

May 23, 2000
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FOR THE RECORD

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Pastors & counselors: Newlyweds need financial planning

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

INDEPENDENCE—With spring in the air and romance in their hearts, thousands of Kentuckians soon will prepare for the "Wedding March." Before they tie the knot, though, pastors and counselors advise couples to discuss an oft-overlooked issue—money.

Pastor Todd Toole counsels with 25 to 30 couples a year, most in their mid-20s or younger. Two-thirds have given little consideration to their financial future.

"They need to consider a basic budget and look at the hidden costs of being married," said Toole, of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Independence.

"Men have had a hard time grasping why women spend so much money on panty hose and makeup. Women are clueless about men having golf and hunting budgets. They need to talk about disposable income."

While those differences might sound amusing, they can have serious consequences. Author David Bach, a partner in a California-based investment company, recently told Knight Ridder news service, "The No. 1 thing people fight about is money. (They) get married to each other because of love, and they get divorced because they fight about money."

The old adage, "opposites attract," often plays a role in romantic attachments, Toole said. However, prolonged money disputes can lead to

"opposites attack," he said.

Spending guidelines must be discussed openly and honestly, the pastor said, since both misers and free spenders don't see their inherent weaknesses. Most attitudes about money originate with parental practices, meaning what people observe growing up seems normal, he said.

Besides personal preferences, couples should disclose credit card debts and other obligations they bring to the marriage. They also should understand the other's tastes in clothing, entertainment and other lifestyle issues, including charitable giving, he said.

Louisville counselor Louis Twyman has met many couples who failed to consider money before marriage, often leading to post-wedding bell

blues.

"The trouble I see is couples getting overwhelmed and living above their means," said Twyman, a counselor for more than 25 years. "I see a lot of credit card debt. I hear a lot of talk about wealth, but there's a lot of credit out there."

"I often see young couples with \$10,000 to \$20,000 in debt," he said. "One couple gave me two credit cards to cut up because they couldn't. It was like cutting off an arm. Even people with good jobs have all kinds of expenses and day care. They're literally living one step ahead of paycheck to paycheck."

He said America's consumer culture is partially to blame. An environment is partially to blame. An environment is partially to blame. An environment is partially to blame. *See Pastors & counselors: ..., page 9*

SBC proposal cites women's roles, abortion, homosexuality

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

NASHVILLE—Proposed revisions to Southern Baptists' historic Baptist Faith and Message statement address such diverse issues as women in ministry, abortion, homosexuality and racism.

The recommendations are part of a report released May 18 by a 15-member study committee authorized last year by Southern Baptist Convention messengers and appointed by SBC President Paige Patterson. The revisions will be considered during next month's SBC annual meeting in Orlando, Fla.

Former SBC President Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in metro Memphis, Tenn., chaired the study committee. He said the committee released its report nearly a month before the SBC so Southern Baptists could review the proposals before the June 13-14 meeting.

The new statement borrows from the two earlier documents adopted in 1925 and 1963. The proposal revises several articles in the current statement, but does not alter the number of articles.

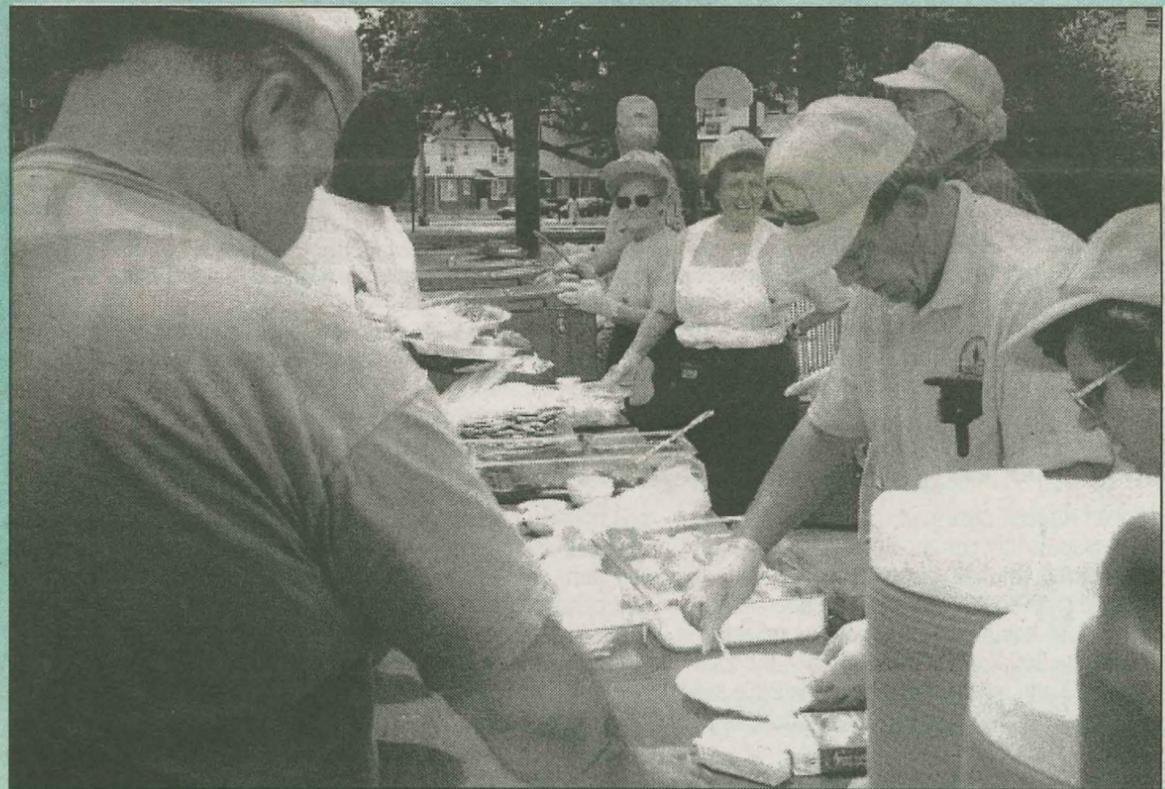
Among major changes to the document is the proposed preamble. Noting that Southern Baptists are "faced with a culture hostile to the very notion of truth," the new preamble adds, "This generation of Baptists must claim anew the eternal truths of the Christian faith."

While drawing extensively from the 1925 and 1963 preambles, the committee did not include the 1963 affirmation that "Baptists emphasize the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion, and the priesthood of the believer."

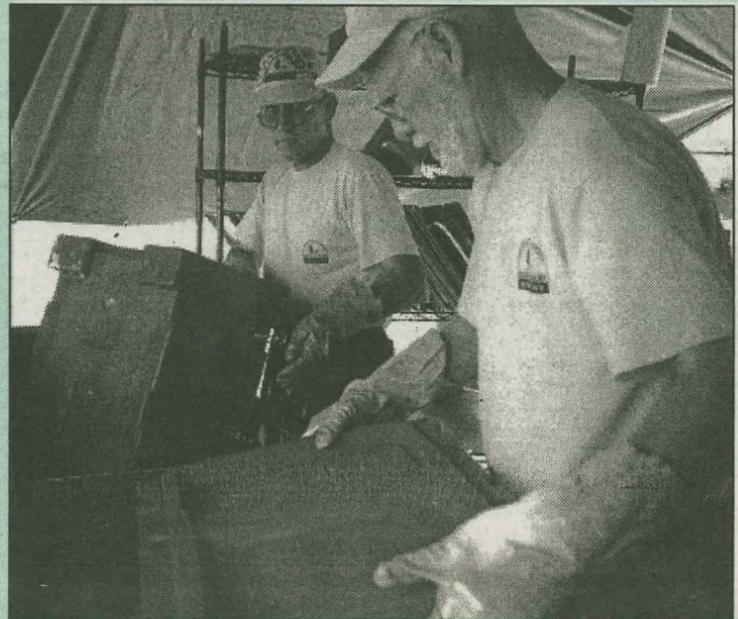
Herschel Hobbs, chairman of the 1963 committee, wrote 30 years later that the purpose of the '63 preamble "was to protect the individual conscience and to guard against a creedal faith."

See SBC faith statement ..., page 2

Putting on a clinic



Kentucky Baptist Convention disaster relief volunteers recently helped a ministry in Louisville that provides food, clothing, medical screenings and dental care as well as spiritual support to people in need. The ministry, known simply as "The Clinic," helped more than 275 people receive health care. Volunteers serve as advocates to help each client through the process of getting assistance at the day-long medical clinic. Advocates also discuss spiritual issues with clients and invite them to a local Baptist church. The disaster relief team prepared and served lunch to more than 500 people during the May 13 event, according to organizer Perry Polnaszek. Seven people made first-time professions of faith in Jesus, he said. ■ Above: Volunteers serve a lunch of fried chicken, vegetables, salad and chocolate pudding. ■ Right: Tom Carraco (foreground) of Lexington and Sturgeon Leathers of Bardstown sanitize containers for serving the meals. (KBC photos by Brenda Smith)



Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, May 24

SBC faith statement proposals address abortion, racism

The 2000 Baptist Faith and Message proposal does not include the 1963 affirmation that "Baptists emphasize the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion, and the priesthood of the believer."

Continued from page 1

The new preamble does not include the 1963 disclaimer against "official creeds." It does, however, maintain the historic affirmation that "confessions are only guides in interpretation, having no authority over the conscience."

Study committee member Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, said the committee "wrote a new preamble in terms of the methodology. Our main goal was to set forth what we were doing and how we understood the confession."

"Not too much should be made of what was in the '63 preamble but not in the 2000 preamble," he added. "We are not denying the concepts of soul competency and the priesthood of all believers."

Among proposed changes, the committee specifies that "while both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture."

Linda Barnes, pastor of Fern Creek Baptist Church in Louisville, voiced concern that such language "is just one more thing to divide Baptists."

"I guess my first reaction is that if those people whom I call power seekers in our convention would learn that the role of pastor is of shepherding and serving and not of power, we would remember what we're about," she added.

Barnes, a 1985 graduate of Southern Seminary, said she hopes the proposed language doesn't become a tool to exclude churches from Southern Baptist fellowship who call women as senior pastors.

Mohler emphasized the SBC "has no power of enforcement over the churches nor has it ever sought such. That remains unchanged."

He added, however that "the convention itself and any Baptist associa-

tion has the right to define its own membership."

Concerning Scripture, the proposal does not add the word "inerrancy," which became a watchword during the SBC's 20-year conservative shift.

Retaining the description of the Bible as "truth, without any mixture of error," the new statement adds, "Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy."

The proposal also deletes the 1963 declaration that "the criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ."

Claiming that language "has been subject to misunderstanding," Rogers said, "Jesus Christ cannot be divided from the biblical revelation that is testimony to Him."

Addressing key moral and social issues, the proposal opposes racism and "all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography." It also urges Baptists to "speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death."

"No confession of faith can be absolutely comprehensive," Mohler said, "but we felt these areas were most crucial."

The proposal relaxes Southern Baptists' view of activities on the Lord's Day. Previous statements called for "refraining from worldly amusements and resting from secular employments." The new wording says Sunday activities "should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ."

Other proposed changes address such issues as the foreknowledge of God, salvation through Christ alone and verbal witnessing.

With additional reporting by News Director David Winfrey, Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press

Rogers highlights report's key revisions

Adrian Rogers, chairman of the Baptist Faith and Message study committee, released a nine-point summary of the revised articles:

■ "We have sought to clarify the intention of both previous editions of the BF&M as reflected in Article I: The Scriptures. We have made the total truthfulness and trustworthiness of the Bible even more explicit, and we point to Jesus Christ as the focus of divine revelation."

■ "In the context of modern denials of the omniscience, exhaustive foreknowledge, and omnipotence of God, we have reaffirmed the teachings of the Bible and the consistent teaching of our Baptist tradition, as reflected in Article II: God."

■ "We have made clear our embrace of the substitutionary character of Christ's atonement in Article II. B.: God the Son."

■ "We have clarified God's creation of human beings as male and female, both made in His image. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. This is reflected in Article III: Man."

■ "Baptists must also make clear our affirmation of the blessing of racial and ethnic diversity, and acknowledge that all races possess full dignity by the creative intention of God. This is also included in Article III: Man."

■ "Given the pervasive influence of a

postmodern culture, we are called to proclaim Jesus Christ as the only Savior and salvation is in His name alone. Baptists thus reject inclusivism and pluralism in salvation, for these compromise the gospel itself. Salvation comes only to those who call upon the name of the Lord, and come to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Article IV: Salvation, includes this clarification."

■ "We reaffirm the New Testament heritage of Baptist congregationalism in Article VI: The Church, recovering the language of the 1925 BF&M and affirming the contribution of the 1963 statement as reflected in the last paragraph of the article. The church comprises all the redeemed, and will include 'believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.'"

■ "The Convention has spoken clearly (SBC resolution in 1984) its conviction that while both men and women are gifted and called for ministry, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. This is included in Article VI: The Church."

■ "Our Baptist ancestors of a mere generation ago could not have imagined the need to address the issues of abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia and all manner of deviant and pagan sexuality. We answer with a clear word of biblical correction. This is found in Article XV: The Christian and the Social Order."

Statement's major proposed changes

I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is (deleted: *the record of*) God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. **Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. ... All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.** (Deleted: *The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ.*)

II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. **God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. ...**

II. C. God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, **fully divine**. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. **At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. ...**

III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. **He created them male and female** as the crowning work of His creation. **The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. ...**

IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, **justification**, sanctification, and glorification. **There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. ...**

VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an **autonomous local congregation** of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, **governed by His laws**, (deleted: *committed to His teachings*) exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is (deleted: *equally*) **responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord**. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. **While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture. ...**

VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. (Deleted: *and by refraining from worldly amusements, and resting from secular employments, work of necessity and mercy only being excepted.*) **Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.**

XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. ... **The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations.** It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by (deleted: *personal effort*) **verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle**, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people. ...

XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. ... In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose **racism**, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, **and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography.** We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. **We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. ...**

Note: New wording in the Baptist Faith and Message study committee recommendations is highlighted in bold. Language deleted from the 1963 statement is in italics.

KBHC officials talk to state agencies about contracts

LOUISVILLE—Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children officials could know by the end of the month whether it will renew contracts with two state agencies that fund millions of dollars worth of services provided by the agency.

KBHC President Bill Smithwick said he met two weeks ago with state officials regarding contracts to supply child care services to the state Department of Juvenile Justice and the Cabinet for Families and Children.

The state's two-year contracts with KBHC and similar service providers are all scheduled to expire July 31.

Smithwick said he will meet again May 31 with a state-appointed council representing the two state agencies.

During the 1998-99 contract year, the state paid almost \$9 million for services from KBHC, according to Mike Jennings, spokesman for the Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children. The agency's current budget is \$19 million.

When the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit last month on behalf of fired lesbian employee Alicia Pedreira, a spokesman for the Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children said the state might change its contracts' language to bar agencies receiving

state funds from restricting employment based on sexual orientation.

Smithwick declined to discuss whether the proposed contracts include such a restriction. The first meeting was broad in scope, he said, noting more specific information about future contracts should be available after a second meeting later this month.

"I'm not discouraged and I'm not hopeful," he said. "Hopefully after we meet on the 31st I'll have some idea."

The issue is far from settled, he said, asking that Kentucky Baptists continue to contact Gov. Paul Patton to express their opinions on the subject.

"I think Kentucky Baptists need to continue to let Paul Patton know what they want for the future of Kentucky kids," Smithwick said. "Do they want role models of traditional family values or not?"

Several Kentucky Baptist congregations have followed Smithwick's advice, some even adopting resolutions to send to Patton and other state leaders. Children's Home officials also have received dozens of letters, cards and e-mails in recent weeks from supporters throughout the state. KBHC also is seeking a visual

show of support among Kentucky Baptists. The agency is distributing blue and yellow ribbons for advocates to wear. The ribbons come with printed guides offering suggestions for ways Baptists can further support KBHC.

Members of West Baptist Church in Hickman adopted a resolution urging state leaders "to support a continued relationship with Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children."

In a letter to state Sen. Bob Jackson, Pastor Champ Thomas described the lawsuit against the KBHC as "an attack by (the) anti-family values movement."

Thomas said his congregation "believes that we must stand up for the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health of our kids before anti-family values movements like the ACLU succeed in removing healthy family values from organizations like KBHC."

"Movements trying to separate God's people from serving the government of Kentucky is not separation of church and state," he added. "It is trying to remove God from our government."

Members of Owingsville Baptist Church adopted a similar resolution

last week, affirming the church's "prayer and complete support" of the Baptist child care agency.

The resolution to Gov. Patton and the state "to protect the children of Kentucky by standing by the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children by renewing its contracts" with the KBHC.

The congregation also called on other churches in the area to support the children's homes by contacting elected state officials.

In a cover letter to Gov. Patton, Owingsville Pastor Bruce Truman encouraged the governor to "do the right thing for Kentucky's children" by standing with the KBHC throughout the lawsuit.

In a letter to the editor published in the May 9 issue of the Western Recorder, members of Yellow Creek Baptist Church in Owensboro noted they had sent a \$5,000 check to KBHC leaders to aid in the agency's legal defense.

Describing the KBHC's hiring policy as "morally and biblically sound," the letter called on "other Kentucky Baptists to make a gift to this worthy cause."

Meanwhile, John Sheller, attorney for KBHC, said the agency likely will file for an extension that would allow them until June 30 to answer the lawsuit filed by Pedreira.

"I'm not discouraged and I'm not hopeful."

Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children President Bill Smithwick



Bill Smithwick

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

■ **Child care class offered.** Professional child care seminars will be offered in July by the Kentucky Baptist Convention. "Diving To New Depths: Loving and Teaching Preschoolers in 2000 and Beyond" will be offered June 3 at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and again June 10 at Calvary Baptist Church in Lexington. Registration for day-long seminar costs \$15, including lunch. For more information, call the KBC Sunday school department at (502) 254-4730 or toll-free at (888) 254-5709.

■ **KBHC hosting forums.** Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children will host a community forum June 1 at 7 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Somerset. The agency's lawsuit with Alicia Pedreira will be among the topics discussed. For more information, call toll-free (800) 456-1386.

■ **Regional leaders named.** Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children recently named directors of two of its regional programs. Donna Lett of Elizabethtown was promoted to direct the agency's foster care programs in West Kentucky. She is a former residential counselor at the agency's Glen Dale Children's Home in Hardin County. Mary Bradway of Morehead was appointed director of KBHC's Morehead residential program. The 12-bed facility in Rowan County serves girls who come from backgrounds of sexual and physical abuse, neglect and family crises.

Louisville crusade chairman touts event for racial harmony

By Brenda Smith
Kentucky Baptist Convention

LOUISVILLE—As a child he remembers passing the "white" school on the way to his "black" school. He remembers going to the "black" water fountain instead of the "white" fountain.

He could never understand why that was needed.

Fifty years later, Lincoln Bingham, pastor of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church in Louisville, is working to achieve the kind of racial harmony that he says will never be achieved merely through civil rights laws, regulations or marches.

To that end, he has been the visionary behind an effort to help churches cross racial and denominational boundaries to work together through the Greater Louisville Tony Evans Crusade set for June 19-21 at Freedom Hall. He is chairman of the steering committee.

The effort already has united more than 125 churches ranging in size from the massive Southeast Christian Church in the suburbs to many small congregations located in the heart of the city. Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Nazarene and other groups are involved in the coalition to sponsor the crusade.

"I have always been disturbed by racial division and racial splintering," Bingham said. "For all my ministry I have always believed that there should be a better cooperation between denominations, races and cultures. My driving force and goal is to

help the body of Christ reflect the inclusion of all believers. Christians must show the lost world that we are doing the same thing, we have the same cause."

Bingham is in his 10th year as pastor of St. Paul which has grown from 35 members to 600. One who practices what he preaches, he has served his community through involvement with the housing commission and Bluegrass Covenant Housing development in the Smoketown Area. He also has been a member of the church relations board at Campbellsville University.

Bingham serves the Kentucky Baptist Convention, serving with the KBC as a consultant for cooperative ministry. He also has been superintendent of missions for the General Association of Baptists, which includes 600 churches.

Just as children of the same father are expected to get along, the same is true for Christians who have the same heavenly Father, Bingham said.

The crusade can be a first step toward helping people find reconciliation of all kinds, he said. He names reconciliation with God, reconciliation between couples, reconciliation between people of different races, and reconciliation between hurting parents and children.

The first step to reconciliation, he added, is to put God in charge. "We must take orders from Him, trust Him and obey Him," he said. "Then we must work on a horizontal level with all people—white, black, Methodist and Baptist. ..."

Bingham said that when organizers first

began thinking about a crusade with a theme of reconciliation, Evans immediately came to mind. Evans is pastor of a racially-diverse church in Dallas and is known nationally for being willing to tackle the tough subject of reconciliation—racial or otherwise.

"Dr. Evans speaks from an informed and theological view that everyone understands," Bingham said. "He has respect and appreciation from all denominations and has been heard across the board."

"The non-Christian community needs to see denominational acceptance," Bingham said. "Since Christians are the model and example for the community, people will be able to see them living it out at the crusade. This will lift trust and respect from all people."

Even with all the work he is putting into making the crusade a success, Bingham said he sees the three-day event as only a beginning. The goal from the start, he said, has been for the crusade to serve as a launching pad for doing even greater things in the future.

Bingham said he believes all denominations, races and cultures can bring value to each other. "We must realize that we need each other; white people need black people and black people need white people."

"We need to contribute because of our different religious and cultural backgrounds," he said. "We must come together to learn from each other."

For more information about the crusade, call the crusade office at (502) 635-1004. The crusade Web site is www.tecrusade.org.

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

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Don't limit Jesus

I don't think missionary Ken Roberts realizes how his letter, "Jesus a true Baptist," in the May 2 issue of the Western Recorder comes across.

In making this statement he is bringing Jesus down to human level. We cannot do that and stand in awe, amazement and wonder before God. John 1:1-3 tells us how great Christ is: "Before the world was created the Word already existed. He was with God and He was the same as God. From the very beginning the Word was with God. Through Him God made all things; not one thing in all of creation was made without Him."

John the Baptist made the statement in Matthew 3:11 that he was not good enough to untie Jesus' sandals. Jesus said in John 10:27, "My sheep listen to My voice; I know them and they follow Me." Since Jesus is to be the commander-in-chief of every believer and because our salvation and abundant life depend upon Him, then all Christian denominations should look to Him for guidance and not think that He should follow us.

The stone that you builders despised turned out to be the most important of all (Acts 4:11). This stone was Jesus.

*Jeannette Teems
Salt Lick*

Humanism affirmed?

According to an article in the May 9 issue of the Western Recorder, missions and new summer missionaries were among the items celebrated during the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship's recent spring gathering.

It always interests me how the Western Recorder consistently portrays the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and Kentucky Baptist Fellowship in a positive light. I wonder how many Fellowship supporters realize that several of their leading moderates have joined

with secular humanists in a newly released book. Surely you are aware of this new book. It was mentioned in a recent Baptist Press release.

In the book, Paul Simmons is quoted as saying, "I have not come to bury humanism but to praise it." Later he says, "Thank God for humanism." He also expresses his support for abortion, which he concludes is a right based on religious liberty. I suppose partially delivering a viable baby and piercing its skull with surgical scissors is an expression of religious freedom for Simmons.

Molly Marshall, another CBF leader, also contributed to the book. In it, she criticizes the biblical doctrine of salvation by faith alone as having "unfortunately, fostered a deep suspicion about the efficacy of any human effort in matters of salvation." I have to wonder: What Bible is she reading? Surely not the one that declares salvation is totally the work of God's grace through Jesus Christ.

The title of the new book is "Freedom of Conscience: A Baptist/Humanist Dialogue." It concludes with a joint statement, "In Defense of Freedom of Conscience: A Cooperative Baptist/Secular Humanist Declaration." I'm sure the Kentucky Baptist Fellowship will want to include this historical work in next year's celebration. I'm sure Kentucky Baptist churches aligned with the CBF will want to include this book in their libraries. Perhaps they also will want to include some of its content in their statements of faith.

*Scott Savell
Taylorsville*

What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Baptist Forum is limited to Western Recorder subscribers, unless someone is responding to a story or editorial of which they are the subject. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 244-6474; or e-mail, wesrec@ntr.net.

Focus on worship

How unfortunate that the April 25 article regarding "shallow choruses" was published at this time, and with only one view expressed.

Trennis Henderson's May 9 editorial and the recent surge of churches split in the so-called "music wars" cause me to wonder about the wisdom and intent of the report. There are enough problems and potential divisions without instigating another one or adding fuel to the ones raging between "contemporary" and "traditional" (at one time also considered contemporary) music.

Perhaps the focus is wrong. If, indeed, we are worshipping in music, then we are directing it all to God. If singing "I Love You, Lord" is "worshipping myself" or "praising myself for my love for God," then what am I doing when I tell my wife or children I love them? It may be overly simplistic to understand that hymns are about God and our experiences while the praise or scripture choruses are addressing God directly.

Instead of worrying about the type—and there are numerous churches that have a great mix, including both without losing any age group—let us make every effort to focus on worshipping our mighty God in a real encounter.

With the "fullness of joy" our Master promised us, let us all sing what best expresses our love and commitment to Christ. We can do this with the desired unity He so often wanted His disciples to understand.

*Dan Cobb
Georgetown*

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Graduates face rapid changes

I recently watched a group of rafters navigating whitewater rapids. The challenge was to leverage the flow and keep direction. The turbulence constantly pushed the rafts to the static waters or reversed their direction so they were out of control.

Today's high school and college graduates are in many ways like those rafters. Graduates are facing the rapids of change. New technology can be outdated before it reaches the market. Competition is intense for positions, market share and profits. Graduates go out into a world in which they may face as many as three to five career changes in their lifetimes due to the changing job market.

In addition, we are living in a post-modern culture in which individual preference is valued over the truth and what may be best for others. The pressure for pluralistic conformity is proving especially difficult for individuals with casual commitments to Christian

values. Graduates must have a strong inner compass in order to successfully navigate the rough waters that are ahead.

These challenges came to mind on a recent beautiful Saturday as I watched more than 280 graduates walk across the platform to receive their degrees at Campbellsville University. Sixty-five of these were mature adults who had lost their jobs when the local Fruit of the Loom plant closed. It was delightful to see their countenance of fulfillment and renewed hope as they received their associate degrees. I was grateful to be a Kentucky Baptist who helped make this possible in the setting of Christian higher education.

One week later I watched more than 250 graduates at Georgetown College assemble for baccalaureate in the chapel. Students read John 3:16 in the eight academic languages of the college. In the recent tradition of the

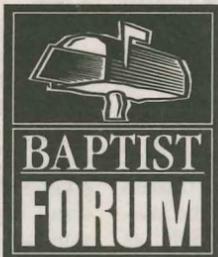
college, Dr. Bill Crouch led the students in a responsive reading of Romans 12 from the Good News Bible, which was translated by Robert Bratcher, a Georgetown graduate. Following the service each graduate received a copy of the Good News Bible.

As I reflected on the opportunity to speak to the graduates, I was grateful for all Kentucky Baptists who support Christian higher education through the Cooperative Program and for the parents who had sacrificed financially to enable the young people to get their degrees. I also was reminded of the high calling of Christian teachers and the commitment of college presidents to raise more than \$4 million each year in new revenues.

It is my prayer that as Kentucky Baptists we can find creative ways to strengthen the distinctive Christian ministries of our schools so graduates are even better prepared to face the rapid changes in their future.

Please join me in congratulating and praying for all of our new graduates.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention



RETIREMENT

What are primary financial benefits of a Roth IRA?

By Don Spencer

So much is said about individual retirement accounts as a means of saving for retirement. However, I continue to find that many people do not understand the difference between a regular IRA and a Roth IRA. I'll use some examples to illustrate the difference:

■ John is married and earns \$32,000 a year. He contributes to his employer's pension plan. John can contribute \$2,000 to an IRA and deduct the \$2,000 from his taxable income. He will save \$420 in Kentucky and federal income taxes. However, when John begins drawing his IRA, he must pay taxes on the money he draws each year. At age 70 and a half, he generally will be required to begin drawing money from his IRA. His wife earns \$8,000 per year in a part-time job. She also may make similar contributions to an IRA.

Advantages to John: Tax deduction saves \$420 in taxes and defers tax on the earnings. (Taxation is delayed, not eliminated.)

■ Bill is married, earns \$80,000 a year and has an employer-provided pension plan. Bill can contribute to an IRA but cannot deduct it from his taxable income due to his income level. Advantage to Bill: Defers tax on the earnings.

■ Charles is married, earns \$40,000 per year and has an employer-provided pension plan. He contributes \$2,000 to a Roth IRA. He cannot deduct the contribution from his taxable income, but the earnings will grow tax-free as long as a few basic rules are followed.

On the regular IRA for John and Bill, the taxes are only deferred, which means they will pay taxes on the money withdrawn in retirement. Charles will never pay tax on the earnings. Advantages to Charles: Tax on the earnings is eliminated. At age 70 and a half, he is not required to draw out any of the funds and he can continue to contribute to his Roth IRA (not to a regular IRA). The Roth IRA has additional advantages for estate planning purposes.

Note to ministers: Due to unique tax laws related to ministers, a traditional IRA generally is not the best for ministers. There is a plan available through the Southern Baptist Annuity Board that has better tax advantages than an IRA. That plan should be maximized before using a regular IRA for retirement planning. Additionally, a Roth IRA may be a viable option to meet other objectives.

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

Grief cycle includes impact, recoil & personal adjustment

Q: As a senior adult, I am facing loss more and more—my husband's death, my adult child's death and bad things happening to my grandchildren. Can you help me better understand the grief process?

Each person's grief is individual and unpredictable, like riding the ups and downs of a roller coaster.

I see three general areas of reaction to loss:

■ In the first days, weeks and months, you are dealing with impact. This is God's protection for you. Emotionally in shock, physically numb and being in denial are common ways of immediate coping. Your task is to come to accept the reality of the loss.

■ The next reaction is recoil. Just as a spring that has been tightened and then released may go in unpredictable directions, the full range of emotions may be felt during this time, and often to an extreme. Your task here is to experience the pain of your grief. Often grieving people are unwisely told to try to "keep busy" to avoid this pain. Harold Ivan Smith, author of "Decembered Grief," writes, "Anything that distracts us compounds the loss."

■ The third reaction is adjustment. We begin looking toward the future again. New interests, friends and personal growth are again possible. Taking responsibility for one's self as a single person, investing emotional energy in new ways and forming new friendships are key tasks. This does not require "letting go" of the person you have lost. You have the right to remember, to memorialize them in meaningful ways.

As a senior adult with multiple losses to grieve, find ways to tell your story. Go to "grief gatherings" in your church or community where people can hear you out. That's often how people start to get out from under the overwhelming sense of loss and grief: one story at a time.

For Internet resources related to grief, see: www.planetconnection.com/friendgrief/, www.aarp.org/griefandloss/ and www.hospicefoundation.org.—James Stillwell

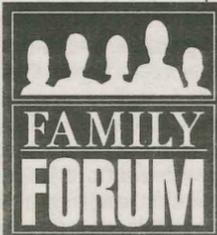
Q: At what point should a couple go to marriage counseling?

So many problems that couples experience can be resolved without the assistance of a marriage counselor. Couples who are good communicators often are quite capable of talking out their differences and finding a workable solution on their own. Many couples gain insight into their problems and find ideas for solutions by reading good books and articles or by attending marriage enrichment events. Strategies such as these have helped many couples work through their problems successfully without the assistance of a marriage counselor.

There are many other couples, however, who could benefit from the services of a marriage counselor, but who are hesitant to take that step. By the time they decide to give counseling a try, their marriage is in such bad shape that salvaging the relationship may be difficult, or even out of the question. In fact, some couples have all but made up their minds to end their relationship before they even begin counseling, but want to be able to say they "tried everything, even counseling." These couples have made obtaining help almost impossible by not seeking help soon enough.

I suppose, then, the best time to go for marriage counseling is when the strategies you know to try are no longer bringing the desired results, but before your relationship suffers too much damage and before you get beyond the point of wanting help.—Susan Howell

Family Forum writers are David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; Susan Howell, assistant professor of psychology at Campbellsville University; 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.



Faith statement changes deserve scrutiny

The suspense is over. The Southern Baptist Convention's Baptist Faith and Message study committee released its report last week. While stopping short of a full-scale overhaul of the historic document, the committee proposed several substantive changes.

Among the most troubling changes is the exclusion of wording from the 1963 faith statement's preamble that reflects rich Baptist heritage. The 1963 committee, chaired by Baptist statesman Herschel Hobbs, affirmed that "Baptists emphasize the soul's competency before God, freedom in religion, and the priesthood of the believer." The '63 preamble also noted such faith statements in Baptist life have never been regarded as "official creeds."

In a 1993 article written for the document's 30th anniversary, Hobbs wrote, "Southern Baptists have always been a non-creedal people. ... Without the preamble, I am certain that the convention would not have adopted this statement."

Study committee member Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, said the current committee opted to write a new preamble to set forth "how we understood the confession." Mohler, who publicly has voiced concern about soul competency producing a negative "autonomous individualism," insisted the committee is "not denying the concepts of soul competency and the priesthood of all believers."

It seems the best way to affirm such cherished Baptist principles is to clearly maintain their presence in the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message. To fail to specifically include soul competency, the priesthood of the believer and a disclaimer against creedalism is an unfortunate and unnecessary flaw in the proposed document.

In the statement's first article on the Scriptures, committee members wisely chose to avoid adding the word "inerrancy" to describe the Bible. Regardless of one's theological view of the nature of Scripture, inerrancy has become more of a political catchword in denominational life than a theological term.

It is enough to affirm the Bible as "a perfect treasure of divine instruction" that has "truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." Those descriptions, included in the statement's 1925, 1963 and 2000 versions,

remain timeless declarations.

One part of the article on Scriptures deleted by the committee stated: "The criterion by which the Bible is to be interpreted is Jesus Christ." Despite the claim by committee chairman Adrian Rogers that such wording "has been subject to misunderstanding," the fact remains that Christ is the ultimate authority in every believer's life.

While personal scriptural interpretation certainly can be abused, interpretation based on the life of Christ as revealed by God's Spirit is an essential part of personal priesthood. That truth should never be minimized in Southern Baptist life.

There are a number of other proposed changes that deserve Southern Baptists' close attention. From the tension between local church autonomy and limiting women's roles in ministry to such moral and social issues as racism, abortion, homosexuality and euthanasia, the new statement will define denominational parameters for decades to come.

The 1998 family amendment served as a trial balloon to determine whether Southern Baptists would accept changes to the 1963

statement. Despite mixed reviews, the majority of messengers embraced the amendment, paving the way for broader changes this year. That action prompted two state conventions to endorse the unamended '63 version, a move that Kentucky Baptist messengers rejected last fall by a vote of 408-374.

Recent history indicates the latest proposal will gain overwhelming support at next month's SBC annual meeting, with few questions or objections. While many churches will enthusiastically identify themselves as "2000 Baptist Faith and Message congregations," others likely will become known as 1963 congregations.

A better choice is for every messenger to carefully study the full report and determine whether each addition and deletion will help unify Southern Baptists or further divide the denomination.

The full text of the report, with comparisons to the 1925 and 1963 statements, is available on www.sbc.net. It's every messenger's responsibility to make an informed decision for the benefit of all Southern Baptists.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Pursuing the ministry of reconciliation

By Lincoln Bingham

"For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility. ... His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile them both to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility (Ephesians 2:14-16).

After 30 years of personal investment in the ministry of reconciliation, I am convinced that the racial divide remains one of the greatest hindrances to unity in the household of faith.

Despite our frequent recital of Jesus' prayer in John 17 that we be one, unity seems to be illusive. Racial prejudice and misguided racial pride have hindered the witness of believers and impugned the integrity of Christ's work on the cross.

Unity in the body of Christ is to be the direct evidence that God sent His Son to reconcile the world to Himself. It is the badge of genuine discipleship. That we have failed to make the minis-

try of reconciliation a priority in the life of our churches is sinful.

Notwithstanding the gains of the civil rights movement of the '60s, I find the current state of race relations in the country rather disheartening. Many believe this is a political prob-

lem. However, I believe it is a spiritual problem that reflects negatively on the evangelistic work of the church.

Christians on both sides of the racial divide—erected by us but eliminated by Christ—are to be the light of the world.

It is our responsibility as ambassadors of Christ to demonstrate that we are reconciled with God through Christ, but also that we are reconciled with one another. It is this unity that has the capacity to inform and transform the community around us. We must confess and repent of the sin of our preoccupation with our racial identity.

There was a time when I considered reconciliation to be subsequent to regeneration. In other words, a person was regenerated and sometime later reconciliation took hold. Ephesians 2:14-16 has convinced me that with Jesus'

death, regeneration and reconciliation occurred simultaneously. Because we are "a new creation," the spirit of reconciliation is already within us. Christ broke down the barrier of hatred that stood between us. As new creations, we need to seek opportunities to demonstrate our relational unity in the cross of Christ. Reconciliation is three-dimensional: upward, inward and outward.

In this new millennium, it is imperative that we do all we can to allow our lights to shine even brighter. The foundation has been laid in the Kentucky Baptist church community. I celebrate our partnerships in building bridges that cross the racial divide.

However, if our ventures are to bear eternal fruit, we must move beyond the predictable approaches and develop real relationships with one another. It will be these relationships that will challenge us to carry the messages of regeneration and reconciliation to an unbelieving world, without regard to race or color. Only when we see ourselves as one will we be able to witness to everyone.



Lincoln Bingham, pastor of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church in Louisville, also is cooperative ministries consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention

BAPTIST DIGEST

■ **Kentuckians appointed tellers.** Two Kentucky Baptists have been named to the Southern Baptist Convention's 2000 Tellers Committee. SBC President Paige Patterson appointed evangelist Wyman Copass of Owensboro and David Daugherty, pastor of Clear Fork Baptist Church in Rockfield, to serve on the committee. Patterson appointed J.K. Minton, a Texas Baptist pastor, as chairman of the committee. He also named New Hampshire pastor Tim Christian to head the SBC Credentials Committee. No Kentuckians were appointed to that committee.

■ **SBC candidates announced.** Two more Southern Baptists have announced plans to be nominated next month for convention office. Paul Russell, pastor of Sunridge Baptist Church in Sebring, Fla., will be nominated for SBC second vice president by Zack Zbinden, pastor of Briarwood Baptist Church in Ringgold, Ga. John Yeats, editor of the Oklahoma Baptist Messenger, will be nominated for a third term as SBC recording secretary. Yeats' former pastor, Woody Cumbie, pastor of North Baptist Church in Indianapolis, will nominate him. Other announced candidates include presidential candidate James Merritt, pas-

tor of First Baptist Church of Snellville, Ga., and first vice presidential candidate Brad Hoffman, pastor of First Baptist Church of Tusculum, Fla.

■ **Midwestern staffer resigns.** A top administrator at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., has stepped down, according to interim President Michael Whitehead. Jim Cogdill has resigned as vice president for academic affairs to pursue evangelistic and church growth opportunities. Cogdill, who joined the seminary faculty in 1997, was a central figure in a trustee investigation last summer that led to the firing of seminary President Mark Coppenger over issues related to "misappropriation of anger." Old Testament professor Gary Smith will replace Cogdill as interim dean of the faculty.

■ **Golden Gate elects new vp.** Trustees of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif., elected Tom Jones as the seminary's new vice president for institutional advancement. Jones, 44, currently holds a similar post at Williams Baptist College in Walnut Ridge, Ark.

He previously was vice president for public affairs at California Baptist College in Riverside.

■ **Convention elects leaders.** The Baptist General Convention of Maryland/Delaware's General Mission Board elected a new executive director and director of communications. David Lee, who has served on the convention staff since 1994, was elected executive director. He has been director of strategic planning and director of the convention's church growth and services division as well as a pastor in Maryland and Mississippi. Bob Simpson, the new director of communications, will serve as editor of Baptist Life, the convention's newsjournal. Simpson has served churches for nearly 30 years in Maryland and other states.

■ **Ballenger named dean.** Isam Ballenger, a veteran missions educator and administrator, will become acting faculty dean at Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond, Va., June 1. He succeeds Thomas Halbrooks, who resigned to become president of Colgate Rochester Divinity School/Crozer Theological Seminary in Rochester, N.Y. Ballenger, 64, also

will continue as the seminary's Duke McCall professor of missions and world Christianity. He retired in 1992 as the Southern Baptist International Mission Board's vice president for Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

■ **ABP names capital bureau chief.** Associated Baptist Press has opened its first regional news bureau in the nation's capital and named Kenny Byrd its Washington bureau chief. Byrd, 27, already has covered the beat for the independent news service for four years in his role as the lead writer for Baptist News Service, the reporting arm of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. The BNS functioned for several years as a capital desk for ABP.

■ **BWA launches campaign.** Billy Kim, president-elect of the Baptist World Alliance, inaugurated a \$2.1 million BWA building campaign during a recent dinner and worship service at Columbia Baptist Church in Falls Church, Va. Kim emphasized the need for a new facility to meet the needs of the BWA in the 21st century, including additional space for current and future ministries, improved conference facilities and a media center.

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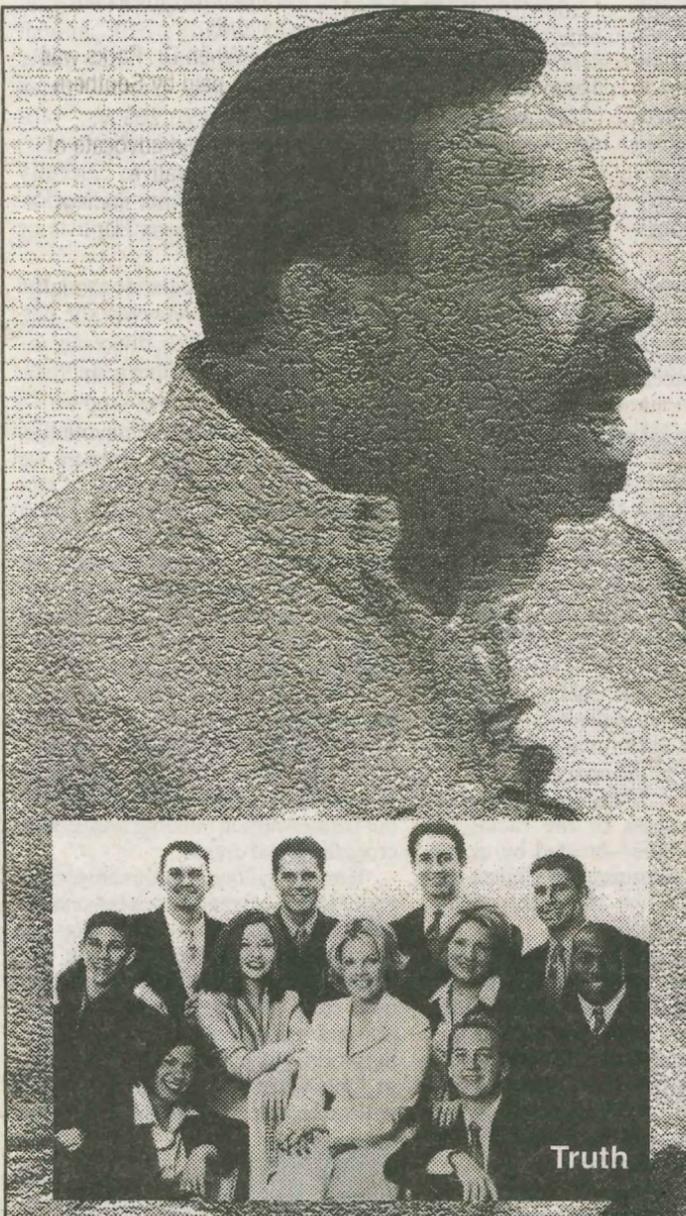
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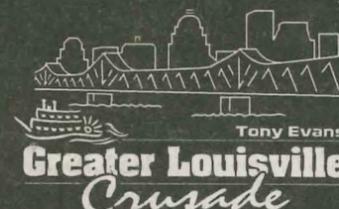
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BAPTISTS

Former SBC missions leader criticizes conservative tactics

By Tim Palmer
Missouri Word & Way

COLUMBIA, Mo. (ABP)—In his strongest remarks on record to date, a longtime missions leader claimed conservatives gained control of the Southern Baptist Convention through deception.

"This whole takeover was based on deceit, on lying, on cheating," said Keith Parks, former president of the SBC agency now known as the International Mission Board.

Parks took early retirement in 1992 from the Southern Baptist agency—then called the Foreign Mission Board—because of philosophical differences with an increasingly conservative board of trustees. While he has previously criticized convention leaders for allowing controversy to override the denomination's main priority of cooperative missions, Parks' recent remarks are his most pointed against Southern Baptists' current leaders.

Parks, who recently retired as global missions coordinator of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, spoke four times in Missouri May 8-11. He was

invited by the moderate group, Mainstream Missouri Baptists.

Parks, at one time among the SBC's most respected leaders, said Southern Baptists came together in 1845 for missions, unifying a regionally and theologically diverse group of churches.

Parks described conversations he once had with former SBC President Adrian Rogers, who countered that doctrine—not missions—is what has held Southern Baptists together.

Evidence that Rogers' view has prevailed is seen in the fact that independent Baptist leader Jerry Falwell now is in the theological center of Southern Baptist leaders, Parks said. He noted that Falwell "hasn't moved, but SBC leadership has moved to where he's been all along."

Parks said he learned several lessons from watching and being removed from leadership for refusing to embrace the conservative direction of the SBC.

One, he said, is that the battle was not over theology, as conservative leaders claim.

"Never one time did anyone try to accuse me of not believing the Bible," he said. "They'd say, 'If you support the

conservative resurgence, you can stay.'"

Most of Parks' FMB presidency spanned the first decade of the conservative movement's rise. He recalled leaders repeatedly insisting they wanted only parity.

Once they succeeded in gaining complete control in 1990 when the SBC met in New Orleans, however, they celebrated the achievement. "They sat there and bragged about the fact that they had lied and cheated and deceived," Parks said.

Parks voiced dismay at what happened once the shift was complete. "The people called Baptists didn't even blink," he noted. "They said, 'We'll follow these guys who acted unbiblically.'"

As conservatives moved to exclude people who weren't committed to their political views, Parks continued, the whole nature of the SBC annual meeting changed. He said "missions night," which had been the big event, became overshadowed by the election of a president.

Baptists have always disagreed, Parks said, but they formerly sought to change minds through persuasion. Now,

he charged, Southern Baptist leaders resort to coercion and control, with rewards for those who do as they're told. "There are preachers who are afraid to come to this meeting tonight," he said to illustrate his point.

Parks said the SBC has shifted from being "confessional," where churches voluntarily unite around similar beliefs, to "creedal," where orthodoxy is a requirement for inclusion. He described this approach as making decisions based on legalism instead of grace.

Parks said he believes if Baptists across the nation really understood what has happened, they would rise in opposition to the convention's current leadership.

In an interview after his speech, Parks said he broke his public silence about SBC leaders only because he had been asked to speak on Baptist principles and on what happened in the SBC. "Usually I'm asked to speak on missions," he explained.

Parks said he doesn't enjoy criticizing the takeover. "It's an unpleasant task," he said, "because it's a tragic thing that has happened to Southern Baptists."

Chapman issues terse response to Parks' views

Morris Chapman, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, issued the following written statement to the Western Recorder in response to Keith Parks' comments:

"Dr. Parks has a well-founded reputation of being unpleasant in his dealings with people he disagrees with—but in this case he is particularly intemperate in his remarks. It is sad when anyone determines that he can only build up his work by tearing down that of others. Disgruntlement and bitterness spoils a man's spirit, jades his judgment and sometimes warps his integrity.

"When Dr. Parks was being paid by Southern Baptists, he was an unashamed advocate of the Cooperative Program. After finding new employers, Dr. Parks championed societal giving as though it is a new discovery instead of the tried and rejected thing it is in Baptist history. It now appears he will devote his retirement years to anti-Southern Baptist diatribes in hopes of damaging the Southern Baptist Convention, its work and its people.

"We could wish better for him and for those he wishes to infect with his spirit."

Mohler, others critique historical accuracy of 'Jesus' miniseries

By Bryan Cribb
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

LOUISVILLE (BP)—The highly publicized "Jesus" miniseries merits scrutiny for its portrayal of Christ and His work, according to Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

"My concerns are where the movie diverges from the biblical story as recorded in the gospels, and there are some significant divergences," said Mohler, who addressed the issue on a panel discussion on WLKY-TV, the Louisville CBS affiliate, following the showing of the first half of the miniseries May 14.

"Jesus in the movie says that He is dying for the goodness in every human heart when the Scriptures are very clear that Jesus died for the sinfulness in ev-

ery human heart, and He died literally for our sins," Mohler said.

In addition to Mohler, the panel featured several local religious leaders including a rabbi, a priest and an Islamic leader, among others. Mohler had viewed a pre-released copy of the miniseries in its entirety May 12.

Another scene that should concern Christians involves the depiction of Jesus' baptism, Mohler said.

"When Jesus comes forth to be baptized, the movie seems to imply that Jesus confessed His sins," he noted. "It doesn't say so directly, but John says that's the purpose of His baptism."

Yet, despite these negatives, the miniseries has some positive aspects, Mohler added.

"Let me say first of all that one of the best aspects of this presentation was that it was not the 'Last Temptation of

Christ,'" he said. "It was not irreverent. I felt like it was a very respectful telling of the story and done in many ways very well."

Though the movie maintains an appropriate emphasis on the humanity of Christ, Mohler said the stress on Christ's human nature at times blurred His deity.

But as for the miniseries' concern with the humanity of Christ, Mohler said, "It's something that I really don't want to complain about ... because the believing church believes not only that He was fully human, but that He was fully divine and both in right measure."

During the panel discussion, Mohler responded to the moderator's question about whether Jesus is the only way of salvation.

"The Scripture is very clear that Jesus Himself said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life, and no one comes to the Father but by Me,'" Mohler explained.

"That is central to the understanding of the Christian church and has been from the very beginning. ... The central thrust of the Christian gospel is that

there is salvation in Jesus Christ and in no other name, and there is salvation to all who call upon the name of the Lord and do so believing in Christ as God's Son whom He has sent."

In an interview with Baptist Press, Mohler said there are other features in the movie to appreciate.

"Jesus is acknowledged as divine. The miracles are presented as real. And events as crucial as the virgin birth and resurrection of Christ are treated with respect," he said.

However, in many places, the producers neglect to relate the full and accurate story as told in the Gospels.

"As a result, Jesus is portrayed as uncertain of His mission at the onset. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is depicted as in love with Jesus. John the Baptist does not recognize Jesus until after His baptism. And Pontius Pilate seems to be plotting the death of Christ and manipulating the Jews," Mohler said.

"The best response to this movie is to return to the original script—the New Testament. Let the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John set the record straight."

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Pastor: Even remarrying seniors need financial talks

"This is an issue for all ages."

Todd Toole, pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

INDEPENDENCE—Most wedding vows include the pledge to remain at each other's side "until death do us part."

But what happens when a widow or widower considers walking down the wedding aisle a second time?

Despite years of previous marital experience and the wisdom of age, elderly engaged couples still need to discuss money, Pastor Todd Toole said.

"Finances are one thing you need to deal with," said Toole, author of a self-published manual, "How to Divorce-Proof Your Marriage." "This is an issue for all ages."

The pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church saw the truth of that recently when he counseled a couple in their 60s.

Although both brought sizable estates into their marriage, the marriage collapsed after 18 months.

Toole worked with them as they sought to resolve their disagreements and give their match a second try.

"The reason they divorced is because one wanted to save the estate

for their children and the other wanted to travel, spend money and take care of themselves," Toole said. "Priorities may change with age, but spending habits don't."

Louisville counselor Louis Twyman said seniors face some unique concerns, particularly the cost of health care and nursing home expenses in case of debilitating illness. "I hear horror stories and they're not just stories," said Twyman, who also is pastor of Ridgewood Baptist Church.

"Unless people have a good pension, they aren't living high off the hog. A lot is happening with couples trying to figure out what they have and how to protect it," he said.

Preserving assets is a serious issue for older couples, he said. Sometimes there is a marked difference between their financial resources. That might leave one partner wondering, "Does it mean everything I've built up over the years is in jeopardy?"

While prenuptial agreements are anathema to many Christians, Twyman said it might be worth considering under such circumstances.

Owensboro investment advisor Christina O'Bryan agreed that estate

planning becomes much more complicated with elderly partners. It is vital to discuss who gets what assets in the event of death or disability, she said.

"If they do the typical, 'I love you' will, the stepmother can get all the assets and the children get nothing," she said. "It's not just a relationship. You have all these ques-

tions about inheritances and finances."

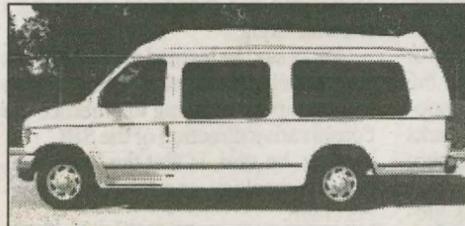
Some partners will agree that what they had before marriage will pass to their own families and what they accumulate together is theirs, she said.

Whatever the decision, she said, the implications of wills, pension benefits, medical coverage and other concerns should be addressed in advance.

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Pastors & counselors: Newlyweds need financial planning

Continued from page 1

ment that glorifies money and possessions makes it easier to develop addictions, whether to shopping, gambling or alcohol, he said. With many young couples also saddled with college loans, it creates a burden on new marriages.

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Money problems don't necessarily surface during the engagement or the post-honeymoon periods. Many couples don't face a crisis until children, mortgage, a second car and maintenance costs come along, the counselor said.

Still, not many couples come to him complaining of money troubles. Twyman said the real issue is control, a psychological barrier that must be resolved before spending deficits can be resolved.

Some of his most successful premarital counseling has been with people who are serious about wanting to change their habits and courageous enough to face the truth.

"They have to decide to change," he said. "It sounds simple but it's not. They have to see the value in changing, whether it's loosening up or tightening up. It can't be forced, either. Then the person will blame the other partner if something goes wrong."

On the practical side, cash management is important to financial harmony in marriage, according to a certified financial planner in Owensboro.

Christina O'Bryan, who works in the investment division of Phil Clark & Associates, said that begins with prospective mates reviewing anticipated income, expenses and personal

preferences and styles of managing money.

Other topics they should discuss are debt and plans to eliminate it, as well as who will handle paying bills and overseeing expenses. In the case of a second marriage, couples must be aware of child care expenses and whether any support payments will be available, she said.

Failing to disclose finances before, or after, the wedding can lead to marital dissolution. O'Bryan met a man whose marriage collapsed last year because of spending disputes. "He earned the money and his spouse didn't work," she said. "But she spent them into debt and the husband didn't even know about it."

The investment adviser said prospective mates also need to consider:

■ What to allocate for "disposable" spending, such as personal items or entertainment.

■ Who will keep the records. Decide which spouse will handle income taxes, receipts for deductible expenses, filing medical claims and other household records.

■ Who has the best benefits package. The spouse with better insurance coverage at work might want to add the other to his or her plan.

■ Retirement. One man with a good

salary but no 401-K retirement option had his wife increase her contribution to her 401-K. While that lowered her take-home pay, at retirement both will benefit from the enhanced pension, the planner said.

■ If marrying late in the year, it may be advantageous for a spouse to be claimed as dependents on a parent's return. While that means the couple can't claim a deduction on theirs, they can work out an agreement with their parents.

"Finances can cause a lot of friction," said O'Bryan, who attends Third Baptist Church in Owensboro. "If it's important for one person to have a cash reserve, the other needs to respect that, even if that's not their preference. Consider the psychological implications and concede to the other person."

While Toole ranks money issues behind disagreements over faith and religion, he said couples should resolve financial problems before saying, "I do."

"Serious disagreements over lifestyle may be a signal to step back and say, 'Maybe we don't belong together,'" he said. "There are issues they have to work out before the wedding. If they wait, they're going to have trouble."

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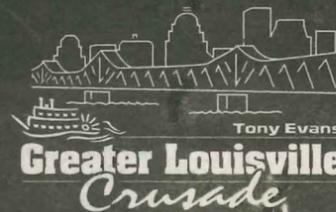
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Attorney predicts ultimate victory to post Commandments

"This case is far from over."

Erik Stanley, attorney for Liberty Counsel, a Christian group based in Orlando, Fla.

By Ken Walker
State Correspondent

LONDON (BP)—Although three counties in southeastern Kentucky have removed the Ten Commandments from public property, the counties' new attorney predicts they will prevail in their fight to post the historic principles.

U.S. District Judge Jennifer Coffman ordered the displays removed on May 5, but the counties didn't take the documents down until May 17. On May 18, the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati refused to grant a stay of Coffman's ruling.

But a Florida-based religious liberty organization that just entered the case said it already had planned to withdraw the appeal to press the matter further in the Eastern Kentucky court.

"This case is far from over," said Erik Stanley, litigation counsel for Liberty Counsel, a Christian group based in Orlando, Fla. "We need to go back to district court to make our chances stronger for a trial. We intend to go forward with the case and fully intend to win it. We feel we have some strong arguments to make."

In 1980, the U.S. Supreme Court ruling known as *Stone v. Graham* invalidated state legislation requiring the Ten Commandments to be posted in public schools.

Despite that ruling, in recent times states and local jurisdictions have resumed postings of the Mosaic law. In Kentucky, they included the courthouses in McCreary and Pulaski counties and Harlan County schools.

The American Civil Liberties Union sued the three counties late last year. Although officials added other historic documents to the displays, Coffman ruled they did not meet legal criteria.

Still, Stanley said the defendants will emerge victorious, whether at the trial level or on appeal. He said previous rulings have upheld Ten Commandments exhibits in a historical context.

"The Supreme Court has said religious symbols can be displayed properly on public property," he said. "We're going forward on that point."

The context of the Commandments' displays has been a key point in court rulings, added John Stepanovich, senior counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice in Virginia Beach, Va.

The ACLJ is representing the Adams County, Ohio, school board, which was sued in 1998 by the ACLU for posting the Ten Commandments outside four county high schools. After the civil liberties group filed a motion for summary judgment, the school board voted May 16 to add four other documents to the displays.

They include the Magna Carta, the Roman law of individuals' rights known as the Justinian Code, the Declaration of Independence and the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution. Stepanovich said experts will testify these documents, and the Ten Commandments, form the basis of American law and government.

The displays should be up this summer and Stepanovich hopes they will lead to dismissal of the lawsuit.

While the general counsel for the ACLU in Kentucky agreed that certain displays are legal, he argued that the displays in the three Kentucky counties

failed to meet that standard. Louisville attorney David Friedman said the key is their purpose and effect.

For example, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of a nativity scene in a park in Pawtucket, R.I., because the display included Santa Claus, reindeer and other secular symbols, he said.

But, Friedman added, the high court invalidated the display of a creche in a courthouse stairwell in Pittsburgh. He said a reasonable observer would conclude the nativity occupied that space with the knowledge and approval of the government.

"So, yes, context matters," the lawyer said. "But what that means is in a context in which the religious component of the display is not the focus of the exhibit. You have to look at it for the purpose of seeing whether it's an endorsement of religion. We've argued, and successfully so far, that these displays aren't close to the line."

The argument has inflamed passions on both sides of the issue. McCreary County Judge-Executive Jimmie Green vowed to resign or go to jail before he would take the Ten Commandments off his courthouse wall.

Last week, the members of the local American Legion post took the document to their headquarters.

The county government official told the Louisville Courier-Journal that he didn't break his word. "Jimmie Green didn't take them down," he said. "The American Legion didn't want me to go to jail and they didn't want me to resign."

While the counties' initial refusal to obey the ruling threatened to create further confrontations, Friedman said he was pleased that officials followed the judge's directive. "Any time you have people complying with court orders, it's good for the system"

Pastor seeing grassroots support

CORBIN (BP)—Regardless of the outcome of a current federal court case in Eastern Kentucky, a Kentucky Baptist pastor leading a grassroots effort to post the Ten Commandments in public places said he believes his group will succeed.

Herschel Walker lives near London, where a federal judge recently ordered the Ten Commandments removed from courthouses and schools in three Kentucky counties as a result of an ACLU lawsuit.

But the pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Corbin said he is confident his side ultimately will win.

Since organizing the Ten Commandments Advancement Fund last November, Walker has spearheaded six pro-Commandment rallies in Kentucky and Tennessee. The gatherings have attracted approximately 25,000 supporters.

He said the fund is designed to encourage people to learn the Ten Commandments and post them in their homes, churches and public places.

"This is a grassroots stirring," the pastor said. "I think God is in it. It's bigger than anything we can imagine. We constantly get calls from across the country."

The citizen group has applied for status as a federally recognized, non-profit organization and compiled a database of 40,000 names, mostly Kentuckians. It also has raised more than \$60,000 in donations.

The money is being used to purchase framed copies of the Mosaic law and such historic documents as the Mayflower Compact, National Motto and the preamble to Ken-

tucky's constitution to be given to interested governments and school systems.

Walker said he believes posting the ancient law is an idea whose time has come. He said God touched his heart as he led a Bible study at a Wednesday night service as he was reminded that God directed the Israelites to:

■ Learn the Ten Commandments and make them an integral part of their being.

■ To teach them to their children so they weren't forgotten.

■ To post them publicly on their gateposts.

Although he acknowledges that some Southern Baptist pastors don't agree with him, Walker charges his critics with sitting in their comfort zones while the world is in a moral nosedive.

"We don't need to sit behind our walls and padded pews and pat each other on the back," Walker said. "We need to be salt and light."

A spokesperson for the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., said the activity in Kentucky reflects the nationwide groundswell of support for the Ten Commandments.

Janet Parshall said the state "seems to be in the crosshairs" of the ACLU, but the lawsuits there haven't deterred people in other states with taking similar action.

The Family Research Council has sold more than 750,000 copies of student book covers with the Ten Commandments. Nearly three-fourths of the sales have come during the current school year.

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Baptist family pays price for opposing school prayer

By Kenny Byrd
Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs

SANTA FE, Texas (ABP)—Debbie Mason grew up in a Baptist church believing in the separation of church and state. Years later she has learned that standing up for that conviction can carry a price, even with fellow Baptists.

Mason and her four daughters found themselves on the minority side of an emotional dispute over prayers at high school football games in Texas.

That dispute is now before the U.S. Supreme Court. Justices will decide by the end of June about the constitutionality of the Santa Fe Independent School District's policy allowing varsity games to be kicked off with prayer.

Lower courts have struck down the policy, which allows a student elected by peers to give a "message" or "invocation" at varsity football games. The Masons are not among the parties challenging the policy in court, but they have vocally opposed it. As a result, they say, they faced harassment and threats.

"If you want to make enemies, if you want people to hate you, stand up for separation of church and state," Mason said.

"This isn't a bad community," Mason said of the 9,000-population Texas town. "A lot of people here are nice, but some people in the churches have made it hard for other people."

When Mason's daughter Jennifer was 17 years old, a local school board member—speaking from the pulpit during the worship service of a Santa Fe church—described parents who opposed the school's policy as "dim-witted" and "bored" housewives with a "void" in their lives.

"I was in shock. I started to cry," recalled Jennifer Mason, now 22, and a reporter for a newspaper in Alvin, Texas.

Mike Lopez, the school board member who made the remark, recalled the incident. "I'll stand by that statement," he said. Opponents of the prayer policy enjoy "taking the opposite view on everything that the town decides to do," he said. Many people in the town refer to families who oppose the prayer as "CAVE people—Citizens Against Virtually Everything."

"I can't understand how a 30-second prayer offered up in the name of Jesus Christ can so traumatize a child beyond repair, yet that same child can go see graphic violence in R-rated movies and be OK," he said.

But Mason said her family's unpopular stance has jeopardized their employment, health and friendships. "For the last four or five years, we've had it hard financially," she said. "We've been called 'anti-prayer' and 'anti-God.'"

On more than one occasion her daughters came home crying, she said. One daughter was diagnosed with an illness that a doctor said was caused by stress and anxiety. Mason said the

Truett quoted at church-state separation rally

WASHINGTON (ABP)—More than 100 people participated in a May 9 rally on the U.S. Capitol lawn to show support for church-state separation.

The rally was convened by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a leading voice against anti-Semitism and hate. Speakers included a Jesuit priest, a Baptist minister and a 17-year-old student who won a lawsuit against a public school district that forced students to participate in Bible lessons. After the rally, participants visited members of Congress, urging them to uphold religious freedom.

Brent Walker, executive director of the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, invoked words of George W. Truett, who gave one of history's most famous speeches on the topic of religious liberty on the Capitol

steps almost precisely 80 years earlier—May 16, 1920.

Quoting Truett, a Southern Baptist statesman and pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, Walker said: "Our contention is not for mere toleration, but for absolute liberty. ... It is not the prerogative of any power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, to compel conformity to any religious creed or form of worship, or payment of taxes for the support of a religious organization."

Walker then asked the crowd: "Can you believe a Baptist preacher said that 80 years ago? Some of them today could do well to go back and read that again." Walker said he wanted supporters of the rally "to see the face of a Baptist that may be different from the kind you are used to seeing."

girl finally admitted "that some kids had been pushing her up against the wall, tripping her and saying, 'You don't believe in God.'"

Mason said people confronted her at school board meetings saying: "You're one of us. You're a Baptist. Why are you doing this to us?" Mason would answer: "Because I am Christian. Because I am Baptist."

Mason, who moved to Santa Fe from Flint, Mich., said Baptists "down here believe differently than what I learned as a Baptist in Michigan."

As a child, she began attending a Baptist church with her grandparents. As she got older, she said, her church taught her about the necessity of sepa-

rating church and state. "Church-state separation is good for religion."

People "don't think about the fact that some day they may wake up and will not be allowed to be a Baptist by their government," she added. "Our forefathers had enough insight to know that we would get back to the same problems they faced, and they wrote a Constitution to help us do the right thing."

Mason said she is perplexed by those who ask, "What harm is a prayer?"

"I guess their religion doesn't matter much," she said. "Has religion become so commercialized that it's become 'just a prayer?' I think prayer means more than that."

Beach ministry

By Robert Dunston

A week at Myrtle Beach, S.C., is typically what students think of for a spring break activity.

One of Cumberland College's spring break mission teams traveled to Myrtle Beach, but their goal was ministry rather than relaxation.

Cumberland College student Andrea Honeycutt led a team composed of Mandy Fish, Theresa Hudson, Kristian Mulberry, Kelly Noel, Brook Tillett and Janie Toy. For a week the students ministered in a variety of ways.

On Sunday the team led a worship service in a campground at Myrtle Beach. Team members spent the remainder of the day preparing for their week's ministry. Much of the day they practiced making balloon animals.

On Monday the Canadian-American Festival began in Myrtle Beach. Special events were happening up and down the beach. The Cumberland team set up a booth painting faces and making balloon animals. They witnessed through explaining Christian symbols and offering to paint them on faces.

A kite festival occurred on Tuesday. Cumberland's students spent most of the day making kites for

children. By the end of the day they had become kite-making experts.

Most afternoons the students worked in a daycare center spending one-on-one time with children. One morning Cumberland's team served in an adult daycare center for the elderly, individuals with Down's syndrome and multiple sclerosis patients. One woman at the

adult center was a 26-year-old victim of multiple sclerosis who had been struck by the disease while a sophomore in college. Team members developed a special friendship with her.

On Thursday the students worked at a soup kitchen, preparing and serving a meal. When they finished, they sorted clothes in a thrift shop.

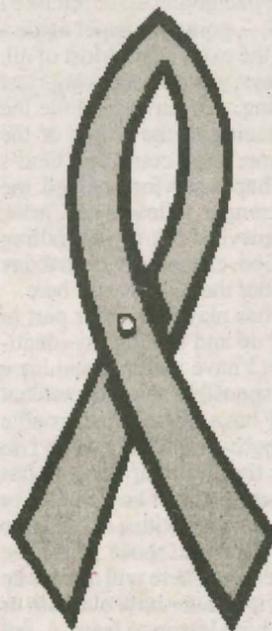
As usual, each of the students enjoyed different activities during the week. They had the opportunity to use their strengths and recognize their weaknesses. They realized the importance of being a team. We appreciate their ministry and example.

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

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College's Christian student group reinstated after gay controversy

MEDFORD, Mass. (RNS)—A student-faculty review board at Tufts University has reinstated a Christian student group after it was kicked off campus because it denied a leadership post to a lesbian student.

The Tufts Christian Fellowship lost its university affiliation after it told student Julie Catalano, a lesbian, that she could not hold a leadership role within the group. The university announced May 16 that a review of the decision found the group had improperly lost its university sanction.

"We're back on campus," Curtis Chang, the group's chaplain, told Associated Press. "We're delighted that Tufts has sought to uphold religious freedom, and we're looking forward to the fall to come back and worship Jesus on the campus and to share the love of God with the campus."

The controversy erupted in April after the group—affiliated with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship—told Catalano she could not help lead the group because she was a lesbian. The group said it believed sexual relations are reserved for married heterosexual couples.

Catalano filed a complaint, saying the anti-gay discrimination violated the school's anti-discrimination policy. A student judicial panel agreed, and banned the group from campus facilities and from receiving student activity funds.

Chang vowed to fight the decision, saying the group never prohibited Catalano from attending meetings and was not "homophobic." The issue was one of religious freedom, he said.

The school's Committee on Student Life, composed of faculty and students, said the group was denied a hearing and has reinstated the group. The case now goes back to the student court, and the group is temporarily back on campus.

Catalano, who left the group earlier this year, could not be reached for comment.

Church loses battle on tax-exempt status

WASHINGTON D.C. (RNS)—An appellate court has upheld a federal court ruling removing a New York church's tax-exempt status after it bought newspaper ads opposing then-presidential candidate Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign.

The revocation—which marked the first time a church has lost its tax exemption for political activity—"neither violated the Constitution nor exceeded the IRS' statutory authority," according to a three-judge panel of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, which issued the ruling May 12.

Lawyers for the Church at Pierce Creek in the Binghamton, N.Y., area, had argued that the Internal Revenue Service violated the church's free-speech rights, engaged in selective

prosecution and exceeded its authority.

"These objections are without merit," the appellate court found in a unanimous ruling, Associated Press reported.

Just before the 1992 election, the church and its pastor, Daniel Little, purchased full-page advertisements in USA Today and the Washington Times to encourage voters to reject Clinton because of his stands on homosexuality and abortion.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State filed a complaint with the tax agency after the "Christians Beware" ads appeared.

"The decision slams the door on mixing religion and partisan politics," said Barry Lynn, executive director of the Washington-based public policy

agency.

The court said churches can form separate, non-exempt organizations "for the promotion of social welfare." Those entities can create political action committees to take part in campaigns, it ruled.

Jay Sekulow, chief counsel for the American Center for Law and Justice, represented the church. He said his law firm had not decided whether to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

"While we are disappointed with the ... case involving the Church at Pierce Creek, we are encouraged that this court appears to provide a blueprint for churches to express their beliefs in a political context," Sekulow said. "This is an important development in the area of protecting the First Amendment rights."

Pro-gay group to protest Presbyterian meeting

LONG BEACH, Calif. (RNS)—The pro-gay group that drew 191 people to be arrested at the General Conference meeting of the United Methodist Church has announced plans for similar demonstrations at next month's meeting of the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Soulforce, an ecumenical group pushing for greater acceptance of gays and lesbians within church life, announced May 15 that the group has planned a civil disobedience protest during a June 25 worship service.

The 2.5 million-member Presbyterian Church (USA)—the nation's larg-

est Presbyterian body—will meet in Long Beach, Calif., for its General Assembly from June 24 to July 1. Pro-gay groups hope to change the church's bans on ordaining gays and lesbians and performing same-sex union ceremonies.

The United Methodist Church ended its General Conference in Cleveland on May 12. The church voted not to change bans on gay ordination and same-sex ceremonies, and retained a statement calling the practice of homosexuality "incompatible with Christian teaching." Soulforce led a demonstration that blocked exits to the Cleveland

Convention Center, and 191 people were arrested.

Mel White, a former ghostwriter for Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson and the leader of Soulforce, said he will train volunteers in nonviolent demonstrations and plans to be arrested again.

After protesters failed to sway delegates to the Methodist meeting, White announced a boycott of Methodist churches that do not welcome gay and lesbian members, and said protesters will picket those churches. The Episcopal Church also will tackle the homosexuality question in July, but White has not said whether he will protest there.

Class OF 2000, part 6

Students come to Oneida for many reasons. Sometimes just moving from one school district to another can cause problems. This essay was written by a young lady who did not adjust well to her new home. She had attended the same school until her freshman year, when her family moved to Kentucky.

"My mother and stepfather had decided it was time to move. ... Moreover, we were going to be moving to a small county in Kentucky. This news was horrifying to me! The last thing I wanted was to leave all my friends and move from the wonderful place I had lived for years. I was angry and upset at my mother and blamed her for ruining my life. I did not want to start over. ... I begged, I cried and I even asked my friends to adopt me.

"I did not do well in my new school. ... Plus I was not getting along too well with my mother and stepfather because I held a grudge against them. ... My mother found information on the Internet and came across Oneida Baptist Institute. ... I decided I would give it a chance. After all the movies, interviews and tours, it was time to say goodbye. ... As the time came closer to parting with them, it seemed like the hardest thing for all of us to do. I wanted so badly to say, 'Stop. Wait. You are forgetting somebody. Take me back.' ... I stood there waving my last goodbye with tears streaming down my face. ... I ran upstairs to my bedroom and cried on my pillow. Then suddenly a girl, who appeared to be my roommate, showed up. I never felt so much comfort from a stranger. ... She ran and gave me the biggest hug and told me things would be OK.

"Oneida was so different from the school I had

attended, mostly in the way we could go to chapel every day. ... Though I always went to church on Sundays, I had never gone during the school day. ... Whenever I felt like giving up or felt like I couldn't handle school, ... going to chapel made a difference. It gave me the extra push. Most of all, I love chapel on Fridays; no one speaking, just singing and worshipping. ... That helped me the most. Singing and listening to the words of the songs meant more to me, and I could feel God's presence. Chapel services helped me become a stronger follower of Christ, because whenever I felt myself falling away from God, chapel service that day was a reminder that God is still here.

"Oneida has played a major part in my growing up and finding my identity. I feel that I have matured and have become a responsible and independent individual. I have always had trouble obeying authority, especially when I do not agree or find it unfair. Oneida has taught me that no matter how unfair, or how much I disagree with a rule, I have to obey it and respect those who have authority over me. There will always be a set of rules to follow no matter how old I am or where I go. ... It was a hard lesson to learn, ... but it has prepared me for the authorities that I will need to obey later in life. ... I have lived and learned from my wrongs, but I have also become a stronger person who has developed into a young adult. Thank you all."

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

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Camp memories from California & Kentucky

Two letters from former campers at Clear Creek Mountain Springs reveal the lifelong influence of our ministry.

Martha Weller Vitale, of Los Angeles, and her sister Dorothy attended the 1938 girls' camp. The great room in our child development center is named in honor of their sister, Edith Rose Weller, a former missionary to Brazil.

"Being stung by a bumblebee while walking barefoot across a field to the church couldn't keep me at home! I was ready to attend camp and to continue building on the solid foundation of the early years (Sunbeams, VBS, G.A. house parties).

"So away we went on that long and tedious bus ride on a hot summer day, winding around curves and up and down hills on the old state highway, finally arriving at camp. I remember stumbling toward the door of the bus, getting off and fainting! The first few precious days at camp I was miserable with a terrible case of hives all over my body. But I did have a few days to participate in all the activities and to receive inspiration from the outstanding leaders.

"One rather unpleasant memory of camp days is the taste of the sulfur

water. Meeting new people and making friends was for me a very special part of camp life. I am sure I speak for many when I say that I left Clear Creek with a deep feeling of gratitude for an indescribable mountaintop experience that lingered long after I returned home and that I wanted to hold onto forever."

Martha sent several photographs, including one of the Georgetown GA group, many of whom remain active in Baptist life.

I also heard from Virginia Cranfield Holbrook, of Louisville, who attended the 1941 camp and enjoyed getting out her teenage scrapbook with camp program, activity certificate and autograph book. She and a friend, Christina Stratton, rode a bus to camp from Lawrenceburg.

"It was a great experience and helped us to be devoted Christians," Virginia wrote. Her father, Geobel Cranfield, was a pastor in Mercer and Boyle counties and her mother was a state youth leader in the 1950s.

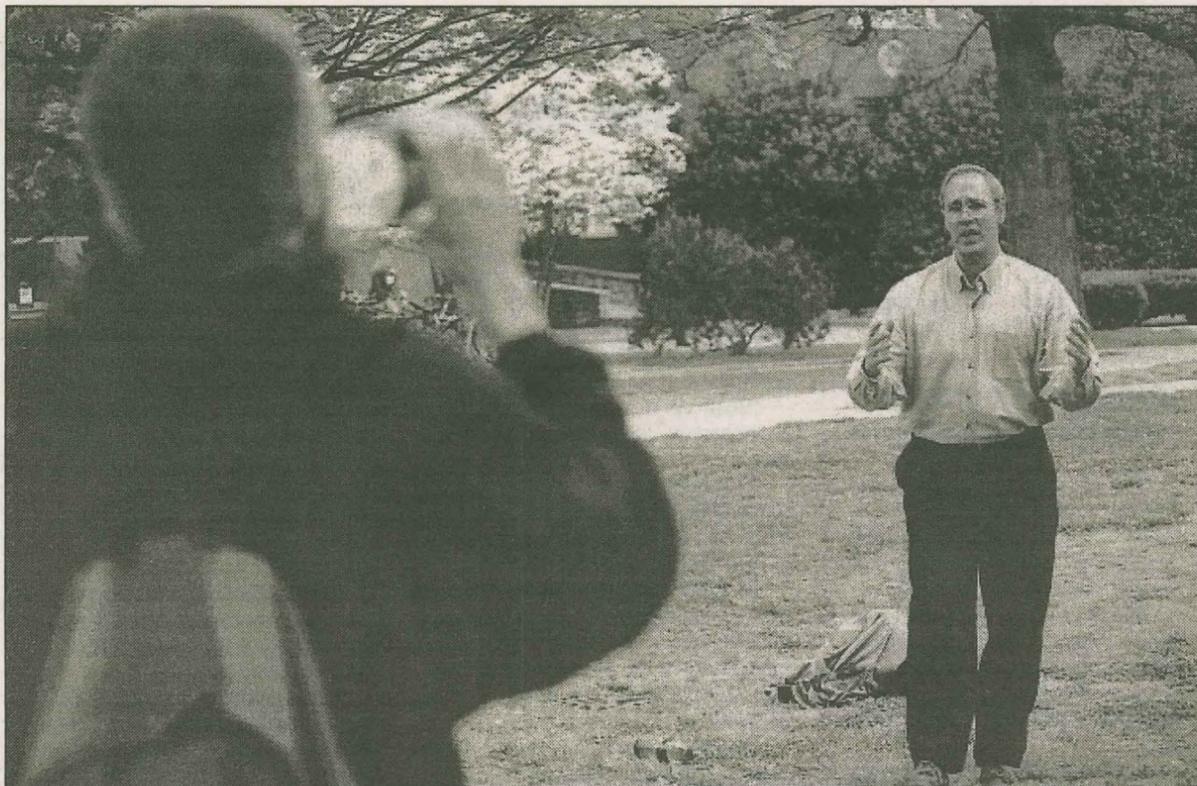
CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

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

EVANGELISM



CAMPUS CONVERSATIONS Phil Nelson begins an open-air forum at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale as students stop to listen. Nelson, a campus minister at the University of Illinois-Champaign, was invited by eight area campus ministries to lead impromptu forums. (BP photos by Michael Leathers)

Talks take gospel to college students

By Michael Leathers
Illinois Baptist

CARBONDALE, Ill. (BP)—As college students strolled the sidewalks after their last morning class at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, they heard a deep voice bellow from a nearby patch of grass.

For many who didn't have the time to stop and listen, they were familiar with this scenario. They assumed he was another preacher on campus, ready to tell them what was wrong with their lives and why they were going to hell.

Drawing closer, they could see their peers clustered around a middle-aged man wearing a light-blue button-down shirt and navy slacks.

The ones who paused to listen found Phil Nelson beginning the first of three days of what he refers to as "open-air forums." Nelson is a campus minister for the Illinois Baptist State Association based out of the University of Illinois in Champaign.

Nelson's goal is to connect with students and honestly answer their questions about Christianity. He's well aware that he is easily mistaken as a member of one of the religious fringe elements who often descend on public campuses, quick to preach at students and slow to respect them.

"Students see them as more of a sideshow. I try to get to know (the students), ask them their names and listen to their questions," Nelson said.

Students who talked to Nelson had various reactions to his discussions. Some were supportive. "I enjoy it when these ministers come out here and talk," said senior Amy Bligh, an agriculture-business major. "I just really like it because it gets people thinking. I have many questions about this whole Jesus-God relationship."

Others were tolerant. Some strongly opposed his presence. "People like him, preaching the word of the Christian God, came here and did the same



REBUTTAL Sophomore Melissa Freeman asks Nelson to explain "what supposedly gets you into heaven" and challenged the concept of absolute truth.

thing to the Indians," senior Alan Sommer said. "The Indians have the Bible; the Christians have all the land."

Nelson, who has held about two dozen dialogue sessions at colleges this year, said he's found a hunger for truth on college campuses. He visited Southern Illinois University at Carbondale at the invitation of eight campus ministries.

At the first dialogue, students asked questions, challenged the claims of Christianity and held spirited debates with Nelson. A common theme revolved around the belief that absolute truth does not exist.

"I try to help them see the inconsistency of relativism," Nelson said. "If someone says everything is relative, they are saying they are absolutely sure there are no absolutes."

Sophomore Melissa Freeman told Nelson, "Your perception of the truth is not everyone's perception of the truth. Truth is completely dependent on the individual and your definition."

Many students asked how can they know the Bible is true. Some said it was unnecessary. "God is out there for everyone to experience, regardless of the Bible," senior Jody Powell said. "I'm saying I can't trust the Scriptures. I can only rely on my own information that's within me."

"So everything in your life is up for grabs?" Nelson asked.

"Yeah, and that's fine with me," Powell said. "It's wonderful."

Some said a relationship with Jesus Christ was not necessary to know God. "I've got a personal relationship with God," junior Doug Bigham said. "I don't need a mediator like Jesus."

"Then you don't have a relationship with God," Nelson said.

Many students are critical of the inconsistencies they perceive in Christianity but do not recognize discrepancies in their own world views, Nelson said. Some students who are animal-rights advocates, for example, view killing animals for food as a violent act but are comfortable with a pro-abortion mindset, Nelson said.

"These open-air forums are not going to see a lot of conversions," he said. "I've learned I can't convince people with historical evidence. I just respond with Scriptures."

The academic environment is challenging for Christian students, who face ridicule for their beliefs. Nelson said that's why the forums are exciting to him.

The sessions "build confidence in Christian students and give them an arena to share Christ with their friends," Nelson said. He and about 150 Christians, mostly students, met the night before the forums to pray.

Nelson told the students at the end of his first two-hour dialogue that Christianity is not solely about facts; it also requires faith. "There's only one way you'll ever understand it. You have to commit your life to Christ without knowing all the answers."

Retired farmer reaps high yield after committing to share faith

By Dave Parker
Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

ROGERS, Ark. (BP)—During the past six and a half years, Walt Durant has led 629 people to faith in Jesus Christ.

Durant is not flashy, tall or handsome. He is more comfortable wearing blue jeans and a cowboy hat than a suit and tie. He doesn't have a seminary degree; in fact, he never completed high school.

And he's 73 years old.

Durant retired in 1992 and moved to Rogers, Ark., from his farm where he raised beef cattle. He said he had been involved with the visitation program at his previous church, but it consisted of "visiting people who had been members there for 40 years." In all his years of visiting, he had led only one person to become a Christian.

In Rogers, he joined Immanuel Baptist Church. When pastor Thomas Hatley preached about sharing one's faith, Durant said he felt convicted and went forward, committing his life to evangelism. Shortly thereafter, Durant attended a class on witnessing, and "I've been running ever since."

Durant started going out with Immanuel's "Highways and Hedges" visitation program in 1994 and led 40 people to Christ the first year. The next year he led 60 people, followed by 60 in 1996, 95 in 1997 and 80 in 1998.

In 1998, Hatley heard about LifeWay Christian Resources' FAITH evangelism program, and that summer he took the entire Immanuel staff—and Durant—to a clinic.

After four semesters of FAITH, Hatley said he is sold on the program. He said it works because it focuses on leading people to faith in Jesus and is tied to Sunday school.

The first year Durant used the FAITH program, the retiree almost tripled the number of people he led to personal faith in Jesus Christ—234 people. In the first three months of 2000, the rate is slightly higher, with 60 professions so far.

While Durant speaks highly of the FAITH evangelism program, he notes it isn't easy. In fact, it takes a lot of work.

Durant practices his presentation twice a day. Each week he goes out on Monday night, Thursday night, all day Saturday and Sunday afternoon. He sets up appointments for other days. He visits an average of 65 homes weekly. Of those, he gets to present the gospel five to eight times, and an average of five people accept Jesus as Savior.

"It's a powerful presentation," Durant said. "If they'll listen, chances are I will lead them to the Lord. But, I had 111 say 'No' last year, and 20 have said, 'No' so far this year."

The secret to his success, Durant said, is simply a willing heart.

"You have to really want to do it," he said. "I believe that if there are any Christians who want to be soul-winners, they can do it by dedicating their lives to soul-winning, by praying real hard and by going."

"God does the soul-winning," Durant continued. "The only thing we can do is go. I thank God that I don't have to worry about getting professions out of people."

Durant said he is the perfect example of the fact that God uses imperfect people.

"I don't have a good education; I didn't even finish high school," he said. "I am bowlegged, bald and old. I thank God I'm not perfect. The Bible says God uses the base, and I am about as base as you can get."

After leading 629 people to Christ, Durant said he still rejoices over every one.

"I'll never get over that feeling," he said. "It is the greatest privilege any man could ever have. I pray every day that the Lord will allow me to do this until the day I die. I hope to be witnessing at someone's door when the Lord calls me home."

He's had several requests to speak, but he keeps turning them down. He said he doesn't want speaking engagements to interfere with his primary responsibility—sharing his faith with others.

Hatley said other people could emulate Durant's success if only they would work at it. "Probably the missing element most folks have is the desire to work," Hatley said. "He's not afraid to work."

PRAYER PARTNERS

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

■ Missionary David Jackson in Boston offers praise for the 115 people who attended the first public service of a new church in Framingham, Mass., Easter Sunday. Three people made public professions of faith in Jesus as Savior that day.

■ Brad Summers, the new pastor at Community Baptist Church, in Weymouth, Mass.

■ Missionaries on the Mwanza Urban Team in Tanzania ask prayer for a "beautiful 26-year-old Tanzanian woman" who is dealing with being HIV positive. Her husband died of AIDS five months ago.

■ The teachers and pastors in the Pastors' Training School in the Biharamulo District of northwestern Tanzania.

■ A large group of non-believers who attended an evangelistic dinner theater in Warsaw, Poland, last month and missionaries Mark and Tatiana McNiel as they lead efforts to share Christ with them.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Shirley Wooton

■ **BEDFORD**—Antioch Church ordained **Ki Sun No** to the gospel ministry. A graduate of Southern Seminary, he has accepted a call to serve Global Mission Church in Korea.

■ **ENGLISH**—**Michael Meiller** resigned as pastor of English Church.

■ **GREENVILLE**—New Cypress Church called **Jeff Noffsinger** as pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Cloverleaf Church will host **Sons of Liberty** June 3 at 7 p.m. For information, call (502) 367-0218. **Geoffrey Lacefield** is pastor.

Fern Creek Church will host **David Livingston** in concert May 28 at 1:30 p.m. **Debbie Gorbandt** is minister of music.

Rockford Lane Church will host revival services June 11-14, Sunday at 6:30 p.m. and Monday-Wednesday at 7 p.m. **Greg Bruckert** will be the evangelist. **Wesley Pitts** is interim pastor.

■ **OWENTON**—Buford Dunavent, a former community missionary for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, died May 3. He was 78. Dunavent, who was also a former missionary to Tanzania and Kenya, served as pastor of Clark's Creek Church in Dry Ridge, Kenton Church in Kenton and Mt. Zion Church in Owenton.

■ **RUSSELL SPRINGS**—Dunnville Church called **Roger Shepherd** as pastor. Shepherd was ordained May 7 by Poplar Grove Church. **Don Arthur** is pastor of Poplar Grove Church.

■ **WILLIAMSBURG**—**Doug Adkins** resigned as youth and college director of Williamsburg First Church. Adkins accepted a call as minister of youth and activities in Madison, Ga. **Harold Mauney** is pastor.

■ **WORTHVILLE**—**Mark Webb** resigned as pastor of Worthville Church.

Somerset church planters appointed

SOMERSET—Philip and Kathryn Bruce were appointed recently by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board as church planters in Burnside.

Bruce will work with High Street Baptist Church and Buena Vista Baptist Church in Somerset to start new churches in that area, primarily in the Lake Cumberland area.

A native of Winston-Salem, N.C., Bruce has worked with churches in Arizona, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. He served in various positions with Highview Baptist Church in Louisville from 1993 to 1995. For the past four years, he was bivocational pastor of Union Grove Church in Bedford.

Mrs. Bruce is a native of Louisville. The couple have two children, Stephanie and Robert.

Scholar raised black church studies to academic level

By Yonat Shimron
Raleigh (N.C.) News and Observer

DURHAM, N.C. (RNS)—As a teen picking cotton in his native Alabama, the venerable scholar C. Eric Lincoln was cheated of his wages one day. When he complained about the dollar count, he was knocked to the ground.

"Ain't no n—r can count behind a white man," the cotton gin owner told him.

That humiliating encounter was one of many that drove Lincoln to excel and made him the distinguished sociologist of black religion he later became.

Lincoln, who spent his last years as professor emeritus at Duke University, died May 14 at 75. He was regarded by many as the most significant black religion scholar in the second half of the 20th century.

During his prolific career, Lincoln wrote 22 books, including several accounts of the black religious experience, but also a novel, books of poetry, church hymns and philosophical ruminations.

In academic circles, Lincoln might best be remembered for elevating the role of black church studies.

His first book, "The Black Muslims in America," written in 1961, examined the growth and appeal of the Nation of Islam, the movement founded by Elijah Muhammad.

He is perhaps best known for his 1990 classic, "The Black Church in the

African American Experience," written with his former student Lawrence Mamiya. The 520-page tome was encyclopedic in its reach, encompassing the black religious experience from its African roots, to the growth of black Baptist and Methodist denominations to the urban church experience.

Lincoln was one of the first to point out the exodus of black males from the church and the tremendous organizational power of laywomen, which, in some cases, was turning young men away from church. He concluded that churches should provide more relevant programs for youth.

At the recent memorial service, Lincoln was remembered for the overarching dilemma at the center of his life and work—that of race.

An ordained United Methodist minister, Lincoln was a founding member of Reconciliation United Methodist Church in Durham, a multiracial church he and his wife, Lucy Cook, attended. Lincoln wrote hymns for the church and, though he was in declining health due to diabetes, high blood pressure and a heart condition, did his best to attend.

"He told me he had dreamed all his life that this was the kind of church he wanted to be a part of," said Lawrence Johnson, the black pastor of Reconciliation who preaches alongside Kevin Baker, who is white. "If he were to start his ministry over, this was the place he would want to be."

CLASSIFIED ADS

AVAILABLE: Evangelist Chris Short has open dates for 2000 and 2001. Call (270) 483-9570 for information or references.

AVAILABLE: Evangelist Wyman Copass has some open dates June-August and November. Good dates available in 2001. Call (270) 683-6040. E-mail: wcmia@aol.com.

FOR RENT: 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo available for vacation rental, Sanibel Island, Fla. Large pool, tennis courts, bikes, canoe, kayak, screened porch, lovely secluded beach. Weekly rates May through mid-December: \$650. Call Pat Owen, (502) 895-8752.

FOR SALE: New 1999 Dodge vans: 15-passenger, raised-roof, lowered stepwell, easy-access, center aisle, ducted rear heat and a/c plus many more options. Retail: \$35,739; net cost after rebates and discounts: \$29,990. Call (800) 582-7118.

FOR SALE: Telex copyette 123 (1&0 Mono), cassettes and clear cassette boxes. Call and leave message: (606) 928-4953.

FOR SALE: Church pews. Call (502) 495-3908 for further details.

SEEKING: Receptionist/secretary; multiple phone lines. Send resumé to: Porter Memorial Baptist Church, 4300 Nicholasville Road, Lexington, KY 40515-4616.

SEEKING: Full-time church secretary with knowledge of Microsoft Word for Windows (Microsoft Publisher and church accounting software helpful). Send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Parkway Baptist Church 2580 Springfield Road, Bardstown, KY 40004.

SEEKING: Children's pastor/director. Bellevue Baptist Church is a fast-growing contemporary congregation averaging 1,000 in attendance in three Sunday morning services. We seek a full-time, experienced, energetic and visionary person with strong leadership, creativity, innovation and the ability to recruit and motivate a growing volunteer team. Contact Dr. Greg Faulls, Bellevue Baptist Church, 519 West Byers, Owensboro, KY 42303. Fax: (270) 685-5134. Web page: www.bellnet.org.

SEEKING: East Cadiz Baptist Church of Cadiz is seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Send resumé to: M/Y Search Committee, East Cadiz Baptist Church, 407 Third St., Cadiz, KY 42211.

SEEKING: Caneyville Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a full-time, experienced, energetic pastor. Prefer college and/or seminary training. Send resumé to: Eddie A. Majors, 164 Clay Way, Leitchfield, KY 42754.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister. Send resumé to: Stamping Ground Baptist Church, PO Box 67, Stamping Ground, KY 40379.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and senior adults. Send resumé to: Minister of Music Search Committee, Burlington Baptist Church, PO Box 48, Burlington, KY 41005; (859) 586-6529.

SEEKING: Full-time director of family life and conference center. Send resumé to: Student Affairs, Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, 300 Clear Creek Road, Pineville, KY 40977.

SEEKING: Experienced full-time youth/children's minister for a 1-1/2 year old contemporary style, growing church (225+) in a small town in central Kentucky. Must be self-motivated, creative, a team player and able to work in a portable church situation. Send resumé to: River of Life Community Church, PO Box 192, Springfield, KY 40069.

SEEKING: Second Baptist Church of Greenville, Ky., is prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of music and youth. Please send resumé to: Mr. John Mark Pendley, Search Committee, PO Box 253, Greenville, KY 42345.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church, Richmond, Ky., is seeking an organist. Contact Dick Ham, minister of music, for job description and organ specifications. Phone: (606) 623-4028. Fax: (606) 623-5978. Deadline for applications: May 31.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music (approximately 15 hours/week). Send resumé to: Youngers Creek Baptist Church, 251 Youngers Creek Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701.

SEEKING: Full-time youth minister in combination with associate pastor or programs minister. Russellville, Ky. Contact church office: (270) 726-2468, or Thomas Bouldin, (800) 718-7372.

SEEKING: Full-time youth/music minister for Hyattsville Baptist Church, Lancaster, Ky. Please send resumé with salary requirements to: Mike Bolin, Personnel Committee chairman, c/o Hyattsville Baptist Church, 1365 Richmond Road, Lancaster, KY 40444. (606) 792-4851 or 792-6610.

SEEKING: Knoxville Baptist Church (Crittenden Association) is seeking a part-time minister of youth to work with grades 6-12. Applicant should be available weekends and Wednesday evenings; should be able to lead youth-oriented Bible study and a variety of spiritual and recreational activities. Music ability a plus. Send resumé to: Bro. Dwight Parker, 2150 Dry Ridge-Mt. Zion Road, Dry Ridge, KY 41035.

SEEKING: Rapidly growing church in Paducah, Ky., is seeking a full-time minister of education. Send resumé to: Mt. Zion Baptist Church, c/o Anthony Gilbert, 78 Owen Drive, Kevil, KY 42053.

SEEKING: Full-time youth and music minister, FBC of Anderson Hills, Cincinnati. Contact Tom Porter: (513) 232-6945, or church: (513) 474-2441.

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 children's minister for Farmdale Baptist Church, 5610 U.S. Highway 127 South, Frankfort, Ky. If you feel God is calling you to this area to work with children, send resumé to: Ms. Bryan, 530 Alfa Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of music and youth. Please send resumé to: First Baptist Church, PO Box 506, Hindman, KY 41822, Attn: Search Committee.

Wildfire makes it a long week for New Mexico minister

By John Loudat
New Mexico Baptist

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. (ABP)—What began as the end of another "hard day at the office" for a New Mexico Baptist pastor turned out to be one of the most exhausting and traumatic weeks of his life.

White Rock Baptist Church in Los Alamos agreed only a few months back to be designated by the American Red Cross as a disaster relief center in the event of an emergency.

Only minutes after arriving home about 6:30 p.m. Sunday, May 7, Pastor Chuck McCullough received a phone call from a Red Cross official asking him to meet at the church in 30 minutes.

As a controlled burn by the National Park Service got out of hand, portions of the Los Alamos town site near White Rock were evacuated. Evacuees began arriving at the church by 8 p.m.

And so did all the help the church would need during the next three days that its facilities were transformed into a command center and shelter.

"I never had to make one call," the astonished pastor said. The stream of volunteers from the church and community "never stopped," he said. McCullough said people came forward to help in any way they could, including opening their homes for people, pets and even horses.

The church provided all the meals for evacuees and workers for the next three days.

"It was just an amazing thing," said McCullough, who watched volunteers work six-hour shifts to care for the 60 people who were processed into the shelter.

It was tiring, too. McCullough estimated that he slept a total of 10 hours from Sunday until Thursday and not at all on the first and last nights the shelter was in operation.

By Wednesday, things were slowing down at the church, so McCullough went home about midnight for what he hoped would be a good night's sleep.



WILDFIRE Fire rages near Los Alamos, N.M., where hundreds of residents have been left homeless. Baptist pastor Chuck McCullough led his church members in ministry to fire victims for three days before the church itself had to be evacuated. (RNS/Reuters photo)

Fifteen minutes later the phone rang. Again, it was the Red Cross informing him the wildfire now threatened White Rock, and its population of 7,000—plus evacuees staying in homes and shelters—might have to be evacuated.

McCullough returned to the church. A half-hour later the order came, and the Red Cross and evacuees packed up and left.

McCullough returned home to help his wife, Karen, and 15-year-old twin daughters, Joy and Grace, leave their

home and belongings. He left the house with his family, plus a pair of jeans and three T-shirts. "I wish now I would have grabbed a few more things," he admitted three days later.

With the rest of his family in bumper-to-bumper traffic headed toward Santa Fe, McCullough and a friend, Darrik Stafford, went by the church to lock it up.

Arriving, they were greeted by two national guardsmen, who asked if they had any food. The guardsmen said they and about 50 fellow guardsmen

nearby were hungry, and they asked if the entire crew could come for breakfast.

McCullough and Stafford started cooking. The troops arrived at 6 a.m. for a breakfast of French toast and left with sandwiches the pair had packed for the group for lunch.

About 4 a.m. the Emergency Operation Center from Los Alamos National Laboratory called the church, asking if they also could come pick up food.

Later the EOC called back, telling the pastor about another 200 people still at the lab who also needed food.

At about 8:30 a.m. Thursday, after filling a Suburban full of all the remaining food and water at the church—and long after the town had been emptied—McCullough and Stafford finally left the church.

All civilians were supposed to be evacuated, McCullough said, but "we were exactly where we were supposed to be."

After a quick shower at home, McCullough finally joined his family at about 11:30 a.m. at LifeWay Conference Center in Glorieta, about 45 miles away, where about 850 evacuees were staying. He said he "just broke down in sobs" when he was told there would be no charge.

McCullough said he wept "all the way through" a chapel service that evening before finally getting a good night's sleep.

On Friday evening he preached during the chapel service. Addressing the crowd as a "fellow refugee," McCullough encouraged them with Jesus' words in Matthew 6 to seek first God's Kingdom and He would provide them with everything they needed, fully aware that many of them had lost nearly all their personal possessions.

McCullough estimated that the church and community have "a year-long job ahead of us."

While 260 now homeless families are facing "utter devastation" and experiencing overwhelming grief, he said, others are having to deal with "survivor guilt."

The community will be changed forever, he said. And "those beautiful green mountains" will be gone for the rest of their lives, he lamented.

White Rock Baptist Church in Los Alamos agreed only a few months back to be designated a disaster relief center in the event of an emergency.

Here's one sports agent who would rather scream, "Show me the kids' camp!"

By Nathan DeFalco
Baptist Press

OCALA, Fla (BP)—If you're looking for a sports agent who's more interested in kids camps and character than he is screaming "Show me the money!" meet Ken Ford.

A far cry from the "Jerry Maguire" stereotype, Ford says he's looking to present a different philosophy with his agency, one that helps athletes make a difference in a young person's life.

"I had a vision of beginning these Christian sports camps," said Ford, founder of Christian Athletes Sports Agency.

"My first question was, 'How do we finance these camps and couple professional athletes with youth?'" he recalled. "God then gave me a vision of

starting an agency to fund the camps."

Based in Ocala, Fla., CASA is the first and only nonprofit sports agency in the National Football League.

Any money made goes straight into the Camp of Champions fund, a branch of Power Source Ministries, also founded by Ford. The funds then are allocated to meet the needs of each individual sports camp.

Ford, a father of three, has been a Florida Baptist minister since 1983.

"My motivation is not the almighty dollar," Ford said. "You can either pay an agent and the money will go into his pocket, or you can pay us and the money will go into camps that make a difference in a young person's life."

Ford started CASA in the spring of 1999, after he was certified with the NFL

Players Association. The first player signed was Tim Cross, a graduate of Carson-Newman College, a Baptist-related college in Tennessee.

Ford said he hopes one day to expand CASA to represent athletes from all sports. The biggest obstacle, he said, is getting licensed and registered in each state.

"For each state you operate in, you have to be registered by that state, which costs a lot of money," he said.

"This whole business is built on relationships and contacts," Ford explained. "For example, if we know someone who is a college roommate of the next star football player, and we get him signed with us, then eventually the word will get around and we will have established a reputation for ourselves."

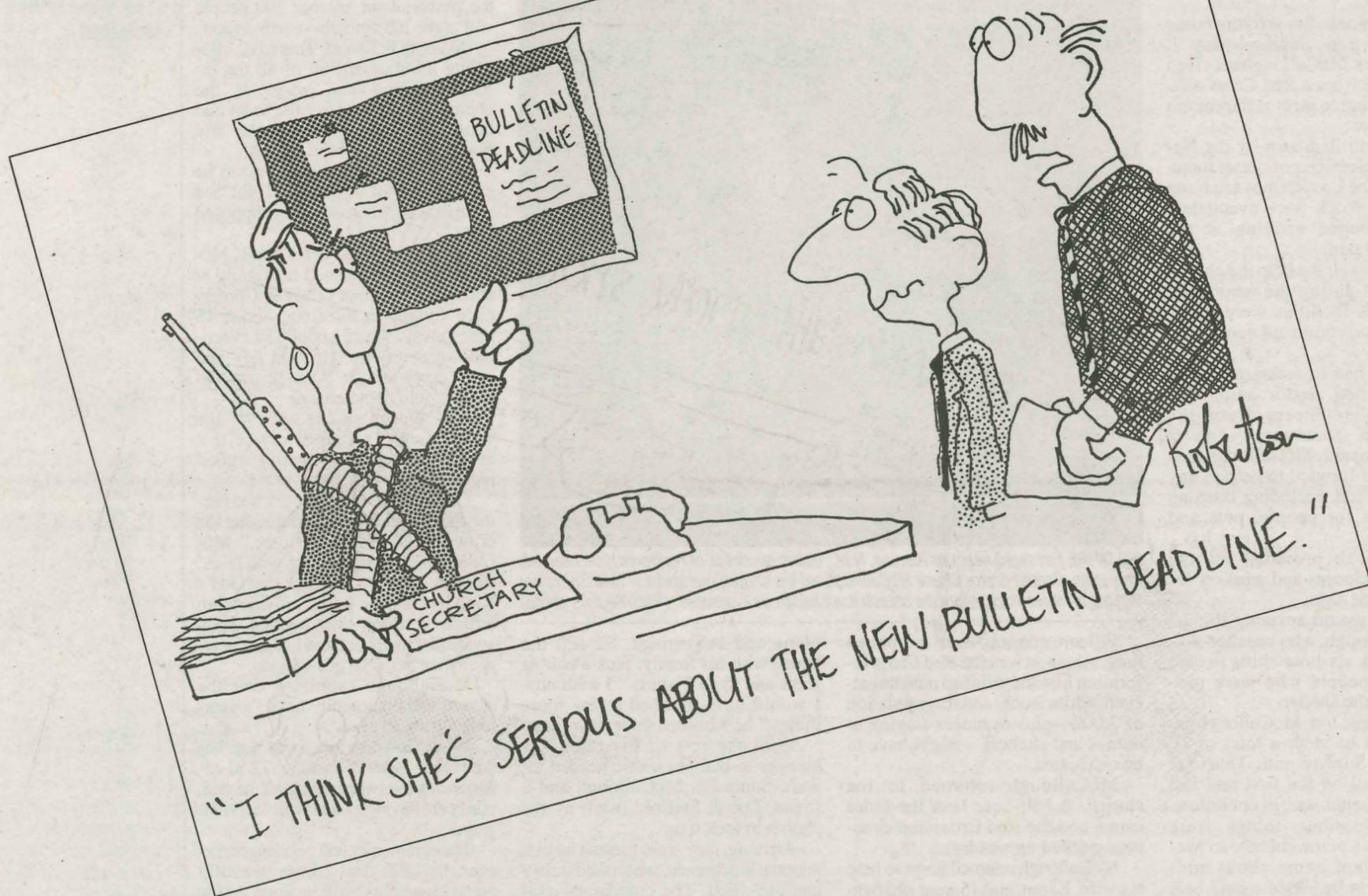
Last fall, Ford mailed 2,500 letters promoting the agency and has hired two outside sports agency consultants who have 30 years of combined experience.

Each camp funded by CASA is designed to surround young, unchurched athletes with Christian athletes, coaches and leaders. A program is set up at each camp that challenges students to do their very best athletically and spiritually.

Ford said he considers CASA not only an outlet for Christian athletes-to-minister, but an outreach for unbelieving athletes.

"Most athletes that will come to us will be Christians," he acknowledged, "but if an unbelieving athlete wants to share his heart with young people, then I'll pour my heart into him, and in that way we make it an outreach."

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