evangelist and Justin Hoagland will be music evangelist. David Livingston is pastor.

Hurstbourne Church honored

Sandra McCormack for 25 years of ministry as church organist. The Sept. 13 recognition included special services and a reception.

Lynn Acres Pastor John Meeks announced his retirement at the end of the year. He has served 8 1/2 years at the church. Meeks will be available for supply preaching. Call (502)361-2991. Also, the church called Steve Fitts to be minister of music. He is a graduate of Southern Seminary.

Southside Church ordained Sunik Hwang to the gospel ministry Aug 26. Sunik is originally from Korea and is a student at Southern Seminary. Mike Roy is pastor.

■ **MIDDLETOWN**—First Church will present Anna Laura Page in concert Sept. 27 during the 11 a.m. service. Danny Haynes is pastor.

■ **MOREHEAD**—First Church welcomed Don Breeden as minister to youth and children. Breeden is from Carlisle Avenue Church in Louisville. Don Mantooth is pastor of First Church.

■ **PADUCAH**—Don and Zona Gardon of Trinity Church will spend several weeks in Maine beginning mid-September as volunteers on mission through the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board. Kenneth Brown is pastor.

■ **RUSSELLVILLE**—First Church

Graham to host evangelists

MINNEAPOLIS (RNS)—Billy Graham has announced plans to kick off the next millennium with an international conference on evangelism that he expects will attract 10,000 participants. The conference will be held July 29-Aug. 6, 2000, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

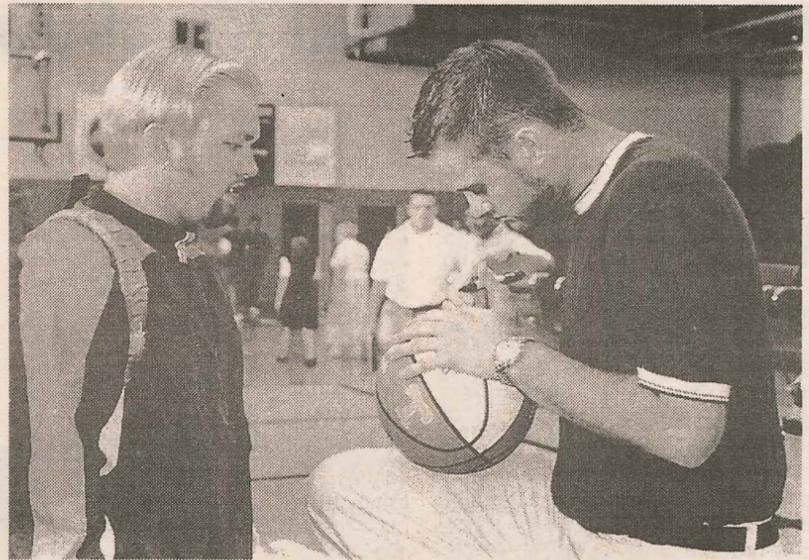
"In the midst of the rapid change in almost every phase of our lives, the task of worldwide evangelization remains a priority of the body of Christ," Graham said.

Graham, who will turn 80 on Nov.

7, said he expects three-fourths of those who attend the conference will be itinerant evangelists from at least 185 nations and territories.

As far back as 1948, Graham has taken part in conferences aimed at improving evangelism. The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association sponsored a major conference in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974 that dealt with evangelistic strategies.

Two conferences in Amsterdam in the 1980s resulted in a "Biblical Standard for Evangelists" still in use.



MILLS AT CAMPBELLVILLE Cameron Mills, a member of the 1998 national championship University of Kentucky basketball team, signs a basketball for Perry Greason, a sophomore from Greensburg at Campbellsville University. Mills was the speaker at Campbellville's Sept. 9 convocation service. "The entire world is looking for something to believe in. The entire world is looking for Jesus Christ," Mills said. (Campbellsville University photo by George Allen)

will present the Master's Men, a 100 voice men's choir, Oct. 11 in the morning service. Randy Neal is pastor.

■ **SHEPHERDSVILLE**—Tom Nidiffer has resigned as minister of music at First Church to accept a position at Pleasant Grove Church. Rich Lloyd is pastor at First Church.

■ **WARSAW**—Bramlette Church is celebrating its 150th anniversary with a homecoming Sept. 26-27. Saturday

services begin at 5 p.m. with Kenny French as speaker, Ken Lafferty with special music, Charlie Stephens as song leader, Charles Stephens in concert. Sunday service will be at 11 a.m. with Gordan Graham as speaker, Faye Allen with special music. An afternoon praise service will begin at 2:30 p.m. For more information call (606) 824-7820. Jay Patton is pastor.

Papers honored for religion newswriting

ATLANTA (RNS)—The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and the Dallas Morning News were among the top winners in awards presented by the Religion Newswriters Association for religion coverage in the secular media during 1997.

The awards were presented in Atlanta during RNA's annual conference.

The Atlanta and Dallas papers tied for first-place in competition for religion pages or sections. Third

place was awarded to the Minneapolis Star-Tribune.

In the individual categories, Ann Rodgers-Melnick of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette won the top prize in the competition for religion reporter of the year. Susan Hogan-Albach of the Minneapolis Star Tribune and Adelle Banks of Religion News Service finished second and third.

Richard Vara of the Houston Chronicle took the top prize for religion writer of the year.

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for rural Harrison County church. We have three services weekly with an average Sunday morning attendance of 65. Please submit resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, Pleasant Green Baptist Church, Rt. 6, Box 499, Cynthiana, KY 41031.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church, Carthage, Mo., seeks full-time minister of music. Seminary or equivalent degree/experience directing church music ministry. Send resumé with VCR tape and references to: Personnel Committee, 631 S. Garrison, Carthage, MO 64836.

NEEDED: Elementary teacher, certification required. Christian school. Call (606) 272-1217 or 273-8658 for interview.

SEEKING: Persons to fill these church positions: minister of education, youth, childhood education, and music. Send resumé to: Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 701 South Main St., Jonesboro, AR 72401.

SEEKING: Northside Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, Ky., is accepting resúmes for position of part-time minister of music and part-time minister of youth or full-time minister of youth/music. Church is located in a rapidly developing residential area. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, 1800 Pear Orchard Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

SEEKING: A full-time minister to students. The position will require the ability to provide strong leadership, direction and training for our youth and children's educational programs, plus assist the pastor with the overall ministries of the church. Send resumé to: Morganfield First Baptist Church, 200 N. Morgan St., Morganfield, KY 42437, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for small Eastern Kentucky church. Parsonage provided. Please submit resumé to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 587, Jenkins, KY 41537.

SEEKING: Full-time director of children's ministry to administer day-care program of the church and coordinate church's ministry to children and their families. Church encourages school teachers to consider God's leading into this opportunity of a career in Christian service. Address inquiries or resúmes to: Southwest Baptist Church, 6401 Scanlan, St. Louis, MO 63139, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Burkesville Baptist Church is seeking a part-time music and youth minister. We are a growing church in a large mission field with large number of youth and children. We have an established music program with excellent musicians. Please submit resumé to: Personnel Committee, Burkesville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 373, Burkesville, KY 42717, or call (502) 864-4105.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Eastern Gate Baptist Church, P.O. Box 6686, Shepherdsville, KY 40165.

SEEKING: Full-time pastor for a small, South-central Kentucky church. Please submit resumé to: Pulpit Committee, Welfare Baptist Church 476 West Cumberland Ave., Jamestown, KY 42629.

SEEKING: Peaks Mill Baptist Church, Frankfort, Ky., prayerfully seeks a full-time pastor. Please submit two resúmes to: Deacon Roger Combs, 203 Creekside Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601, and Trustee John Griffin, 8209 Owenton Road, Frankfort, KY 40601.

SEEKING: Full-time director of missions for Sandy Creek Baptist Association. Please send resumé to: Chairman of the Search Committee John Sexton, Route 1, Box 106, Roodhouse, ILL 62082.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of education and youth for Scottsville Baptist Church. Send resumé to: Search Committee, Scottsville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 392, Scottsville, KY 42164.

Kentucky native seeks home for record cross collection

By Richard Scheinin
San Jose Mercury News

SAN JOSE, Calif.—In early July, 60 years after Ernie Reda's mother gave him his first cross in Blackey, Ky., the retired San Jose handyman received this letter from the special projects coordinator at the Guinness Book of Records:

"Congratulations! I am happy to report that your claim for the largest collection of crosses has been accepted as a new record. ... Should someone call or write to us inquiring about who holds the record for the largest collection of crosses, your claim will be given."

"I felt like jumping up and down, to have the world's honor," says Reda, 75, whose collection, the result of a decades-long spiritual obsession, includes 8,439 crosses and crucifixes, as well as 2,758 other "religious items," 1,758 religious books and 21,200 religious postcards and greeting cards that he has wedged into his garage. This effusion of religious artifacts fills the room, floor to ceiling: crosses made of gold, silver, buttons and matchsticks; crosses that stand 8 feet tall; and crosses that would fit on the tip of Tom Thumb's pinky.

There are so many crosses of so many styles and geographical and historical derivations that Reda has long felt they belonged in a special museum that he envisions atop a mountain overlooking the Santa Clara Valley. Inside there would be religious items from all the world's faiths, an ecumenical cornucopia of spirit. People would

look up to the glass-faced museum, glistening in the sun, and "know that there's a God," says Reda.

But no patron has stepped forward to donate land or building, and Reda, who has slowed down because of arthritis and chronic stomach and back problems, has grown a little frustrated. He's usually not one to complain, but "it's got to the point where it's really pathetic, sad," he says in his soft Kentucky drawl. "There's a man in South Dakota who's willing to build me a museum in a shopping center.

"But I want to stay here," Reda reiterates. "I got in 84 more crosses on Friday from a man named Ohr in Florida—they keep coming in from all over the world. See, I want to make this museum so doggone interesting that you can't see it in a day. I've got a pin of a little angel playing golf that Bob Hope and his wife, Dolores, gave me. A lot of times, I wake up in the morning and there are boxes setting outside the front door. Full of crosses. One of them a priest sent me from Zambia, Africa, made out of ropes. A lot of people tell me I'm nuts, but this museum—there's going to be nothing like it."

It's easy to dismiss Reda as a fanatic, but his sense of mission is heartfelt and his one-of-a-kind collection is the sort of thing that turns up in American Heritage magazine—or, for that matter, in an exhibition space at the Smithsonian Institution.

Last year, Reda wrote to Guinness about the size of his ever-growing collection. They responded by asking him to provide testimonials about the

truthfulness of his claim from a number of community leaders, including business people and clergy.

For Reda, Guinness's recognition looses a flood of stories about his childhood and religious upbringing in the mountains of Kentucky. He was born in Vicco, a tiny coal-mining town, where the Redas were one of only two or three Italian families. Three Sundays a month, the family piled into a Model A Ford and drove to Mass in Hazard, about 13 miles away: "That was the biggest event in my life," he says, "every Sunday to put on a white shirt and go to church."

Reda got a little wild as a teenager, and his parents, grocery store owners, sent him off to boarding school in Blackey, Ky. His mother gave him a cross, to hold in his bed at night if he ever got scared. Every time she visited, she gave him another cross, until he had a shoe box full. That's how the collection started.

Then Reda moved about the South. He managed drive-in movie theaters and restaurants. One drive-in restaurant was in Bishopville, S.C., where the townsfolk threatened Reda for serving a group of black G.I.s who stepped off a bus one day in the early '60s. That's when Reda and his wife, Carmela, headed for California, where three of his sisters lived. Driving westward, he spotted three crosses atop a hill, he says, repeating one of his favorite stories, "and that's when I made a promise to God that I'd collect 5,000 crosses and make the world's first religious museum."

In San Jose, Reda worked as a

plumber, electrician and fix-it man, all the while haunting flea markets and garage sales, buying crosses. Every time he acquired another cross, he gave it a number, entered its description in a notebook and mounted it inside a pine frame that he built in his workshop from grocery crates.

"Let's take a look," he says, opening his garage door. There's a crucifix from Mexico: Jesus nailed to a cross made of grapevines. There are black Jesuses of painted pine, a white Jesus of alabaster, a shiny copper-colored Jesus of papier-mache.

"Hey, will you do something for me?" Reda asks. "Will you let me thank the thousands of people who have sent me their crosses? Because without them, and without God, this wouldn't have happened. And I want to ask for help from some of the churches, because this museum would be for all them. And I've done everything to make it happen but stand on top of a pulpit downtown and preach.

"Sure, people say I'm dreaming," Reda says. "I hear that all the time. But I won't give up. I tell you what: I had a letter from a nun in Missouri and she had heard about the collection in the Catholic Digest. She gave me such a feeling not to give up. And some of the words she put in there! 'If God hadn't meant for me to have the museum, he wouldn't have let me get this far.' I think that made good sense. I think God's testing me. So I think it's just a matter of time."

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"I want to make this museum so doggone interesting that you can't see it in a day."

Ernie Reda, collector of 8,439 crosses and crucifixes

Adventists launch Internet sunset calendar

SILVER SPRING, Md. (RNS)—The Seventh-day Adventist Church has launched a Web page that allows people to calculate precise sunrise and sunset times for any place in the world.

"The 'Sunset Calculator' provides an easy user interface for anyone to access sunrise and sunset times for any given day and for any given spot on the globe," said Jonathan Gallagher, news director for the denomination.

Gallagher noted that Adventists observe the seventh-day Sabbath from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday, so knowing precise sunset times is significant.

"Of course, we do not go down to the last minute in a legalistic way, because keeping Sabbath special is a matter of enjoying this wonder gift of God to us, a sanctuary in time," he said.

The calculator should be helpful to people from other faiths that observe the seventh-day Sabbath, as well as those who simply want to know hours of daylight on any given day, such as filmmakers, vacationers and the just plain curious.

The site can be accessed at: <http://news.adventist.org/sun>.

Electric Amish rock group sparks controversy

By James Melchiorre
Religion News Service

ARTHUR, Ill. (RNS)—The tunes will sound familiar to the baby boom generation and forward—until they hear the song titles: "I Want to Hoe Your Land," "Big Ol' Horse and Buggy" and "Barn to Be Wild."

Singing these songs' lyrics are three men sporting white shirts with black hats, suspenders and vests and wearing fake beards.

Meet the Electric Amish.

"We needed some kind of gimmick, just a visual gag. So we got the idea it might be pretty funny to have Amish guys in a rock band," recalled member Dean Metcalf. "We never expected it to go this far."

Gimmick or not, the Electric Amish has sold 50,000 copies of its two albums, which feature rock 'n' roll songs and lyrics rewritten to reflect Amish themes.

The band spent the summer on a concert tour playing weekend shows throughout Indiana and Illinois, including a stop at the Moultrie-Douglas County Fair in Arthur, Ill., a community which includes 4,000 Amish in a rural settlement dating back to the Civil War. The presence of so many Amish in the immediate area made the concert at Arthur the most controversial stop in the Electric Amish summer tour.

Indeed, when the band opened an evening concert in Arthur recently,

they used words not likely to be used in polite Amish company.

"Hello, heathens," shouted Metcalf, in Amish costume and character as Graeber Goodman.

In the hours before the concert, visitors to Arthur saw the Amish everywhere, driving along rural roads past fields of shoulder-high corn and meeting together for the seemingly ubiquitous late summer family reunions.

The Amish come out of the Anabaptist movement of Europe of the late 17th century. Amish teaching requires simplicity and separation from worldly pursuits and forbids the use of cars, telephones and electricity.

In slightly larger Arcola, Theresa Binion runs the Illinois Amish Interpretive Center, a museum dedicated to the history of the Illinois Amish. The center features photographs and books, and examples of Amish quilts, furniture, clothing and carriages. Binion is a Mennonite and questions the judgment of county fair organizers who invited the Electric Amish.

"I think it's making fun of somebody's religion," Binion said. "I can't imagine you could make fun of black people or gays and get away with it."

To the members of the Electric Amish, none of whom are Amish, their act is satire, pure and simple.

"Certainly it's comedy and we never intended to harm anyone with what we're doing," Kyle Grayson said.

Harm would come only if the music perpetuates negative stereotypes,



said Donald Kraybill, provost of Messiah College in Grantham, Pa., and author of "The Riddle of Amish Culture."

"If the lyrics aren't insidious, it doesn't strike me as particularly offensive," Kraybill said. "But do groups take more freedom with the Amish because the Amish are not as engaged in the society? And if they were Hispanics, African-Americans or Asians, would it be seen as just as funny?"

ELECTRIC AMISH With songs like "Barn to Be Wild," the Electric Amish have drawn crowds and raised eyebrows for their satire of the reclusive religious group. (RNS photo)

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