



WESTERN RECORDER

February 22, 2000
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FOR THE RECORD



Baptists

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Cooperative Program

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"Peanuts" added to many a sermon, says Baptist cartoonist. *Page 14.*

"Smoke on the Mountain"

The Christian music comedy show is among the most popular for regional theater. *Page 15.*

Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, Feb. 23

Conference: Jesus models Christian response to stress

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

CEDARMORE—The bad news: It's a stress-filled world whose pace is likely to accelerate.

The good news: Jesus Christ modeled a way to live in His grace amid the tensions caused by rapid change.

That was the message of several speakers and workshop leaders during this month's deacon-pastor-spouse retreat at Cedarmore Baptist Assembly.

An underlying theme of the conference was the need to pray about daily challenges and pressures.

Like the introduction of "A Tale of Two Cities," keynote speaker Les Hollon said Charles Dickens' classic de-

scribes life in the 21st century: the best of times and the worst of times. Despite the fruits of progress, the technological age poses many challenges, he said.

"How many times has your leadership style had to change?"

asked Hollon, pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville. "How many times have you had to change the way you do deacon ministry? But the Lord Jesus, who is the same yesterday, today and forever, knows our needs. We need to look at how not just to cope, but to thrive with the stress."

Using Matthew 9 as an illustration, Hollon recounted that Jesus endured a daily routine filled with demands and

criticism. He healed people of various diseases while bystanders either blamed the victims for their illness or mocked him, Hollon said.

Jesus also persuaded Matthew to follow Him and confronted

John's disciples who questioned His methods. And He was verbally abused by skeptics before the day concluded, Hollon said.

"Stress is the inner accountability of expectations," he said. "If we don't feel it, we're dead. It was good stress that caused Matthew to follow Jesus (and) that caused Jesus to heal a woman. I want stress—it keeps this building up."

Hollon listed antidotes to unhealthy stress, including:

- Laughter.
- Dedicating life to God each day and confessing the need for His wisdom.

- Reconciling personal relationships within the family and church.

- Praying about anxieties and meditating on God's goodness.

The most dramatic example of relying on God to answer the stress of life came from Skip Ford, deacon chairman at St. Matthews Baptist.

He described drawing closer to God as his wife struggled with a fatal neurological disease for more than 30 years. Ruthie Ford died Dec. 31.

"The only prescription (was) you
□ See *Speaker: Jesus models ...*, page 6



Older members pose challenges, opportunities for congregations

By Kristen Campbell
Religion News Service

MOBILE, Ala. (RNS)—Sunday mornings, Frankie Wood stops by an area nursing home to provide transportation for a fellow church member to Kingswood United Methodist Church in Mobile, Ala.

She also lends a hand for the church's senior citizens' group, the "Keenagers."

"I feel like I'm a helper—to be able to get to some of these older people who are in their upper 70s and 80s," said Wood, 63. "I just like doing that. I just love doing things for other people."

Oftentimes, she said, they are a group that's ignored within the congregations they helped found and support.

Today, more than one in eight Americans—some 33 million people—is at least 65. In 30 years, about 20 percent of the U.S. population will be more than 65 years old.

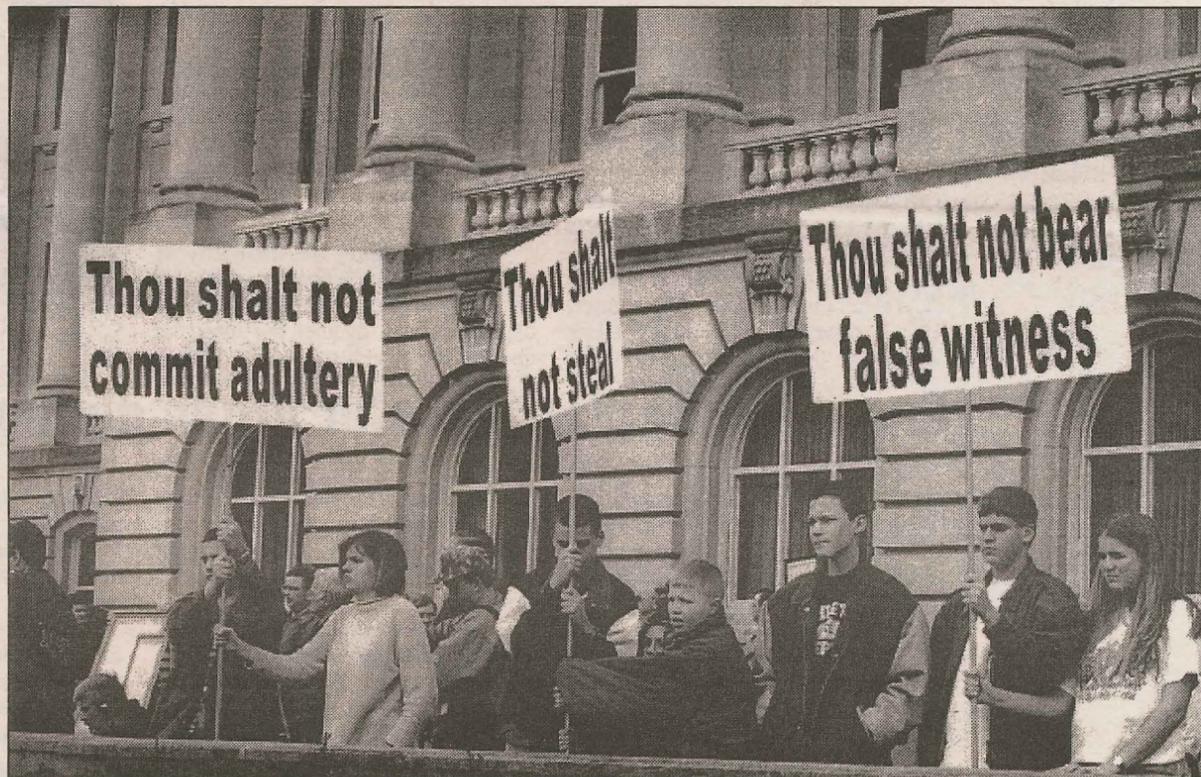
As a group, they have better health, better education and better financial security than any of their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents.

For countless congregations, these men and women have offered lengthy spiritual, academic, social and financial support. But when they turn to their pastors, some may find the opportunities to serve—or to receive some assistance—lacking.

Charles Arn, co-author of "Catch the Age Wave" and president of Church Growth Inc., in Monrovia, Calif., contends that "ageism" pervades many contemporary churches.

"We did a survey a few years ago," he said. "For every one
□ See *Aging members ...*, page 6

Commandments rally



Hundred of supporters of posting the Ten Commandments in public schools held a rally on the steps of the state Capitol in Frankfort last week. Kentucky's Senate passed a resolution affirming the Ten Commandments, 37-1, but it faces an uncertain future in the House of Representatives. *Story on page 3*

Missionaries see Druze responding to gospel

By Eileen Carroll
SBC International Mission Board

GOLAN HEIGHTS (BP)—In the land where Jesus walked and taught, a group of Georgia young people share their faith among the Druze.

Chatter passes among the 23 members of the outreach team from Warren Baptist Church in Augusta, Ga. "Did you get that street over there? No, OK, let's get that one and then we'll move on to the next village."

They pause, sip some water, then pick up their sacks of cassettes and literature and trudge off. Israel's Golan Heights swelter under cloudless skies; cloudless except for the day the team prays for rain and God obliges by sending a downpour that even locals say is

unusual for this time of year.

About 30,000 Druze live in the four villages they visit. The team, composed mostly of high school seniors and college freshmen, delivers Christian materials to a high percentage of the households.

For most of these young people, this is their first trip outside the United States. Often they are invited into homes for juice or freshly picked cherries.

During the week, one man prays to receive Christ as Savior after the tape and materials the team leaves.

Local Christian workers among the Druze are delighted with the warm response the Warren team gets and comment that the Druze are more responsive to the gospel than ever before.

"Never have I seen them so hungry,"

one of the workers says. They plan extensive follow-up visits and discussions with the many Druze who express interest in the Christian message during the team's week-long visit.

Prayer is a vital part of the Golan Heights project. More than 1,000 people support it with prayer.

"God has really impressed on each of us how important prayer is," says Chuck Gordon, project leader and minister of students at Warren Baptist Church.

The church prayed for months before adopting the project. Once they did, each member of the team recruited 50 prayer supporters for it. And the team spent their first day in Israel on a prayer walk through the villages in which they

□ See *Volunteers help share ...*, page 10

BAPTISTS

Baptist volunteers help Georgia tornado victims dig out

"You learn a lot about your prayer life when the walls and roof are coming apart all around you."

Tornado survivor Harris Malcolm, pastor of First Baptist Church, Camilla, Ga.

CAMILLA, Ga. (BP)—More than 200 Georgia Baptist volunteers are assisting in relief efforts after a series of tornadoes Feb. 14 that killed 22 people and injured more than 100 others.

Many of the deaths occurred in the town of Camilla, 200 miles south of Atlanta, where the Valentine's Day storms cut a five-mile path of destruction through a housing development two miles south of town.

Jim Richardson, director of the Georgia Baptist Convention's disaster relief team, said destruction in south Georgia is "very extensive."

Baptist volunteers from across the state set up a command post at First Baptist Church of Camilla, including groups to handle communications, clean-up, feeding and childcare. The church also is operating as a shelter for storm victims.

Camilla pastor Harris Malcolm and his family were among those directly impacted by the storm. They huddled together under a mattress as the tornado slammed into their home.

Their house was destroyed, but the pastor and his family escaped serious injuries. The homes of eight members of the congregation were heavily damaged and 20 other homes were moderately damaged.

"You learn a lot about your prayer life when the walls and roof are coming apart all around you," Malcolm said. "We know that the mattress didn't save us. We know that the roof in that hallway didn't save us. What ultimately saved us and protected us was the hand of God."

In nearby Cairo, Shannon Harrell, 28, and her eight-month-old daughter, Kylie Rae, were killed in the storm. Her husband Todd, a Royal Ambassador

leader at Pine Level Baptist Church, survived with minor injuries.

In neighboring Grady County, Macedonia Baptist Church sustained major structural damage. The storm blew away the front portion of the church. A spokesman for Grady Baptist Association said several church members living nearby were injured by flying debris. Authorities said five deaths were confirmed in the vicinity.

Joe Beechum, director of missions for Tucker Baptist Association, said the shock of what happened is being felt across the region. "This is enormous," he said. "You can't even get to the areas that are the hardest hit."

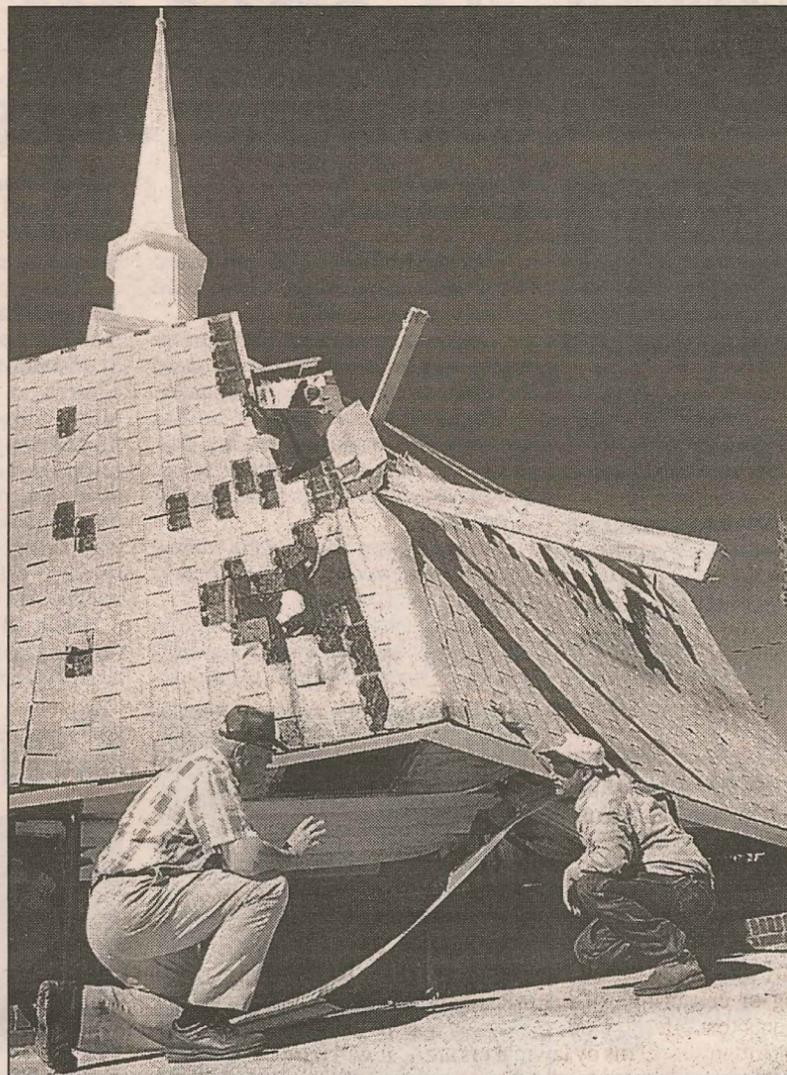
Richardson said Baptist volunteers are "working with the Department of Transportation and local utilities to cut away tree limbs and clear away debris."

"Southern Baptists are mobilizing all across the state," he said. "When it's all said and done we'll have more than 200 volunteers on the scene."

More disaster relief teams were scheduled to arrive, including a mass care feeding team. "We're here to lend a helping hand and help minister to people who've been affected by this storm," Richardson said. "That's what Baptists are all about, being there when someone needs help."

Ron McCaskill, pastor of First Baptist Church of Cairo, said the storm left behind extensive damage, but hope remains. "We are very grateful to be alive," he said. "The important thing is to live each day like it was your last day."

Acknowledging the difficulty of coping with the unexpected deaths of people of all ages, he added, "We have to put lives back together, bury the dead and find a way to begin again."



TORNADO DAMAGE Macedonia Baptist Church deacon Merrill Palmer (left) and pastor David Pickering inspect damage to the church sanctuary caused by a Valentine's Day tornado that hit Pelham, Ga. (BP photo by Joe Westbury)

European Baptist scholar urges dialogue between East and West

PRAGUE, Czech Republic (ABP)—Baptists in Europe remain divided between East and West but can learn from each other, said a German scholar at an international conference on theological education.

"Not only the East has to learn from the West, but also the West has to learn from the East," said Stefan Stiegler, chairman of the European Baptist Federation's Theological Assistance Group.

About 70 seminary leaders and teachers from 24 countries in Europe and the Middle East attended the conference at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague, Czech Republic.

Europe is in a process of unification, Stiegler said, but differences remain between East and West. Despite proclaiming to be "one in Christ," he added, such gaps also exist in Baptist life.

An obvious gap is education, Stiegler said. While many Baptists in Western Europe studied at prestigious schools, other Baptists under communism could not obtain theological education.

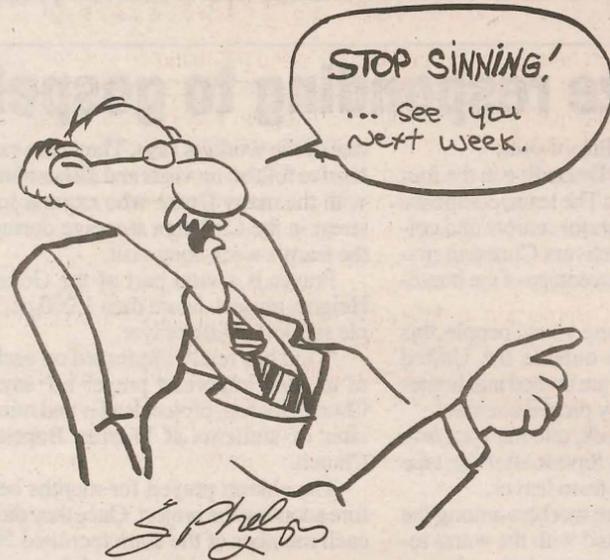
That doesn't mean Eastern churches lack theology, Stiegler said, describing what another scholar has labeled "survival theology."

A weakness in the Eastern Europe-

an mindset, however, is that education in communist schools concentrated on conformity and obedience. "Initiative was not only forbidden but dangerous," he said. "It will need two or more generations to overcome this shaping in the hearts of the Eastern people."

Western Baptists also were shaped by their culture, he added, suggesting a preoccupation with "money and advertisement" distorts the gospel message.

COUNSELING FOR THOSE WITH SHORT ATTENTION SPANS



BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Kruschwitz accepts Baylor post.** Robert Kruschwitz, chairman of the philosophy department at Georgetown College, has been named director of Baylor University's Center for Christian Ethics effective June 1. The Center for Christian Ethics was chartered in 1990. It has been related to Baylor since 1997, when it moved its main office to the campus in Waco, Texas. Kruschwitz, 46, a native of Kentucky, has taught at Georgetown College since 1978. He is a graduate of Georgetown and the University of Texas at Austin.

■ **Yancey to address educators.** Christian author Phillip Yancey will be among the featured speakers at the 2000 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Associa-

tion. The event will be held March 31-April 1 at First Baptist Church of Nashville. Yancey will discuss Jesus and His leadership style in a session titled, "Leadership with a Design." German author Christian Schwarz, another featured speaker, will discuss "Natural Church Development." For registration information, write to SBREA at Box 330369, Fort Worth, TX 76163-0369.

■ **Florida megachurch pastor dies.** Homer Lindsay Jr., the pastor of the nation's second-largest Southern Baptist church, died Feb. 13, nine days after being diagnosed with lymphoma. Lindsay, 72, was pastor of the 26,000-member First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., for 31 years. He shared that role with co-pastor Jerry Vines, a

former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, the last 17 years. The church recorded 860 baptisms last year. Lindsay recently had announced retirement plans.

■ **SBC childcare available.** Registration is being accepted for on-site childcare for preschool children of messengers to the 2000 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. This year's annual meeting will be June 13-14 in Orlando. Registration material is available by writing to SBC Preschool Childcare, Janine Pflibsen, 1022 South Orange Blossom Trail, Apopka, FL 32712. Childcare registration will be confirmed on a first-come, first-served basis. The cost of childcare services is \$5 per child per session.

Senate action affirms Ten Commandments

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

FRANKFORT—Seeking to avoid the legal pitfalls of past legislation, a resolution affirming the Ten Commandments was approved last week in the Kentucky Senate.

An amended version of Senate Joint Resolution 57, sponsored by Sen. Albert Robinson (R-Dist. 21), passed Feb. 15 by a vote of 37-1 after two hours of debate.

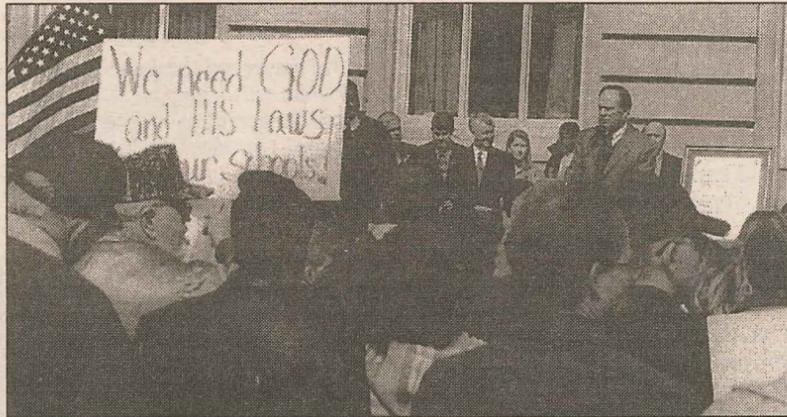
The measure faces an uncertain future in the House of Representatives where Floor Majority Leader Greg Stumbo (D-Dist. 95) said, "We won't be in any hurry to move it."

SJR 57 calls on the Kentucky Department of Education to encourage teachers and school administrators to implement a 1992 Kentucky law protecting religious liberty for students in public schools. That statute (KRS 158.195) declares, "There shall be no content-based censorship of American history or heritage in the Commonwealth based on religious references" in such documents as the Declaration of Independence, the Mayflower Compact and the national anthem.

The Senate resolution specifically cites the Ten Commandments as a document public school teachers can post and teach from as part of "historic displays of original documents reflecting American history." The measure also seeks to halt the "suppressing or censoring" of historic documents that refer to God.

Among concerns by lawmakers are recent lawsuits filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky against Harlan County school district as well as McCreary and Pulaski counties. The suits accuse those entities of violating the Constitution by posting the Ten Commandments in schools and other public facilities.

Robinson said the current resolution is "a softer approach" than a previous Kentucky law struck down 20 years ago by the U.S. Supreme Court. That law required schools to post the Ten Commandments rather than leaving the choice to local school administrators and teachers. The Supreme Court ruled in 1980 that the more stringent law violated the First Amendment's establishment clause.



RALLY Former Gov. Brereton Jones speaks at a rally affirming the role of the Ten Commandments. The event was held Feb. 15 outside the state Capitol.

During Senate debate, Sen. Tim Shaughnessy (D-Dist. 19) called for the resolution's references to Christianity to be changed to Judeo-Christianity. Despite objections from Robinson, the amendment passed 29-9 before the full measure was adopted with only one negative vote.

"Whether you call yourself Christian or Judeo-Christian, you're still in the Christian category," Robinson said, "I just wanted to say where we were in terms of our historical documents and that is Christian. Let's remember from whence we came."

Even with the amendment, Robinson described the Senate action as "a major victory."

"In the House, I would take it the way it is and be glad to get it through," he said. "If they let it out to the floor, it will pass."

Citing opposition he has received on the issue, Robinson said, "I will take the heat. I'd rather have God's approval than others'. My goal is to put God back in His rightful place."

Prior to the Senate vote, Robinson addressed hundreds of Ten Commandments supporters at a rally on the steps of the state Capitol. "Let's hope and trust that God's will will be done," he said. "While I'm in there voting and the others are voting, pray, pray, pray."

Describing the issue as "a battle between good and evil," fellow Sen. Jack Westwood (R-Dist. 23) said, "I look forward to casting a vote for righteousness."

Former Gov. Brereton Jones told

the crowd, "It's time for every single one of us to stand up for our beliefs."

Although "no one has the right to promote one religion over another religion in our schools," he said, "We must teach our true and factual history exactly as it happened."

Keynote speaker Billy Epperhart, a pastor from Littleton, Colo., conducted funeral services for four of the shooting victims from last year's shooting rampage at Columbine High School.

Urging Kentucky legislators and citizens to "unashamedly stand for what we know to be true," Epperhart said, "We've got to have some people who are willing to stand on the side of right or we're going to see Columbine repeated over and over and over again."

"What we're facing in this nation is a crisis of godlessness," he said. "We need to bring God back into the schoolroom."

Herschel Walker, pastor of Hopewell Missionary Baptist Church in Corbin, is among outspoken supporters of posting the Ten Commandments in public schools.

"You cannot deny history," Walker insisted. "A nation that does not know what it was yesterday does not know what it is today."

"What's wrong with teaching our children thou shalt not kill? What's wrong with teaching our children thou shalt not steal?" he asked. "Let's untie the hands of our teachers and let them teach morality. What's wrong with that?"

Blood drives & fun runs added to honor Cooperative Program

LOUISVILLE—Regional blood drives and fun runs are being added to the 75th anniversary celebration of the Cooperative Program in Kentucky as planners look for ways to promote the giving plan among younger Baptists.

Regional blood drives will be hosted in at least 25 cities in mid-September, said Robert Reeves, director of communications for the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

"If we have a successful blood drive in all of these cities, we will have covered the breadth of Kentucky pretty well," Reeves said.

The timing coincides with the Labor Day weekend, a time when blood supplies traditionally are low, Reeves added. "This will be an opportunity for the people of Kentucky to hear about Baptists in a very positive way as we use our celebration to meet an important need in the communities."

Termed Operation Cooperation, the regional events will be organized by local churches. Area committees also are being asked to organize fun runs. One proposal is to offer runners T-shirts that promote local Baptist ministries.

The blood drives and runs are part of an effort to spark more excitement among younger Baptists for the unified plan for funding missions and ministries by Southern Baptists. Those who have studied the different generations in America say that the World War II generation generally gives to institutions, but more recent generations prefer to fund causes or activities where they can be personally involved.

Each Kentucky Baptist church has been sent a package of information, encouraging them to have individual celebrations of the Cooperative Program's 75th anniversary during 2000. The mailing includes a resource packet, posters, material samples and an order form for videos and free materials.

"The materials can be used to help older people reinforce their belief in the Cooperative Program and help younger people understand that it is the lifeline of missions, education and ministry," said James Jones, pastor of Campbellsville Baptist Church and chairman of the convention's 75th Anniversary Committee.

The Cooperative Program, started in 1925, funds the missions efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention. It supports the work of more than 9,300 national and international missionaries; six seminaries; local, state and national agencies; and other Southern Baptist causes.

In addition to celebrations in local churches and regional events, the KBC annual meeting in November will mark the anniversary. The theme for the meeting will be the same for the anniversary celebration, "Partners in the Harvest."

The meeting in Bowling Green, Nov. 14-15, also will include a celebration during the Tuesday evening session.

From reporting by News Director David Winfrey and KBC communications department intern Jackie Bishop

Gambling & alcohol among measures considered by state legislature

FRANKFORT—Alcohol and gambling remain among hundreds of issues still under consideration by Kentucky's legislature.

With just over five weeks left in the current legislative session, more than 1,000 measures have been filed in the Kentucky House of Representatives and Senate.

Two bills seeking to expand alcohol sales in the state are nearing passage in each house. Senate Bill 39, sponsored by Sen. Tom Buford (R-Dist. 22), would allow a local-option vote on permitting liquor licenses at qualified 9- and 18-hole golf courses.

The proposal, touted as an effort to promote economic development, passed the Senate by a vote of 27-9-1 and is

nearing a final vote in the House. The measure reportedly would affect 16 counties.

Expressing concern about the tactics of alcohol promoters, Claude Witt said legislators are "writing these alcohol bills very tight in order to get them through."

Witt, executive director of the Temperance League of Kentucky, has been monitoring the legislation throughout the current session. He said the bill could be a starting point for seeking liquor votes at other resort settings across the state.

House Bill 463, sponsored by Rep. Jim Callahan (D-Dist. 67), also takes a narrow approach to expanded liquor sales. It would allow liquor sales at automobile race tracks with a seating capacity of at least

30,000. The new 65,000-seat Kentucky Speedway in Gallatin County is the only race track in the state that would qualify.

"It's a very unique type of bill because it affects only one special-interest race track in the entire state," Witt pointed out. The bill passed the House 66-25 and is awaiting final Senate action.

On the gambling front, a measure to prohibit the Kentucky Lottery Commission "from approving or using games involving video lottery terminals or similar devices without specific legislative authorization" gained the approval of the Senate Licensing and Occupations Committee. The Senate committee also adopted an amendment clarifying that the prohibition against video gambling includes

"interactive" video gambling.

Those developments are a significant change from concerns last year that video lottery terminals and other gambling proposals might gain legislative approval this year. With a March 1 deadline for filing new bills this session, no gambling expansion measures have been introduced.

Citizens Against Gambling Expansion, an interdenominational anti-gambling coalition, has worked throughout the session to mobilize statewide opposition to expanded gambling. CAGE moderator Nancy Jo Kemper told supporters last month, "We will not relax nor reduce our crusade until this session has concluded."

To contact a legislator concerning these or other issues, call (502) 564-8100.

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

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Confronting the danger of singing

By Tom Ehrich

Please write about "the joy of singing," requests a church musician. He leads music in a congregation that refuses to sing. They have a long history of "the choir doing all the singing," he explains. "The general church member has no idea what the 'joy of singing' is all about."

He isn't the first minister of music to lament silence in the pews. How can they not sing, mystified song leaders wonder. How can they be surrounded by the joy of sound and not want to join in?

My view is that some simply cannot sing and are embarrassed; some think hymns are an unnecessary intrusion on a private worship experience; some think music is best done by experts; and some—probably fewer than we think—take the haughty attitude that singing is beneath them.

It seems to me the issue isn't the joy of singing, but the danger of singing.

Singing does expose inadequacy. This is a fundamental issue for those who seek God. Many hesitate to offer

their ministries to God because they feel untrained or outshone. Many feel unworthy to make a sound in God's presence. Silence is a hiding place—from a tuneless soul, as well as from a tuneless voice.

The danger of singing is that, yes, it would expose one's inadequacy, but even worse, it would reveal God as One who doesn't measure adequacy. Where would we hide then? If we cannot earn God's favor, then how do we deal with a lifetime spent trying to earn favor? Whose favor did we want? Why did we think their favor mattered?

A second danger in singing is losing control. I don't mean dancing on the pew, although that would be an interesting sight in some churches. I mean a more basic loss of control, namely, if we sing, then part of us is out there, beyond our wall, beyond our safety zone.

When we sing, we say words we normally don't say—words like "gladness," "shame," "holy." We give voice to needs—"Just as I am without one plea," "that saved a wretch like me," "hopes and fears of all the years"—we

spend our lives trying to stifle.

It isn't that we are too stiff to bend the knee before Jesus, but that we cannot bear any awareness of needing to bend.

As in prayer and speaking, we don't know what will come out if we open our lips. The aching in our hearts might be revealed. Our anger and hatred might be exposed. Our sins might be known. They might smell the self-loathing on our breath. Better to stay silent.

And yet some congregations do sing. When the music starts, they leap to their feet. Some hold hymnbooks, some follow words on a large screen. Some attempt harmony, some barely cling to the melody. The issue isn't technique. What makes the difference, I think, is that they are the broken. They know their need of God. They simply must sing to the God of all hope.

Imagine: The music minister bids the choir to cease and gently asks the congregation, "Friends, what are you afraid of? What pain stills the song God has planted in your hearts? What emptiness do you fill with pride? Come, let us weep together, for the joy of singing starts in a baptism of tears."

Tom Ehrich is a free-lance writer and computer consultant in Durham, N.C.

COMMENTARY

Diluted worship

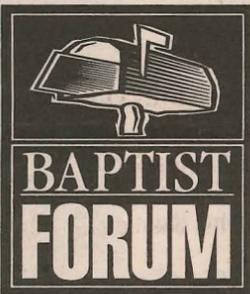
In the Feb. 8 Western Recorder article by Tim Ellsworth denoting further changes within the school of church music at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, one can see that the ongoing diluting of worship within Southern Baptist churches will be hastened by graduates.

The new "praise and worship" concept can hardly be seen as any serious attempt to prepare leaders for worship. The idea that an academic degree would be offered or even considered by any reputable educational es-

tablishment is laughable.

Southern Seminary, long a pillar of theological affirmation and music excellence, has become nothing more than a pretender within the educational arena. To award a degree to praise leaders, in the name of educational excellence, is to newly define oxymoron. How much instruction is needed to be a praise cheerleader? It requires little musical ability, little sensitivity and no background of church history, dogma or music as an art form.

Edward Clark
Danville



End death penalty

I wish I could ask every governor, state legislator, Supreme Court Justice, presidential candidate, member of Congress and voter the following question: Would you be in favor of the death penalty if your child or spouse were found guilty of a capital crime?

When considering the death penalty, I wonder how many politicians who say they are followers of Christ ask the WWJD question, "What would Jesus do?" The death penalty is barbaric, has been proven to be no deterrent and should be abolished in our country. For capital offenses, I favor life in prison with no possibility of parole.

Paul Whiteley Sr.
Louisville

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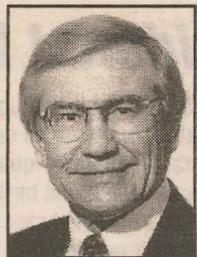
Spending Sunday on the road

For me, Sunday, Feb. 13, started in Madisonville and ended in Winchester. It was a busy day but a joyous one as I got to participate in worship at two dynamic Kentucky Baptist congregations in times of leadership transition.

Harold Meers, transitional pastor at First Baptist Church of Madisonville, invited me to preach in both morning worship services. Due to major renovations being made to the sanctuary, two services are conducted in the church's activities center. Both worship services were meaningful and I was privileged to present a special recognition to the church family for their faithful support of missions through the Cooperative Program.

Harold, a retired pastor, has been called by God to assist churches in leadership transition. The church is grateful for his outstanding leadership. Please pray for this congregation as members search for the pastor God has selected to lead them into the future.

After lunch, Kay and I drove to Winchester for the installation of the new pastor at Central Baptist Church. The church has been served well during the interim by the outstanding preaching of Hershael York, who teaches preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.



Bill Mackey

The new pastor is Art Beasley who has been pastor of St. George Baptist Church in Orangeburg, S.C., for 12 years. Art has served as an associate pastor and as a frequent speaker at youth events. Art and his wife, Sandy, have four daughters and one son. He comes to a strong missions church, having participated in numerous missions trips himself.

Central Baptist is located in spacious facilities, which currently are being used by a school while its new facilities are being completed. The church has a strong educational and missions ministry. Through the years Sunday school attendance has been strong and missions support and involvement have been excellent.

I challenged the new pastor to:

- Discover God's vision for the church.
- Exercise courageous faith.
- Be a leader with integrity.
- Equip and deploy the people for ministry.
- The people were challenged to:
 - Realign fellowship groups in order to assimilate new people effectively.
 - Protect the pastor's time with God and the Word.
 - Pray for their pastor and his family, and for one another.
 - Prepare for praise and worship through personal Bible study and prayer.
 - Walk closely with Jesus every day.
 - Believe that God will bless their ministry.

One of the delights of visiting Central Baptist Church was to say thank you to Gretna Miller again. She and her husband, Truett Miller, now deceased, took Kay and me into their family when I served as Truett's associate in Middleboro after seminary. Thank God for mentors who assist us in the journey.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

GIVING

Deferred gift annuities: give now, gain later

By Laurie Valentine

Making charitable gifts during your lifetime doesn't have to be a "now or never" proposition.



Deferred charitable gift annuities are a giving option in which you make a gift now, but

don't begin to receive income until some time in the future.

These "life income" gift plans provide benefits to the donor as well as valuable support to the causes that receive the gifts. The donor benefits include a charitable income tax deduction equal to the value of the charity's interest in the gift as well as potential for an increase in your income if the property you gift is earning only certificate of deposit interest rates or dividends.

A deferred charitable gift annuity is an agreement between you and a qualified charity in which you agree to make a gift of cash or appreciated assets such as stock. In exchange for your gift, the charity agrees to pay you a fixed annual amount for life. The annual payments to you can't start for at least one year after you make the gift.

A deferred gift annuity can be the answer for the soon-to-be retiring 64-year-old who expects a good cash flow from various sources for the next six years at which point his or her income will diminish. The individual can make a gift now to establish the deferred gift annuity and provide for annuity payments to begin at age 70 when the extra income will be needed.

Deferred gift annuities also can be a source of supplemental retirement income.

Sam, age 50, already is contributing the maximum amount allowable to his 401(k) retirement plan. He wants to accumulate more for his retirement years and would like to accomplish his objective on a tax-favored basis.

Sam can establish a deferred charitable gift annuity in 2000 that will not begin to make payments to him until 2015 when he is age 65. Sam has no income until he begins to receive the annuity payments, but he can take an income tax deduction in 2000, the year he makes the gift.

Deferred charitable gift annuities offer the opportunity to give now and receive later.

Laurie Valentine is trust counsel for the Kentucky Baptist Foundation

Intentional family rituals can help ease tension, build unity

Q: My sister and I worry about family unity. As our parents get older, we sense a great deal of family tension across the generations. The tension is not at a conflict or hostility level. What can we do?

Pastoral counseling is available if the issues involve brokenness. If there is a lack of connectedness among family members, building intergenerational family rituals may be helpful. By connectedness, I mean the family members have grown apart from each other and need reconnecting. A pastoral counselor can help make this assessment.

In today's society, even in Christian families, lack of connectedness is a major problem. Most people are not intentional about maintaining their awareness and concern for each other. Life is so busy that the time for doing relationship building is limited or non-existent.

The idea of establishing intentional family rituals is not a new concept. However, before this can be accomplished, many families need to tame their televisions and computers.

Intentional families plan what they want for their families, and to attain those ends, they develop intergenerational rituals and activities. Many families feel they are too busy to spend time with each other. Yet there are some very natural occasions for these kinds of times. Celebrating birthdays, graduations, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day and Father's Day help people feel loved and important to the family. Consider the church calendar and find many times for family rituals. From these events build family tradition.

Your concern for your family is a situation faced by many other families. The power and strength of families who incorporate rituals into their daily lives include stronger cohesion, more time spent together, more richness in their interactions and more loving relationships. Take heart in knowing your efforts to help your family reconnect their love for each other is of vital importance.—*Jon Rainbow*

Q: When should I seek counseling for my child?

When a child gets sick or doesn't feel well, most parents know when to play doctor and when to call one. In the same way, parents usually are able to tell when reinforcements are needed to help children cope with special challenges.

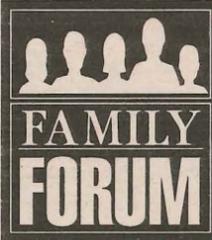
The better you know your child, the easier it will be to notice when things are not normal. Mounting behavior problems, a loss of concentration, struggles with school, constant conflict in relationships at home, a loss of appetite and a listless mood may signal a child's need for help in sorting out his or her feelings. Be alert to situations at school or church, problems with friends, grief or anger that doesn't run its course, as well as other hurts that time doesn't heal.

Talk with others who spend time with your child and know him or her well. These might include a minister or teacher at church, the parents of one of your child's best friends, a relative or a schoolteacher. See if they have noticed the same behaviors and attitudes you have.

As you try to decide whether to seek professional help, the simple question, "Would you like to talk with someone about what's bothering you?" will sometimes tell you all you need to know.

Don't feel like a failure if you feel the need to call for help. As James Dobson says, parenting is not for cowards. It often takes great courage to confront problems before they get worse. As you pray, be specific in asking God to help you know how to make things better for your child.—*David Garrard*

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; Jon Rainbow, a clinical gerontologist and professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and Wade Rowatt, director of the St. Matthews Pastoral Counseling Center in Louisville. Send questions for Family Forum to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail us at wesrec@ntr.net.



Integrity combats bumper sticker mentality

As I was sitting in traffic, the bumper sticker on the car in front of me caught my attention. "God, protect me..." it began. As I eased closer, I discovered the full message read: "God, protect me... from your followers."

Ouch! Of course, my first reaction was to dismiss it as a cynical jab at overzealous televangelists or end-of-the-world doomsayers. On second thought, I realized the sticker held more truth than most of us care to admit. The fact is the attitudes and actions of many Christians tend to push people away from Jesus rather than draw them to Him.

How can we make sure our words and deeds produce a positive impact for the cause of Christ among the people we encounter each day? The obvious starting point is to reflect the virtues of faith, hope and love found in 1 Corinthians 13:13. Allow the Holy Spirit to blend in such God-honoring fruit as joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23.

Step by spiritual step, we have the potential to move far beyond bumper sticker accusations to achieve an effective Christian witness. Yet even amid such admirable traits, there remains at least one other essential ingredient: integrity. In a society obsessed with a me-first mentality, it is vitally important that Christians be people of impeccable integrity.

We all are familiar with people who have earned a lifelong reputation for integrity. Evangelist Billy Graham immediately comes to mind.

Anecdotes about "Peanuts" creator Charles Schulz suggest he also lived a life of integrity. From hapless Charlie Brown to philosophical Linus, his characters frequently interjected theological musings into their observations of life. Schulz reportedly took a stand for his faith during the 1965 production of "A Charlie Brown Christmas," insisting that Linus be allowed to recite the entire Christmas story from Luke 2. If a

cartoonist can use his professional platform as an outlet for his faith journey, surely we can do the same in our day-to-day lives.

Sadly, however, just as we can name fellow Christians who have set examples of faithful integrity, we just as easily can list individuals who have forfeited integrity. Whether it's Christian politicians who carelessly compromise their convictions or church leaders who fudge on baptism and attendance figures, integrity is a fragile virtue that can be quickly shattered.

While it's easy to point out those who violate their integrity with "big" sins, it's important to remember our own integrity is on trial every day—even in the seemingly insignificant choices of life. Just ask the guy with the bumper sticker.

"Judge me, O Lord, for I have walked in my integrity; and I have trusted in the Lord without wavering," King David declared in Psalm 26:1. Are we willing to say the same thing to God today? Do we dare invite God

to judge our lives using our personal integrity as the measuring rod?

In Matthew 5:37, Jesus was emphatic about the importance of speaking with integrity. "Let your statement be, 'Yes, yes' or 'No, no,'" He instructed. "Anything beyond these is of evil."

It's been said that wisdom is knowing the best thing to do and integrity is actually doing it. In a world filled with antagonistic bumper stickers and apprehensive people, it's imperative that Christians be known as men and women of unwavering integrity.

How can we accomplish that lofty goal? We must be willing to set our personal standards higher than those who will do virtually anything to get ahead. We must carefully guard our Christian integrity as a cherished possession.

Above all, we must continually seek God's help to mature into people of sincere faith, hope and love—generously seasoned with steadfast integrity.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Where is Christian music headed?

By Larnelle Harris

"Sing for joy to God our strength; shout aloud to the God of Jacob! Begin the music, strike the tambourine, play the melodious harp and lyre. Sound the ram's horn at the new moon, and when the moon is full, on the day of our feast; this is a decree for Israel, an ordinance of the God of Jacob" (Psalms 81:1-4).

Where is Christian music going? I sometimes consider what my financial status would be had I received a dime for each time I've been asked that question. The question of Christian music's journey seems to be an ongoing query.

As I searched the Word in my own personal study of this issue, I came upon Psalms 81. The celebration of the Sabbath, new moons and other appointed feasts were events of grand magnitude as spelled out in the law of the Lord. Theologian Matthew Henry calls on us to pursue the same emphasis whenever the people of God come together. "Our errand is to give unto God the glory due unto His name, and in all our religious

assemblies we must mind this as our business," Henry wrote.

I don't know if those few verses will stir your heart as they are stirring mine at this moment. All up and down my arms the hair stands; whatever happens physiologically before tears of excitement and joy have been activated. I sit here waiting and expecting something marvelous and wonderful to start. And it has. It's worship.

There can be no mistake, whatever your personal musical tastes, of the intention of the music in this passage. It is used to bring about a yearning so deep into the reaches of one's own being that the soul comes nigh to bursting. It's used to help the worshipper summon the individual gift and talent in every muscle and tendon to exuberant praise. It is to cause the body to groan and strain until finally, in perfect union with the heart, mind and spirit, the vocal chords become so overwhelmed that they involuntarily shout aloud in thanksgiving to the God of Jacob.

Just think, this is only one passage of all the many in Scripture that call us

to praise the Lord with joyful music and singing in preparation to hear God's word. I am thankful that these scriptures are spread throughout the Bible.

Skillfully played instruments and songs are used as a few soulful chords to bring the congregation together. It would seem that the gatherings of Israel's children needed then what we need now: a corporate understanding of the business at hand; a release from the attentions and distractions of the world; a way to do together the most difficult thing that humankind attempts—unobstructed focus on God the Father and Provider.

Where is Christian music going? I have no idea. I don't know anyone who does. Yet let us hear music that helps us respond with awe, devotion and commitment to our Lord. And yes, that will be different for each of us.

So, I cannot say with any assurance where Christian music is headed. However, there are cues in God's Word that help me personally understand that as His music journeys on, there are destinations where it is not likely to arrive.



Larnelle Harris, a Grammy Award-winning Christian vocalist, is a member of Maple Grove Baptist Church in Louisville

RESOURCES

Counselor: Everyone is an occasional pain in the neck

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

CEDARMORE—Dealing with difficult people can be eased by recognizing that, at times, everyone irritates someone else, said a former pastoral counselor and hospital chaplain.

David Stancil, associate pastor of St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, said it is appropriate for problems to exist in churches. Jesus told the Pharisees He didn't come to reach those who are healthy, Stancil noted.

In a workshop on stress with difficult people, he said relationships in the church suffer conflict from such factors as differing perspectives, motivations and personal preferences.

"I don't think anybody gets up in the morning and says, 'I'm going to be difficult,'" Stancil said. "Everything we do has a purpose. We're trying to accomplish things that meet our needs."

The two fundamental hungers in each person's heart are a life that matters, which gives people a sense of significance; and relationships that last, which provides community, he said.

Whether inconsiderate, abusive, irrational, hostile or adversarial, Stancil said difficult behavior stems from individuals not understanding how to achieve what they want.

"For whatever reason, they don't

have the tools or understanding to get where they want to go," he said. "If you listen, you can hear them talk about loneliness, isolation and rejection. They're wounded. Out of our brokenness, we hurt each other."

It takes effort to break down the barriers that isolate difficult people, he added. Only by showing care for them can one earn the right to speak words that may help them see their shortcomings, he said.

Formerly a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Stancil recalled a pastoral student who had few interpersonal skills. He was rude, wouldn't listen, constantly interrupted and failed to pay attention to others' body language.

After one encounter, Stancil wrote a list of 14 things the man did (or failed to do) during their conversation. Later, Stancil took the man aside and explained the drawbacks of his habits.

Although cautioning him a couple more times in the ensuing year, Stancil gradually built up enough credibility so the student would listen to him.

"Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, 'True Christian community is found when the person you least want to be with always is around,'" Stancil commented. "The place to start is with me. It's easy to say (someone else) is the problem, when (that person) is saying that I'm the problem."

Christians & STRESS

- 10 leading causes of stress**
- In order:
- 1 Death of a spouse
 - 2 Divorce
 - 3 Marital separation
 - 4 Jail term
 - 5 Close family member's death
 - 6 Personal injury, illness
 - 7 Marriage
 - 8 Fired from work
 - 9 Marital reconciliation
 - 10 Retirement

Source: *Holmes Stress Scale*, developed by psychiatrist Thomas Holmes and colleagues at the University of Washington

Healthy stress: Making good choices

Here are a list of qualities or activities that help reduce stress, as outlined by Pastor Chris White in his presentation on stress and leadership:

- Good genetics.
- Sense of humor.
- Proper diet.
- Alternate stress, meaning exercise. "We know that diet and exercise go a long way" in reducing stress, White said, "but not how far. If I'm not eating well and not exercising, I feel it. It affects my spiritual life."
- Set realistic goals. Willow

Creek Community Church outside Chicago has become a model for many pastors, but few churches are going to attract 16,000 worshippers each week, he noted.

- Understanding the effects of stress. Knowing about stress can help a person reduce it, he said.
- Relaxation and sleep.
- Thorough job preparation.
- Financial security. This doesn't mean being rich, but having control of one's spending habits, he said.
- A stable home.

Source: *The Joy of Stress* by Dr. Peter Hanson

Despite the inevitability of relational tensions, he pointed out that the Bible also criticizes murmuring, grumbling and secretly complaining about others. With gentleness and humility, church members must find ways to respectfully relate to each other, he said.

He termed Matthew 18:15-20 "The Rule of Christ," saying that if more people followed this outline for resolving disputes the church would be in much better shape.

"When He said to take two or three with you (if a one-on-one meeting fails), it's a reality check on me," Stancil said. "It's to see if I'm at fault."

He also outlined a four-step process to help build Christian community:

■ *Pray.* Pray to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit, that God will provide a heart of compassion and zeal for the lost, and for a whole-hearted yielding to the Lord.

■ *Guard the tongue.* One social organization has a three-pronged test to follow before speaking, he said: Is it true, kind and necessary? "I think Paul would agree with that."

■ *Achieve a clear spirit.* Matthew 5:9 and 23-24 also spell out rules for reconciling problems with others. Don't allow a root of bitterness to grow in your heart, Stancil advised.

■ *Be trustworthy.* For church leaders, this includes knowing and following both the letter and the spirit of the church's bylaws and working to build trust with the congregation.

Speakers: Jesus models Christian response to stress

Continued from page 1

must learn to live with it," her husband recalled. "Her strength was strong because of her confidence in God's grace. We had to learn to live with stress and with the fear, anger and frustration of a disease that wouldn't go away."

"Our spiritual strength was challenged and tested, yet we chose to live in God's grace," he said. "Experiencing peace in the stress of today will not be found in an absence of distress, but in a relationship with Jesus Christ."

Some people try to pretend stress doesn't exist, or wrap the string of pressure tighter around their emotional box, said Chris White, pastor of First Baptist Church of Carrollton.

But stress has consequences that can't be outworked or escaped, said White, who led a workshop on stress and leadership.

He told of recently recognizing his own workaholic tendencies and said he must make changes to avoid health problems, including heart attack. Everyone must face the fact that there are deeper issues in life than hard work and certain forces they can't control, he added.

"Doctors believe 70 percent of diseases are stress related," he said. "We're living longer but maybe not as well. We have days and times when it feels like a tiger has jumped on our back."

There are positive choices that can help counteract the stress of church and life, White said. Among them are adequate rest, a good diet and exercise, a sense of humor and a stable home.

"Most of what we feel from stress isn't from outer forces," he said. "It comes from our core beliefs and conflicts with meeting (others')

expectations. The answer to stress comes from within. It can be stressful to go through the days Jesus did, but He was eating and drinking from a relationship with God."

Another way of dealing with life's demands is setting limits on personal behavior and expectations, said Nancy Miller, a marriage and family therapist from Louisville.

In a seminar on "Stress and Temptation," she told of creating problems for herself when she married a pastor and tried to live up to a set of ideals she imagined a pastor's wife should possess.

She said the most common stress-related problems Baptist pastors face are indulging in overeating, work or sex.

While the latter might shock some church members, she said one nationwide survey of pastors showed 23 percent had engaged in sexual misconduct. Another, of Southern Baptist pastors in six Southern states, revealed about 14 percent admitted to inappropriate sexual activity.

Miller cautioned that church leaders shouldn't expect human frailties to vanish with an ordination ceremony. Citing the writings of two well-known psychologists, she said Americans are especially prone to cross the line from healthy habits to addictions.

"When we say, 'It won't happen to me,' is when we become most vulnerable to temptation," she remarked.

The annual pastor-deacon-spouse retreat, sponsored by the Kentucky Baptist Convention's church growth team, attracted approximately 150 people. A retreat for West Kentucky residents will be held Feb. 25-26 at Jonathan Creek.

Aging members pose both challenges and opportunities for congregations

Continued from page 1

senior adult pastor on a staff, there are 48 youth pastors."

In many cases, Arn said, congregations' senior members are simply taken for granted. As a group, seniors are loyal to institutions, unlikely to move and generous with their financial contributions. Their children and grandchildren, generally, are less loyal, more transient and not as economically supportive of their congregations, he added.

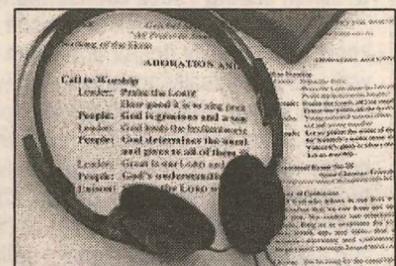
For those and other reasons, Arn said, religious communities often can be heard bemoaning the "aging of the church" and doing just about anything to capture elusive Boomers, Busters, Gen Xers and the teenagers and young children of Generation Y.

"One of the reasons that there may be greater attention given to the younger generations is the likelihood that without that attention, the younger generation will take off," Arn said.

Even so, he insists that congregations should be more mindful of their senior members, both in terms of services congregations need to provide as well as services older members might render.

"If they view seniors as basically requiring caretaking and attention and consumers of the church's resources, it's no wonder that they will do as little as possible," he said. Ageism in congregations, Arn said, prevents many churches from realizing the untapped potential of the older members.

Warren Wall, pastor of St. Ignatius



SENIOR AIDS Large-print bulletins and earphones are the kinds of services churches can provide to more fully include the elderly in the worship life of a congregation. (RNS photo)

Catholic Church in Mobile, said it's difficult to get people to shift their attention to the needs of older members. "They're sort of the hidden members."

Not until younger members recognize the growth explosion among older adults—and their own nearness to the "golden years"—will individuals begin to respond to seniors' needs, Wall said. Until then, he said, "It's like they have their heads buried in the sand."

Arn, a church growth consultant, said he hopes congregations would be motivated to respond to the ballooning senior population for theological reasons rather than demographic ones.

"Ideally, the motivation is a realization that God loves seniors as much as he does Boomers or Busters," he said. "If there's any motivation for saving souls, there's a certain degree of urgency that should be there for older adults."

Christian groups declare war on poverty

By Adelle Banks
Religion News Service

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A wide array of Christian leaders stood in front of the U.S. Capitol last week to call on political candidates and the nation's religious and secular sectors to make eradicating poverty a top agenda item.

Liberal, moderate and conservative Christians were among those gathered to urge agreement to a "Covenant to Overcome Poverty" and call for partnerships with political, business, labor and philanthropic leaders to reduce the numbers of poor people.

"The persistence of widespread poverty in our midst is morally unacceptable," the covenant reads. "Just as some of our religious forebears decided to no longer accept slavery or segregation, we decide to no longer accept poverty and its disproportionate impact on people of color."

The covenant was announced at the conclusion of the annual summit of Call to Renewal, an alliance of religious organizations working to overcome poverty and racism. Religious leaders who took turns at the microphone on the east steps of the Capitol expressed their simultaneous concern for the poor and the hope their unity

would help those most in need.

"In a time of record prosperity, the poor are being left behind but the churches are being drawn together," said Jim Wallis, who convened Call to Renewal. "I believe we are on the verge, on the edge of a movement for economic justice led in large part by people of faith."

Wallis was joined by other speakers who represented the breadth of Christianity, including officials of the National Association of Evangelicals, the National Council of Churches and the U.S. Catholic Conference as well as faith-based organizations that have long worked with the poor.

"For evangelicals, there is no way that we can say we are committed to the authoritative word of God ... unless we are committed, I believe, to the cause of the poor," said Rich Cizik, vice president for governmental affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals. "I believe by the group standing here that the cold war among religious groups over the poor is over."

Mark Publow, vice president of domestic programs for the evangelical Christian relief organization World Vision, said he hoped the covenant would become a "mandate for personal involvement" by more American

churches in helping the poor.

Wallace Charles Smith, a Washington pastor and representative of the predominantly black Progressive National Baptist Convention, said "our voices will not remain silent" about those who are oppressed.

But even as they heralded their unity on the problem, the leaders said the religious community cannot be the sole entity addressing the ills of poverty. David Beckmann, president of Bread for the World, said the government must approve a "package of policies that makes it possible for every family in this country to have a livable income."

The covenant, initially affirmed by 57 individual leaders, calls for congregations and other organizations to place the needs of the poor as a high priority as they allocate their time and resources, promote economic opportunities and evaluate political candidates. It also calls for dismantling racist structures and organizing interracial and interdenominational efforts to overcome poverty.

The larger 10-year campaign to implement the covenant seeks new partnerships among governmental, business, labor, philanthropic and nonprofit sectors to achieve such goals as quality health care that is affordable, good education for all children, affordable and safe housing and a decent family income.

"Our principle is that people who work full time should not be poor," the group said in a statement.

House Speaker staying with Protestant chaplain candidate

WASHINGTON (RNS)—House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., buoyed by a talk with evangelist Billy Graham, continues to support Charles Wright as the candidate for House chaplain.

The support comes despite continuing criticism in Catholic circles that the Protestant Wright is favored over Catholic priest Timothy O'Brien.

Hastert spoke with Graham earlier this week and the speaker's spokesman said "it was a positive conversation that helped strengthen the speaker's resolve to have Dr. Wright appointed chaplain." But the spokesman stressed that Hastert did not feel any pressure from Graham on the issue.

Graham spokesman Larry Ross acknowledged the two men discussed the chaplain issue but said the evangelist chose not to immerse himself in the debate. "Mr. Graham said that he did not and could not take sides on this issue."

Prominent Catholics have voiced concern that the support of Wright over O'Brien by House leaders may reflect anti-Catholic bias.

O'Brien is a priest of the Milwaukee archdiocese but serves as director of the Marquette University Les Aspin Center for Government in Washington. Wright, a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) minister, is a retired pastor working in a specialized international ministry of the National Capital Presbytery.

The co-chairmen of the selection committee released a report in mid-January saying they did not rank the finalists for the position, but media reports have said the leaders still knew O'Brien was their top choice.

A House vote on the leadership's choice for chaplain has been delayed due to the controversy. Feehery said no vote has been scheduled in the House and the House is in recess until late February. The eventual successor to retiring House Chaplain James D. Ford, a Lutheran, will receive an annual salary of \$138,000.

OPERATION COOPERATION

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Your story will be used to encourage Kentucky Baptists to participate in **Operation Cooperation**, a state-wide blood drive planned for September as part of the Cooperative Program 75th anniversary celebration. Through Operation Cooperation, Kentucky Baptists will be encouraged to follow the example of Christ by donating blood so that others might be "made whole again."

To share your story, contact:



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Catholics, Baptists still largest in U.S.

NEW YORK (RNS)—The Roman Catholic Church, Southern Baptist Convention and United Methodist Church remain the nation's largest church bodies, reports the new edition of the Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches.

The volume, prepared annually by the National Council of Churches, reports on North American denominational and ecumenical bodies.

Eileen Lindner, editor of the yearbook, said there is "a more nuanced interpretation" of the various factors effecting changes in liberal and conservative church growth statistics.

"For the first time, the Southern Baptist Convention reports a loss rather than a gain in membership," she said. "The percentage of membership loss for

the convention is virtually identical to that of the Presbyterian Church (USA), raising increasing doubts about the adequacy of a conservative church growth as opposed to a progressive church decline scenario.

"On the other hand, a solid and consistent growth pattern continues to be reported by the Assemblies of God, a Pentecostal denomination often identified as a growing conservative communion."

The membership totals for the top three denominations are:

- Roman Catholic Church, 62 million.
- Southern Baptist Convention, 15.7 million.
- United Methodist Church, 8.4 million.

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Century21 Joe Guy Hagan



Proposal against gay marriage gets support from unlikely group

SAN FRANCISCO (BP)—A California ballot initiative that would define marriage has gained some unexpected support from a group of homosexual men and women.

"Gays for 22" announced their support of Proposition 22, the initiative to define valid marriages in California as being between a man and a woman.

Tom Beddingfield, a homosexual political consultant and "Gays for 22" coalition chairman, said the issue is about states' rights.

"It's not an anti-gay initiative," Beddingfield told the San Jose Mercury News. "California needs to be protected from other state judges redefining our law for us."

Proposition 22, if passed, would block the state from recognizing gay marriages performed in states that have legalized same-sex marriages.

No state permits same-sex unions, but the Vermont legislature is considering it after its state supreme court ruled that same-sex couples are entitled to the same benefits as married people.

"California isn't ready for gay marriage," Beddingfield said. "And we shouldn't let some other state legislature or judge tell us we should have it."

In other developments, The Field Poll released a poll showing that voters support Proposition 22 by a 52 percent to 39 percent margin. The poll showed Proposition 22 leading in all geographic regions except the San Francisco Bay area and was favored by both men and women and by all ethnic groups. The poll was based on responses from 7,775 likely voters.

Proposition 22 will be on the March 7 ballot.

Gay-rights activists vandalize churches

By Todd Starnes

TAMPA, Fla. (BP)—Tampa police have advised two Southern Baptist churches to increase security after they were vandalized by homosexual activists who also threatened to disrupt worship services, according to the pastor of one of the targeted churches.

A group calling itself the "Coalition to Convert Baptists" claimed responsibility for the vandalism at Seminole Heights Baptist Church and Idlewild Baptist Church.

The vandals used pink spray paint to mark the buildings with slogans and triangles. The same group also claimed to have planted a bomb in the Seminole Heights building on Sunday, Feb. 13.

"It could have been very bad," said Greg Floyd, Seminole Heights' pastor. "The police came and did a sweep of the building. Fortunately, they didn't find anything and we were able to have morning worship services."

Floyd said he has had several anonymous calls from homosexuals threatening to disrupt the church's worship services, and those calls have prompted the Tampa police department to caution the congregations.

"The police have asked us to step up our security. Tonight we've got a man coming to train our ushers on how to react if something happens during the service," Floyd said. "I guess you could say that we've become a focal point in

this issue."

The "issue" surrounds a Feb. 26 conference scheduled at neighboring Bell Shoals Baptist Church and sponsored by Focus on the Family. The conference focuses on homosexual issues facing youth and a recent advertising campaign featured the slogan, "Tired of being gay?" The graffiti that appeared at the two churches featured a similar slogan, "Are you tired of being Baptist?"

Police are still searching for suspects in the incidents.

Ironically, neither Seminole Heights nor Idlewild is the site of the conference. "We certainly support the conference, but we really don't have anything to do with the hosting of it," Floyd said. Bell

Shoals was not targeted.

Floyd said he believes that his church was targeted because of its visible location downtown. "You can see the graffiti from the interstate," he said. "One caller said that we were chosen because we have recently revamped our church."

Despite the vandalism, which was removed by church members, Floyd said he was proud of how his congregation responded. "Our people are trying to take the high road. We want to help homosexuals, and that is the message that came out in the local media," he said. "That's just part of what happens when you start reaching out to people."

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NATIONAL NOTES

■ **Ted Turner's at it again.** Atlanta media mogul Ted Turner recently took another swipe at religion. The Time Warner vice chairman, who once called Christianity a faith for "losers," was quoted last week by USA Today as denying the prospect of a religious savior. "Almost every religion talks about a savior coming. When you look in the mirror in the morning, when you're putting on your lipstick or shaving, you're looking at the savior," he said. "Nobody else is going to save you but yourself."

■ **Dobson opposes Bauer endorsement.** Gary Bauer's endorsement of Republican presidential candidate John McCain has resulted in a rebuke from James Dobson, a friend and fellow culture-war combatant on behalf of many conservative Christians. In a statement, the former president of Family Research Council said McCain has the best chance of "reversing the damaging years of the Clinton era." Dobson disagreed, noting several issues including McCain's failed first marriage and involvement in the Keating Five savings and loan scandal.

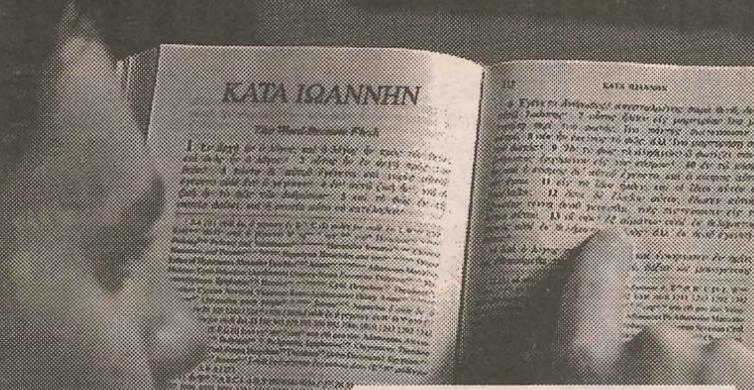
■ **Laws against gay discrimination favored.** Most Americans favor legislation opposing discrimination against gays, but most people responding to a recent poll remain opposed to same-sex marriage and adoption by gay couples. The nationwide Harris poll found 56 percent of those surveyed were in favor of expanding current laws banning discrimination based on race, age, disability, religion and gender to include gay men and lesbians. Also, 16 percent of those surveyed said they approved of legalizing marriage between two women. Adoption by gay couples was opposed strongly with 57 percent disapproving of adoption by male couples.

■ **Racist church court challenge rejected.** Claiming the law on which the suit was based is too vague, a judge has dismissed an effort by the Illinois attorney general challenging the status of the white supremacist World Church of the Creator as a charitable organization. Cook County Circuit Court Judge Julia Nowicki said this month that honoring Attorney General Jim Ryan's request to enforce the state's charitable solicitation law against the church—led by white supremacist Matt Hale—would harm freedom of speech.

■ **Judge halts 'Choose Life' plates.** A Florida judge has halted distribution of the state's new "Choose Life" license plates while she determines if they amount to a political statement against abortion. Circuit Judge Lucy Chernow Brown issued her decision this month after a suit was filed by the National Organization for Women. The manufacture of 10,000 of the "Choose Life" plates had begun when Brown's order was released. Proceeds from the sale of the plates would go to organizations aiding pregnant women who decide to put their babies up for adoption.

■ **Church arsons down again.** Church arsons have decreased for the third straight year after a jump in the arson rate in 1996, a task force studying the problem has reported. About 100 churches were burned or were the targets of attempted bombings in 1999, compared with nearly 300 in 1996, said the National Church Arson Task Force. During its three years of investigation, the committee has looked into more than 800 arsons, bombings or attempted bombings that occurred between January 1995 and October 1999, Associated Press reported.

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Endorsement could cost church tax-exempt status

WASHINGTON (RNS)—Americans United for Separation of Church and State has asked the Internal Revenue Service to investigate whether a prominent New York City church violated tax law by supporting Democratic candidate Al Gore for president.

Floyd Flake, pastor of Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church in Jamaica, in the borough of Queens, welcomed the vice president at a worship service at his church on Feb. 13.

"I don't do endorsements from across the pulpit because I never know who's out there watching the types of laws that govern separation of church and state," Flake, a former Democratic congressman, said according to news reports. "But I will say to you this morning and you read it well: This should be the next president of the United States."

Barry Lynn, executive director of Washington-based Americans United, wrote to the IRS about what he called "improper partisan political activity" at Flake's church.

"This statement indicates that Flake is aware of the provisions in the

Internal Revenue Code that bars houses of worship from endorsing or opposing candidates for public office but chose to ignore them," Lynn wrote. "Such a flagrant violation of the law cannot be ignored."

Lynn cited a portion of the Internal Revenue Code that bars churches and other nonprofit organizations from intervening in political campaigns for or against candidates.

"I urge you to conduct an investigation into the actions of Rev. Flake at Allen African Methodist Episcopal Church and take whatever steps you deem appropriate to make certain that this church obeys the law," Lynn wrote.

Flake could not immediately be reached for comment.

In 1995, the IRS revoked the tax exemption of the Church at Pierce Creek, a Vestal, N.Y., congregation that paid for full-page newspaper ads in the fall of 1992 declaring that voting for Bill Clinton was a sin.

Americans United had filed a formal complaint with the IRS about the church's activities. The church later sued unsuccessfully in federal court to regain its tax exemption.

Home church censures Operation Rescue's founder

BINGHAMTON, N.Y. (RNS)—Claiming one-time member and Operation Rescue founder Randall Terry has behaved "unbiblically," the pastor of Terry's former church has issued a public "letter of censure" of the militant conservative activist.

Dan Little, pastor of Landmark Church in Binghamton, N.Y., also wrote that Terry is guilty of conduct "far short of Christian standards of behavior."

Little's letter was posted on the Web site for Operation Save America (formerly known as Operation Rescue). Terry was an elder of Landmark Church for 12 years.

"Many of his longtime friends ... are shocked and bewildered that a man who has traveled the country pleading with Christian people to think and act biblically is now thinking and acting so anti-biblically on a number of fronts," Little stated.

In the letter, Little denounced what he called Terry's "spiritual deterioration" and "lack of purity in speech and lifestyle," writing that "Randall is altogether a different person than the one we knew and supported so many years ago."

Little also accused Terry of "leaving his wife in preparation to divorce, annul or otherwise dissolve their Christian marriage" and chastised

him "for his unwillingness to repent of this sin."

He also charged that Terry engaged in a "pattern of repeated and sinful relationships and conversations with both single and married women."

Terry has confirmed he and his wife, Cindy, are separating, but dismissed Little's claims as "absolute nonsense, insanity," according to The Washington Post. "Let me just say this: My marriage problems are personal, painful and private," he said.

A letter written in Terry's defense and signed by four pastors read, "The truth is this: Mr. Terry has asserted he has only had sex with his wife." But Little said the assertion is similar to President Clinton's denial of his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Little also criticized Terry's vocal opposition to Vermont's domestic partner plan, which would grant same-sex domestic partnerships a legal status parallel to that accorded marriages.

"To go out and speak and challenge people to live and think biblically, you have to begin at home," Little told Associated Press. "If you can't do it at home, why go to Vermont? Stay home and get it right and then go out and say what you want."



Terry

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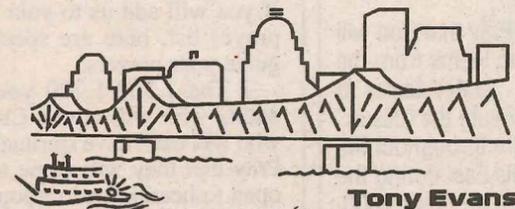
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Dr. Bill Mackey
Executive Director
Kentucky Baptist Convention



**Greater Louisville
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Druze live in land of Jesus but don't know His gospel

By Eileen Carroll
SBC International Mission Board

How to pray for the Druze

■ Most Druze have not heard the gospel, but recently this has begun to change. Pray that the Druze not only will hear, but understand and respond positively to the call of Christ in their lives.

■ The Druze are not taught their religion's deeper concepts until well past their youth. Pray that Druze youth will find Christ to fill the void in their lives.

■ The largest population of Druze may be in Lebanon. Pray for the two church plants among the Druze of Lebanon. Pray for the believing witnesses there. Pray that the Druze of Syria will hear the good news of Jesus Christ. Pray for the scattered Christian Druze. Pray that the first Druze church in Syria will be started.

■ The Druze of Israel are a recognized ethnic minority of 100,000 individuals. Pray they will tune into gospel television and radio broadcasts in their Arabic language so that they will begin to understand the good news of Jesus Christ.

■ The Druze of Israel are a privileged minority because, unlike other minorities, their young men serve in the army on the same basis as Jewish young men. In the army they are exposed to a much wider world beyond their villages. Pray this will make them more open to hear the gospel of Christ.

■ Pray that God will raise up teams from the United States to distribute the "Jesus" film throughout the Middle East during the year 2000.

GOLAN HEIGHTS (BP)—Drive northeast from Nazareth into the Golan Heights, and soon you will see villages perched on the steep hillsides. This is Druze territory.

The Druze are one of the major people groups unreached by the gospel in the Middle East. Their villages are not so different from others scattered across the Galilee.

There are about 1 million Druze in the Middle East. Some live in Israel, others in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. They are most common in southern Syria, where they make up 88 percent of the population in an area known as the Jabal Druze.

It is estimated there are no more than 100 Christian believers among them. Two small churches were organized among them in Lebanon in 1998.

While the Druze speak Arabic—like most other non-Jewish people in the Golan Heights—they are not Muslims. Instead, they have developed a unique, secretive religion that combines elements of Islam and Christianity with Eastern concepts, such as reincarnation.

The Druze believe God revealed Himself to a Muslim leader named Al-Hakim who lived in Cairo, Egypt, about A.D. 1000. Al-Hakim considered himself divine and claimed he could speak for God. After he died in 1021, a Persian theologian named Hamza helped

spread his teachings; 111 mystical messages were gathered into six books the Druze regard as sacred.

Those teachings are so secret that only about 20 percent of the Druze over age 40 are initiated into the inner circle of those who know the religion's content. They do not share their beliefs with outsiders; they say the only way to become a Druze is to be born one.

They also cling tenaciously to their identity as a people group; a Druze is allowed only to marry another Druze. Although most do not know their religion's secret teachings, they are taught to be helpful to others in their group.

The Druze believe there is but one god. They believe there have been 10 men like Al-Hakim who, over time, have represented this deity. That number does not include Jesus Christ.

Jesus is seen as a prophet on a level with Muhammad and other religious leaders, not as a divine revelation. The Druze respect the Bible as a "lesser revelation," saying it is less important than their own revelations.

Southern Baptists and other "Great Commission Christians" have launched a long-term effort to share the gospel with the Druze. Christian workers cooperate to distribute copies of the Bible, the "Jesus" film and other Christian literature.

Although the Druze are known to be fierce fighters, visitors to the region have found them to be hospitable and open to discussing spiritual matters.

Volunteers help share gospel with Druze



WITNESS A volunteer talks with a Druze truck driver in the Golan Heights.

Continued from page 1
later would work.

"Because of that intense prayer, we've seen God's hand at work," Gordon says.

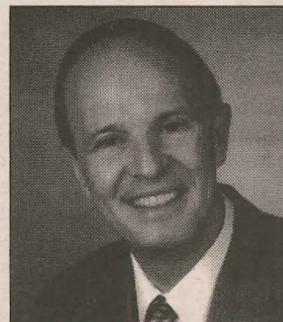
He also beams at the maturity and poise his team displays as they hand out materials and share their faith. Some of the students met with 20 high school teachers who asked many questions about Christianity.

"Though the questions were sometimes grilling and grueling, God proved Himself so faithful again as always," Gordon says. "Their questions made it impossible not to share the message of salvation through Jesus Christ."

By the end of the week, the Warren team has distributed 2,000 copies of the "Jesus" film, audiotapes of the film, Arabic language New Testaments and other evangelistic materials along the hilly streets of the Golan Heights.

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Be our prayer partner

Our column this week is by Ron Tipton, our director at Jonathan Creek. Ron joined our team last November and came to us from LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville. Ron and his associate, Jason Ellerbrook, provide the leadership at Jonathan Creek.

Driving home the other day, God impressed on me the need for us to pray for the upcoming summer at Jonathan Creek and Cedarmore. It continues to be so evident that God has His hand in all that is taking place leading up to this summer, but we cannot trust in our own strength to accomplish the task before us.

I would like to invite you to be a prayer partner in the ministry that will happen this summer.

If you will add us to your weekly prayer list, here are specifics to guide your prayers:

■ The 1,500-1,700 youth and adults who will attend Crossings who will each have spiritual needs. Pray that they will come to camp open to hearing and responding to the message of Christ, whether that is salvation or a call to a deeper commitment and walk with Christ.

■ The multitude of girls, boys and youth who will be ministered to at Cedarmore by the Kentucky

Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood and SonTeams.

■ Safety during all the recreation, and for the application of the recreational events to the spiritual life of each participant.

■ Safety for the SonTeams as they travel and minister throughout the state.

■ The spiritual growth and physical energy and stamina of the Cedarmore, Jonathan Creek, Crossings and SonTeam staffs.

If you would like to come to one of our camps and pray over the facilities in preparation for the summer, please come! Just let us know when you are going to be here. I would like to see each bed, chair and area of camp prayed for before the start of the summer.

Lastly, if you would like an update of the life changes taking place at camp or further prayer requests, please send an e-mail to info@jonathancreek.org.

Thank you again for your support in the kingdom's work of changing lives!

KENTUCKY BAPTIST ASSEMBLIES



Rusty Ellison

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

Potato project helping Baptists share gospel in Bulgaria

By Mike Creswell
SBC International Mission Board

GULYANTSI, Bulgaria (BP)—As a bleak winter chills this once-communist country, many Bulgarians have food on their tables because of Baptists.

A \$65,000 grant from Southern Baptists, combined with aid from European Baptists and other Christian groups, helped produce more than 120 tons of potatoes that have been distributed throughout Bulgaria.

A key factor in the effort, though, was hard work by Bulgarian Baptists, who helped plant, care for and harvest more than 40 acres of potato-bearing land near the Danube River outside Gulyantsi, a town in northern Bulgaria.

Southern Baptist missionaries and their Bulgarian Baptist co-workers said they are praying that the gesture of sharing food will help weary Bulgarians find hope in Jesus Christ.

Bulgaria overthrew its communist government as other Eastern European nations did in the late 1980s. But successive governments failed to refashion the country's economy. Old-style farm cooperatives have not been replaced by modern farms. Three-fourths of Bulgaria's 8.2 million people live in poverty.

Many of Bulgaria's older people have especially suffered in recent years. Most of them receive pensions amounting to less than \$30 a month, not enough to live on. Young people have trouble finding jobs, even with university degrees in hand.

So thousands of Bulgarians welcomed the potatoes, which were sold for



POTATO PROJECT Bulgarian Baptist Stefan Neikov (left) and Southern Baptist missionary Paul Ridgway inspect seed potatoes from a project that produced more than 120 tons of potatoes to help hungry Bulgarians survive the winter. With the country's economy in disarray and old-style farming cooperatives not producing enough food to take care of the population, thousands of Bulgarians welcomed the potatoes, which were produced in part from Southern Baptist hunger relief funds combined with aid from European Baptists and other Christian groups. Southern Baptist missionaries and their Bulgarian Baptist coworkers are praying that the gesture of sharing food will help weary Bulgarians find hope in Jesus Christ. (BP photo by Grace Robinette)

the equivalent of about five cents a pound. Bulgarian Baptist churches distributed most of the potatoes; others went to hospitals and orphanages.

Southern Baptist missionary Paul Ridgway requested the grant money from the International Mission Board's hunger relief funds, given by Southern Baptists throughout the United States to fight hunger and meet human needs around the world. Paul and his wife, Judy, maintain a busy schedule of mu-

sic teaching and performing.

But Ridgway credits Bulgarian Baptist Stefan Neikov for the potato project. Neikov is a retired Bulgarian army colonel who once taught at the military academy at Pleven.

Neikov secured unused public farm land owned by the town of Gulyantsi and began rallying support for a potato project that would help feed the hungry. German Baptists gave two tractors; other funds came from a Dutch Reformed

Church helping agency and United Methodists.

On a recent winter day, Neikov and Gulyantsi's deputy mayor stood with Ridgway, braving a cutting wind as they watched a tractor preparing fields for use again next year.

The men are dreaming of setting up a Christian cooperative to grow grain and other crops as a way to make area people self-sufficient.

"The idea is to both provide food for people, plus jobs. Much of the land is unused, abandoned," Neikov said. "We want everyone to benefit. At the moment, agriculture in all Bulgaria is a total loss."

A trim man, Neikov still has a military bearing. He is planning this attack on hunger and poverty the way he once planned engineering for military campaigns. "God gives us things to do, but we have to work," he said with a smile.

Amid his new agricultural projects, Neikov lets a Baptist church meet in his home. The church was organized decades ago but members dwindled away. Now, with Neikov's backing and with Alexander "Sasho" Grosev as pastor, the congregation has grown too large for the Neikov house.

Baptists here say the long-term strategy is not just helping people physically, but using the recognition gained through the projects as a springboard for evangelism and church planting.

Last fall, Texas Baptists sent more than four dozen trained professionals to hold medical, dental and eye clinics in and around Gulyantsi, part of the larger strategy.

WORLD VIEW

■ A controversial human rights group says it has bought the freedom of 5,514 slaves in Sudan during a secret mission. Christian Solidarity International said its redemption program in December brought the total number of slaves freed through its work to 20,961. The organization claims more than 100,000 people, mostly Christians and animists from southern Sudan, continue to be enslaved by the more Muslim portion of northern Sudan. But Christian Solidarity has been criticized for allegedly fueling the slave trade. Critics claim that buying the freedom of slaves encourages more trafficking.

■ More than 160 Pentecostal clergy traveled to Rome this month to learn more about their historical roots. Delano Ellis of Cleveland, president of the Joint College of African-American Bishops and presiding bishop of the United Pentecostal Churches of Christ, said he believed this was the largest group of Pentecostal clergy to make a pilgrimage to the city. Ellis said his church traces its history from the Roman Catholic Church to the Anglican and Methodist churches. "We are one family. We have one blood, the blood of Christ."

■ The number of Lutherans around the world climbed by 1.6 million between 1998 and 1999, boosting the denomination's worldwide membership from 61.5 million to 63.1 million. Membership in the Lutheran World Federation rose as well, jumping 1.6 million to 59.4 million. The number of churches within the federation also grew, from 124 to 128. Africa still boasts the largest number of federation churches, but Asia witnessed the largest growth in new membership.

Student spiritual leaders recognized

By Robert Dunston

Each year at our Founder's Day convocation, Cumberland College presents the Sullivan Awards to a man and woman of that year's graduating class. The awards recognize students who have made a significant and lasting impact at Cumberland College through their daily demonstration of spiritual values.

Kelly Jo Hughes, the daughter of Robert and Patty Hughes of Glasgow, received the Mary Mildred Sullivan Award for 2000. Hughes is majoring in elementary education with an emphasis in English. She has ministered in Fellowship of Christian Athletes as an officer and participant and has served faithfully in our freshmen orientation program.

Hughes led several Bible study groups, including a group for Cumberland's women's soccer team, of which she is a member, and she has been named an Academic All-Conference Athlete. During her summers, she has engaged in Christian ministry, most recently serving as a coach in the Crosspoint program. Her constant, loving witness for Christ has touched the lives of many.

Tommy Dautel, son of Richard

and Martha Dautel of Knoxville, Tenn., received the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award. Dautel is a business administration major with an emphasis in management and finance. He has been involved in Fellowship of Christian Athletes and in honor societies, including the National Freshman Honor Society and the National Math Honor Society.

Dautel played soccer all four years at Cumberland, receiving the Most Valuable Player Award for the past three years. This year he was captain of the team. During this past summer he worked as an intern for the Rollins Corporation in Atlanta. In addition to performing his duties in an excellent manner, he created a caring

community among the Cumberland students working in Atlanta for the summer. He has demonstrated the highest Christian values in every facet of life.

We congratulate both students for their outstanding spiritual leadership on Cumberland's campus. God already has used them in a great way, and we know God will continue to bless the lives of others through them.

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

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Play for the children

Even though snow has been in recent forecasts and that pesky groundhog in Pennsylvania saw his shadow, golf is on my mind.

I was blessed a few weeks ago to go golfing in Myrtle Beach, S.C., with some friends. I'm finding out more and more what a companionable sport golf is. It is also a real test of friendship. You don't let just anybody watch you flail around for 18 holes.

This year marks our second "Play for the Children" golf tournament to support Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. I really had a wonderful time last year playing in the regional events and getting to know new and old friends of this ministry.

There were some very hot days last summer when golf felt like work and it makes me all the more grateful to those who participated.

Many of last year's golfers commented that they hadn't known too much about KBHC prior to "Play for the Children." At every hole were signs with facts about Kentucky Baptists' ministry to kids and families. "I didn't know we were doing all that!" was heard more than once.

I hope you will consider joining us this year. There are seven region-

al events scattered all over the commonwealth, so there will be one close to just about everyone. The first event is May 13 in Lexington. For a complete list of regional tournaments, call (800) 456-1386.

I encourage you to recruit a team from work, church or among your family. Think about someone you know who hasn't had much contact

with KBHC and see if you can get them excited about this ministry. We are mailing information to all the churches, but we would appreciate you being a KBHC ambassador in your church to make sure that your pastor is aware of the events. If your pastor is a golfer, consider making a gift of the sponsorship fee and ask him to be on your team.

We want everyone who participates to have fun, but we don't want you to forget that your fun is a gift. The money from this year's events will provide care and hope to hurting kids and families across the commonwealth. I hope you will be a part of it!

Bill Smithwick is 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

TELEVISION

Religious TV missing the mark, according to study

"We're not trying to change the way people feel about Christian television, but we're trying to change the way Christian television feels about people."

Total Living Network President Jerry Rose

By Ted Parks
Religion News Service

ANAHEIM, Calif. (RNS)—In a study commissioned by a Christian broadcasting network, a third of the viewers polled who consider themselves evangelical Christians said they don't like religious television.

The figure jumps to 60 percent for people who say they are religious but not evangelical.

The results led the Total Living Network, which commissioned the study, to conclude that "religious television is not currently meeting the needs of viewers." TLN released a summary of its study during the annual convention of the National Religious Broadcasters earlier this month.

The 24-hour Chicago cable network has been analyzing the data for more than a year as part of an effort to understand its viewers, said Christine Moore, TLN's publicist.

The survey also looked beyond religious programming to television in general.

Among the additional findings are that 73 percent of adults believe "a lot of TV is often violent, sexually explicit and even shocking," the summary indicated.

For 54 percent, "today's TV has very little redeeming value."

The results don't surprise some media experts.

"They're very consistent with everything I've read and studied," said Ken Waters, who teaches media eth-

ics at Pepperdine University in Malibu, Calif.

"It's preaching to the choir," Waters said of current Christian television programming. "There's not enough variety. ... How many preachers can you watch in a 24-hour period?"

For TLN President Jerry Rose, the study showed a mismatch between what many Americans want from religious programming and what it delivers.

"There was a disconnect between their feeling and need," Rose said, "and what they saw on Christian television."

TLN commissioned the study so it could be "intentional ... in designing the format rather than letting the format just happen," he said.

A television veteran who is also an ordained Assemblies of God minister, Rose said a lot of people in Christian television come to the medium from a background in ministry. Because "their passion is to build a church," he said, "television becomes a conduit" for their ministry goals.

By showing more awareness of the unique character of the medium, Rose said he wants to transform Christian television. He hopes to foster joint ventures among religious broadcasters and producers and plans to experiment with new formats.

Referring to recent mergers by media giants like AOL and Time Warner, Rose said secular companies realize they "have to form strategic, synergistic alliances." He suggests the

same for Christian broadcasters, who he said perennially lack funds to compete with the slick production values of their nonreligious counterparts.

Rose said he is planning a programming format that will combine short dramatic episodes with interviews and other segments to gently connect with viewers' needs.

Instead of being preached answers to questions they may not even have, viewers would see the positive results

of faith and get a sense of hope for their lives, he said.

"The idea is not to be so declarative," said Rose, who served as NRB president from 1988 to 1990.

Calling for new concepts from religious broadcasters, Rose said, "We're not trying to change the way people feel about Christian television, but we're trying to change the way Christian television feels about people."

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Beta Club making an impact

By Denise Spencer
Oneida Publications Director

Our high school Beta Club is busy with Governor's Cup competition, sponsored by the Kentucky Association for Academic Competition.

Thirteen of our students competed at the district level earlier this month. Joy Beth Woods earned first place in composition, while Will Bowling took second place in composition. Amanda Travis earned third place in general knowledge.

In December, the club competed at the state Beta Club convention. Our students tested in language, math, science and history. Some did arts and crafts projects.

But perhaps the Beta Club's highest accomplishment so far this school year was its performance at the Kentucky Youth Assembly. Oneida's club sent 14 members to KYA in November.

At KYA, students debate and vote on bills in the Kentucky mock government. Students serve as senators, representatives, authors, press corps agents, lobbyists or supreme court justices. Any bill that passes in this youth legislature is given to the KYA governor. Once he or she signs the bill, it can be sponsored by a Kentucky state representative or senator and perhaps become an actual law.

Our students took two bills, one of which passed. The approved bill recommended replacing school suspension with community service. It was authored by seniors Shawna Jewell and Kristopher Ximenes.

Oneida Baptist Institute's Beta Club sponsor, Dan Stockton, required each student to speak publicly about a bill at least once during the weekend.

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Ximenes was one of only 10 students out of 1,400 participants to receive the Best Delegate Award for Speaking.

Stockton explained that speakers are judged by how well a bill is presented, including the "clarity, conciseness and the concepts" expressed by the young person. Stockton said Ximenes's win "makes a big statement about how we work with kids and the potential our kids have." He added that Ximenes's strengths were his use of parliamentary procedure and his knowledge of public speaking.

Kentucky Youth Assembly is sponsored by the YMCA. The weekend is a wonderful experience for high school students from across the commonwealth. Stockton said, "It's a training ground for congressmen and lawyers. It exposes them to the actual judicial process in Kentucky. There's no better way to show students how our government works than to put them in the center of it."

Even if Beta Club students don't become lawyers or government officials, Kentucky Youth Assembly experience can influence them professionally. Stockton said he's seen it lead to public speaking, involvement in the military and jobs working for candidates running for office.

Stockton enjoys taking Oneida students to KYA, where they mix and mingle with 1,400 of Kentucky's brightest young people. "It makes a big impact on them," he said. "The biggest thing they gain is realizing they have a voice, not just in the community but in our state; a voice where they can be heard."

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

Fulfilling the heart's desire through missions

"All through seminary I prayed that God would send me to an associate position to do education, evangelism and missions. My adviser didn't give me much encouragement," 1993 Clear Creek graduate Bob Dillman said.

"I went for an interview as minister of education with Southern Hills Baptist Church in Sioux City, Iowa," he recalled. "I asked if the church was mission-minded. The pastor said, 'We didn't want to scare you, but the position also includes assisting with our mission churches.' I cried! The church was exactly the desire of my heart."

Bob, Linda and their four children moved to Sioux City in June 1999. Pastor Leo Endel has led the church for 10 years and has seen attendance increase from 40 to 400 in two morning services. Dillman works with Sunday school, using the GROW program for outreach. Upward Basketball reaches 150 kids, triple the number involved last year. Each team has seven kids, and the program includes Scripture memorization, half-time devotions and an outreach to families.

The Baptist Convention of Iowa has seven associations, and Northwest Association includes 13 coun-

ties. With a population of 85,000, Sioux City is located beside the Missouri River with Nebraska and South Dakota cities across the river. The city is the home of Gateway Computers and a meat packing center, slaughtering 15,000 hogs a day.

The church sponsors two missions, Kingsley and Sioux Center, and plans to start another church. A Mississippi church gave \$38,000 to purchase three acres for the Kingsley site and the state convention provides a 16-foot by 80-foot mobile chapel as the first meeting place. The Dillmans conducted a vacation Bible school in the community last summer.

"God is so good! He knows what we can do and what we would like to do. I wanted an associate pastor position, and being involved in mission points is icing on the cake," Dillman said.

As Southern Baptists observe a national emphasis on home missions, I ask you to join me in prayer for Bob and Linda Dillman and the growing work in Iowa.

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

BOOKS

Let Prayer Change Your Life. *Becky Tirabassi.* Thomas Nelson Publishers, re-released 2000. 170 pages. \$10.99. ◆◆◆ (out of five)

Without knowing her personally, one comes away from reading this book with a picture of Becky Tirabassi as an action-oriented, highly organized, high-octane Christian. She advocates a pattern of daily praying that is in constant motion and full of expectations for power and results.

Part testimony and part instruction, this book grew out of Tirabassi's experience as a youth worker on the edge of spiritual burnout. As time went on, she found her constant activity moved her away from her commitment to personal spiritual development, with the result that her ministry became job, not joy.

Confronted by a speaker who stated "prayerlessness is sin," Tirabassi did an immediate inventory of her relationship with God. After being convicted that people make time for what they love, she pledged to spend an hour a day in prayer.

The book outlines the method she developed for that hour of daily prayer. In each hour, she structures her time for praising God, admitting sins, making requests of God, thanking God, listening to God through journaling, reflecting on God's messages through sermons, New Testament readings, Old Testament readings and readings from Proverbs. At her side the whole hour is her journal, in which she writes her prayers, records God's responses and reflects on sermons and scripture.

This book provides some helpful insights into the how and why of the discipline of daily prayer. Her model definitely fits the Type A personality, but with the addition of some "centering" time, could be useful for the less-driv-

en among us. *Jim Holladay*

Christian Chaos: Revolutionizing the Congregation. *Thomas Bandy.* Abingdon Press, 1999. 331 pages. \$20. ◆◆◆◆

In the television program, "Get Smart," secret agent Smart and the agency CONTROL were locked in a constant struggle against the evil agents of CHAOS. Each episode centered around defeating some threat to the establishment and restoring order.

Thomas Bandy would probably rewrite that script. He argues that the death knell of most churches will be the conscious and unconscious desire to order and control the environment, not only of the church, but of the community as well.

Bandy is convinced that in most churches, too much time is spent serving the needs of the institution and not serving the mission of the church. The hope for most churches will come in the painful decision to restructure the organizational life of the church so that people are empowered and free to respond to God's mission for them and for the church.

Building on a vision of the church which began in his book "Growing Spiritual Redwoods" and continued in "Moving Off the Map," Bandy suggests that churches should develop a model of congregational life that balances prescriptive and proscriptive thinking to create a climate of freedom where the activities of the church are accountable to the mission of the church. In an interesting twist, he suggests that job descriptions should be written more in the negative, i.e. what a person or committee may not do, rather than trying to detail everything they ought to do.

Designed for laypeople and pastors,

"Christian Chaos" challenges most of our assumptions about the organizational life of our congregations, as well as the way staff and other leaders should function. While I recommend this book as a stimulating vision for the church, it would not be wise to try to implement that vision without moving through the process of discernment described in "Moving Off the Map." *Jim Holladay*

Common-Sense Church Growth. *Howard Batson.* Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1999. 147 pages. \$14. ◆◆◆◆

The target group for this book is pastors. The purpose of the book is to encourage pastors down a path that will provide church growth with integrity. The techniques also happen to be good common sense.

Howard Batson proposes 10 principles that a pastor either can adopt personally or lead the church to employ which will lay the foundation for growth. Each of the principles can be used by a pastor of any size church, although the chapters on providing church plant support and building an exemplary staff lean toward the medium-size church and larger.

Batson is at his best when he is speaking to the pastor concerning establishing a healthy pastoral ministry and treating everyone as valued people. Batson's encouragement in these two chapters is truly common sense, but is often forgotten in the midst of the pressure to follow other plans for church growth.

The idea Batson highlights over and over again is that a church seldom grows beyond the vision of the pastor. Therefore, issues of pastoral integrity and relationships with members are key elements of church growth.

Although this book is written for pastors, it would be extremely helpful

to pastor search committees as they enter the interview process. The principles, with adaptation as needed for each church, can easily serve to guide the pastor search committee to find the right person for the church. *Wayne Hager*

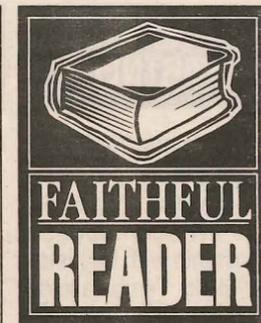
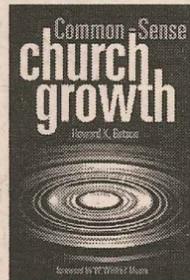
God and the Victim: Theological Reflections on Evil, Victimization, Justice and Forgiveness. *Klisa Barnes Lampman & Michelle Shattuck.* William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1999. 316 pages. \$16. ◆◆◆◆

The book is the product of a forum sponsored by Neighbors Who Care, a ministry of Prison Fellowship Ministries, which devotes itself to crime victims. The reason for the forum was the conviction that any ministry needs a firm biblical and theological foundation, not just good intentions. The contents of this book certainly provide ample theological and biblical reflection upon how we look at and approach the victims of crime. The subject matter is not lightweight and neither is the book.

Contributing to the book are a combination of biblical scholars, ethicists, pastors and experts on criminal justice issues.

The resulting written contributions offer a thought-provoking exploration of how to address the spiritual issues facing victims of crime and those who wish to assist them. Woven throughout the book are issues of justice, forgiveness, revenge and retribution. Along the way the reader will encounter different perspectives on the same issue with each presentation well-reasoned and challenging.

A study guide included at the end of the book helps the reader further explore the subject, with a focus on applying the material to the reader's own situation. *Wayne Hager*



By Wayne Hager, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Mt. Airy, N.C., and Jim Holladay, pastor of Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville. Holladay and Hager welcome feedback or suggestions for book reviews.

Contact them via e-mail at: docholladay@juno.com or jwhager@surry.net

Author says sex book's controversy shows need

By Shelvia Dancy
Religion News Service

DALLAS—A book about sex and the church is turning heads. Some heads are turning because of its title, "Holy Sex."

Other heads belonging to some Christian bookstore managers are shaking back and forth, saying no to putting the book on their shelves.

Author Terry Wier says such responses are just another example of Christians burying their heads in the sand in regard to this touchy topic.

"When you start talking about holy and sex, it irritates people," said Wier. "The church has just decided not to deal with the issue of sexuality. They don't want to know it's there, but that does not make it go away."

Some Christian bookstores—including LifeWay Christian Stores of the Southern Baptist Convention and Family Christian Stores—have refused to sell the book, objecting to its front and back covers. Both depict a nude scene from the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican in Rome, illustrating the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden.

One customer, who bought a copy of the book for her adult son, reportedly used white paper to hide the covers.

A representative for LifeWay Christian Stores said the book's cover did

cause some concern for the bookstore chain, but he would not specify why. "We make buying decisions based on a lot of different things," said the representative, who wished to remain anonymous.

But Wier said the book's cover only emphasizes the intimacy between a wife and husband, and shows that sexuality is not a shameful matter.

"Shame came from sin, not sexuality," he said. "Genesis says Adam and his wife Eve were in the garden and they were naked and not ashamed. God did not bring shame to sexuality."

Wier, who is co-pastor of a bilingual, nondenominational church in Dallas with his wife, Phyllis, said he wrote the book to help people gain a better understanding of their own sexuality. He wants readers to "recognize the holiness of sex."

"If God created everything and everything He creates is good, then why is sex supposed to be so bad?" asked Wier, co-pastor of the Isaiah Worship Center since 1996. "The intimacy of a married couple is a good way to explain to us the intimacy of the Trinity and to explain Christ's level of intimacy with the church. From Genesis to Revelation, God was the groom and He referred to Israel as the bride, and when people chased other gods He called them adulterers. Christ is the groom, and the

church is the bride. It's all about intimacy."

The church is haunted by widespread sexual problems, especially adultery, divorce, premarital sex and homosexuality, Wier said, and poorly trained church leaders add to the problem.

"The vast majority of seminaries don't address real sexual issues, so we have church leaders in all denominations who have no idea what to think or feel about sexual issues," he said, adding that 15 years of experience ministering to people with sexual problems heightened his awareness of the number of Christians facing such issues.

Despite the controversy, Wier said he thinks his message of open and frank discussion about sexuality is being heard. "Any time there's a major shift in people's thinking, it always takes time," he said.

"There was a time when nobody wanted a drug addict in church—now there are drug ministries and nobody thinks twice about it," he said. "You'll see a whole generation of people who will read this and realize the intimacy of relationships the way God intended, and they're going to want that. I think the sex issue is now where the drug issue was 30 years ago—it's going to take a fight, but people will realize we have to talk about it."

Atlas' author hopes to open a window to the biblical world

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)—A seminary professor hopes to open a window into the places and events of the Bible through a new atlas he has produced.

The Holman Bible Atlas, by Thomas Brisco, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary professor of biblical backgrounds and archaeology, is more than a simple collection of maps—the 298-page hardbound book includes an extended bibliography, 132 maps, 153 photos and text that surveys biblical history chronologically.

Covering events from the migration of Abraham into Canaan to the spread of the early church in the Roman Empire, the atlas features photographs, most of them taken by Brisco, of sites that loom large in Scripture, such as the Nile River, the Wilderness of Judah and the Sea of Galilee.

With the diversity of Bible atlases already available, Brisco said he sought to make a visual atlas that helps draw the reader into the world of the Bible, using a user-friendly format with maps and photos. Brisco said the atlas is designed to be a resource for readers from a wide spectrum, from laypeople and Sunday school teachers to beginning seminary students.

The project began in 1986 as a 70- to 80-page project but soon grew bigger, he said.

The first section of the atlas covers the physical geography of Israel and other Bible lands such as Mesopotamia and Egypt. The second part, the majority of the book, surveys Bible events in a chronological fashion, concentrating on events from 1500 B.C. to A.D. 100, and hopefully "inviting enough to allow a person to follow the (biblical) narrative," Brisco said.

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for these people and projects, which are part of Kentucky Baptists' partnership with Baptists in Poland, Tanzania and New England:

■ **Kentucky volunteers needed for these partnership projects in Poland:**

■ Construction at the Swietajno camp, April 18-May 1.

■ Construction at the Warsaw seminary, April 18-May 1.

■ **Kentucky volunteers needed for these partnership projects in Tanzania:**

■ Evangelism in the capital city of Dar es Salaam, May 2-17.

■ Prayer walk in Shinyanga, May 2-17.

■ An anesthesiologist or certified registered nurse anesthesiologist for Kigoma, two weeks in late July or early August.

Call Calvin Wilkins in the Kentucky Baptist Convention partnership missions office for more information, (502) 245-4101, ext. 236.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **BANNER**—Enterprise Association called **Thomas Biddle** as director of missions. Biddle, a native of Carlisle, was pastor of Lancer Church for the past 5 1/2 years.

■ **CLAY CITY**—Powell's Valley Church called **Joey Rogers** as associate pastor. **Marion Brewer** recently completed his 35th year as pastor of Powell's Valley.

■ **IRVINE**—First Church called **David Cook** as pastor. Cook previously served at Big Creek Church.

■ **LEXINGTON**—Hillcrest Church called **Tim Elliott** as associate pastor

of education and families. **Tony Hancock** is pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Crescent Hill Church is hosting a Festival of Women's Voices in morning worship. The speakers will be hospital chaplain **Mera Corlett**, Feb. 27; Minister to Students **Anita Roper**, March 5; hospital chaplain **Kelley Milstead Woggon**, March 12. **Martha Lytle**, retired missionary to Russia, spoke Feb. 20.

Maple Grove Church will host **David Livingston** in concert Feb. 27 at 7 p.m. **Ray Hayes** is interim pastor.

■ **MEANS**—Means Church called **Jeff Deel** of Winter Haven, Fla., as pastor.

■ **OWENSBORO**—Walnut Memorial Church will host **Greater Vision** in concert Feb. 27 at 6 p.m. **Odell Beauchamp** is pastor.

■ **WINCHESTER**—Central Church called **Art Beasley** of South Carolina as pastor.

What's going on?

Send your happenings to Shirley Wooton for Mountains to the Mississippi. Mail: Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253. Fax: (502) 244-6474. E-mail: shirley_wooton@kybaptist.org.

Montgomerys named NAMB church planters

ALPHARETTA, Ga.—Daniel and Mandy Montgomery recently were appointed by the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention to be church planters in Louisville.

Montgomery, will be a church planter intern, starting a church targeting younger adults of an in-town Louisville community.

Both are students at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, and both have served as church starting interns in 1999.

Christian cartoonists remember Charles Schulz's influence

By Art Toalston
Baptist Press

NASHVILLE (BP)—Of all the people saddened by the death of Charles Schulz, one of the cartoonist's strongest influences was with pastors, according to a Baptist cartoonist.

"Just about every preacher I know" has quoted from Schulz's "Peanuts" cartoons, Joe McKeever said.

Schulz, 77, died Feb. 12 on the eve of his last cartoon in Sunday papers across the globe.

McKeever, pastor of First Baptist Church in Kenner, La., has been cartooning since childhood. His cartoons have appeared in such journals as Leadership, Preaching and Pulpit Helps, in state Baptist papers and, with two other cartoonists, in an eight-volume series, "Instant Cartoons for Church Newsletters."

McKeever said preachers have been especially aided by Linus, the philosophical brother of Lucy in Schulz's cartoons.

McKeever himself cited Linus in a recent sermon, from a cartoon in which Linus turned to the New Testament Book of Acts to address one of Lucy's pressing concerns.

Lucy thanked Linus for easing her

mind on the matter, to which Linus replied, "Good theology has a way of doing that."

McKeever knows firsthand Schulz's graciousness. When the preacher/cartoonist joined the National Cartoonists Society around 1980, he wrote to about 10 of the group's most prominent members, Schulz among them, and asked for a cartoon strip original drawing. Schulz was among those who replied.

Schulz, who grew up in St. Paul, Minn., was raised in a Lutheran home, joined the Church of God as an adult and taught a Sunday school class, according to Crosswalk.com, a Christian Internet site. Perhaps one of his greatest trials as a Christian came in a divorce and remarriage.

Schulz took a stand for his faith when his Charlie Brown Christmas special was in production years ago, facing off with network officials to make sure that Linus recited the entire Christmas message, the Christian Internet site iBelieve.com recounted.

Schulz died in his sleep of a heart attack in his California home after a battle with colon cancer and small strokes that forced him to end "Peanuts." Schulz's retirement came after nearly 50 years of cartooning encompassing more than 18,000 strips.



Schulz



PEANUTS Charles Schulz, 77, creator of the "Peanuts" characters, died peacefully at home Feb. 12, three months after revealing he was diagnosed with colon cancer and a day before his last comic appeared. (fms/photo courtesy of PEANUTS (c) United Feature Syndicate, Inc./Reuters)

Schulz's fellow cartoonist and friend Johnny Hart, who often infuses his "B.C." and "The Wizard of Id" strips, reflecting on the extraordinary circumstance of Schulz dying just hours before his final cartoon was published, told iBelieve.com, "It's as if, when you're through and you've made your peace with Jesus and your family and everything is cool, and you've said your good-byes ... Charlie always said, 'When I die, the strip will die, too.'"

McKeever, writing last year in the journal Preaching on the subject of "What Preachers Can Learn from Cartoonists," observed that preachers and cartoonists "seem to have a mutual attraction" and share a lot in common.

"They live by deadlines, they need to be wordsmiths, everything is grist for their mill, their craft works on different levels and rarely does one hit everyone in the target audience," he wrote. "When they do their work really well, they may expect someone to be offended. One more thing: Both groups do a lot of their work sitting at a table or desk staring at a blank sheet of paper."

McKeever also observed, "Successful preachers and cartoonists are originals, different from the others in the field each in his own way. Some are truly artists; others not so talented. But each has learned how to do his best, to speak with the voice and use the abilities God gave him."

CLASSIFIED ADS

SEEKING: First Baptist, Shepherdsville, is looking for a half-time minister of youth—great bivocational or seminary student position. Contact: Personnel Committee, FBCS, 238 Frank E. Simon Ave., Shepherdsville, KY 40165. (502) 955-7372.

SEEKING: Edgewood Baptist Church of Nicholasville, Ky., is receiving resumés for the ministry position of minister of youth and education. Please forward resumés to: Kevin Lee, 717 South Main St., Nicholasville, KY 40356.

SEEKING: Resumés are being sought from individuals who desire to be considered for director of missions for Madison Baptist Association in Huntsville, Ala. (82 churches with 48,000 members). Send resumé to: Dr. Walter G. Nunn, Chairman of Search Committee, 1007 Speake Road, Huntsville, AL 35816. Deadline is March 15.

SEEKING: Daycare teachers: full-time days, part-time afternoons. Infants through 5-year-olds. Lynn Acres Daycare, 5007 Southside Drive, Louisville, KY 40214. Mail resumé or call Marlene, (502) 363-3300.

SEEKING: Spottsville Missionary Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking applicants for pastor. Please send resumé to: David Spainhoward, chairman, Pastor Search Committee, 8855 Old US 60, Spottsville, KY 42458.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music/youth activities. New church—excellent opportunity for growth. Send resumé to: John Dunaway, Community Baptist Church, 1026 Pebble Creek Drive, Henderson, KY 42420.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Hopkinsville, Ky., is prayerfully seeking applicants for pastor. Please send resumé to: FBC Pastor Search Committee, 1400 South Main St., Hopkinsville, KY 42240.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, West Covington Baptist Church, 1003 Highway Ave., Covington, KY 41011.

SEEKING: Office assistant for Christian social service agency. Have a real heart for ministry? Part-time Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Skills needed: typing, data entry, some knowledge of Windows 95, Microsoft Office, great phone skills and ability to deal with clients and the public. Interested? Call Infant Resource Project at (502) 584-0774 and ask for Cathy Neel.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of education. Please send resumé to: Crestwood Baptist Church, 1006 East Main St., Frankfort, KY 40601, Attn: Minister of Education Search Committee. For information regarding our church, please visit our Web site: www.crestwoodbaptist.com.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of West Jefferson, Ohio, is searching for a full-time youth pastor. You may send resumés to the church at 686 West Jefferson-Kiousville Road, West Jefferson, OH 43162, Attn: Search Committee.

SEEKING: Senior pastor for a loving church in Bowling Green. Must be experienced and ambitious. Send resumé to: Forest Park Baptist Church, 520 Old Morgantown Road, Bowling Green, KY 42101, Attn: Search Committee.

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

FOR SALE: Used Diesel school-buses, automatic transmission, air brakes, 65-passenger. Call Fisher Buses at (502) 267-5191 or e-mail Fisher Buses@aol.com.

PEOPLE

'Smoke on the Mountain' akin to weekend gospel sing

By Stacey Hamby
Missouri Word & Way

OVERLAND PARK, Kan. (ABP)—Mix the style of a Broadway musical with the story of a Saturday-night gospel sing in a rural church and the result is the hit production "Smoke on the Mountain."

After a year-and-a-half run off Broadway in The Lamb's Theatre in New York, Smoke on the Mountain has been performed on about 250 stages across the nation—making it the second most-performed play in regional theaters.

The musical is set in 1938 in a rural Baptist church in North Carolina. Connie Ray, a North Carolina native who stars in the Disney sitcom "The Torkelsons," wrote the play conceived and directed by Alan Bailey.

"When it played in New York, most of the audience had never been to a church like this," said Bailey, who grew up in Bradley Baptist Church near Macon, Ga. He now lives in Los Angeles.

"One thing I've learned is that a guarantee of success in New York is to do something new or in a different way. They saw this as something new because they never had any experience with this setting," he said. "Whereas now, the primary appeal is to people most like the audience in that church would be."

Smoke on the Mountain centers around the Sanders family. The setting is a Saturday-night gospel sing in Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Mount Pleasant, N.C.

The Sanders family performs several bluegrass gospel songs. Sprinkled throughout the musical is each family member's testimony.

The family interaction—with each other and the audience (which plays the church congregation)—makes the play entertaining.

"People are able to see something of themselves in one of the characters up there on stage," said Lori Blalock, an actress at New Theatre Restaurant in Overland Park, Kan., who has played



MUSICAL Performers for metro-Louisville's Derby Dinner Playhouse performed "Smoke on the Mountain" in 1994 and 1998. Set in a rural North Carolina Baptist church in 1938, the Christian music comedy has been performed on about 250 stages across the nation—making it the second most-performed play in regional theaters. (Photo courtesy of Derby Dinner Playhouse)

the part of June Sanders four times.

"It's about forgiveness and all the simple things in life; it's about getting along with your family. That's the beauty and charm of it."

Blalock, a member of Prairie Baptist Church in Prairie Village, Kan., added: "It's about life's lessons. It's uplifting. People can relate to the family. And while there's lots of the Bible (throughout the play), it's not pushed or forced. It's dealt with honestly. Truly, I've never heard of any complaints."

In the Louisville area, Derby Dinner Playhouse has produced the show twice and found receptive audiences, said Annie Myers, marketing/production assistant.

"We've found that Christian musicals are quite popular," she said. "Its just good songs that people remember, hymns from their youth, basically."

The popularity of Christian musical comedies has led the playhouse to produce its own original show. "Peace in the Valley" is scheduled to be shown later this year, Myers said.

"Smoke on the Mountain," though

strongly Christian-based, also appeals to non-Christians. Bailey said non-Christians discover they have things in common with people like the Sanders family.

"We're all really alike in terms that we learn to listen and accept other people without judgment," he said. "That's why they feel uplifted when they leave; it's about people with real faults, and ultimately, the characters learn that what they need most in life is to learn to listen."

Bailey and Ray said that when they wrote the musical, their goals were to create a play that highlights what is funny about being Southern without making fun of it and to share the message of God's love.

"It was important to us to paint a picture of a loving God," Bailey said. "It went along with the message of people struggling to be good Christians and family members because of the rewards of love that you find."

Bailey's idea for a singing in Mount Pleasant Baptist Church was based on memories of a church from his child-

hood. "I was inspired by the little church in North Carolina where my grandparents were members. They would have gospel sings, and everybody up there always seemed so perfect.

"I knew that they must be like any other family—fuss and argue on the way home," he said. "So I wanted to explore a family and what it would be like to have to appear perfect, but not be—thus, the Sanders family."

The idea continues to grow. Bailey said a play's performances usually peak two or three years after appearing in New York. Not so with Smoke on the Mountain. It continues to be in high demand. It is second only to "Pump Boys and Dinnettes" in regional performances.

"I think one reason people keep coming back for more is because they discover just how great this music is," Bailey said. Characters play instruments such as the fiddle, mandolin, ukulele, banjo and harmonica, he said. "Particularly in musical theater, you never hear this kind of music. Southern gospel and bluegrass gospel have really been a revelation to a lot of people who have produced this play."

New Theatre's producer and director Richard Carrothers said the reasons he keeps scheduling Smoke on the Mountain are both business and personal. First, people keep requesting to see it. Second, "Every time I direct Smoke on the Mountain, I feel it's giving me the opportunity to witness, and I never get tired of that."

Carrothers said he plans to run the sequel in his theater later this year. "Sanders Family Christmas" opened in 30 theaters last year. With the same setting and characters, the musical is set in 1941.

"It's been long enough (since 1938) that the Sanders can have developed a new set of problems," Bailey said. "But also it's December 1941, and the country has just gone to war, so there's a real reason everybody wants to huddle together."

With additional reporting by the Western Recorder

"Every time I direct Smoke on the Mountain, I feel it's giving me the opportunity to witness, and I never get tired of that."

Richard Carrothers

Christian musician talks about his battle with demons of pornography

By Todd Starnes
Baptist Press

MEMPHIS (BP)—It happened when he was in fourth grade. Clay Crosse was at a friend's house hanging out after school.

"My friend's dad had these magazines and we looked at them. It was amazing to me," Crosse recalled. "It was shocking. I was just a kid, and I knew that I wasn't supposed to be looking at this stuff, but I did."

That afternoon, visions of pornography were burned into his eyes, and more than 20 years later, the popular Christian musician discovered his ministry and his relationships were becoming clouded by a sin that he kept hidden from the world.

Now, Crosse said it's time to share his struggle with pornography to the body of Christ.

"It's been heavy on my heart," Crosse said. "I'm not the kind of guy who can be a

public figure and put on a happy face when something is so pressing on my heart."

While Crosse said he wasn't addicted to porn, he said it is a problem many men deal with—and one that can be overcome "with God's strength and support in our lives."

Crosse said he grew up in Memphis, Tenn., in a Christian home. He became a Christian at 13 in a Southern Baptist church and was active in his youth group through high school and college.

"My parents were very strong believers," Crosse said. "So I can't say it wasn't because I didn't have strong people in my life, because I did."

But outside their home, Crosse experienced his first brush with pornography. In high school and college, Crosse said he had occasional glimpses of "girlie" magazines. "I would allow myself to see pornographic movies, magazines, that type of thing."

Still, Crosse said he didn't think he had a problem.

When Crosse turned 23, he married Renna, his high school sweetheart. "I thought that whenever that temptation would come up, I would say, 'It's not a part of my life. That happened when I was in high school. I have a beautiful wife, a great life.'"

After about four years of marriage, however, he said he found himself tempted and his personal standards slipping again.

Several years ago, Crosse said, pornography crept back into his life. "The bottom line is that I allowed myself to participate again. It was detrimental to me. It was the kind of thing that started to affect my thought life," he said.

He said it was on a long plane ride in 1998 that God confronted him with his secret sin. "And I hated what I saw. I needed to clean up my life. I could see how this was going to take its toll. I had

never committed adultery, but I knew it was going to happen," he said. "Pornography is one thing, but it only leads to a physical reality. You can only watch it so long before you want to participate and I had gotten to that point."

Crosse confessed his weakness both to God and to his wife. "We had a long sitdown, a time of confession, a time of prayers and tears," Crosse said.

Crosse received his wife's forgiveness, but the healing wasn't overnight. "It was a time of reckoning. I had to admit that I am vulnerable to this. I'm not this guy walking around that's incapable of failure. I had to make this area of my life a priority with God."

Two years later, Crosse said he maintains strict accountability in his spiritual walk. "I have people that I'm accountable to," he said. "It's amazing how God sent people into my life that I could talk to about this."



HOSTED BY:
CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Saturday
March 25, 2000
9:00 am - 4:00 pm
at CCBBC's Family Life Center

Featured Speaker:
RANDY SPRINKLE
International Mission Board
International Prayer Strategist

Fun for the entire family!

Conferences and Displays by
International, Home and
State Missionaries

MISSIONSFEST 2000
Schedule:

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 9:00-10:00 am | Registration |
| 10:00-11:30 am | Conferences,
Activities for
children |
| 11:30-1:30 pm | Lunch and
Mission Booth
Displays |
| 1:45-2:00 pm | Concert |
| 2:00-3:00 pm | Worship Service |

Conference Topics:

Urban Missions / KY Partnership with Poland
and Zambia / Nehemiah Project with NAMB /
Russian Pastor's School Partnership / How to
Pray for Missionaries / Deaf Ministries

- Lunch will be prepared by the Disaster Relief Team of Kentucky and available for a *minimum fee* to everyone ages 5-adult.
- Free activities for children grade K-6.
- Childcare and lunch will be available for a *minimum fee* to children 2 weeks - 4 years of age. Call the CCBBC Child Development Center at (606) 337-1758 to pre-register.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:



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