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Vol. 24, No. 3



Staying in Homestead

**Long-term ministry grows
out of storm relief**

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Win Gover helps a student with homework. Gover and his wife Janell are members of Southside Baptist Church in Covington, Ky., and spend winter months near Miami.



Staying in Homestead

Food, fun and homework help are part of after-school activities at Open House Ministries.



Long-term ministry grows out of storm relief

HOMESTEAD, Fla. — Hurricane Andrew made a quick visit to south Florida in 1992, devastating the communities of Homestead and Florida City. Baptist volunteers came in droves to help rebuild homes and lives.

In the process they discovered a place where they could invest in long-term ministry. Some 13 years later, Open House Ministries (OHM) is a vital part of a community still seeking to recover.

“They just need to know that somebody somewhere cares about them,” said Wanda Ashworth, as children gathered for after-school activities that include refreshments, recreation and help with homework.

Ashworth directs Open House Ministries, sponsored by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Florida, CBF National and partnering churches. She first visited the ministry center with a mission team from First Baptist Church of York, S.C., where she was minister of music.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN PIERCE

Her associate director, Leah Crowley, came from York as well. A former teacher, Crowley directs the children's and youth programs at Open House.

"Giving [the children] just a little goes a long way," said Crowley. "It's not that their parents don't love them; they are just overwhelmed. It may be that they just spent 15 hours in a squash field."

Carolyn Anderson, coordinator for CBF of Florida, remembers how Homestead got on their radar following Hurricane Andrew.

"Hundreds of volunteers from across the country came to assist in cleanup, repairs and rebuilding in the migrant communities," she recalled. "[We] were prepared to deliver food, water, diapers, etc."

David Wideman, associate pastor at University Baptist Church in Coral Gables, coordinated the early relief efforts, said Anderson. Then David and Tracy Bengtson were appointed as CBF missionaries to Homestead. Long-term volunteers John and Christine Smith helped develop OHM as well.

The teens who come to OHM today for Bible study and worship were just toddlers when the big hurricane came through in 1992. But they pick up on the tension of their parents when another one is forecast, said Crowley.

OHM administrative assistant Esperanza Perez, whose husband Cormé is a faithful volunteer, said the community "wasn't prepared at all" for the overwhelming destruction brought on by Hurricane Andrew. Fear of a similar tragedy rises each season, she said.

Natural disasters are not the only concerns in this community outside Miami. The closest school to the OHM center is struggling, and nearly a third of the neighbors live below the national poverty level.

Ashworth, who has a social work degree from Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina, describes the ministry setting as diverse with a variety of challenges and opportunities. Sixteen distinct ethnic groups live closely, but somewhat segregated.

"They don't want us to refer to them as Hispanics," said Ashworth of the many Spanish-speaking neighbors. "They want us to know where they are from — Honduras, Mexico, Guatemala."

Programs for children and youth (creatively called "Salteens") are just part of the OHM effort to help build better communities in South Florida. A thrift store sells

donated clothing for 25 cents apiece twice weekly. The income provides jobs for those wanting to work in the store.

A food distribution program helps families meet basic needs. OHM shares space and partners with a free health clinic and organizes support groups for diabetics. Another partner addresses employment, education and housing issues.

Ashworth and Crowley are helping start a new ministry with young offenders at Everglades Youth Development Center where no chaplain is assigned.

But it is the ministry with younger members of the community that brings so much energy to the OHM center. Even when no formal activities are planned, the kids often make their way over.

"We only meet with the homework club on Tuesday and Wednesday," said Crowley. "But pretty much every afternoon there are kids here."

Sometimes they come over just to talk and cut paper, she said.

"So many of them don't have crayons, glue and scissors at home," said Crowley. "They don't have books. We like for them to fill their homes with books."

Perhaps the greatest gift provided to these children is a safe place to run and play, and staff and volunteers that give them love and guidance. Apparently, this is much of the appeal for the children and their parents.

"We've been blessed to be seen by the community as common ground, holy ground," said Ashworth of the ongoing ministry that grew out of a tragedy. **BT**

COME TO HOMESTEAD

Volunteers and mission teams are a big help with the varied programs of Open House Ministries including summer day camps. For information on scheduling a trip to Homestead, contact:

Wanda Ashworth, director
Open House Ministries
1350 SW 4th St.
Homestead, FL 33030
(305) 242-1418
wanderful43@yahoo.com



Each noonday, OHM staff and volunteers share prayer requests submitted by Homestead residents throughout the week.

Sharing...

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2006 General Assembly

General Sessions – June 22-23
Auxiliary Events – June 21 & 24
Georgia World Congress Center
Atlanta, Ga.



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- "Living Positively: An HIV/AIDS Summit"
- a Theological Education Banquet



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Schedule of Events

Assembly runs Thursday and Friday with auxiliary events on Wednesday and Saturday.

Wednesday, June 21

9:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
1:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Auxiliary Events

Invitation to Sabbath: A Clergy Day Apart
HIV/AIDS Summit
Theological Education Banquet

Thursday, June 22

7:00 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.
8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.
8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
9:00 a.m. – 10:10 a.m.
10:30 a.m. – 11:40 a.m.
11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.
2:00 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.
3:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
6:45 p.m.
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
8:30 p.m.

Auxiliary Events

HIV/AIDS Summit
Resource Fair Open
Workshops
General Session I
Lunch & Auxiliary Events
Workshops (includes Business Breakouts)
State/Regional Meetings
Dinner & Auxiliary Events
Pre-Worship Gathering
General Session II
Resource Fair Event

Friday, June 23

7:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.
8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
11:00 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.
2:00 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.
3:30 p.m. – 4:40 p.m.
5:00 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
6:45 p.m.
7:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
8:30 p.m.

Auxiliary Events

Resource Fair Open
General Session III
Fellowship Time
Lunch & Auxiliary Events
Workshops
Workshops
Dinner & Auxiliary Events
Pre-Worship Gathering
General Session IV
Resource Fair Event

Saturday, June 24

9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Auxiliary Events

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John D. Pierce
Executive Editor
editor@baptiststoday.org

Jackie B. Riley
Managing Editor
jackie@baptiststoday.org

Keithen M. Tucker
Development & Marketing
ktucker@baptiststoday.org

Gail Hardison
Circulation Manager
ghardison@baptiststoday.org

Jannie Lister
Office Assistant

Bruce T. Gourley
Online Editor
gourley@baptiststoday.org

Walker Knight Jack U. Harwell
Publisher Emeritus Editor Emeritus

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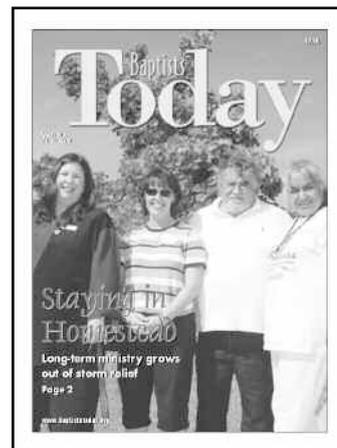


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Cover photo by John Pierce. Open House Ministries staff and volunteers (left to right) Wanda Ashworth, Leah Crowley and Cosmé and Esperanza Perez continue a ministry in Homestead, Fla., that began as hurricane relief in 1992.

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Quotation

“ remarks ”

“The vast, vast majority of Americans and the vast majority of American Christians know virtually nothing about Palestinian Christians.”

—Martin E. Marty (Sightings)

“We used to think it was done. But a lot of the areas that are still developing have to do with making judgment calls.”

—University of Missouri-Columbia researcher Denis McCarthy on evidence that the brain continues to develop after age 18, when most become college freshmen (USA TODAY)

“It’s definitely something in the grape juice that has no business being there.”

—Police Capt. Fred Komm on the poisoning of Welch’s grape juice served last month during communion at Calvary Baptist Church in Darien, Conn., sickening about 40 parishioners (Stamford Advocate)

“Christians across the state have an obligation to turn out on something as important as this.”

—Former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore urging voters to support a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriages as well as vote for him for governor in the Republican primary June 6 (AP)

“Denominational entities ought to trust the people in whose name they serve to the point of providing fair and balanced accounts of issues raised in meetings as well as the meetings themselves.”

—Editor Bob Terry of The Alabama Baptist, opposing a new policy that requires the trustee chairman’s approval of all releases from the SBC International Mission Board

“You can’t be untouchable and then call other people infidel.”

—Imam Mohamed Magid, executive director of the All Dulles Area Muslim Society in Northern Virginia, saying Muslims should protest defamations against the faith perpetrated by their co-religionists (RNS)

“Baptists function best in sunshine when the doors and windows are wide open. Dissident voices, whether their opinions are right or wrong, must be heard.”

—Charlie Warren, editor of Arkansas Baptist News

“Most of you are so young you don’t know who I am, and that’s good.”

—Former PTL host Jim Bakker, speaking to a church in Fort Mill, S.C., site of his former scandal-ridden ministry (RNS quoting The Herald in Rock Hill, S.C.)

“We are in danger of choking the life out of the future of the SBC by dabbling in peripheral matters and neglecting the heart of our convention, which have always been missions, evangelism and cooperation.”

—Jimmy Draper, in his last column before retiring Jan. 31 as president of LifeWay Christian Resources (BP)

“Unless the church advocates for [the elderly], they are left between a rock and hard place.”

—Bobby Joe Saucer, former dean of Morehouse School of Religion and author of Our Help in Ages Past: The Black Church’s Ministry Among the Elderly from Judson Press (Atlanta Journal-Constitution)

“Our affirmation lies in submission to Christ, not in forcing others to submit to our ideology as does fundamentalism.”

—Denton Lotz, general secretary of the Baptist World Alliance

“Once again the odor of money surrounds the clergy.”

—Papal biographer Vittorio Messori on the Vatican charging a publisher \$18,000 to reprint 30 lines of Pope Benedict XVI’s speeches (RNS)

“For fear of dissension and disharmony in the church, members have sold their Baptist legacy for a mess of porridge and today we have ill-informed, passionate provincial statements ... passing for mainstream Baptist thought.”

—Stephen Fox of Collinsville, Ala., in an op-ed piece in The Post

“... As for me and my house, we’re going to support him.”

—Bluegrass picker Ricky Skaggs calling President Bush, with whom he shared the Grand Ole Opry stage Feb. 1, “God’s man for this time” (BP)

“[Being a worship leader must be] the highest of all art forms, to worship and call people into the presence of God.”

—Irish rock star Bono, talking with reporters after speaking to the National Prayer Breakfast Feb. 2 (Religion & Ethics Newsweekly)

“White supremacists these days are nut cases. They used to be governors and senators.”

—Cynthia Tucker, editorial page editor for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, paying tribute to Coretta Scott King and other civil rights pioneers

editorial

In search of 'biblical manhood'

By John Pierce

My father was a member of all-male civic organizations and "the men's" Sunday school class at our church. That appeal was not passed on to me. I have not belonged to an exclusively male group since Boy Scouts.

When college football coach Bill McCartney launched "Promise Keepers" in 1990, he drew masses of men to high-energy rallies. As a journalist, I attended several of these events including the massive "Stand in the Gap" rally on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., in 1997.

While I never felt drawn into the movement personally, it seemed to meet a need within a lot of men. The messages, primarily, were positive and needed ones about taking responsibility and making family life a priority.

Of course there was enough masculine stuff to keep the guys' interest. Coming out of the emotional events, busloads of men would journey home with newfound energy and commitments.

Back home, one young man told me he had helped form an all-male "accountability group" that met on Saturday mornings to encourage each other in their family responsibilities. He invited me to join.

I graciously declined, noting that I like to spend Saturday morning making pancakes for my kids. A couple of drops of batter to each side of the pancake will look like ears. Just add chocolate chips for eyes, the end of a strawberry for the nose and a banana slice for the mouth — and, wah-lah, you have an appreciated work of art.

Growing up in a culture that valued machismo, I understood that men were to be tough, hardworking and unemotional. Occasionally some tenderness would break through — usually during the invitation or testimony time at church — and I always found that refreshing and even desirable.

During my nearly half-century of life the roles of women in society — and much more slowly in church — have changed dramatically. It has been encouraging to see opportunities for women to use their gifts in

ways once restricted.

Not all aspects of the feminist movement — or "women's liberation" as it was once called — have been positive. Many women will tell you they have burned out from trying to be and do too much at the same time. Overall, however, both women and men have much to celebrate about these cultural changes.

Most of my theological wrangling over the years has focused on what it means to be a Christian person rather than a "biblical male." While never denying the differences in genders, the Bible seems to focus more on what it means to be a follower of Jesus rather than a male or female disciple.

So I am intrigued by the effort of some Baptists today to advocate for an understanding of "biblical manhood" that emphasizes male headship and dominion. The most obvious example in Baptist life is at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. The campus houses an organization known as the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Its director, Randy Stinson, is also assistant professor of gender and family studies.

Stinson and others at the seminary denounce "egalitarian" marriage in which husband and wife share equal responsibilities for decision making. Southern Seminary Dean Russell Moore told the Evangelical Theological Society last November that "egalitarians" are winning the day even in the homes of evangelical Christians — and he doesn't like it.

"Egalitarians are winning the gender debate because evangelical complementarian men have largely abdicated their biblically ordained roles as head of the home," said Moore according to Baptist Press. He lamented that "practical decisions are made in most evangelical homes through a process of negotiation, mutual submission and consensus."

Now that's something to fear in a relationship — negotiation, mutual submission

(which is called for in Ephesians 5:21) and consensus!

In the winter issue of the seminary's magazine, *The Tie*, Stinson presents his view of "biblical manhood" and urges males to "do something that is a challenge to you. It may be to kill a bear or a lion ..."

He also warns that messiness is "evidence of passivity," a characteristic not appropriate to biblical manhood apparently.

"Your home, dorm room, garage, office and car should bear the mark of your masculinity as you subdue it and keep it in order," adds Stinson.

Somehow I hear the Village People singing "Macho Man," more than the teachings of Scripture.

My hope is that these young ministers — and husbands or husbands-to-be — will listen to other voices about what it means to be a Christian person — and a man. Or, perhaps, they will just read the broader biblical message and see how Jesus related to women at a time when the larger culture considered them of little value. **BT**



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readers' responses

Freedom, not just tolerance

EDITOR: The guest column ("What Roger Williams can still teach us" by Nick Gillespie, January 2006, page 9) was splendid. Thank God for Rogers Williams and thank you for publishing it.

One small quibble: Roger Williams despised the word "toleration." He called it a "weasel word."

The concept establishes a "tolerator" and a "toleratee." Liberty then becomes a concession — a gift from a superior to an inferior.

Freedom, however, is a gift from God, irrevocable. The ideal is full-throated freedom, not toleration.

James M. Dunn, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Intelligent Design fails as science

Editor: I suppose I shouldn't be surprised at the appearance of Intelligent Design "science clubs" on some of our university campuses ("Intelligent Design gains momentum," February 2006, page 27), but I am. Colleges should be teaching their students to critically examine ideas. The lessons are

apparently not coming across.

Creationism and Intelligent Design fail as science for a fundamental reason: Both require miraculous or magical events to explain the existence of things in our natural universe. The scientist's role is to understand the natural world and explain how it works.

Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution describes physical mechanisms and processes by which living organisms most likely developed in our world. Creationism and Intelligent Design have not and indeed cannot do this.

The Creationists' ultimate aim is to discredit not just Darwinian Evolution, but all of science. Their goal is to replace critical objective thinking with subjective belief ordained by some ecclesiastical or political authority.

This is precisely what is happening in the Southern Baptist Convention today. Individual thought is being suppressed in favor of subjective group-think imposed by the SBC Executive Committee. The questioning, searching spirit is being drowned by dogma. The same kinds of people are hard

at work in the Creationist movement.

Intelligent Design is insidious. It is a siren song. It sounds good, but is not what it purports to be. Thoughtful Christians cannot ignore this threat to our freedom.

Virgil H. Soule, Frederick, Md.

Info needed on Baptist women ministers

EDITOR: Baptist Women in Ministry has commissioned a report to be titled "The State of Women in Baptist Life." Included in the report will be statistics about the number of Baptist women who have been ordained.

In order to secure the most up-to-date and accurate information, we are asking for your assistance. Please send the names of women ordained in 2005, along with the name of the ordaining church and the date on which they were ordained, to Eileen Campbell-Reed at bwim@mindspring.com or Pam Durso at pdurso@tnbaptist.org.

*Pam Durso, associate director
Baptist History and Heritage Society
P.O. Box 728, Brentwood, TN 37024-0728*

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Baptists Today to honor Cecil Sherman at April 21 dinner in Asheville, N.C.

ASHEVILLE, N.C. — Cecil E. Sherman, the first national coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, will receive the sixth annual Judson-Rice Award at an April 21 dinner at the First Baptist Church of Asheville, N.C.

The event is sponsored by the board of directors of the independent, national news journal *Baptists Today*, and is open to the public.

Sherman is a native of Fort Worth, Texas, and a graduate of Baylor University, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Princeton Theological Seminary. His pastorates included the First Baptist Church of Chamblee, Ga., the First Baptist Church of Asheville, N.C., and Broadway Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

Sherman was a key leader in efforts to resist the fundamentalist takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention that was formalized in the 1980s, and helped to build alternative forms of cooperation after the convention was radically reshaped.

"Cecil epitomizes not only the vision of *Baptists Today*, but that which all good Baptists are called to do," said Tommy Boland of Atlanta, past chairman of the news journal board. "He is most remembered for his deep

commitment to the evangelization of the world, and most particularly recognized as the protector of our most cherished Baptist principles and heritage."

Sherman will give an address following dinner and a tribute by James H. Slatton, pastor emeritus of River Road Church, Baptist in Richmond.

"Dr. Sherman is a courageous and passionate defender of Baptist freedom and responsibility, who always has a fresh and insightful word," said John Pierce, executive editor of *Baptists Today*. "We look forward to hearing whatever challenge he brings."

In retirement, Sherman has served as an interim pastor and as visiting professor of pastoral ministries at Baptist Theological Seminary in Richmond. His writings include the *Adult Formations Commentary* (Smyth & Helwys) used weekly by many Sunday school teachers.

The Judson-Rice Award was created in 2001 to commemorate the contributions of early Baptist mission leaders Adoniram Judson, Ann Hasseltine Judson and Luther Rice, and to recognize a current Baptist leader who has demonstrated important leadership while maintaining the highest integrity.



Previous recipients are communications pioneer Jimmy Allen, author and speaker Tony Campolo, former seminary president Russell Dilday, missions advocate Alma Hunt and church historian Walter Shurden.

Reservations for the dinner may be made by calling the *Baptists Today* office toll-free at 1-877-752-5658. Cost is \$20 per person payable by credit card or advance check. The First Baptist Church is located at Five Oak Street in downtown Asheville, N.C. **BT**

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Chris Hamlin — pastor, Tabernacle Baptist Church; director, HIV/AIDS African-American Initiative, UAB

Joyce Hollyday — co-pastor, Circle of Mercy, Asheville, N.C.

Willie Jennings — professor, Duke Divinity School

Sarah Shelton — pastor, Baptist Church of the Covenant, Birmingham, Ala.

*Youth and children's events include a visit to the
Civil Rights Institute in Birmingham.*

For more information, visit www.allianceofbaptists.org.

N.C. Baptist newspaper will pick some directors to 'protect freedom'

By Greg Warner

CARY, N.C. (ABP) — The *Biblical Recorder*, newspaper of North Carolina Baptists, will choose some of its own directors in a move to preserve its journalistic freedom, say the newspapers leaders.

Beginning this fall, the 172-year-old newspaper will nominate four people to open seats on its 16-member board, bypassing a convention nominating committee the leaders fear is stacking the board with "agenda-bearing conservatives."

The cost will be significant, however. The *Recorder*, with an annual budget of about \$900,000, will likely lose a total of \$400,000 in funding from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina over the next four years.

The move — invoking an unusual option in the convention's bylaws — will not negate the newspaper's relationship with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, which still can elect or reject the newspaper's nominees. But it will give the *Recorder* some insulation against censorship in the theologically diverse but deeply divided convention, its leaders said.

"In most other state conventions where agenda-bearing conservatives have gained control of the state paper's board, they have either muzzled the editor through censorship, or replaced him with someone who could be counted on to promote the party line," said Editor-President Tony Cartledge. "A free Baptist press was lost in those conventions."

Baptist newspapers and news services have been a frequent battleground in the Southern Baptist Convention's 27-year-old controversy between conservatives and moderates, which now has migrated to the state conventions.

Cartledge informed the Committee on Nominations in late January of the *Recorder's* December decision. The newspaper's directors took advantage of a 1992 amendment to the convention's governing documents which allow its 12 affiliated agencies to nominate up to 50 percent of its

directors. In return, the entity gives up a similar percentage of its funding from the convention during the time those directors serve — four years in the *Recorder's* case.

The newspaper is the first North Carolina agency to exercise the option. But in a similar action, the Baptist Retirement Homes of North Carolina recently voted to start naming its own trustees. Meanwhile, a convention committee is studying its relationships with five affiliated colleges.

"We exercise this option with deep regret," said Joe Babb, chairman of the *Biblical Recorder* board, "not only for the loss of funding but for the increasing polarization in BSC life that has led us to believe that, for the time being, this decision is necessary in order to safeguard and preserve the charter principles of a free press for the future. We have no agenda for changing our relationship to the BSC."

Mike Cummings, the convention's acting executive director, said he is not troubled by the *Recorder's* decision. "I hope it doesn't give the impression that the *Recorder* doesn't need the money because I know it does and deserves Cooperative Program support," he said.

Cummings said he would rather the *Recorder* invoke the trustee-nomination provision than face more difficult issues the other agencies could face.

Typically, each president of a North Carolina Baptist entity gives the nominating committee a list of potential trustees — generally twice as many as the number of vacancies — and the committee usually nominates people from that list.

Last year, however, the committee nominated people from those lists for every entity except the *Recorder*, Cartledge said. "The committee accepted only two of the eight names submitted by the *Recorder* and excluded the other six without providing

any rationale for doing so."

"As for why these good people were excluded, all we have to go on is the chairman's statement to Conservative Carolina Baptists [Oct. 20] that the committee wanted to put more conservatives on the *Biblical Recorder* board," Cartledge said.

Several other agency presidents were surprised when the committee rejected some of their nominees as well. The committee said some were excluded because they belonged to churches affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists, which has an open policy toward homosexuals, but none of the *Recorder's* excluded nominees were members of Alliance churches.

If the North Carolina Baptists vote this fall to reject the *Recorder's* nominees, he said, convention bylaws require their replacements come from the newspaper's list of other recommended directors.

Cartledge said having conservative directors for the newspaper is not the issue.

"I have recommended a number of conservative candidates in past requests, and they have served well," he said. "But when presenting potential candidates, I have always told the nominating committee that whether a board member favors conservative or moderate theological positions is not an issue to me. What is important is that the person appreciates traditional Baptist distinctives and is committed to the mission of the *Biblical Recorder*."

According to the *Recorder's* charter, the publication is "to maintain and safeguard the inalienable rights and privileges of a free press, these rights and privileges being consistent with the traditional Baptist emphasis upon the freedom, under Christ, of both the human spirit and Baptist churches."

"One cannot overestimate the importance of a free press that covers the news objectively rather than serving as a controlling body's public relations tool," Babb said. "Often in the face of unwarranted criticism, the *Biblical Recorder* has provided that valuable service to North Carolina Baptists since 1833, and we hope to continue that tradition for many years to come." **BT**



Tony Cartledge

N.C. Retirement Homes trustees vote to leave convention control

By Tony Cartledge
Biblical Recorder

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. (ABP) — The Baptist Retirement Homes of North Carolina have adopted bylaw amendments that allow the corporation's trustees to elect their own successors.

Previously the bylaws called for trustees to be elected by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, which also had the power to remove trustees.

A letter informing the North Carolina convention of the changes was delivered to acting executive director-treasurer Mike Cummings Jan. 18.

"I deeply regret to see this action taken, and I hope there will be opportunity for us to have some important dialogue with [BRH president] Bill [Stillerman] and his board in regard to this decision," Cummings said.

Convention president Stan Welch also

learned about the decision Jan. 18. "We will need to get our legal counsel to look at the legality of what they want to do," he said, noting that the matter would be discussed.

"I don't think North Carolina Baptists are going to let them just break away in this particular way after having invested so much in them over so many years," Welch said.

But Stillerman told the *Biblical Recorder* of North Carolina that the Baptist Retirement Homes has always used the funds received from the convention for benevolent care only.

Baptist Retirement Homes, founded in 1951, operates retirement communities in Albemarle, Asheville, Concord, Hamilton, and Winston-Salem. When founder Jimmy Hayes petitioned the convention in 1950 for aid in beginning a ministry to the elderly, he was given encouragement but no money, Stillerman said.

The convention did not contribute funds or participate in choosing trustees until 1957, Stillerman said. The corporation has always raised its own funds and borrowed money in its own name, he said.

And, Stillerman said, trustees do not consider the action to constitute a break from the convention. In a Jan. 18 press release, Stillerman insisted, "The changes made to our organization's bylaws document have no theological overtones but are related strictly to matters of governance and finance."

"We have every intention to continue to maintain significant ties with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina," Stillerman said, "and our long-standing tradition of offering long-term care services to North Carolina Baptist older adults."

"An autonomous, stable governing board is essential" to ensure the financial viability of the organization in the future, he said. **BT**

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Phillips: Charismatic-leaning Baptists betrayed

By John Pierce
Baptists Today

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — When Judge Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson launched a revolution within the Southern Baptist Convention they found an eager soldier in Ron Phillips, who served as chair of the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) in the early 1990s.

Phillips, 58, has been pastor of Central Baptist Church of Hixson, near Chattanooga, Tenn., since 1979 — the year when what proponents call “the conservative resurgence” and opponents call “the fundamentalist takeover” began within the SBC.

Today, Phillips — who had “an experience with the Holy Spirit” in 1989 that changed his life and ministry significantly — sees himself on the excluded side of SBC life.

“I do believe Paige [Patterson] and others have betrayed every one of us,” said Phillips, whose ministry is now known as Abba’s House and draws about 3,000 worshippers each Sunday.

The congregation identifies itself as “a Spirit-filled Southern Baptist Church” that “operates in the gifts of the Spirit while holding to the Word of God.” Phillips said his congregation affirms biblical authority — what he thought was the sole issue in the SBC controversy.

“We thought it was a commitment to a higher view of scripture rather than a narrowing view of fundamentalism,” said Phillips, who helped carry out the radical reshaping of the convention as HMB chair.

Any criticism that he is now on the receiving end of what he helped create is certainly “fair,” Phillips confessed. He said he has apologized to many who were excluded from SBC life in recent years.

“I was much younger,” he said. “But I was very serious and sincere.”

Phillips was elected president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention in 1991 — after his “experience with the Holy Spirit.” There were no problems, said Phillips, because “I didn’t get up and talk about it.”

In his book, *Awakened by the Spirit*, released by Thomas Nelson Publishers in 2000, Phillips shares his emerging

“We thought it was a commitment to a higher view of scripture rather than a narrowing view of fundamentalism.”

theological and historical perspectives as a “Spirit-filled” Baptist.

Phillips said his passion for evangelism and missions remains high but he is finding it harder to support the work of Southern Baptists. He said convention policies — including the one recently adopted by the SBC International Mission Board that excludes missionary candidates who use a private prayer language — are pushing more good Baptists away.

“We’re shocked and betrayed by what has happened at the International Mission Board,” said Phillips. “I feel like it is a precursor to a total booting out of Baptists with charismatic leanings.”

In response, Patterson said neither he nor anyone else to his knowledge ever made a promise to include charismatic persons in all aspects of SBC life. And his position on gifts of the Spirit, he said, has been public for years and is documented in a commentary he wrote on 1 Corinthians.

“The Bible says not to forbid speaking in tongues since the miracle of Acts 2, for example, was a miracle of God,” said Patterson. “However, Paul builds in so many restrictions in 1 Corinthians 14 as to make the practice of mere utterance, what is practiced mostly today, virtually of little value.”

Patterson said, as a Baptist, he would not forbid anyone from speaking in tongues, but would not call such a person to be his pastor or appoint someone with such leanings as a seminary professor.

“I cannot imagine why anyone could feel betrayed,” said Patterson, now president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. “Most of us don’t make deals; we try to understand scripture and faithfully preach it.”



Ron Phillips

Phillips, however, reads such a promise from page 158 of Judge Pressler’s book, *A Hill On Which To Die*, released in 1999 by the Southern Baptist publishing house, Broadman & Holman. In his personal recounting of the rightward shift in the SBC, Pressler writes:

“The liberals had said that after the conservatives finished with those who held different views of the nature of the Bible, they would begin attacking the charismatics (neo-Pentecostals). They also alleged conservatives would later attack various other groups until they ‘purify’ every aspect of convention life.

“They said conservatives wanted to make everybody think just as they do. Such a charge is ludicrous, but it did worry some people such as my friend Wally Henley [pastor of Encourager Church in Houston and former president of the Alabama Baptist Convention], who had charismatic leanings.

“I assured him the issue was not the charismatic movement. Although I am not a charismatic, I have referred people with charismatic convictions to his church, which leans charismatic.

“I assured him that Paige, our friends, and I would not turn on charismatics after the battle over biblical authority was won. He trusted us, and he and others have now seen that this issue will not be a test of fellowship.

“Charismatic worship and understanding of spiritual gifts is an interpretation of Scripture that was not our concern. Our concern was the nature of Scripture... All we wanted was for people to base what they believe on an intelligent study of what the Bible says.”

Phillips said he and Pressler serve together on the National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) board. He believes Pressler was sincere in his statement.

That assurance, however, is not being kept by SBC leaders, said Phillips. And the growing restrictions within SBC agencies make it harder for him and others to stay connected.

“I think this is an effort to exclude ‘Word and Spirit’ people” from the SBC, he said.

Like others, such as Oklahoma pastor

Wade Burleson, whose removal as an IMB trustee is being sought by the agency's board, Phillips sees the new restrictions on overseas missionaries as an assault on IMB President Jerry Rankin who admitted to having a private prayer language.

Phillips said if the trustees think such practices are biblically wrong, they should make the new restrictions retroactive to current missionaries and staff — rather than applicable to future candidates only. Otherwise, he said, it is a moot point.

"It [private prayer] should be nobody's business," said Phillips, calling the latest restrictions on missionaries "horrible."

Phillips said he doesn't know Rankin personally but has heard wonderful reports about his leadership from missionaries he has encountered around the world. He predicated the new restrictions on missionaries would hurt Southern Baptist efforts to become more ethnically diverse also.

"Many African-American congregations

that are Southern Baptist operate with the leadership of the Holy Spirit," said Phillips. "That's got to be an issue."

Phillips also claimed that members of his congregation are no longer able to serve as missionaries — even as volunteers — of the SBC agency whose trustees he once led.

NAMB spokesman Marty King, however, said the agency does not screen volunteers for possible Charismatic leanings. The board does have a policy, King said, that prohibits appointed missionaries and endorsed chaplains from practicing *glossalalia* (speaking in tongues), including a private prayer language.

Phillips said he and his congregation are relating to a wider group of Christians than before. Independent Baptists, and even so-called moderate Baptists within and outside the SBC, are more open to him than current Southern Baptist leaders, he said.

"I have spoken in some moderate churches and have had some great revivals,"

said Phillips. "I think there is a greater hunger in moderate churches for the Holy Spirit."

Just admitting that, said Phillips, would probably cause some Southern Baptist leaders to call him a liberal. Knowing so many good people on both sides of the Southern Baptist divide that he helped create grieves him, he added.

So does Phillips still consider himself a Southern Baptist?

"I do," he said. "I think I'm the real deal."

Phillips said he is not mad at those he helped to gain power in the SBC, just concerned that they have "embraced what I call McCarthyism." Their philosophy, he said, seems to be "us four and no more."

So Phillips said he and his congregation are partnering for missions and evangelism wherever they find acceptance and support.

"We want to go where we are celebrated, not just tolerated," said Phillips. **BT**

Conflict over speaking in tongues speeds departure of Criswell dean

DALLAS (ABP) — Doctrinal differences among Southern Baptist conservatives apparently have claimed another victim — Scott Camp, dean of students at Criswell College in Dallas.

Camp's contract as dean, which ran through Jan. 31, was not renewed, in part because Camp supports speaking in tongues.

Conservatives have long tolerated the presence of charismatics within the Southern Baptist Convention — largely because they tend to agree on inerrancy and other key beliefs — but doctrinal purists have argued more recently for stricter enforcement of the SBC's conservative theology.

The SBC International Mission Board, which already prevented missionaries from teaching charismatic practices, recently tightened their policy to exclude missionary candidates who use a "private prayer language," a form of tongues. That action and others prompted objections from some younger SBC leaders, who worry the 16 million-member denomination is drawing the circle of fellowship too small.

Criswell President Jerry Johnson called Camp "a great friend" and said the departure of his former Criswell classmate was not bitter but necessary. Both men acknowledged doctrinal differences played a

role, according to the *Dallas Morning News*.

Criswell College, with 400 students, was founded by First Baptist Church of Dallas and is named for its legendary pastor, W.A. Criswell.

"Southern Baptist churches are not charismatic churches," Johnson told the *Morning News*. While Criswell enrolls students from charismatic backgrounds, he said, the faculty and top staff are expected to reflect consensus Baptist beliefs.

Although Criswell College is not an SBC-owned school, its students often seek missionary appointment by the International Mission Board. It's important not to contradict the IMB's position on speaking in tongues, Johnson told the *Morning News*.

Camp's involvement in a local congregation also apparently factored into his departure.

Camp is pastor of a new and growing Southern Baptist congregation in Arlington called Fellowship of Joy Church, taking time away from his Criswell job. "A decision needed to be made, and the president and I had been in dialogue about my willingness to leave the church," he told the *Morning News*.

But the church's theological leanings also were an issue, according to Johnson.

Camp hired Harvard educated Carl Raschke as theologian in residence at Fellowship of Joy, preaching monthly. Raschke, author of *The Next Reformation*, has called inerrancy "pseudoscientific" and a "weak" view of Scripture.

"Inerrancy is a big issue for this college and always has been," Johnson said.

Raschke met with Criswell faculty and students in November to clarify his position on the Bible, which he said is "a stronger view of Scripture" than inerrancy, "not a weaker view." He told the *Morning News* the students seemed to understand but not top administrators. **BT**



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Mercer leaders want more 'Baptistness' — despite loss of convention affiliation

By John Pierce

MACON, Ga. (ABP) — In the first major event since the Georgia Baptist Convention unilaterally voted to break a 173-year-old relationship with its flagship university, Mercer University officials welcomed more than 150 church leaders to the campus Jan. 19-20 to explore ways to sustain and enhance the school's Baptist identity.

"We reaffirm that Mercer is a Baptist university," said Mercer president Kirby Godsey, "That reality, of course, can never be changed by a state convention."

Godsey, who will retire in June after 27 years as Mercer's president, said the university faces the dual challenges of evaluating "how the Baptist identity informs the Mercer experience" and how to "sustain relationships with Baptist people."

Godsey called the Georgia Baptist Convention's decision in November — to sever ties with the university by pulling scholarship funds for Baptist students — an action based on frustration over a lack of control, rather than the publicized issue of homosexuality. Unlike three other Georgia Baptist colleges, Mercer trustees are not selected by the convention.

"The abuse of the university in *The Christian Index* was unwarranted and uncivil, and our critics know it," said Godsey, referring to a cover story in the GBC-owned newspaper just prior to the November meeting.

The story focused on a meeting of the Mercer Triangle Symposium held on what is nationally promoted by homosexual advocates as "Coming Out Day."

"Did Mercer have a 'coming-out day?'" asked Godsey. "The answer is no. This nation has a 'coming-out day.'"

Godsey said some Mercer students held a forum — "not a novel idea at a university" — to discuss sexual orientation. "What better place to discuss such issues?" Godsey asked. "Otherwise, we leave such conversations to the backrooms and hallways."

Godsey said he would rather students dialogue about gay and lesbian issues in a university forum than get their information

from the Internet and Will and Grace. The stated purpose of the symposium, he added, was "to provide an open forum for issues related to sexuality."

"Mercer will not be an advocate for alternative lifestyles," said Godsey. "We will be an educational institution."

While the university has a different role than the church, Godsey said, Mercer is "keenly aware of our church constituency." However, said Godsey, "our students will be permitted to discuss sexuality. We're more freeing than some churches."

The university, he added, will act with respect and civility toward all persons. He suggested that Mercer has "about the same percentage of gay students as you have as members of your congregations."

Godsey said Mercer is exploring ways to move ahead as a Baptist university free of formal ties with the GBC. "Our challenge is that we can't ultimately live out our Baptist identity in isolation," said Godsey. "How do we join hands with Baptist people?"

The university serves churches through many functions, Godsey said, including ministry preparation through the undergraduate program in Christianity and graduate studies at McAfee School of Theology, the resources of the Center for Baptist Studies and Mercer University Press, and the expansive Baptist archives collection.

Godsey tossed out a few ideas for expanding Mercer's role as a Baptist resource, such as producing a new hymnal or Bible study curriculum. And he suggested Mercer affiliate with other like-minded Baptist groups.

Godsey asked participants to meet in groups to consider new ways the university might assist Baptist congregations. "We need your best thinking, insights and highest wisdom," he said.

Mercer is appealing to churches for financial support to replace Georgia Baptist

Convention funding for Baptist student scholarships. Godsey said the convention provides \$3.5 million of the \$11.5 million in aid to Baptist students, who make up more than half of the student population.

"The students entering Mercer this fall will receive no Baptist money unless it comes from you and your churches," Godsey told the gathering.

Godsey said he is very grateful for what Georgia Baptists have done in creating and supporting Mercer, but described current leaders as "walking around in three days of darkness."

Church historian Walter Shurden of Mercer, who also addressed the summit, called for formal action to ensure that at least half of the board of trustees and all future presidents be active Baptists. He suggested that at least 10 percent of the trustees be Baptist ministers from across the nation in order to keep the university connected with congregations.

Shurden urged Mercer to establish ties with Baptist organizations like the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Baptist World Alliance, Progressive National Baptist Convention and American Baptist Churches, USA. But he advised those should be "dotted-line" connections rather than "hard-wired" as in the past with the GBC.

Reports from discussion groups showed various opinions about the degree to which the university should connect with other Baptist groups, the potential for including direct funding to Mercer in church budgets, and which resources would be most useful.

Overwhelmingly, participants called for a more aggressive effort to get Mercer faculty and staff visible in churches and to get Baptists — especially potential students — to visit the campuses.

Some voiced support for retaining an active campus ministry program. Currently, the Baptist campus ministry program is directed by convention employee Chris Fuller. Godsey said the future of that position is not clear but that the university will continue to have a Baptist Student Union. **BT**



Kirby Godsey

Shurden: History shows challenges to sustaining a national Baptist university

By John Pierce and Greg Warner

MACON, Ga. (ABP) — Can Baptists build and sustain a national Baptist university? It hasn't been done yet, said top leaders at Mercer University, but Mercer has as good a chance as anyone.

"Mercer may be the best hope for preserving the principles that have defined Baptists," Mercer president-elect Bill Underwood told school supporters Jan. 20. "Today there remain relatively few Baptist universities that have not been lost to either the threat of fundamentalism or the threat of secularization. Among those that remain, fewer than five have the strength and resources to emerge as great national universities. Mercer is one of the very few. Together, we can do it here."

"The fact that no one else has done it should not be discouraging," Underwood said. "To the contrary, that's what provides us with the opportunity to do something truly special. Mercer can be the intellectual engine of a dynamic worldwide free Baptist movement."

Underwood addressed a Jan. 19-20 gathering of Baptist supporters of Mercer — his first major speech since being elected president Dec. 2.

Kirby Godsey, who will retire in June after 27 years as Mercer's president, asked participants, mostly Georgians, to help "chart a course toward being the model of a premiere Baptist university."

Godsey said the two-day forum was "the first step in a long journey toward

sustaining and improving the university's 'Baptistness.'"

The Baptist summit came on the heels of the Georgia Baptist Convention voting in November to sever its 173-year tie to the university, prompting Mercer leaders to rally supporters to make up the loss of funding and strengthen its Baptist identity.

"Mercer can be the single greatest resource in Baptist life, if Baptists will embrace us," said Underwood, a law professor at Baylor. The Texas Baptist school also has flirted with national status, invoking the model of Catholic Notre Dame.

Walter Shurden, former chair of Mercer's Christianity department and current director of the university's Center for Baptist Studies, said he would like to see Mercer become a national university that is fully integrated into Baptist life, but he acknowledged history is against any Baptist university attaining elite status.

He pointed to two now secular universities with deep Baptist roots. Baptists founded Rhode Island College in 1764. Today it is Brown University, an Ivy League school in Providence, R.I.

Early Baptist leader Luther Rice started Columbian College in 1821. Today it has evolved into the respected George Washington University. "We lost it!" said Shurden of the Washington, D.C., school formed to educate Baptist ministers.

Shurden noted Mercer's similar beginning, but said he hopes for a better outcome. Prominent Baptist leader Jesse Mercer founded the school in 1833.

Shurden called on Mercer administrators to hire faculty that support the university's Baptist identity and mission. "If Mercer is to become a national Baptist university, it will require more Baptist faculty and non-Baptist faculty who care about this Baptist identity."

Shurden said that an effort among some Southern Baptists in the 1920s to designate Mercer and Baylor University in Texas as national universities of the east and west failed. The situation would have resembled what United Methodists have done with Emory University in Atlanta and Southern Methodist University in Dallas, he said.

"We were left with good schools but all regional or state schools," said Shurden.

Shurden noted that other religious traditions have done what Baptists have failed to do. He cited Brandeis, Brigham Young and Notre Dame as national universities that have not shied away from their respective Jewish, Mormon and Catholic identities.

"Mercer is a Baptist name in the same way Brigham Young is a Mormon name," said Shurden. He said Baptists have an image problem that could hinder its educational efforts, but so do Catholics.

Shurden called on trustees to act quickly in assuring that the board maintains a Baptist majority and selects only active Baptists as future presidents.

"I hope future presidents are cut from the mold of Underwood, Godsey and [Rufus] Harris," who preceded Godsey. **BT**

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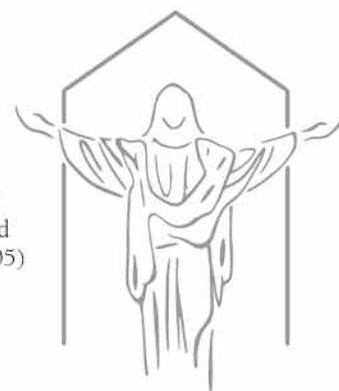
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Mercer president-elect Underwood decries 'spiritual masters' who limit Baptist freedom

By Greg Warner

MACON, Ga. (ABP) — Baptists need no “spiritual masters” — either from the right or the left — to tell them what to believe in their churches or universities, said Bill Underwood, incoming president of Mercer University.

Any attempt to impose orthodoxy on believers threatens the individual freedom of conscience, Underwood said Jan. 20 in his first major speech to supporters of the Baptist university.

“This is what Baptists have believed from the beginning,” the Baylor University law professor said. “It is a part of our earliest heritage: Freedom of individual conscience, respect for the freedom of others who disagree, and individual responsibility. These have been bedrock Baptist principles. These principles are at stake at this moment in Baptist history.”

Individual freedom — and academic freedom in Baptist universities — is under threat from those who would restrict the open pursuit of truth, said Underwood.

Sometimes that threat comes from fundamentalists, who “advocate restrictions on freedom of inquiry that would stifle the robust exchange of ideas necessary to seek the truth,” he said. But even some Christians on the other end of the spectrum are afraid to trust individual believers to find the truth.

Underwood quoted Duke Divinity School theologian Stanley Hauerwas, who wrote in a 1993 book: “No task is more important than for the church to take the Bible out of the hands of individual Christians in North America.”

“I certainly believe that God uses the Scripture to help keep the Church faithful,” Hauerwas wrote in *Unleashing the Scripture*, “but I do not believe that each person in the Church is thereby given the right to interpret the Scripture. The [Church] knows that the right reading of the Scripture depends on having spiritual masters who can help the whole Church stand under the authority of God’s Word.”

Underwood said Hauerwas’ view is also

seen in the “Baptist Manifesto,” a theological statement, drafted and supported by some prominent moderate and progressive Baptists, that emphasizes the role of community as a balance to individual freedom. Underwood said the “Manifesto” “hinted at the need for spiritual masters to tell us how to interpret the Scriptures.”

According to the “Manifesto”: “Scripture wisely forbids and we reject every form of private interpretation that makes Bible reading a practice which can be carried out according to the dictates of individual conscience. We therefore cannot commend Bible study that is insulated from the community of believers or guarantees individual readers an unchecked privilege of interpretation.”

Such thinking is dangerous and unbaptistic, Underwood said.

“How would the check work?” he asked the Mercer audience. “Would the community take a vote? Would a simple majority be sufficient to declare one believer’s interpretation of the Scriptures heresy? What then would we do with the heretic?”

Underwood said “politicians in the Southern Baptist Convention” already “have declared themselves our spiritual masters” in the 2000 “Baptist Faith and Message” statement. That Southern Baptist statement calls itself an “instrument of accountability,” a claim Underwood said “has never before appeared in a Baptist confessional statement, at least not to my knowledge.”

“Accountability to who?” he continued. “Surely a human confessional statement isn’t required in order for God to hold us accountable.”

Jesus warned his followers not to submit to the scribes and Pharisees, Jewish religious leaders who “set themselves up as spiritual masters for others,” Underwood said.

“Indeed, when we stand before God on judgment day, how many of us believe that it would be a defense to God’s judgment to say that we just did what we were told by

our spiritual masters?” Underwood asked. “The truth is that we are responsible for our souls. We will be judged as individuals, not as communities.”

Underwood likewise defended the liberty of conscience in academia, saying Mercer must be willing to challenge the “prevailing orthodoxy.”

“If we are to be a great Christian university, we cannot be afraid to pursue the course of truth, wherever that course might lead,” he said. “Indeed, if our pursuit of truth leads us to question our existing view of God, it may just be that God is trying to tell us something.”

In the past, he said, prevailing Christian orthodoxy defended both a flat earth and slavery using the Bible.

“How many other beliefs, at one time firmly held as true, have been proven false with the passage of time? What so-called ‘truths’ that we hold dear today will the passage of time prove false? And how will we know if we accept what others have declared as orthodox without question? What this means is that our faculty and students must be free to discuss, advocate and debate ideas that are controversial, even ideas that challenge prevailing viewpoints.”

Underwood, who served as Baylor’s interim president, said he disagreed with his predecessor’s decision threatening to expel students who wrote an editorial arguing a ban on gay marriage was unconstitutional.

“I too disagreed with the students’ viewpoint, but I disagreed even more with the reaction of our president,” he said. “The president’s reaction ended any further discussion. And our academic community lost a valuable opportunity to gain new insights through an intellectually rigorous examination of the issue.”

A similar controversy over homosexuality at Mercer prompted the divorce with the Georgia Baptist Convention.

“What better place for such discussion to occur than on the campus of a Baptist university, where Christian perspectives on the issue are welcome — perspectives that simply would not be a part of the dialogue on many campuses,” Underwood said. **BT**



Bill Underwood

'Manifesto' supporters say community role misinterpreted

By Greg Warner

BUIES CREEK, N.C. (ABP) — The 1997 "Baptist Manifesto," a theological statement that emphasizes the role of community to counterbalance individual freedom, has been misinterpreted by critics as opposing freedom of conscience, say seven Baptist theologians.

"We believe with early Baptists and the mainstream Christian tradition that an individual's conscience is inviolable, but not infallible, and therefore we are always under the obligation to see to it that our consciences have been formed by the faithful practices of the church," the theologians said in a statement to Associated Baptist Press.

The statement was prompted by a Jan. 20 speech by Bill Underwood, president-elect of Mercer University, to Baptist supporters of the Macon, Ga., school.

Freedom of individual conscience "is what Baptists have believed from the beginning," said Underwood. "It is a part of our earliest heritage: Freedom of individual conscience, respect for the freedom of others who disagree, and individual responsibility. These have been bedrock Baptist principles."

"These principles are at stake at this moment in Baptist history," Underwood said. He cited both the "Manifesto," drafted by moderate and progressive Baptists, and the "Baptist Faith and Message," used by the fundamentalist leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention.

But the seven theologians, five of whom were authors of the "Manifesto," say Baptists in America have placed too much emphasis on individual interpretation in the last two centuries and weakened or abandoned their earlier commitment to the role of faith communities, particularly the local church.

"We do not wish to silence others or deny them the freedom that is their birthright in Christ," the seven wrote. "But we have come to believe that while autonomous individualism may seem to offer some protection from authoritarian coercion, in reality it creates a lonely society of moral strangers."

In his speech Jan. 20, Underwood cited

portions of the "Manifesto" he said "hinted at the need for spiritual masters to tell us how to interpret the Scriptures."

One passage in particular: "We therefore cannot commend Bible study that is insulated from the community of believers or guarantees individual readers an unchecked privilege of interpretation."

But the seven theologians said the "Manifesto" does not intend that "the individual Christian should unthinkingly kowtow to the majority perspective in the community."

Instead, they said, the "spiritual masters" of interpretation are, in a sense, those believers of the past whose "wisdom and charity" has been proven over time — such as Abraham and Sarah, Martin Luther and Menno Simons, William Carey and Lottie Moon.

"We believe that competency in the interpretation of the Scriptures is not something that is injected into our brains at birth — it is not 'common sense' — nor is it something that we acquire in a moment of conversion, and it is never unaided," the theologians said. "Rather, one learns it over time, and always in conversation with saints past and present, famous and anonymous, who constitute the one body of Christ guided by the Holy Spirit."

They added: "If our consciences are not accountable to others who have sought to understand and embody the Scriptures in contexts other than our own, then we have no need to have millions of hungry, homeless mouths telling us that we may be skipping over some of the most important parts of the Bible."

Underwood told ABP he can agree with the "Manifesto" theologians that individual conscience is "inviolable but not infallible" and that the community of faith is essential.

"It would be arrogant not to take into account what other Christians have said," he noted Feb. 1. "But each of us ultimately has to come to his or her own conclusions."

"I think we are answerable to God for what we believe; I do not think we are answerable to other human beings."

Theology professor Steve Harmon, who drafted the theologians' response to Underwood, agreed to a point.

"Each one of us is ultimately directly accountable to God, but we are helped toward being accountable to God by the community that forms us as individuals," said Harmon, associate professor at Campbell University Divinity School, a Baptist school in Buies Creek, N.C.

Harmon said Christianity is "a way of life that is inescapably communal; it can't be done in isolation."

He said Baptists have not always overemphasized the individual. "If you dig back into the 17th century, you find more balance of the individual in community, whereas the emphasis we've derived from our culture, particularly in the 20th century, is more of a radical autonomy."

Curtis Freeman, director of the Baptist House of Studies at Duke Divinity School in Durham, N.C., agreed community was more prominent in Baptist thought "until very recently."

"It's not just me and Jesus," said Freeman. "The church is more than an aggregate of individuals, — like a bunch of marbles in a bag — you just pour them in and pour them out again."

"The conviction that drives me in this," said Freeman, "is the promise that Jesus gives: Where two or three are gathered, Jesus is there with them. It doesn't say 'where I gather with my hat' or 'where I sit down with my Bible.' That's what we have to wrestle with. That kind of individualism makes ecclesiology very hard to conceive of."

On one point at least, all three agreed — there's no place for coercion in authentic faith. When the individual submits to the community's correction, it has to be voluntary.

"If that's the bottom line," Underwood said, "then we probably don't disagree."

In addition to Freeman and Harmon, the theologians drafting the Jan. 31 statement are: Mikael Broadway of Shaw University Divinity School in Raleigh, N.C.; Barry Harvey of Baylor University in Waco, Texas; Elizabeth Newman of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Va.; Mark Medley of Campbellsville University in Campbellsville, Ky; and Philip Thompson of North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls, S.D. **BT**

2006

Brought to you this month
by Phillip Bennett



The Resource Page

... creative and practical ideas

The emerging church conversation

In October 2005, my wife, Irene, and I used part of my four-week sabbatical after 20 years of ministry to learn more about the emerging church, a concept that began in the late 1990s among some younger church leaders and is now taking place globally. While some outsiders call it a “movement,” insiders call it a “conversation.”

Irene and I visited three emerging churches in Virginia, Maryland and Minnesota. We also attended a three-day conference, “A Generous Orthodoxy.” In each place we were two of the oldest, if not the oldest, persons present. (Usually we were 25 years older than most participants.) We also read a number of books written by leaders in this conversation. I want to share with you what we learned about the emerging church from our study and visits.

Characteristics

- There is no particular model. It is more a mindset having different and creative expressions varying according to cultural context, local tradition and the thinking of a particular church’s leader.
- Semantics matter, such as the preference for worship “gathering” rather than worship “service.” Service refers to music and preaching offered to attendees rather than what the people bring to God. “Gathering” emphasizes that when the church gathers it is to worship God.
- Leadership is more decentralized and entrepreneurial with less congregational control. A real leveling of the field between clergy and laypersons exists.
- Organizational simplicity is held dear. A common expression is “not buildings, budgets and bodies, but conversation, connection and collaboration.”
- Emphasis is on building the Kingdom of

God, not personal salvation; on converting people to become followers of Jesus who are “partners” in mission and ministry, not on helping them become “members” of a church. Instead of preoccupation with the soul after death, people are invited into a personal relationship with God that will not be private.

- The local community is to be a missional community. Mission-mindedness, an ecumenical commitment and a high value for social justice are present.
- On the surface the conversation appears to be one of style. Underneath it, however, is a crucial theological and ethical paradigm shift.

Worship experiences

- Gatherings usually occur on Sunday between 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.
- Worship is holistic or eclectic in expression.
- Experiences last more than 60 minutes, with most 90 minutes or more.
- The music is new, sometimes written by local musicians. Some old hymn texts with new tunes are used, but mostly newer texts dominate.
- All kinds of media — computerized visuals of text, art, pictures, videos — are used throughout the worship time.
- Everyone dresses informally.
- Worshipers have many opportunities to connect.
- Many announcements are made about doing ministry or mission in the community and around the world, but almost none are about meetings.
- Communion is a part of every worship gathering. Attendees serve themselves or laypersons serve them at small tables placed around the room.
- No offerings are taken. However, “offering

Recommended Reading

- Gibbs, Eddie and Ryan K. Bolger. *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures*. Baker Academic, 2005.
- Kimball, Dan. *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations*. Zondervan, 2003.
- McLaren, Brian D. *A New Kind of Christian*. Jossey-Bass, 2001.
- McLaren, Brian D. *The Story We Find Ourselves In*. Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- McLaren, Brian D. *The Last Word and the Word After That*. Jossey-Bass, 2005.
- McLaren, Brian D. *A Generous Orthodoxy*. Zondervan, 2004.
- Miller, Donald. *Blue Like Jazz*. Thomas Nelson, 2003.
- Wallis, Jim. *God’s Politics*. HarperSanFrancisco, 2005.

On the Web

- <http://www.off-the-map.org/>
<http://www.emergentvillage.com/>
<http://www.vintagefaith.com/>
<http://www.theooze.com/>

boxes” and information on direct deposits are available at the front or rear of the building.

- Pastors lead the “teaching-preaching” segments, and associate ministers or laypersons conduct the other parts of the worship experiences, including communion.
- Worship leaders demonstrate real sensitivity to post-modernity by giving clear instructions and regular explanations (for example, about religious symbols, liturgy, prayer times, use of Scripture and readings) to help seekers and guests understand what is taking place and why. **BT**

THE RESOURCE PAGE is provided by the Congregational Life office of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in partnership with *Baptists Today* and for those dedicated lay leaders working in the educational ministries of local churches. This month’s page was written by Phillip Bennett, minister of education at First Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga.

2006 Formations Commentary

Bible Study resources for the adult Formations lessons available from Smyth & Helwys Publishing (www.helwys.com)

LESSONS FOR:

**Sunday, April 2-30,
2006** Written by Robert
Mulkey, retired pastor of
First Baptist Church of
DeLand, Fla., and cur-
rently pastor of the Baptist
Fellowship at The Villages, Fla.



April 2, 2006

Jesus is anointed

John 12:1-16

Just over the Mount of Olives from Jerusalem was a small town that was important to Jesus. Bethany was the home of his friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus. It was the scene of the raising of Lazarus after four days in the grave. This miracle led to deadly hostility, however.

In response to the miracle, the Pharisees and the chief priests met in a panic. They said to each other, "If Jesus keeps on doing this sort of thing, he will have everybody following him and the Romans will come down on us. He is a threat to our holy place and our nation." Caiaphas made his speech: "It is better for one man to die than for the whole nation to be destroyed." They were planning to kill him, so they started looking for him.

With that dark threat in the background, we are brought to a party in Bethany given in Jesus' honor. Martha, Lazarus and Mary were there. We know hard-working Martha. She is the one serving the food and drink. Lazarus, celebrating life, is at Jesus' side. And we know Mary's devotion to Jesus as her teacher. She brings expensive perfume to anoint his feet.

Mary's act of devotion inspires us. We are touched by her love for Jesus. We may even resolve to be more extravagant in our giving. But her gift and the timing of it also intrigue us. Anointing the feet of a living person was extraordinary because this was

done to corpses to prepare them for burial. We want to ask Mary if she has knowledge of something we do not: "Mary, did you know that Jesus was soon to die?"

The answer to this question is provided in the way John presents the incident. In John's story, Mary's act is prophetic. The message of the anointing is clear. John has warned us that Jesus is in danger of dying at the hands of his enemies. We know it will happen soon. Mary lovingly gives Jesus a foot massage. It shows more than affection and devotion. It foretells his death on the cross.

Discuss: How would you have responded to Jesus if you had been in Mary's place? How are you responding in today's world to followers of Jesus who are persecuted for their faith?

What can you do to help Christians living in nations such as China, Sudan and Indonesia where their freedom is limited?

Judas Iscariot is at the dinner party. His reaction to Mary's loving gift to Jesus gives evidence of the darkness of his heart. He asks, "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" (This would be a large sum of money, a year's wages for a laborer.) What is Judas thinking?

John tells his readers that Judas is the one who will betray Jesus — and the very one who kept the common purse *and* stole from it. Why would Judas turn against Jesus?

Luke's gospel reports that just prior to this event in Bethany, Jesus has gone to the home of a chief tax collector in Jericho named Zacchaeus. Everyone is upset by Jesus' choice to have dinner with this notorious "sinner." Perhaps Judas decides to turn against Jesus at this point. Jesus shows that his ministry is going in a direction that does not connect with the goals Judas wants to pursue. And now he accepts this wasteful display! Judas is disappointed in Jesus. Judas' agenda does not agree with that of Jesus.

In response to Judas' concern, Jesus says Mary has bought the perfume so that she

might keep it for the day of his burial. She is apparently planning to give a lavish gift of perfume for anointing his body when he dies, but she cannot wait. She uses the perfume to honor Jesus while he is alive.

Jesus then commends her for what she has done, teaching his followers to do good to others in Jesus' name while there is still time: "Leave her alone. The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

Discuss: Have you ever held back on an impulse to serve someone (ex: make a visit or call, write a note, take a meal or a gift)? What opportunities have you missed to honor someone you love? What can you do today to prevent other missed opportunities?

April 9, 2006

Jesus is betrayed

John 18:1-11

John saw Judas as completely under the control of the Evil One. Satan had entered into Judas. He is the thief who would steal from the disciples' money box, the deceitful one pretending to care about the poor, the traitor who went out into the darkness to betray his friend. Judas is the snake in the garden.

Judas fascinates us. He was one of the chosen twelve. How could he follow Jesus for three years, listen to his teachings, have Jesus wash his feet, eat the last supper with Jesus, and then go to the high priest and sell Jesus for 30 pieces of silver?

Discuss: What does Judas' act of betrayal say about human depravity? Are we capable of turning our backs on Jesus as Judas did?

Have you ever wondered why a friend deserted you? The friend never talked with you about a wrong you had done. He or she simply went away. You heard later what your friend said to someone else about you. If a friend has ever forsaken you, you know something of what Jesus experienced when Judas betrayed him and the other disciples



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abandoned him.

But when John tells the story of the arrest of Jesus in the garden, his attention is on Jesus, not Judas. John does not mention Judas' use of a kiss to identify Jesus to the temple guards. Instead, he makes it clear that Jesus is in charge. He knows what is about to happen and goes out to meet those who have come for him.

Throughout his gospel John tells us that Jesus knows who he is, where he has come from, where he is going and what will happen to him. John's Jesus is always in control. He knows what he has come to accomplish. John poses for his readers the question, How do I react to Jesus when I see his power and miraculous signs?

John tells us Jesus asked, "Who is it that you want?" They answered him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am he" (18:4-5).

"I Am" or "I am he" is the great name Jesus uses a number of times in the Gospel of John to indicate he came from the Father. Three times in one dispute with religious authorities Jesus sounds this theme. The first is to affirm that he brings the presence and power of God. "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am he, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24).

The second seems to be a less intense claim to be the obedient Son of Man. "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you shall know that I am he; and of myself I do nothing, but as the father has taught me, that is what I say" (8:28).

The third use of that strange term comes within a climactic exchange and takes us back to John's prologue: "He was in the beginning with God" (1:2).

Jesus' meaning is quite clear in John 8:56-58 when he says, "Abraham your father was overjoyed to see my day, and he saw it and was glad." The authorities respond, "You are not yet fifty years old, 'and you have seen Abraham?'" Jesus then says, "In God's truth I tell you, before Abraham came to be, I am he."

The next time we hear these words is when Judas brings the posse to arrest Jesus (18:4-6). "Then Jesus, knowing all that would happen to him, came forward and said to them, 'Whom do you seek?' They answered him, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Jesus said to them, 'I am he.' Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them. When Jesus said to them, 'I am he,' they drew back and fell to

the ground."

A few Pentecostal Christians have pointed to this event as a biblical example of being "slain in the Spirit." For them, being slain in the Spirit is being overpowered by the Spirit and losing control of one's body and falling backward.

Discuss: Why do you think the soldiers fell back, apparently unable to carry out their intention to arrest Jesus? Were they overpowered by the Spirit, or were they simply reacting to the power of Jesus? Why did John want to show how powerful Jesus was at the moment he was deciding not to use that power to save himself?

Robin Griffith-Jones comments in his book, *The Four Witnesses*, "Far from being overpowered, he [Jesus] must rein in his power before the soldiers can lay a hand upon him. One sentence from Jesus is enough to drive them back."

There is another indication of Jesus' power and authority in John's story of the arrest in the garden. Peter draws his sword and cuts off the right ear of the high priest's slave, Malchus. Jesus tells Peter to put away his sword and then says, "Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?" For John, Jesus' words to Peter indicate that his betrayal, arrest and crucifixion are not fate overtaking him. As Raymond Brown notes in his commentary, *The Gospel of John*, "Jesus is the master of his fate."

According to John, Jesus gives Judas permission to leave the last supper (13:27) and allows the Temple forces to arrest him. We feel the impact of his words, "No one takes my life from me. I lay it down of my own accord" (10:19).

What a powerful figure Jesus is in John's Gospel! He is one with the Father, the great "I Am."

Discuss: In what ways do you experience the power of Jesus being available to you? Down what new path will you follow him?

novel, *The Da Vinci Code*.

John's account provides no evidence of a romantic relationship between Mary and Jesus. Rather, she had a deep devotion to Jesus as her "Lord" and her teacher. She was also the first person to discover the empty tomb and the first bearer of the good news of the resurrection.

Mary came to the tomb "before dawn" (3-6 a.m.). Archaeologists have shown that the tomb would have had a stone disk sitting in a sloping groove to cover the entrance. It would have been easy to roll it closed, but difficult to roll it open. When Mary saw that the stone had been rolled back, she was alarmed at the possible implications. Could the grave have been robbed? Had the authorities taken the body somewhere to add further insult to the crucifixion? Mary ran for help.

Peter and "the other disciple" whom we presume to be John ran to the tomb. John arrived first, but with his more reflective and perhaps cautious personality he looked around the outside of the tomb. Peter upon arriving ran straight into the tomb, however.

John wants his readers to know that the grave clothes were arranged in a way that indicated something of the resurrection. Peter saw them "lying there" with the head covering separated from the rest of the cloth and carefully folded.

Something other than robbery had happened. Why would a grave robber take the time to carefully arrange the cloth that had wrapped the body? Why would a robber remove the grave clothes if he were stealing the body? Or could it be, as Bruce Milne suggests in his commentary, *The Message of John*, that the grave clothes were still swirled like a wrapping because Jesus' body had simply passed through them like a chrysalis a butterfly has left behind.

When the other disciple came into the tomb, "he saw and believed." Does this mean he believed Jesus had been raised from the dead? There seems to be no other way to interpret "believed." But John implies this belief was only the beginning. They were soon to understand that the scriptures pointed to his rising from the dead.

After these two disciples saw the empty tomb and one of them believed in the resurrection, John says simply, "the disciples returned to their homes." They saw the empty tomb and the discarded clothes. The beloved disciple believed. But why not shout it from the rooftops?

Mary is the focus of the story now. She

April 16

Jesus conquers death

John 20:1-18

John tells the good news of the resurrection of Jesus in the beautiful light of his bond with Mary Magdalene. Their relationship has fascinated many people. A nonbiblical legend says they were lovers. This legend has found life in American culture in the movie, *The Last Temptation of Christ*; in the musical, *Jesus Christ Superstar*; and in the recent best-selling



stood weeping. Somewhere I saw a church sign that read: “Weeping Mary Baptist Church.” I wish I had found the pastor or a member and asked about the origin of the church’s name. Perhaps a minister once preached so powerful a sermon on the story of Mary’s weeping outside the tomb that the people were in awe of her deep love for the Lord and wanted to name their church after such devotion.

While she was weeping, Mary looked inside the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting where Jesus’ body had been. They asked why she was weeping. As she was answering, Mary became aware that someone was standing behind her. She turned to see Jesus, but mistook him for the garden keeper. Was she so overcome by grief that her perception was distorted? Or is John reporting an experience similar to that of the two disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus and did not recognize him until he broke bread with them in their home (Luke 24:30-31)?

In his resurrection appearances Jesus seems to be the same as before the crucifixion and yet strangely changed. The resurrection body is like the physical body, but it is not the same. (Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:42-44) that the resurrection body is not a physical body but a spiritual body). As John will show in the remainder of his gospel, Jesus can appear suddenly. His body is not limited by time and space.

When Jesus called her name, Mary turned and said to him, “Rabbouni!” And apparently she embraced him. His reply was, “Don’t hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father.” His words were not a rebuff. They were a revelation of the fact that he would be entering into a new relationship with the disciples when he had ascended “to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God” (20:17).

We can have confidence in our relationship with our Father because Jesus has been “glorified” in his crucifixion and has been raised from the dead to give us his commission and his spirit. “Jesus said, ‘As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (20:21-22).

Discuss: How will we live out Jesus’ charge to his disciples as our commission today? How can we keep ourselves available and open to receive his Spirit? How can we be the living presence of Christ in our time and place?

April 23

Easter and Peter

Acts 3:12-19

Peter and John were about to enter the temple. A man who was lame from birth was being carried to his begging station beside the door. He looked up and asked them for money. To his surprise, he received what he did not ask for. He asked for money and received healing. It was Peter who reached down, told him to walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and pulled him to his feet.

Luke describes a dramatic scene. The man who had never been able to walk without help was now “walking and leaping and praising God.” When the people in the temple saw him and recognized him as the man they had seen there for years asking for alms, they were amazed. Naturally they wanted to know how this miracle had happened.

When the people gathered around Peter in astonishment, he was quick to tell them it was not his and John’s power or goodness that brought about the healing. He made the people of Jerusalem aware of a whole new dimension of power: the resurrection power of Jesus was now loose in their world. That power was present because, as Peter said, “The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob raised Jesus from the dead.”

It is significant that Peter spoke the names of those patriarchs. Luke reported in his gospel (20:37-38) that Moses spoke of the resurrection when, in the story of the burning bush, he spoke of “their Lord as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Now he is God not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.” The God of the Jewish nation is the God of the resurrection. His power is a living power available in the Jesus whom they killed and God raised from death.

Peter’s accusations in Acts 3 against the people of Jerusalem sound harsh. He began each statement with an accusative “you.” “You handed Jesus over and rejected him in the presence of Pilate. You rejected the Holy and Righteous One and asked to have a murderer given to you. You killed the Author of Life.”

Each accusation is worse than the one before. Peter builds their guilt list to a crescendo and then states the power of God over their evil. “But God raised him from

death.” Rejection, betrayal and murder could not stop the power of God to bring Jesus back from death.

Peter’s ungrammatical statement emphasizes the role of faith. “And his name, through faith in his name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which *comes* through him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all” (3:16 NKJV). By faith, the life-giving power of Jesus’ name healed the lame man and set him to walking and dancing.

Discuss: Whose faith did Peter mean? Did he leave that unclear in order to make us think about the combination of the man’s faith and the faith he and John had in the name of Jesus? What other stories of Jesus’ power to heal involved the faith of the people around the one who was suffering?

Peter and John asked no questions about the lame man’s past. They placed no conditions on his healing. They gave him the healing in Jesus’ name as a free act of God’s mercy. The way the healing took place reminds us that Jesus never tried to explain anyone’s suffering. He labeled the power of physical infirmity as Satan’s power and delighted in breaking that power’s grip on a human life.

Discuss: How does the healing of this lame man in Acts 3 compare with the gospel accounts of the way Jesus healed people?

In Peter’s proclamation of the resurrection of Jesus is the good news that Jesus’ power and authority are now available both to heal us and to give us strength.

I liked the WWJD (“What would Jesus do?”) fad that was around a few years back. It would indeed do us good to ask ourselves before making a decision, “What would Jesus do?” But the answer to that question is often only the beginning of what we need from God.

I find that I need more than knowing the answer. I am often not able to do what Jesus would do even though I know what he would do. I need more help than his example. I need his presence and his power. When I dare to ask him earnestly and directly, sometimes out loud, I can often see and feel his power at work in my life. “And his name, through faith in his name” I am made stronger.

The message of the resurrection must have been good news to those who heard Peter’s sermon and knew they were guilty of killing “The Author of Life.” They needed forgiveness and a second chance to let Jesus’ power work in their lives. That is exactly what



his resurrection means for guilty people like the residents of Jerusalem and you and me.

John Claypool used to say of the resurrection, "A clear indication of the love of God for sinners is the fact that he raised up his son and sent him back to the very people who killed him." Peter is certain that their repentance and faith will bring into their lives the gift of God's forgiveness and the power of the resurrected Jesus Christ.

April 30

Easter and Philip

Acts 8:26-40

Luke reports that the Spirit led Philip to tell Samaritans and Gentiles the good news about Jesus. The Spirit of the resurrected Jesus directed him and made him a witness for Jesus beyond Jerusalem and Judea.

Luke does not explicitly say, "The Holy Spirit sent Philip to the Samaritans." However, he reports that when Philip proclaimed Christ in "the city of the Samaritans," the Spirit's presence was evident. As he spoke, there were "miraculous signs" (v. 6). And, just as in the ministry of Jesus, "unclean spirits, crying with loud shrieks, came out of many who were possessed; and many others who were paralyzed or lame were cured. So there was great joy in that city" (vv. 7-8 NRSV).

After his joyful experience of the presence of the Spirit in Samaria, Philip was told by "an angel of the Lord" to go south to the desert road from Jerusalem to Gaza. When he arrived in the area, it soon became clear to him why he had been sent there. An Ethiopian eunuch was riding along that road in his chariot. Philip still needed some prodding from the Spirit. He was not sure what he should do, but the message came through to him from the resurrected Jesus: "Go to that chariot and stay near it" (v. 29).

When you have an opportunity to talk about your faith, you may be tempted to dismiss it as mere coincidence. Sitting beside a stranger on a plane who wants to hear your faith story, running into a neighbor in the doctor's waiting room who needs your encouragement, encountering a coworker who wants to talk about spiritual matters ... in such events as these the Spirit is leading you to tell the good news about Jesus. An angel may not have told you what route to take, but circumstances have put you there

and you have the message in you. What more evidence of the Spirit's leading do you need?

John Polhill in *The New American Commentary on Acts* writes that the Ethiopia referred to in this story is not to be confused with modern Ethiopia. It is the ancient Nubian empire, referred to in the Old Testament as the Kingdom of Cush whose inhabitants were black.

In modern terminology the Ethiopian would be called the Minister of Finance of "the Candace, Queen of the Ethiopians" (v. 27). As a God-fearing Gentile, he was interested in the God of Israel. However, as a eunuch, he would not have been allowed into the Temple because of his physical imperfection. Deuteronomy 23:1 makes it clear that a man who had been emasculated could not enter "the assembly."

The Bible contains many evidences of God's amazing kindness. In the very book the Ethiopian was reading he would have been able to find this message of hope: "... do not let the eunuch say, 'I am just a dry tree.' For thus says the Lord: To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name ... that shall not be cut off" (Isa 56:3-8 NRSV). As he read from the scroll of Isaiah, the eunuch did not know that this promise was about to be fulfilled for him.

Philip ran to the slow-moving wagon and began to trot alongside. He heard the Ethiopian reading from the text of Isaiah. John Polhill points out a basic theme running throughout Luke-Acts: Old Testament texts need a Christian interpreter. Just as Jesus "opened ... the Scriptures" for the disciples, the resurrected Jesus opened the Scriptures for this Gentile through Philip.

The text was Isaiah 53:7-8. The images are of a lamb about to be slaughtered and a lamb silent as he is about to be sheared. No doubt these images evoked for Philip the suffering, crucifixion and humiliation of Jesus. The Ethiopian asked an informed question and gave Philip a perfect opening to talk with him about Jesus and how he could accept the Good News for himself. This was no accident. The Spirit was using the circumstances to bring this man into a relationship with Jesus through Philip.

We, too, might serve as a Philip to an outcast like the eunuch. We may know

someone whose life experience is very different from ours due to cultural background or sexual orientation. As we quietly listen, the Spirit of the resurrected Jesus may send us to someone on whom he wants to shower his grace. We may be privileged, like Philip, to welcome that person into the family of God.

We don't know what other scriptures Philip chose to share with the Ethiopian, but we do know that he was soon ready for Philip to baptize him. What a powerful picture of authentic response to the good news that God loves the world enough to give his only Son!

Who knows what body of water the man saw that caused him to say to Philip: "Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?" The most important thing to notice about his words, as Frank Stagg pointed out in his *Book of Acts*, is that they echo Luke's persistent theme: "the unhindered gospel."

The resurrected Jesus has removed barriers. There are now no hindrances to the spread of the Good News to all people. The Spirit led Philip to show the Ethiopian eunuch that Jesus has broken down those barriers based on how a person's body works and his skin color.

They went down into the water together, and Philip baptized this seeking Gentile. "When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:38-39). How are we to understand Philip being suddenly taken away by the Spirit of the Lord?

Luke tells us this detail to make it clear that the Spirit of the living Lord was in charge all along to way. He brought him to this road so that he could tell the Good News to the Ethiopian eunuch, and then he transported him somewhere else to continue being a witness in coastal cities.

This story of the working of the Spirit in Philip's life tells us the living Lord wants to work through us to show his incredible kindness to those who are facing hindrances to their participation in the church and to people who want help in understanding the Bible. Our responsibility is to listen quietly to what the Spirit is saying to us and then follow the Spirit's urgings to go and speak on behalf of Jesus who is living and active among us, bringing down all hindrances to the spread of the Good News. **BT**

The Lakeland Fellowship, a newly established CBF congregation in central Florida, is seeking a **pastor** to partner in developing a church (www.lakelandfellowship.org). Send résumé to: Richard Phillips at phillips931@msn.com.

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First Baptist Church of Vienna, Ga., is seeking a full-time **pastor**. The church has a membership of 470. First Baptist is a traditional, moderate church with strong community and family ties. The applicant should have prior pastoral experience and hold a Master of Divinity degree from an accredited institution. Please mail résumés to: Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 351, Vienna, GA 31092. Deadline for receiving résumés is March 31.

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Hominy Baptist Church, a CBF congregation in Candler, N.C., is seeking a **minister of administration and outreach**. Job description is available at www.hominybaptist.com. Application deadline is March 15. Please submit résumés to: Hominy Baptist Church, 135 Candler School Rd., Candler, NC 28715 or hominy@bellsouth.net.

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First Baptist Church of Gainesville, Fla., is seeking an **associate minister for children, youth and families**. This full-time minister will be responsible for leading/coordinating the current programs to new levels of content and involvement. M.Div. and/or previous experience preferred. Send résumés

to: CCCAKPayne@aol.com or Search Committee, 425 W. University Ave. Gainesville, FL 32601.

First Baptist Church, San Angelo, Texas, seeks a full-time **minister with young families**. For more information or to submit a résumé, contact: Ronnie Laughlin, First Baptist Church, 37 E. Harris, San Angelo, TX 76903 or (325) 655-4101 or laughlin@fbcsanangelotx.org. Deadline for submission is March 31.

Large, downtown, moderate church seeks a **minister to children** who will provide creative leadership that will focus and shape our ministry to children and their families. Candidates should have an advanced degree from an accredited seminary or equivalent, effective communication and organizational skills, a commitment to assist children and families in their spiritual journey, and a demonstrated love for children from all backgrounds. The candidate must be a self-starter and have positive, innovative and creative leadership skills. Please send résumés to: Heather Newton, c/o First Baptist Church, 5 Oak St., Asheville, NC 28801 or hnewton@buncombe.main.nc.us or tbratton@fbca.net. For further information, including position description, visit www.fbca.net.

An historic church in Beaufort, S.C., is seeking an individual who is called to be a **minister to children**. The individual who fills this position will be responsible for ministry with children birth to sixth grade. A college degree with a master's level equivalent is preferred, along with some experience in childhood education and/or children's ministry. Further information is available at www.bcob.org. Send résumé including philosophy of ministry and a recent photograph to: bcob@bcob.org or Mr. Donald Gruel, Chairperson, Minister to Children Search Committee, P.O. Box 879, Beaufort, SC 29901.

Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond seeks to fill a tenure-track or tenured **faculty position in homiletics**, rank commensurate with experience. Candidates must be Baptist, hold the M.Div. and Ph.D., and have at least six years experience as a senior pastor and in teaching homiletics. Women and minorities are encouraged to apply. The search will continue until the position is filled. BTSR is a member of the ecumenical Richmond Theological Consortium and is supported by the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist General Association of Virginia. Mail letter of application, résumé and three letters of recommendation to: Homiletics Search Committee, Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, 3400 Brook Rd., Richmond, VA 23227.

Alabama CBF Coordinator: Résumés and recommendations will be received until March 31. Email or fax cover letter (labeled Alabama CBF Coordinator Search), résumé and related information to: search@alabamacbf.org or (205) 424-5651. Address any other correspondence to: Alabama CBF, 2539 John Hawkins Pkwy., Ste. 101-113, Birmingham, AL 35244.

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SBC, other evangelical groups remain conspicuously mum on immigration

(RNS) — Advocates at World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, can usually expect a warm greeting from large evangelical groups wielding clout in the halls of Congress.

But this year, they're getting a downright chilly reception to one of their priority agenda items: immigration reform.

As Congress grapples with legislation regarding an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants, the nation's most powerful conservative Christian organizations have been watching from the sidelines. This occurs despite decades of evangelical initiative to make America a hospitable haven for religious and political refugees.

The search to explain the silence leads through several layers of reasoning.

For starters, the Christian right says it has other issues at the moment, such as the confirmation of conservative judges and the battle against same-sex marriage. Beyond that, some suspect evangelicals don't want to appear soft on lawbreakers of any kind. And on a level that plumbs the depths of what it means to bear Christian witness, evangelicals confide they're still struggling as a community to determine the right thing to do.

Among Southern Baptists, for instance, "there's no consensus about what to do about the (illegal immigrants) who are already here or about how we would allow legal immigration," says Richard Land, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty

Commission, which articulates public policy positions for the 16 million-member Southern Baptist Convention. Southern Baptists "see a basic distinction between people who are refugees, who are in fear of losing their life and home ... and those who are coming over primarily for economic reasons and are not abiding by the immigration laws." Because mass deportation "isn't realistic," Land says, the denomination needs to wrestle longer with what to do.

Evangelicals on the immigration front lines say time is running out.

Near Tucson, Ariz., Maryada Vallet travels the desert in a pickup truck, stopping to not only feed undocumented border crossers, but wash their blistered feet. It's a gesture from biblical accounts of what Jesus did for his disciples at the Last Supper.

Such inspired volunteer work, warns World Relief staff attorney Amy Bliss, could lead to federal prosecution if a bill passed in December by the U.S. House of Representatives becomes law.

"Anyone who believes" in the biblical story of the gentile who stopped to help a wounded man, Vallet says, "should be outraged that ... the government is making it a crime to be a Good Samaritan."

Soon the U.S. Senate is expected to start reviewing the House-passed bill in committee. Liberal religious activists say evangelical participation could make the difference between success and failure.

"To have the evangelical voice there

(advocating) has been particularly important to this administration, which listens to them," says C. Richard Parkins, director of Episcopal Migration Ministries for the Episcopal Church U.S.A., a mainline Protestant denomination with a liberal bent. "They have access to leadership that we've not had access to."

Yet despite appeals for help from evangelicals at Baltimore-based World Relief and Arlington, Va.-based Jubilee Campaign, the faith's political heavy hitters have kept mum on immigration.

Amber Hildebrand, a spokesperson for the Washington-based Family Research Council, explains: "It's not that we don't think (immigration policy) is important. There have just been other issues the FRC has chosen to focus on." Colorado-based Focus on the Family spokesperson Gwen Stein gives the same reason for her group's reticence to take a stand.

The National Association of Evangelicals hasn't taken a position on immigration since 1985. At that time, as President Reagan was ushering in what was in effect an amnesty program for illegal aliens, the NAE pledged "to eliminate the spirit of racism in any of our responses" and "show personal and corporate hospitality to those who seek a new life in our nation."

Led by evangelical organizers at World Relief, 42 national religious groups and 69 local ones signed a statement in October calling for a process to let undocumented immigrants apply for legal status. Signatories ranged from the Union for Reform Judaism to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

In Congress, debate hinges largely on whether immigrants who pay a fine and other penalties should be able to then seek legal status. A bill proposed by Sens. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., would allow for such a process, while President Bush's guest worker proposal would require the undocumented to leave after a designated period. Whether family members should be separated or kept together also looms large as an issue up for grabs. **BT**



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Megachurches more diverse, new study finds

(RNS) — When you think of megachurches, do you think of them as congregations that are homogeneous gatherings in huge complexes?

Scholars who have just completed a study of congregations with weekly attendance of 2,000 or more say you may need to think again.

Thirty-six percent of 406 churches surveyed said that minorities make up 20 percent or more of their congregation. And a higher percentage — 56 percent — said they are making efforts to become multiethnic.

“I find that just amazing, given that we always talk about Sunday being the most segregated hour of the week,” said Scott Thumma, professor of the sociology of religion at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut.

“There’s a good bit of diversity going on.”

Thumma was the principal investigator for the study, which was done in conjunction with the Leadership Network, a Dallas-based nonprofit that aims to foster innovation among Christian leaders.

Researchers found that the number of megachurches totals more than 1,200. Thumma said his database of megachurches included 600 five years ago and 850 in early 2005.

“They’re not so much an anomaly as they were a decade or two ago,” said Thumma.

Investigators found that few megachurches have colossal sanctuaries. Just 5 percent have sanctuaries that seat 3,000 or more. More than half — 53 percent — have

four or more services over the course of a weekend.

The findings were based on surveys completed by 382 churches with weekly attendance of 2,000 or more, and 24 with attendance of 1,800 or more, supplemented by research to learn the latest totals of megachurches.

Researchers reviewing the total number of megachurches found that the states with the most megachurches are California (178), Texas (157), Florida (85) and Georgia (73).

The largest portion of megachurches — 34 percent — were nondenominational, followed by Southern Baptist (16 percent), unspecified Baptist (10 percent), Assemblies of God (6 percent) and United Methodist (5 percent). **BT**

Survey: churchgoers have fewer divorces

ANN ARBOR, Mich. (RNS) — Husbands and wives who attend religious services together are less likely to divorce, whether they are black or white, new research from the University of Michigan shows.

The study, conducted by researchers connected to the Institute for Social Research, examined how religion affected the risk of divorce for both black and white couples in the first seven years of marriage. Data came from 373 couples initially interviewed in 1986, their first year of marriage, as part of the Early Years of Marriage project at the university.

“The findings suggest that the most effective intervention strategies for dealing with marital instability and divorce are those that consider gender and race,” said Edna Brown, the paper’s lead author, in a press release.

Black couples are at higher risk of divorce than whites, the study found. But it also found education a protective factor against divorce for wives, and income a protective factor for husbands. Regardless of race, however, couples who attended religious services together were less likely to divorce.

Other aspects of faith, such as frequency of attendance or importance of faith, didn’t influence the risk of divorce. **BT**

Civil rights leader expelled from Vanderbilt to return as professor

(RNS) — A retired Methodist pastor and civil rights leader whose expulsion from Vanderbilt University caused a national furor 46 years ago will return to the university as a distinguished professor.

The Nashville, Tenn., university announced the one-year appointment Jan. 18 as James Lawson was named Vanderbilt’s 2005 Distinguished Alumnus.

“It’s not often that either persons or institutions have an opportunity to redress a grievous wrong,” said Lucius Outlaw, Vanderbilt’s associate provost for undergraduate education. “The expulsion of James Lawson was a significant moment in the history of Vanderbilt that set it back decades.

“Bringing him here isn’t about making apologies, because that happened many years ago,” Outlaw added. “It’s about a new point in our relationship with him, and continuing the process of working our way past the perception of Vanderbilt as a white, segregated, arrogant institution.”

Lawson, pastor emeritus of Holman United Methodist Church in Los Angeles, where he served for 25 years before retiring in 1999, said: “This is for me an

unexpected, even momentous personal instant in my journey.”

Dubbed by Martin Luther King Jr. “the leading nonviolence theorist in the world,” Lawson helped organize sit-ins by black students that led to the desegregation of lunch counters in downtown Nashville. He also was active in civil rights struggles in Alabama and Mississippi.

His expulsion from Vanderbilt for his role in the movement and the resulting resignations of faculty members in protest embroiled the campus and the Nashville community in a nationally reported controversy for months in the spring of 1960. Eventually, a compromise was forged to stop most of the resignations and allow Lawson to complete his degree in Nashville. But Lawson instead chose to transfer to Boston University.

“No other alumnus has contributed so much to issues of national and international justice and peace, and the promotion of a non-violent worldview,” Vanderbilt Chancellor Gordon Gee said. “James Lawson — and the faculty and students who supported him in 1960 — knew Vanderbilt’s true mission even before Vanderbilt understood it entirely.” **BT**

Air Force revises religion guidelines

By Robert Marus

WASHINGTON (ABP) — Pentagon officials have revised a set of guidelines on religious freedom in the Air Force after complaints from members of Congress and some religious groups.

But the revisions met with mixed reviews from groups with interests in the struggle over religion in the armed services.

“This interim guidance outlines the basic principles we expect all military and civilian airmen to follow as we solidify formal policy,” said Lt. Gen. Roger Brady, Air Force deputy chief of staff for personnel, according to a Pentagon news release Feb. 9.

But Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, said the revisions look like “an effort to water down” the original draft because of pressure from Religious Right leaders.

The earlier draft, released in August, was intended to address a controversy centered on the religious climate at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

In April, Lynn wrote Pentagon officials a letter complaining that there was a pervasive and systematic bias in favor of evangelical Christians at the government-run school. The letter detailed incidents in which administrators, faculty and upper-class cadets at the academy allegedly promoted evangelical forms of Christianity or harassed cadets of minority faiths.

An outspoken parent of two Jewish cadets and a Lutheran chaplain at the school soon echoed AU’s complaints.

Among the allegations were several incidents in which faculty or administrators promoted evangelical groups or beliefs in ways the complainants found inappropriate or coercive — such as repeated attempts to convert non-evangelical cadets and prayers or religious promotions at events with cadets of differing faiths. The charges also included several incidents in which cadets of minority faiths were harassed or humiliated by fellow cadets.

The Air Force issued a report on the academy and the guidelines to deal with the controversy.

But in October, a group of conservative congressmen — led by Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.) — wrote a letter to President Bush



complaining about the new guidelines. Jones and his colleagues claimed that the document’s proposed solution — that only “non-sectarian” public prayers were appropriate at events where airmen of many faiths would be present — limited the religious freedom of Christian chaplains who wanted to pray in Jesus’ name.

“The current demand in the guidelines for so-called ‘no-sectarian’ [sic] prayers is merely a euphemism declaring that prayers will be acceptable only so long as they censor Christian beliefs,” Jones wrote.

However, the old guidelines did nothing to prevent Air Force chaplains from giving sectarian prayers at voluntary events where only members of their faith would be present — such as on-base worship services or Bible studies.

In a nod to Jones’ complaint, the revision inserts a line noting that chaplains “will not be required to participate in religious activities, including public prayer, inconsistent with their faiths.”

Lynn noted that the revised document contains no similarly explicit protection for regular military personnel. “This reads like the big problem is that somehow chaplains were losing their right to be religious,” he said. “But these regulations and guidelines came out of specific abuses and practices at the Air Force Academy. This is what they were supposed to remedy, and I think that this draft is a real serious retreat from the sensitivity expressed in earlier drafts from minority religious viewpoints.”

Lynn also faulted the revised guidelines for deleting a list of specific routine military events in which public prayer would typically not be appropriate. In the original guidelines, examples included “staff meetings, office meetings, classes, or officially sanctioned activities such as sports events or practice sessions.”

But the new document simply says public

prayer “should not usually be a part of routine official business.”

And, Lynn noted, the old guidelines included a separate list of events that, “consistent with long-standing military tradition,” could be solemnized with “a brief non-sectarian prayer.”

“Because they took out all that specific language, I feel like more and more activities will be included,” he said. “They seem to want to hedge all their bets and to be able to have a person in authority pray at many different events and say that, ‘Well, this is an exemption to the general principle.’”

Lynn also faulted the revision for shortening the guidelines cautioning officers and upperclassmen against proselytizing their inferiors in the Air Force chain of command.

“This doesn’t have all that language about the significance of a superior officer and a person of lower rank and all those sensitivities,” he said. “It just doesn’t recognize the power differential that caused so many of the problems at the Air Force Academy itself.”

But the Air Force’s Brady said most of the changes simply were to streamline the document.

“We found that we could more effectively express them with leaner, broader verbiage,” he said. “These guidelines help clarify religious respect issues and provide a simple document that is easy for all airmen to comprehend.”

Lynn didn’t accept that assertion. “I don’t think this is a shorter document just because people thought it was too wordy. I think it’s a shorter document because people didn’t want so much emphasis on the rights of adherents of minority religions in the Air Force,” he said.

At least one group that had criticized the earlier guidelines expressed approval of the new ones.

“The guidelines appropriately caution superiors against making comments that could appear to subordinates to be official policy. With that in mind, they properly state that ‘superiors enjoy the same free-exercise rights as all other airmen,’” said Tom Minnery, senior vice president of Focus on the Family, in a Feb. 9 statement. “Just as important, we hope these guidelines will bring an end to the frontal assault on the Air Force by secularists who would make the military a wasteland of relativism, where robust discussion of faith is impossible.” **BT**

Christians who pledge abstinence outlast non-pledgers

By Ken Camp
Baptist Standard

WACO, Texas (ABP) — A new survey of Baptist newlyweds suggests that, though true love does not always wait, it waits more often if it starts with a formal pledge of purity.

While a majority of church-going young couples in the Texas survey acknowledged having sexual intercourse before marriage, the study suggested Baptist couples were much more likely to wait until their wedding night if they took a formal abstinence pledge, such as Southern Baptists' True Love Waits program.

The program gained popularity in the 1990s. Many of the earliest generations of youths to take the pledges have since entered into their first marriages.

Byron Weathersbee, interim chaplain at Baylor University in Waco, Texas, analyzed such sexual-purity pledges and sex education in a Christian context as the focus of his doctoral dissertation. He surveyed young married couples in Texas Baptist churches to examine how — and how much — churches made an impact on their sexual behavior.

Of the young Christians surveyed, six out of 10 who made sexual purity pledges abstained from sexual intercourse until marriage. But only three of 10 who didn't take a formal pledge remained chaste.

All of the surveyed individuals — who had been married less than five years — professed faith in Christ. Of that figure, 99 percent attended church, 84 percent said they grew up in church and 87 percent grew up in a two-parent home.

Even so, 62 percent of the males and 65 percent of the females engaged in sexual intercourse before marriage, Weathersbee discovered. Nine out of 10 who acknowledged sexual activity prior to marriage never took a True Love Waits purity pledge.

"To a large degree, we're missing it," Weathersbee said. "The young people are receiving the data, but they're not translating it into values that result in a lifestyle of purity and holiness."

The strength of the True Love Waits emphasis lies in the way it involves parents, a supportive network of peers, the church as a whole and the community at-large in emphasizing the importance of a pure

lifestyle, Weathersbee said.

The overall sexual abstinence movement — both faith-based and secular — clearly has reaped positive benefits, said Richard Ross, who pioneered the True Love Waits program in 1993.

"The fact is rates of teenage sexual activity rose for 20 unbroken years. Then came True Love Waits and, from that, the broader abstinence movement. From that moment on, rates of teenage sex have dropped every year for 12 unbroken years," he said.

Ross pointed to a study published three years ago in the journal *Adolescent Family Health* that credited the decline in adolescent pregnancy in the United States primarily to the increasing number of sexually abstinent teenagers.

"It clearly shows that increased abstinence accounted for 67 percent of the decrease in pregnancy for girls ages 15 to 19," said Ross, professor of student ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Some research has led analysts to

conclude many American teens are substituting other sexual behaviors for intercourse. For instance, a report released by the National Center for Health Statistics last September found more than half of American teens ages 15 to 19 engaged in oral sex.

Weathersbee's research also revealed "only 27 percent of the young people entered the marriage bed chaste," having refrained not only from intercourse but also from other sexual practices.

But Ross insists teens who take faith-based abstinence pledges understand their promise to mean refraining from any sexual behavior.

Teens who take the True Love Waits pledge promise to enter "a lifetime of purity" that includes, but is not limited to, refraining from sexual intercourse until marriage, he noted.

"Every teaching book for True Love Waits carefully makes the point that teenagers are pledging lifetime purity in thought, look and touch," Ross said. "We also teach: if it involves a sexual organ, it is sex." **BT**

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 Bissett, Ruby, Sarasota, Fla.
 Bittrick, Lindel, New Braunfels, Texas
 Bittinger, Herman/Maxine, Boaz, Ala.
 Black, Tom/Doris, Columbus, Ga.
 Black, Rebecca J., Atlanta, Ga.
 Blackberry, Jeffries L./Elizabeth B., Bowling Green, Ky.
 Blackburn, Mr./Mrs. David M., Athens, Ala.
 Blackstock, R.T./Nita, Penney Farms, Fla.
 Blackstone, Billy B., Chandler, Texas
 Blanchard, Linda, Fayetteville, Ga.
 Bland, Thomas A./Eunice, Wake Forest, N.C.
 Blanton, Bill, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Blanton, Novella, Gaffney, S.C.
 Blevins, F. Zane, Hopewell, Va.
 Blount, Mr./Mrs. Perry, Soperton, Ga.
 Boatright, Vetta A., Louisville, Ga.
 Boland, Tommy, Alpharetta, Ga.
 Bolton, Mrs. V.M., Mobile, Ala.
 Boss, J. Larry, Villa Rica, Ga.
 Bowen, Irene/Charles, Dalton, Ga.
 Bowen, Mrs. Thomas, Woodland, Ga.
 Bowen, W.L., Tifton, Ga.
 Bowie, John, Birmingham, Ala.
 Box, Mr./Mrs. Benton H., Clemson, S.C.
 Boyd, Kirk/Hazel, Moultrie, Ga.
 Bradley, Ruth S., Nashville, Tenn.
 Bragg, Joel, Birmingham, Ala.
 Bramblett, Marian, Greenville, S.C.
 Bramlett, W.C., Kennesaw, Ga.
 Brannan, B.J., Chickasha, Okla.
 Brannon, John/Bette, Kirkwood, Mo.
 Branstetter, Paul D., California, Mo.
 Brantley, Maruice/Edna, Tucson, Ariz.
 Brewer, Donald/Joey, Gainesville, Ga.
 Brewer, Paul D., Jefferson City, Tenn.
 Brewer, Ralph/Peggy, Largo, Fla.
 Bridges, Ray F., Covington, Ga.
 Bridgman, Huey A./Charlotte V., Columbia, Ga.
 Brinkley, Dot W., Hartselle, Ala.
 Britt, Tim, Barnwell, S.C.
 Britton, Vera M., Seneca, S.C.
 Brown, Allen/Gayle, St. Simons Island, Ga.
 Brown, Ann, Rome, Ga.
 Brown, Dale/Jane, Hephzibah, Ga.
 Brown, Harold, Port Neches, Texas
 Brown, Kelly, Fitzgerald, Ga.
 Brown, Kent, Gretna, Va.
 Brown, Lavonn D., Norman, Okla.
 Brown, Mr./Mrs. Harry B., Charlotte, N.C.
 Brown, Ron/Maryan, Phoenix, Md.
 Brown, Tom, Murfreesboro, Tenn.
 Browning, Edwin/Faye, Madison, Fla.
 Browning, Robert/Jackie, Lilburn, Ga.
 Brummett, Catherine, Birmingham, Ala.
 Bruner, James, Macon, Ga.
 Brunson, Mr./Mrs. Nolen, Greenville, S.C.
 Bryan, Sigurd F., Birmingham, Ala.
 Bryant, Gladys, Nashville, Tenn.
 Bryant, James W., Chesapeake, Va.
 Bryant, Jim, Harrison, Ark.
 Bryant, Thomas B./Linda M., Columbia, S.C.
 Bryson, J.G./Earlene, Carrollton, Ga.
 Bugg, Charles/Diane, Shelby, N.C.
 Bullard, C. Michael/Lisa G., Garner, N.C.
 Bunch, Lynette, Murfreesboro, N.C.
 Burge, W. Lee, Atlanta, Ga.
 Burgess Jr., Mr./Mrs. C.S., Decatur, Ga.
 Burlington, Hugh A./Vickie T., Greenville, N.C.
 Burt, Bruce S., Manchester, Ga.
 Burton, Gary, Hope Hull, Ala.
 Burton, Larry M., Montgomery, Ala.
 Bush, Jean, Albany, Ga.
 Butler, Ben J., Bristol, Va.
 Byrd, Mr./Mrs. Robert, Nashville, Tenn.
 Byrd, Frieda, Macon, Ga.
 Byrum, George, Asheboro, N.C.
 Calaway, Bernie L., Cullowhee, N.C.
 Calcote, Ralph, Wesson, Miss.
 Calhoun, Tommie, Durham, N.C.
 Callaway, James/Beverly, Ringgold, Ga.
 Callaway, Nancy, Ringgold, Ga.
 Calvert, Sim, Vinemont, Ala.
 Campbell, Cecil A., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Campolo, Margaret D./Anthony, St. Davids, Pa.
 Canipe, Chris/Sandra, Greensboro, N.C.
 Cantrell, C.C./Sachiko, Mountain View, Mo.
 Cantwell, E.H., Baton Rouge, La.
 Caraway, Michael/Claudia, San Angelo, Texas
 Cardwell, Mary Jane, Waycross, Ga.
 Carpentar, Dorothy, Dahlonega, Ga.
 Carpenter, Anne/Bill, Greenville, S.C.
 Carpenter, Florence, Irving, Texas
 Carson, Jack, Henderson, Ky.
 Carter, Charles, Madison, Miss.
 Carter, James E./Ann D., Jacksonville, Fla.
 Carter, Jimmy/Rosalyn, Plains, Ga.
 Case, J.V., Bowling Green, Ky.
 Casey, Evelyn, Gainesville, Fla.
 Cassidy, Donald, Premium, Ky.
 Cataldo, K.M., Stuart, Fla.
 Cates, J.H., Fredericksburg, Va.
 Cato, Sue, Little Rock, Ark.
 Chaddick, RoGene, Clovis, N.M.
 Chafin, Barbara B., Bellaire, Texas
 Chamberlain, Eugene, Nashville, Tenn.
 Chambers, Fay, Bowden, Ga.
 Chance, Jane, Dalton, Ga.
 Chandler, Lita, Lilburn, Ga.
 Chaney, H.W., Sedalia, Mo.
 Chapman, Robert R., Mars Hill, N.C.
 Chappell, Bonnie, San Angelo, Texas
 Chiles, Henry/Bobbie, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Chisolm, Ivan, Jasper, Ala.
 Christenberry, George A., Augusta, Ga.
 Christensen, Mr./Mrs., Ponca City, Okla.
 Clark, Bobbye S., Memphis, Tenn.
 Clark, David L., Snellville, Ga.
 Clark, Roy N., Rome, Ga.
 Clark, Sarah D., Cocoa, Fla.
 Clarke, James A., Birmingham, Ala.
 Clemons, Hardy, San Antonio, Texas
 Cloar Jr, Ralph M., Little Rock, Ark.
 Clontz, Marie, Asheville, N.C.
 Cluff, Dorothy, Orange, Va.
 Cockrum, Howard B., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Cole, Robert, Plattsmouth, Neb.
 Cole, Paul/Sarah, Waco, Texas
 Coleman, Darrel, Little Rock, Ark.
 Collins, Charles E., Signal Mountain, Tenn.
 Coltharp, Art/LaNell, Austin, Texas
 Compton, Joyce, Beverly Hills, Fla.
 Conn, Walton, Franklin, Tenn.
 Connally, Virginia Boyd, Abilene, Texas
 Conner, Mr./Mrs. Carmen L., Leesburg, Fla.
 Cook, David, Smyrna, Ga.
 Cooley, Ray N., Wallingford, Conn.
 Coon, David, North Kingstown, R.I.
 Cooper, W.F., Waco, Texas
 Cornell, Lionel, Citra, Fla.
 Cospser, Wilma, Cullowhee, N.C.
 Cotney, Bernece W., Wadley, Ala.
 Couch, Rex G., San Marcos, Texas
 Covington, Mr./Mrs. R.W., Waco, Texas
 Coward, Roderick W., Charlotte, N.C.
 Cowart, Jim, Roswell, Ga.
 Cox, Mary Frances, Simpsonville, S.C.
 Creamer, W. Roy, Salisbury, N.C.
 Crenshaw, Mrs. B.M., Kennesaw, Ga.
 Croom, R.B., Wilmington, N.C.
 Cropper, William E., Lilburn, Ga.
 Cross III, G. Lee, Atlanta, Ga.
 Crouch, Henry, Asheville, N.C.
 Crouch Jr., W.H., Georgetown, Ky.
 Crow, Joyce, Waco, Texas
 Crowe, Kathy/David, Cornelia, Ga.
 Cruce, Dean, Chattanooga, Tenn.
 Crump, Kenny/Shirley, Ruston, La.
 Crumpler, James/Susan, Mason, Ohio
 Culberson, Sarah B., Gasden, Ala.

Culpepper, Alan, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Cunningham, Dorothy, Chesterfield, Mo.
 Currie, David, San Angelo, Texas
 Curry, Bradford, Standford, Ky.
 Cuttino, Thomas E., Columbia, S.C.
 Dale, Robert, Richmond, Va.
 Daniel, T.R., Evans, Ga.
 Dant, Jim, Macon, Ga.
 Dantzler, Debbie, Conway, S.C.
 Daugherty, John/Phyllis, Pineville, LA
 Davis Jr., Mr./Mrs. Luther J., Washington, N.C.
 Davis, Phil/Joyce S., College Station, Texas
 Davis, Ruth, Lavonia, Ga.
 Davis, Wayne/Betty, Clemson, S.C.
 Dawson, Irvin/Elinor, Stockbridge, Ga.
 Day, J. Daniel/Mary Carol, Raleigh, N.C.
 Day Jr., Shirley R./William O., Waynesboro, Va.
 Day, Sande Wilson, Macon, Ga.
 De Hanas, Everett M., Venice, Fla.
 De Priest, Marjorie, Nashville, Tenn.
 Dellinger, J. Bruce/Melna, Pontotoc, Miss.
 Denham, Allen, Columbus, Ga.
 Devenny, Mr./Mrs. T.A., Piedmont, S.C.
 Dickerson, Art/Sally, Signal Mountain, Tenn.
 Dietz, Robert/Laura, Orlando, Fla.
 Dilday, Russell, Dallas, Texas
 Dill, Dorothy, Greenville, S.C.
 Dillard, Kyle, Austin, Texas
 Dilworth, Robert H., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Dixon, Virginia, Atlanta, Ga.
 Doggett, Mary Ann, Houston, Texas
 Dorriety, James O., Hampton Cove, Ga.
 Dudley, Thomas E., Kingsport, Tenn.
 Duke, Tommy/Gail, Dalton, Ga.
 Dukes, David, Jesup, Ga.
 Duncan, Ann, Marietta, Ga.
 Duncan, Margaret F., Statesboro, Ga.
 Dunn, Ray T., Fort Myer, Fla.
 Durham, Patricia, Savannah, Ga.
 Duvall, Pearl, Cordele, Ga.
 Duyck, Sally, Asheville, N.C.
 Early Jr., Mr./Mrs. William E., Fort Worth, Texas
 Eckert, Juanita, Belleville, Ill.
 Eden, Julia S., Jesup, Ga.
 Edgington, Owen W., Flat Rock, Ill.
 Edmondson, Dorothy, Austin, Texas
 Edwards, J. Don, Athens, Ga.
 Edwards, M.A., Rock Hill, S.C.
 Edwards, Sue/Jimmy, Brentwood, Tenn.
 Elkins, Cliff, Raleigh, N.C.
 Elliott, Betty Gail, Alexandria, Va.
 Ellis, Bill/Charlotte, Richmond, Ky.
 Ellis, Bonita, Baton Rouge, La.
 Elmore, Tom/Ruby, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Emmons, Robert W., Meridian, Miss.
 English, Patti, Fredericksburg, Va.
 Etheridge, Robert, Lawrenceville, Ga.
 Ethridge Jr., Cecil, Gray, Ga.
 Eubanks, Gary/Virginia, Marietta, Ga.
 Fain, Mrs. W. Maurice, Stony Point, N.Y.
 Fain, Sarah C., Ridgeway, Va.
 Faris, Oran, Frankfort, Ky.
 Farrar, Ruth, Landrem, S.C.
 Ferguson, Earl J., Stillwater, Okla.
 Ferguson, Jack C., Birmingham, Ala.
 Ferrell, E.E., Black Mountain, N.C.
 Fetzer, Larry, Meeker, Okla.
 Fisher, J.A.S., Shreveport, La.
 Fitzgerald, Paul, Muncy, Pa.
 Fitzgerald, Sue, Mars Hill, N.C.
 Fleming, Oliver G., Ahsoskie, N.C.
 Fletcher, Joel/Jean, Rome, Ga.
 Flinn, James L., Huntsville, Ala.
 Flournouy, Mr./Mrs. E.E., Albany, Ga.
 Fogleman, C.W., Lake Charles, La.
 Ford, Annie H., Huntsville, Ala.
 Ford, Carmen H., Beaufort, S.C.
 Forner, Martha F., Shelby, N.C.
 Fortner, Mr./Mrs. L.L., Columbus, Ga.
 Foster, Billie D., Conroe, Texas
 Foster, Carlton/Billie, Conroe, Texas
 Foust, Mr./Mrs. Dennis, Birmingham, Ala.
 Fowler, Robert K./Anne H., Houston, Texas
 Frank, Jim, Kansas City, Mo.
 Free, Dixon, Lincolnton, N.C.

Freisinger, Jacqueline, Molino, Fla.
 Fuller, Betty B., Matthews, N.C.
 Fuller, Doug/Cindy, Manchester, Ga.
 Fuller, Jean S., Bowdon, Ga.
 Fussell, Mrs. Homer J., McRae, Ga.
 Gage, Kerri R., Miami, Fla.
 Gail, Harriett J., Independence, Mo.
 Galloway, Mr./Mrs. W.H., Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Galloway, William/Caroline, Greensboro, Ga.
 Gandy, Lillian S., Fort Worth, Texas
 Gannon, Truett/Margaret, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Gardner, Jess/Davis L., Lexington, Ky.
 Gardner, Jimmy L./Annie Faye, Alpharetta, Ga.
 Gardner, Robert/Anne, Macon, Ga.
 Garner, Evelyn, Waycross, Ga.
 Garner, Marvin E., York Springs, Pa.
 Garrard, Deborah C., Atlanta, Ga.
 Gaustad, E.S., Santa Fe, N.M.
 Gaventa, Alice P., Richmond, Va.
 Gentry, Joe/Pat, Rock Hill, S.C.
 George, Virginia, Nashville, Tenn.
 Gibbs, Lois, Athens, Ga.
 Gideon, Joe, Albuquerque, N.M.
 Gilbert Jr., Wyatt M., Lavonia, Ga.
 Giles, Joseph/Alice, Baltimore, Md.
 Gillespie, Sue, College Station, Texas
 Gillis, Pat, Statesboro, Ga.
 Gillum, James N., Richmond, Va.
 Ginn, Perry/Betty, Decatur, Ga.
 Girod, Glenn, Baton Rouge, La.
 Glass, Bryan/Carolyn, Stillwater, Okla.
 Glaze, Mr./Mrs. R.E., Cullman, Ala.
 Glover, Ann O., Orangeburg, S.C.
 Godsey, Kirby/Joan, Macon, Ga.
 Goepfert, Robert, Carbondale, Ill.
 Good, Ed/Peggy, Greer, S.C.
 Goodwin, Arthur P., Little Rock, Ark.
 Gorman, June, West Columbia, S.C.
 Goss, Betty V. (Betsy), San Angelo, Texas
 Gragg, Alan/Jessie, Asheville, N.C.
 Granade, Napp/Sarah, Kathleen, Ga.
 Grand Sr. T. Spencer, Greenville, S.C.
 Graves, Clinton/Ima Mae, Blacksburg, Va.
 Graves, Thomas/Wendy, Midlothian, Va.
 Gray, Joyce K., Johnson City, Tenn.
 Gray, Mrs. Paul, Pensacola, Fla.
 Green, Herman, El Paso, Texas
 Greene, James, Montgomery, Ala.
 Greenhaw, William, Macon, Ga.
 Greer, Juanita, Weaverville, N.C.
 Grier III, James C., Rock Hill, S.C.
 Griffin, David, Carrollton, Ga.
 Griffith, James N., Newnan, Ga.
 Grogan, Jane, Columbus, Ga.
 Grooms Jr., H.H., Birmingham, Ala.
 Gross, Ben/Helen, Chattanooga, Tenn.
 Groves, Barbara, Harvest, Ala.
 Guinn, Neva, Alexandria, La.
 Gullatt, Tom/Vera, Fairburn, Ga.
 Gunter, Roy, Shawnee, Ky.
 Gurney, Don, Bartlett, Texas
 H.E. Butt, Kerrville, Texas
 Hackle, Emma Jeane, Winter Haven, Fla.
 Hagan, Danny, Statesboro, Ga.
 Hamm, Horace A., Fuquay-Varina, N.C.
 Hamrick, W.K., Gastonia, N.C.
 Haney, Carl/Elizabeth, Odessa, Mo.
 Haney, Don/Debra, Tunnel Hill, Ga.
 Hannah, J. Perry/Eunice, East Wenatchee, Wash.
 Hanson, Starr/Jim, Dalton, Ga.
 Harbin, Betty, West Union, S.C.
 Hardee, Hoyt/Martha, Loris, S.C.
 Hardy Jr., W.M., Elberton, Ga.
 Harley, James/Carolyn, Pueblo, Colo.
 Harmon, Royce Jenne, Stephenville, Texas
 Harrelson, Walter/Idella, Winston Salem, N.C.
 Harris, Colin/Faye, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Harris, Mr./Mrs. Douglas J., Jefferson City, Tenn.
 Harris, J. Hoffman/Norma, Decatur, Ga.
 Harris, Robert, Marietta, Ga.
 Harris, William, Alexandria, Va.
 Harrison, Ircel C./Rita F., Murfreesboro, Tenn.
 Harston, Jana, Charlotte, N.C.
 Hart Jr., Angus, Jeffersonville, Ga.
 Hartsell Jr., Fletcher L., Concord, N.C.
 Harvey, Betty P., Thomaston, Ga.

Harvey, Carroll E., Clermont, Fla.
 Hastings, Sr., Mrs. C.L., Laurel, Miss.
 Hasty, Margaret L., Hiawasee, Ga.
 Hatcher, Jimmy, Ringgold, Ga.
 Hause, Martha, Bradenton, Fla.
 Hawes, Betty B., Buena Vista, Va.
 Hawes, William, Burke, Va.
 Hawkins, Theron, Comfort, Texas
 Haynes, Henry/Betty, Vinita, Okla.
 Hays, George H., Liberty, Mo.
 Hays, James, Norman, Okla.
 Hays, Wilma, Camilla, Ga.
 Heath, Neil/Anne, Macon, Ga.
 Heaton, Joy, Waverly, Va.
 Hebert, Mary, Baton Rouge, La.
 Hedrick Jr., Norman, Richmond, Va.
 Hege, Charles W., Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Heldebrand, James O., Tulsa, Okla.
 Henderson, Bill/Rena, Ridgecrest, N.C.
 Hendrix, John, Clinton, Miss.
 Henson Jr., Paul E., Dalton, Ga.
 Hester, H.O., Montgomery, Ala.
 Hester, Versie, Huntsville, Ala.
 Hill, Les/Jan, Lexington, Ky.
 Hill, Mr./Mrs. Leonard E., Nashville, Tenn.
 Hill, Mrs. Davis C., Nashville, Tenn.
 Hill, Tom/Joan, Canton, Ga.
 Hills, Hannah B., Raleigh, N.C.
 Hillyer, Billy/Marilyn, Tyler, Texas
 Hines, Mary L., Birmingham, Ala.
 Hinson, Charles/Shirley, Valdese, N.C.
 Hobbs, Dan, Norman, Okla.
 Hobbs, Timothy W., Henderson, Ky.
 Hoffman, Edith B., Shelby, N.C.
 Hoffman, Henry H., Birmingham, Ala.
 Hogan, Jane H., Athens, Ga.
 Holcomb, Henrietta K., Fayetteville, Ark.
 Hollman, K. Hollyn, Falls Church, Va.
 Holmes, Cynthia, St. Louis, Mo.
 Holt, Delbert/Oma Gean, Blair, Okla.
 Honeycutt, Betty, Rutherfordton, N.C.
 Hooper, Mr./Mrs. W.L., Bolivar, Mo.
 Hopper, Richard T., Norman, Okla.
 Houston, Douglas W., Starkville, Miss.
 Howell, Crawford, Dothan, Ala.
 Howell, J. Hayden, Columbia, S.C.
 Howell, Mr./Mrs. Joe, Hartselle, Ala.
 Howell, Ray, Lexington, N.C.
 Howell, Walter L., Columbia, S.C.
 Howle, David, Plainview, Texas
 Huddleston, Greg/Denise, Atlanta, Ga.
 Hudson, Robert R., Silver Spring, Md.
 Huff, Henry A., Mars Hill, N.C.
 Huff, James A., Oklahoma City, Okla.
 Hughes, Estel W., Richland, Va.
 Humphrey, Cathy, Flowery Branch, Ga.
 Humphrey, Ophelia, Amarillo, Texas
 Humphreys Jr., James E., Huntingdon, Tenn.
 Hurst, C.R./Jesmarie, Tyler, Texas
 Hutchens, Eugene, Tusculumbia, Ala.
 Hutchinson, Elvan E., Raleigh, N.C.
 Hyde, Randy, Little Rock, Ark.
 Iley, Bryce B., Harrisburg, N.C.
 Ingram, Herbert J., Cordele, Ga.
 Isbell, Steve, Fort Payne, Ala.
 Ivey, Marilyn S., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Jackson, Jeri B., Huntsville, Ala.
 Jackson, Murl/Gwen, Chattanooga, Tenn.
 Jackson, Patisue, Atlanta, Ga.
 Jacobs, Walter/Jean, Greenville, S.C.
 James Jr, J.W., Richmond, Va.
 James, Glen W., Cookeville, Tenn.
 Janson, Kathryn G., Alexandria, Va.
 Jeffcoat, Bob/Elaine, Durham, N.C.
 Jenkins, Linda, Yazoo City, Miss.
 Jenkins, Mary Louise, Brandenburg, Ky.
 Jenkins, Woody, Goochland, Va.
 Jennings, Martha, Muskogee, Okla.
 Jennings, Roy/Marye, Germantown, Tenn.
 Jennings, Theron, Carrollton, Ga.
 Johns, Dorothy, Waycross, Ga.
 Johnson, Carleen I., Sikeston, Mo.
 Johnson, Carroll/JoAnne, Brownfield, Texas
 Johnson, J. Katherine, Scottsdale, Ariz.
 Johnson, J. Paul, Birmingham, Ala.
 Johnson, Jan, Dunlap, Tenn.

INFORMATION

Johnson, Jim/Joan, Box Springs, Ga.
 Johnson, Milton, Ruston, La.
 Johnson, Mr./Mrs. Carrol, Brownfield, Texas
 Johnson, Paul B., Buies Creek, N.C.
 Joiner, Richard/Marilyn, Jackson, Miss.
 Jones, Barry W., Athens, Ga.
 Jones, Cecil, Melbourne Beach, Fla.
 Jones, J. C., Frankfort, Ky.
 Jones, Joseph M., Huntsville, Ala.
 Jones, Mr./Mrs. William D., Owens Cross Roads, Ala.
 Jones, Thomas D., Pamplin, Va.
 Jordan, Monty/Diane, Talbot, Tenn.
 Joyce, J. Daniel, Houston, Texas
 Junker, Patsy/Bill, Brentwood, Tenn.
 Kahn, Mr./Mrs. Jack H., Plano, Texas
 Kalmanson, Mary, Swainsboro, Ga.
 Keller, Charles W., Broussard, La.
 Kelley Jr., James F., Birmingham, Ala.
 Kelly, Earl, Jackson, Miss.
 Kendall, Joe F., Covington, Texas
 Kennedy, Lalah, Claxton, Ga.
 Kenney Jr., Leslie, Desoto, Texas
 Kerr, Barry W., St. Simons Island, Ga.
 Keuch, Don, Columbia, Md.
 Kibbons, Jerry R., Campbellsville, Ky.
 Kidd, Bill/Hester Ann, Washington, N.C.
 Killebrew, Horace, Kennesaw, Ga.
 Killian, W. Harold, Greenville, S.C.
 Kilpatrick, Allie C., Milledgeville, Ga.
 Kilpatrick, Jimmy/Margaret, Cochran, Ga.
 Kimzey, Elizabeth R., Athens, Ga.
 King, Dianne, Marion, Ala.
 King, Mr./Mrs. Ron, Midland, Ga.
 King, Florrie C., Lithonia, Ga.
 King, Tom, Tallahassee, Fla.
 Kington Jr., O.M., Naples, Fla.
 Kirkpatrick, Kathryn S., Waynesville, N.C.
 Kling, Florace, College Station, Texas
 Knighton, Neal, Garland, Texas
 Koiner, J. Michael, San Antonio, Texas
 Kolb, Margaret, Little Rock, Ark.
 Kong, Dan, Honolulu, Hawaii
 Krump, Kenny S., Ruston, La.
 Kuhnle, Mary Dan, Slidell, La.
 LaVance, John, Pensacola, Fla.
 Lam, Virginia, Tucker, Ga.
 Lamb, Bob/Rhea, Shelby, N.C.
 Lancy, Reid H., Burlington, N.C.
 Landers, Burnell, Independence, Mo.
 Landes, R.R., El Dorado, Ark.
 Lane, Geraldine, San Antonio, Texas
 Laney, Reid H., Burlington, N.C.
 Langdon, Kenneth, Gainesville, Fla.
 Langford, Charles/Betty, Dalton, Ga.
 Langford, Henry Victor, Richmond, Va.
 Langston, Eugene/Sara, Pensacola, Fla.
 Lanham, Bill/Karen, Clemson, S.C.
 Lark, H.J., Pickens, S.C.
 Laughead, Vivian, Raytown, Mo.
 Lawrence, Flora, Ringgold, Ga.
 Lawrence, John/Anne, Raleigh, N.C.
 Leach, Barbara M., Rome, Ga.
 Lee, Clyde, White Marsh, Md.
 Lee, Grace, Pineville, La.
 Lee, John D., Spotsylvania, Va.
 Lehman, Carl/Melba, Powder Springs, Ga.
 Lennon, Robert/Anne, Wilmington, N.C.
 LeVines, Tom/Shirley, Palmyra, Va.
 Levy, Jan, Radford, Va.
 Lewis, David H., Penhook, Va.
 Lewis, Paul/Marsha, Macon, Ga.
 Lewis, Rhonda, Gonzales, La.
 Life, Mary Louise, Baton Rouge, La.
 Limbaugh, R. Leslie, St. Louis, Mo.
 Lindsey, Paul, Madison, Ga.
 Lingafelt, Charles, Gretna, Va.
 Little, James/Daisy, Hartselle, Ala.
 Little Jr., W.J., Jackson, N.C.
 Little, Lolete, Birmingham, Ala.
 Loftin, Elliott, Lincolnton, N.C.
 Loftin Jr., Mr./Mrs. Robert, Nashville, Tenn.
 Logan, Walter H., Greenwood, S.C.
 Logue, Tom/Ethel, Little Rock, Ark.
 Long, Brad/Joyce, Houston, Texas
 Long, Charlie/Sandy, Hot Springs, Ark.
 Lovegren, August, Cedartown, Ga.
 Lovegren, Norman, New Orleans, La.
 Lowe, Nancy, Memphis, Tenn.
 Lowery, C. Aubrey, Cullman, Ala.
 Luncsford, Malcolm, Richmond, Ky.
 Lunsford, Dan, Mars Hill, N.C.
 Lyles, Ron, Pasadena, Texas
 Lynch Jr., Albert, King George, Va.
 Madden, M., Slidell, La.
 Maddox, Gaiser/Kay, Ponca City, Okla.
 Magee, Nell, Nashville, Tenn.
 Mallow, Ronald L./Sonia M., Frederick, Md.
 Maloch, Jim, Little Rock, Ark.
 Malone, Bill/Drexel, Shawnee, Okla.
 Manley, James/Lillian, Loganville, Ga.
 Marchman, Ray, Greensboro, Ga.
 Maret, Mr./Mrs. Randall T., Dalton, Ga.
 Marler, Parkes, Forest, Miss.
 Marquez, Grace E., Birmingham, Ala.
 Marshall, Bill, Columbia, Mo.
 Martin Jr., William, Raleigh, N.C.
 Martin, Fred, Pensacola, Fla.
 Martin, Jerry/Adell, Henderson, Ky.
 Martin, Mary, Atlanta, Ga.
 Mason, Sue, Pinnacle, N.C.
 Matthews, Jerry T., North Augusta, S.C.
 May, Walton/Margaret, Richmond, Va.
 Maynard, Pina C., Apex, N.C.
 Maze, Mary Wells, Boaz, Ala.
 McAbee, Harold/Rochelle, Lizella, Ga.
 McAfee, Carolyn, Seabrook, S.C.
 McAfee, Tom/Julie, Seabrook, S.C.
 McCain, Charles S., Shreveport, La.
 McCall, Duke, Highlands, N.C.
 McCall Jr., P.L., Society Hill, S.C.
 McCall, W. Reaves, Hartsville, S.C.
 McCartney, Evelyn, Vero Beach, Fla.
 McClanahan, Rosalind, Birmingham, Ala.
 McConnell, William C., Knoxville, Tenn.
 McCormick, Gwenn, Morriston, Fla.
 McCraw, Paul L., Winston-Salem, N.C.
 McDaniel, Randall/Gretchen, Birmingham, Ala.
 McDonald, Catherine, Rome, Ga.
 McDowell, Jim/Sara, Louisville, Ky.
 McDowell, L.W., Powells Point, N.C.
 McElrath, Hugh T., Penney Farms, Fla.
 McGill Jr., Mr./Mrs. Henry C., San Antonio, Texas
 McIntosh, Ellen Marie, Manchester, Mo.
 McKinney, Elizabeth R., Ft. Worth, Texas
 McKinney, Eugene, San Antonio, Texas
 McKinney, W.H., Athens, Ga.
 McKnight, Alan/Barbara, Duluth, Ga.
 McManus, Harold, Macon, Ga.
 McNeely, Gerald, Louisville, Ky.
 McPhaul, Mary O., LaFayette, La.
 Measles, Sandra, Morton, Miss.
 Melton, William, Evergreen, Ala.
 Mendheim, Doyle/Merle, Macon, Ga.
 Mercer, Abbie, Owensboro, Ky.
 Merritt, John, Leicester, N.C.
 Miles, Andrew, Lyons, Ga.
 Miles, Paul M., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Miller, Fred S., Columbia, S.C.
 Miller, James C., Bristol, R.I.
 Miller, Leon/Kay S., Kerrville, Texas
 Mills, James F., Augusta, Ga.
 Milstead, Beth, San Antonio, Texas
 Mims, Chip, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Minter, Miriam G., Cairo, Ga.
 Mitchell, Carlton T., Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Mizell, Mr./Mrs. Walter S., Little Rock, Ark.
 Moates, Lamon, Americus, Ga.
 Moench, Mr./Mrs. William L., Nashville, Tenn.
 Montacute, Paul, Falls Church, Va.
 Mooney Jr., Mr./Mrs. M.H., Atlanta, Ga.
 Moore, Marylu, Paducah, Ky.
 Moore, Mrs. John A., Brownwood, Texas
 Moorehead, Thelma, Easley, S.C.
 Morehead, Marjorie B., Marietta, Ga.
 Morgan, Bruce/Emma, Gainesville, Ga.
 Morin, Gene, Greenville, S.C.
 Morris, J. Glenn, Baltimore, Md.
 Morrison Jr., Mrs. A.L., Montgomery, Ala.
 Morse, Mr./Mrs. James O., Waco, Texas
 Morse, Martha, San Antonio, Texas
 Morton, Jack W./Ann White, Cumming, Ga.
 Morton, Thelma, Charlotte, N.C.
 Moses, Austin, Austin, Texas
 Moses, Judith, Little Rock, Ark.
 Murney, Donna, Springfield, Mo.
 Murray, Ralph L., Hendersonville, Tenn.
 Myers, Emily, Macon, Ga.
 Naish, Jane, Clayton, Ga.
 Neal, William, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Nelson, Bardin H., Bryan, Texas
 Nelson, Morgan, Roswell, N.M.
 Nelson, Paul/Virginia, Arlington, Va.
 NeSmith, Mrs. H.G., Oneonta, Ala.
 Nichols Jr., Mr./Mrs. F.T., Savannah, Ga.
 Nimmons, Billy, Dalton, Ga.
 Nolan, Paul/Anne, Signal Mountain, Tenn.
 Noles, Thomas/Shirley, Milledgeville, Ga.
 Norman, Onida L., Davis, Calif.
 Northcutt, Gordon, Longview, Texas
 Northcutt, LeGrande/Cassandra, Longview, Texas
 Norton, Sidney, Gaffney, S.C.
 Novak, Rynell S., Denton, Texas
 Nutt, Jackie, Raleigh, N.C.
 Nuttall, Bruce W., Fort Collins, Colo.
 O'Hare, Jimmie D., Waco, Texas
 O'Leary, Ruth S., South Pittsburgh, Tenn.
 Oliver Jr., John, Richmond, Va.
 Orosz, Judy I., Martinez, Ga.
 Otto, Francis R., Macon, Ga.
 Outland, W.R., Washington, N.C.
 Owen, Grant/Irene, Ardmore, Okla.
 Paciocco, Robert, Washington, N.C.
 Pankey, F. Lawson, Richmond, Va.
 Parham, Jo Ann, Gainesville, Fla.
 Parkhurst, Ellen, Arlington, Va.
 Parks, Keith/Helen Jean, Richardson, Texas
 Patterson, Ken/Mary, Richmond, Va.
 Patton, Mr./Mrs. William, College Station, Texas
 Paulson, Gayle, Commerce, Ga.
 Paulson, Mr./Mrs. Marlin, Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga.
 Peacock, Julia Deane, Crestview, Fla.
 Pearson, D.E., Orlando, Fla.
 Pearson, Glen, Hattiesburg, Miss.
 Peck, Helen D., Atlanta, Ga.
 Peebles, Kay, Pitts, Ga.
 Perkins Jr., Henry H./Summers, Clemson, S.C.
 Perrin, Tom, Tallahassee, Fla.
 Peters, Jack/Norma, Tuttle, Okla.
 Peters, John E., Columbia, S.C.
 Phelan, Mary F., Phoenix, Ariz.
 Phillips, Harold/Gwen, Liberty, Mo.
 Phipps, Kenneth/Sandra, Miamisburg, Ohio
 Pierce, John/Teresa, Macon, Ga.
 Pipkin, Joseph M., Orlando, Fla.
 Pittard, Roger/Elizabeth, Richmond, Va.
 Platt, Wilfred, Macon, Ga.
 Plunkett, L. Richard, Carrollton, Ga.
 Poole, Chuck/Marcia, Jackson, Miss.
 Porter, Walter/Mary Lynn, Dadeville, Ala.
 Potts, A. Earl, Homewood, Ala.
 Potts, Robert J., Columbus, Ga.
 Powell, Bill/Sara, Hartwell, Ga.
 Powell, Mary M., Baton Rouge, La.
 Prager, Ray E., Grand Junction, Colo.
 Price, Marshall, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Proctor, Harold, Warrior, Ala.
 Proctor, Robert, Louisville, Ky.
 Proctor, T.G., Clemson, S.C.
 Prosser, Mr./Mrs. Bill, Ardmore, Okla.
 Prouser, Rose, Burbank, Calif.
 Pryor, Dorothy M., Decatur, Ga.
 Purcell, Kesse/Patsy, Broad Run, Va.
 Purifoy, E.D., Corsicana, Texas
 Puryear, Mr./Mrs. James B., Augusta, Ga.
 Queen, Mike/Bobbie, Wilmington, N.C.
 Quillen, Myrl, Matthews, N.C.
 Quisenberry, Virgil/Judy, Central, S.C.
 Raborn, Mr./Mrs. Wiley B., Baton Rouge, La.
 Ragans, Sherrill, Tallahassee, Fla.
 Ragsdale, Mr./Mrs. John G., Little Rock, Ark.
 Ramsey, Jed/Frances, Beaumont, Texas
 Randles, Jack C., Fallston, Md.
 Ratliff, Joseph M./Joan C., Greensboro, N.C.
 Ratterree, Mack/Laura, Atlanta, Ga.
 Rauch, Robert K./Ruth M., Moorsville, N.C.
 Ray, S.C./Marjorie, Greensboro, N.C.
 Reeder, James L./Mary W., Huntsville, Ala.
 Rentz Jr., Ben A., Charlotte, N.C.

Reynolds, Jerry D./Rebecca B., Dallas, Texas
 Reynolds, Sam A., Atlanta, Ga.
 Reynolds, William J., Nashville, Tenn.
 Rhodes, Milton L., San Antonio, Texas
 Rhodes, V. James/Verna Adwell, Columbia, Mo.
 Rhodes, William S., Atlanta, Ga.
 Rich, J.T., Clemson, S.C.
 Richards, Vincent, Richmond, Va.
 Rigdon, Sam, Buena Vista, Ga.
 Riley, Dan/Jackie, Macon, Ga.
 Rivers, Ernest/Louise, College Station, Texas
 Robbins, DeAlpha B., Washington, D.C.
 Robbins, Paul/Gladys, Savannah, Ga.
 Roberts, Florence, Durham, N.C.
 Roberts, J.W./Mildred, Fayetteville, Ga.
 Robertson Sr., E. Moss, Braselton, Ga.
 Robinson, John, Springdale, Ark.
 Roddy, James R., Candler, N.C.
 Rogers, James/Mary Ann, Memphis, Tenn.
 Rogers, John/Jean, Bainbridge, Ga.
 Rogers, Mr./Mrs. Elton E., Colonial Heights, Va.
 Rogers, Paul/Caroline, Tabor City, N.C.
 Rohrer, Robert H., Tucker, Ga.
 Romo, Oscar I., Cumming, Ga.
 Ross, Joan L., Dalton, Ga.
 Rothell, R.D./Patricia, Piedmont, S.C.
 Rotters, Larry, Sweetwater, Tenn.
 Rowell, Edd/Ruth, Macon, Ga.
 Royal, Mr./Mrs. A. Lee, Charlotte, N.C.
 Rudert, Barry/Rosalie, St. Louis, Mo.
 Russell, Jim, Bentonville, Ark.
 Russell, Kenneth, Calhoun, Ga.
 Rusty Edwards, Waco, Texas
 Rutland, S.F., Charlotte, N.C.
 Ryle, Dallas/Nancy, Marietta, Ga.
 Sample, Mr./Mrs. George, Greenville, Tenn.
 Sanders, David/Jennifer, Commerce, Ga.
 Sanders, Drayton/Mary Etta, Dalton, Ga.
 Sanderson, Leonard, Pineville, La.
 Sandford, Rob/Bettina, Norfolk, Va.
 Sasser, C.G., Conway, S.C.
 Savage, Stanley/Andrea, Moultrie, Ga.
 Savell, Bill/Jan, Maryville, Tenn.
 Sayer, Edith, Travelers Rest, S.C.
 Scaggs, Robert A., North Augusta, S.C.
 Scanlon, Clark/Sarah, Richmond, Va.
 Scarborough, Robert/Glenella, Fort Worth, Texas
 Schaaf, Jim/Beverly, Macon, Ga.
 Schaible, Charles/Pat, Macon, Ga.
 Schlein, L.H., Augusta, Ga.
 Schmucker, Bob, Brownfield, Texas
 Schmucker, Mary, Lubbock, Texas
 Schrysen, Joan, S. Daytona, Fla.
 Scott, Jim, Phoenix, Ariz.
 Scott, Vann/Tracey, Boaz, Ala.
 Seat, Leroy, Bolivar, Mo.
 Segars, Don, Lawrenceville, Ga.
 Shackelford, Wayne/Anna, Snellville, Ga.
 Shauf, Al/Becky, Cordele, Ga.
 Shaw, Charlotte E., Raleigh, N.C.
 Shaw, Jack A., Cocoa, Fla.
 Shelley, Don/Susan, Greenville, S.C.
 Sherrer, Marcie, Dalton, Ga.
 Shields, Emily, Birmingham, Ala.
 Shipley, Hal/Jean, Murray, Ky.
 Shoemyer, Dorothy, Shelbina, Mo.
 Shore, Steve/Darlene, Apex, N.C.
 Shriver, George H., Statesboro, Ga.
 Shurden, Walter/Kay, Macon, Ga.
 Simmons, Roy E., Beebe, Ark.
 Simms, Helen, Richmond, Va.
 Simms, Mary Ann, Greer, S.C.
 Simpson, Vivian, Buies Creek, N.C.
 Simpson, Richard/Sarah, Upatoti, Ga.
 Sisson, Willard/Sue, Flintstone, Ga.
 Sledd, Max/Betty, Decatur, Ala.
 Small, R. Lephon, Florence, S.C.
 Smith, David M., Houston, Texas
 Smith, Iris H., Cairo, Ga.
 Smith, Ivan/Sue, Clanton, Ala.
 Smith, Janie W., Richmond, Va.
 Smith, John B., Montross, Va.
 Smith, Kathryn M., Little Rock, Ark.
 Smith, L.E., Bowling Green, Ky.
 Smith, Mary Call, Lugoff, S.C.
 Smith, Royal B., Ft. Oglethorpe, Ga.

Smith, Neron, Raymond, Miss.
 Smith, Nina H., Albuquerque, N.M.
 Smith, Oxford, Eclectic, Ala.
 Smith, R. Cornelius/Jeanette R., Norphlet, Ark.
 Smith, Roy C./Carolyn, Norphlet, Ark.
 Smith, Truman, Richmond, Va.
 Smith, Walter E., Arden, N.C.
 Snell, Carolyn R., Hattiesburg, Miss.
 Snider, Aubrey/Patricia, Bradenton, Fla.
 Snider, Ted L., Little Rock, Ark.
 Snyder, Milton, Milledgeville, Ga.
 Solomon, Gary/Marsha, Carrollton, Ga.
 Soroka, Alexander, Colonial Hgts, Va.
 Spangler, Harold/Martha, Meadows of Dan, Va.
 Spear Jr., R.D., Dunwoody, Ga.
 Spencer Jr., John M., Smyrna, Ga.
 Spencer, J.F., Fayetteville, Ark.
 Sphear, Elizabeth, Lexington, Ky.
 Spivey, Bryant, Elgin, S.C.
 Spratt, J. Lee, Columbia, S.C.
 Sprawls, Perry/Charlotte W., Montreat, N.C.
 Stallings, David/Grace, Cairo, Ga.
 Stancil, D.H., Memphis, Tenn.
 Staton, Christine, Atlanta, Ga.
 Stephenson, Mr./Mrs. Henry L., Washington, N.C.
 Stephenson, Robert L., Norman, Okla.
 Sterling, Thornton, Waco, Texas
 Stevens, Lila, Two Harbors, Minn.
 Stevens, Velma, Fort Worth, Texas
 Stewart, Charles, Meridan, Miss.
 Stovall, Mary Frances, Decatur, Ga.
 Stover, Elizabeth, Rutherfordton, N.C.
 Strange, James F./Carolyn, Tampa, Fla.
 Strange, M. Eugene, Stuarts Draft, Va.
 Strawn, Bud, St. Petersburg, Fla.
 Strawn, Russel W., Independence, Fla.
 Street, Gail, Columbus, Miss.
 Strickland, Ann, Pendleton, S.C.
 Strickland, Clarissa, Lilburn, Ga.
 Stripling, W.S., Norcross, Ga.
 Strother, J.O., San Angelo, Texas
 Summerhill, Bill/Faye, Gainesville, Fla.
 Swann, Patricia, Cave Spring, Ga.
 Taira, Aiko, Mililani, Hawaii
 Tassie, Willis/Roberta, Louisville, Ky.
 Tate, Marvin E., Louisville, Ky.
 Tatum, Freddie, Brownfield, Texas
 Taylor, Elred M., Louisville, Ky.
 Taylor, Gloria J., Fairbanks, Alaska
 Terry, Thomas R., Blackville, S.C.
 Thomas, Mary, Gulfport, Miss.
 Thomas, P. Leon, Southport, N.C.
 Thomas, Pheroba, Fort Payne, Ala.
 Thomas, William, Lafayette, Ala.
 Thomason, Ben, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Thomason, Bob, Clinton, S.C.
 Thompson, Alec, Forsyth, Ga.
 Thompson, Ray A., Jackson, Miss.
 Tice, John D., Rocky Face, Ga.
 Tichenor, W.B., Columbia, Mo.
 Tilley, Clyde/Nancy, Seymour, Tenn.
 Tilley, Jim/Claire, Hartselle, Ala.
 Tillman, Earl/Carolyn, Rome, Ga.
 Timmerman, Ed/Sarah, Cairo, Ga.
 Tobias, Hugh, Jacksonville, Fla.
 Todd, George/Helen, Vero Beach, Fla.
 Torbert, John W., Pineville, La.
 Torrance, Grady/Frances, Milledgeville, Ga.
 Townley, Mrs. Durelle T., Pensacola, Fla.
 Trawick, William/Margaret, Decatur, Ga.
 Trott, Mildred, Montgomery, Ala.
 Troy, Laura, Atlanta, Ga.
 Trull, Joe E., Wimberley, Texas
 Tuck, Marjorie Gay, Gainesville, Va.
 Tucker, Julia B., Albany, Ga.
 Tucker, Keithen/Sarah, Macon, Ga.
 Tull, Virginia, Richmond, Va.
 Tullock, John H., Delano, Tenn.
 Turner, Jerry W., Fairfax, Va.
 Turner, William/Earlene Rentz, Lancaster, Ky.
 Tuttle, Walter/Beverly, Wake Forest, N.C.
 Tweedy, William F., Baton Rouge, La.
 Twine, H. Edgar, Tampa, Fla.
 Tyler, Ava A., Winchester, Ky.
 Tyler III, James M., Richmond, Va.
 Tyndall, Llew/Bob, Washington, N.C.

Unger, Brian, Liberty, Mo.
 Upchurch, James/Wilma, Carrollton, Ga.
 Van Hoose, Jim, Sarasota, Fla.
 Vanderford, John A., Jacksonville, Ala.
 Vaughn, Brian D., Birmingham, Ala.
 Vaughn, Joe F., Richmond, Va.
 Vazquez, A.M., Macon, Ga.
 Vernon, Steve, Leveland, Texas
 Vick, Lucy H., Cincinnati, Ohio
 Vinson, Bill/Dotty, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Waddell, Brent, Jensen Beach, Fla.
 Wade, Phyllis L., Tulsa, Okla.
 Wainwright, Jack/Carol, Greensboro, Fla.
 Walker, Brent, Washington, D.C.
 Walker, Charles O., Jasper, Ga.
 Walker, Francine, Morrow, Ga.
 Wallace, Billy C., Stillwater, Okla.
 Ward, Carolyn, Marietta, Ga.
 Ward, Hal/Vivian, Deville, La.
 Ware, Todd, Monroe, Ga.
 Warren, John H., Springfield, Mo.
 Warren, Katharine, Fredericksburg, Va.
 Wash, Louise H., Pensacola, Fla.
 Washburn, Carey B., Kinston, N.C.
 Washburn, David, Durham, N.C.
 Watson, E.C./Mary Anne, Elgin, S.C.
 Watson, Jane, Monroe, La.
 Watson, Marion, Conway, S.C.
 Watson, Mr./Mrs. L.E., Frankfort, Ky.
 Watson, Yin, Bolivar, Mo.
 Watt, Joseph R., Hawkinsville, Ga.
 Watts, Philip/Barbara, Birmingham, Ala.
 Webb, Len/Marian, Crestwood, Ky.
 Weeks, Robert, Bullard, Texas
 Welch, Carroll B., Madison Heights, Va.
 Wells, Frank S./JoAnn F., Enterprise, Ala.
 West, G. Allen, Louisville, Ky.
 West, Elizabeth, Edison, Ga.
 Whitaker, Mr./Mrs. Bruce, Raleigh, N.C.
 White, Clement/Carole, St. Petersburg, Fla.
 White, Mr./Mrs. Reuben, Marietta, Ga.
 Whitefield, Sam R./Peggy S., Smyrna, Ga.
 Whitfield, Bryan J., Macon, Ga.
 Whitfield, Sam R., Smyrna, Ga.
 Whitson, C., LaFayette, Ala.
 Wilbanks, W. Wayne/Nicky, Commerce, Ga.
 Wiley, Paul G., Springfield, Va.
 Wiley, Pearl R., Tupelo, Miss.
 Wilkins, Joe B., Portsmouth, Va.
 Wilkins, Ruby, Wadley, Ala.
 Wilkinson, J.A., Seabrook, Texas
 Williams, Beverly L., Hope Hull, Ala.
 Williams, Claude, Durham, N.C.
 Williams, Doris K., Macon, Ga.
 Williams, Jackie, Birmingham, Ala.
 Williams, James/Susan, Montgomery, Ala.
 Williams, Joe P., Louisville, Ky.
 Williams, Pat, Snellville, Ga.
 Williams, Paul/Mary Ann, Orange Park, Fla.
 Williams, Richard M., Suffolk, Va.
 Williams, Woodie/Winnie, Seneca, S.C.
 Williamson, James, Macon, Ga.
 Willis, Scott/Vickie, Murfreesboro, Tenn.
 Willis, Tommie/Lucy, Birmingham, Ala.
 Wilson, Chappell, Marietta, Ga.
 Wilson, Charles E., Leesburg, Va.
 Wilson, Charles I., Aliceville, Ala.
 Wilson, David/Ann, Maryville, Tenn.
 Wilson, Frances, Statesville, N.C.
 Wilson, Hilda C., Dunn, N.C.
 Wilson Jr., Robert K., Pensacola, Fla.
 Wilson, Mr./Mrs. Jesse D., Maryville, Tenn.
 Wilson, O. Chappell, Marietta, Ga.
 Wilson, Robert R./Mary, Shreveport, La.
 Woods, Elnora, Cleveland, Ga.
 Woodson, Robert R./Carolyn B., Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Wright, Lela S., Ravenwood, W.V.
 Wright, Randy, Spartanburg, S.C.
 Wyatt, Mr./Mrs. Roy, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Yates, James F., Yazoo City, Miss.
 York, James A., Bolivar, Mo.
 Younce, Daisy, Washington, N.C.
 Young, Donald E., Macon, Ga.
 Yount, Diane, Cullowhee, N.C.
 Zongker, Rose, Tallahassee, Fla. **BT**

back-row birdie

It takes one to know one

By Keith D. Herron

It's true and I can't deny it: I'm teaching a class in my church this spring on Christian ethics, and a man named Crook is the author of the textbook (groans and snickers).

Not only that my adoring children would quickly point out, but also there's no denying the undeniable: *I'm* the teacher of a class on ethics (more snickers from the cheap seats in my family circle). My kids no longer qualify as *kids* and are sassy enough to know me for all my faults hidden or otherwise. To them, I'm not their pastor ... I'm their dad. In spite of it all, they say they still love me. That they have any faith at all can be attributed to their mother.

But there's no getting around it. The preacher preaches about God and goodness, about sin and forgiveness and redemption, and to do that is one of God's gracious miracles. Sometimes I say more than I know. (*Yikes! ... Sometimes?*) That's a limitation better understood (and forgiven) by my congregation than I can imagine. More than that, there are times I'm guilty of professing to have it more together than I do. Most often, when I suggest to my church that faith is a struggle, it's my sideways effort to admit it is my own struggle I'm confessing.

Every preacher has to cut a deal with God in order to have the nerve to get up and "say words." Where did we talk about this undeniable truth in seminary? Where in the ordination service did we have a chance to confess our sins? Don't you think we should?

I've always held to the notion that maybe it takes a sinner to talk about sin. Alcoholics Anonymous is built on such a notion. Maybe the church is just one big operation called Sinners Anonymous, and at the bottom of everything we say and do there's an unspoken covenant we'll admit that "everybody's got something to hide" and the leader of the pack is the pastor who's got as much or more to hide than the average person in the pew. There should be a wanted poster with the pastor's

mug plastered to every entrance of the building, WARNING: SINNER ON THE LOOSE!

Nowhere is that notion truer than on Thursday nights when the class gathers. It's two hours of hand-to-hand combat over the reading material. Most of us have never taken a formal course on ethics, so we're all struggling just to muster the material.

I walked in on the first night and Birdie was already there. She looked like an eager first grader on the first day of school. She had two pens and a freshly sharpened pencil arranged neatly next to her notepad. Her textbook was opened flat to the first page of the first chapter, and she had a fresh, bright look.

"Glad you worked through all that anxiety I know you faced in teaching this course. The staff all told me you were shamed into teaching it. Even they thought it was appropriate you would be the logical one to teach a course on ethics." She smiled and winked knowingly.

"My formal study of ethics is admittedly

thin, but it doesn't mean I don't have my own way of figuring out the tough issues," I offered weakly. "In fact, I've got my methods.

First, I think of Jesus' recommendation that I try to figure out how *I* want to be treated. Then I can know how *I* need to treat *others*.

Then, on other occasions, I let old man Sheldon coach me by imagining what Jesus would do. I read *In His Steps* when I was a teenager, and it seems to be adequate enough for those times when I might be confused about how to act.

"The last piece of advice I've adopted is of my own thinking: 'How a thing is done is as important as the thing itself.' That keeps me from trying to over-rationalize how I go about getting things done. What do you think?"

"Gosh, Brother Pastor, that's more than I expected from you. I took you too lightly it seems." (There are times when I believe Birdie had a former life as Muhammad Ali's sparring partner.) "I've always been amazed at the number of folks who think they have the right thing figured out on any given topic. They'll quickly position themselves as the expert who has the whole thing figured out so that any position you might take is on the wrong side of the truth."

"Birdie, I agree. You should be the pastor of a Baptist church and try to stand at the crossroads of the differing opinions of your congregation. No matter where you take your stand, it's wrong with at least a handful of your own members."

"Well, Rev ... I have some advice for you: Stay alert!" She laughed so loud she actually snorted, but she didn't care. Somehow laughter so full and so honest that it's accompanied by a snort is a good gift from God for those of us needing a double-shot of God's grace. **BT**

—Keith D. Herron is pastor of Holmeswood Baptist Church in Kansas City, Mo.

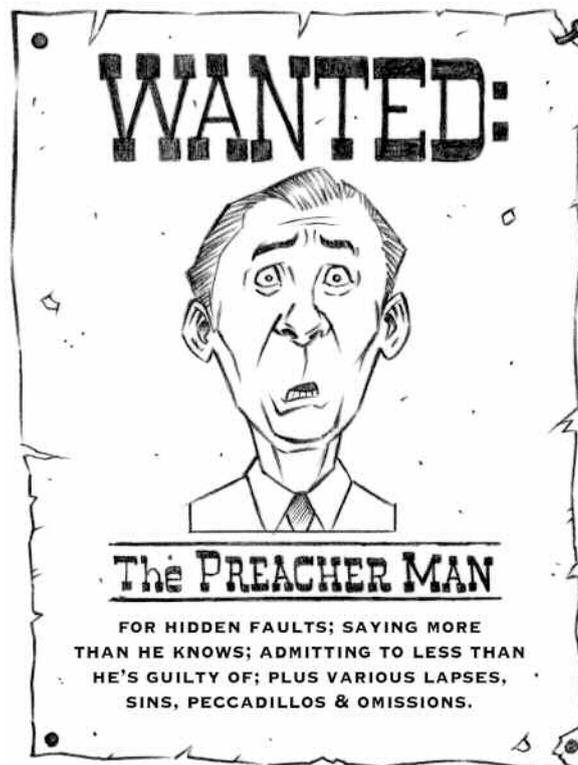


Illustration by Scott Brooks

faith experience

The grace of good books

By Perry C. Bramlett

The *Oxford English Dictionary* uses a bouquet of words to describe grace, among them divine favor, influence, inspiration, virtue, wholesome (quality) and impart (strength), most having to do with something positive, inspirational and often (God) gifted.

Frederick Buechner echoed the idea of grace when he wrote that we never “get” grace but it is something we are given, and that the gift of grace can be ours only if we will reach out and take it.

One grace we often overlook is that of good books and reading. We all know that books and stories entertain and help us escape from a stressful and chaotic world. Good books also help us understand our world, our culture, our society and times, and even ourselves. The best of good reading can present to our minds and hearts ideas that not only are appealing intellectually and emotionally stimulating, but also perhaps those we may want to make our own. In addition, good books or stories can picture for us a character so brimming with admirable virtues that we remember it always and “take to heart” the Christian and moral ideals the character represents.

A reliable example of a memorable character is the great royal lion Aslan, the unforgettable and majestic Christ-God figure of C.S. Lewis’s Narnian tales. Many have testified that they will always remember the early scene in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* when Mr. and Mrs. Beaver

entertain the children at their home in the snowy wood. When Lucy asks about Aslan and if he is “safe,” Mr. Beaver’s reply is at once classic and full of grace and insight: “Safe? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

For many readers, Mr. Beaver’s answer to Lucy’s question has been *the* great description of Christ and the Christian life — we have a king who is good, but following him is never “safe.” Aslan, in that particular scene, in that particular story, becomes the living picture of Christ and the Christian life as it can be and is to be lived, for all the particular readers of Lewis’s wonderful and enchanting story.

Two years before his death, Lewis published his only book of literary theory, a very readable little masterpiece titled *An Experiment in Criticism*. This work is, at its most basic, an encouragement for any reader to enjoy good books and stories for what they bring us.

In it Lewis reminds us that if we want to become good readers, we have to “surrender” to what we are reading — in other words, read it with our whole mind and heart. He wrote that when we do this, our good reading experience will have something in common with love and moral action —

we are accepting the book or story without prejudging it.

Lewis states further that when we read well, we should not be so concerned if a book or story is “right” or “wrong” — whether we agree or disagree with the author — but that we should read to “enter fully” into the opinions of others. In this way we can learn to appreciate books and the ideas and experiences in them for what they are, while at the same time not “losing ourselves.”

Another thing we often forget is that books and stories at their best are artistic and that Christian readers can have the delightful privilege of enjoying the grace of their artistry and beauty.

Good books picture ideas and expressions of beauty, whether they contain a play, story, novel or poetry, and these literary forms often have elements that show us the grace of God. The unity, design, balance, use of language and descriptions in good books or stories can enhance our ideas of beauty and show us best how to enjoy them.

Well-written and crafted stories can haunt (in a good way), charm, sometimes disturb and nearly always “take us away” to new experiences of the mind and heart. From a Christian perspective, we should be aware that literary artists have often created for us expressions of God’s beauty that can help us feel and know his good pleasure.

C.S. Lewis was a reader his entire life. He always appreciated the grace and beauty of good books and stories as they entertained and inspired him, challenged him to think logically and clearly, and informed him as a devoted Christian who cared deeply about his world. We can give thanks that God continues to give us the grace of Lewis’s own good books and stories, and that we can read and enjoy them anytime we want. **BT**

— Perry C. Bramlett is the founder of C.S. Lewis for the Local Church-Interstate Ministries, a nationwide Lewis speaking and teaching ministry based in Louisville, Ky.



Read about it in
Baptists Today

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Texas ethics leader Phil Strickland dies

DALLAS — Phil Strickland, director of the Christian Life Commission of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, died Feb. 11 at age 64. He worked with the public policy and moral concerns agency for 38 years.

Strickland earned his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of Texas in Austin. He often recalled that he took a leave of absence from a Fort Worth law firm in December 1967 to help Texas Baptists defeat gambling and never returned.

Strickland became the first registered lobbyist in Austin serving a religious denominational body where he urged lawmakers to oppose the expansion of gambling, resist attempts to chip away at the separation between church and state, and remember the needs of children — particularly the poor, abused and neglected.

He was a member of Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas where a memorial service was held Feb. 15. **BT**

Longtime Baptist educator Starr Miller dead at 84

NEWNAN, Ga. — W. Starr Miller, president emeritus of Brewton-Parker College, a Georgia Baptist school in Mt. Vernon, Ga., died Jan. 26. Miller, 84, had lived in Newnan, Ga., in retirement.

Miller served as Brewton-Parker's president from 1979-1983. He returned as interim president in 1997 to help guide the school during a financial crisis. During his tenure, the college established its first bachelor's degree program.

An educator for 38 years, Miller also served in teaching and administrative positions at Young Harris College and Tift College, where he was academic dean. Miller, who held a doctorate from Duke University, was dean of the education school at Georgia Southern University for 18 years.

A memorial service was held Jan. 31 in the college chapel, following a graveside funeral in Statesboro, Ga. **BT**

in the know

Keeping up with people, places, and events

PEOPLE

James R. Barnette has been named associate professor of religion and director of ministerial formation at Samford University where he has served as minister to the university since 1994.

Joseph Bruce is executive director of the Baptist Convention of New Mexico, succeeding Claude Cone who retired.

Ronda Cole was ordained to ministry Jan. 15 by First Baptist Church of Cocoa, Fla., where she serves as minister to students. Cole, from Cary, N.C., is a graduate of Campbell University and Duke Divinity School.

William Flake, a North American Mission Board resort missionary in Helen, Ga., died Jan. 27.

Doug Hodo will retire June 30 as president of Houston Baptist University, where he has served 19 years.

Linda Marie Jones is missions coordinator of Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina. She previously served as an associate pastor of Winter Park Baptist Church in Wilmington, N.C.

H.K. Kingkade is director of church relations for Georgetown College in Kentucky. He has served as Baptist campus minister at the University of Kentucky since 1993. He succeeds **Eric Fruge** who is now leading Georgetown's capital campaign.

Mitchell Neubert fills the Chavanne Chair for Christian Ethics in Business at the Hankamer School of Business at Baylor University. He comes from Bowling Green State University.

Reggie Thomas is new director of leadership development for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. He comes from the pastorate of First Baptist Church of Walnut Valley, Calif.

PLACES

Louise and Harwood Cochrane have pledged a \$3 million matching gift to **Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond** to be applied to the \$19 million "Building Our Future ... Together" campaign.

Campbell University has announced plans to build a chapel. A gift of more than \$2.1 million has been given toward the \$5 million worship center by Robert Butler of Warrenton, N.C., in memory of his wife, Anna.

First Baptist Church of Aiken, S.C., spent last year celebrating the congregation's bicentennial. The church formed in 1805 with 15 members. Fred Andrea III is current pastor.

PASSPORT announces the addition of a Louisiana camp for this summer. Loyola University in New Orleans will host one week of PASSPORT Youth Camping with a Mission, July 17-22. During the daily missions project time at camp, teenagers will have the opportunity to participate in hurricane relief work. For more information, call (800) 769-0210 or visit www.passport-camps.org.

EVENTS

The University Campus: Tomorrow's Moderate Baptists, a conference on collegiate ministry and mission, will be held at First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., **May 4-5, 2006**. For information and to register, visit www.centerforbaptiststudies.org/conferences/index.htm.

The **Baptist History and Heritage Society** annual meeting is **June 1-3, 2006**, at First Baptist Church, Washington, D.C. Speakers include Brent Walker and Denton Lotz. For information, contact Pam Durso at pdurso@tnbaptist.org or visit www.baptisthistory.org. **BT**

the lighter side

‘Anybody could have done it’

By Brett Younger

I'm not sure how this happened. This is so not me. When I received my car registration renewal from the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles I immediately sent it in. I was pleased to receive my sticker well before the expiration date.

That's when the story gets fuzzy. As best I can reconstruct it, I inexplicably scraped off the sticker that looked most like the one I had received in the mail and replaced it, without recognizing that I now had two registration stickers and no inspection sticker.

(If you have done this, it would be nice if you would let me know. I will not tell anyone except my wife, Carol, as she seems to need evidence that I'm not the only one this foolish.)

I realized my mistake, but it took a while. I stared at my windshield in disbelief for a long time. Later that morning, I pulled in to the “In-N-Out Lube” and tried to explain, “The goofiest thing happened.”

Jerry, my mechanic, gently interrupted: “It certainly did. Anybody could have done it. It really is confusing. We get at least three or four of these a week.”

John, the smirking teenager standing behind Jerry, did not seem to agree that anybody could have done it or that it's really confusing. John was more of the

opinion that it takes a special brand of ineptitude to scrape off your inspection sticker and replace it with a second registration.

I handed Jerry my receipt from two months earlier (at least I'm an idiot who saves receipts) and he graciously said, “We don't have a choice. We have to do the inspection again, but we can shave a few dollars off of this. The government does the dangdest things. It's just ridiculous how much these look alike. At least now your registration and inspection will be the same month. That's an advantage.”

I'm still not clear on how this is an advantage, but I am grateful to Jerry for being kind and I'm more confident than ever about my radiator, power steering and brake fluids.

“Anybody could have done it” and “it really is confusing” are such Christian things

to say. Jerry made me think about other gracious comments we can use when confronted with stupid behavior. Some of these suggestions are pretty specific:

- “I think I have a coupon for tattoo removal.”
- “I can hardly see the stain.”
- “It's going to grow back.”
- “You were too cute for him.”
- “You didn't like working there anyway. You said a monkey could do that job.”
- “I've read that the SAT is a terrible predictor of college success.”
- “I wrecked my first car when I was 16, too.”
- “Most men your age look funny in shorts.”

Some kind comments after stupid behavior would be helpful around the church:

- “Not every sermon has to be thought provoking.”
- “The Bible says, ‘Make a joyful noise.’ You certainly did that.”
- “It's not like you're the first person to fall asleep during a prayer.”
- “Bless your heart.” (This one works particularly well when spoken by a Southern woman.)

Sometimes a mistake is an opportunity to speak sacred words:

- “I know how you're feeling. I've been there, too.”
- “You made a mistake, but it's not who you are.”
- “No matter what, I will always be here for you.”
- “All I want you to do is come home.” **BT**

—Brett Younger is pastor of Broadway Baptist Church in Ft. Worth, Texas.

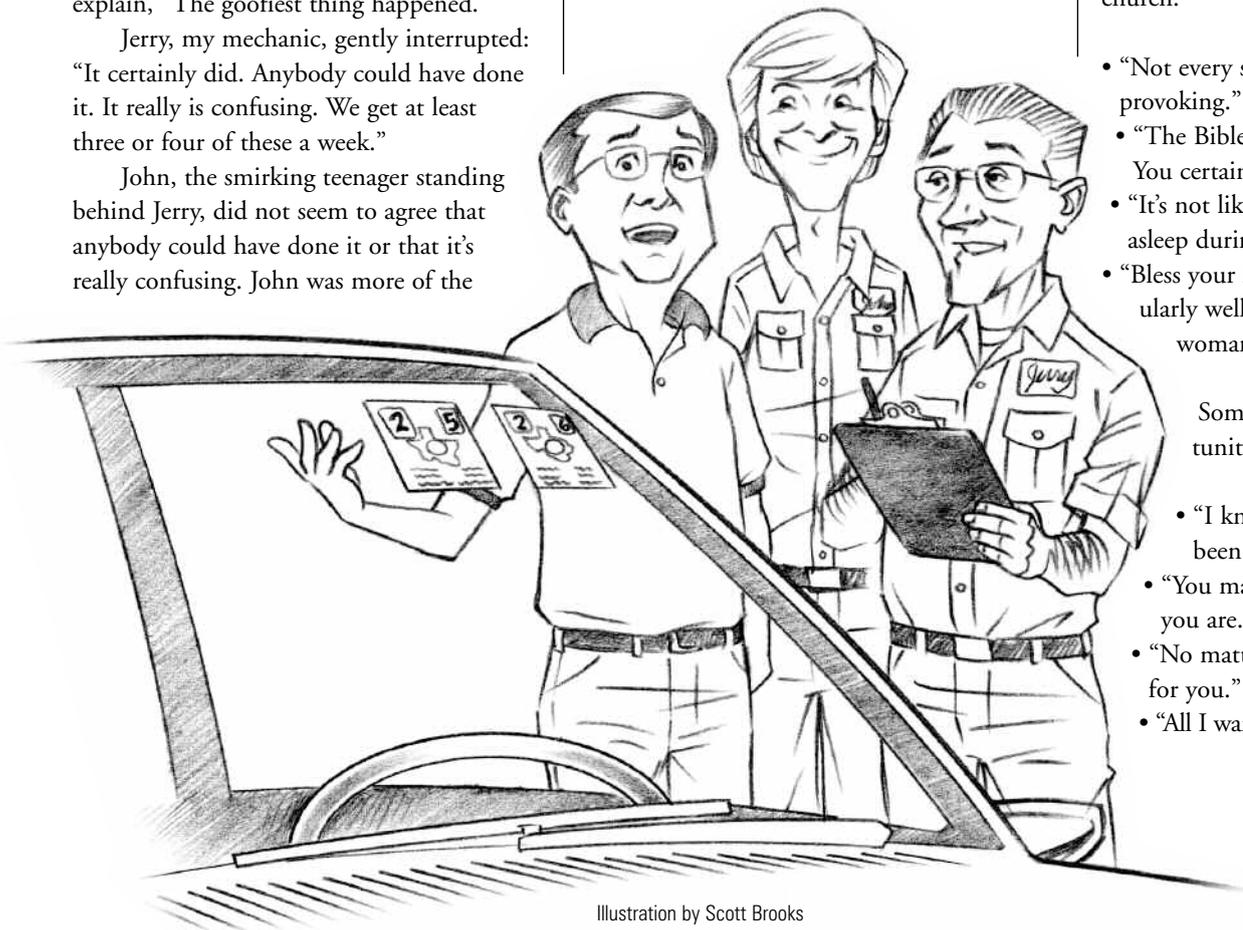


Illustration by Scott Brooks

Vatican rejects science behind Intelligent Design

VATICAN CITY (RNS) — The Vatican has moved to clarify its position in the Intelligent Design debate, publishing an article in its official newspaper that dismisses the theory on scientific grounds and embraces a recent court ruling in Pennsylvania keeping the theory out of classrooms.

After months of mixed messages from Pope Benedict XVI and his aides, the Vatican directly addressed the issue in the Jan. 17 edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* by reaffirming Catholic support for the science behind Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

In an editorial by Fiorenzo Facchini, a professor of evolutionary biology at the University of Bologna, Italy, the newspaper said proponents of Intelligent Design improperly blurred the lines between science and faith to make their case that certain forms of biological life are too complex to have evolved through Charles Darwin's

theory of evolution.

"If the model proposed by Darwin is held to be inadequate, one should look for another model. But it is not correct methodology to stray from the field of science pretending to do science," Facchini wrote.

Views expressed in *L'Osservatore* do not affect church doctrine, but the newspaper is thought to reflect Vatican thinking because its content is published with official approval.

Intelligent Design is a theory that says observation of life forms reveals they are so complex they could only be the product of a designer. Noting that the debate over Intelligent Design's merits has recently spread beyond the United States to Europe, Facchini said the theory's reliance on a "superior cause," or designer, ultimately undermined its validity as sound science.

He also lauded a recent ruling by a federal judge in Pennsylvania that kept

Intelligent Design from being taught as science in public schools. That ruling is not binding beyond Pennsylvania, but it is expected to have a ripple effect, perhaps influencing school boards across the country considering Intelligent Design as a theory that should be taught.

"Intelligent Design does not belong to science and there is no justification for the pretext that it be taught as a scientific theory alongside the Darwinian explanation," wrote Judge John Jones, a Republican appointee.

Pope Benedict XVI has at times appeared to favor Intelligent Design, describing the natural world as an "Intelligent project" one day after the Kansas Board of Education voted in November to adopt new standards that cast doubt on evolution. His ambivalence has opened a rift between some conservative prelates and members of the Vatican's scientific community. **BT**

Religious conservatives praise Bush's commitment to ban cloning

WASHINGTON (RNS) — Conservative Christian groups say they are heartened that President Bush promoted legislation to ban human cloning in his State of the Union address Jan. 31.

"Any time the president uses the bully pulpit to endorse specific measures, we're optimistic that it will have an impact," said Carrie Earll, bioethics analyst for Focus on the Family.

In his speech, Bush described human cloning as "the most egregious abuses of medical research" and called for a ban on the controversial procedure "in all its forms."

Bush supports the Human Cloning Prohibition Act that would ban the creation of embryos through cloning and impose criminal and civil penalties on offenders.

The House of Representatives has voted to ban all human cloning, but the legislation is stalled in the Senate.

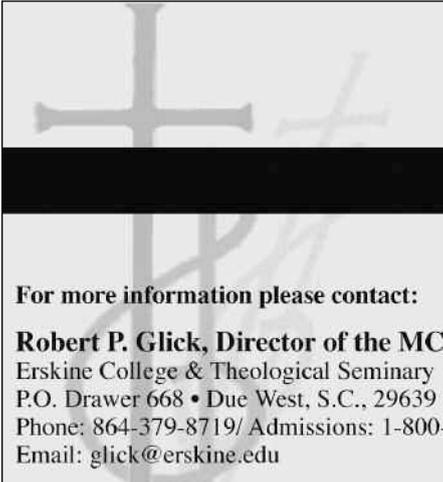
Earll said Focus on the Family opposes human cloning not only because an embryo is destroyed to obtain stem cells for research, but also because of the serious health risks posed in reproductive cloning.

Tony Perkins, president of the Family Research Council, has also pushed for a ban.

"Human life is a gift from our creator — and that gift should never be discarded, devalued or put up for sale," Perkins said.

But some see an opportunity in cloning to enhance and lengthen life.

The Biotechnology Industry Organization, a secular group of companies, opposes reproductive cloning but supports human cloning techniques for research — especially when used to create stem cells — "because it has been demonstrated over and over that that technique in that context holds a lot of promise to eventually treat and cure many diseases," said spokesman Michael Werner. **BT**



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the media shelf

Reviews by Jackie Riley

Talking the Walk

Letting Christian Language Live Again

Marva Dawn

Principalities and powers, the Virginal Conception, the Incarnation, salvation, vicarious atonement, propitiation, redemption, justification, sanctification, parousia ... these and other “church words” are often overused, usually misunderstood and sometimes even ignored.

While the language of the Christian faith seems to have lost much of its meaning, Marva Dawn argues that “church words” symbolize significant events and the ways in which they are spoken can influence the behavior of others. Thus, she encourages the church to

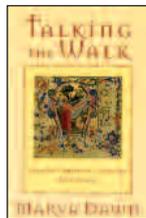
contemplate these key words and names as primary elements in our relationship with God before rejecting them as outdated and irrelevant.

“Churches cannot flourish if the names are corrupted,” Dawn writes.

“Some essential words should be retained in all their customary truth and eternal mystery.”

Therefore, she calls *Talking the Walk* a book of “corrupted words reclaimed.” In it she

does not attempt to present a systematic doctrinal piece or an explanation of definite conclusions about the Bible or creative approaches to dealing with church-related issues. Rather, she is responding to what she



terms a church crisis.

While the book is a collection of short reflections on more than 60 words, written in very approachable language, it should not be viewed as a quick read. Individual readers could examine one or two readings on a daily devotional basis. Likewise, Bible classes could use the selections as discussion starters for more in-depth study. Detailed endnotes provide additional study resources for those ministers, teachers or students desiring further exploration of topics.

\$22.99 / hb / 220 pp / BrazosPress / ISBN 1-58743-061-4 / www.brazospress.com

[More Media Shelf page 38 >](#)

Author explores marks of ‘competent pastor’

A review by John Pierce

Competence, according to author Ron Sisk, is “the ability to do what needs to be done.” For those in pastoral ministry such competence requires a wide range of skills and commitments.

Sisk addresses the issues of pastoral competence out of 20 years of firsthand experience as a Baptist pastor along with his current work with ministerial students at North American Baptist Seminary in Sioux Falls, S.D., where he is professor of homiletics and Christian ministry.

A clear understanding of oneself is essential to functioning as a competent minister, according to Sisk. Such ministers need “a realistic perspective on your own life as human being, a Christian, and a minister — what works for you and what doesn’t.”

Sisk urges ministers to gain a good understanding of family systems and to see how the minister’s own family dynamics have shaped his or her life. For example, a middle child of an alcoholic parent will likely assume the peacemaker role and avoid conflict at all cost. Awareness of these dynamics can help the minister in understanding leadership styles and other behaviors.

Familiarity with family-systems psychology is helpful to pastors, said Sisk, because

congregations generally function according to family dynamics.

Two creative approaches give Sisk’s book a feeling of dialogue. First, he gives brief case studies at the beginning of each chapter. The reader learns of a minister facing a particular challenge. Then Sisk addresses the issues presented in the story.

Second, Sisk invited two pastors and a pastoral care expert to add their comments. The sidebars are interspersed throughout the book and address the various topics presented in each chapter. These comments from ministry professionals dealing with real-life pastoral situations help keep the book grounded and practical.

Addressing the important issue of motivation, Sisk writes: “Ministry is first of all a calling. It is a calling that has professional aspects and that requires professionalism, but at the bottom the only sufficient reason to enter and to remain in the Christian ministry is the call of God.”

Ministry as a vocation declined in social status through the 20th and into the 21st centuries, said Sisk, eliminating previous cultural reasons for becoming a minister. It is a difficult and demanding occupation, he insisted.

“If you’re working for the Lord rather

than the church board, that constitutes self-motivation,” writes Sisk. “If you’re working for the board, it’s time to search again for God’s call in your life.”

Sisk noted that ministers lack a prescribed work routine and must discipline themselves to use their time wisely. Understanding one’s personality is a good way, he adds, to work at doing what needs to be done rather than doing only those things one enjoys.

An admitted introvert who loves his study, Sisk writes: “If I waited to go visiting in the nursing homes until I felt like going visiting, it would never get done ... There is no substitute for the daily work of deciding what you will do.”

Sisk explores many other aspects of pastoral competence including the minister’s personal faith development, improving communication and relational skills, good time management, dealing with stress, and becoming a more effective leader. His insights and the pastoral dialogue should bring encouragement and practical help to both novice and veteran ministers.

The Competent Pastor: Skills and Self-knowledge for Serving Well, Ronald D. Sisk
\$18.00 / pb / 192 pp / The Alban Institute / ISBN 1-56699-304-0 / www.alban.org

➤ Media Shelf from page 37

Travelers on the Journey
Pastors Talk about Their Lives and Commitments

Mark D. Constantine, editor

Following interviews with six socially engaged pastors across the American South serving Protestant, Catholic and nondenominational congregations from rural Arkansas to urban Atlanta, Constantine concludes that 21st-century pastors will increasingly be called on to use their power and influence to promote racial, social and economic equity.

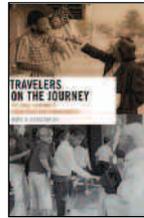
While the persons interviewed are presented “not as models who should be emulated but rather as companions and fellow travelers on the journey to justice from whom we can learn and with whom we can walk,” they are representative of a new generation of ministers who must learn to generate new ideas and take more risks in the face of varied societal challenges.

These six spoke with candor about their accomplishments and failures as they have attempted to do ministry in new ways such as operating a community grocery store and a

charter school for students expelled by the local public school system.

The Baptist interviewed, Cindy Webber in inner-city Louisville, Ky., spoke of how she has changed her type of ministry from giving handouts to becoming part of the community seeking help and working as part of a family to achieve progress. She emphasizes: “Let the social workers do social work, and let the church be a place where everyone’s on common ground.”

A volume in the Pulpit & Pew series undertaken by Duke University Divinity School and supported by a grant from Lilly Endowment, Inc.,



Travelers on the Journey may be a spark for initiating serious discussion aimed at change. It poses sensible questions for ministers and congregations to consider in changing ministry approaches and for instructors as they train ministerial students. **BT**

\$20.00 / pb / 232 pp / Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. / ISBN 0-8028-2934-1 / www.eerdmans.com

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Q: What do these churches have in common?

A: Through group subscriptions to **Baptists Today**, they keep up with the latest issues facing Baptists.

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Angier Baptist Church, Angier, N.C.

Ball Camp Baptist Church, Knoxville, Tenn.

Baptist Church of the Covenant, Birmingham, Ala.

Bayshore Baptist Church, Tampa, Fla.

Believers Baptist Fellowship, Hendersonville, Tenn.

Bible Fellowship Baptist Church, North Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Boulevard Baptist Church, Anderson, S.C.

Briarcliff Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.

Broadmoor Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La.

Brookwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.

Calvary Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C.

Calvary Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, Ala.

Calvary Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.

Central Baptist Church, Daytona Beach, Fla.

Central Baptist Church Bearden, Knoxville, Tenn.

Chapel Creek Church, Broken Arrow, Okla.

College Park Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

Covenant Baptist Church, Gastonia, N.C.

Crosscreek Baptist Church, Pelham, Ala.

Cullowhee Baptist Church, Cullowhee, N.C.

Druid Hills Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.

Emmanuel Baptist Fellowship, Irmo, S.C.

Emerywood Baptist Church, High Point, N.C.

Fellowship Baptist Church, Fitzgerald, Ga.

Fernwood Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C.

First Baptist Church, Abilene, Texas

First Baptist Church, Aiken, S.C.

First Baptist Church, Albany, Ga.

First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C.

First Baptist Church, Athens, Ga.

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