

# BAPTISTS Today

**‘More than a ramp’**  
Church leaders focus on full access

page 5

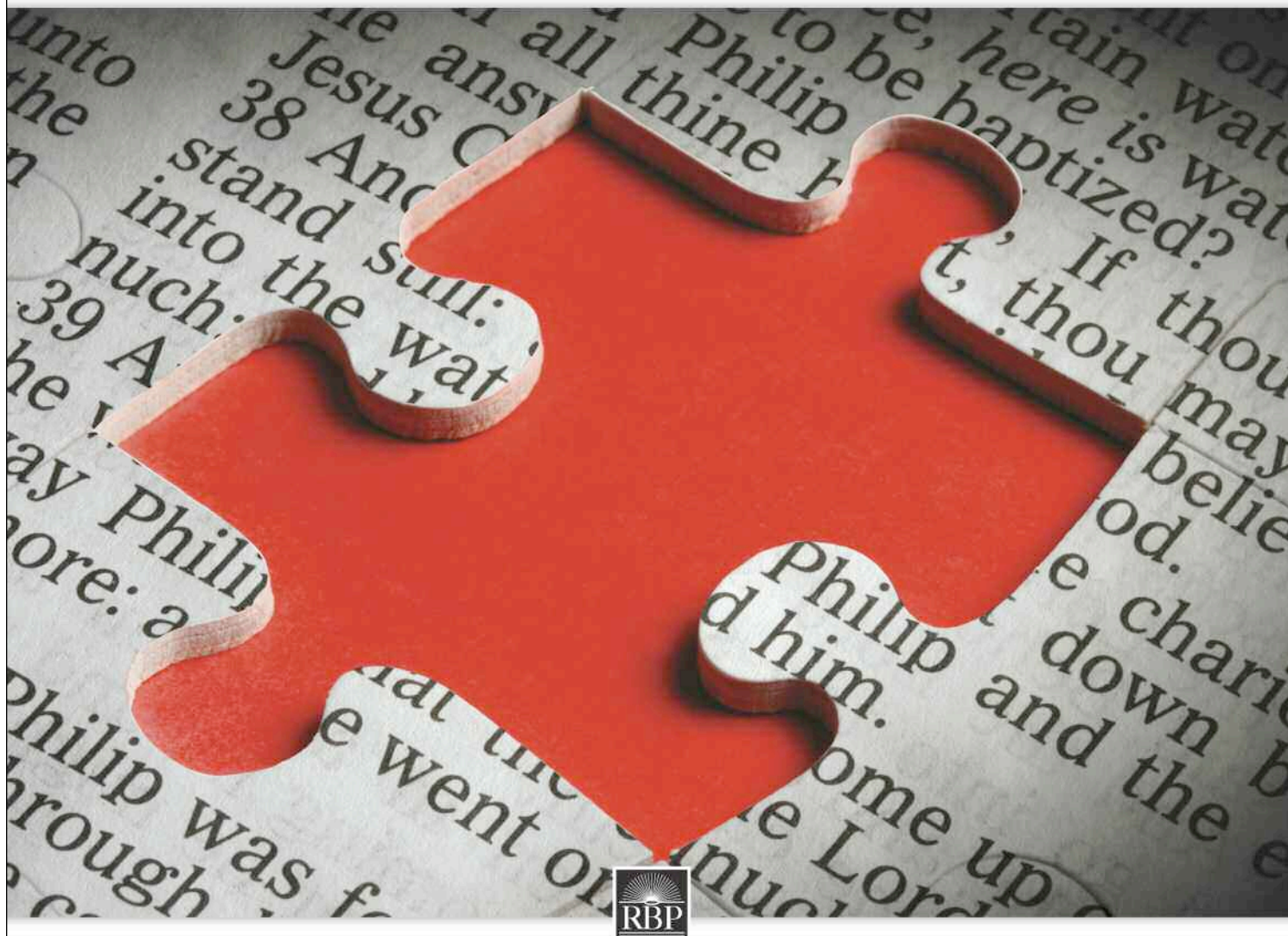
Patrick Henry Hughes emphasizes abilities

page 4





# WHAT'S **MISSING** FROM YOUR CURRICULUM?



GO TO OUR WEBSITE

[WWW.FINDWHATSMISSING.ORG](http://WWW.FINDWHATSMISSING.ORG)

RBP IS **100% COMMITTED** TO TEACHING THE **ENTIRETY** OF GOD'S WORD.

**20% OFF!** All new curriculum customers will receive 20% off their entire bill (*phone orders only*).  
**Order by 9/30/2009 • 1.800.727.4440**  
MUST SPECIFY DISCOUNT CODE BT100 AT TIME OF ORDER.

**John D. Pierce**  
Executive Editor  
editor@baptiststoday.org

**Jackie B. Riley**  
Managing Editor  
jackie@baptiststoday.org

**Keithen M. Tucker**  
Development and Marketing Director  
ktucker@baptiststoday.org

**Tony W. Cartledge**  
Contributing Editor  
cartledge@baptiststoday.org

**Bruce T. Gourley**  
Online Editor  
gourley@baptiststoday.org

**Vickie Frayne**  
Art Director

**Jannie T. Lister**      **Connie Pursiful**  
Office Assistant      Office Assistant

**Lauryn C. Dant**  
Circulation Assistant

Walker Knight      Jack U. Harwell  
**Publisher Emeritus**      **Editor Emeritus**

**Board of Directors**  
Gary F. Eubanks, Marietta, Ga. (chairman)  
Kelly L. Belcher, Spartanburg, S.C.  
(vice chair)  
Z. Allen Abbott, Peachtree City, Ga.  
Jimmy R. Allen, Big Canoe, Ga.  
Nannette Avery, Signal Mountain, Tenn.  
Ann T. Beane, Richmond, Va.  
Thomas E. Boland, Alpharetta, Ga.  
Huey Bridgman, Columbus, Ga.  
Robert Cates, Rome, Ga.  
Anthony D. Clevenger, Pensacola, Fla.  
Kenny Crump, Ruston, La.  
David Currie, San Angelo, Texas  
James M. Dunn, Winston-Salem, N.C.  
James L. Evans, Auburn, Ala.  
W.M. Gilbert Jr., Lavonia, Ga.  
R. Kirby Godsey, Macon, Ga.  
William B. Greenhaw, Macon, Ga.  
Leslie D. Hill, Lexington, Ky.  
Jimmy Little, Hartselle, Ala.  
Michael M. Massar, Tyler, Texas  
J. Thomas McAfee, Macon, Ga.  
William T. Neal, Stone Mountain, Ga.  
Ella Wall Prichard, Corpus Christi, Texas  
Michael G. Queen, Wilmington, N.C.  
Mary Etta Sanders, Dalton, Ga.  
Macon Sheppard, Folly Beach, S.C.  
Walter B. Shurden, Macon, Ga.  
Charlotte Cook Smith, Raleigh, N.C.  
David M. Smith, Houston, Texas  
Leo Thorne, Valley Forge, Pa.  
Sarah Timmerman, Cairo, Ga.  
Clement H. White, St. Petersburg, Fla.

**Advocates**  
Mary Jayne Allen, Chattanooga, Tenn.  
Randy L. Hyde, Little Rock, Ark.  
Sherry McGlaughlin, Liberty, Mo.  
David Woody, Daniel Island, S.C.

*Baptists Today* (ISSN 1072-7787)  
is published monthly by:  
*Baptists Today*  
P.O. Box 6318  
Macon, GA 31208-6318

To subscribe or place  
an advertisement,  
call 478-301-5655 or  
toll-free 1-877-752-5658.

Subscription rates:  
1 year, \$20    2 years, \$35  
1 year groups of 25 or more, \$15  
1 year Canada, \$35  
1 year foreign, \$50

Periodical postage paid  
at Macon, Ga. 31208

POSTMASTER:  
Send address corrections to:  
*Baptists Today*  
P.O. Box 6318  
Macon, GA 31208-6318

© 2009 *Baptists Today*.  
All rights reserved.

*Baptists Today* serves churches by providing a reliable source of unrestricted news coverage, thoughtful analysis and inspiring features focusing on issues of importance to Baptist Christians.

An autonomous national Baptist news journal

**8**

## Street Questions

‘What makes Baptists different?’

By A. Roy Medley



Sara Spivey, Mandy Curlee and preschool director Carol Brown are part of a growing ministry at Highland Hills Baptist Church in Macon, Ga., to include persons with special needs.

Related stories on pages 4 and 5.



Geneticist Francis Collins on the compatibility of faith and science.  
By Daniel Burke

Page 32

## PERSPECTIVE

- > Southern Baptists and eventual evangelism.....7  
*By John Pierce*
- > Talking points for a difficult issue .....24  
*By Bob Setzer Jr.*
- > Yearning on the everlasting arms .....25  
*By Tom Ehrich*
- > Billy Graham’s words to remember.....26  
*By Jack U. Harwell*
- > King David: warts and all .....34  
*By Tony W. Cartledge*

## IN THE NEWS

- > Dunn receives ‘merit badge for stubbornness’ .....11
- > Missouri court affirms Windermere’s independence .....12
- > Angelou, Carter urge Baptist unity, shared ministry .....13
- > Poll: Americans hold ‘nuanced’ views on homosexuality .....14
- > Study: Religiously unaffiliated open to faith .....14
- > Southern Seminary closing School of Church Music .....15
- > Advocates say new stem cell guidelines are sensible .....16
- > Church leaders react to evangelicals’ embrace of torture .....27
- > Henry Crouch: news journal helps preserve freedom .....28
- > National Day of Prayer gets political makeover .....29
- > Alliance launches new initiatives, honors leader .....31
- > Balmer says Religious Right ‘mortally wounded’ .....33

## FEATURES

- > Stan Hasteley reflects on 20 years with the Alliance .....30  
*By Tony W. Cartledge*
- > Dave Ramsey calls for spending discipline, .....38  
debt-free living
- > Some long-gone preachers still preaching on air waves.....39  
*By Adelle M. Banks*

## IN EVERY ISSUE

Quotation Remarks	6	Resource Page	22
Editorial	7	Classifieds	23
Media Shelf	17	In the Know	23
Back-row Birdie	18	Reblog	37
Formations Commentary	19		



# No time for pity

Patrick Henry Hughes puts an emphasis on ability

**S**TONE MOUNTAIN, Ga. — “One of my big motivations comes from the artist Ray Charles,” said 21-year-old Patrick Henry Hughes before performing a closing concert for the Development Disabilities Ministries (DDM) conference titled “Opening New Worlds” at Smoke Rise Baptist Church east of Atlanta in mid-April.

Charles, the legendary pianist and singer who died in 2004, had to overcome many obstacles — poverty, grief, racism and blindness — to achieve musical success. It is a message that young Hughes both grasps and carries on.

“Like everyone, there are days when I don’t want to go to classes or to marching band rehearsals or do that one particular homework assignment, but I always look at Ray Charles and realize how he had obstacles to conquer as well — especially when his fame was starting to spread,” the University of Louisville junior told *Baptists Today*. “I realize that what he went through makes my daily challenges no big deal whatsoever.”

Hughes was born without eyes and the ability to walk. So what is this talk about marching band?

That’s what he thought when the band director at U. of L. suggested he participate. But with Patrick Henry playing the trumpet and his faithful dad, Patrick, pushing the chair, that’s exactly what he does.

## Daily routines

The oldest of three sons, Patrick Henry began picking out tunes on a piano before his first birthday. At age two, he was taking requests for songs like “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.”

Family video clips — shown during a stirring six-minute feature on ESPN — verify his early talent. Today Patrick Henry is an accomplished pianist and singer who performs a wide range of music from classical to country.

But his first and final songs in this concert for caregivers and church leaders



interested in the full inclusion of all persons in the life of the church — regardless of physical and mental challenges — paid tribute to his motivator.

He put sunglasses over his nonfunctioning glass eyes and swayed a bit in his wheelchair. Then in a strong, soulful voice he belted out “Georgia on my Mind” and “America the Beautiful.”

While the late musician Ray Charles motivates Patrick Henry Hughes, the gifted young performer is quick to identify his father, Patrick, as his hero. Rightly so.

The elder Patrick works third shift for UPS in Louisville in order to be with Patrick Henry for his daily activities of school and band practice — where dad has to learn all of the marching routines. The two often travel together as well.

“We are blessed to get a lot of requests [to speak and perform] and we try to do as many as we can,” said Patrick Henry.

Balancing travel with school is not too difficult, he added. Plus, Patrick Henry is well known on campus, his dad noted, and the professors seem eager to assist.

“We alert the professors when I’m going to be gone — and ask about what I’m going to have to do to catch up,” said Patrick Henry.

A full-time student and Spanish major, Patrick Henry takes classes three days a week in the fall — to match up with band rehearsals — and two days a week in the spring. Early mornings are for piano practice.

His dad once dreamed of having a son who would be a star on a college football field. In a much different way than he imagined, that dream has come true.

## Reaching potential

Patrick Henry has no time or place for self-pity. There is too much to accomplish.

“Right now my life’s calling is to finish school and graduate, and also to continue to pass on my message to millions of people who might need to hear it,” he said.

And what is that message?

“My main message that I pass along is that it doesn’t matter what kind of problems you might face on a day-to-day basis — it might be that one little obstacle in front of you that makes you think, ‘I’m not going to be able to conquer that’ — but if you set your mind to achieve a goal, you can do it.”

His new book, *I Am Potential*, carries that message as well. And he encourages church leaders to not underestimate the contributions of those who face different challenges than most other persons.

“I would like to say to church leaders to stay open even though people might have a ‘different ability,’ as I like to call it,” said Patrick Henry. “They can still be able to pass along God’s message to others.”

Like most young adults, Patrick Henry is considering several good options for his future. He might seek a career as a musician or possibly work as an American diplomat in a Spanish-speaking country. But one other possibility stays on his mind.

“I’d really like to become the host of a popular game show,” he said with a big smile. He even has a title, concept and tune for the show called “The Check’s in the Mail.”

Before long, we all might check our local listings. **BT**

# More than a ramp

Full access requires removal of physical, attitudinal barriers

**S**TONE MOUNTAIN, Ga. — Building an entrance ramp into a worship facility is just the first step along the good path to making congregational life accessible to all persons, experts passionately shared during the “Opening New Worlds” conference sponsored by Developmental Disabilities Ministries ([www.ddmga.org](http://www.ddmga.org)) in April.

Answering the question of why churches should be more inclusive of persons with mental and physical challenges is an easy one for Jackie Mills-Fernald, director of Access, the disabilities ministry of McLean Bible Church outside Washington, D.C.



Jackie Mills-Fernald

“Everybody is made in God’s image — and we love people,” she stated simply and emphatically.

The need for such strategic ministry is clear as well, she said, rolling off surprising statistics like: One in five persons (54.4 million) in America has a condition that hinders one or more activities.

Effectively including persons with disabilities in congregational life, Mills-Fernald said, requires overcoming common barriers of architecture, communication methods and — most importantly — attitudes. An accessibility assessment is the best way for churches to identify those barriers that may never have been addressed.

Practical changes — such as creating accessible facilities and using communication modes that don’t assume one can see and hear — are easier to accomplish than removing attitudinal barriers. Education is required such as training greeters and ushers in

“disability etiquette” when encountering a visitor with a physical or mental challenge.

“Use ‘person-first’ language,” said Mills-Fernald, as one example. “It is ‘a person with autism,’ not ‘an autistic person.’”

Families that include members with special needs are often uninvolved in churches or feel less than fully included, leaders repeatedly stated. Churches can do much more to make these persons feel welcomed and valued.

Among the practical suggestions for getting started, Mills-Fernald offered these:

- Begin in children’s ministry. Ask parents: “What do you want from us?”
- Don’t ask parents to lead the classes. They need a break and spiritual nurture.
- Use church members with expertise (such as special education teachers) to be consultants and trainers — not teachers. They do that work all week long.
- Do some “community mapping” to see what services (such as respite care) are being provided by others in your area. Network to avoid duplication.
- Provide pew cutouts in various parts of the worship setting to allow for more choices. “It’s not OK to put all the wheelchairs in the back of the room.”
- Push for classroom space “that makes sense” even if it means relocating a “settled” Bible study class. Good access to bathrooms, a sink and an exit is very important.
- “Start small and dream big ... Let need drive programming.”

Ministry with persons with disabilities requires a focus on staffing, facilities and resources said Mills-Fernald. And every congregation needs a “champion for the cause” — who reminds others in church leadership to not forget this ministry.

“We are exclusive; our God is not,” she said. “We’ve failed as the Body of Christ to

make all persons welcome.”

But she affirmed: “God blesses this kind of outreach.”

Ginny Thornburg agrees. She is director of the Interfaith Initiative of the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) and the mother of a grown son with special needs.

“You have a right to be welcome in the House of God of your choice,” she said, noting that a true welcome is not patronizing but communicates the sense of being valued.

Thornburg said her work is underpinned by two core values: That children and adults with disabilities have gifts and talents to bring to the church, and that these persons have a right to a full life of faith.

“(Persons with disabilities) have been excluded, isolated and underserved for years,” she said. “(Church involvement) is not just rolling into the 9:30 service and leaving.”

So she celebrates when churches include and value those with special needs — such as having someone read the biblical text for worship in Braille or asking someone in a wheelchair to take up the offering.

Her son Peter, 49, has found such inclusion in a United Methodist Church in Hershey, Penn., she said. Although he has both physical and mental limitations — and “is mostly kind and contented” — he feels like a vital part of the church family.

She recalled asking her son to tell her what he thinks of God. After a moment of reflection, his brief but comforting answer was: “Nice.”

Though he works slowly, Peter bags bagels for the food bank and collects soft drink tabs — in record numbers — for charity fundraising efforts.

“People with disabilities want to be enjoyed,” said his mother.

Churches, she said, should be places “where no one is treated like a nuisance” and “where someone like Peter would come to know God as ‘nice.’” **BT**

# Quotation

“ r e m a r k s ”

“Many of us have come to believe that ‘church’ is a building, an event, or a moment on Sundays. The Church Jesus Christ envisioned was actually a movement of his people, engaging the world with his love.”

—Pastor Jeff Warren of First Baptist Church of McKinney, Texas, on suspending worship services May 3 and urging congregants to be active in their community as part of a “Don’t go to church ... Be the church” emphasis (Dallas Morning News)

“By God’s grace, what some have called the ‘Battle for the Bible’ that began in the SBC in 1979 has been won. But we believe the ‘War for the Bible’ began in the Garden of Eden when the serpent first questioned the truthfulness of God’s words and will continue until all things are made new in Christ. Southern Baptists must not retreat one inch from the non-negotiable doctrine that the Bible is without error, lest we squander the gains of recent years.”

—From the “Great Commission Resurgence” Declaration issued by Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny Hunt and to be presented to the SBC meeting later this month (Baptist Press)

“In the areas they already control, these groups are imposing draconian restrictions on human rights and religious freedom and engaging in brutal acts against individuals, particularly women and local police, who refused to accede to their repressive policies.”

—A report from the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom on the Taliban’s impact on Pakistan (CNN)

“This is the dawning of a new era, and as we put our hands together and believe God, God will visit his people afresh. God will forgive his people and heal our land. There will be a revival and a fresh awakening.”

—Kingsley Appiagyei, new president of the Baptist Union of Great Britain (ChristianToday.com)

“Forty-four percent of adults do not currently belong to their childhood faith ... But of those who have left their childhood religion, including those who were ‘unaffiliated’ as kids, a large majority of them have become affiliated with another religious tradition.”

—From a Chicago Sun-Times article about a new Pew Research Center poll

“Our mission remains steadfast: to train Christian leaders who serve with excellence in every area of their lives.”

—Founder Pat Robertson, 79, on plans to retire as president of Regent University in Virginia Beach but remain as chancellor (Virginian-Pilot)

“This venture is important because it works to reduce poverty, and the need for capital in these countries is great.”

—Rick McClatchy, coordinator for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of Texas, on the growing funds invested by his organization and others in micro-finance initiatives through the CBF Foundation (ABP)

“It seems to me there’s been an uptick in church conflict because of the economy.”

—Chris Gambill of the Center for Congregational Health in Winston-Salem, N.C. (ABP)

“I tend to argue that Ted Geisel (Dr. Seuss) was a first-class Christian thinker and that this thinking was intentionally made part of the literary and artistic work he has given us.”

—Robert Short, a retired Presbyterian minister, in the introduction to his book, The Parables of Dr. Seuss (RNS)

“Conversations around the kitchen table may be more responsible for the shortage of Roman Catholic priests in the U.S. than influences from American culture.”

—From a Religion News Service story about a Georgetown University study showing 45 percent of new priests said they were discouraged from entering the priesthood

“If those seeking the beloved community are stressed out on titles, positions, control, bossing and ‘feathering their own nests,’ community will not be achieved.”

—Atlanta pastor and longtime bridge-builder Emmanuel McCall, delivering the T.B. Maston Lectures at Hardin-Simmons University’s Logsdon School of Theology in Abilene, Texas, in April (ABP)

## In the news, 25 years ago . . .

“In recent years a growing number of voices within our fellowship have begun to say that missions is not the Southern Baptist distinctive. Their voices would tell us local evangelism and biblical orthodoxy are our vital Baptist distinctives.”

—President Keith Parks of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board in the June 1984 issue of SBC Today

# editorial

## Southern Baptists and eventual evangelism

By John Pierce

It was hard not to laugh when reading a Baptist Press story about Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president Johnny Hunt issuing a new declaration — with hundreds of signatures from other SBC leaders — calling for a “Great Commission Resurgence” within the denominational group.

Apparently, it has something to do with the dipping statistics about dipping new believers.

Of course, they could just put evangelist and former SBC president Bailey Smith back on the mega-church trail to re-baptize deacons, Sunday school teachers and choir members along with near-infants to get the numbers back up.

Instead, Hunt and others think this declaration might do the trick. The best punch line in the lengthy document was this one:

“The promise of the Conservative Resurgence was that eventually we would find enough common biblical and theological ground that we could focus on the Great

Commission.”

Perhaps “eventually” is the operative word. For those who don’t see the humor, you should have been around these guys a quarter-century or so ago.

All we heard during the red-hot days of the Fundamentalist Takeover of the SBC was that “liberalism” had infiltrated the convention — and if these true Bible believers were in charge, then evangelism would reign supreme.

The irony, of course, is two-fold:

One, Southern Baptists were in the midst of Bold Mission Thrust, the largest (and admittedly arrogant) worldwide evangelism effort ever tried when the takeover was launched.

Two, these guys who took over the convention have been running it for decades now with continuous infighting that keeps narrowing the circle of participation and



with public proclamations that alienate large segments of society.

And finding anything that resembles “common biblical and theological ground” — despite adopting an extremely narrow doctrinal statement that is enforced as a creed — does not seem possible since the “essentials” of faith just keep on changing.

Messengers to the SBC meeting in Louisville later this month will surely adopt this new document and feel proud that they are doing a good thing for the great cause of evangelism. Maybe it will work this time — eventually.

And maybe someday Southern Baptist leaders will finally “find enough common biblical and theological ground” to focus on spreading the Good News rather than serving as self-ordained theological watchdogs.

But I suspect Southern Baptists will have better success with the Great Commission only when they start taking more seriously the Great Commandment — instead of condemning and rejecting everyone who does not think just like them. **BT**

### YES! I/We want to support *BAPTISTS TODAY* by...

- Making a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ (enclosed).
- Making a pledge of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Keystone Fund to be given over three years. (Initial gift enclosed)
- Making a gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ in memory or honor (circle one) of \_\_\_\_\_.
- Providing a church group subscription (25 copies) through a gift of \$450.
- Sending individual gift subscriptions to \_\_\_\_\_ friends at \$20 each for one year or \$35 for two years. (Enclose names and addresses of recipients.)
- Exploring ways to support *Baptists Today* through estate planning. (Contact Keithen Tucker at 478-330-6223 or 478-361-5363 or [ktucker@baptiststoday.org](mailto:ktucker@baptiststoday.org).)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

•••

MAIL completed form with check to: *Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318 — or, to use a CREDIT CARD, call 1-877-752-5658 or 478-301-5655.

**BAPTISTS TODAY IS A 501(c)(3) CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION. GIFTS OF SUPPORT ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED.**



## 'STREET QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISTS'

Editor's note: This is the sixth article in a series titled "Street Questions about Baptists," in celebration of 400 years of the Baptist movement.

## 'What makes Baptists different?'

Several years ago a Lutheran friend asked me, "What's the difference between Baptists and Lutherans?"

Referring to Martin Luther's 95 points of dispute with the Roman Catholic Church, I replied, "Baptists found more than 95 things wrong with the church."

Rather than beginning this discussion there, maybe it is best to begin where I started when I recently addressed the Islamic Society of North America, i.e., with what we share in common with other parts of the Christian church.

With the church universal we share the ecumenical councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon and their great affirmations of Jesus as both truly human and truly God, and the nature of God as Trinitarian: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

With the churches of the Reformation we share the three emphases of *Sola Gratia* (grace alone), *Sola Fides* (faith alone) and *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone).

With the Anabaptists of the continent we share the believer's church tradition. And with the Congregationalists of England we share a local church polity.

So what makes Baptists different? If anything, it is this: at the heart of Baptist life and thought is an emphasis upon an experiential relationship with God, the belief that ordinary persons can be in personal relationship with God and can directly approach God.

Our life is formed around "heart religion" rather than creeds, in part, because early Baptists were scandalized by formal membership in the church without an experience of personal faith. These Baptists were ridiculed and persecuted by their contemporaries for their "experimental" religion, but they did not relent.

At the heart of their insistence is a key scriptural principle: we are created in the

image of God (*imago dei*) for relationship with God. The image of God walking in the garden in the cool of the evening with Adam and Eve is a paradigm of the relationship God wishes to have with all.

As Dallas Willard has noted, what God wants most is a personal relationship with us, so great is God's love for us. As the creation of God who desires to know and be known by us, God alone is sovereign over conscience in matters of faith.

As a result, Baptists have placed strong emphasis upon the individual with regard to our thought and practice. Some would argue that such an emphasis is a result of the influence of the enlightenment, but Baptists would strongly hold that it is scriptural, that God desires not only a relationship with humanity at large (which we do not deny) or with the community of believers (which we do not deny, either) but also with individuals.

Baptists were inspired to emphasize the personal (not private) nature of faith as they read of God's promise of a new covenant "written on the heart" so that "all know me from the least to the greatest" (Jer. 31:31-34), as they were moved by the profoundly personal affirmations of faith in the Psalms (e.g., Ps. 139), as they were touched by the ministry of Jesus with

individuals, and as they were convicted by the testimony of the New Testament to the importance of faith that is personal.

If we take the personal nature of faith (rooted in our creation in the image of God, in the nature of God as love, and the sovereignty of God over us) as the organizing principle of Baptist life and thought, we can see how Baptists have consistently sought to safeguard this encounter of creature with Creator, of the beloved with the Lover.

The various Baptist emphases upon soul freedom/soul competency, religious liberty, the lack of a marked distinction between clergy and laity, the importance of the individual conscience, and the autonomy of the local church are all means of safeguarding that holy encounter between the soul and its sovereign Lord. Such is our conviction that this sacred space is essential for the exercise of faith.

Thomas Helwys gave pen to this conviction in his letter to King James I: "For men's religion to God is between God and themselves. The King shall not answer for it. Neither may the king be judge between God and man. Let them be heretics, Turks, Jews, or whatsoever, it appertains not to the earthly power to punish them in the least measure." (*A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity*)

King nor legislature, bishop nor priest, council nor convention have the right to interfere with or coerce this most sacred of relationships. Baptists have not placed humanity at the center of our faith, but God, and we have sought to carve out space for this sacred encounter "from the least to the greatest."

The personal nature of faith for Baptists finds its expression in worship,



A. Roy Medley is general secretary of American Baptist Churches in the USA, based in Valley Forge, Penn.



language and theology in our focus on Jesus. One does not have to sing many of our hymns, hear many of our sermons, or listen to the spontaneous praise in personal testimonies or our faith talk to know that we are a Jesus people.

Jesus — the face of God whom we adore, the hand of God that touches us, the voice of God that calls us, the eye of God that sees and has compassion upon us, the heart of God that loves us — this Jesus has captured us! His birth, ministry, death and resurrection reveal and open the path for our relationship to God.

In response there flows from us a profound sense of personal gratitude for Christ's sacrifice on the cross that flows forth in an overwhelming sense of love for "him who died for me." The quintessential essence of the Baptist Christian's identity and piety is the overwhelming personal experience of God's love in forgiving our sins, which leads to our profession of faith in him and willingness to take up our cross and follow him through the public sign of

believer's baptism, a public witness of our personal faith.

As Baptists we have been clear that such love and gratitude are expressed in discipleship, a following of Jesus marked by a desire to grow up into spiritual maturity in him.

Remarkably aware of our moral frailty and creatureliness, Baptists have not taught Christian perfectionism. However, there is an understanding that, falter and fail as we may, dependent as we are upon the Holy Spirit to heal, forgive and restore us, we are called to grow in faith that expresses itself through love. This is all that matters (Gal. 5:6).

Again, as Dallas Willard has so rightly remarked, our salvation is not an economic transaction in which we have a one-time exchange of sins for forgiveness, but an ongoing relationship with a living Lord who desires to be our dearest friend and companion. Hence, one of the most frequently sung hymns in Baptist life, probably second only to "Amazing Grace,"

is the testimony of "What a Friend We Have in Jesus!"

Loving God (the first and greatest commandment) must find expression in love of neighbor (the second commandment). So, Baptist life has emphasized loving neighbor in Good News-telling, justice-seeking, peace-making and mercy-doing.

One will find great evangelists such as Billy Graham and great prophets such as Martin Luther King Jr. in our Baptist family. But mostly, one will find everyday folk, who live as covenanted communities of disciples, understanding and living life through their commitment to Jesus Christ as attested to in Scripture, the one who has embraced them in love on the cross and gained victory over sin and death through his resurrection that all of creation might be redeemed for "through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20). **BT**



## CAMPBELL UNIVERSITY DIVINITY SCHOOL

Master of Divinity  
Master of Arts in Christian Education  
Master of Divinity/Master of Business Administration  
Master of Divinity/Master of Arts in Community Counseling  
Doctor of Ministry



**Christ-Centered**

**Bible-Based**

**Ministry-Focused**

Join us for lunch on Thursday, July 2, at the CBF General Assembly in Houston. To RSVP, contact Amanda Matthews at 1-800-760-9827, ext. 1830 or [matthewsa@campbell.edu](mailto:matthewsa@campbell.edu).

Campbell University Divinity School  
P.O. Drawer 4050  
Buies Creek, NC 27506

Kelly M. Jones  
Director of Admissions  
[kjones@campbell.edu](mailto:kjones@campbell.edu)  
[www.campbell.edu/divinity](http://www.campbell.edu/divinity)  
800-760-9827, ext. 1865



# Contemplating your next move?

Get the theological foundation and ministry skills you need through the B TSR School of Christian Ministry.

## Online continuing education courses and resources to support your ministry:

- Online Certificate Program with concentrations in Preschool & Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Music & Worship Leadership, Small Group Leadership, and Pastoral Ministry Leadership
- Online Focused Studies courses on preaching, Jeremiah, and HIV/AIDS ministry
- Congregational resources
- On-site events

## How you benefit:

- Learn from course facilitators with "in the trenches" experience
- Interact with others who are active in your ministry area
- Strengthen your theological foundation for ministry
- Learn practical ministry tools

## School of Christian Ministry courses are:

- Open to everyone regardless of educational background
- Web-based so they are accessible anytime, anywhere
- Affordable, and scholarships are available

For information visit  
[SCM.btsr.edu/SCMHome](http://SCM.btsr.edu/SCMHome)

or call 888.339.2877

# BTSR

BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY AT RICHMOND

SCHOOL of  
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY



# ‘Merit badge for stubbornness’

## James Dunn receives Judson-Rice Award

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — James M. Dunn, a man who “personifies the Baptist witness” while antagonizing enemies of religious liberty, received the ninth annual Judson-Rice award on April 24. The award, sponsored by *Baptists Today*, was presented at a dinner event held between sessions of a regional New Baptist Covenant celebration meeting at Wake Forest University.

**D**unn, currently Professor of Christianity and Public Policy at the Wake Forest University Divinity School, is best known for his 18-year stint as director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs (now Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty), where he served from 1981 until 1999.

Baptist historian Bill Leonard, dean of the Wake Forest Divinity School, said Dunn “personifies the Baptist witness” through the power of an uncoerced faith grounded in a free church, recognizing the inevitability of dissent.

Dunn understands that religious liberty is a “fragile fortress” that protects both believers and unbelievers from the state as well as from *de facto* establishments that seek power, Leonard said.

As a defender of religious liberty, Dunn “has discomfited purveyors of religious and political privilege from the time he was promoted from the primary to the junior department,” Leonard added, referencing names for children’s Sunday school departments commonly used in the mid-20th century.

Leonard praised Dunn as “one of the most amazing mentors I have ever known,” noting that many former students “would not have made it without the tangible financial help and personal encouragement of James and Marilyn Dunn.”

At the turn of the 18th century, Leonard recalled, Adoniram Judson and Ann Hassel-



James Dunn (center) receives the Judson-Rice Award from *Baptists Today* board chairman Gary Eubanks (right) and editor John Pierce.

tine Judson set sail as Congregational missionaries, but became convicted en route that they were really Baptist, “not because they wanted to be, but because they had to be.”



Bill Leonard

Anne Judson later wrote to some of her Congregationalist supporters, apologizing for the change and asking for forgiveness.

Dunn has never apologized for being a Baptist, Leonard said, though “some who have experienced his dissent can’t forgive him for staying a Baptist.”

“The rest of us,” Leonard concluded, “are so glad you stayed.”

Dunn said he accepted the award for both himself and his wife Marilyn “with heartfelt humanity and heartfelt humility,” recognizing the tribute “as a merit badge for being the most stubborn.”

Dunn recalled the time he spent as director of the Texas Baptist Christian Life

Commission and named other early directors, Foy Valentine, Jimmy Allen and Phil Strickland.

“Unlike the present mouthpieces for Southern Baptists,” he said, “we often reminded people that we did not speak for Baptists, but to them.”

“I believe that every human being made in God’s image has access without filter or formula to the divine,” Dunn said. “We live the truth in gospel freedom. We sing ‘I know whom I have believed — not *what*.’”

“It’s unblinkered balderdash” to think that soul freedom is a threat to the church, Dunn said, asserting that the greater danger is “falling for the sin of certainty, and forgetting the certainty of sin.”

Uncertainty is inevitable, he said, but can be faced with hope.

“Happy-faced optimism and grim-faced pessimism are both fragile and insufficient estimates by human beings,” he said, but “hope, on the other hand, is a theological virtue, a gift of God’s grace, the opposite of despair. We can in freedom choose hope.” **BT**

# Mo. court affirms Windermere's independence

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (ABP) — Missouri's Supreme Court has declined to review an appeals-court ruling that a Baptist conference center on the Lake of the Ozarks acted legally when it changed articles of incorporation to switch to a self-perpetuating board of trustees in 2001.

Leaders of the Missouri Baptist Convention had appealed a Feb. 3 ruling by the Missouri Appeals Court for the Western District that the state convention is not a

member of Windermere Baptist Conference Center's corporation and that no legal contract exists between the two entities.

The state's high court denied an application for transfer from the appellate court May 5. The decision leaves in place a lower court's ruling from last year that the convention surrendered its right to elect the camp's trustees when messengers voted to incorporate Windermere as a separate non-profit entity in 1999.

Dan Bench, Windermere's president and CEO, welcomed the Supreme Court's denial. "We urge the MBC to accept these judicial rulings and allow Missouri Baptists to put this sad conflict behind us," he said in a press release.

Windermere was one of five agencies sued by the convention in 2002 for moving to self-perpetuating boards of trustees. The claims were separated in 2007, and Windermere was chosen as the first to go to trial.

Trial dates have not been scheduled for lawsuits involving four other formerly affiliated entities that also moved to self-perpetuating boards in 2000 and 2001. Those entities are *Word & Way* newspaper, The Baptist Home, the Missouri Baptist Foundation and Missouri Baptist University.

Windermere's lead attorney, Jim Shoemaker, called the nearly seven years of litigation "needless" and said costs were "immeasurable" for all involved. Shoemaker said actions of Windermere's board of trustees "were always consistent with both Missouri law and the corporation's best interest."

Convention leaders contend that Windermere was built using mission money from the convention's Cooperative Program unified budget, and that the property morally and legally belongs to the state's Southern Baptist churches.

Windermere CEO Bench says Windermere continues to be open to all Missouri Baptists, just as it has been for more than 50 years, though Windermere leaders in the past have alleged that the Missouri Baptist Convention has tried to undermine the camp's ministry by dissuading groups and speakers from attending. **BT**

*Fulfill your calling*

*at the highest level of excellence*



Master of Divinity

- Biblical Studies
- Christian Education & Formation
- Missiology
- Pastoral Care & Counseling
- Pastoral Studies

Dual-Degree Programs

- MDiv/MA/Ed.S. Mental Health Counseling
- MDiv/MA English or English Education
- MDiv/MBA

Doctoral Programs

- Doctor of Ministry

Highlights

- ATS Accredited
- Strong Financial Assistance
- Study Travel & Mission Immersion
- Intramurals & Social Activities
- Missions Trips & Volunteering
- Koinonia Student Lounge

School of Divinity  
Office of Admissions  
1-877-GWU-GRAD  
divinity@gardner-webb.edu  
gardner-webb.edu/divinity

Gardner Webb  
University

M. Christopher White  
School of Divinity



After a seven-year legal battle with the Missouri Baptist Convention, Windermere Baptist Conference Center's 2001 move to a self-perpetuating board has been confirmed. Photo by John Pierce.



# Angelou, Carter urge regional gathering of Baptists to unite, meet the world's needs

By Lance Wallace  
*CBF Communications*

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — For two days more than 1,000 Baptists continued the spirit of the 2008 Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant by putting aside differences and focusing on the shared work of addressing the world's needs.

The theme of the third of five scheduled regional gatherings was “God’s Year to Act,” and worship services and workshops emphasized the importance of Baptist Christians responding to the Luke 4 call for preaching good news to the poor, proclaiming freedom for the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, releasing the oppressed and proclaiming the year of the Lord’s favor — all at a time of economic recession.

Writer and Wake Forest professor Maya Angelou opened the gathering with a call to be “rainbows in someone’s dark cloud,” and former President Jimmy Carter closed by reminding the audience of the New Baptist Covenant’s vision of achieving unity among Baptists.

Other keynote speakers included Wake Forest Divinity student Matt Johnson, Friendship Missionary Baptist Church pastor Clifford A. Jones of Charlotte and Park Road Baptist Church co-pastor Amy Jacks Dean of Charlotte.

In the opening session, the 81-year-old Angelou entered singing a line from a 19th century slave song — “When it looks like the sun ain’t gonna shine no more, God put a rainbow in the sky.” She wove a poetic narrative of people who were rainbows in her life and how Baptists can be rainbows in the stormy lives of others.

“When Rev. [Serenus] Churn called and asked me to speak, I thought ‘What am I doing? What am I doing? Then I thought about you, and I thought about rainbows. For 400 years you have been a rainbow to someone. That’s what Baptists have tried to be — a hope.’”

Referring to the 400th anniversary of Baptists being celebrated this year, Angelou claimed her Baptist heritage as a positive influence on her life. She asked the Baptists



**Writer and Wake Forest University professor Maya Angelou encourages diverse Baptists to be “a rainbow in someone’s cloud.”**  
CBF photo by Carla Davis.

in attendance to be part of the solution to the problem of racism.

“We see the blight of racism still assailing us,” she said. “At some point we have to stop letting differences divide us ... a smile and ‘good morning’ to someone who looks different than you can lift someone’s spirits ... in a second, you can qualify someone to be on this earth.”

In the Friday night service, Jones said Baptists can play a powerful role in solving poverty by working together. “I like this gathering that former President Carter has brought together because it maximizes our strengths,” he said.

On Saturday morning, Jacks Dean said: “Mercy isn’t a feeling like ‘bless his heart.’”

“Mercy isn’t pity. Mercy isn’t a sentiment. Mercy is an action,” she said. “It’s something that we do... mercy has something to do with how we treat people who are captive.”

Carter capped the event by reviewing the 2008 Celebration of the New Baptist Covenant and the need for unity among Baptists.

“Since I left the White House, Rosalynn and I have visited 125 countries,” he said. “We learned that Baptists are known all over the world for our disagreements and being argumentative ... It’s directly opposite of the gentle and loving nature of the one we worship.”

He asked the audience if they could affirm two statements: salvation comes from the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ and Baptists should put aside their differences to work together to help the poor. Both statements received enthusiastic applause.

“Let us pray that all other Christians can be bound together in a spirit of peace, freedom and love,” Carter said in conclusion.

Carter has committed to speak at each of the scheduled regional meetings, offering a word of encouragement to continue to work toward the ideals of the New Baptist Covenant. Event organizers pronounced the Winston-Salem event successful on many levels.

“It’s been beyond our wildest imagination in terms of the multi-racial, inter-church and multi-generational involvement,” said Bill Leonard, dean of the Wake Forest University Divinity School and chief organizer of the event. “This effort was a genuine people’s movement and so many individuals and churches contributed to it.”

Pastor Serenus T. Churn of Mount Zion Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, and one of the co-chairs, expressed excitement at the progress the New Baptist Covenant is making at bringing together Baptists of all races.

“This is the first local expression of that event in 2008, and this has been a tremendous response,” Churn said. “It has been wonderful, and it’s just the beginning of worshipping and working together.”

The next regional gathering is scheduled for Aug. 6-7 in Norman, Okla., with another one in Chicago, Ill., in 2010. New Baptist Covenant program chair Jimmy Allen said there are efforts underway in Los Angeles and Philadelphia to organize regional meetings in the future.

“There is something going on,” Allen said. “God is building bridges among us. We’re not trying to control it.”

The New Baptist Covenant is an informal alliance of more than 30 racially, geographically and theologically diverse Baptist organizations from throughout North America that claim more than 20 million members. The organizations have united around the shared vision found in Luke 4:18-19. **BT**

# Poll: Americans hold 'nuanced' views on homosexuality

By Kevin Eckstrom  
*Religion News Service*

A large survey on American attitudes toward homosexuality reveals a “nuanced and at times inconsistent” view on gay rights, with Americans saying states should not be forced to recognize same-sex unions, but also saying gay couples should have access to federal spousal benefits like Social Security.

The poll of more than 2,000 registered voters by Quinnipiac University found Americans torn over the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, which defines marriage between one man and one woman at the federal level and allows states not to recognize gay unions performed in other states.

Americans slightly support, 50 to 44 percent, the provision that allows states to not recognize gay unions, but a slim majority, 54

to 39 percent, supports federal spousal benefits.

In addition, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of Americans support the repeal of the ban on gays in the military, while half of Americans don't see the battle for gay rights as an extension of the battle for civil rights for African Americans.

“In general, Americans tend to be more supportive when it comes to narrow equity questions, like serving in the military or collecting federal benefits,” said Peter Brown, assistant director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute.

“But they are less accepting of more philosophical issues, such as equating gay rights with civil rights for blacks and the belief that people are born gay rather than it being a choice.”

Indeed, the poll found that people's views

of homosexuality as a choice or inborn trait are a stark predictor of their views: two-thirds of those who think people are born gay support same-sex marriage, for example, compared to just 15 percent of those who think homosexuality is a choice.

The poll was clear in showing that gay causes are attracting increased support from Jews and Catholics and some Protestants, but evangelicals remain the most opposed to questions of gay marriage, adoption or benefits.

Three-fourths of evangelicals oppose laws to allow gay marriage; two-thirds oppose civil unions; and 62 percent oppose federal spousal benefits. More than half of evangelicals see gay marriage as a “threat to traditional marriage,” while two-thirds of Catholics, and nearly 90 percent of Jews, disagree. The Quinnipiac poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 2.2 percentage points. **BT**

## Study: Ranks of religiously unaffiliated remain open to faith

By Robert Marus  
*Associated Baptist Press*

WASHINGTON — While the fastest-growing religious segment of the United States population is those who are not affiliated with a particular religion, that group is not necessarily comprised of secularists and largely remains open to faith, a new study shows.

But majorities of those who have left their childhood faith cite judgmentalism and hypocrisy among religious people and leaders as a major reason why they left the fold.

The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life released the study — a follow-up to a survey released in December — on April 27.

The “Faith in Flux: Changes in Religious Affiliation in the U.S.” study involved in-depth interviews with more than 2,800 people who had responded to the earlier “U.S. Religious Landscape Survey,” which found that more than 16 percent of all Americans were not affiliated with any particular religious group.

Of the currently unaffiliated in the original survey, 79 percent said they had been raised in a religious tradition. However, those raised religiously unaffiliated apparently have a significantly harder retention problem than



many faith groups. A majority — 54 percent — of those who were raised religiously unaffiliated now say they belong to a religious group.

A full 39 percent of respondents who said they were unaffiliated as children became Protestants. While 22 percent of the formerly unaffiliated had joined majority-white evangelical Protestant churches, 13 percent had joined historically white mainline Protestant denominations and 4 percent had joined historically African-American Protestant churches.

Only 6 percent of those raised without a religious affiliation had converted to Catholicism, and 9 percent had converted to other faith groups (including Eastern Orthodox Christianity, Judaism, Islam and smaller religious groups).

Of the unaffiliated who eventually

joined Protestant churches, those who joined evangelical organizations — whose very name implies evangelism — were just as likely to cite a friend's invitation to church as a factor in their conversion as those who joined mainline Protestant churches.

The ranks of the currently unaffiliated, the survey found, are not heavy on strong secularists. In fact, about a third of those who were religiously affiliated as children but have become unaffiliated said they thought they simply had not yet found the right religion and would be open to becoming religious again.

When asked about why they had left their childhood faith, large majorities of former Catholics and Protestants cited hypocrisy and judgmentalism among religious congregations and leaders, Pharisaical attitudes among the religious, greed in religious leaders and institutions and a belief that no single religion holds a corner on the truth. However, only 32 percent of the unaffiliated who were raised in Catholic and Protestant churches agreed with the statement that “modern science proves religion is superstition.” The study was devised from callback interviews of 2,867 people who had participated in the Pew Forum's earlier religious-landscape survey, taken in 2007 and released in 2008. **BT**



# Southern Seminary School of Church Music closing after providing 65 years of training

By Bob Allen

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (ABP) — Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is closing its 65-year-old School of Church Music and Worship, combining it with the School of Leadership and Church Ministry into a new School of Church Ministries.

The seminary's board of trustees approved the move, based on recommendation of a task force, at a meeting April 21 on the school's Louisville, Ky., campus.

Starting this fall, faculty members from both the School of Church Music and Worship and the School of Leadership and Church Ministry will serve within the School of Church Ministries. Randy Stinson, currently dean of the leadership school, becomes dean of the new school. Gregory Brewton, associate professor of church music, will serve as area coordinator over music and worship.

Seminary President Al Mohler said the intent is to preserve the tradition of the music school, which has produced thousands of ministers of music for Southern Baptist churches over the decades, while adapting to current trends.

"The bottom line is there has been a substantial drop in the number of music students at the graduate level in Southern Baptist Convention seminaries," Mohler said in an interview.

Mohler said the music school, started in 1944 by then-seminary President Ellis Fuller, currently is at 30 percent of its optimal enrollment. While a valuable program for its time, Mohler said it is "not economically viable today" to sustain a stand-alone music school.

Mohler said about 80 percent of ministers of music in Southern Baptist churches also have another staff assignment, like education or youth, so by combining its music and church-leadership programs the seminary will "look more like the churches" it serves.

He said the music faculty, which currently numbers 11, will be downsized to the equivalent of four full-time positions. The staff reductions, he added, will take place by attrition.

Southern Seminary opened the music school at a time when the Southern Baptist

"The bottom line is there has been a substantial drop in the number of music students at the graduate level."

— PRESIDENT AL MOHLER

Convention's growing seminary system began moving beyond training preachers to additional tasks, like improving the quality of worship and discipleship training in Southern Baptist churches.

While taken for granted for more than a generation, combining classical music training with theology studies in a seminary setting is primarily a Southern Baptist innovation, said Paul Richardson, professor of music at Samford University in Birmingham, Ala. Richardson said Southern Baptists began purposeful training of church musicians in the early part of the 20th century. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary established a School of Gospel Music in 1915.

In the 1940s, the SBC's Sunday School Board established a church-music department led by B.B. McKinney, a famous writer of hymns and gospel songs who taught at Southwestern Seminary from 1919 to 1931. Under his leadership the board released the Broadman Hymnal, creating a common worship tradition in Southern Baptist churches so pervasive it earned comparison to the Anglican Book of Common Prayer.

The National Association of Schools of Music began accrediting undergraduate degrees in church music in 1952. Before long many Southern Baptist congregations came to expect that a full-time minister of music would complete seminary training or comparable training at a university.

Influenced by the models of Westminster Choir College and Union Theological Seminary, SBC music schools focused on sophisticated choral music, graded choirs and more formal worship. While not alone in the effort, Southern Baptist seminaries were often considered unparalleled, in the theology-school

world, in their commitment to church music. They grew into programs unsurpassed in size and scope. For instance, only three schools accredited by the Association of Theological Schools offer doctorates in musical arts, and all are SBC seminaries.

By the 1980s and 1990s, enrollments in schools of church music reached record highs. At the same time worship styles began to change, shifting away from hymnals, choirs, organs and Brahms toward more casual liturgies and popularly influenced musical styles. Recently the Sunday School Board's successor, LifeWay Christian Resources, unveiled a web-based SongMap application allowing anyone to select songs and download sheet music and audio files in any key for as little as \$1.49.

Mohler said the music school made a significant contribution to the denomination, and its closing does not indicate a failure by the faculty. "The world has changed around us," he said.

Mohler said discussions about closing the school have been going on about two years, but current economic pressures sped up the process.

In December Mohler announced a projected \$3.2 million shortfall in a \$30 million budget. In January seminary officials eliminated 35 administrative positions — 20 full-time and 15 part-time — but no faculty jobs were lost.

Southern Seminary's School of Church Music opened in property bought and donated by trustee V.V. Cooke that now serves as the seminary president's home. The seminary built Cooke Hall, attached to Alumni Chapel, in his honor in 1970, and enlarged it in 1985.

Deans of the School of Church Music have included Forrest Herren, who held the post from 1952 to 1981; Milburn Price, 1983-1993; and Lloyd Mims, 1993-2000. The current dean, Thomas Bolton, is retiring as part of the downsizing.

While on campus trustees also took part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new \$5.5 million Sesquicentennial Pavilion, a white-columned welcome center that Mohler said will function as the "new front door" for the seminary as it celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. **BT**



Milburn Price

# Advocates say new stem cell research guidelines are sensible middle ground

WASHINGTON (RNS) — Some anti-abortion religious leaders are welcoming new draft guidelines from the National Institutes of Health on embryonic stem cell research as a balanced approach to the controversial procedure.

The guidelines, issued April 17, permit federally funded research on stem cells derived from embryos that are no longer needed for fertility treatments.

Most embryos that are not planned to be used in fertility treatments are discarded or kept in a type of frozen limbo. The draft guidelines presumably would not allow federal funds to be used to create embryos solely for research purposes.

“They have hit the right balance by limiting funding to particular slated-to-be-destroyed IVF cells, yet expanding significantly the number of diseases that can be addressed by increasing the number and range of stem cell lines from which we can learn,” said Joel Hunter, pastor of an Orlando-area megachurch. “These guidelines respect life from



beginning to end.”

Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, said “the new regulations embody caution and care that respect pro-life values.”

The Catholic Church opposes embryonic stem cell research, but Stephen Schneck, director of The Catholic University’s Life Cycle Institute, called the draft rules “a major step toward the common ground most Americans are now demanding.”

Former Southern Baptist Convention President Frank Page said the decision is not the one conservative Christians wanted most — a total ban on stem cell research — but is better than it could have been.

“While Dr. Page would wish for a ban on all embryonic stem cell research that results from the destruction of any human embryos (which he refers to as unborn babies), he is somewhat heartened by the fact that the White House has issued forth regulations which prohibit any stem cell research which would come from embryos created for research,” the statement reads.

Family Research Council President Tony Perkins continued his criticism of the funding of any research of embryonic stem cells.

“The research that President Obama supports is not sound science and will destroy human life,” Perkins said. “... (T)he guidelines implement a plan that will force taxpayers to foot the bill for research that involves human embryo destruction.”

The draft guidelines followed a March 9 executive order by President Obama to rescind the Bush administration’s 2001 limits on federally funded stem cell research. The NIH expects to issue final guidelines by July after a period of public comment. **BT**

## Study: Evangelicals trail other faiths on global warming

(RNS) — While a majority of white evangelicals believe there is solid evidence that the earth is warming, only one in three says human activity is the cause, according to a recent survey.

A survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life shows significant disagreement among U.S. religious groups on climate change and its causes.

Nearly half of all Americans blame global

warming on human activity, according to the survey, but only 34 percent of white evangelical Protestants do the same. Seventeen percent of that group say natural patterns are the cause, and 31 percent are not convinced that the earth is warming at all.

That stance is at odds with black Protestants, white non-Hispanic Catholics, white mainline Protestants, and religiously

unaffiliated Americans, all of whom are significantly more likely to accept evidence of global warming, according to Pew.

Black Protestants (39 percent); white, non-Hispanic Catholics (44 percent); white mainline Protestants (48 percent); and religiously unaffiliated Americans (58 percent) are all also more likely to attribute climate change to humans, the survey found. **BT**

## Promise Keepers invites women for the first time to 2009 gathering

(RNS) — Promise Keepers, the evangelical ministry known for its focus on making men better fathers and husbands, is inviting women for the first time to its main 2009 conference, the ministry announced.

“This year we are calling men to bring the women in their lives,” founder and chairman Bill McCartney announced April 20. “To celebrate our 20th year of ministry, we are called to do three things:

honor our wives, daughters and sisters; be a tangible blessing to the poor and oppressed; and embrace our messianic Jewish brothers as our spiritual fathers in the faith.”

Promise Keepers, which at its height held more than a dozen large conferences a year and gathered hundreds of thousands of men on the National Mall in a 1997 event, has diminished in size and

staff in recent years. The lone 2009 event will be held in Boulder, Colo.

McCartney, a former University of Colorado football coach, returned to the helm of the ministry in 2008 after resigning in 2003 to care for his ill wife. After he left Promise Keepers, he started “The Road to Jerusalem” ministry that focuses on Jews who believe Jesus is the Messiah. **BT**



# the media shelf

Review by Jackie Riley

## Leaders Who Last

Sustaining Yourself and Your Ministry

Margaret J. Marcuson

### Introduction

In this excellent volume on pastoral leadership, the words of William Shakespeare ring true: "... to thine own self be true." ... Be true to the ministry style that fits your personality and gifts — not the role expectations of others, leadership consultant and coach Marcuson tells us. Focus on "I" in following your purpose and goals, but then step aside and realize you can't control the results. Simply learn how to focus on what you can control — yourself and your response to others.

Reading this book is a freeing, though unsettling, experience. It requires a change of mindset to understand that lasting leadership whether in the church or another institution is based on a long-term attitude, understanding systems and the self, and not depending on the approval of others. Marcuson knows how to ask hard questions that can make a difference in one's ability to lead others.

She is well qualified to write this volume, which grew out of her personal experiences as

a pastor. Frustrated with trying to make people what she thought they should be, she faced burnout and considered changing careers. Rather, she changed her leadership philosophy and style.

In a concise and practical style, *Leaders Who Last* approaches leadership based on family systems theory. Marcuson ably combines principles of family therapy with biblical and ancient wisdom and personal experiences, while introducing us to the examples set by modern-day and historical leaders.

She emphasizes the importance of leaders knowing the history/story both of their family of origin and of the institution served, and offers common-sense explanations of how such things as birth order and family methods of dealing with conflict, commitments, illnesses and grief affect leadership style.

Further, Marcuson reminds leaders to focus on process and relationships and less on outcome, taking responsibility for themselves and helping others to do the same while avoiding the superhero or overfunctioning mode. Accepting limitations both of self and



others and maintaining balance while understanding reactions is a key. And, she clearly draws the line of where helping should begin and end.

Although directed primarily toward professional church leaders, Marcuson's systems discussion and application are excellent tools for understanding other places of ministry or even secular employment. Her explanation of emotional triangles in the workplace translates to various settings. The chapter on the role of money is quite revealing, especially as it relates to institutional conflict. Topical discussions are nicely summarized with hard-hitting "Questions to Ponder" at the end of each chapter.

*Leaders Who Last* is a must read for leaders who take themselves too seriously and/or have the knack for making others dependent on them. It is an excellent training tool for young ministers and a good refresher course for experienced — and perhaps frustrated — ministers. **BT**

\$20.00 / pb / 160 pp / Seabury Books  
ISBN 13: 978-1-59627-095-4 /  
www.seaburybooks.com

## I want to sustain Baptists tomorrow.

I am / We are pleased to make a gift commitment to *Baptists Today* of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year for three years.

### TOTAL GIVING LEVEL

- Heritage Partners (\$50,000 or above)
- Founders Circle (25,000-\$49,999)
- Freedom Circle (\$10,000-\$24,999)
- Visionary Circle (\$5,000-\$9,999)
- Editor's Circle (\$1,000-\$4,999)
- Circle of Friends (\$500-\$999)
- Patrons (\$100-\$499)
- Contributors (up to \$99)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill out this form and return it to *Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318

**Baptists Today**  
The Voice to Sustain Baptists Tomorrow  
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN 2009-2011

## back-row birdie

## The line off the back of the boat

By Keith D. Herron

**T**he fault line of the church runs right through the issue of corporate America's concept of leadership. Most churches today are looking for the kind of leader who's willing to set the direction for the church and in doing so they want somebody sweet enough to talk them into what they should already want but don't, and tough enough to kick them in the keister when they don't want it on their own. They want somebody who's part St. Francis of Assisi and part Mister T. Understandably that's a tough combination, but we're talking about a mystery beyond comprehension that's nothing less than the church's idolatry for something that's likely missing in them.

The other night I had a dream. In my dream I had a vision of the church as a boat, and seated in the boat were members of the various churches I've ministered to through the years. Some were from the church where I am currently the pastor, but there were also a few from the church where I grew up and there was even a woman from the very first church where I was a youth minister on weekends while in college. I recognized them well enough, but I couldn't understand why they were there together, and more pointedly, why they all seemed to know one another. It was the oddest collection of passengers you could ever put in one boat. And guess who was standing up on the bow of the boat? It was me!

Unlike most dreams, when I woke up I understood exactly what the dream was all about. In my dream, I was the captain of the ship who stepped up to the bow of the church boat putting one foot dramatically up on the bow while holding one hand up to the brow to shade my eyes while scanning the horizon ... but scanning for what? Storm clouds likely, but it was not my ability to envision the future that was important as much as the appearance of a clear vision of the horizon. I was watching the tides and the waves and the winds. It was odd, as it seemed I was creating the vision of purposeful movement whether the boat was going around in

circles or headed in a straight line. Whether we were actually going anywhere didn't seem to matter much.

But while all eyes of those on board were focused forward, there was a strange phenomenon off the back of the boat about which no one paid much attention. What no one in the boat was noticing was a rope tied off the stern with the line headed strong down into the depths of the water. The rope was taut because of what was beneath the surface of the water, but no one knew for sure what it was because one simply couldn't see beneath the surface to the darkened depths of the water.

In my office, I was deep in thought about my dream and how we are usually fixated on the captain's actions on the bow and not the stern when my phone lit up and the voice of our secretary boomed, "Birdie on line three!" Sometimes it seems she needs to jolt me awake or I'll miss a call. I pick up the phone.

"Good morning Starshine!" I boom out to Birdie. I know she's not a morning person, so it's my privilege to share the joy and exuberance of this glorious morning. In fact, the earlier it is, the more I want to give her a jolt.

"Butt a stump, Reverend, you know God doesn't approve of loud persons this early in the morning."

Birdie may have been in a foul mood, but I wasn't. "Birdie, I've been thinking about the nature of the church and how the pastor's job is to look like a leader whether the church is moving forward or not."

"Good Lord! It must be Monday and you've finally flipped out."

I told Birdie about my dream of the pastor standing

bravely on the bow and the rope off the stern of the boat and wondered whether she had a clue what that meant.

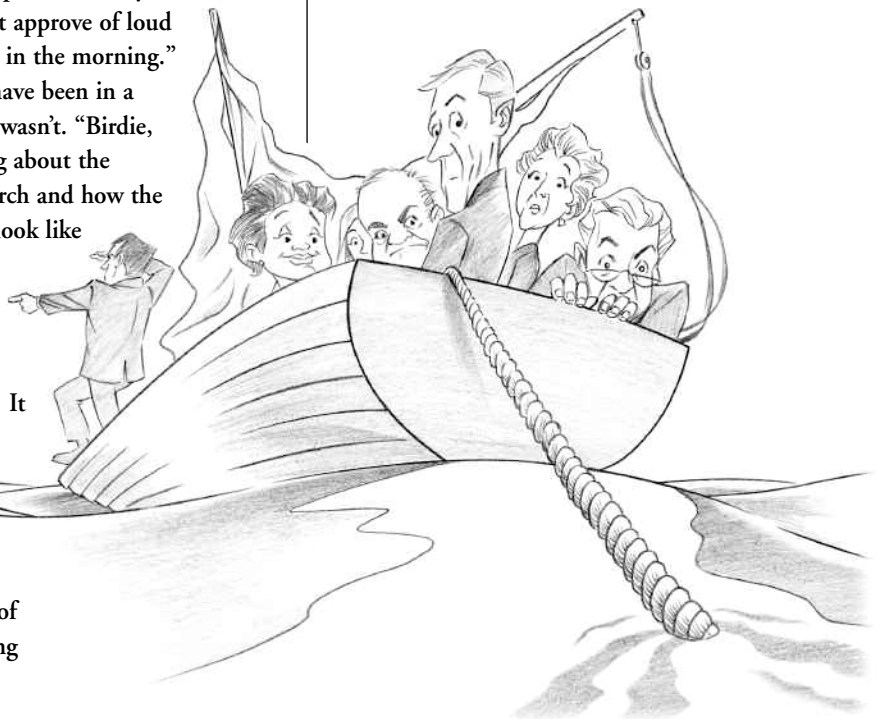
"Reverend, dreams are powerful business and it's not what I was expecting or hoping for, but interesting still. The rope's obviously the thing no one wants to think about which makes it so intriguing. My son-in-law's a therapist and he's got a saying that might help us: 'Most buried things are dead things ... dead and buried for a reason.'"

"Yikes! What on earth could be so dead that the church throws a line over the stern and drags it along all the while ignoring it?"

"Preacher ... you can't be that naïve ... but then again maybe you are. The things that are dead and buried in most churches are its secrets. Maybe it's even the old habits everyone can see but can't seem to do anything about. Maybe it's all the idolatries we refuse to acknowledge and will die to protect."

"So, tell me ... was it a dream or was it a nightmare?"

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





# 2009 Formations Commentary

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

## LESSONS FOR: Sunday, July 5-26, 2009

Written by Tambi Brown Swiney of Nashville, Tenn., a leadership development specialist for Tennessee Cooperative Baptist Fellowship



July 5, 2009

## Jerusalem: A city in need of peace

Luke 19:41-48

Have you ever set out to revisit a place that was near and dear to your heart, only to be disappointed by what you observed when you returned? The holy city of Jerusalem was such a place for Jesus.

When Jesus was only a few weeks old, he made his first visit to the temple in Jerusalem when his parents presented their firstborn son to the Lord in accordance with Jewish law. Simeon and Anna recognized salvation wrapped in a blanket that day, and the prophetess testified to anyone who would listen that the “redemption of Jerusalem” had at last arrived (Luke 2:38).

As a child, Jesus and his family routinely visited the holy city to observe the three annual great feasts — Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles — as mandated by Jewish law. On one such visit, a precocious 12-year-old Jesus confounded the teachers of the law with wisdom well beyond his years (Luke 2:41-47).

Two decades later Jesus was known as a “teacher” himself, and this time as he entered Jerusalem to observe Passover, he did so in a procession worthy of a king. But Jesus was under no illusions that this would be an ordinary visit to observe a Jewish feast. He had resolutely set out for Jerusalem, knowing full well the fate that awaited him (Luke 9:51). The time of God’s coming had arrived, yet Jerusalem would fail to recognize the Messiah in its midst.

Just as he had wept over the death of his

beloved friend Lazarus (John 11:33-36), Jesus was moved to tears over the fate of his beloved city of Jerusalem. “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,” he lamented, “you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing” (Luke 13:34). Oh, the irony! The city whose very name speaks of peace had rejected the Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6).

Using imagery from the Old Testament (see Isa. 29:3, Ezek. 4:1-2), Jesus prophesied about Jerusalem’s downfall — a prophecy fulfilled in A.D. 70 when the Romans took the city. In his writings, the ancient historian Josephus was able to provide a vivid eyewitness account of the fall of Jerusalem, since he had accompanied Titus, the Roman general, to the siege of the city:

No pity was shown on account of age or out of respect for anyone’s dignity — children and elderly, lay people and priests alike were slain. The battle surged ahead and surrounded everybody, including both those who begged for mercy and those who resisted. The flames spread out to a great distance and its noise mixed with the groans of the perishing; and such was the height of the ridge and the magnitude of the burning that one would have imagined the whole city was aflame.

If Jesus grieved over the city, then how much more did he mourn over the state of the temple — the holiest site in the city, the supposed center of Israel’s worship? The temple had undergone a massive renovation under Herod’s leadership, and while the temple itself still possessed the same modest dimensions of the one originally constructed by Solomon, the footprint of the temple complex had been greatly expanded. Three surrounding valleys had been filled in so that Herod’s construction crews could create a series of concentric courts.

The outermost of these courts was the court of the Gentiles, which in Jesus’ day had become a marketplace where vendors sold the supplies necessary for observant Jews to make their required sacrifices — animals, doves, wine

and oil. Moneychangers also did a brisk business in the court, since worshippers had to exchange their Roman currency for Tyrian shekels in accordance with the law (Exod. 30:13).

When Solomon dedicated the temple, he prayed to the Lord: “May your eyes be open toward this temple night and day, this place of which you said, ‘My Name shall be there,’ so that you will hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place” (1 Kgs. 8:29). The temple was intended to be the place where the people of God communed with their Lord, yet this consecrated site had become commercialized. As Jesus ruefully observed, the house of prayer had become a den of robbers. The temple was not what it should have been. The city was not what it should have been. The people were not what they should have been.

“If you had only known on this day what would bring you peace” ... The city desperately needed peace. On this day in Jerusalem, the people hung on to the words of Jesus. In just a few days Jesus would hang on a cross. Peace personified arrived in Jerusalem and was crucified.

*Discuss: How has the church been commercialized today? Is your church known as a house of prayer? How is your city in need of peace?*

July 12, 2009

## Nineveh: A city in need of grace

Jonah 3:1-4:11

People who dwell in areas prone to tornadoes have grown accustomed to the technological advances that enable meteorologists to provide pinpoint warnings when storms are looming. Doppler radar can detect conditions in the atmosphere that indicate the potential formation of a tornado, and meteorologists have the ability to warn people in specific neighborhoods that danger is imminent. Some cities have installed tornado sirens as an additional way to alert residents to take cover. These early warnings have saved countless lives.

God called a prophet from Gath Hepher to



Cooperative Baptist Fellowship provides these Bible study resources to church leaders through this supplement to *Baptists Today*. For more information on how CBF is “serving Christians and churches as they discover their God-given mission,” visit [www.thefellowship.info](http://www.thefellowship.info) or call 1-800-352-8741



be his early warning system for Nineveh (2 Kgs. 14:25). Situated on the east bank of the Tigris River near the modern Iraqi city of Mosul, Nineveh was the last capital city of the powerful Assyrian empire. One of only three cities that are referred to as “great” in the Bible — along with Jerusalem (Jer. 22:8) and Gibeon (Josh. 10:2) — this sprawling metropolis was undoubtedly impressive, with its ziggurats and massive wall.

Built by the mighty hunter Nimrod, one of Noah’s great-grandsons (Gen. 10:8), Nineveh had a bad reputation. The Assyrians were well known in the ancient world for their brutality and cruelty. The prophet Nahum inventoried Nineveh’s sins: plotting evil against the Lord (Nah. 1:11), violence and plunder (Nah. 3:1), and prostitution and witchcraft (Nah. 3:4).

Humbled by his gut-wrenching experience in the belly of a great fish, Jonah belatedly and reluctantly embraced his God-given assignment to sound the alarm about the impending judgment of Nineveh. In 40 days, the city would be overthrown. Talk about a pinpoint forecast! The Lord was fed up with Nineveh’s sinfulness and was prepared to judge the people harshly, yet because of his great mercy he allowed a prophet to warn the people so that they could take appropriate action.

When meteorologists issue tornado warnings, they give explicit instructions to people who find themselves in the path of the storm: seek shelter immediately and go to an interior space in the lowest level of the building. Interestingly, when Jonah issued his all-points bulletin to the city of Nineveh, he did not tell the people what they were supposed to do in the face of judgment, nor did he describe the nature of their sins that had precipitated God’s wrath. Only a time frame and a punishment were proclaimed.

“If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned,” the Lord declared through the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. 18:7-8). Repentance was the only protective measure the people of Nineveh could take in the face of the storm of God’s wrath.

Sometimes people don’t take storm warnings seriously, and when they fail to take the necessary precautions to protect their lives, tragedy ensues. In this case, the Ninevites responded appropriately to Jonah’s warning. They comprehended the urgency of the situation and recognized what they needed to do to preserve the city: repent.

After a tornado strikes, television stations often go to great lengths to highlight how effective their warnings were in preventing casualties. Similarly, we might expect that Jonah would have rejoiced after the Ninevites took heed of his warning and turned from their evil ways, sparing the city from destruction. Instead, we find the sulking prophet perched on the outskirts of Nineveh, wallowing in anger and waiting for God to smite the city. Jonah resented God’s compassionate response to the Ninevites’ repentance. A man who had been the beneficiary of God’s grace was certainly not grace-full himself.

Jonah blamed God for provoking his anger, but the real problem was internal. Clearly, there was something wrong deep inside the prophet’s heart. In contrast to the tone of his repentant prayer in chapter 2, the prophet now seems to have reverted to his pre-belly-of-the-fish state, since his prayer in chapter 4 reeks of self-centeredness. As Eugene Peterson observed in *Under the Unpredictable Plant* (p. 157), anger can be a useful diagnostic tool.

When anger erupts in us, it is a signal that something is wrong. Something isn’t working right. There is evil or incompetence or stupidity lurking about. Anger is our sixth sense for sniffing out wrong in the neighborhood ... What anger fails to do, though, is tell us whether the wrong is outside or inside us. We usually begin by assuming that the wrong is outside us — our spouse or our child or our God has done something wrong, and we are angry. That is what Jonah did, and he quarreled with God. But when we track the anger carefully, we often find it leads to a wrong within us — wrong information, inadequate understanding, underdeveloped heart.

The Hebrew people were taught to love their neighbors as themselves, but they tended to narrowly define their neighbors as those within the nation of Israel. Jonah perceived the Ninevites as enemies who did not deserve his love or God’s mercy. He did not understand the breadth of the Lord’s compassion and grace. The prophet possessed a head knowledge of God’s Word, but not a heart knowledge.

“Should I not be concerned about that great city?” In one of his letters to the church at Corinth, Paul urged the believers that as God’s fellow workers they should be careful not to receive God’s grace in vain (2 Cor. 6:1). To experience the grace of God and then fail to extend that same grace to others is a sure sign of an underdeveloped heart.

*Discuss: Can you identify with Jonah’s bad attitude? When has your anger been a sign that something was wrong within your heart?*

July 19, 2009

## Nazareth: A city in need of correction

Luke 4:16-30

Conversations at a 20th high school reunion are predictable: “Look at him! She’s doing *what* now? Who would have thought? I remember when he used to ...”

Luke’s description of Jesus’ return to his hometown is reminiscent of just such an experience. The Nazarenes knew this man as Joseph’s boy, the carpenter’s son. Undoubtedly many folks still remembered the scandal surrounding Jesus’ birth — how that sweet girl Mary had ended up pregnant before her betrothal to Joseph. Although Jesus’ birthplace was the Judean hamlet of Bethlehem, his family had headed north to this Galilean village after Joseph had an unsettling dream that caused him to fear for his child’s safety. Nazareth was where Jesus “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52) under the watchful eyes of his neighbors.

The Nazarenes thought they knew this man. And yet, on that day when Jesus returned to the synagogue where he had spent countless Sabbaths during his formative years, they were at first astounded and then angered.

As per tradition, a passage from the Pentateuch was read first, then an excerpt from the Prophets. The reader would stand, out of reverence for God’s holy word, and read from the Hebrew Bible before sitting down to deliver a sermon on the passage in Aramaic. Visiting dignitaries were often afforded the opportunity to serve as guest speakers in the synagogue. Since those assembled were well aware of Jesus’ spreading fame, they were anxious to hear what this prophet had to say, and they were undoubtedly hopeful that his guest appearance would also include some divine works of wonder.

Jesus was well aware of the expectations of his former neighbors. The Nazarenes had heard what their hometown prophet had done in the Galilean seaside town of Capernaum, how he had taught authoritatively in the synagogue and healed those afflicted by demons and diseases (Mark 1:21-34). Now it was Nazareth’s turn to be in the spotlight.

“Come on, hometown boy, show us your stuff!” But Jesus refused to take the bait. In the





passage prior to this Nazareth narrative, Luke described the temptation of Jesus. In the devil's third attempt to tempt the Christ, he urged Jesus to exercise his powers purely for show (Luke 4:9-12). Jesus rejected that temptation in the wilderness, and he rejected it again in Nazareth.

What Jesus said and did — or failed to do — that day in the synagogue at Nazareth enraged his former neighbors. “Who does this guy think he is? Does he have some sort of messianic complex?”

Jesus' words make it clear that he did, in fact, believe he was the Messiah. He claimed to be the fulfillment of a messianic prophecy — the Anointed One of Israel, their long-awaited king. That should have sounded like good news to the Nazarenes, even if it seemed unlikely that a carpenter's son could ascend to David's throne. But it was the phrase from Isaiah Jesus omitted that really got the crowd's attention.

The Nazarenes thought they would know what the Messiah would do when he ushered in the kingdom of God. The Messiah was supposed to proclaim not only the year of the Lord's favor, but also the day of God's vengeance (Isa. 61:2). Why did Jesus neglect to mention the latter phrase?

The Israelites had greatly anticipated the day when their new king would take the reigns of power and judge their enemies. So why was this so-called prophet, through his commentaries about Elijah and Elisha, highlighting God's soft spot for the Gentiles? What initially seemed perplexing — that one of their own would suggest he was the Messiah — now seemed preposterous. This man couldn't be God's chosen one; he was a false prophet, deserving not a coronation but an execution.

What happened next might well be termed a miracle, though undoubtedly not the type of miracle the Nazarenes had anticipated. Jesus walked through the midst of the mob unharmed to proceed with his ministry elsewhere in Galilee. In due time he would suffer at the hands of an angry crowd, but not today.

The Gospels do not recount another visit by Jesus to Nazareth. The Messiah delivered a message of correction and then departed. Ironically, in this acceptable year of the Lord, the Messiah was not accepted in his own hometown. He was despised and rejected, and the Nazarenes esteemed him not (Isa. 53:3).

*Discuss: If you had been worshipping at the synagogue that day in Nazareth, how would you have responded to Jesus' words? Can you recall a time when someone's teaching prompted you to rethink your theology?*

July 26, 2009

## Sodom: A city in need of intercession

Genesis 18:16-33

The Chamber of Commerce of Sodom would have had a difficult time promoting the city as a family-friendly destination. “Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord” (Gen. 13:13). Lot undoubtedly was aware of Sodom's wretched reputation, yet he still chose to pitch his tents near this city on the plain when his uncle Abram gave him the opportunity to select a place to settle (Gen. 13:12). The well-watered region was pleasing to Lot's eyes but repulsive in God's sight, and we learn early in the story that God would eventually destroy the city (Gen. 13:10).

Not long after Lot relocated his family and flocks near Sodom, he was caught up in a war between rival kings and taken hostage (Gen. 14:11-12). His uncle rushed to his rescue with 318 trained men, returning Lot and the other hostages, along with their possessions, safely home (Gen. 14:16). Yet living in the midst of such sin, they were not safe at all. According to the account in Genesis 19, the rampant wickedness in the city included sexual immorality and the failure to practice hospitality. The judge of all the earth would not ignore Sodom's sins indefinitely.

The Lord appeared to Abraham near the great trees of Mamre and reassured his servant that the divine plan to make Abraham into a great nation and bless all peoples on earth (Gen. 12:2-3) was about to unfold (Gen. 18:10). Despite evidence to the contrary, Sarah would not remain barren much longer. Paint the tent blue — it's a boy!

But on the heels of this extraordinarily good news came a chilling announcement from the Lord. The wickedness of Sodom and its sister city Gomorrah was so great, so grievous, that the Lord had to act. The cries of those who had suffered injustice were deafening, and the Lord was compelled to respond. By expressing his intention to go down and see the state of affairs in Sodom for himself, the Lord implied that his divine investigation would culminate in judgment.

The Lord's decision to alert Abraham in advance of judgment is indicative of the intimacy of their relationship. Abraham was a friend of God (2 Chron. 20:7), one chosen to be an instrument of God's blessing. God expected his servant to do what was right and

just (Gen. 18:19), and through this experience Abraham would come to a deeper understanding of God's righteousness and justice.

Upon learning of Sodom's impending doom, Abraham's thoughts immediately turned to his nephew. What would happen to Lot? What about his family and herdsmen? If the Lord chose to wipe out the entire city — with the righteous perishing alongside the wicked — would that be right and just? How would such a sweeping act of judgment affect God's reputation among the people in the surrounding cities?

Just as Moses would one day plead for mercy on behalf of the Israelites after the golden calf incident (Exod. 32:11-14) and Amos would beg the Lord to relent from judging Israel by locusts and fire (Amos 7:1-6), Abraham interceded on behalf of his righteous nephew (2 Pet. 2:7). He did not want to see the innocent suffer, nor did he want the Lord's reputation to be harmed. But a failure to judge such egregious wickedness would also harm God's righteous reputation. Could middle ground be found?

In a scene reminiscent of a courtroom drama, Abraham approached the bench of the judge of all the earth. Sodom's corporate guilt was undeniable, and judgment was about to be levied. Hence, the negotiations commenced. Abraham realized he was on shaky ground, yet he forged ahead in his line of questioning as an advocate for the righteous. Would clemency be offered for the sake of 50 righteous people? If 45 righteous citizens could be found, would the city be spared? How about 40? 30? 20? 10?

Much like the persistent widow in Jesus' parable (Luke 18:1-8), Abraham pressed his case. Unlike the woman in the parable, though, Abraham was dealing with a righteous judge. He had confidence in God's character and would not have argued the case so forcefully in the first place unless he felt a compassionate response was possible. Abraham's compassionate intercession for the sinful city of Sodom stands in stark contrast to Jonah's clearly expressed animosity toward Nineveh (Jonah 4:1).

Even with the threshold for judgment greatly lowered, Sodom would not escape judgment. However, the Lord did graciously respond to Abraham's intercession on behalf of the righteous, sending two angels to warn Lot and his family to flee before the impending destruction. When the Lord finally did judge the city, “he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived” (Gen. 19:29).

*Discuss: Would you have interceded on Sodom's behalf? When have you bargained with God? BT*

# The Resource Page

... creative and practical ideas

Brought to you this month  
by Jill Jenkins



## Planning for good children's Bible learning experiences

**T**en-year old Benjamin nearly sprints down the hall of the children's department at church. His parents teach in the youth area, so he arrives bright and early each Sunday. His teacher is there in his room to greet him, no matter how early he comes. Mr. John expects this early arriver and involves him in conversation and the preparation process. Benjamin loves hanging out at church with Mr. John until his friends get there for class. Without uttering a single biblical principal, Mr. John has already taught Benjamin several important things, for example: I am worthwhile; Mr. John respects me; Mr. John loves me; God loves me; and, church is a fun place to be.

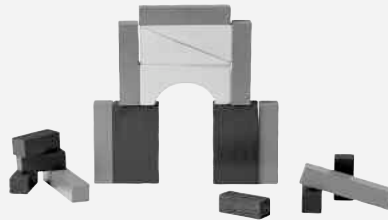
Teachers/leaders can take several simple steps to convey God's love and lessons to the children in their classrooms. Let's practice these together so that we can make our teaching time the most wonderful Bible teaching experience of a child's week.

**1. Make the room ready.** Learning begins when the first pupil arrives in the classroom. She's learning that someone cares enough about her to have the lights on, temperature adjusted, materials and supplies out, a teacher there to receive her. She's learning as much from the relationship with the teacher as she is from the Bible stories. Great teachers model the kind of love and concern that represents God.

**2. Study the Bible, the lesson and the children.** Leaders teach from their overflow of knowledge. If they are well studied on the Bible background material and the story itself, they can incorporate both, using their own words with excellent storytelling technique. Being familiar with the material allows teachers to use their Bibles to tell the story and look at the pupils as they teach, instead of reading it in their teaching books.

### Children learn when they ...

- are interested in the subject or the process
- have a need
- see personal value
- have the necessary skills to learn something new
- can relate new learning to previous experiences
- are involved in and enjoy the learning process
- are influenced by a person they love and respect
- feel encouraged to learn



### Plan lessons for children to ...

- know the facts
- understand the meaning
- apply bible principles in their lives/change the way they act

### Resources

- Beckwith, Ivy. *Postmodern Children's Ministry: Ministry to Children in the 21st Century Church*. Zondervan, 2004.
- Garland, Diana. *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*. InterVarsity Press, 1999.
- Prosser, McCullar, Qualls. *Building Blocks for Sunday School Growth*. Smyth & Helwys, 2002.
- Tobias, Cynthia U. *The Way They Learn*. Tyndale Press 1994.

**3. Design a class based on the needs of children.** Most of us require a child-based curriculum to teach effectively. A curriculum with a scope and sequence helps us know what has been taught and where we are going over the years with our teaching content. A devoted teacher prepares lessons based on the needs and learning styles of the children in the group and in coordination with the team of leaders in the classroom. Include numerous opportunities for drama, art, puzzles, maps, research, hands-on construction, discussion, games, music and creative writing.

**4. Respect the pupils God has sent your way.** Most adults seem to love children: respect is even more important. Show respect to children by listening to what they are really saying, allowing them to make choices, and involving them in planning activities that reflect their interests and needs.

**5. Pray without ceasing.** Prayer is the glue that binds together all the elements of good Bible learning. Pray for guidance in studying and planning the activities. Pray for each pupil. Pray for the Bible teaching time. Pray for lives to be changed through the testimonies of the teachers and the Bible lesson of the day. Prayer will improve you and your relationship with God, and it will have a powerful impact on your teaching effectiveness.

\*\*\*\*\*

Try these simple things each week as you work with children. Be prepared. Plan well with others in a way that children can learn. Keep the needs of the children in mind as you plan. Respect the children and their differences. Pray continuously for this all-important hour each week. Lives will be changed, including yours. **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 Jill Jenkins, minister to children at Johns Creek Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Ga. Resource Page Archives are available at <http://www.thefellowship.info/Resources/Church-Resources/Baptists-Today-resource-page>.



# in the know

*Keeping up with people, places, and events*

**Dean Allen and Lisa Wimberly-Allen** have been called as pastors of Fernwood Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C. effective June 15. Both hold doctorates from Boston University and have held a variety of positions, including serving on the faculty of Central Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Chris Chapman** is pastor of First Baptist Church of Raleigh, N.C., going from Knollwood Baptist Church in Winston-Salem.

**Horace W. Fleming Jr.**, a longtime Mercer University administrator and former president of the University of Southern Mississippi, died May 1 at age 65.

**Michael Helms** is pastor of First Baptist Church of Jefferson, Ga., coming from Trinity Baptist Church in Moultrie, Ga., where he served for 13 years.

**Julie Merritt Lee** becomes pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Hendersonville, N.C., in July, after completing a pastoral residency at Wilshire Baptist Church in Dallas.

**Richard Kremer** will become pastor of Garden Lakes Baptist Church in Rome, Ga., in July, coming from St. John's Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C.

**Jay Meadows** is pastor of Canton (N.C.) First Baptist Church, coming from First Baptist Church of Baxley, Ga., after 10 years.

**Kelly Evans Rhodes** is associate pastor of Edenton (N.C.) Baptist Church.

**Rob Sanford** will retire June 5 after 41 years in Baptist campus ministry. For the past 39 years he has served at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va.

**Bruce E. Whitaker** of Raleigh, N.C., died May 5 at age 87. He was president emeritus of Chowan University in Murfreesboro, N.C., where he served as president for 32 years before retiring in 1989.

**Pastor:** First Baptist Church of Jamestown, N.C., located in the Piedmont Triad area between Greensboro and High Point, is seeking a full-time minister. We are a moderate church that follows the 1963 *Baptist Faith & Message*. We have an active membership of 100, average Sunday school attendance of 50-60, and average Sunday worship attendance of 65-75. We are seeking an energetic pastor, who is a divinity school graduate, with strong leadership and interpersonal skills, who can help us grow spiritually and in numbers. Interested candidates should mail their résumé by June 30 to: Pastor Search Committee, 6503 Ivy Stone Dr., Jamestown, NC, 27282, or [connolly3@triad.rr.com](mailto:connolly3@triad.rr.com).

University Baptist Church, a small, progressive church in the university town of Carbondale, Ill., is seeking a **pastor** who would be comfortable with a diverse CBF/SBC environment. The position may be full or part time; we are looking for creative possibilities. Interested parties may send résumés to: [ubcpsc@verizon.net](mailto:ubcpsc@verizon.net).

**Contemporary Worship Leader:** First Baptist Church of Shreveport, La., is seeking an individual of strong faith to creatively direct and inspire our contemporary worship service, Crossings ([www.crossingsfbc.org](http://www.crossingsfbc.org)). The qualified candidate for this full-time position should express passion for leading others in worship, a desire to collaborate with all creative disciplines and technology to develop a cutting edge contemporary worship experience, and a heart to build up the next generation of worship leaders. The ideal candidate should have several years of experience leading contemporary worship and developing volunteer-based praise ensembles. Additionally, candidates should demonstrate excellent instrumental and vocal musicianship, strong management skills, and creative discernment. Send résumé to: Joyce English at [joyce@fbcshreveport.org](mailto:joyce@fbcshreveport.org).

Azalea Baptist Church in Norfolk, Va., a moderate church affiliated with the BGAV and the CBF, seeks a full-time **director of Christian ministries** to develop, implement and oversee educational programs. For a detailed job description, send résumé along with work history and official school transcripts to: J. Francis, Search Committee, Azalea Baptist Church, 3314 E. Little Creek Rd., Norfolk, VA 23518.

For Sale: Back issues of *Baptists Today*  
\$2.50 each

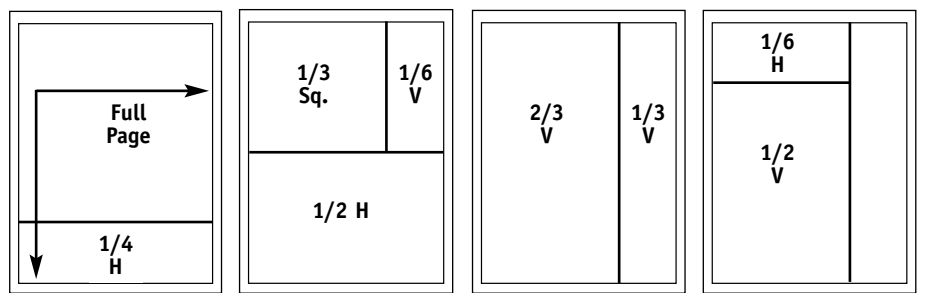
Credit card orders: (478) 301-5655  
Mail orders: *Baptists Today*,  
P.O. Box 6318  
Macon, GA 31208-6318

## ADVERTISE WITH BAPTISTS TODAY

Ad Size/Inches	Horiz.	Vert.	Price (bw/clr)	
Full Page	7.75	10.75	\$1400/\$1800	<b>Print Classified Ads</b>
Back Cover	8.0	8.0	\$2200 (clr)	
2/3 Page V	5.12	10.5	\$1000/\$1325	• line: \$1.50 per word
1/2 Page H	7.75	5.12	\$775/\$1000	• 1/3 page: \$450
1/2 Page V	5.12	7.75	\$775/\$1000	• 1/6 page: \$225
1/3 Page V	2.45	10.5	\$500/\$650	<b>Web Display Ads</b>
1/3 Page Sq	5.12	5.12	\$500/\$650	• Banner: \$150 / week
1/4 Page H	7.75	2.45	\$375/\$500	• Side box: \$75 / week
1/6 Page H	5.12	2.45	\$250/\$325	<b>Web Classified Ads</b>
1/6 Page V	2.45	5.12	\$250/\$325	• line: 75¢ per word
				• 1/3 page: \$225
				• 1/6 page: \$112.50

Details, ad reservations: [jackie@baptiststoday.org](mailto:jackie@baptiststoday.org)

**1-877-752-5658**



guest commentary

# Talking points for a difficult issue

*By Bob Setzer Jr.*

**R**ecently, both Miss California and mega-church pastor Rick Warren got slammed for speaking to the issue of gay rights. While each pleased some and infuriated others, both got beaten up pretty badly in this very public and often nasty debate.

Perhaps I feel more sympathy than most for these public figures because I have never said or written anything on the subject of homosexuality without unintentionally hurting or angering people I love.

Still, the question of how our church and culture should respond to the issue of gay rights is not going away. Is it possible for Christians to enter into a constructive conversation on such a contentious matter?

Toward that end, let me suggest some “talking points.”

First, gay people are not first and foremost an “issue.” They are people. And as people, they are beloved of God (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8). Even those who regard certain people as their “enemy” are called by Christ to love them (Matt. 5:44-45).

Second, gay people are part of just about everybody’s family or extended family and just about everybody’s church. Before making strident statements about this issue from either side of the divide, please remember you are

talking about someone’s son or daughter, sister or brother, or perhaps your own friend or neighbor.

Third, for serious Christians, the Bible must be part of our moral discernment process.

Two common extremes must be avoided:

(1) the Bible is irrelevant to this debate because it was “wrong” about slavery, women’s rights or whatever, or (2) the Bible condemns homosexuals, end of discussion.



Instead of ignoring the Bible on the one hand, or cherry-picking passages to condemn

homosexuals on the other, the Bible should be read holistically on this and every issue. It should be read in the Spirit of Christ (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15) and in dialogue with other believers (2 Pet. 1:20; Matt. 18:20).

In all such readings, a key question for me is “What reading of the Bible is closest to Christ’s own heart as revealed in the Sermon on the Mount?” (Matt. 5-7).

Fourth, the question “What *Did* Jesus Do?” — not just “What Would Jesus Do?” —

can be answered only by a careful reading of the New Testament in general and the Gospels in particular.

What did Jesus teach about God’s intention for sexuality (Mark 10:6-9; Matt. 19:10-12)? If we believe Jesus is the fullest revelation of God’s truth, then how does his teaching on sexuality shape our thinking?

And when Jesus encountered those who clearly fell outside the norm of God’s intention — such as the woman at the well (John 4:16-18) or the woman caught in adultery (John 8:10-11) — how might Jesus’ response to them shape our response to others in our own place and time?

I certainly don’t expect the “talking points” I’ve proposed to bring complete agreement about the difficult moral and theological questions of our day. Our differing experiences, assumptions, and interpretations of both the Bible and life make that impossible.

But surely the church can and should be a community of serious moral inquiry where kind, thoughtful conversation replaces the angry tirades so common in our culture. **BT**

*—Bob Setzer Jr. is the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Christ in Macon, Ga., to whom he first offered these comments.*

## “Yes, I want to subscribe to Baptists Today!”

**print subscription**

- 1 year \$20
- 2 years \$35

**online subscription**

- 1 year \$15
- 2 years \$25

**I have enclosed a check in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

(Credit card orders also acceptable)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_



**BAPTISTS Today**

Please fill out this form and return it to *Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318, or call 1-877-752-5658.



## guest commentary

# Yearning on the everlasting arms

By Tom Ehrich

RELIGION NEWS SERVICE

**M**y father and I were eating lunch at Marquette Manor, the retirement center in Indianapolis where he has lived since my mother's death five years ago. A friend walked up and put his hand on my father's shoulder.

The two began singing, my father on melody, his friend on harmony. They do this every time they see each other at lunch.

The day before, they sang "Down by the Old Mill Stream," composed in 1908 to recall a lover's first encounter with a 16-year-old "village queen" whose "hair has turned to silver."

Today, as I again joined the melody, they sang a ballad much loved by U.S. soldiers crossing the ocean to World War I:

*"There's a long, long trail a-winding  
Into the land of my dreams,  
Where the nightingales are singing  
And a white moon beams;  
There's a long, long night of waiting  
Until my dreams all come true;  
Till the day when I'll be going down  
That long, long trail with you."*

When we finished, residents applauded.

On our walk to lunch, my father and I had sung the ballad that dominated USO performances during the last two years of World War II: "I'll be Home for Christmas." Its final words — "if only in my dreams" —

Humanity is at its best when we yearn for goodness and love, when we step outside our defenses and dare to imagine better.

expressed a yearning that went beyond lonely soldiers on the front.

I grew up singing these songs. In those early years, I knew nothing of leaving home, the magic of young love, missing my homeland or seeing my father alone at age 93 after 60 years of marriage.

Yet what I did know, even as a child singing along while Dad played guitar, was the force of yearning — that tender and urgent longing for what is good and loving. Long before we lose what we have loved, we feel the power of yearning for that love, and we sense the risk of holding on to anything dear.

It's not a morbid dread, but an awareness that life is fleeting and it takes great courage to love another person. It takes courage to care about a partner, a child, a parent, because as hymnist Isaac Watts said, "time like an ever-rolling stream bears all its sons away."



Like soldiers huddling in trenches, we give each other courage by expressing our yearnings. We sing, we write, we draw, we pray. Songs don't end wars, anymore than singing at lunch can roll back the years to happier days. But our yearnings are what make us human.

Any animal can fight or steal. Humanity is at its best when we yearn for goodness and love, when we step outside our defenses and dare to imagine better. The darkness tries to drive us back inside by making us afraid of our own longings and by cheapening them. Our humanity draws us back to the stream where love can blossom.

Our yearnings are what connect us to God, as well. God isn't to be known by a majestic throne, thunderous rage or finely tuned loathing. God is known in the risk of creating that which can betray its maker and surely will die.

Jesus told the disciples of his leaving, and invited them to love him anyway, because in loving and losing, they would know the fullness of God's love.

In the songs of childhood, my father taught me to yearn for goodness and love. Now he is teaching me the courage to keep on yearning. **BT**

—Tom Ehrich is a writer, church consultant and Episcopal priest based in New York.

## EXPERIENCE makes the DIFFERENCE

Publications, Business Stationery, Website Development, Banners & Posters, Corporate Identity Packages, Annual Reports, Pocket Folders, Postcards, Variable Data Mailing and More... all under one roof.

DESIGN PRINTING MAILING & FULFILLMENT

Competitive Pricing

Award Winning Results

**WaltonMedia**  
create • print • distribute

1360 US Hwy 78 East • P.O. Box 1047 • Monroe, GA 30655  
770.267.0022 • 800.241.7879 • www.waltonmedia.net



# Billy Graham's words to remember

By Jack U. Harwell

How many of us have gone to funerals, heard ministers pay glowing tribute to a departing saint, then gone home and said, "I wish that person could have heard those warm words while they were still alive."

**W**ell, one of our greatest Christian heroes is nearing the end of his earthly pilgrimage. Allow me to pen some words of tribute while he is alive to read them.

In 1973, Billy Graham came to Atlanta to lead an evangelistic crusade at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium. As editor of the Georgia Baptist state newspaper, *The Christian Index*, I was asked to be publicity chairman.

For several months leading up to the crusade services, we had prayer meetings, strategy sessions, training events and other functions with him. Dr. Graham was always gracious, humble, patient, polite, courteous, focused and positive in every situation — a true Christian gentleman.

Even on the golf course he was self-effacing, modest and kind — and honest.

After the crusade Dr. Graham asked to come by my office and discuss the event, which had been phenomenally successful. He wanted to know, "What did we do wrong? What did we do right? What can we learn from the Atlanta crusade that might help us elsewhere?"

That three-hour conversation was one of the most meaningful experiences in my Christian life. One statement jolted me sharply: "Jack, you watch America for the next 20 years, and you're going to see a national wave of nostalgia, everybody longing for the good old days."

Then he paused and said, "That national wave of nostalgia will be one of the most



Jack Harwell and Billy Graham in 1973

dangerous things to ever happen to America."

Stunned, I asked Dr. Graham why a national wave of nostalgia could be so dangerous.

He replied: "One, if we spend so much time longing for another time, another place, another circumstance, we fail to see all the opportunities and all the resources at our disposal — right now — at this time, this place, this circumstance, to witness to lost people about God and our Savior."

"Secondly," Dr. Graham said, "if we get caught up in longing for days gone by, we begin to question God, to doubt his wisdom in placing us at this time, at this place, in this circumstance. We argue with him about letting us live today, here and now, with all of the current challenges and privileges we have, rather than the so-called good old days. Such nostalgic thinking eventually becomes spiritual arrogance, with us thinking we know more about where we should witness and work than God knows. Ultimately we can forget who is Lord and who is servant."

Hundreds of times since 1973 I have relived that conversation. His prediction was right on target. Our nation has been caught up in nostalgia — in politics, education, movies, music, television, diplomacy and especially organized religion.

Nostalgia was a prime factor in the fundamentalist surge that spawned the takeover of the Southern Baptist Convention. Some longed for the "glory days" of the SBC — 1950 to 1970. That 20-year span of unparalleled growth, however, came about primarily because of the post-World War II baby boom. Almost every denomination in this nation reported record numbers.

Then, those baby-boomers became teenagers, then college students in a huge influx in the 1960s. That flood of students helped to fuel the campus revolts, feminism, sexual revolution, flower-child phenomenon and protests against the war in Vietnam. Assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy contributed to what President Jimmy Carter called "the national malaise" of conflict and chaos we now call the turbulent '70s.

In a desperate effort to resurrect the perceived peace and tranquility of the "good old days," ultra-conservative revolutions cropped up all over America and other parts of the world.

Baptists were caught up in all this paranoid sickness called nostalgia — resulting in our modern Baptist version of the Salem witch trials of the Puritan era.

I think Dr. Graham had a prophetic insight in 1973 that came from the Holy Spirit and from his unique understanding of world religions and political affairs.

Just before he left my office that day, Dr. Graham asked: "Jack, do you know when the good old days were? For every individual the good old days happened when they were at the peak of their personal power and production. It's an individual mindset, not a collective time period."

Chew on that thought awhile. Doesn't it resonate with the most sacred Baptist tenet of all, the priesthood of every single believer to answer only to their Savior and Lord?

The only day we ever have to serve God is today — the good old TODAY. **BT**

— Jack U. Harwell is editor emeritus of  
Baptists Today

"Doesn't it resonate with the most sacred Baptist tenet of all, the priesthood of every single believer to answer only to their Savior and Lord?"



# Evangelicals seem unfazed by torture. Why?

By Greg Warner  
*Religion News Service*

Does conservative Christianity encourage torture?

That debate has been reignited by new numbers from the Pew Research Center that show white evangelicals are more supportive of “torture to gain important information from suspected terrorists” than any other religious or political group in the survey.

Less than half of the general public (49 percent) say government-sponsored torture can “often” or “sometimes” be justified, compared to almost two-thirds of white evangelicals (62 percent).

That view is almost identical to the view of Republicans (64 percent), giving fuel to the charge that evangelicals’ views on torture are rooted more in politics than their faith.

“Conservatives are living within their own moral universe,” said Joel Hunter, an evangelical megachurch pastor from suburban Orlando, Fla.

“In the last few decades, we have kind of created our own moral terms — more neoconservative than walking in sacrificial love.”

The torture debate within evangelical circles is as complex and multi-layered as evangelicals themselves. First, do the Pew numbers matter, and how much? And second, if evangelicals are finding their way to an endorsement of torture, how are they getting there?

The Pew numbers have prompted a great deal of soul-searching among Hunter and other evangelical leaders. David Gushee, an ethicist at Mercer University who has worked with the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, is one of them.

“These answers reveal deep problems in the moral formation of evangelical Christians, especially in the South, our capitulation to utilitarianism and nationalism rather than submission to the lordship of Christ, and our weakness in developing and committing to a human-rights ethic,” he said.

Richard Land, who heads the Southern Baptists’ Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and was a close ally of the Bush White House, is another torture critic.

“If the end justifies the means, then where do you draw the line?” Land said in an

interview. “It’s a moveable line. It’s in pencil, not in ink. I believe there are absolutes. There are some things we must never do.”

Yet some say the Pew numbers, like all survey data, can be problematic. Researchers did not define “torture,” and that’s the problem, say defenders of the Bush administration policy of “enhanced interrogation techniques.”

Two conservative Christian scholars said waterboarding could be justified in some instances, and Christians can come to different conclusions about whether the practice constitutes “torture.”

“Evangelicals, like everyone else, do not support any immoral use of force for any reason by anyone,” said Daniel Heimbach, professor of ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. “And evangelicals, like everyone else, also believe that coercive methods of interrogation can be used within strict moral boundaries. There is, in fact, no moral disagreement on this.”

Keith Pavlischek of the Washington-based Ethics and Public Policy Center agrees with Gushee and others that Christians are not properly informed about the torture issue. But he insists if they were, they would understand that while torture itself is inherently evil, not all methods that inflict pain constitute torture.

Labeling certain techniques as torture without doing the hard work of applying consistent moral principles distorts the debate, said Pavlischek, a former Marine colonel in Iraq and now director of EPPC’s Program to Protect America’s Freedom.

Simple slogans don’t help, either, he said, because the debate itself is not simple.

“If your first question is ‘What would Jesus do?’ you get a mess,” said Pavlischek. “The reason evangelicals are confused (on torture) is because evangelical leaders are confused.”

While many evangelical leaders say they were shocked and embarrassed by the latest Pew findings, they were equally troubled when survey data last October indicated evangelical views on torture are more often influenced by “common sense” and “life experiences” rather than Christian teachings or beliefs.

“The data in our survey points to many

white evangelicals thinking first as partisans and second as people of faith,” said researcher Robert Jones, whose firm, Public Religion Research, conducted the October study for Mercer University and the Washington-based group Faith in Public Life.

“When they engage their faith in thinking about the issue, support for torture drops.”

Hunter, for his part, blames “a whole lot of evangelicals (who) are listening to a whole lot of talk radio” and seeing the debate solely through the lens of national security and homeland security.

“Many of them see patriotism in terms of protecting our country rather than remembering the admonition in Scripture that you don’t overcome evil with evil but rather overcome evil with good,” said Hunter, who holds an advisory seat on President Obama’s faith-based office.

Support for torture can’t be blamed on a lack of religious education; in fact, the Pew numbers showed that support for torture actually increased among those who attended church more frequently.

“It would be easy for casual news watchers to conclude that if you want to end torture in this country, the best thing to do would be to empty out the churches,” Gushee wrote in a column for the Associated Baptist Press.

Some evangelicals aren’t just worried about the survey numbers, but also whether those numbers will tarnish evangelicals’ public image. Gushee, for one, worries about the perception “that evangelicals have a strangely selective moral vision.”

Heimbach, however, disagreed, saying the problem is not so much with evangelicals as with an unfriendly media that is anxious to portray Christian conservatives in a bad light.

“Those reporting on evangelicals are also responsible to avoid unjustified stereotypes and should rather assume the best, not the worst, of evangelical Americans who take the teaching and example of Jesus Christ seriously,” he said. “... Evangelicals are not suddenly less adept at media relations, rather the culture is becoming decidedly less friendly toward evangelical Christians.” **BT**

# Baptist leader: News journal preserves the important principle of freedom

Henry Crouch doesn't mince words when it comes to discussing the importance of the historical Baptist principle of freedom.

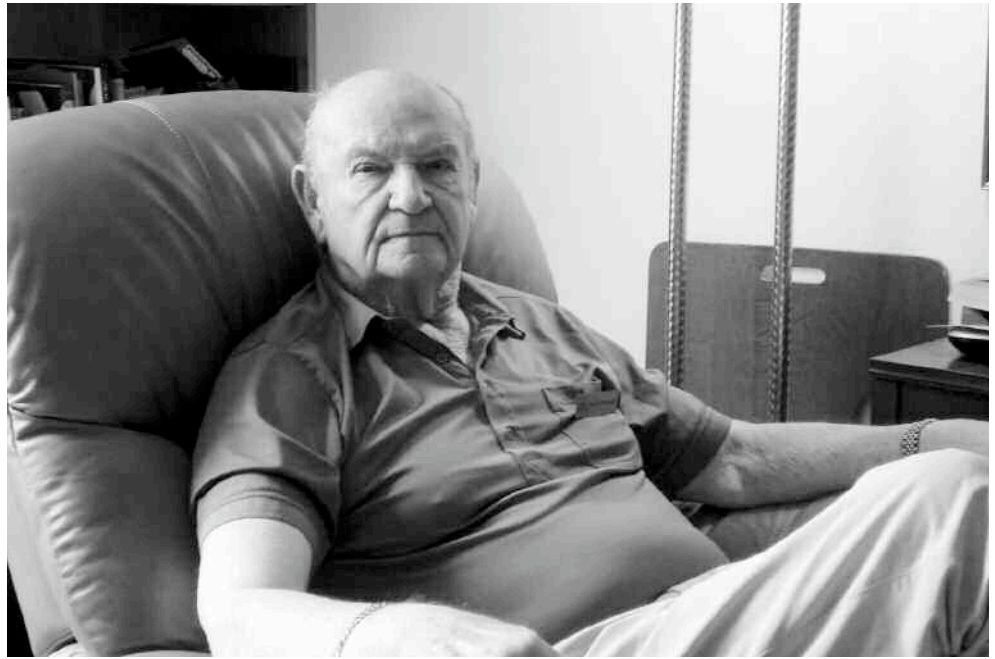
**T**hroughout four decades of ministry — particularly his 23 years as pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C. — he endeavored to preserve the Baptist values and principles he learned at home and in his church, which he shared with his congregations from the pulpit and supported with his leadership and funds.

Thinking back on the 1970s and 1980s, Crouch remembers the struggle churches went through when the leadership of the Southern Baptist Convention began to shift to the far right, introducing changes to the denomination's tenets with which moderate Baptists could not identify.

He says that struggle is why he has subscribed to and supported *Baptists Today* since its first issue in 1983.

"Baptist principles are important," said Crouch. "Those principles include freedom, and those principles value open minds. *Baptists Today* continues to shine the light on those principles and values, and we need that. Baptists have a very short memory, so we need to be reminded continually."

Crouch recalled when denominational publications had greater independence.



"They may have received partial funding from the convention, but they were not controlled," he said. "That is not true anymore. Freedom of speech and the Baptist principle of freedom are hard to come by, yet are easy to lose."

Because *Baptists Today* is an autonomous news journal, Crouch says Baptists can trust what is written.

"No one tells him what to write," said Crouch of current editor John Pierce. "He makes those decisions. I may not agree with everything that is written in *Baptists Today*, but I appreciate the effort to show me another viewpoint. That is what freedom provides you."

Crouch, who was present when founding editor Walker Knight first discussed establishing the independent national publication 26 years ago, said the freedom to provide a "clear and open picture of what is happening" is why he regularly supports *Baptists Today* and is committed to helping build its endowment.

"We cannot afford to lose *Baptists Today*," he said. "... We should have endowed it a long time ago. It is our voice; it reminds us of our Baptist principles and values."

Crouch worries about the next generation of Baptists being well informed about the cost of protecting important Baptist principles.

"I don't know if the young Baptists today are even concerned about what happened," he said. "You often aren't until it touches you ... when your daughter has been called to the ministry, but is told she can't preach ... when academic freedom is threatened at your school. Then, you start to question. We need *Baptists Today* to keep shining a light on what is happening." **BT**



If you would like information on making a planned gift to *Baptists Today*, contact Keithen M. Tucker, Development and Marketing Director for *Baptists Today*, at [ktucker@baptiststoday.org](mailto:ktucker@baptiststoday.org) or (478) 330-6228 or (478) 361-5363.

# National Day of Prayer gets a political makeover

By Adelle M. Banks  
*Religion News Service*

WASHINGTON — Evangelical leaders gathered for the annual observance of the National Day of Prayer on May 7 prayed for President Obama but criticized his decisions to not mark the day with a White House event or send a representative to their annual gathering on Capitol Hill.

Observers say the change of plans from previous years demonstrates that conservative Christians have less influence in the halls of Washington with a new Democratic administration. The Obama administration issued a proclamation instead of holding a public event.

“I am sad to say this morning that this is the first time since the year 2000 that there has not been a prayer service in the White House,” said Shirley Dobson, leader

of the National Day of Prayer Task Force and wife of Focus on the Family founder James Dobson, at the Cannon House Office Building.

“I feel a void that the executive branch is not represented here.”

In his (prayer-day) proclamation, Obama said that American leaders like President Lincoln have long called the country to prayer.

“Throughout our nation’s history, Americans have come together in moments of great challenge and uncertainty to humble themselves in prayer,” he said.

“Let us also use this day to come together in a moment of peace and good will.”

At a news conference two days earlier, White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs said that while the president has chosen to publicly observe the day solely with the proclamation, “privately he’ll pray as he does every day.”

For the last eight years, President Bush had welcomed the Dobsons and other supporters to the East Room for a ceremony marking the day. When the task force did not hear from the White House this year,

they moved their Capitol Hill event, traditionally held in the afternoon, to a morning time slot.

“In many ways, it validates an assumption that a lot of evangelicals have felt over the last few months, which is they are not going to have as easy an entrée to the halls of power in Washington as they have over the last eight years,” said Michael Lindsay, assistant professor of sociology of Rice University.

While the change in prayer plans may reflect the ebb and flow that occurs when the White House changes political parties, it also may show that “culture warrior” evangelicals may be losing prominence while other religious groups may be gaining it.

“It might have been the most politically smart move for him not to ... host the event,” said Lindsay of Obama. “Because this is not the constituency that voted for him in November and there are other religious groups who have some strong opposition to the way that the National Day of Prayer Task Force has tended to focus on the Christian-Jewish community.”

Michael Cromartie, director of the Ethics and Public Policy Center’s Evangelicals in Civic Life program, said he thinks evangelicals still have significant influence outside the Washington buildings equated with power.

“It’s not declining influence as much as it is lack of access to the halls of power,” he said. “Their numbers haven’t gone down. It’s just their access has gone down.”

Far from leaving the scene, he predicted that evangelicals will regroup and continue to speak out on issues ranging from same-sex marriage to the next Supreme Court justice nominee.

As the three-hour prayer event concluded on the Hill, conservative Christian leaders — including the Dobsons — joined about a dozen members of Congress at a news conference to affirm a House resolution on “America’s religious heritage.”

James Dobson said there that he disagrees with Obama’s decision not to hold a White House prayer event.

“We will not be disrespectful of him because of the office and we do pray for him, but I do regret his lack of emphasis on the foundation of prayer on which this country was based,” he said. **BT**



Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.), at the microphone, and Rep. Randy Forbes (R-Va.) are joined by other members of Congress for a press conference following a May 7 worship service they hosted on Capitol Hill marking the National Day of Prayer. Photo by John Pierce.



# Hastey reflects on 20 years with Alliance

**T**heological education, partnership missions, and honest inclusiveness bubble quickly to the surface as Stan Hastey recalls highlights of his 20 years of leading the Alliance of Baptists.

The Alliance was founded in 1987, the first splinter group born from the sharp political and theological controversy that divided the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Originally known as the Southern Baptist Alliance, supporters sought to preserve and advance a progressive stream among Southern Baptists that conservative SBC leaders were working hard to block.

Professor Alan Neely, who left Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary for a position at Princeton Theological Seminary, served as acting director of the Alliance until Hastey was hired to the post of executive director, becoming the organization's first full-time staff member on Jan. 1, 1989.

Hastey came to the Alliance from the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs (now Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty), where he served for 15 years after earning a Ph.D. at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1973. At the Baptist Joint Committee, Hastey worked mainly in communications as Director of Information Services.

Hastey tapped fellow BJC employee Jeanette Holt to work in an administrative role at the Alliance. They established an office at First Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., and were the only paid staff for the next 18 years.

When Holt retired two years ago, the Alliance switched to a peer-oriented leadership model, hiring Chris Copeland as Minister for Leadership Formation and changing Hastey's title to Minister for Missions and Ecumenism. A lack of finances grounded plans for a third full-time staff member.

Hastey sees the Alliance's contributions to theological education as a major accomplishment. As leaders of the SBC's new guard put more and more staunch conservatives on the trustee boards of its seminaries, concern about a narrowed approach to theological education became "a driving force that brought the Alliance into being," Hastey said.

That concern resulted in the creation of Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond (BTSR) in 1991, with the Alliance playing a

central role. The Alliance also helped to pioneer Baptist studies programs in non-Baptist schools including Duke University Divinity School, the Candler School of Theology at Emory University, Wesley Theological Seminary at American University in Washington D.C., and Brite Divinity School at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth.

The Alliance provided seed money for all of those programs, Hastey said, and has also "been the financial lifeline for the Baptist Theological Seminary in Zimbabwe."



Hastey is equally proud of the Alliance's model of doing missions. "We've done it on a really modest level," he said, "but have tried to live into a partnership model domestically and in other countries."

A partnership with the Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba has been of special interest to Hastey, who grew up in Mexico as the child of missionaries. The Alliance has sponsored about two dozen congregational partnerships between American and Cuban churches, despite strict limitations on travel imposed by the U.S. government. Hastey is gratified that the Alliance has been able to pursue the partnership above-board, with proper licensing, while also working hard for changes in U.S. policy toward Cuba.

The Alliance has other partnerships with Baptists in Zimbabwe and in Brazil. For the Brazilian Baptists, the Alliance translated Walter Shurden's *The Baptist Identity: Four Fragile Freedoms* into Portuguese, and there is now an emerging group of progressive Baptists in that country, Hastey said.

Hastey is likewise proud of the Alliance's

emphasis on inclusiveness, which he describes as "unquestionably one of our core organizational values." The Alliance of Baptists supported women in ministry from its inception even though it was a controversial subject, even among some moderates.

More controversial has been the Alliance's inclusive stance with regard to sexual orientation. In 1995, the Alliance adopted the report of a task force on human sexuality that encouraged congregations to welcome and affirm all persons without regard to sexual orientation. As an organization, the Alliance has lived out that mandate, electing leaders and hiring staff who are gay and lesbian as well as heterosexual.

The Alliance's early decision to declare itself as "welcoming and affirming" unquestionably "became one of our points of identity that both distinguished us and limited us in our growth potential," Hastey said. It is "not only an entrenched value but a core value of who we are."

Hastey regrets that the Alliance has not been more successful in including more people of color, though not for lack of effort. "We have not been well-positioned to attract predominantly African-American congregations," he said.

Hastey is pleased with the Alliance's prospects, and "thrilled" about Paula Clayton Dempsey's employment. "She will take on her new role as team leader well; she has all the gifts and all the tools. I couldn't be more pleased with her being named as the new team leader."

Dempsey is "just right for this time," said Hastey, noting her ability to serve as a bridge between older members and younger ones, many of whom knew her as a campus minister.

In retirement, Hastey and his wife Bettie plan to remain in Alexandria, Va. He hopes to do some preaching, and has two major writing projects. The first project will be a history of the Baptist Joint Committee, to mark its 75th anniversary in 2011.

Hastey has a head start on that project: his doctoral dissertation explored the committee's early history. He also plans to complete a history of the Alliance that was begun by the late Alan Neely. A 2012 release will help to celebrate the Alliance's 25th anniversary. **BT**

# Alliance launches new initiatives, honors leader

**C**HARLOTTE — The Alliance of Baptists celebrated Stan Hastey's 20 years of direction, welcomed new leaders, adopted six initiatives, and affirmed statements on social issues during its annual convocation held April 17-19 at Park Road Baptist Church in Charlotte.

Paula Clayton Dempsey of Mars Hill, N.C., director of the Advent Spirituality Center, was hired to fill Hastey's position. As Minister for Partnership Relations and the only full-time employee, Dempsey will act as team leader for five part-time staff members.

Alliance members agreed, with some misgivings, to give up the organization's current office space at First Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. A single toll-free number will connect to all staff, and a new mailing address will be established in Atlanta, near finance director Carole Collins.

Following a two-year period of discernment, Alliance members agreed to focus their work on six initiatives. A "growth and nurture" initiative sets out an intentional strategy for numerical growth through "midwifing new Alliance congregations" along with enlisting existing congregations and individual members.

Other initiatives included the development of new mission partnerships, facilitating the sharing of ministry resources, providing service opportunities for students, fostering deeper relationships among Alliance clergypersons, and creating additional opportunities for Alliance members to gather.

To address the initiatives, members approved a "Midwifing New Congregations" conference to be held in April 2010, a plan to connect students with mission partners for summer missions opportunities, and the development of an online exchange where churches or individuals can post ministry resources or services they are willing to share.

In a lengthy business meeting, president Brooks Wicker of Apex, N.C., led members in a frank "dinner table discussion" about Alliance finances. The group's governing board had already reduced the 2009 budget by 20 percent, from \$501,625 to \$398,415.

Susan Parrish, recently hired as part-time development director, said a renewed focus on development should generate additional

revenue. At a banquet honoring Hastey's retirement, she announced the creation of "The Hastey Society," an annual list of donors who contribute \$1,000 or more to the Alliance.

Participants gave unanimous approval to statements calling for the U.S. Congress to raise the minimum wage to \$10 per hour and to approve the Employee Free Choice Act, which would make it easier for workers to organize. Members also affirmed a statement that calls for legislation to reduce climate change, to support vulnerable communities

federal benefits and protections to same-sex as well as heterosexual couples.

The Alliance has long been on record as "welcoming and affirming" of gays, lesbians, bisexual and transgendered persons. Some members, however, were less enthused with the proposed call for clergy to stop signing marriage licenses, wanting more time to consider the matter.

In his final "State of the Alliance" report, Hastey expressed four hopes for the future, beginning with a desire "that we will remain true to founders as a freedom movement among Baptists." In an uncertain time, he said, Alliance members "have fixed our eyes on the Pole Star, the North Star of Christian freedom."

As the Alliance has resisted creeds and the "shibboleth of so-called 'doctrinal purity,'" he said, members must continue upholding liberty of conscience for individuals and churches, standing on the principle of a free church in a free state and opposing efforts by either one to use the other for its own purposes.

Hastey also called for the Alliance to remain active in interfaith dialogue and relationships, seeking "to be a part of the whole church" and to "work with believers everywhere in giving full expression to the gospel.

Continued efforts at becoming more inclusive are also essential, Hastey said. "It is better to be small and inclusive than large and exclusive," he said, expressing hope that the Alliance "will become evermore an inclusive people" with regard to gender, sexual orientation and race.

Hastey closed with the hope that "we will be captivated by Christ in a larger mission in the world." No one comes away from involvement in mission partnerships unmoved, he said, "we must give attention to larger mission."

Author Diane Butler Bass, in a final-day address, urged Alliance supporters to remember the roots of their progressive history. Rather than defining themselves by what they are not or thinking of themselves as "red," "blue" or even "purple," Bass said members should think "green" and embrace the "generative" story of love and growth from which they came. **BT**



Ann Quattlebaum presents a decorative globe to Stan Hastey during his retirement dinner April 18 after 20 years of service.

affected by climate change, and to "assist and welcome climate migrants" forced to move because of changing environmental conditions.

The Alliance, which has a missions partnership with the *Fraternidad de Iglesias Bautistas de Cuba* (Fraternity of Baptist Churches of Cuba), also gave unanimous approval to a statement calling for an end to all travel restrictions between the U.S. and Cuba.

A fifth statement generated little real opposition but considerable discussion, and was eventually referred for further study and consideration at the 2010 meeting in Monterey, Calif. The proposed statement would have "invited" clergy affiliated with the Alliance to "refrain from acting as an agent of the state by signing marriage licenses, at least as long as the same licensing is not available to same-sex couples." It also called for Congress to repeal the Federal Defense of Marriage Act and grant the same

## QUESTION AND ANSWER

# Francis Collins

## on the compatibility of faith and science

**W**ASHINGTON — A year after stepping down as director of the Human Genome Project, Dr. Francis Collins is embarking on a new venture, one that may be even harder than deciphering DNA.

Collins's new BioLogos Foundation, which launched in April, aims to be a bridge in the debate over science and religion and provide some answers to life's most difficult questions.

Through an interactive Web site ([www.BioLogos.org](http://www.BioLogos.org)), gatherings with pastors and scientists, and possibly developing science curricula for Christian schools, Collins aims to tell others about the deep compatibility he sees between Christianity and science.

### Q: What led you to this new project?

A: After my book (*The Language of God*), I got thousands of e-mails from people, many of them troubled, many of them excited, many of them puzzled by what they heard. They wanted to engage in a further discussion that would drill more deeply.

I tried to keep up with those letters and quickly found out there was no way I could. I felt bad because the point was to start a conversation and I wasn't holding up my end. There needed to be a place to provide some kind of responses to the questions that came up over and over again, and that sounds like a Web site.

### Q: Where does the name BioLogos come from?

A: It's a word that I made up, which means basically "life, by God speaking it into being."

*Bios* is the Greek word for life, and *Logos* is from John 1:1: "in the beginning was the Word (*Logos*)."

### Q: What kind of answers will the Web site give?

A: Many of those questions do not have straightforward answers and we're not trying to come at them as if they've never been asked before. We've distilled some possibilities into



**Geneticist Francis Collins believes that evangelicals and scientists often talk past each other.**

essays of three or four pages that an interested person might find helpful.

They present options for serious believers who also trust science to give reliable data, all of which are consistent with both Scripture and science.

It's not like we pound the table and say there is only one answer and here it is.

### Q: What's the goal for this Web site and foundation?

A: My hope would be that we are the hub of activity. There are other groups that have been pursuing these kinds of questions and trying to seek harmony instead of conflict, but they are relatively few and not all that visible.

If there's something we can do to try to help build those links, we'd love to do that.

### Q: Can you give an example of the kinds of questions the Web site will be addressing?

A: What role did God have in evolution? Are there divine action possibilities in evolution? Or is it one of those things where God started the process and then stepped back and hoped it would all turn out right?

That doesn't sound exactly correct for a believer. So how does God actually get involved in the process of evolution?

### Q: Is your target audience fellow evangelicals?

A: That's our primary audience because I think that's where the greatest stir is going on. But I would hope that skeptics and seekers and believers of other faiths would also find this an interesting place to go.

### Q: Is the site interactive in the sense that people can pose questions that will be answered?

A: We very much want to have interaction. So if you pose a question that we don't have up there, or you want to challenge an answer, you are welcome to do that.

We are not quite clear what the volume will look like, but we are prepared to take it on.

### Q: What about other BioLogos projects?

A: There will be an event in New York that will be the first of its kind: a conversation between theologians, scientists and (mainly evangelical) pastors. A continuing effort to reach out to pastors is going to be crucial because they're in the hot seat.

Many are trying to teach about Genesis and may have scientists in their congregation who say, "Now wait a minute, you don't really understand what the evidence is here."

We need to empower pastors to not be afraid of those conversations.

There will be opportunities for summer courses for students and faculty at Christian colleges, and developing curricula for Christian schools to try to present an alternative to the young-earth creation (theory), which is often the only thing that science classes in Christian high schools teach.

It sets those students up for a potential crisis when they get to the university and realize that the data for young-earth creationism is just not there. **BT**

—Dr. Francis Collins is a physician-geneticist who headed the Human Genome Project. His new work, the BioLogos Foundation, is funded by a grant from the John Templeton Foundation.



# Balmer says Religious Right ‘mortally wounded’

By John Pierce

MACON, Ga. — In 20 to 30 years, historians will look back on the Religious Right as “a tragic aberration,” said Randall Balmer, professor of American religious history at Columbia University’s Barnard College and author of several books including *Thy Kingdom Come: How the Religious Right Distorts the Faith and Threatens America* and, most recently, *God in the White House: How Faith Shaped the Presidency from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush*.

Now an Episcopal priest serving a rural congregation in Connecticut — in addition to his teaching, writing and speaking — Balmer gave the Walter B. and Kay W. Shurden Lectures on Religious Liberty and the Separation of Church and State, sponsored by the Washington-based Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty, at Mercer University in April.

Balmer’s father was a strict pastor — affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America — who did not affirm his son’s academic achievements. His winding spiritual journey was detailed in a memoir, *Growing Pains: Learning to Love My Father’s Faith*.

In his three-lecture series at Mercer, Balmer claimed that the Religious Right “distorted the beautiful, redemptive words of Jesus and turned them into something punitive.”

His historical overview of evangelical engagement in American politics began with the observation that conservative Christians pulled away from such involvement after the Scopes Trial in 1925.

“Many [Evangelical Christians] were not even registered [to vote] until [Jimmy] Carter came out of nowhere as a ‘born-again’ Christian,” said Balmer.

Carter, he said, provided a “reinsertion of piety into presidential politics” and “sent every New York journalist to his Rolodex to find out what that (born again) is.”

Yet “many of the same voters who propelled him into office in ’76 turned radically against him [in 1980],” said Balmer.

Opposition to abortion is often cited as the reason for the Religious Right coming into being and for opposing Democratic candidates — including the Baptist layman Carter, he said. But Balmer called this “the abortion myth.”

Balmer said the late Paul Weyrich, a key political organizer of evangelicals, confirmed to him that the Religious Right was launched as an effort to support Bob Jones University after the IRS rescinded the school’s tax-exempt status in 1976 due to policies of racial discrimination.

However, Balmer said he does not believe racism was the motivation for the rise of the Religious Right but a subculture’s defense of its worldview — particularly prevalent in the South “where Baptists function as a kind of state religion.”

Opposition to legalized abortion and support for government-sponsored prayer in school were highlighted later, said Balmer. While President Ronald Reagan, who defeated Carter in 1980, wooed the newly-energized Religious Right, there is no reference to the issue of abortion in his 700-plus-page autobiography, said Balmer.

“From 1980 to 2008, the Religious Right has had extraordinary influence on the American landscape,” said Balmer. But the political influence of the Religious Right has

waned — and, with the most recent presidential election, has been “mortally wounded,” he added.

Younger evangelicals are interested in broader — and sometimes different — issues than the limited few focused on by aging or deceased Religious Right figures such as radio host James Dobson and the late television preacher Jerry Falwell, he said.

“The Religious Right lost their prophetic voice,” said Balmer. “We always have to be careful of the seduction of power.”

Christian influence on politics is better carried out from the edges rather than the center of power, he suggested.

“It is time for evangelicals to reclaim their faith from the Religious Right,” said Balmer, noting that special favor for a majority faith is not needed.

“Religion has flourished in this country precisely because the state has stayed out of the church’s business,” said Balmer, who described his own move into the Episcopal Church tradition as the result of “aesthetic deprivation.” **BT**

## How Big Is God’s Mission— and Where Are You in It?

Log on to [www.baptistwaypress.org](http://www.baptistwaypress.org)

*Participating in God’s Mission* consists of 13 Bible lessons that will broaden and deepen your understanding of God’s mission (it may be bigger than you think) and encourage and challenge you to participate in it.

New studies available every quarter for your church’s adult Bible study classes. More than 30 studies available now.

Call 1.866.249.1799 toll-free to order or for a FREE sample!

**BAPTISTWAYPRESS**  
BaptistGeneralConventionOfTexas



*Part two in a two-part series on David and leadership*

# King David: warts and all

Negative lessons from the downward David (2 Samuel 11-20)

**D**avid's road, as related in 1-2 Samuel, is consistently upward until 2 Samuel 11. From that point, the path is uniformly downhill.

David did many things right — and if we read only 1 Chronicles, that's all we'd know about. But David also made some serious mistakes, and we can learn from those as well.

## *1. David grew complacent and neglected his duties.*

When David's pivotal encounter with Bathsheba occurred (2 Samuel 11), the text is very clear in reminding us of what David should have been doing: "In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel with him; they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem" (2 Sam. 11:1).

One gets the impression that David had grown complacent, no longer sensing the need to earn his keep or win respect. An old proverb of uncertain derivation says, "An idle mind is the devil's playground" (or "workshop"). David's lounging on his upstairs patio could be Exhibit A.

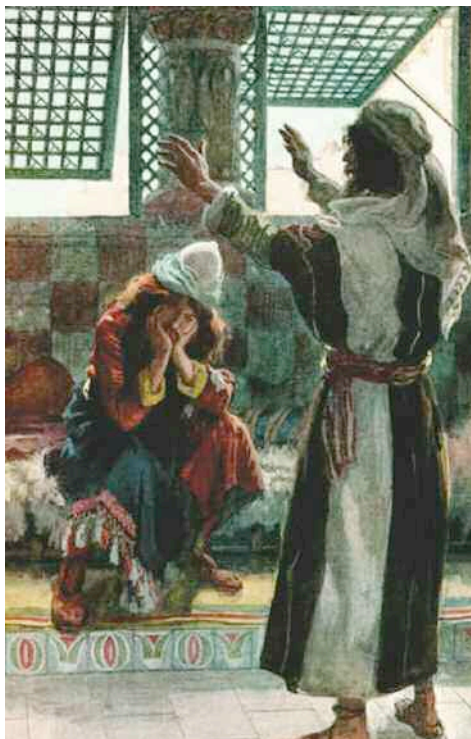
Previously, David had won enough battles to ensure homeland security, established his government, and appointed officials to run it. All of that showed good leadership — but one who stops providing attentive oversight stops being a leader.

David lost his focus on following God and becoming the best king he could be, and when that happened, he lost other things also.

It doesn't take much imagination to see what happens if a pastor or other leader decides that he or she has "arrived," and decides to coast while other people do all the work. Other problems are bound to follow.

## *2. David lost his moral compass.*

Other problems certainly followed for David. For some reason, perhaps because his regal power went to his head, David seems to have lost his moral compass.



*Nathan berating David, by James Tissot*

Early in his career David testified that he carefully kept himself pure, not just when engaged in a conflict considered to be Holy War, but even on routine patrol (1 Sam. 21:5). On multiple occasions David could have made his life easier by killing King Saul, but he declined. He knew what was morally right, and was committed to it.

But, in 2 Samuel 11 that seems unimportant to David, who willingly ogles and then takes the wife of one of his most faithful soldiers.

We can't know what was in David's mind any more than we can perceive how Bathsheba felt about it, but the commitment to doing right was no longer at the top of his priority list. Committing adultery with a faithful soldier's wife led to an unplanned pregnancy, a frustrated attempt to cover it up, and a plan to betray her husband so he would be killed in battle.

David had lost not only his morality, but also his loyalty and his integrity. The Hebrew text underscores this in a forceful way that

English translations often miss.

The story closes with two phrases that draw an intentional contrast between the way David and Yahweh interpret his actions. David told his commander Joab that he should not let Uriah's murder "seem evil in your eyes" (11:25), but "the thing that David did was evil in the eyes of Yahweh" (11:27b). The same David who once was famed as a man after God's own heart had become so blinded by personal concerns that he could no longer recognize evil when he saw it.

On the surface it might seem inconceivable that a Christian leader would have an affair with a church member, but it happens — and it happens when leaders lose focus on their God-given mission and turn their focus to their own desires and perceived needs.

## *3. David played favorites, refusing to discipline his children.*

In response to David's multiplied sin, God announced through the prophet Nathan that the sword would never depart from his house. The remainder of 2 Samuel 12-20 tells the sad story of David's descent from the mountaintop of success to the deep valley of defeat and misery.

That story begins with David's children. The child born to Bathsheba died, and David's penitent prayers could not prevent its death. Other tragedies grew directly from David's failures as a parent and a leader.

Neither good leaders nor good parents play favorites or set different standards for different people. David appeared to let his children operate with no standards at all.

Amnon, David's oldest son, lured his half-sister Tamar to his bedroom and violently raped her before ordering his steward to throw her out, leaving his sister as damaged goods with a ruined life ahead (2 Sam. 13:1-22). David grieved when he heard it, but did nothing to Amnon, the text said, "because he loved his son." He let his oldest son get away with rape.

With no comfort to be found in her



father, Tamar went to her full brother, Absalom, who took her into his home.

Two years later, Absalom murdered Amnon and fled the country (13:23-38). David grieved, again, not only over Amnon's death, but also for Absalom's absence.

David did not pursue Absalom. He let his most popular son get away with murder.

Within a few years David allowed Absalom to return to Jerusalem, but in short order Absalom undermined his father's reputation, gathered an army of malcontents, and marched on Jerusalem, effectively usurping the throne when David fled the city (2 Sam. 14-19).

David's army eventually defeated Absalom's forces, but with little help from David, who appealed to his men to spare his son.

#### 4. *David lost his confidence and courage.*

Somewhere along the way, David lost the confidence and courage that had made him such a magnetic and effective leader in his younger days. Although he continued to make a few good decisions, such as arranging a system for gathering intelligence and planting a double-agent in Absalom's court (ch. 16), David chose to abandon Jerusalem rather than standing up to his conniving son Absalom.

Once they had fled and set up a defensive post in Mahanaim, David devised a good battle plan by dividing his veteran army into three groups that would force Absalom's larger but untrained forces into the forest of Ephraim, which supposedly killed more victims than the sword (18:8).

David's soldiers fought valiantly, but when David learned that Absalom had been killed, he became lost in himself, lost in his grief. Many supporters who stayed with him did so on the basis of loyalty and memories of David past, but there was a limit to how long that could continue.

#### 5. *David lost interest in those who followed him.*

The end result is that David seems to have lost all desire to lead. When he heard about Absalom's death (18:19-33), David lamented so loudly that he demoralized his own troops, making them ashamed of their own victory (19:1-4).

When David lost his desire to lead, Joab had to take up the slack and prop him up in a leadership position, but David was no longer a leader. He was like a pastor who may be personally frustrated or demoralized, and becomes so caught up in his own concerns that he has lost interest in his people. Church

members know whether or not the minister cares about them.

#### 6. *David lost his respect.*

After losing his confidence, his courage, and his interest in his people, David also lost a great deal of his respect. Even though David's army defeated Absalom's troops, that didn't automatically make David king again.

After the coup, David had to be re-appointed as king, but he took no action toward making that happen. The elders of Judah and Israel fought over who would get credit for "bringing David back," but David became little more than a puppet pulled between the two factions rather than a leader who united others in a common cause.

David became, in fact, a source of contention rather than a healer of contention. Later, as David grew old and the question arose as to who would follow him, he offered no leadership but was manipulated by those around him (1 Kings 1-2).

When a church leader loses the respect of the congregation, some people may remain loyal, while others do not. The pastor becomes the source of contention rather than a unifying leader. Regaining some measure of leadership may involve persuading supporters to leave the church and start a new one, or to vote out the people who disagree, and that's not the kind of leadership that builds strong churches.

#### 7. *David lost his joy.*

Finally, we can't help but note that the same David who joyously sang and danced before the Lord in 2 Samuel 6 lost his joy soon after 2 Samuel 11. He grew old and died as a bitter, mean-spirited man who was more concerned with settling old scores than with dying an honorable death.

People want leaders they can believe in, people who seem to have it together, people who have some inner joy of their own. If they don't see that the leader has a personal inner life and an inner joy, they're not going to follow.

David's life offers lessons on both good and bad leadership. We can be grateful that David's admirable qualities are more often remembered than the bad. How will today's leaders be remembered? **BT**

*Editor's note: This is the second article in a two-part series on King David and leadership that is adapted from lectures presented to the Smoky Mountain Institute of Christian Studies.*



Register Today  
for Fall Classes!

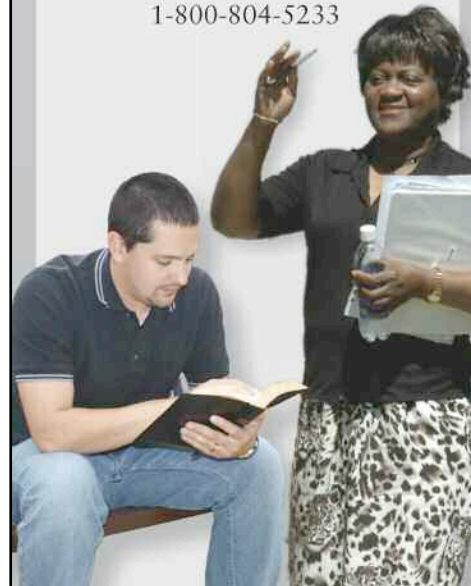


## Baptist Studies Program

Traditional theology and ecumenical dialogue in a seminary that will teach, form, and nurture you for a life in ministry.

[www.ltss.edu](http://www.ltss.edu)

4201 North Main Street  
Columbia, SC 29203  
(803) 786-5150  
1-800-804-5233







Tu cuidas de la iglesia, y el plan *Beneficios de por Vida* cuida de ti: un plan de jubilación, beneficios en caso de incapacidad, y un seguro de vida para personas en el ministerio.

MMBB: Junta de Beneficios para Ministros y Misioneros  
Visítenos hoy: [www.mmbb.org](http://www.mmbb.org) o llámenos al  
1.800.986.6222.

| M | M | B | B |

JUNTA DE BENEFICIOS PARA MINISTROS Y MISIONEROS 800.986.6222 [www.mmbb.org](http://www.mmbb.org)

## Getting archaeology stories straight

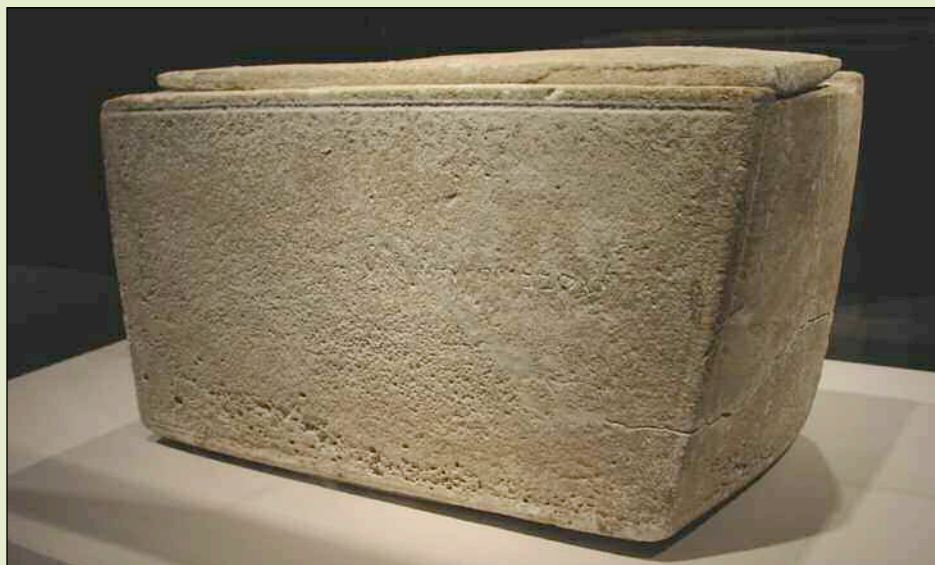
By Tony W. Cartledge  
posted April 24, 2009  
[www.tonycartledge.com](http://www.tonycartledge.com)

**A** Duke University Symposium on Archaeology and the Media that I attended April 23-24 grew out of a growing problem — fueled largely by an unpatrolled Internet and media outlets that need sensationalist stories to attract attention — in which matters of archaeological interest are distorted and misinterpreted to a gullible public.

Perhaps you have heard of the James (brother of Jesus) Ossuary, which most legitimate archaeologists regard as a forgery, or the Talpiot tomb near Jerusalem that reportedly contained ossuaries belonging to Jesus' family. It's a bogus claim, despite a fancy TV documentary that would lead many to think otherwise.

Sadly, some of the most famous "archaeologists" known to the public are not archaeologists at all, but there is big money to be made by claiming to have found Noah's Ark or the Ark of the Covenant.

The late Ron Wyatt, a nurse anesthetist whose website continues to promote him (because there's money still to be made), even claimed to have found remnants of Jesus' blood, so identified because the number of chromosomes reportedly confirmed divine conception.



A popular book last year claimed to have found markers noting the original Garden of Eden at a fascinating but not paradisaical site called Gobekli Tepe. A news article, written by the author using a pseudonym, was planted to spur interest just before the release of the book.

Klaus Schmidt, the real archaeologist who is quoted in the story, wrote a rebuttal to refute the way his words and findings were twisted by the article's author.

The list of fantastical finds boggles the mind, and archaeologists and scholars agree that they have been unsuccessful in getting the media to give attention to their

reasoned rebuttals of bogus claims — partly because genuine evaluation isn't nearly as sensational. They are trying to find a better way.

Occasionally, I speak to some of these claims that are of interest to our readers, and try to offer something other than the story presented in the popular media, but I'm rarely an expert on the subject at hand.

This symposium helped me make connections and contacts necessary to do a better job at that, so our readers will be less likely to be taken in by sensationalist claims. I hope our readers will find the effort worthwhile. **BT**

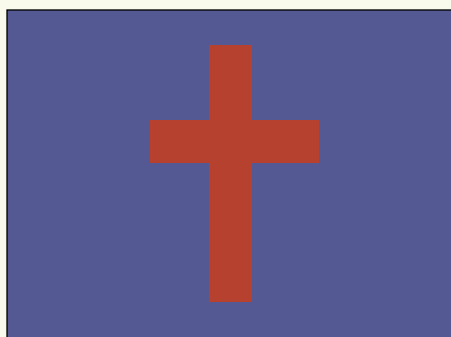
## Order is important

By John Pierce  
posted April 18, 2009  
[www.bteditor.blogspot.com](http://www.bteditor.blogspot.com)

**D**riving just west of The Big Chicken, Marietta, Georgia's famous landmark, I passed the expansive Roswell Street Baptist Church. A large American flag was blowing in the brisk wind — with a much, much smaller Christian flag on the same chain below it.

"What is the message being presented here?" I wondered while trying not to judge.

But the size and prominence of the American flag — with the hardly noticeable Christian flag below — may well communicate a (perhaps unintended)



message.

It raises the very important question: Are we Christian Americans or American Christians?

Civil religion — the mixing of religious faith and nationalism to the point of being indistinguishable — is hard to address rationally without facing charges of being unpatric.

I learned of another good Baptist

church that simply forgot to have Communion for nearly two years when without a pastor. But shortly thereafter, someone told me, "All hell broke loose when someone moved the American flag."

Ministers and other church leaders who are both patriotic Americans and committed Christians — but understand the priorities and differences between the two — are often challenged by church members who cannot.

And as many church leaders have discovered, it matters not how rational and clear we make our case. Those who disagree tend to do so out of deep emotion that allows no room for reconsideration.

Most ironic, of course, is that a Christian minister can get in deep trouble for suggesting to Christians that our highest commitment is to Christ.

But order really is important. **BT**



# Financial guru Dave Ramsey, calls for spending discipline, debt-free living

EDMOND, Okla. — In a gloom-and-doom economy, Christian financial guru Dave Ramsey fashions himself as a prophet of hope.

Part stand-up comedian, part economics professor, Ramsey built a multimillion-dollar business by dispensing simple financial advice: Live on a budget. Don't spend more than you make. Start an emergency fund. Get out of debt and stay out of debt.

One of his favorite Scriptures is Proverbs 22:7: "The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

Now, with the nation in what Ramsey characterizes as "complete freak-out mode" over the recession, the faith-based approach he touts seems to be resonating even more, he said.

"I would not say that business is booming during the recession, but this economic downturn has made people realize that now is the time to turn their financial life around," the 48-year-old money-management expert said in an interview.

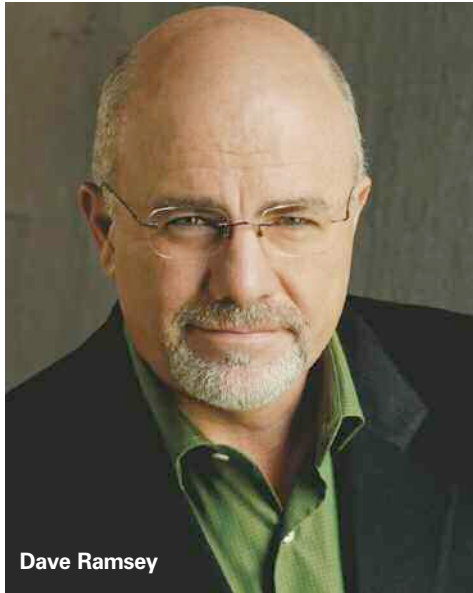
As evidence of the significant interest in the one-time bankrupt real estate salesman who turned around his financial life based on biblical principles, consider the scene at an Oklahoma City-area megachurch in April.

About 1,500 people showed up at Life Church that evening to hear Ramsey give a history of capitalism and explain why he believes the economy will survive the current woes. But the crowd that saw the syndicated talk-show host in person was far from alone.

His free, nationwide "Town Hall for Hope" meeting was simulcast live to more than 6,000 churches, businesses and military bases — 10 times more venues than Ramsey initially thought might participate, he said.

"The one thing America needs right now is hope," Ramsey said. "All we're hearing in the news is how bad things are, and no one is talking about hope for the future. The truth is, fear is running rampant in America today, and people are making bad decisions based on that fear."

Ramsey said he almost bought into the



Dave Ramsey

fear himself. But then he prayed.

"I talked to my dad and the fear left me," he said, referring to God. "Fear is not a fruit of the Spirit."

Ramsey's message: "Hope doesn't come from Washington. Hope comes from you and me. Hope comes from God."

Three time zones and roughly 3,900 miles from Oklahoma City, Ted Manolas and fellow church members watched Ramsey on big screens in Chugiak, Alaska, northeast of Anchorage.

"You could say that I've joined the Dave Ramsey cult," joked Manolas, director of finance and administration at The Crossing Church at Birchwood, before the simulcast began.

As a result of Ramsey's teachings, Manolas said, he paid off all his debts — including his home.

The Alaska church has taught Ramsey's "Financial Peace University," a 13-week video series, to more than 150 families, Manolas said.

Nationally, 750,000 families have completed the course, according to Lampo Group Inc., Ramsey's Brentwood, Tenn.-based company, which has more than 200 employees. Lampo is the Greek word for "light," referring to the passage in the Gospel of Matthew calling for Christians not to hide their faith.

Ramsey's fans — who swear off credit

cards like alcoholics do beer — include listeners of his daily radio show carried by more than 400 stations and his nightly cable show on Fox Business.

Ramsey is not without his critics. Some financial experts take issue with what they consider to be his overly simplistic notion of becoming financially secure. Others question how he can charge people already in debt for most of his live events and online resources.

But Chris and Tami Burke of Edmond, Okla., said Ramsey's common-sense approach helped them eliminate more than \$23,000 in debt. The advice they received from Ramsey was worth every cent, they said.

Now, the couple that attends Life Church drives used cars and gives more money to the church.

"In the past, many people were just blowing and going, just spending a lot of money," said Chris Burke, a hospital administrator who arrived more than an hour early to hear Ramsey speak. "Now, more than ever, you have companies downsizing and people losing their jobs. ... So, now's a better time than ever to really look at your finances and really buckle down."

Organizers insisted that Ramsey's 90-minute event was no political rally, nor an investment seminar.

Nonetheless, the self-proclaimed capitalist — an outspoken critic of the federal bailout of big business — spent considerable time railing against Washington politicians and offering his advice on everything from the real-estate market to the disadvantages of investing in gold. Despite the serious subject matter, he sprinkled his comments with homespun humor.

"When things were going really good, any idiot could make money," he said. "Even a turkey can fly in a tornado, y'all."

Concerning President Obama's call for a new credit-card law protecting consumers, Ramsey said he used "plastic surgery" to deal with the debt he racked up with Visa and MasterCard.

"I legislated the credit-card companies that were in my life with a pair of scissors," he said. **BT**



# Some preachers, long gone, keep preaching from beyond the grave

On the Sunday after Easter, famed Southern Baptist preacher Adrian Rogers appeared on Trinity Broadcasting Network, asking his congregation in suburban Memphis to turn to a passage of the Gospel of John.

“**A** Christian with a witness in his heart is never at the mercy of a man with an argument in his mouth,” he said in the trademark deep voice that has been heard on TV and radio for 22 years. “Learn that, my friend.”

Within hours, D. James Kennedy was on Ion Television, comparing Americans who have drifted away from God to secular humanism to the New Testament’s prodigal son.

Both evangelical preachers, along with radio broadcaster J. Vernon McGee, all have something in common. They all died years — and in McGee’s case, decades — ago.

Yet their messages continue via TV, radio and the Internet, even as some listeners probably don’t even know they’re long gone.

“McGee, of course, is king of the hill,” said Frank Wright, president and CEO of the Virginia-based National Religious Broadcasters (NRB). “He is today the most widely listened-to Christian broadcaster anywhere in the world.”

The three broadcasters, Wright said, remain on the airwaves because of their knack for telling “timeless stories” and their focus on the unchanging texts of

the Bible.

When Wright worked at Kennedy’s Center for Christian Statesmanship in Washington 14 years ago, he would listen to McGee on the radio as he drove to the commuter-train station.

“I listened to the guy for 3½ years before I knew he was dead,” Wright recalled. “I was captivated by his kind of homey preaching style and had no idea that he had gone on to be with the Lord.”

Leo Karlyn, president of McGee’s Thru the Bible Radio Network in Pasadena, Calif., said the ministry, which began in 1967, has expanded to the Internet and added a Facebook page a few months ago. He expects McGee would be surprised that the ministry continues.

“He said, ‘I want you to play these tapes until the money runs out,’ and the money has never run out,” Karlyn said of McGee, who died at the age of 84 in 1988. “We have great donors and people who are interested in what does the Bible really say.”

One donor recently gave \$800,000 and others have bequeathed jewelry, an old Oldsmobile and even a \$20,000 stamp collection to the ministry.

Both Kennedy, who died in 2007, and Rogers, who died in 2005, set up separate

broadcast ministries that have continued even as their pulpits have been filled by successors.

Tullian Tchividjian, grandson of evangelist Billy Graham, has been in Kennedy’s pulpit at Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., since Easter, but Kennedy is the one seen on the television program, “The Coral Ridge Hour.”

“Nothing has changed,” said John Aman, spokesman for Kennedy’s Coral Ridge Ministries. “We’ll continue to air Dr. Kennedy’s sermons and provide occasional specials.”

Although the ministry made significant cuts in the number of stations that carried Kennedy’s sermons after he died, it now reaches the same percentage of U.S. households it reached before his death — 90 percent. Kennedy’s “Truths that Transform” radio program airs on 544 radio outlets today, compared to 700 in 2006.

Bill Skelton, president and CEO of Love Worth Finding, said the Tennessee ministry founded by Rogers runs on about 13,000 U.S. television outlets and 1,800 radio stations worldwide. His Internet sermons were downloaded 1.7 million times last year.

“His own words were, ‘While the messenger’s gone home, the message must continue,’” said Skelton, who also is chairman of the NRB board.

“It may sound a little bit macabre to say this: I think as long as people turn on their radio and turn on their television sets and hear somebody teaching and preaching truths that are relevant to this life, the fact that he is alive or not is really not the important thing.” **BT**



D. James Kennedy



Adrian Rogers

“I listened to [J. Vernon McGee] for 3½ years before I knew he was dead.”

—FRANK WRIGHT, PRESIDENT AND CEO OF NATIONAL RELIGIOUS BROADCASTERS

# What do these churches have in common?

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

Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C.  
Boiling Springs Baptist Church, Boiling Springs, N.C.  
Boulevard Baptist Church, Anderson, S.C.  
Broadmoor Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La.  
Broadway Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.  
Brunswick Islands Baptist Church, Supply, N.C.  
Chadbourm Baptist Church, Chadbourm, N.C.  
College Avenue Baptist Church, Lenoir, N.C.  
College Park Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.  
Covenant Baptist Church, Gastonia, N.C.  
Cullowhee Baptist Church, Cullowhee, N.C.  
Druid Hills Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.  
Dunwoody Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.  
Edenton Baptist Church, Edenton, N.C.  
Emerywood Baptist Church, High Point, N.C.  
Faith Baptist Church, Georgetown, Ky.  
Fernwood Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C.  
First Baptist Church, Ahsokie, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Aiken, S.C.  
First Baptist Church, Anderson, S.C.  
First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Cape Girardeau, Mo.  
First Baptist Church, Carolina Beach, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Carrollton, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Clemson, S.C.  
First Baptist Church, Columbus, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Commerce, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Conway, S.C.  
First Baptist Church, Dalton, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Forest City, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Fort Myers, Fla.  
First Baptist Church, Frankfort, Ky.  
First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Fla.  
First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Gastonia, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Greenville, S.C.  
First Baptist Church, Greenwood, S.C.  
First Baptist Church, Hawkinsville, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, High Point, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Huntsville, Ala.  
First Baptist Church, Kannapolis, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Lavonia, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Lexington, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Lincolnton, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, London, Ky.

First Baptist Church, Lumberton, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Madison, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Madison, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Marion, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Mocksville, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Morganton, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Morrow, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Mount Airy, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Mount Olive, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, Tenn.  
First Baptist Church, New Bern, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Orangeburg, S.C.  
First Baptist Church, Pensacola, Fla.  
First Baptist Church, Rome, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Rutherfordton, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Savannah, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Sanford, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Spruce Pine, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Tifton, Ga.  
First Baptist Church, Wilson, N.C.  
First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C.  
Forest Hills Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C.  
Franklin Baptist Church, Franklin, Va.  
Grace Fellowship Baptist Church, Meridian, Miss.  
Grandin Court Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.  
Greystone Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C.  
Haddock Baptist Church, Haddock, Ga.  
Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.  
Highland Hills Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.  
Highland Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas  
Holmeswood Baptist Church, Kansas City, Mo.  
HomeStar Fellowship, Raleigh, N.C.  
Hope Valley Baptist Church, Durham, N.C.  
Johns Creek Baptist Church, Alpharetta, Ga.  
Kathwood Baptist Church, Columbia, S.C.  
Knollwood Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C.  
Lakeside Baptist Church, Rocky Mount, N.C.  
Lakeview Baptist Church, Camden, S.C.  
Lamberth Memorial Baptist Church, Roxboro, N.C.  
Lexington Avenue Baptist Church, Danville, Ky.  
Loray Baptist Church, Gastonia, N.C.  
Lystra Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, N.C.  
Madison Baptist Church, Madison, Ga.  
Mars Hill Baptist Church, Mars Hill, N.C.  
Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, N.C.

Mount Zion Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.  
National Heights Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ga.  
New Heights Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.  
Northminster Baptist Church, Jackson, Miss.  
North Stuart Baptist Church, Stuart, Fla.  
Northwest Baptist Church, Ardmore, Okla.  
Oakmont Baptist Church, Greenville, N.C.  
Peachtree Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.  
Piney River Baptist Church, Lowesville, Va.  
Pintlala Baptist Church, Hope Hull, Ala.  
Providence Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.  
Providence Baptist Church, Cookeville, Tenn.  
Providence Baptist Church, Hendersonville, N.C.  
Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C.  
Reynoldson Baptist Church, Gates, N.C.  
Rolling Hills Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ark.  
Rolesville Baptist Church, Rolesville, N.C.  
Second Baptist Church, Liberty, Mo.  
Second Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.  
Second Baptist Church, Richmond, Va.  
Second-Ponce de Leon Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.  
Shades Crest Baptist Church, Birmingham, Ala.  
Smoke Rise Baptist Church, Stone Mountain, Ga.  
Snyder Memorial Baptist Church, Fayetteville, N.C.  
South Main Baptist Church, Houston, Texas  
St. Andrews Baptist Church, Columbia, S.C.  
St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky.  
Tabernacle Baptist Church, Carrollton, Ga.  
Tabernacle Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C.  
The Lakeland Fellowship, Lakeland, Fla.  
The Memorial Baptist Church, Greenville, N.C.  
The Oaks Baptist Church, Lyons, Ga.  
Trinity Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn.  
University Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La.  
Vineville Baptist Church, Macon, Ga.  
Watts Street Baptist Church, Durham, N.C.  
Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta, Ga.  
Wingate Baptist Church, Wingate, N.C.  
Winter Park Baptist Church, Wilmington, N.C.  
Woodmont Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn.  
Yates Baptist Church, Durham, N.C.  
Youngsville Baptist Church, Youngsville, N.C.  
Zebulon Baptist Church, Zebulon, N.C.

## Your church can be better informed, too

FOR AS LITTLE AS \$450 A YEAR

(minimum 25 subscriptions at \$18 each). Just send a list of names and addresses, along with a check, to:  
*Baptists Today*, P.O. Box 6318, Macon, GA 31208-6318. (For more information, call toll-free 1-877-752-5658.)