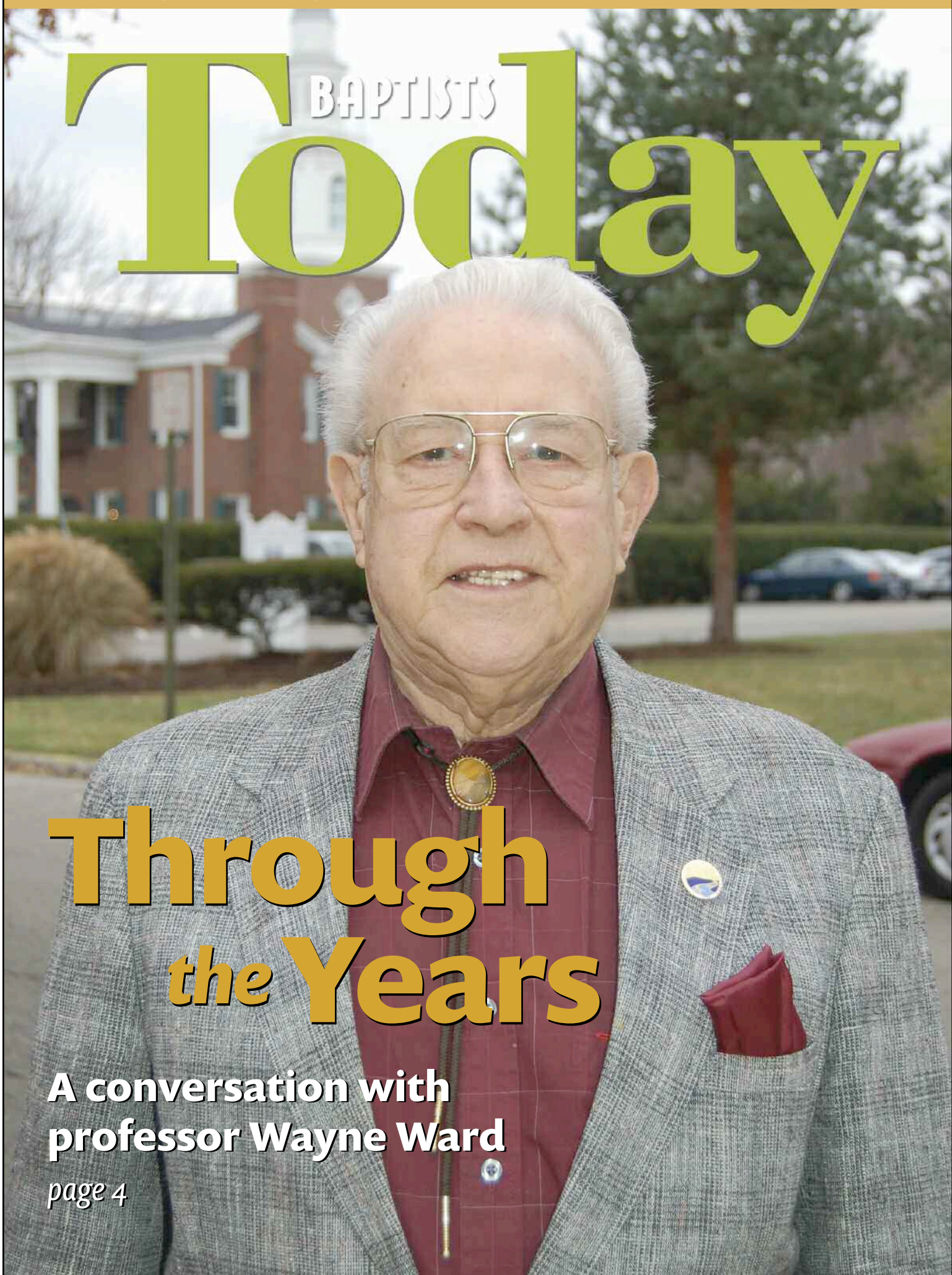


BAPTISTS Today

Through *the* Years

A conversation with
professor Wayne Ward

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An autonomous national Baptist news journal

Street Questions

"Seriously, do Baptists ordain women or not?"

By Pamela Durso



Cover photo by John Pierce.
Dr. Wayne Ward — with Southern Seminary buildings behind him — has lived beside the campus for 55 years.

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welcome

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Through the Years

A conversation with professor Wayne Ward

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Many have passed through the doors of the 150-year-old Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. However, Dr. Wayne E. Ward, 87, has spent much of his long life in a close relationship with Southern Baptists' oldest ministerial training ground.

He held the prestigious Joseph Emerson Brown Chair of Christian Theology — named for the former Governor of Georgia whose generosity saved the school during Reconstruction and now held by current seminary president Albert Mohler.

A respected Bible teacher and preacher, Ward remains an active member of Louisville's Crescent Hill Baptist Church.

Baptists Today editor John Pierce paid a visit to Godfrey Avenue — which runs alongside the seminary campus — where Ward has lived since 1953. This conversation is adapted from that interview.

BT: How did your relationship with Southern Seminary begin?

WEW: As a boy in the '20s, I came up here several times with Dad who was the seminary's attorney. They were in the process of moving from downtown [Louisville] out to here.

Then Dad was director of a (summer-long) Bible conference in Missouri led by the seminary faculty. We had musical groups; it was quite a thing.

[President E.Y.] Mullins would often come home to Crowley's Ridge with us on the weekends.

After Mullins died, they called [John R.] Sampey out of retirement to be president in

1929 — just before the Great Depression. He hung in there all through the '30s.

Sampey came home with us once and asked my mother: "Where did you get those green beans? They are delicious."

We owned a whole city block and grew them right outside.

"Our faculty, we can't pay them," Sampey said. "Students are hungry."

So she organized the women in the association. They sent [canned beans and other food] by the truckload up here.

BT: Who were some of the early influences on your spiritual life?

WEW: Very early on, the biggest influences were people who came to our church for revivals: Mullins, Sampey and J. McKee Adams.

The pastor that shaped me more than any other was Willie Chadwick, although he was a dyed-in-the-wool "Trail of Blood" Baptist successionist. He said it over and over: "Jesus was a Baptist. Read the Book. He was baptized by a Baptist preacher."

He influenced my style of preaching. As a boy, he started me reading Hurlburt's *Story of the Bible*. In the most eloquent, simple English, it tells every story.

[Chadwick] was a teaching pastor and he would bring in some of the most wonderful Bible teachers and preachers. I learned that there are themes in the Bible.

The worst thing you can do is to carve the Bible up into verses as if they have a life of their own. The paragraph is the most important punctuation we have.

The Hebrew and the Greek texts, they wouldn't even divide between the words — but you could see where the paragraphing is. The paragraph is the most important unit of thought.

My parents, of course, were a great influence. My mother was the conservative in our family. My dad liked Harry Emerson Fosdick.

And Dad went over to the Scopes Trial in Dayton, Tenn., in '25 because he was such a fan of Clarence Darrow — whom he had gotten to know while studying in Chicago. Dad thought William Jennings Bryan made a complete ass of himself.

He came back and said: "The Bible had a poor defender today, son. Clarence Darrow just tied him in knots."

In 1925, Mullins was the [seminary] president and led the fight over Darwinism. He had developed what he called "theistic evolution" — the process of development but God was very much in charge of it.

Now [current Southern Seminary president Al] Mohler won't have that one bit. They go up to the Creation Museum [in Northern Kentucky] and are serious about it. Yet they walk around on this 200-million-year-old Devonian limestone.

Every time they build a building over there they have a big cost overrun. The engineer on this latest building even talked about having to blast through "Devonian limestone." He used those words. It was funny.

Can you imagine them, seriously, taking students up there [to the Creation Museum] to show them men riding dinosaurs with bows and arrows? It is funny, funny, funny.

BT: How did your call to ministry occur?

WEW: I was carrying the load of Dad's hopes that I would carry on the Ward, Ward and Ward Law Firm. Dad and all of his brothers were lawyers and judges.

Uncle Lee — who ran for governor of Arkansas — came close to losing his life over defending the right of those [black] kids — the Little Rock Nine as they are called — to go to school. That put a mark on me.

I thought that if I was a lawyer, I could go to bat for [racial equality]. The law was already there. I did have some second thoughts.



Wayne Ward taught theology at Southern Seminary for more than 40 years and then continued guiding doctoral students.

It's like I said to a young doctor in my church once: "Doc, I wish I could help people who are suffering like you do."

He said: "Preacher, I'm going to lose every one of my patients eventually. What I do for them is temporary. What you can do for them is for eternity. Don't belittle what you can do for them."

BT: So where did you attend college?

WEW: I started at Ouachita in 1938. But, that year, Dad lost the only election he ever lost — for circuit judge.

Sometime near the end of my freshman year, '38-'39, he called and said: "Son, I'm going to have to have your help ... I've got debt from the campaign."

I was trained in shorthand and worked as a court reporter. So I dropped out — but went back the next year and met sweet little Mary Ann Heath.

BT: Your wife-to-be?

WEW: For 65 years. She died Thanksgiving '07.

In college, I was already flying in the Navy Reserve. I had learned to fly on crop-dusters down in the boot-hill of Missouri. Dad and his brothers owned a Delta Flying Service.

[The college] had an ROTC program for the Navy. I had several flights out to the Pacific in training, but came back and finally graduated — right during the war.

BT: Were you planning to go into the Navy after graduation?

WEW: I came up here to the seminary on the 7th day of February in 1942 — just two months after Pearl Harbor. I stayed in one of these apartments and went down into the basement.

There were a few of those jars still left of my mother's green beans and black-eyed peas.

[President] Sampey would meet college seniors — from all over the nation and several foreign students — down at the old Broadway Baptist Church where they also had graduation before the seminary chapel was built.

He said to us: "How many of you young gentlemen are married?"

Out of the 350 or so, only two or three hands went up. I was engaged to Mary Ann already, but not married.

"All right, I'll let you young gentlemen who are married enroll," he said. "The rest of you, go over there and stop Hitler."

That day, I stopped off in Memphis on the way home and upped my reserve status to active duty. In May, when I finished my senior year, I went into active duty.

BT: That was quite a charge Sampey gave.

WEW: Yes, and when I got back from the Navy, Sampey was still living. I loved that man, though he was a cranky old guy.

Mullins Hall had one telephone right there by the entrance. The guy who lived in the room by the telephone got his room and board by answering the telephone and keeping records.

He got to where he'd say, "Sampey's Mule Barn," when he answered the phone.

One day, there was a long pause and then a gruff voice said: "Do I hear one of my jack-asses braying?"

[Sampey] welcomed me back in early 1946. I had two or three visits with him before he died.

I was called as pastor of Finchville — really, its name is Buck Creek Baptist Church of Jesus Christ at Finchville.

BT: Did you stay in Louisville from then on?

WEW: Mary Ann and I volunteered for missions. I wanted to go to Japan where I had lived at the end of the war. I was there on the day of surrender in 1945.

When it came time to graduate with my first [seminary] degree in 1949, we had a saying: "Those who can go out and preach; those who can't stay and teach."

But Mary Ann and I took our physical exams for the Foreign Mission Board, and she didn't pass. She had problems from tuberculosis as a child and some serious problems with one eye.

See **WARD** page 14 >

Quotation

“ r e m a r k s ”

“We’re seeing an increase in the number of families that might cite moral and religious instruction as one factor but not the overriding one.”

—*Ian Slatter, spokesman for the Homeschool Legal Defense Association, in a U.S. News & World Report article revealing that homeschooling has surged by 74 percent over the past eight years to 1.5 million children including a growing number of non-evangelicals*

“Prayers offered at public events ... are prelude to something else that is the main event. If Jesus is right and prayer is actually a conversation we can have with God, then we have no business reducing it down to the level of a starter pistol at a foot race.”

—*Jim Evans, pastor of First Baptist Church of Auburn, Ala. (ethicsdaily.com)*

“We can be good Baptists and hold to church-state separation without being sectarian Scrooges — without saying ‘Bah, humbug’ to every ceremonial expression of popular religious concern.”

—*Robison B. James, professor emeritus at the University of Richmond and research professor at the Baptist Theological Seminary of Richmond (ethicsdaily.com)*

“I think it’s like Marines who take a beach. They’ve always got to be taking a beach. They don’t make good occupiers. They always have to keep pushing.”

—*Pastor Rick White of People’s Church in Franklin, Tenn., on the fundamentalist Southern Baptist leaders he previously supported during the so-called “conservative resurgence” (The Tennessean)*

“There are crises banging on the door right now, pawing at us, trying to draw us off our ethical center — crises that tempt us to feed the wolf of vengefulness and fear.”

—*Sharon E. Watkins, president of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), urging President Obama to “listen to the better angels of your nature” in her sermon at the Washington National Cathedral interfaith service Jan. 21 (RNS)*

The numbers of survivors are decreasing, but those who are remaining are all getting older and sicker, and as they age, their needs become greater.”

—*Hillary Kessler-Godin, spokeswoman for Claims Conference that assists Holocaust survivors with health-care needs (RNS)*

“Just as the church made a horrible mistake several centuries ago insisting that the earth is flat, I think the church may make a major mistake in our generation saying that sexuality should be this and nothing else.”

—*Former president of the National Association of Evangelicals, Ted Haggard (ABC News)*

In the news, 25 years ago . . .

By a vote of 210-113, messengers to a called meeting of the Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association rejected a motion to disfellowship Cornell Baptist Church for calling a female pastor, Susan Lockwood Wright.

—*SBC Today, March 1984*

“It’s been my hope as your pastor for the 18 months I’ve been here that this wound would heal and we wouldn’t have to revisit the unpleasant parts of our past, but unfortunately this week we’ve had to do that. The wound will not always be with us; the wound will not always define us.”

—*Brady Boyd of New Life Church in Colorado Springs Jan. 25 acknowledging another sex scandal involving former pastor Ted Haggard that resulted in the church’s insurance company paying a settlement to a young man who claimed to have had a sexual relationship with Haggard (RNS)*

“We Christians should take an honest look at what it is we think qualifies a person to lead. I sometimes wonder if one of the problems of modern Christianity is that we have created such a false sense of super-spirituality that we succumb to a certain mode of pretending that we never struggle.”

—*Pastor Wade Burlison of Enid, Okla., blogging at kerussocharis.blogspot.com about leadership in light of the Ted Haggard tragedy*

“How meetings are run, how new leaders are apprenticed, how the books are kept, how communication is structured, how events and programs are implemented and evaluated — all of this is crucial to congregational life, but rarely understood as ministry.”

—*Louis B. Weeks, author of the Alban Institute book, All For God’s Glory: Redeeming Church Scutwork (Christian Century)*

editorial

Guarding the Baptist clubhouse

By John Pierce

We have all driven by churches with “Everyone Welcome” emblazoned on a sign — knowing good and well that not everyone is welcomed there. Honesty should have compelled them to add: “... that is, everyone just like us.”

Despite the wide embrace of Jesus, often those who claim his name are among the most exclusive, divisive, inflexible and punitive people toward those who do not share their habits and certitudes.

In other words, if not careful, churches and church-related groups can resemble childhood clubhouses.

The mentality of exclusivity is the same — although clubhouse doors tend to be more honest in their intent: “Keep out!” “No girls allowed.”

For example, the Georgia Baptist Convention has become a clubhouse with all the marks of adolescent immaturities. Some preacher-boys who like to make rules now guard the clubhouse door.

They pick fights with those who have no interest in their childish squabbles and don’t even clinch their fists in response — such as the First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga. (See story on page 12.)

The church simply — and as Baptists churches have done for centuries — called the

pastor they genuinely believed to be God’s choice for them. In this case, they were led — even to the surprise of the search committee — to a gifted pastor who happened to be a woman.

But this made the guardians of the Georgia Baptist Clubhouse real, real mad. So these boys huddled in secret — with their clubhouse door locked — to devise punishment.

They didn’t talk to the Decatur congregation or to the pastor about the prayerful process that led to her being called as pastor. They didn’t consider the effective ministries being carried out by members of that historic church in their diverse community.

Such information gathering — or even simple courtesy — is not part of the clubhouse culture. Rather, angry boys prefer to make rules and stew over how to respond to those who don’t think and act just like them.

They are petty — and continually punitive toward those who don’t toe their well-drawn line.

The Georgia Baptist Convention claims to be “a living partnership of churches growing in grace, strengthening one another in faith and working together in obedience to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission of

Jesus Christ.”

Grace? Working together? Not in the clubhouse.

Churches and associations of churches — regardless of their size, location or theological bent — must always be on guard against creating a clubhouse culture.

Wisely, pastor Julie Pennington-Russell, in a church newsletter column, advised the Decatur, Ga., congregation she leads: “May God save us from the deadly notion that this church exists to provide goods and services for eligible ‘members.’”

She is right. The Christian calling is not about guarding our doors but getting out of them.

However, fundamentalism lends itself so well to this us-versus-them mentality destined to build walls. It is driven by fear of anyone or anything outside the clubhouse doors.

Fundamentalists fear Darwin, diversity, sociological changes, religious pluralism and anything that does not fit with their cemented conclusions about God.

“Different” and “enemy” are the same word to them.

The sign or slogan may say, “Welcome” — but you have to know the code, speak the language, sign the statement and earn your way in. The warm embrace of the Gospel gives way to cold, harsh exclusivity.

God alone is not judge. Others — who act as though they have equal insight into the ways of God — have volunteered to assume that role.

There are no divine mysteries to explore with wonder and humility. The divine has already been captured and codified in doctrinal principles to which everyone must adhere.

Therefore, guardians of the fundamentalist clubhouse grant and withhold admission — based on how much one resembles them. There is no room for growth — and, to their great relief, no fear of change.

For many of us, however, following Jesus — though a constant challenge — has great appeal. Joining an exclusive club — of any kind — does not.

But apparently there are still many who like or at least tolerate the Baptist clubhouse. Be warned: you should knock before entering. **BT**



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'STREET QUESTIONS ABOUT BAPTISTS'

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

'Seriously, do Baptists ordain women or not?'

Like most questions that are asked about what Baptists "do," the answer to this question about ordination is yes, they ordain women — and no, they don't ordain women.

Some Baptist denominations and individual Baptist churches have ordained women, both as ministers and as deacons, for well over a century. Other Baptist denominations and churches either oppose the practice or have not given much thought to the ordination of women.

Tracking numbers in Baptist life is a nearly impossible task, so exploring the stories of what Baptists have done is much easier than finding reliable statistics.

One of the earliest ordinations of a Baptist woman occurred around 1877. That year, Lura Mains was listed as a minister in the annual reports of two Michigan Freewill Baptist churches, indicating that she had been ordained. Three years later, Mains organized and then served as pastor of a Freewill Baptist church near Batavia station in Branch County, Mich.

Northern Baptists (now American Baptist Churches USA) began ordaining women ministers as early as 1882. That year, on July 9, May C. Jones was ordained by the Baptist Association of Puget Sound in Washington.

Apparently, her ordination caused quite a controversy. Opponents charged that Jones' church, First Baptist Church of Seattle, had not properly requested ordination from the association or scheduled an ordination council. Instead church delegates, while their pastor was in Europe, had proposed to the association meeting on July 9, 1882, that Jones be ordained that very day after the close of the official meeting.

Participants at the meeting who were offended by the proposal walked out, leaving only those supporting Jones' ordination to

vote on the recommendation.

Following her ordination, Jones served briefly as interim pastor of First Baptist Church of Seattle and, beginning in 1883, was pastor of six Baptist churches, sometimes serving two or three churches simultaneously.

Available statistics demonstrate that the number of Northern Baptist ordinations of women ministers remained low, with only 16 women being ordained between 1882 and 1920. Finally, in the 1970s, the numbers of ordained women began to increase after American Baptists in 1965 adopted a resolution affirming the equality of women and advocating the ordination of women.

Yet, despite the fact that American Baptists have ordained thousands of women ministers, the overall percentage of women serving as pastors of ABC churches is in the single digits. In 2006, 403 women served as pastors and co-pastors, but they made up only 7.5 percent of all ABC-USA pastors.

Southern Baptists did not ordain women until 1964. That year, on Aug. 9, Watts Street Baptist Church in Durham, N.C., ordained Addie Davis. Despite the support of the Watts Street congregation and the recommendation of the ordination committee, many persons opposed the ordination.



Pamela R. Durso is associate executive director-treasurer of the Baptist History and Heritage Society based in Atlanta. She also serves as the treasurer of Baptist Women in Ministry.

The church's pastor, Warren Carr, received nearly 50 letters criticizing him and the church. Davis also received letters, some from as far away as California.

A Richmond, Va., man demanded, "Renounce your ordination!" Another man addressed her as "a child of the Devil."

Davis never answered the letters but instead spent her time seeking a church to pastor. Not finding a willing Baptist church in the South, she moved to Vermont and then to Rhode Island and was pastor of American Baptist churches in those states.

From 1964 to 1997, Sarah Frances Anders, now distinguished emeritus professor of sociology at Louisiana College and long-time keeper of statistics and information about Baptist women, documented 1,225 ordinations of Southern Baptist women, an average of 37 per year. Since 1997, the number of ordinations of Baptist women in the South has increased slowly each year, with the most increases occurring in the last 15 years as the new moderate Baptist bodies have been established.

In 2007, 73 women reported having been ordained by Baptist churches affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists and the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship. As of 2008, more than 2,000 Baptist women in the South had been ordained.

Only about 600 women are currently serving as pastors or co-pastors of Baptist churches throughout the United States. The great majority of these female-led churches are affiliated with the American Baptist Churches USA, but 113 of them are affiliated with the Alliance of Baptists and/or the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

The great majority of ordained Baptist

women are not pastors but are hospital and military chaplains, church staff ministers, missionaries, mission organization leaders, college and seminary professors, and social ministry leaders. The ordination of these women is reflective of the late 20th-century trend of ordaining ministers who serve in positions other than the pastorate.

Historical records indicate that women ministers have been around for a long time, and ordinations of women to the gospel ministry by Baptist churches can be traced back over 130 years. But the other reality is that many Baptists do not endorse this practice.

In the 2000 *Baptist Faith & Message*, Southern Baptists spelled out their opposition to the ordination of women as pastors. The policy of the National Baptist Convention of America, the second largest African-American Baptist denomination, is to not ordain women as ministers. Thus, ordained women ministers are still a rarity in much of Baptist life.

Ordained women deacons are another part of this story. Some Baptist churches have ordained women deacons for a long time. In 1920, First Baptist Church of Ahoskie, N.C.,

became one of the earliest Southern Baptist churches to ordain women as deacons.

That year, the church voted to solve the problem of an extremely large diaconate by asking all the deacons to resign (an interesting model that may appeal to a good many Baptist churches). The next month, the church elected nine new deacons, seven men and two women, and for the first time, women served as deacons in the church. The number of women increased quickly.

By 1929, four women were serving in the diaconate. In 1955, the Ahoskie church voted that women should make up at least 30 percent of the deacon body.

The Ahoskie situation, however, was unusual among Southern Baptist churches. According to Baptist historian Leon McBeth, only 200 to 300 SBC churches had women deacons by 1973. The majority of those churches were in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Texas.

In 1976, 57 Virginia churches had women deacons. That number increased to 150 in 1984 and to 363 in 2000. While the number of churches ordaining women as deacons has continued to increase, the overwhelming

majority of Baptist churches continue to exclude women from the diaconate.

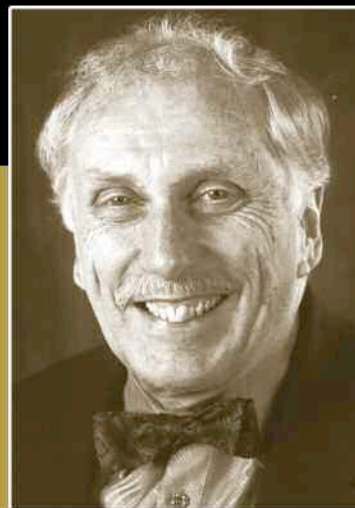
American Baptists, on the other hand, have long had women serving in the diaconate. These women serve on equal footing with male deacons, but ABC-USA churches generally have not ordained their deacons, female or male. Many African-American Baptist denominations have deaconesses who serve as female assistants to the male deacons. The men are generally ordained, while the women are dedicated.

In 2009, as Baptists celebrate the 400th anniversary of their founding, a wide variety of belief and practice has developed with regard to women's ordination. Some Baptist churches freely ordain women as deacons but have never ordained a woman minister. Some Baptist churches adamantly oppose any ordination of women.

Some Baptists churches have ordained women ministers but do not have women serving in their diaconate. And some Baptist churches ordain women as ministers and deacons. As is true in almost all areas of Baptist life, diversity of thought and practice abounds. **BT**

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Tribute by Dr. Bill Leonard • Address by Dr. James M. Dunn

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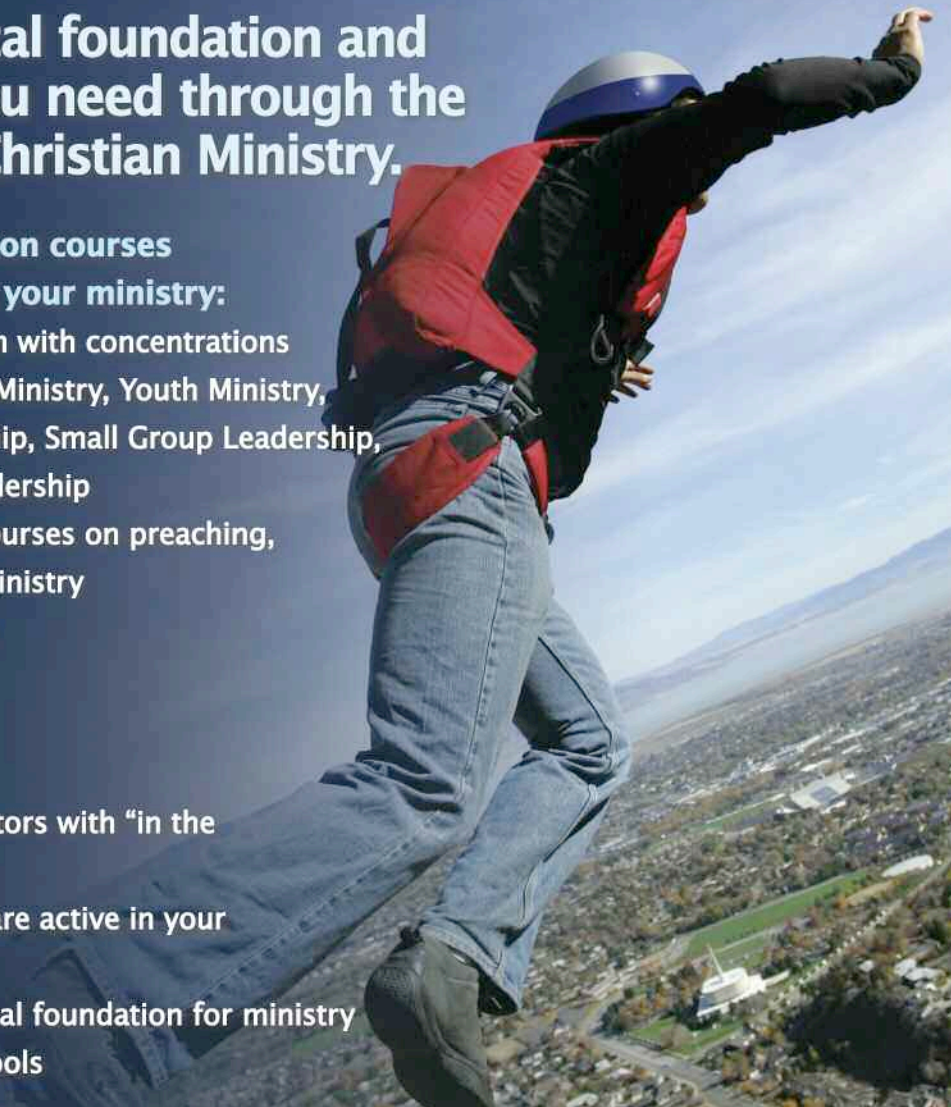
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Birmingham hosts regional gathering

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — More than 1,000 people assembled in Birmingham, Ala., Jan. 31 for the first regional gathering of the New Baptist Covenant. The event, which was held at the historic 16th Street Baptist Church, St. Paul's United Methodist Church and the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, occurred on the one-year anniversary of the Celebration of a New Baptist Covenant, which drew more than 15,000 Baptists in Atlanta.

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, where Jesus declared his intention to bring good news to the poor, release for the captive and sight for the blind.

"This morning I come representing Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Ga.," said former President Jimmy Carter in the morning keynote address. "I speak to you as a deacon, Sunday school teacher and husband of the most active deacon."

Carter said: "There is no way for us to avoid Jesus' emphasis on the poor, the blind, the oppressed."

In the afternoon worship session, participants heard from Marian Wright Edelman, founder of the Children's Defense Fund, and Wayne Snodgrass, pastor of Progressive Union Baptist Church of Huntsville, Ala.

"The real challenge is 'What do we do after the benediction?'" Snodgrass said. "Where do we go from here?"

In her impassioned plea to the audience to seize the moment of administration change to bring about improvements in the lives of impoverished children, Edelman called for universal health care for children, enhancements to education, increased involvement in the lives of children by responsible adults and churches reaching beyond their doors into their own communities to come alongside children who need love.

"I know if Dr. King were here today he would say 'let's start a movement to liberate the poor children,'" Edelman said. "This is a biblical moment of transformation. That we



Former President Jimmy Carter speaks at the first regional New Baptist Covenant event at 16th Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. Photo by Caroline Davis.

will stand here and answer the call."

Arthur Price, pastor of the historic 16th Street Baptist Church, and Gary Furr, pastor of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church, served as co-chairs of the event's steering committee, which also included pastors and lay leaders from across Alabama, Mississippi and the Florida panhandle.

"Can you imagine that 45 years ago, people used to gather here to strategize on how to put an end to racial inequality?" Price said during the morning worship at the 16th Street Baptist Church, where four African-American girls were killed by a Ku Klux Klan bombing in 1963.

"Imagine that 45 years ago this window to my left where Jesus is knocking on the door, the face of Christ was blown out. I believe that God was telling us back then, as he is telling us now, that we are more united than we are divided."

Furr echoed the call to unity and spoke of the growing friendship between his congregation and Price's.

"The New Baptist Covenant begins with common worship, which will grow into fellowship, which will grow into friendship, which will grow into possibilities we have not yet dreamed," said Furr. "This is a new day. We want to be a part of people

joining hands."

The event also included 14 breakout sessions, which focused on the Luke 4 mandate of good news for the poor. Music and theme interpretations were provided by a mass choir that included the Birmingham Chamber Chorus and local church choir members, the Magic City Boys and Girls Choir, Troy University Dance Ensemble and recording artist Kate Campbell.

Organizers hope the event will build relationships between congregations and clergy among various Baptist denominations and create possibilities for shared work in the future.

When asked how Baptists could continue to build on the momentum of the New Baptist Covenant, Carter said, "Pray about it. Each one of us has untapped ideas and innovative thoughts to channel into this goal. Reach out to our neighbors, put away the divisions that separate us and exemplify what Christ taught. It depends on how high on our list of priorities we make this goal."

The Birmingham event is the first of five regional gatherings that will be held this year. Upcoming events include: April 2-4 in Liberty, Mo.; April 24-25 in Winston-Salem, N.C.; Aug. 6-7 in Norman, Okla.; and Sept. 10-12 in Chicago, Ill. **BT**

Georgia Baptist leaders warn of further action against church with female pastor

By John Pierce

DECATUR, Ga. — In her church newsletter column dated Jan. 23, pastor Julie Pennington-Russell of the First Baptist Church of Decatur, Ga., reported on a Jan. 7 visit by representatives of the Georgia Baptist Convention (GBC) who warned that some unidentified individuals within the convention are seeking a formal “withdrawal of fellowship” from the congregation.

Pennington-Russell reported that Executive Director Robert White — accompanied by GBC Church-Ministers Relations director Danny Watters and *Christian Index* editor Gerald Harris — informed her and two other church representatives that, while the church is free to call the pastor of their own choosing, the convention is also free to decide with whom they will relate.

It was the first direct communication since the convention drafted and passed a somewhat-veiled motion in November 2008 permitting GBC leaders to reject mission funds from the congregation and to prohibit First Baptist members from having representation in the convention. The action was in response to the church calling a female pastor — Pennington-Russell — in August 2007.

She told church members that the GBC representatives explained that a formal “withdrawal of fellowship” would mean that the church could not receive materials or services from the GBC such as training in Vacation Bible School, Sunday school or evangelism.

“Not sure I’d heard correctly, I pressed a little,” she wrote in the column. “Do you mean that if I called you up one day and said — ‘The Spirit is doing something amazing at First Baptist Decatur! Waves of men, women and teenagers are responding to God and are being baptized and we could use some additional help in giving them a good foundation. Could you send a team over to meet with our folks?’ — are you telling me that the GBC wouldn’t want to help us with that?”

White said he would be willing to help “personally” in such a situation, but not as an official representative of the GBC, Pennington-Russell reported.

“Friends, in that hour-long conversation

Julie Pennington-Russell at the 2008 Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of N.C. meeting



it became crystal clear to me why people are abandoning denominational structures in droves and why denominationalism as it exists today is doomed: It is largely missing the point,” she wrote. “The denominational leaders in my office that day love people and care deeply about the gospel — I’m certain about that. But the sad reality is, most denominational organizations are stuck in bureaucratic systems that have forgotten why they exist in the first place.”

She said the congregation must be on guard against “missing the point” as well.

“May God save us from the deadly notion that this church exists to provide goods and services for eligible ‘members,’” she continued. “...We exist to follow Jesus into gospel adventures of all kinds in collaboration with all God’s people, whatever their denominational preferences or doctrinal stances.”

Pennington-Russell acknowledged that the church has “kingdom-focused” relationships with other organizations such as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, the Willow Creek Association, the Baptist World Alliance and the Atlanta Metro Baptist Association.

Pennington-Russell told *Baptists Today* that she has received “an overwhelmingly positive response” to the column from church members. Though the GBC’s action last November received much media attention,

she said, it was “barely a blip on the radar at Decatur First Baptist.”

In meeting with convention leaders and in writing the column, Pennington-Russell said her goal was “to be kind and to be honest.” She expects the church will take no formal action in response to the convention: “That’s not what we are all about.”

The pastor and congregation are giving their attention to the church’s growing ministries, she said, aimed at reaching persons in the community with no church connections. Last year, largely through a growing second worship service, the congregation added dozens of new members including the baptism of 21 persons, nine of whom were adults.

Pennington-Russell said she envisions the church reaching many more in the days ahead.

“It certainly indicates the direction we are going,” she said. “And that is a high priority for us.”

Any additional GBC action against the church would have very little impact on the congregation, she predicted. Most, she said, “already consider ourselves disfellowshipped” by the earlier decision to reject mission funds from the church.

Only about 13 members — some with relatives serving as Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) missionaries — direct their mission gifts to SBC causes through the church, she said. The church will find a way for them to continue that support if they wish, she added.

Pennington-Russell described the meeting with GBC representatives as friendly — but late in the decision-making process.

“It just seemed so odd to me that all of this would happen without [convention leaders and church leaders] looking eye-to-eye,” she said.

White, the GBC executive director, was asked by *Baptists Today* about the convention’s intentions regarding further action against the Decatur church, the public relations impact of the decision and the result of refusing mission gifts during an economic downturn.

“I have no comment for you on these matters,” he responded. **BT**

Texas Baptist woman seeks equality

By John Pierce

CONROE, Texas — Shirley Taylor has created a website (www.bwebaptist.com) and is widely distributing an open letter that urges Southern Baptists to rethink their restrictive positions on women in church leadership.

Taylor — who retired following a 2005 reorganization of the Baptist General Convention of Texas — explained her efforts in an interview with *Baptists Today*.

BT: How did the idea of “Baptist Women for Equality” come about?

ST: The idea is to provoke women to question why they accept so readily that women cannot be deacons or pastors.

BT: Was the Jan. 15 “open letter” the first of an ongoing electronic newsletter?

ST: I don't know if there will be more. But there will be more information put on the website.

A feature called “Letters to My Pastor” — which is a collection of letters I have written to

my pastor and other Baptist leaders — will appear soon.

BT: Who else is leading this effort? Do you have a board or committee?

ST: My husband is the only one who is helping me. He is an encourager, and helps in every way — which makes it possible for me to do this.



Shirley Taylor

BT: What do you hope to accomplish?

ST: I hope that Southern Baptists can be brought into the 21st century, stop this nonsense about women being submissive to men — which is an old Middle Eastern idea — and allow women their equal place in our churches.

I hope to see at least one church in my local association have a woman deacon. ... I have been writing letters to my pastor and Baptist leaders since 2000, promoting women as deacons and pastors.

The Southern Baptist Convention ...

loves to keep up their animosity toward women. One of the proposals that will be brought to the convention in June shows how narrow-minded and backward Southern Baptists have become...

The offensive motion is to amend the SBC constitution to disallow affiliation by churches that have female senior pastors. ... Their attitude is comparable to the Middle Eastern men who have denied women status and made the women themselves believe that God wills such.

... I would like to ask those pastors [who strongly oppose women in church leadership] the question you asked me: What do you hope to accomplish — by keeping women in the place they have decided we should be?

We have devoted a huge amount of time and effort into this project. It has cost us money as we have developed a website, mailed out over 100 letters to churches and individuals. How much does a snowflake weigh? Almost nothing, but one snowflake upon another can cause a tree limb to break.

This is my snowflake. I add it to the weight of all those others who have come to realize that women should claim the equality that is already given them by Almighty God. **BT**



Kelli George Kirksey joins her brother Chris George, pastor of First Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., in serving Communion. Kelli, a divinity student at Gardner-Webb University, preached during the Feb. 1 service as part of Martha Stearns Marshall Day promoted by Baptist Women in Ministry. Photos courtesy of *Mobile Press Register*.



➤ WARD from page 5

So they wouldn't let us go. We thought about trying to pay our own way to get to Japan.

Ellis Fuller, then our seminary president, called me: "Wayne, you can teach more students and multiply yourself many times over by communicating your love of missions to them."

So I wound up teaching — and served at Finchville until '53. I loved to preach and got in the habit of holding interim pastorates.

But in the process, I neglected my family. John, I had the idea that you sacrificed everything — including your family — for your calling. If I had it to do all over again, I would certainly put my family further up the line of my time.

BT: How many children do you have?

WEW: Three. We lost one while [I was] in the Navy.

I'd come back from the Pacific and we were working on a secret project — drone planes.

One night — an awful night — we had lost one of our drones. A farmer risked his life and got badly burned trying to get that pilot out — which turned out just to be a dummy. But our cover was blown.

Mary Ann was pregnant — and just sure I was going to die.

I remember coming in that night and the air traffic officer said: "Lieutenant, your wife is out there."

I said: "Good grief, how did she find us?"

I had orders to ship out to the Pacific. The next night we were driving somewhere near the Nevada-California border when she went into labor.

We stopped at a ranch house and found a retired doctor who came out and helped us. But we lost that [child]. The trauma of it was horrible.

In the winter of '45 I came back [from overseas] to Memphis — the same place where I had upped my status. They decommissioned me, though I stayed in the reserves.

I met Mary Ann that night, and we went to the hotel about midnight. The clerk said: "Lieutenant, I don't have any regular rooms left but I've got the bridal suite."

I said: "Buddy, that's what we need."

That's where Larry began. Then we had Becca and then David.

BT: You went into the doctoral program in '49 and began teaching. Then did you move into this house about the time you finished that degree and started teaching full time?

WEW: Almost exactly the same time — in '53.

BT: So how long did you teach at Southern?

WEW: I taught full time until '94. When Al [Mohler] came on board [as president] in '92 — and was moving everybody out — he said, "Dr. Ward, your senior professorship runs out in '94 and it will not be renewed."

The trustee board asked me to please finish the doctoral students who would be bereft of their supervisor. The last one finished his doctoral dissertation about '04.

BT: What is your current relationship with the seminary?

WEW: Mohler tolerates me and sometimes even affirms me. I was on his [doctoral] committee.

For awhile, I looked for him to give me an ultimatum that I couldn't come on the campus anymore. He's been angry enough at me sometimes.

But he's decided to wait me out. He knows it won't be long.

I have to be careful about being too openly critical. But what do I have to lose?

I walk across that wide street out there every day. I'm in the dining room or the bookstore or the post office foyer or hallway.

Now, practically all of them know my name because of something I've written or they've heard me on tapes. But when my name is used in a classroom I'm usually a whipping boy for things I've said.

I went through a period of years when nobody knew me. But I have been invited to speak in some classes and in chapel.

The students like to stop and talk to me. I've loved students since I began teaching in the '40s and until this day.

Some days I think: "Wayne, everything you've believed in and stood for has been swept away. You've been labeled a heretic."

But I know God's truth arises still.

I walk over there and find myself reaffirmed and renewed by talking to students — even though they'll solemnly look me in the face and say: "Dr. Ward, you're wrong about evolution."

I say: "Well, you have a right to your viewpoint." But then they might say that I opened up a passage of scripture for them.

As I say, I try to corrupt as many of them as I can. I mean by that — I challenge what they say.

BT: Were you able to satisfy your mission calling through teaching?

WEW: During what we called our missionary sabbatical year, 1993-94, we spent a full year working with the mission board in every one of our fields around the world. I'd do the biblical studies for their annual mission meetings.

Then Mary Ann would get up and say, "Wayne has laid the biblical foundation. But I'm going to have to deal with the nitty-gritty: how to live together in an expatriate compound in a foreign culture."

When I finally came to terms with the fact that I couldn't go to the mission field — that I was either going to have to be a pastor or teach — I began to start really face-to-face, personally relating with students. I came to love them — and still do.

BT: What changes have you seen in Southern Baptist theological education?

WEW: It is so strange. My generation, of course, was the survivors of World War II. We were on fire. Almost all of us had been overseas, and we were missionaries.

At the seminary we had Missionary Day once a month. And missionaries would write us from the field; it was powerful stuff. Nearly everybody in the chapel would offer themselves for foreign missions.

That was uppermost in the '40s, to train to go out. We felt like we were the generation called of God to go out — having shot it all up and bombed it all up — and try to build it back.

We thought it was very simple — go out and win this world for Christ.

Along with that, in the late '40s, institutions like the University of Louisville and the University of Kentucky started departments of religion. In even state-supported schools there were departments of religion.

I taught during that time — while working on my first and second degrees here — in the religion department at U of L.

[President Ellis] Fuller ... said we are going to provide the teachers for all of these departments of religion.

Fuller died in '50. [President Duke]

McCall came in early September of '51. He said we are going to be the training ground for all of our Baptist colleges and all of our state schools. We will train the professors.

That backfired on Duke. All during the '50s we were training people to be like us. Whereas we'd had 90 percent of the student body wanting to go out and become pastors, it flip-flopped. Ninety percent or more wanted to be teachers like us. We dug the hole that really sank the seminary in 1958.

Southwestern [Baptist Theological Seminary] had jumped to the front training missionaries — whereas we had all the leading pastors, even in Texas. We dominated the big pulpits and had dominated the mission boards.

When we started training all the professors, we moved our focus. That affected us clear on up to and through the time [Walter] Shurden became our dean [in the early '80s].

Shurden said we've got the peripheral things but we don't have the center — which is the Baptist pulpit for churches. Though he is a teacher and historian, he saw we needed to recover the voice of the pulpit and be the trainer of pastors. He still thinks so.

... Theological education has shifted over and over again in my career depending on what is the goal or purpose of the seminary. Mohler is clearer on his mission and purpose than any of the others have been.

It is essentially to take us back to our founders who were five-point Calvinists. They weren't really Calvinists as much as they were Dortians. The Synod of Dort — 75 years after the death of Calvin — gave us those five articles we call TULIP: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and perseverance of the saints.

[Former Southern Seminary professor] Dale Moody, from college days back in Texas on, had been dismantling every one of those except the last — perseverance of the saints.

And if he didn't spend the last years of his life knocking that one down. That's what got him fired.

BT: In a sense, did Moody lose his job for taking the Bible literally?

WEW: He was basically right. He didn't believe you could lose your salvation. He thought we had fallen into the practice of making coming down the aisle and hopefully shedding a few tears — making that salvation.

He correctly understood that salvation is a journey — a beginning. God will preserve

those who are faithful.

I can't tell you how many times [Duke] McCall or then later [seminary president] Roy [Honeycutt] would send me out to Texas or Arkansas to a convention or pastors' conference ... to stamp out the fires Dale Moody had started — which I did.

The thing that finally broke him was the publication of *The Word of Truth*. If you read those chapters on salvation and apostasy, he spells out a position that is absolutely impossible to reconcile with the seminary's Abstract of Principles.

He was going to make one last push [before retirement] to knock down that fifth pillar of Calvinism. He would state that publicly. When his book came out, you couldn't cover for him anymore. It is just spelled out there.

Dale was my prayer partner. I loved him and I miss him. And, basically, he was right.

Dale was an evangelist. He would tell them: "You can't just walk down the aisle and say 'I love Jesus' and then live like the devil. It's not genuine."

Anyway, it seems to me that theological education in my career here has simply been an expression of the goals of the leadership. Sometimes they have been fairly well on target and sometimes not.

BT: You have witnessed a lot of history here.

WEW: I've recorded over 100 hours of oral history. It shakes me up, John, to realize that out of [its] 150 years — as man and boy — I have known this school over half of that time.

Greg Wills is writing the official history [of Southern Seminary] to be released during this sesquicentennial year. As they say, the guys who win the fight write the history.

BT: What theological issue do you wish Baptists would wrestle with more today?

WEW: The Baptist worldview leaves a lot of room for dissent and diverse opinion because we can't have the kind of certainty that Catholics require. They want an absolutely rigid hierarchy.

And that is what these folks over here [Southern Seminary] want. But we've got to recover the humility and limitations we have as human beings — to wake up every morning and consider that I may be wrong.

I crashed three times in the Navy. I can

tell you what happens when you think you are dying. I don't go back to any statement of faith I ever signed. I just say. "Lord here I come — I love you and trust you."

BT: You've been called both a heretic and a fundamentalist by fellow Baptists, haven't you?

WEW: Yes. [SBC takeover leader] Paige Patterson called me: "Uncle Wayne, I heard you wrote a commentary on the Gospel of John that was shot down by some of your colleagues who thought it was too conservative. How would you like to do that for our new [American] Commentary? I've heard you preach on John, and I want you to write that."

I said: "Paige, you're out of your mind. I'm not about to write a commentary for you."

We were calling it the fundamentalist commentary.

[Paige] calls me "Uncle Wayne" — as does his wife Dorothy. Her father is my double first cousin, but I was closer to him than either of my two brothers.

At age 9 — when my mother died of kidney failure — he left me with Aunt Grace Kelley (grandmother of Dorothy Kelley Patterson and Chuck Kelley, current president of New Orleans Seminary). I became her boy, and she took care of me until I went away to college.

BT: If you could go across the street and give one more lecture to seminary students, what would you talk about?

WEW: [I'd] start with a little bit of humility and the recognition that you don't have to have it all down in rigid, theologically dogmatic statements.

And — like you avoid the plague — avoid any kind of political alliance with any entity of the government — local, national, whatever. That's our heritage as Baptists. That's what I treasure.

I would also say: Don't let the Holy Spirit be cornered by the Pentecostals. The Holy Spirit is the presence and power of God in our lives.

It can never be contained in an institution. He — or she — is alive.

Baptists require an authentic, evident experience of the Lord Jesus Christ transforming your life. That's who we are and how we come into our churches.

That would be the sermon I would preach. **BT**

Baptists Today:

A voice to sustain Baptist tomorrows

McCall brothers committed to spreading the word on Baptists

When Reaves McCall discovered *Baptists Today* at a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) meeting several years ago, one of the first people he shared the publication with was his twin brother.

“He told me I needed to read it,” said P.L. “Roy” McCall of Society Hill, S.C. “*Baptists Today* was one of the best publications I had ever seen.”

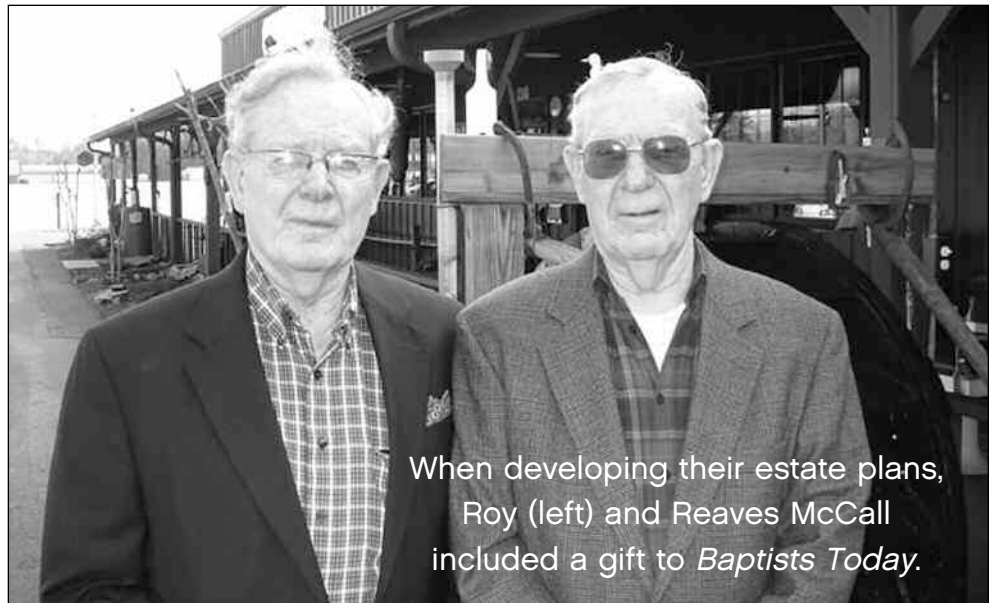
As fourth-generation Baptists, the brothers appreciate how the monthly news journal reports on Baptists across the denomination.

“*Baptists Today* is one of the best ways to disseminate what Baptists are doing, whether they are freewill, fundamentalists, mainstream, CBF or Alliance of Baptists,” said Reaves of Hartsville, S.C. “It keeps you up-to-date on what Baptists are doing, and it is unbiased in reporting everything Baptists do and everything they say. It is a wonderful way of knowing what is going on in our denomination.”

While the brothers look alike, both agree they are quite different otherwise. P.L., a farmer of 40 years, enjoys hunting, fishing and the outdoors. Reaves, a retired architect, loves music and the arts and finds time for cooking pizzas and for collecting original artwork. But one area in which they are almost as identical as their appearance is their deep, abiding love of being Baptists and their interest in and concern for the denomination.

“*Baptists Today* tells the whole story of Baptists,” said P.L. “It is just amazing how much I didn’t know about all the Baptists in the world. I learn something every time I pick it up.”

Learning the whole story is a major reason why Reaves reads the publication each month. “I have heard so many rumors — things about what different facets of our denomination are saying about each other —



When developing their estate plans, Roy (left) and Reaves McCall included a gift to *Baptists Today*.

and I just think it is wrong.

“I believe in diversity, everybody to their own choosing,” he explained. “As Baptists, we always have disagreements, but we can always be agreeable. That’s my philosophy. And *Baptists Today* covers all facets of Baptists. The title of the publication tells it all.”

His older twin brother agrees. “I don’t think there is any other organization that is doing the job that *Baptists Today* is doing,” said P.L. “I think it is important for people to know what is going on in our Baptist denomination.”

When developing their estate plans, both brothers included a gift to *Baptists Today*.

“I have been blessed through my 78 years because I had a Christian mother and father,” said P.L., whose father was a leader in the founding of West Hartsville Baptist Church, where he and his brother and their families have attended for the past half-century. “My gift will continue to perpetuate itself in doing good through *Baptists Today*,” he explained.

Reaves wants *Baptists Today* to have sufficient funds to continue. “Putting *Baptists Today* in my will, to me, is a living testimony to what I believe,” he said. “I did it to keep the home fires burning — so we will know what is going on.”

For more information on making a planned gift to *Baptists Today* through your estate, contact Keithen M. Tucker, Development and Marketing Director, at ktucker@baptiststoday.org or 1-877-752-5658. **BT**

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guest commentary

A tribute to Daniel Goodman

By Rabbi Stephen Pinsky

Editor's note: Daniel Goodman, 40, a divinity school professor at Gardner-Webb University, died unexpectedly on Jan. 13. This tribute by Rabbi Pinsky of Temple Beth Torah near Palm Beach, Fla., was read at a Jan. 15 memorial service at Boiling Springs (N.C.) Baptist Church across from the GWU campus. Goodman's work in Jewish-Christian relations was featured in the December 2008 issue of Baptists Today.

Dear Barbara — Dear Friends:

I have always been especially moved by the story of Moses' last days on earth. We read these words, of course, in the Book of Deuteronomy; we see God call Moses up to the summit of Mount Nebo, where he can see the whole land of Israel spread out before him, across the Jordan River.

We hear God say to him the saddest words in the Torah: "This is the land that I swore to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob, saying: 'I will give it to your offspring.' I have let you see it with your own eyes, but you shall not cross there."

Moses, of course, dies in the land of Moab, within sight of the place he has envisioned and searched for these 40 years. He dies, as all of us do, with dreams unfulfilled and goals unmet, knowing that others will go on to a new place where he will never walk.

Part of the pain of coming to the end of life is worrying about what will happen to those who survive us. That is why we have the Book of Deuteronomy, a speech that lasts for 33 chapters in which Moses pours out his anxieties and his advice to the Israelites who will go into the Promised Land when he is gone.

He wants to know that his children will be okay without him; that they will be settled and safe; that their lives will go on; that they will continue to hear his voice in their heads, guiding and directing them in difficult moments. He wants to feel that in some way he will still be part of their story.

Amazingly, he still *is* part of our story



I have grown in both my understanding and my appreciation of his faith — a faith rooted in the life of another gentle and kind young man taken well before his time.

— the Jewish story — and, in many respects, the Christian story. The life ended long ago, but the relationship goes on forever.

Dan Goodman's story has now become part of our story... From the moment I met Dan more than a decade ago, I understood that here was a truly unusual human being — an extraordinary combination of mind and heart and, for me at least, an absolute model of what being a Christian should be.

He represented for me the very best of his faith and was in a very real sense — to use an old Yiddish word — a *mensch*, a person who has the rare ability to not only share in other people's joys but to feel their pain as well.

As a result of our friendship, I have grown in both my understanding and my appreciation of his faith — a faith rooted in the life of another gentle and kind young man taken well before his time.

And I had the privilege of watching how Dan's empathy for the Jewish people

and his appreciation for Judaism deepened and grew as our friendship blossomed. Dan was a treasure in my life, even as he was a gift to all of his many friends and to the army of students whom he taught and, most of all, to his family — to Barbara and to his children, whom he loved beyond words can convey.

Dan Goodman was not a saint, but he was a *tzadik* — a truly righteous man — a gift from God to teach us a little more about what life should be all about, a little more about what our world could be if we only found the will and found the way to take the teachings of our individual faiths and to truly live them with all of our hearts and all of our souls and all of our collective might.

I promise that for as long as I live, I will never forget that Dan helped me see just a bit more clearly what the Promised Land could be and that God has given each of us the ability to build that land together in our own communities and in our own time.

We will always miss him, we will always ache for him, we will always wish with all of our hearts that we could have him back — even for one hour. At this painful hour of parting, we hold him close to us — loving him in absence, telling and re-telling his story, weaving him into the unfinished stories of our own lives and cherishing his memory for as long as we have breath within us.

Ayl Malay Rachameem: Fully Compassionate God on high: Grant perfect rest in Your sheltering presence to our dear friend — our brother — Daniel Goodman, who has entered eternity. God of mercy, let him find refuge in the shadow of Your wings, and let his soul be bound up in the bond of everlasting life. God is, indeed, his inheritance. May he rest in peace, and let us all say: Amen. **BT**

in the know

Keeping up with people, places and events

PEOPLE

Crozet (Va.) Baptist Church has called staff members **David Collyer** and **Colleen Swingle-Titus** as co-pastors. Collyer previously served as pastor of worship, and Swingle-Titus as pastor of families and community development.

John Inscore Essick has been named assistant professor of church history at Baptist Seminary of Kentucky. A recent Ph.D. graduate from Baylor University, he is the third full-time faculty member at the Lexington, Ky., school.

Bill Hardee is pastor of First Baptist Church in Griffin, Ga., following 10 years service as pastor of Vineville Baptist Church in Macon, Ga.

D. Leslie Hollon is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas, coming from St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., where he served for 14 years.

Jesus Romero will lead the new bachelor's degree in Spanish program at Baptist University of the Americas in San Antonio. He comes from Howard Payne University where he was professor of modern languages.

Oscar Romo died Jan. 16 at age 79. He was a leader among Southern Baptists in ethnic evangelism and church planting through the former Home Mission Board. A memorial service was held at Johns Creek Baptist Church in Alpharetta, Ga.

Leroy Yarbrough, retired chairman of the division of church music at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and a former minister of music at churches in Georgia, Texas and Louisiana, died Dec. 25, 2008.

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LESSONS FOR: Sunday, April 5-26, 2009

Written by Steve Sheely,
pastor of Rolling Hills
Baptist Church in
Fayetteville, Ark.



April 5, 2009

Proclaim Christ's Death

1 Corinthians 11:17-32

Have you ever seen an elephant in the middle of your sanctuary? We've all been there. The church is facing a painful struggle and, meanwhile, worship and business and relationships go on as if nothing was wrong.

The situation with the little church in Corinth was not perfect. In fact, not long after the gospel reached this cosmopolitan Greco-Roman city, the new Christians were faced with serious problems. As you read this epistle, you can almost feel Paul's anguish as he writes across great distances exhorting and encouraging his flock. It has been three years since Paul was in Corinth, and the second half of this letter addresses the church's specific questions and even specific problems reported by others.

Paul was an Easter person. He lived in joyful hope of the resurrection: "To live is Christ, to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). Throughout his correspondence with the Corinthians you will notice Paul moving back and forth from stern admonition and theological instruction to almost ecstatic praise and encouragement. And embodying God's way of making the best out of difficult situations, Paul uses the Corinthians' problems to turn their attention to the amazing, redemptive power of God in Christ. This passage is no exception.

The wonder of Easter seems a long way off as our passage begins: "... your meetings do more harm than good." That is strong language. How did this church get in this mess? The Corinthian congregation was a mixed

group: Pagans, Jews, Romans, immigrants, slaves, rich and poor. Your congregation might also be composed of people from diverse backgrounds. A homogenous church can find unity easier to achieve, but a heterogeneous congregation offers the richness that comes with diversity. The problems in the Corinthian church were related to their diversity.

Imagine this situation: Your church is having an all-church fellowship at the home of a wealthy member. An important part of this gathering is the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Yet when you arrive, you notice that the driveway is already full of cars. You step inside and see a group of your church members seated around the dining room table. They are eating, drinking, talking and laughing. You and other church members stand in the entry hall without a place to sit and without food and drink. There is no room for you. You leave feeling excluded and hurt.

The wealthy, the educated and the privileged had created a "church within a church" in Corinth. Instead of hosting a gathering in honor and remembrance of Christ, they were exposing their brothers and sisters in Christ to humiliation that effectively negated the gospel message. Just like the warning from James, Christ's brother (James 2:1-4), and instruction from Christ himself (see Luke 14), partiality and discrimination have no place in the Kingdom of God. The gospel is a message of equal grace, equal redemption and equal access. No one is excluded. No one is more valuable than anyone else.

That this behavior was happening during the Lord's Supper (vv. 23-26) was devastating to the Corinthian church. The sacrifice of Christ and the new promise of forgiveness and inclusion are meant to be celebrations of grace and equality. We all need what Christ offers us. None of us are any more deserving than another. Paul frequently reminds us that the elite are no more valuable to God's kingdom than the "weak" or "foolish" (1 Cor. 1:26-31, 12:12-26).

Discuss: Does our church sanction any event that is exclusive? Is there anything we do

that keeps someone from experiencing the presence of God as revealed in the body of Christ? Are we guilty, in some form, of the same sins of the Christian elite in Corinth?

One unique feature of Christianity, as it spread in a pagan world with countless deities and religions, was the accessibility to God. It was the only religion where devotees did not have to purify themselves before encountering the Divine. Come as you are; God awaits. Yet many of us have misinterpreted 11:27-32.

Confessing our sin before God is an essential part of our relationship with him, but, despite the practice of many churches, we do not have to confess every sin before we can receive the Lord's Supper. The instruction of verses 27 and 28 does not demand our perfection before God as a condition of receiving the bread and cup. Rather, the instruction of these verses is a warning against exclusion.

Discuss: Are we creating obstacles that keep the poor or the marginalized from the table of Christ? Do our actions negate the message of the Lord's Supper?

As we approach the wonder of Easter, we are reminded to proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (v. 26). And this death is for all, even the poor, sick, lonely and broken. Christ did not remain in the gilded banquet hall or the spacious *triclinium*. He met those on the outside looking in. He loved them. He sacrificed for them. And, as his followers, we proudly proclaim his death when we live the same way.

April 12, 2009

Remember the Resurrection

1 Corinthians 15:1-19

As a pastor I have a privileged perspective at times of joy and times of grief. But some moments stand out.

I officiated a wedding once for a young couple who were friends of my wife. I said I would do the wedding if they came to church



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with us one Sunday morning. Unfortunately, that never happened. Two years after their wedding he was killed late one night in an automobile accident in central Texas. He left his wife and newborn child behind. I attended a memorial service held in their backyard.

“Why am I weeping?” I asked myself. I was saddened at this man’s death, but I barely knew him. And then I realized: the entire memorial service was without any reference to Christ, God and eternal life. Life — and death — are experienced so differently by those who do not remember the resurrection.

Between last week’s passage about the importance of inclusion in the body of Christ and Paul’s discussion of the resurrection in chapter 15, we find some of the most well-known scriptures in the entire Pauline corpus. As the broken body of Christ brings unity among all who believe, Paul plainly addresses the value of diversity, the wonderful adhesive that is love and how the uniqueness of each gifted believer actually functions in a church.

But Paul’s responses to issues facing the Corinthian church reach a crescendo in chapter 15. It is as though Paul saves the church’s greatest problem for last. Some of the church members are saying, “There is no resurrection of the dead” (v. 12). Chapter 15 is Paul’s argument against this position, embellished by his occasional outbursts of joyful encouragement. Paul speaks to the doubters, but he speaks to the faithful as well.

Most importantly, Paul begins by reminding the Corinthian Christians of the gospel he preached to them (vv. 3-5). Each of us should commit this passage to memory: “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter and then to the Twelve” (NIV).

That Christ died for our sins joins each of us in Christ’s death. His death was not a private, independent death. It was linked indelibly to our own. Christ interrupted the natural consequences of our sin and forever included himself in our death — and our destiny. For just as Christ’s death and our own death are brought together, so also is Christ’s resurrection our resurrection. We are incorporated with Christ at death and the resurrection. The grace of God is truly amazing!

This is what Paul preached to the Corinthians, and what they believed. And this

is the great news that will transform their lives, both today and forever, provided they hang on to it (v. 2). It is this gospel to which Paul refers throughout chapter 15. (Remember, Paul believes there is no distinction between the resurrection of Christ and our own resurrection. If Christ can be resurrected, then we can too.)

I’ve heard the saying, “You might be the only Bible someone ever reads.” As our culture moves from a church society to a post-modern society, this statement becomes more important. In verses 6-8, Paul lists those eye-witnesses who contribute to the evidence of the resurrection of Christ — including himself. But verses 9-11 head in a different direction.

Woven into his assertion about the validity of the gospel message is Paul’s own testimony of the grace of God. With extraordinary confidence and humility, Paul associates his identity as an apostle with the very essence of the resurrection story. This is his testimony: the grace of God demonstrated in the gospel story is the same grace that empowered Paul to be the man he is. In his argument against those who claim there is no resurrection, Paul’s first proof is his own life.

Reflect: In your efforts to demonstrate the reality of the resurrection, what evidence can you give? What is happening in your life today that would indicate a 2,000-year-old tomb is empty? How has the grace of God, which saturates the stories of the death and resurrection of Christ, been observable in your recent history? Who has seen that evidence?

Beneath the rhetoric of Paul’s argument with those Corinthians (which begins in earnest in vv. 12-18) is a down-to-earth reality weighing heavily on a real-life group of people.

Discuss: What happens to a congregation when some leaders do not truly believe the complete gospel message? Are there leaders in your church who do not accept the believer’s resurrection? Do our churches have a place of leadership for those who do not believe they themselves will be resurrected?

According to Paul, true Christian witness and leadership are empowered by the energizing grace of God demonstrated by our inclusion in Christ’s death and resurrection. It is not our place to judge what others believe, but it is our place to celebrate the grace of God as it is revealed in the lives of those who unabashedly anticipate their own resurrection. And it is those, like Paul, that we can also choose to emulate.

It is a sad fact that funerals are still happening in backyards among well-wishers who make no mention of the resurrection and that churches are still led by those who do not eagerly await their own resurrection. So it remains vitally important that we not only proclaim the resurrection, but also embody it. Those touched that deeply by the grace of God are not easily forgotten.

April 19, 2009

Contemplate the Mystery

1 Corinthians 15:20-41

We used to visit my grandparents in Mississippi each summer. The soil was so dark and rich, it seemed that you could grow okra in a sidewalk crack. We never had a garden when I was growing up, so my grandparents’ gardens were fascinating. Even in early summer my grandmother would start bringing in beans, peas and tomatoes. The firstfruits were ready, and there were a lot more on the way.

After confronting the body-splitting disrespect of the “have-nots” and the futility of a resurrectionless religion, the glorious hope of Easter crackles like lightning in this section of Paul’s epistle to the Corinthian Christians. Christ has indeed been raised ... our firstfruits! All who belong to him will be raised as well. To those who deny the resurrection, Paul continues with his lockbox-link between the reality of the risen Christ and the reality of the resurrection of those who receive the sacrifice Christ has made on their behalf. Grace is lived only when it is believed.

I remember seeing an old black-and-white photograph of Teddy Roosevelt. He is on safari and bedecked in khaki shorts, hiking boots and a pith helmet. He stands grinning with one foot on the head of some poor creature. Despite our stances on hunting for sport, the image is fitting.

We frequently see Christ turning the other cheek or silently letting Roman thugs whip him unmercifully. But in verses 24-26, our Lord is triumphant. He is the victor. Every evil scheme, corrupt system and exploitive regime is on the ground, eyes blank and tongues hanging out, while Christ stands with his foot on their necks. Even death, now nothing more than a pile of bones, a black robe and a rusting scythe, lies motionless under the



foot of the King of Kings. He is Christ the destroyer. Every enemy lies lifeless at his feet. The end has come. He hands over this reclaimed kingdom to God the Father and graciously submits to him. All is in all. All is restored.

These mysterious, cosmological glimpses we get from Paul are mind-blowing. “What do you mean there is no resurrection? Christ is the destroyer! Christ is the victor! The risen Christ has defeated every enemy we can imagine and then hands the kingdom to God the Father. No resurrection? Are you kidding?”

The details Paul provides about these events solidify the validity of Christ’s forever authority. And, you and I share in Christ’s victory, just as we share in his death and resurrection. As my gospel-singing friend Earnest Alexander used to say: “The good news keeps getting gooder!”

So back to Paul’s rebuttal of the resurrection-deniers. In verses 29-30 he asks, “Why do you continue to baptize on behalf of those who have already died if there is no resurrection?” There is no scholarly consensus on the exact nature of this baptism, except that it was most likely vicarious. Perhaps believers had died before they had the opportunity to be baptized. Regardless, as baptism symbolizes a believer’s death, burial and resurrection, Paul asks why they would continue this practice if they no longer believed in the resurrection.

It is in verses 30-34 that Paul gets personal, pastoral and practical. He speaks again from his own life story. He has faced many risks because of his commitment to Christ and the gospel (see 2 Cor. 11:23-30). Why suffer for Christ? Why serve in humiliation? Why be attacked by wild beasts? Because those risks are not unreasonable for someone who anticipates resurrection. So looking closely at this passage we begin to unearth something: motive. So why would someone choose *not* to believe in the resurrection?

We must remember that Paul has written these words to a real group of people. Even by the first century the gospel had been manipulated by those who want to be churchy, but are unwilling to let go of a worldview that abdicates them of eternal accountability. In addition to the futility of a so-called Christian life that denies the resurrection, that life is also earthbound and timebound. Quoting a verse from Isaiah 22:13 (which also served to recall the popular understanding of Epicurean

philosophy), Paul reminds us that a life without an eternal perspective offers only short-term, inconsequential pleasures.

And in this context, sin is caused by living a life without a resurrection hope (v. 34). Perhaps we would prefer to view sin as every vile act done by someone other than ourselves. But Paul, in this conversation, associates sinning with living each day with no belief that our forever Christ offers us forever as well. And Paul warns us to be careful how we associate with those who live as though there is no resurrection.

But why would someone choose to believe in the resurrection, especially after reading verses 30-32? A life with no significance beyond “three-score and ten” is radically different from the life that is immersed in the same gracious love of God that walks out of the tomb and says “Come be with me forever.”

I spent the fall semester of my senior year in college as a chaplain intern at Louisiana State University Medical Center in Shreveport. That dreary chaplain’s office in the basement of that hospital was frequently brightened by a lovely, white-haired volunteer. “Why do you volunteer down here?” I asked her one day. “Because of the gospel,” she answered. “What do you mean?” I asked. With an unbelievable smile she said, “Because I am going to live forever” and her face lit up like a beacon. To this day that conversation encourages me.

Are you curious about the impact of your life for Christ? If so, try this simple exercise. Stand in front of a mirror and make the following proclamations: “Christ is risen from the dead.” “I will be raised from the dead.” “I will be with Christ forever.” “By his love, God has given me life eternal.” Putting your beliefs into words, spoken to yourself and others, brings those beliefs to life. A life of Christ-like sacrifices for the sake of others is a long way from “eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.”

Our motivation for living sacrificially, whether it is volunteering at a hospital, befriending the homeless or living missionally locally or globally, is not based on fear or judgment. We are, in fact, motivated by courage, freedom and love — courage because Christ will conquer every enemy, freedom because we are no longer crippled by fear, and love because of God’s grace in giving us eternal life.

April 26, 2009

Rejoice in Hope

1 Corinthians 15:42-58

I have three sons: 6-year-old twins and a 5-year-old. They have this strange, simultaneous attraction and revulsion to being scared. Lately it is all about zombies (and zombie pirates). When someone holds out their arms, begins walking stiff-legged and growls “I’m a zombie!” it is our cue to run around the house screaming in fright.

We know that this epistle to the Corinthian church is, for the most part, a response to a series of questions (1 Cor. 7:1) from that struggling congregation. Most likely, some church members were curious about what would happen to their bodies upon being resurrected (see 15:35). Perhaps those who denied the resurrection made absurd speculations to support their position: “Resurrection? Will we be corpses walking around? Is heaven a place of living skeletons?” Oh no! Zombies! Fortunately, Paul refutes these bizarre statements with his typical clarity while disclosing thrilling and edifying details about our resurrection bodies.

In essence, he is describing our new human nature. How quickly we skim over passages like this. Perhaps it is such an overwhelming concept that we resist stopping to absorb what it truly means for us. We tend to view the Bible as a textbook, providing truth and orthodoxy. Or we view this passage as simply a record of Paul’s debate with certain Corinthians. But Paul was writing much more than a textbook. This is a guidebook for a brand new life. It is a handbook for our participation in a radical, forever kingdom.

So now we are being told that our resurrection will yield our new heavenly nature. In our human form we are sown perishable, in dishonor and in weakness. That is life as we know it. But our resurrection will yield new bodies, raised imperishable, in glory and in power — a new body with a different splendor (15:40-41) that will bear his likeness (v. 49).

Gordon Fee writes, “We are currently living within one form of our existence — another awaits!” As I sit in a coffee shop with my laptop, I look around and realize I am only seeing part of the picture. There is a new heaven and a new earth out there



(Rev. 21:1-22:5), but also a new me! Can I actually take these amazing verses with me each day? What will happen if I do? What will happen if I take to heart Paul's description of my forthcoming nature? This life with all its struggles and pain and disappointments is only the first phase of my existence — and that changes everything.

Paul also assures the Corinthians that our resurrection transformation is nothing to fear. A trumpet will blow a cosmic reveille and, in an instant, we will exist in different bodies; bodies with an entirely different physiology; bodies not bound by the laws of nature, but defined by the laws of supernature. We will trade particles of dust for the particles of heaven. We will not be zombies or ghosts or reincarnated souls. We will remain ourselves, but with wonderful spiritual bodies. Our lives and our existence will be an entirely new realm to discover. We will see creation, earthly life and humanity from a new perspective.

I can't help but think about C.S. Lewis' poorly-titled but stunning book, *The Great Divorce*. The protagonist takes a bus ride to heaven and describes, in Lewis' most potent imagery, a glorious new existence. Heaven and her residents are more real and more alive than

the earth could ever be. Can we even imagine that we will enjoy a reality more "real" than the one we are living now?

So we are left pondering the staggering difference between two lives. One life is experienced with the bare expectations of dishonor and weakness — as perishable as a rotting banana. And this life is contrasted to someone who also experiences natural life in all its weakness but knows that an imperishable, glorious life is coming. The difference between these beliefs about our nature is the foundation to living a truly Christ-like life.

Consider Christ himself as described in Hebrews 12:1-2: "... who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." Our destiny makes anything possible.

In the meantime, we are citizens of two worlds. We carry two passports. We live knowing "the kingdom of heaven is near" and the breeze we feel is the wind of Pentecost, blowing from one world to another. We see through a glass darkly, but catch glimpses of our ultimate nature in passages like this, in mystical encounters with God and in the holy intrusion of his Spirit in our earthly lives today.

Yes, we have power ... and our power is victory, a victory that began the moment a dead Christ sealed in a dark tomb stirred and opened his eyes. Suddenly everything was changed forever. At that moment the victory was ordained, a victory felt on the wind today but celebrated by trumpet blast tomorrow. We begin living today what will be gloriously fulfilled on the day that eye twinkles.

At this transformation, the battle is over. Death leaves the field defeated. A mind-blowing, breath-taking existence (without death) awaits us. So today we can stand firm (v. 58) and live missionally, crossing whatever bridges Christ leads us across, with full assurance that our labor is not in vain.

For further reading:

Fee, Gordon D. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament: The First Epistle to the Corinthians*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981.

Theissen, Gerd. *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth*. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982.

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2009

The Resource Page

... creative and practical ideas

Brought to you this month
by David Woody



Missional youth planning

Summertime is busy for youth ministers. Camps, mission events, water parties, fellowship gatherings and regular group meetings dominate the school break schedule. By the time August rolls around, the summer events wind down, too, giving everyone a much-needed breather. But then, two weeks later, school begins and a new year of youth ministry gets rolling. Retreats, football games and fifth quarters, lock-ins, mission events, and regular group meetings quickly fill the calendar.

Many times, the adults in charge of youth ministry get caught up in the moment of spending time with and mentoring their teenagers. That is a wonderful gift of ministry and is truly living out the call to be the presence of Christ for others. The downfall is that long-term planning for the youth year can easily get overlooked. Instead of planning six months to a year down the road, long-term planning is reduced to deciding on the toppings for the ice cream dessert at the end of the night.

Teenagers have schedules and generally know when they will be busy. The schedule might be dictated to them like a soccer schedule complete with practices or a marching band season with rehearsals and competitions, but teens know what they will be doing in the future. Youth ministry needs to get on their calendars, too. Taking the time to think a couple of months to an entire year ahead will not only help the youth make plans, but will also assist the youth

ministry in planning and completing quality events.

One of the easiest ways to plan a youth ministry year is to take last year's calendar out of the folder and reproduce it for the current year, changing the dates as necessary. Youth come to expect special events at certain times of the year. Some groups have a fall retreat that is the highlight of the year. Failure to have one would be disastrous for the minister and the entire church. Some groups rally around a big ski trip, a week of youth camp or a week of mission work in the summer.

Another way to plan a youth ministry year is to think missionally. Instead of simply doing the same things as last year, the group takes some time to discern what God is calling the members individually and collectively to do.

Bo Prosser, coordinator for congregational life at Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, defines the missional church this way: "The missional church is about empowering people to discover and use their passions on purpose to be the presence of Christ in their worlds whether anyone joins their church or not!" In a similar vein, we could say that "a missional youth ministry blesses teenagers to discover and use their passions so that they can make a difference in the world for Christ. If others want to join them along the way, that would be great!"

A missional youth ministry can incorporate all the traditions the youth have come to

love and expect and combine them with a year-long emphasis that will make a difference in the lives of the youth and the world.

CBF (www.thefellowship.info) provides some resources that will assist the youth ministry in missional thinking and planning. Daniel Vestal's book, *It's Time* is the backbone resource for a youth study guide of the same name. The guide focuses on one chapter per session. Each session will help the youth to discover aspects about their own passions, about the ministry of CBF and about their individual relationship with God. The book and study guide will help guide where you feel the youth ministry of your church should be heading.

Destinations is a resource for church planning that maps a congregation's missional journey, and can easily be used for youth ministry. The booklet lays out different ideas for an entire year and has a wealth of resources and references to assist in the planning process.

Finally, *Ignite!* is a 12-month youth missions education curriculum. Each month contains a Bible study, a mission study, a mission project idea and a worship suggestion. For churches with volunteer youth leaders, *Ignite!* is a great resource that has a year of regular meetings already planned.

With little time and energy, plans can be made for a year of youth ministry. Planning missionally will help provide focus for the youth and will use their gifts and talents as they seek to be the presence of Christ in the world. Simply having a plan and schedule will help adults spend more time building relationships with the youth and being the ministers they are called to be. **BT**



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 Basham, Daniel W., Arlington, Texas
 Bateman, William, Hardy, Va.
 Baugh, Babs, San Antonio, Texas
 Baughn, Dean, Rutherfordton, N.C.
 Baumgardner, James L./Paula L., Oliver Springs, Tenn.
 Baxley, Edward, Chickasaw, Ala.
 Baxley, Gladys, Cullowhee, N.C.
 Beane, Ann T., Richmond, Va.
 Beckham, C.T., Dallas, Texas
 Belcher, Philip/Kelly, Spartanburg, S.C.
 Belcher, Robert/Mary, Washington, N.C.
 Bellamy, Grace H., Dahlonga, Ga.
 Bellis, Gerald/Mary, Bullard, Texas
 Bennett, Eddie, Gillsville, Ga.
 Bennett, Renee, Macon, Ga.
 Benson, Sara, Oak Ridge, Tenn.
 Bewley, Ray/Ann, Bradenton, Fla.
 Biggs, Katherine, Muskogee, Okla.
 Bingham, Mack, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Binns, Mary Arnold, Atlanta, Ga.
 Biscoe, Willie B., Spotsylvania, Va.
 Bishop, Amelia, Austin, Texas
 Bishop, Jr., Jack/Eve, Lake Junaluska, N.C.
 Bissett, Ruby, Sarasota, Fla.
 Black, Anne, Tallahassee, Fla.
 Black, Tom/Doris, Columbus, Ga.
 Blackburn, David M., Athens, Ala.
 Blackburn, James B., Savannah, Ga.
 Blackstock, R.T./Nita, Penney Farms, Fla.
 Blackstone, Billy B., Chandler, Texas
 Blackwell, James C., Dalton, Ga.
 Blake, Keith, Lake Waccamaw, N.C.
 Blake, Otis/Nancy, Griffin, Ga.
 Blalock, Nancy, Boiling Springs, N.C.
 Blanchard, Michael, Gateville, Texas
 Blanton, Bill, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Blanton, Melba S., Clemson, S.C.
 Blase, Bill, Springfield, Mo.
 Blomstrom, David, Richmond, Texas
 Blount, Mr./Mrs. Perry, Soperton, Ga.
 Bloxom, Bob/Pat, Mappsville, Va.
 Bodkin, Tom, Raleigh, N.C.
 Boland, Colleen, Baton Rouge, La.
 Boland, Tommy/Beth Ann, Alpharetta, Ga.
 Bonner, Frank, Shelby, N.C.
 Bonner, Stephen L., Sulphur Springs, Texas
 Booker, Lewis, Richmond, Va.
 Boss, J. Larry, Villa Rica, Ga.
 Bowen, Charles/Irene, Dalton, Ga.
 Bowers, Frank/Dorothy, Eden, N.C.
 Boyd, Jerry G., Belton, Texas
 Boyd, Kirk/Hazel, Moultrie, Ga.
 Bradley, Ruth S., Nashville, Tenn.
 Branch, Judy, Tifton, Ga.
 Brandon, Catherine, Stephenville, Texas
 Branstetter, Paul D., California, Mo.
 Brazil, Wilburn/Grace, Asheville, N.C.
 Brenton, J.H., Raleigh, N.C.
 Brewer, Donald/Joey, Gainesville, Ga.
 Brewer, Luther, Cary, N.C.
 Brewer, Paul D., Jefferson City, Tenn.
 Brewer, Ralph/Peggy, Largo, Fla.
 Bridges, John/Roxanne, Kings Mountain, N.C.
 Bridgman, Carolyn R., Rockingham, N.C.
 Bridgman, Huey/Charlotte, Columbus, Ga.
 Britt, Tim, Barnwell, S.C.
 Brock, Nancy C., Abilene, Texas
 Brooks, DeWayne, Central, S.C.
 Broome, Frank/Susan, Macon, Ga.
 Brown, Cleon M., Hanahan, S.C.
 Brown, Dale/Jane, Hephzibah, Ga.
 Brown, Kent/Ann, Gretna, Va.
 Brown, Lavonn D., Norman, Okla.
 Brown, Lucile, Wilmington, N.C.
 Browne, Rodney/Linda, Macon, Ga.
 Brusse, Joseph C./Corre W., College Station, Texas
 Bryan, Sigurd F., Birmingham, Ala.
 Bryant, Jim, Harrison, Ark.
 Brymer, Gene, Lexington, S.C.
 Bryson, H.T./Martha, Charlotte, N.C.
 Bryson, J.G./Earlene, Carrollton, Ga.
 Buckner, Jo C., Anderson, S.C.
 Bugg, Charles/Diane, Boiling Springs, N.C.
 Bullock, Marci/Orris, Lexington, Ala.
 Bunch, Lynette, Murfreesboro, N.C.
 Burgess, Jr., Mr./Mrs. C.S., Decatur, Ga.
 Burks, Gilbert, Albertville, Ala.
 Burlington, Hugh A./Vickie T., Greenville, N.C.
 Burt, Bruce S., Manchester, Ga.
 Burton, Larry M., Montgomery, Ala.
 Burton, Mark/Vicki K., Marion, N.C.
 Busby, Randall F., Chicago, Ill.
 Byrd, Dr./Mrs. Robert, Nashville, Tenn.
 Byrd, Frieda, Macon, Ga.
 Calaway, Bernie L., Cullowhee, N.C.
 Calcote, Ralph, Wesson, Miss.
 Caldwell, Jack, Macon, Ga.
 Calhoun, Mr./Mrs. James E., Champaign, Ill.
 Calvert, Sim, Vinemont, Ala.
 Camp, Paul L., Rome, Ga.
 Campbell, Cecil A., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Campbell, Robin, San Marino, Calif.
 Campolo, Margaret D./Anthony, Bryn Mawr, Penn.
 Cantrell, C.C./Sachiko, Mountain View, Mo.
 Cantrell, Kenneth, Lawton, Okla.
 Cantwell, E.H., Baton Rouge, La.
 Cape, Sandra/Ronnie, Vienna, Ga.
 Caplinger, Jean, Tyler, Texas
 Cardwell, Mary Jane, Waycross, Ga.
 Carothers, Eugenia, Orange, Va.
 Carp, Barbara M., Pensacola, Fla.
 Carpenter, Dorothy, Dahlonga, Ga.
 Carpenter, Florence, Irving, Texas
 Carpenter, Scott, Rutherfordton, N.C.
 Carson, Jack, Henderson, Ky.
 Carter, Betty R., Reidsville, N.C.
 Carter, Charles, Madison, Miss.
 Carter, Jimmy/Rosalynn, Plains, Ga.
 Case, J.V., Bowling Green, Ky.
 Cassidy, Donald, Premium, Ky.
 Casteen, Williams, Raleigh, N.C.
 Cataldo, K.M., Stuart, Fla.
 Cates, Robert/Martha, Rome, Ga.
 Causey, Jack/Mary Lib, Statesville, N.C.
 Cave, Ottis, Stanford, Ky.
 Chaffin, Charlie, Benton, Ark.
 Chance, Jane, Dalton, Ga.
 Cherry, Russell T., Lumberton, N.C.
 Chiles, Henry/Bobbie, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Chilton, Charles/Fay, Locust Grove, Va.
 Chisolm, Ivan, Jasper, Ala.
 Chuku, Dominique, Greer, S.C.
 Church, Nancy, Hiawasse, Ga.
 Clark, Jane M., Southern Pines, N.C.
 Clark, William J./Margaret T., McDonough, Ga.
 Clarke, Sharon, Rockingham, N.C.
 Clayton, Jim/Marilyn, Raleigh, N.C.
 Clemons, Hardy/Ardelle, San Antonio, Texas
 Clevenger, Toni, Pensacola, Fla.
 Clontz, Marie, Horseshoe, N.C.
 Cluff, Dorothy, Orange, Va.
 Coates, Edwin, Raleigh, N.C.
 Cobb, Bobbye Q., Millen, Ga.
 Coble, Marie S., Charlotte, N.C.
 Cockrum, Howard B., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Coe, Charles/Elbia, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Colclough, Eunice L., Goldsboro, N.C.
 Cole, Paul/Sarah, Houston, Texas
 Coleman, Byrns/Alice, Wingate, N.C.
 Coleman, James, Memphis, Tenn.
 Coleman, Lucien, Weatherford, Texas
 Coltharp, Art/LaNell, Austin, Texas
 Colvin, Herbert, Waco, Texas
 Colwell, Jack/Gwen, Macon, Ga.
 Conklin, Larry, Mineral Wells, Texas
 Conn, Walton, Franklin, Tenn.
 Connors, Betty/Austin, Raleigh, N.C.
 Cook, Charlotte/Brent, Marietta, Ga.
 Cook, Evelyn, Charlotte, N.C.
 Cook, Richard/Grace, Eight Mile, Ala.
 Cooley, Ray N., Wallingford, Conn.
 Cooper, C. Kenny, Nashville, Tenn.
 Cooper, Melvin, Prattville, Ala.
 Corn, Ann, Lexington, N.C.
 Cornell, Lionel, Citra, Fla.
 Cotney, Bernece W., Wadley, Ala.
 Covington, Dr./Mrs. R.W., Waco, Texas
 Crenshaw, B.M., Kennesaw, Ga.
 Crew, Peggy, Cairo, Ga.
 Crocker, Marge, San Antonio, Texas
 Crook, Mary Nell, Opelika, Ala.
 Cross III, G Lee, Atlanta, Ga.
 Crouch, Henry, Macon, Ga.
 Crouch, Jr., W.H., Georgetown, Ky.
 Crump, Kenny/Shirley, Ruston, La.
 Crumpler, Carolyn Weatherford, Cincinnati, Ohio
 Crumpler, James/Susan, Mason, Ohio
 Cubbedge, James E./Carolyn H., Guyton, Ga.
 Culpepper, Alan/Jacque, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Culpepper, Vernon C., Raleigh, N.C.
 Cunningham, Dorothy, Chesterfield, Mo.
 Curry, Bradford, Standford, Ky.
 Cyrus, Gary, Raleigh, N.C.
 Dale, Bob/Carrie, Henrico, Va.

- Daniel, T.R., Evans, Ga.
 Daugherty, Betty, Hendersonville, N.C.
 Daugherty, La Fern, Kennett, Mo.
 Daugherty, Sylvia, Lewisville, N.C.
 David, T.D., Cairo, Ga.
 Davis, Edwin E., Elm Grove, La.
 Davis, George S./Kathryn Y., Richmond, Va.
 Davis, Janet B., Monticello, Ga.
 Davis, Jr., Mr./Mrs. Luther J., Washington, N.C.
 Davis, Meredith, Lincolnton, N.C.
 Davis, Phil/Joyce S., College Station, Texas
 Davis, Richard, Semora, N.C.
 Davis, Tom, Lenoir, N.C.
 Dawson, Irvin/Elinor, Stockbridge, Ga.
 Day, Dan, Raleigh, N.C.
 Day, Jr., Shirley R./William O., Waynesboro, Va.
 Day, Sande Wilson, Macon, Ga.
 Day, Troy L., Kannapolis, N.C.
 Day, William/Rebecca, Hammond, La.
 De Hanas, Everett M., Venice, Fla.
 De Priest, Marjorie, Nashville, Tenn.
 Dean, Joseph/Carol, Birmingham, Ala.
 Dean, Kenneth/Mary, Carrollton, Ga.
 Deavours, George C., Jasper, Ala.
 Dempsey, Edward, Athens, Ga.
 Denson, Loretta, Maryville, Tenn.
 DeVane, Betty, Carrollton, Ga.
 Devenny, Dr./Mrs. T.A., Piedmont, S.C.
 Dilday, Russell, Dallas, Texas
 Dixon, Bill, Birmingham, Ala.
 Dixon, Don, Tullahoma, Tenn.
 Dixon, Phillip R., High Point, N.C.
 Dominey, Mabel, Melbourne, Fla.
 Doom, Elizabeth, Clemmons, N.C.
 Dorriety, James O., Hampton Cove, Ga.
 Draughon, Walter, Birmingham, Ala.
 Drewry, Miriam T., Athens, Ga.
 Driver, Kathy B, Raleigh, N.C.
 Duncan, Mr./Mrs. Michael, Eminence, Ky.
 Dunn, James/Marilyn, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Dunn, Ray T., Fort Myers, Fla.
 Durham, Jay/Jackie, Dacula, Ga.
 Duyck, Sally, Asheville, N.C.
 Dyke, Eva M., Temple, Texas
 Eaton, Hal, Mouth of Wilson, Va.
 Edwards, Hoyle, Rutherfordton, N.C.
 Elkins, Billy, Cairo, Ga.
 Elkins, Thelma, Fort Worth, Texas
 Elliott, Betty Gail, Alexandria, Va.
 Ellis, Bill/Charlotte, Richmond, Ky.
 Ellis, Edmund, Courtland, Va.
 Ellison, Ron, Beaumont, Texas
 Erwin, Janet L., Abilene, Texas
 Eskew, Richard/Jane, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Ethridge, Bruce/Katie, Beaufort, N.C.
 Eubanks, Gary/Virginia, Marietta, Ga.
 Evans, Sid/Laura, Picayune, Miss.
 Everette, James E., Columbus, Ga.
 Evitts, Kathy, Clarksville, Ind.
 Fain, W. Maurice, Stony Point, N.Y.
 Fain, William/Sarah, Ridgeway, Va.
 Farrar, Bertha B., Atlanta, Ga.
 Faulkner, Pat, Nebo, N.C.
 Fausett, James G, Marietta, Ga.
 Fendley, Archie, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Ferguson, Jack C., Birmingham, Ala.
 Ferguson, Jane, Alto, Ga.
 Ferrell, E.E., Black Mountain, N.C.
 Fields, Wilmer C., Nashville, Tenn.
 Findley, Jill, Pensacola, Fla.
 Finley, John/Norma, Savannah, Ga.
 Fite, James D., Lilburn, Ga.
 Fite, Mary, Avondale Estates, Ga.
 Fitzgerald, Sue, Mars Hill, N.C.
 Fleming, Oliver G., Ahoskie, N.C.
 Flynt, Wayne, Auburn, Ala.
 Ford, Annie H., Huntsville, Ala.
 Ford, Carmen H., Beaufort, S.C.
 Forney, Martha F., Shelby, N.C.
 Fortner, Mr./Mrs. L.L., Columbus, Ga.
 Fortune, Mary, Flint, Mich.
 Foster, Carlton/Billie D., Conroe, Texas
 Fowler, Robert K./Anne H., Houston, Texas
 Frank, Janice, Kansas City, Mo.
 Free, Dixon, Lincolnton, N.C.
 Free, Judith A., Baltimore, Md.
 Freeman Jr., Sam W., Roswell, Ga.
 Freeman, Tom, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Freisinger, Jacqueline, Molino, Fla.
 Fritts, Mr./Mrs. Gene, Lexington, N.C.
 Fulbright Sr, Ellis/Ruby, Raleigh, N.C.
 Fuller, Betty B., Matthews, N.C.
 Fuller, Doug/Cindy, Manchester, Ga.
 Galloway, Dr./Mrs. W.H., Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Galloway, John, Norwood, N.C.
 Gannon, Truett/Margaret, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Gardner, Robert/Anne, Macon, Ga.
 Garner, Darrell/Sammie, Boone, N.C.
 Garner, Hubert, Sanford, N.C.
 Garrett, V.G., Houston, Texas
 Gaston, Joel/Nan, Monticello, Ga.
 Gaventa, Alice P., Midlothian, Va.
 Gibbs, Lois, Athens, Ga.
 Gibson, Billy R., St. Simons Island, Ga.
 Gilbert Jr., Wyatt M., Lavonia, Ga.
 Gillespie, Arthur/Faye, Gastonia, N.C.
 Gillespie, Sue, College Station, Texas
 Gillis, Pat Ingle, Statesboro, Ga.
 Ginn, Perry/Betty, Decatur, Ga.
 Glaze, Dr./Mrs. R.E., Cullman, Ala.
 Glover, Ann O., Orangeburg, S.C.
 Godsey, Kirby/Joan, Macon, Ga.
 Goepfert, Robert, Carbondale, Ill.
 Gooch, Peggy M., Raleigh, N.C.
 Goode, Eloise, Apex, N.C.
 Goolsby, Carl, Marietta, Ga.
 Gordon, John T., Dallas, Ga.
 Gore, James W., Lumberton, N.C.
 Gore, Betty V., San Angelo, Texas
 Gottman, Nanita, Montezuma, Ga.
 Gourley, Bruce/Debra, Manhattan, Mont.
 Gragg, Alan/Jessie, Asheville, N.C.
 Graham, Phillip/Carolyn, Yadkinville, N.C.
 Graves, Thomas/Wendy, Midlothian, Va.
 Gray, J.L./Libby, Charlotte, N.C.
 Gray, Joyce K., Johnson City, Tenn.
 Gray, Lucy M., Pensacola, Fla.
 Green, Herman, El Paso, Texas
 Green, Barbara A., Dahlonaga, Ga.
 Greene, James, Montgomery, Ala.
 Greenhaw, William, Macon, Ga.
 Grier, III, James C., Rock Hill, S.C.
 Griffin, Barbara D., Ft. Myers, Fla.
 Griffin, David, Carrollton, Ga.
 Griffin, Virginia, Monroe, N.C.
 Griffith, James N., Palmetto, Ga.
 Grigg Sr., C. Irvin, Kernersville, N.C.
 Gross, Ben/Helen, Chattanooga, Tenn.
 Groves, Barbara, Harvest, Ala.
 Guinn, Neva, Alexandria, La.
 Gullatt, Tom/Vera, Fairburn, Ga.
 Gurney, Donald/Mary, Georgetown, Texas
 Hackle, Emma Jeane, Winter Haven, Fla.
 Hackler, Peggy Ott, Jacksonville, Fla.
 Hadaway, Chloe, Panama City, Fla.
 Hagan, Danny, Statesboro, Ga.
 Haig, Barbara, Atlanta, Ga.
 Hall, Andrew, Fayetteville, Ark.
 Hall, Maurice/Marcia, Columbia, S.C.
 Hambrick, Maribeth, Lexington, Ky.
 Hambright, Barry, Gastonia, N.C.
 Hamby, Mary Frances, Simpsonville, S.C.
 Hamilton, William/Charlene, Las Vegas, Nev.
 Hamm, Horace A., Fuquay-Varina, N.C.
 Hammett, Michael E., Seneca, S.C.
 Hammonds, Richard/Betty, Avondale Estates, Ga.
 Haney, Carl/Elizabeth, Odessa, Mo.
 Hannah, J. Perry/Eunice, East Wenatchee, Wash.
 Harbin, Betty, West Union, S.C.
 Harbison, Robert, Logan, Ala.
 Hardee, Hoyt/Martha, Loris, S.C.
 Harden, Harry, Charlottte, N.C.
 Hardin, Newton, Lexington, N.C.
 Hardin, Phyllis, Tucker, Ga.
 Hardy, Valerie, Loganville, Ga.
 Harley, James/Carolyn, Pueblo, Colo.
 Harris, Colin/Faye, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Harris, J. Hoffman/Norma, Hickory, N.C.
 Harris, Joseph B., Washington, Ga.
 Harris, Norman B., Durham, N.C.
 Harris, William, Alexandria, Va.
 Harrod, J.D., Wilmington, N.C.
 Harley, William (Bill)/Doris, Arcadia, Fla.
 Harvey, Lena, Leesburg, Fla.
 Hasty, Martha E., Monroe, N.C.
 Hatcher, Mrs. Milford B., Macon, Ga.
 Hawes, Betty B., Buena Vista, Va.
 Hawes, William, Centreville, Va.
 Hawkins, Aubrey L., Roswell, Ga.
 Hawkins, M.L., Orangeburg, S.C.
 Haynes, Henry/Betty, Vinita, Okla.
 Hays, James, Norman, Okla.
 Hays, Wilma, Camilla, Ga.
 Heath, Carol, Cairo, Ga.
 Heath, Neil/Anne, Macon, Ga.
 Hefner, Fred/Janice, Macon, Ga.
 Heifner, Tom, Panama City Beach, Fla.
 Helm, Michael D., Hot Springs National Park, Ark.
 Helvey, James, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Henderson, Odis/Jewel, Sheffield, Ala.
 Hendrix, Josephine, Hays, N.C.
 Hennessy, J.E., Monticello, Ga.
 Herbert, Mary M., Greenville, N.C.
 Herring, Jack, Summerville, Ga.
 Hester, Versie, Huntsville, Ala.
 Hiers, Gene/Reba, Metter, Ga.
 Higdon, L.I., Cairo, Ga.
 Highfill, Richard E., Garland, Texas
 Hill, Les/Jan, Lexington, Ky.
 Hill, Pam/Charles, Cullowhee, N.C.
 Hill, Pete, Kansas City, Mo.
 Hill, Tom/Joan, Canton, Ga.
 Hines, Mary L, Birmingham, Ala.
 Hinkle, Kenneth, Madison, Ala.
 Hinson, Charles/Shirley, Valdese, N.C.
 Hobbs, Jerry, Norman, Okla.
 Hodge, John S., Shreveport, La.
 Hodges, Sam, Dallas, Texas
 Hoffman, Henry H., Birmingham, Ala.
 Hogan, Jane H., Athens, Ga.
 Hollaway, Ernest L., Hermitage, Tenn.
 Honeycutt, Jim, Lexington, N.C.
 Hooper, Dr./Mrs. W.L., Bolivar, Mo.
 Horner, Bill, Lewisburg, Tenn.
 Hortman, Hobart C., Rome, Ga.
 Houston, Bessie F., Ringgold, Ga.
 Houston, Douglas W., Starkville, Miss.
 Howell, Bill/Mary Ann, Whitakers, N.C.
 Howell, Lillian, Enfield, N.C.
 Howell, Walter L., Columbia, S.C.
 Howle, Bill, Wickliffe, Ky.
 Howle, David, Plainview, Texas
 Hudson, David E., Augusta, Ga.
 Hudson, R.D., Hendersonville, N.C.
 Hudson, Robert R., Silver Spring, Md.
 Huff, James A., Oklahoma City, Okla.
 Hughes, Nellen K., Houston, Texas
 Hughes, Estel W., Richland, Va.
 Hull, Polly, Charlotte, N.C.
 Hunnicutt, Jack/Jane, Weaverville, N.C.
 Hunnicutt, John, Thomasville, N.C.
 Hunt, John, Kings Mountain, N.C.
 Hutson, James, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Hux, Mary B., Reidsville, N.C.
 Iley, Bryce B., Harrisburg, N.C.
 Ingram, Kay, San Antonio, Texas
 Ingram, Mark M., Vienna, Ga.
 Isbell, Steve, Fort Payne, Ala.
 Ivey, Marilyn S., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Jackson, Murl/Gwen, Chattanooga, Tenn.
 Jackson, Patisue, Newnan, Ga.
 James, Glen W., Cookeville, Tenn.
 James, Ken/JoAnne, London, Ky.
 Janson, Kathryn G., Alexandria, Va.
 Jeffcoat, Bob/Elaine, Durham, N.C.
 Jenkins, Linda, Yazoo City, Miss.
 Jenkins, Mary Louise, Brandenburg, Ky.
 Jennings, Martha, Muskogee, Okla.
 Jennings, Theron/Sherry, Carrollton, Ga.
 Johnson, Bill/Vicki, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Johnson, Carroll/JoAnne, San Antonio, Texas
 Johnson, Charles/Carleen, Sikeston, Mo.
 Johnson, Jan, Dunlap, Tenn.
 Johnson, Jannetta F., Lawrenceville, Ga.
 Johnson, Jim/Joan, Box Springs, Ga.
 Johnson, Jon G./Frances J., Asheville, N.C.
 Johnson, Paul B., Buies Creek, N.C.
 Johnson, Peggy, Dadeville, Ala.
 Johnson, Raymond, Blytheville, Ark.
 Joiner, G. Neil, Vienna, Ga.
 Joiner, J.B., Cairo, Ga.

Jones, Anelle S., Ruston, La.
 Jones, Barry W., Athens, Ga.
 Jones, Jamie, Fayetteville, Ark.
 Jones, Janet L., Conway, S.C.
 Jones, Joseph M., Huntsville, Ala.
 Jones, Sherwood, Dalton, Ga.
 Jordan, Monty/Diane, Brentwood, Tenn.
 Kahoe, Richard D., Woodward, Okla.
 Keller, Ella, Granite Falls, N.C.
 Kelly, Earl, Jackson, Miss.
 Kemp Jr., H.B., Columbia, S.C.
 Kennedy, Wayne D., Bladenboro, N.C.
 Keown, Gerald/Sharon, Moore, S.C.
 Kerr, Barry W., St. Simons Island, Ga.
 Keuch, Don, Columbia, Md.
 Kidd, Bill/Anne Hester, Washington, N.C.
 Killebrew, Horace, Kennesaw, Ga.
 Killian, W. Harold, Greenville, S.C.
 Kilpatrick, Allie C., Milledgeville, Ga.
 King, Chester C., Demorest, Ga.
 King, Joel/Martha, Moulton, Ala.
 King, Patricia/Edwin C., Ormond Beach, Fla.
 King, William B., Thomasville, Ga.
 Kirkpatrick, Kathryn S., Waynesville, N.C.
 Kiser, Cleve, Fayetteville, Ga.
 Kiwiet, Margaret E., Dallas, Texas
 Klutz, Joyce, Concord, N.C.
 Knight, James R., Cullman, Ala.
 Koiner, J. Michael, Bandera, Texas
 Ladd, R.E., Pinehurst, Texas
 Lail, Jack C., New London, N.C.
 Lam, Virginia, Tucker, Ga.
 Lamb, Bob/Rhea, Shelby, N.C.
 Lamberth, Dorothy, Tyler, Texas
 Lancaster, Jeanne, Houston, Texas
 Lancaster, W.B., College Station, Texas
 Landers, Burnell, Independence, Mo.
 Landon, Rick/Judy, Lexington, Ky.
 Laney, Reid H., Burlington, N.C.
 Langdon, Kenneth, Gainesville, Fla.
 Langford, Henry Victor, Richmond, Va.
 Langston, Eugene/Sara, Pensacola, Fla.
 Lark, H.J./Julia, Pickens, S.C.
 Larrimore, Joseph S./Edith, Wingate, N.C.
 Latimer, James, Denver, Colo.
 Lawrence, John/Anne, Raleigh, N.C.
 Lawrence, Laura B., Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Lawrence, William W., Sanford, N.C.
 Lawton, Ben R., Mesquite, Texas
 Leach, Barbara M., Rome, Ga.
 Lee, Grace, Pineville, La.
 Lesch, Marie/Gomer, Bowling Green, Ky.
 Levy, Jan, Radford, Va.
 Lewis, David H., Penhook, Va.
 Lewis, James A., Kissimmee, Fla.
 Lewis, Paul/Marsha, Macon, Ga.
 Light, Sandra S., Lexington, S.C.
 Limbaugh, R. Leslie, St. Louis, Mo.
 Lingafelt, Charles, Gretna, Va.
 Little, James/Daisy, Hartselle, Ala.
 Little, Jr., W.J., Jackson, N.C.
 Lockhart, James E., St. Louis, Mo.
 Loftin, Elliott, Lincolnton, N.C.
 Loftin, Jr., Robert, Nashville, Tenn.
 Logan, Walter H., Greenwood, S.C.
 Logue, Tom, Little Rock, Ark.
 Long, Jody/Julie, Macon, Ga.
 Love, Barry/LaVerne, Lubbock, Texas
 Lovegren, August, Cedartown, Ga.
 Lovegren, Norman, River Ridge, La.
 Lowe, Bruce, Dallas, Texas
 Lowe, Frank, Murfreesboro, N.C.
 Lowe, Jeff, Fayetteville, Ga.
 Luncford, Malcolm, Richmond, Ky.
 Lunsford, Dan, Mars Hill, N.C.
 Lynch, Larry, Shady Dale, Ga.
 Mabry, Harold, Lexington, N.C.
 Macon, Seth C., Greensboro, N.C.
 Maddux, Charles/Fannie Louise, Pembroke, Ky.
 Maloch, Jim, Little Rock, Ark.
 Malone, Bill/Drexel, Shawnee, Okla.
 Maner, Charles/Kimberly, Gastonia, N.C.
 Marchman, Ray, Greensboro, Ga.
 Maret, Randall T., Dalton, Ga.
 Marquez, Grace E., Birmingham, Ala.
 Marshall, George/Charlotte, Athens, Ga.
 Martin, Arthur R., Central, S.C.

Martin, Bob, Stuart, Fla.
 Martin, Bobby G., Jasper, Ga.
 Martin, Ernest L., Danville, Ky.
 Martin, Fred, Pensacola, Fla.
 Martin, Mary, Atlanta, Ga.
 Martin, Patricia B., Huntsville, Ala.
 Matthews, Jerry T., North Augusta, S.C.
 Matthews, Rick/Carolyn, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Matthews, Ron/Joan, Bartlesville, Okla.
 Mattox, William H., Elgin, S.C.
 May, Walton/Margaret, Richmond, Va.
 Maynard, Pina C., Apex, N.C.
 McAbee, Harold/Rochelle, Lizella, Ga.
 McAfee, Tom/Julie, Juliette, Ga.
 McCain, Charles S., Shreveport, La.
 McCall, Duke, Palm Beach, Fla.
 McCall, Jr., P.L., Society Hill, S.C.
 McCall, W. Reaves, Hartsville, S.C.
 McCartney, Evelyn, Vero Beach, Fla.
 McClanahan, Rosalind, Birmingham, Ala.
 McClung, Ron, Haddock, Ga.
 McClure, A., Falls Church, Va.
 McCormick, Gwenn, Morriston, Fla.
 McDowell, Lawrence E., Tampa, Fla.
 McElligott, Shelby, Pensacola, Fla.
 McEwen, Jack/June, Signal Mountain, Tenn.
 McGee, Jerry E., Wingate, N.C.
 McGill, Jr., Dr./Mrs. Henry C., San Antonio, Texas
 McIntosh, Ellen Marie, Manchester, Mo.
 McKenzie, Herbert C., Wilkesboro, N.C.
 McKinley, Hugh/Rebecca, Apex, N.C.
 McKinney, Elizabeth R., Ft. Worth, Texas
 McKinney, Eugene, San Antonio, Texas
 McKinney, W.H./June, Athens, Ga.
 McKnight, Alan/Barbara, Duluth, Ga.
 McSwain, Larry/Rebecca, Alpharetta, Ga.
 Meade, Charles, Abingdon, Va.
 Mellnik, Roella, Forest City, N.C.
 Melton, William, Evergreen, Ala.
 Mendheim, Doyle/Merle, Macon, Ga.
 Messick, Harold M., Greensboro, N.C.
 Miller, Ann Shaw, Raleigh, N.C.
 Miller, John Al, Elizabethtown, Ky.
 Miller, John/Eloise, Hopkinsville, Ky.
 Mills, James F., Augusta, Ga.
 Mills, Jo/Barbara, Waleska, Ga.
 Minton, Bobbie, Greensboro, N.C.
 Mitchell, Evelyn, Thomaston, Ga.
 Mitchell, Memory F., Raleigh, N.C.
 Mitchell, Sunny, Oceanside, Calif.
 Mizell, Dr./Mrs. Walter S., Little Rock, Ark.
 Moates, Lamon, Americus, Ga.
 Monfalcone, Wes/Rebecca, Casselberry, Fla.
 Montacute, Paul, Falls Church, Va.
 Moore, Catherine E., Pendleton, N.C.
 Moore, Mrs. John A., Brownwood, Texas
 Moore, Paul G., Greenville, S.C.
 Moore, Jean B., Owensboro, Ky.
 Morgan, Chris, Camdin, Ark.
 Morgan, Darold H., Richardson, Texas
 Morse, James O., Starkville, Miss.
 Morse, Martha, San Antonio, Texas
 Morton, Jack W./Ann White, Cumming, Ga.
 Morton, Margaret, Raleigh, N.C.
 Mosely, Marjorie, Macon, Ga.
 Moses, Judith, Little Rock, Ark.
 Mullin, James O., Weatherford, Texas
 Mullis, Lounell, Asheville, N.C.
 Murphy, Fred E., Thomasville, Ga.
 Myers, D. Russell, Albemarle, N.C.
 Myers, Harold E., Talbot, Tenn.
 Naish, Jane, Clayton, Ga.
 Naramore, Penny, Alabaster, Ala.
 Neal, Jeff, Anderson, S.C.
 Neal, William T./Judy, Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Nelson, Morgan, Roswell, N.M.
 Nelson, Paul/Virginia, Arlington, Va.
 Nettles, Jr., William C., Salem, S.C.
 Newberry, Dan/Sue, Columbus, Ga.
 Nimmons, Billy, Dalton, Ga.
 Nolan, Paul/Anne, Signal Mountain, Tenn.
 Northcutt, LeGrande/Cassandra, Longview, Texas
 Norton, Sidney, Gaffney, S.C.
 Nutt, Jackie, Raleigh, N.C.
 Odom, Mary H., Greensboro, N.C.
 Oliver, Susan P., Tampa, Fla.
 Orosz, Judy I., Martinez, Ga.

Orrell, Shirley, Wilmington, N.C.
 Osburn, Ken, Arvada, Colo.
 Outland, William R., Washington, N.C.
 Ouzts, Patrick L., Cairo, Ga.
 Overton, Wayne, Oxford, N.C.
 Padgett, Dan/Polly, Westville, Fla.
 Page, Jimmy/Joyce, Ormond Beach, Fla.
 Palmer, S.B., Jacksonville, Fla.
 Parham, Jo Ann, Gainesville, Fla.
 Parkerson, William E., Greensboro, N.C.
 Parks, Randy, Sparta, N.J.
 Parris, Robert S./Paula J., Dunwoody, Ga.
 Parsley, Sr., Brantley H., Mobile, Ala.
 Patterson, J. Wayne/Cheryl C., Clemson, S.C.
 Paulk, Judy, Alpharetta, Ga.
 Paulson, Marlin, Fort Oglethorpe, Ga.
 Peacock, Hugh/Janie, Rome, Ga.
 Peacock, Julia Deane, Crestview, Fla.
 Pennell, Wayne, Lenoir, N.C.
 Penninger, Thomas/Robin, Lexington, N.C.
 Pentecost, Julian/Mary, Richmond, Va.
 Perkins, Henry, Clemson, S.C.
 Perkins, Sara H., Clinton, Miss.
 Perrin, Tom, Tallahassee, Fla.
 Perry, Robert L., Bois D'Arc, Mo.
 Perryman, Maurine, Thomasville, N.C.
 Peterson, Aubin/Marie, Arlington, Texas
 Peterson, Kenneth E., Delaware, Ohio
 Phillips, Jim/Helen, Gaffney, S.C.
 Phipps, Kenneth/Sandra, Miamisburg, Ohio
 Pickard, Nancy, Sandford, N.C.
 Pierce, John/Teresa, Macon, Ga.
 Pinson, Bobbie/Bill, Duncanville, Texas
 Pipkin, Joseph M., Orlando, Fla.
 Pittard, Roger/Elizabeth, Richmond, Va.
 Pittman, Iddo, Hammond, La.
 Pitts, Bill/Ruth, Waco, Texas
 Pitts, James D., Columbus, S.C.
 Platt, Wilfred, Macon, Ga.
 Plemmons, Susan, Gaffney, S.C.
 Ponder, Morgan S., Birmingham, Ala.
 Poole, Chuck/Marcia, Jackson, Miss.
 Porter, Jack/Dixie, Raleigh, N.C.
 Porter, Nathan, Crawford, Texas
 Porterfield, Coolidge, Greensboro, N.C.
 Poss, Ann D., Cuthbert, Ga.
 Poston, Steve, Matthews, N.C.
 Potts, Robert J./Dorothy, Columbus, Ga.
 Powell, Bill/Sara, Hartwell, Ga.
 Presley, Billy/Claire, Gates, N.C.
 Price, Marshall, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Prichard, Lev/Ella, Corpus Christi, Texas
 Proctor, T.G., Clemson, S.C.
 Prosser, Mr./Mrs. Bill, Ardmore, Okla.
 Prouser, Rose/Fred, Burbank, Calif.
 Purvis, Jon/George, Jackson, Miss.
 Puryear, Dr./Mrs. James B., Augusta, Ga.
 Putnam, Larry, Greensboro, N.C.
 Queen, Mike/Bobbie, Wilmington, N.C.
 Quisenberry, Virgil/Judy, Central, S.C.
 Rabitsch, T. Dean, Monticello, Ga.
 Ragan, Harold/Marge, Cairo, Ga.
 Ragans, Sherrill, Tallahassee, Fla.
 Ragsdale, John G., Little Rock, Ark.
 Ramsaur, David J., Lumberton, N.C.
 Ramsey, Jed/Frances, Beaumont, Texas
 Randall, Lenzy/Margaret, Clinton, S.C.
 Ratterree, Mack/Laura, Atlanta, Ga.
 Ray, Dan, Greer, S.C.
 Ray, Rayburn, Nashville, Tenn.
 Reagan, Jimmy M./Norma, Houston, Texas
 Reeder, James L./Mary W., Huntsville, Ala.
 Reinitz, Mary Gray, Oxford, N.C.
 Renfro, Mr./Mrs. Grady W., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Renfro, Robert, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Rennell, James, Cookeville, Tenn.
 Revelle, Earline W., Shiloh, N.C.
 Reynolds, George/Natalie, Rome, Ga.
 Reynolds, Jerry D./Rebecca B., Bulverde, Texas
 Reynolds, Sam A., Atlanta, Ga.
 Rhodes, Milton L., San Antonio, Texas
 Rhodes, V. James/Verna Adwell, Columbia, Mo.
 Rhodes, William S., Atlanta, Ga.
 Rice, Norman, Birmingham, Ala.
 Rich, J.T., Clemson, S.C.
 Rigdon, Sam, Buena Vista, Ga.
 Riley, Dan/Jackie, Macon, Ga.

- Rivers, Ernest/Louise, College Station, Texas
 Roberts, J.W./Mildred, Fayetteville, Ga.
 Roden, William H., Coker Creek, Tenn.
 Rogers, Elton/Beverly, Colonial Heights, Va.
 Rogers, Jean, Bainbridge, Ga.
 Rogers, Jim/Martha, Midland, Texas
 Rogers, Paul/Caroline, Tabor City, N.C.
 Rooks, Ron/Karen, Tampa, Fla.
 Roth, Benjamin, Woodstock, Ga.
 Rowell, Edd/Ruth, Macon, Ga.
 Royal, Mr./Mrs. A. Lee, Greensboro, N.C.
 Rudert, Barry/Rosalie, St. Louis, Mo.
 Ruffin, Ro, Pitman, N.J.
 Runyan, Roy/Louise, Swifton, Ark.
 Russell, Charles, Asheville, N.C.
 Russell, Kenneth, Calhoun, Ga.
 Rust, James/Mary Anne, Lumberton, N.C.
 Rutland, S.E., Charlotte, N.C.
 Sample, Mr./Mrs. George, Greenville, Tenn.
 Sanders, Drayton/Mary Etta, Dalton, Ga.
 Sanders, Sandra H., Bogart, Ga.
 Sandford, Rob/Bettina, Norfolk, Va.
 Sapp, David/Linda, Atlanta, Ga.
 Sasser, C.G., Conway, S.C.
 Savage, Stanley/Andrea, Moultrie, Ga.
 Savell, Bill/Jan, Maryville, Tenn.
 Scaggs, Robert A., North Augusta, S.C.
 Scales, Anne C., Dallas, Texas
 Scanlon, Clark/Sarah, Richmond, Va.
 Scott, Jim, Phoenix, Ariz.
 Scott, Susan, Hope Hull, Ala.
 Sellers, Joe C., Whiteville, N.C.
 Settle, Paula, Stanta, Ky.
 Shauf, Elton/Rebecca, Cordele, Ga.
 Shaw, Jack A., Spring Hill, Tenn.
 Shelby, David R., Knoxville, Tenn.
 Shell, Dr./Mrs. E. Wayne, Auburn, Ala.
 Shelley, Don/Susan, Greenville, S.C.
 Shields, Emily, Birmingham, Ala.
 Shingleton, Frances, Raleigh, N.C.
 Short, Ruth Ann, Marthasville, Mo.
 Shriver, George H., Statesboro, Ga.
 Shuller, Lee, Fayetteville, N.C.
 Shurden, Walter/Kay, Macon, Ga.
 Sidwell, Larry, Mt. Vernon, Ill.
 Simms, Helen, Richmond, Va.
 Simms, Mary Ann, Greer, S.C.
 Simpson, Richard/Sarah, Upatoi, Ga.
 Sims, Robert/Sara, Tyler, Ala.
 Singletary, John/Priscilla, Pittsboro, N.C.
 Sloan, Martha M., Mooresville, N.C.
 Small, Martha H., Baton Rouge, La.
 Small, R. Lephon, Florence, S.C.
 Smartt, Walter H., Rising Fawn, Ga.
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 Smith, David M., Houston, Texas
 Smith, Guy A., Midland, Ga.
 Smith, Iris H., Cairo, Ga.
 Smith, Janie W., Richmond, Va.
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 Smith, Johnny J., Zebulon, N.C.
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 Smith, Marvin/Wilda, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Smith, Mary Brown, Macon, Ga.
 Smith, Mary Elizabeth/Bob, Macon, Ga.
 Smith, Neron, Raymond, Miss.
 Smith, Oxford, Eclectic, Ala.
 Smith, Roy/Charlotte Cook, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Smith, Truman, Richmond, Va.
 Smith, Walter E., Arden, N.C.
 Smyth, Jerry P., Burlington, N.C.
 Snell, Carolyn R., Hattiesburg, Miss.
 Snider, Aubrey J./Patricia A., Bradenton, Fla.
 Snider, Ted L., Little Rock, Ark.
 Solomon, Gary/Marsha, Carrollton, Ga.
 Sowell, Broadus/Pat, Vero Beach, Fla.
 Spear, Jr., R.D., Dunwoody, Ga.
 Spencer, J.F., Fayetteville, Ark.
 Sphar, Elizabeth, Lexington, Ky.
 Stafford, Carolyn, Cairo, Ga.
 Stagg, Evelyn O., Louisville, Ky.
 Stallings, David/Grace, Cairo, Ga.
 Stanfield, David/Jean, Greensboro, N.C.
 Stanfield, Margarette, Luling, Texas
 Steinig, Ronald D., Lawton, Okla.
 Stem, Josephine, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Stephenson, Ann, Henrico, N.C.
 Stephenson, Dr./Mrs. Henry L., Washington, N.C.
 Stephenson, Robert L., Norman, Okla.
 Stevens, Lila, Two Harbors, Minn.
 Stewart, Francis, Jasper, Ga.
 Still, Charles N., Columbia, S.C.
 Stinson, Helen M., Greensboro, N.C.
 Storey, I. Harold, Rome, Ga.
 Strader, Martha, Granada Hills, Calif.
 Strange, James F./Carolyn, Tampa, Fla.
 Strawn, Bud, St. Petersburg, Fla.
 Strickland, Ann, Pendleton, S.C.
 Strickland, Mildred S., Smithfield, N.C.
 Sullivan, Roger/Shirley, Alexandria, La.
 Summerhill, Bill/Faye, Gainesville, Fla.
 Summerville, Jim/Marion, Chapel Hill, N.C.
 Swedenburg, Mary, Hoover, Ala.
 Swilley, Ava H., El Dorado, Ark.
 Talley, Drayton H., Huntsville, Ala.
 Tatum, Freddie, Brownfield, Texas
 Taylor, Frederick/Myra, Troy, N.C.
 Taylor, Michael W., Albemarle, N.C.
 Teal, Mr./Mrs. Dewey, Carrollton, Ga.
 Teel, James, Abilene, Texas
 Terry, Thomas R., Blackville, S.C.
 Testerman, Ruby, Vinton, Va.
 Thomas, Irene, West End, N.C.
 Thomas, P. Leon, Southport, N.C.
 Thomas, Ben, Winston-Salem, N.C.
 Thomason, Robert/Catherine, Clinton, S.C.
 Thompson, Alec, Forsyth, Ga.
 Tice, John D., Rocky Face, Ga.
 Tilley, Clyde/Nancy, Seymour, Tenn.
 Tilley, Jim/Claire, Hartsville, Ala.
 Tillitt, Virginia, Hannibal, Mo.
 Tillman, Earl/Carolyn, Rome, Ga.
 Timmerman, Ed/Sarah, Cairo, Ga.
 Titus, Bob, Commerce, Texas
 Todd, George/Helen, Vero Beach, Fla.
 Tolbert, Malcolm, Baton Rouge, La.
 Torbert, John W., Pineville, La.
 Travis, Kenneth/Jean, Smyrna, Ga.
 Trehwitt, Blair/Edna, Villa Rica, Ga.
 Triggs, Gene/Robbie, Clinton, Miss.
 Trott, Mildred, Montgomery, Ala.
 Troy, Laura, Atlanta, Ga.
 Tuck, Bill, Midlothian, Va.
 Tucker, Julia B., Albany, Ga.
 Tucker, Keithen/Sarah, Macon, Ga.
 Tucker, Sarah Michael, Statesboro, Ga.
 Turlington, Ralph D., Durham, N.C.
 Turnage, Becky, Washington, N.C.
 Turner, Bill/Earlene Rentz, Lancaster, Ky.
 Turner, Jerry W., Hedgesville, W. Va.
 Tuten, Jann, Brandon, Miss.
 Tutterow, Vicki M., Alpharetta, Ga.
 Tuttle, Martha, Rocky Mount, N.C.
 Tuttle, Walter/Beverly, Wake Forest, N.C.
 Twine, H. Edgar, Tampa, Fla.
 Tyer, Mrs. Charles L., Belfast, Maine
 Tyndall, Robert/Llew, Washington, N.C.
 Underwood, Mr./Mrs. George M., Sumnerdale, Ala.
 Valentine, Mary Louise, Dallas, Texas
 Vanderford, John A., Jacksonville, Ala.
 Vanlandingham, Richard, Cairo, Ga.
 Vaughn, Joe F., Richmond, Va.
 Vestal, Marie, Jonesville, N.C.
 Vick, Lucy H., Cincinnati, Ohio
 Vinson, Bill/Dotty, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Wade, Mr./Mrs. A.E., Winterville, Ga.
 Wade, Phyllis L., Tulsa, Okla.
 Wajdowicz, Oveta M., Tampa, Fla.
 Walden, Barbara, Cairo, Ga.
 Walker, Brent/Nancy, Falls Church, Va.
 Walker, Charles, Tallahassee, Fla.
 Walker, Francine, Morrow, Ga.
 Walker, Roy E., Whiteville, N.C.
 Wallace, Billy C., Stillwater, Okla.
 Wallace, John D., Morristown, Tenn.
 Wallace, Ray, Frierson, La.
 Wallin, Sadie, Mars Hill, N.C.
 Walters, Annelle, Cairo, Ga.
 Walts, Millie, Leland, N.C.
 Ward, Carolyn, Marietta, Ga.
 Ward, Charlotte, Auburn, Ala.
 Ward, James/Ruth, York, Penn.
 Ward, Ms. Troy Faith, Stanwood, Wash.
 Ward, Wayne E., Louisville, Ky.
 Wardin, Albert, Nashville, Tenn.
 Warren, T.L., Hickory, N.C.
 Washburn, Carey B., Kinston, N.C.
 Washburn, David, Durham, N.C.
 Washington, Velma/Don, Greenville, S.C.
 Watson, E.C./Mary Anne, Elgin, S.C.
 Watson, Yin, Bolivar, Mo.
 Watts, Philip/Barbara, Birmingham, Ala.
 Weaver, Doug/Pat, Hewitt, Texas
 Webb, Len/Marian, Crestwood, Ky.
 Webb, Wallace E., Dunedin, Fla.
 Welch, Carroll B., Madison Heights, Va.
 Wells, Olen, West York, Ill.
 Wentz, Mary/Wendell, Rockwall, Texas
 West, Elizabeth, Edison, Ga.
 West, Elmer, Richmond, Va.
 Whisenant, James, Fairbanks, Alaska
 Whitaker, Dr./Mrs. Bruce, Raleigh, N.C.
 Whitaker, Dr./Mrs. Dan, Ringgold, Ga.
 Whitby, Charles/Tricia, Macon, Ga.
 White, Clement/Carole, St. Petersburg, Fla.
 White, Mr./Mrs. Reuben M., Marietta, Ga.
 Whitfield, Sam R., Smyrna, Ga.
 Whitson, Charles, LaFayette, Ala.
 Wiggins, Keith A., Gates, N.C.
 Wilbanks, W. Wayne/Nicky, Commerce, Ga.
 Wilbanks, Willena F., Tallahassee, Fla.
 Wiley, Mrs. Thomas, Tupelo, Miss.
 Wilkinson, J.A., Seabrook, Texas
 Williams, Alan/Blanche, Durham, N.C.
 Williams, Ashley, Savannah, Ga.
 Williams, Beverly L., Hope Hull, Ala.
 Williams, Claude, Durham, N.C.
 Williams, Claude/Charlotte, Athens, Ga.
 Williams, Donald, Timonium, Md.
 Williams, Donnie, Ardmore, Okla.
 Williams, Eddie, Chapel Hill, N.C.
 Williams, Frances, Erwin, N.C.
 Williams, James R., Montgomery, Ala.
 Williams, Pat, Snellville, Ga.
 Williams, Preston, Montezuma, Ga.
 Williams, Voncille, Columbia, S.C.
 Williams, Woodie/Winnie, Seneca, S.C.
 Williamson, M.J., Conyers, Ga.
 Willis, Donald E., Chesterfield, Mo.
 Willis, Scott/Vickie, Murfreesboro, Tenn.
 Willis, Jr., Thurman, Monticello, Ga.
 Wilson, Chappell, Marietta, Ga.
 Wilson, Charles E., Newnam, Ga.
 Wilson, Charlie/Jill, Aliceville, Ala.
 Wilson, Dr./Mrs. O.R., Florence, S.C.
 Wilson, Frances, Statesville, N.C.
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 Wilson, Jr., Robert K./Charlie Faye, Pensacola, Fla.
 Wilson, Milton/Norma, Jasper, Ga.
 Wilson, Oliver, Wilsonville, Ala.
 Wilson, Wanda H., Weaverville, N.C.
 Winslow, Linda, Jamestown, N.C.
 Withers, Sarah, McDonough, Ga.
 Womack, Wanda J., Raleigh, N.C.
 Wood, Britton/Bobbye N., Fort Worth, Texas
 Wood, Mary A., Bentonville, Va.
 Wood, Wendell, Milledgeville, Ga.
 Woodson, Robert R./Carolyn B., Stone Mountain, Ga.
 Wright, Sue, Stillwater, Okla.
 Wyatt, Dr./Mrs. Roy, Knoxville, Tenn.
 Wyatt, Ouida, Vero Beach, Fla.
 Wyche, Ray, Hallsboro, N.C.
 Yarbrough, Leroy, San Antonio, Texas
 Yates, James F., Yazoo City, Miss.
 York, James A., Springfield, Mo.
 Young, Donald E., Macon, Ga.
 Young, Florence B., Williamsburg, Ky.
 Young, Susan R., Ringgold, Ga.
 Younger, Brett, Lilburn, Ga.

the lighter side

The audacity of hope

By Brett Younger

On March 16 — the day after Selection Sunday — four NCAA college basketball tournament brackets will be on our refrigerator. Every year my family enjoys picking the games and seeing which one of us picks the most winners. Actually, that's not completely true. The one who wins will enjoy it and the rest will not. (We do this for entertainment purposes only; no wagering is allowed.) I look forward to staring at my bracket, trying to convince myself that I know something about St. Mary's basketball. I'm already relatively certain how this dance will turn out.

Carol will use an amazing system that has served her well. She will pick Missouri because her parents used to live there, Butler because she has relatives named Butler, and IUPUI because it's fun to say. If some pesky team like Alabama State beats some big dog like Connecticut, Carol will have picked it because everyone knows hornets would give huskies fits. If this year is like most, her whimsical Nostradamus-like prognostication will put Carol well ahead of *Sports Illustrated's* so-called experts.

In his early years in the tournament, my younger son was bitten by picking too many UNC-Asheville's, Vermonts, and Holy but not that athletic Crosses, so for the last few years Caleb has been the champion of the champions. He will cast his lot with the Dukes, North Carolinas and Pittsburghs — the giants of the basketball world. Caleb has no room for high hoops hopes, only the solid hardwood of the expected. If there are no upsets, Caleb will have his bracket laminated.

I am somewhere in the middle. I will end up regretting picking Mississippi State. I have to learn that it's wrong to pick a team just because my mother gave me their cap. I

will be right to pick Wake Forest because Demon Deacons is the all-time greatest nickname. I will be wrong to go against Oklahoma because their players don't go to class. I will wish I hadn't picked Marquette just because Marquette was my favorite Jesuit missionary.

If this year is like most, I will once again grow in my admiration of our older son. Graham will end up with a broken, bleeding bracket, but in the truest sense he will far

knocking off Texas, and George Mason eliminating Georgetown. Graham picked upsets that could only happen in his hoop dreams. He continually gave his heart to directional schools (Northern Iowa, North Dakota State, South Alabama), initialed schools (VMI, VCU, BYU), and states that don't sound like states (Weber State, Portland State, Long Beach State). His love for the Gonzagas, Buffalos and Mercers kept him from winning, but it also kept him in love with the audacity of hoops.

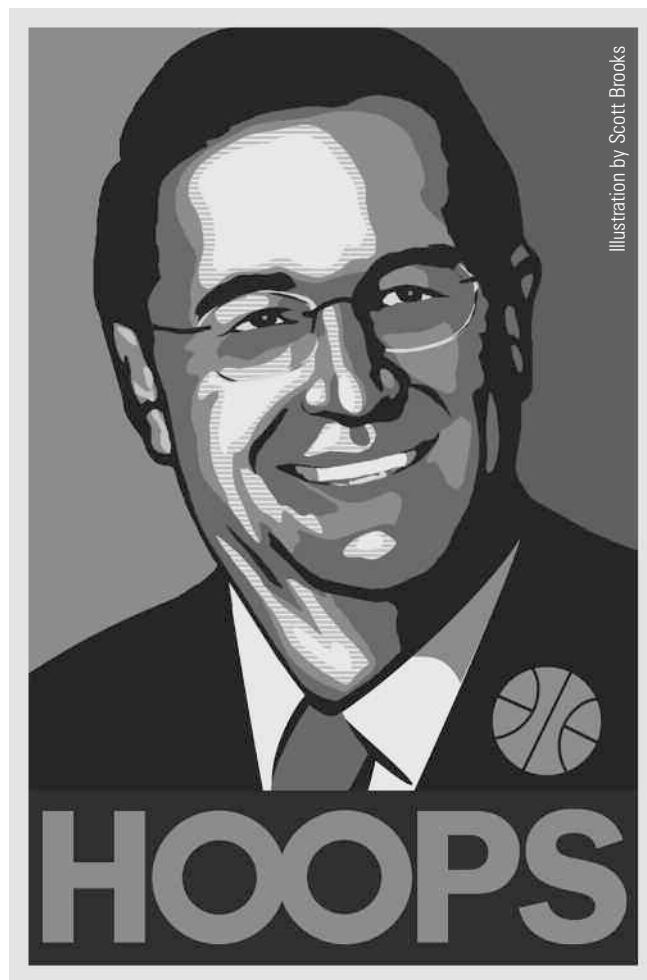
A year ago Graham became a freshman at Davidson College. This was perfect, because Graham prefers the world where the Davidson Wildcats could win it all — and last year they came close. Davidson snuck into the tournament as a #10 seed. They beat a #7, a #2, a #3 and then lost to #1 Kansas, the eventual champion, on a last-second shot. They won almost as many games as my hope-filled son predicted.

Graham does not live in the black and white of boring brackets, but in the rainbows of which dreams are made. He has chosen a world in which small, liberal arts colleges with no athletic tradition and no rebounding could take the trophy. It is, of course, madness, but if dreams are madness, then we should choose not the NCAA tournament of what will be, but the hope of what should be.

People of faith regularly put faith in the Davidsons of the world. We keep believing that David will defeat Goliath. The Christian gospel is the good news of the unexpected. We don't give ourselves to what is most likely. We give ourselves to what is

best. We dream of a world that is better than it is. **BT**

—Brett Younger is associate professor of preaching at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology.



outdistance us all. Graham chooses not to be part of the world where UCLA, Syracuse and Louisville win games, but lose their souls.

For years Graham's bracket included predictions of Western Kentucky taking out Kentucky, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi

Freedom of the press a Baptist ‘trophy’

Religious freedom has long been considered the “trophy” of Baptists — even if some Baptists of yesteryear weren’t as radical as heroes like Roger Williams, John Clarke, Obadiah Holmes and John Leland — and accounts of Baptists fighting for the separation of church and state fill the history books.

Contemporary observers are often shocked when they find Baptists — of all people — compromising religious liberty issues and church-state separation for government favoritism. Given the Baptist reputation for their advocacy of religious freedom, it is assumed that Baptists have swiftly announced their support for other First Amendment freedoms found in the Bill of Rights of the American Constitution.

Baptist giants of the early 20th century — E.Y. Mullins and George W. Truett — both voiced support for freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

Mullins, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said these freedoms were “implied” in the fundamental freedom of religious liberty. Because Baptists believe in these freedoms for themselves, Mullins reasoned, they must affirm them equally for all people.

Truett, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, argued for a free press that would not be “censured by the Sultan, nor sizzled by some Czar.”

Truett anticipated later squeamishness about abuses in the print media, however. He implored newspaper editors to have integrity and take the moral high road of integrity when deciding what to publish.

Baptist contributions to the freedoms of speech and the press have especially come through the work of Supreme Court Justice Charles Evans Hughes. A lifelong Baptist and the first president of the Northern Baptist Convention (now American Baptist Churches USA) upon its formation in 1907, Hughes was chief justice of the court for 11 years, from 1930 to 1941.

The Hughes Court advanced the parameters of freedom of the press and freedom of speech. In particular, Hughes helped incorporate both freedoms into the Fourteenth Amendment, so that First Amendment freedoms are protected from state interference.

Contemporaries of Hughes said that his

Baptist commitment to individual conscience contributed to his legal insights and that he had shown a “greater fondness for the Bill of Rights than any chief justice this country ever had.”

Southern Baptists confronted the issues of a free press during their “controversy” that raged during the 1980s. Was the denominational press a public-relations agency for the Southern Baptist Convention, or were the journalists free to report all the news in the spirit of a free press?

Most journalists argued for a free press — and were accused of siding with the moderate faction of the convention fight for doing so. In particular, Paul Pressler, one of the architects of the SBC’s fundamentalist takeover, vehemently complained about reporting by the SBC news agency Baptist Press and accused journalists of initiating



interviews that criticized the “conservative resurgence.”

In 1990, with the fundamentalist victory complete, Al Shackleford and Dan Martin of Baptist Press were fired.

The concept of a free press was also tested severely at the Sunday School Board (now LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC) when agency trustees stopped the publication of their history — in their minds skewed with liberal bias — by seminary professor Leon McBeth.

During the 400th anniversary of the origins of the Baptist tradition, we will applaud our commitment to freedom. If freedom of the press is implied in religious freedom, as E.Y. Mullins suggested, then we must be free to search and report the truth, as we understand it, and we must allow others to do the same. **BT**

— Doug Weaver is associate professor of religion at Baylor University. This column is from *Associated Baptist Press*.

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From **humble beginnings** to the space age

Huntsville church has navigated two centuries

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — Some congregations claim lofty ambitions. Members of First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Ala., ascended to unprecedented heights, sending the first Americans into outer space, landing the first men on the moon, and hurling satellites into the outer reaches of the universe.

First-time visitors would never imagine that the church is two centuries old, and could be forgiven for being confused upon turning into the church parking lot. An enormous tower first attracts the eye — reminiscent of a rocket awaiting liftoff.

In the shadows of the rocket-like tower, an enormous mural occupies the entire front of the sanctuary, recessed within what appears to be a 1960s-era pavilion. Only when one's eye focuses on an image of Jesus holding a cross, circled by the planets of our universe, does one's mind register that this might be a church.

Uniquely interesting, the buildings housing the church hint at the composition of the membership, which includes many rocket scientists and engineers, employees and contractors of Huntsville's NASA Marshall Space Flight Center and the U.S. Army.

Yet journeying to the moon and beyond was far beyond the imagination of the original members. Arriving in present-day northern Alabama in the early 19th century, the charter members of the church feared attacks from Cherokees and Chickasaws.

Founded in 1809 about six miles north of present-day downtown Huntsville near the West Fork of the Flint River, and soon named "Enon" (renamed First Baptist at the turn of the next century), the little frontier congregation slowly grew as more settlers filtered into the area.



This photo of the current building and artist Ed Starnes' rendering (next page) of the 1813 church house provided by First Baptist Church of Huntsville.



From the untamed lands of northern Alabama, the unfolding story of the Enon church proved to be a reflection of the progressive journey of some Baptists in the South. Birthed at the beginning of the modern missions movement, Enon, comprised of white and black members, wrestled with the Baptist missions controversy of the 1820s and 1830s, eventually siding with missionary forces and earning the distinction as the oldest missionary Baptist congregation in the state.

In the 1840s, the congregation affiliated with the newly formed Southern Baptist Convention. During the Civil War, the church moved to the city of Huntsville and congregational records fell silent, the latter reflective of a large-scale shortage of Baptist church records during the war.

Struggling during Reconstruction and becoming a white-only congregation, women emerged as a pivotal force in mission support, church finances and an emerging temperance movement. Discipline practices during the second half of the 19th century mirrored a widespread decline in local church life throughout the South.

Huntsville entered the 20th century as a growing city in a re-emerging South, and First Baptist grew as the city blossomed. As the SBC consolidated denominational structures, First Baptist increasingly adopted convention-sponsored programs from Sunday school to Baptist Young People's Union.

Surviving the Great Depression, the late 1940s and the 1950s witnessed congregational growth that paralleled the golden years of the SBC.

Following World War II, the U.S. Army chose Huntsville as a research and design facility for the newly emerging field of rocket science, and in the 1960s NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center led the city into a period

of unparalleled growth.

Scientists and engineers from throughout the nation and world moved to Huntsville, and many joined the congregation. While many other city congregations struggled with cultural and societal changes that swept the South in the 1960s, FBC witnessed new building programs, membership growth and the emergence of a hands-on missions focus that hinted of an emerging post-denominational

missions approach.

New challenges confronted the congregation in ensuing decades. As a fundamentalist controversy consumed Southern Baptist life in the 1980s, FBC became one of the earliest supporters of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and allowed members the freedom of conscience in supporting various Baptist organizations and endeavors.

While some historical Baptist congregations throughout the South fled downtown for the suburbs, First Baptist chose to remain

in the heart of Huntsville and minister to the needs of the community. And while many established churches experienced decline as younger generations flocked to megachurches or forsook church altogether, First Baptist retooled itself to better reach students and young families in Huntsville.

In short, the story of the Huntsville's First Baptist Church is both the story of Baptists in the South over the past two centuries as well as the story of the modern space age. Within the walls, faith and science co-exist in harmony as members worship a God who both cares for the hungry child down the street and is Lord of the vastness of the universe. **BT**

Editor's note: In recognition of the congregation's 200th anniversary, the Baptist History & Heritage Society (www.baptisthistory.org) will hold its annual meeting at First Baptist Church of Huntsville June 4-6. The meeting's theme, "Events Shaping Baptist Heritage in America," will correspond with the release of the congregation's bicentennial history written by Bruce Gourley and titled, Leading for 200 Years: The Story of the First Baptist Church of Huntsville, Alabama.

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Jewelry brightens outlook for poor

Economic malaise is nothing new for persons who live in the nation's poorest counties, where poverty is endemic and finding daily bread is a daily task. In several hard-hit areas, women and girls are learning to make money by making jewelry.

The Nada (*Nay-da*) community, near the Red River Gorge in eastern Kentucky's Powell County, is rich in mountain scenery but poor in job opportunities. That's why it, like the Mississippi River town of Helena-West Helena in Phillips County, Ark., is at the heart of a Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) rural poverty initiative.

CBF field personnel Ben and Leonora Newell in Helena-West Helena, like Paula Settle in Nada, seek to help poor residents become more self-sufficient through a variety of community development projects.

CBF's "Together for Hope" poverty initiative targets the nation's 20 poorest counties. The Newells' assignment to Helena-West Helena was one of the first: as farms in the agricultural area became increasingly mechanized, jobs become so scarce that the county's population fell sharply during the past 35 years, with Helena-West Helena alone dropping from 16,000 to 12,000 in the six years the Newells have been there.

They've had some success in meeting spiritual needs through providing activities for local youth who have few options for entertainment other than drugs, sex or trouble making, Newell said. And, they've seen community projects such as a downtown garden blossom into multiple gardens that assist more hungry residents.

But sustainability is key to making a long-term difference in people's lives, according to Newell. That's why they and other CBF field personnel have been exploring "Business as Mission," encouraging persons who have economic expertise to assist poor residents in beginning a sustainable business.

That's where jewelry making comes in. Wanda Kidd, former campus minister at Western Carolina University and now campus ministry consultant for CBF of North Carolina, had met the Newells through bringing student mission teams to Helena-West Helena. She took up jewelry making as a hobby in 2007, and quickly made far more earrings than she could wear. As other women admired her handcrafted creations, she saw a potential fund-raising



Jewelry-making provides creativity and economic opportunities in Phillips County, Ark. Photo by Ben Newell.

opportunity.

Kidd sold handmade earrings before Valentine's Day in 2008 and made enough money to donate \$500 to Habitat for Humanity. When she talked with the Newells about making more as a fund-raiser for their ministry in Helena-West Helena, Ben Newell suggested a better idea: he asked Kidd to teach the craft to local girls so they could earn their own money. Kidd did so in May 2008, using seed money from her own sales to provide supplies and tools for the girls. In short order, the "Delta Jewels," a group of 10 girls ranging from nine to 18, was born.

Kidd, who uses only real stones and sterling silver findings (the parts that touch the ear), said the girls were impressed with the quality of the materials, and noted "Just because you're poor doesn't mean you don't know beauty."

With the assistance and encouragement of five adult mentors, the girls produced about 250 pair of earrings, each one carefully packaged with the maker's signature. The earrings were offered for sale during the 2008 General Assembly in nearby Memphis, and quickly sold out.

The project offers the girls a chance to earn a livable wage while also giving back to the community or to others, Newell said. Earrings typically sell for \$10 per pair. About half is used for the supplies and operating expenses. The girls are paid \$5 per pair, and donate 10 percent of their earnings to a fund used to help others.

The concept worked so well that Kidd was soon asked to provide similar training in Nada,

Ky., Brooklyn, N.Y., and Homestead, Fla.

In Nada, Kidd trained a group of teenagers and women brought together by CBF missionary Paula Settle. Taking a cue from the nearby Red River Gorge, the group adopted the moniker "GORGEous Gals." Over the space of a few months, the group sold more than 1,000 pair of earrings, Settle said.

As in Helena-West Helena, social and spiritual components complement the project's economic benefit. Each jewelry-making session begins with a devotional and prayer led by one of the adult mentors. "Not only are the teens and women loving the extra money, they are also enjoying being together and are learning good work habits," Settle said.

The urban area of Homestead, Fla. doesn't qualify as one of the 20 poorest counties, but the poverty is still real: 43 percent of children live below the national poverty level. CBF began "Open House Ministries" in the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew 16 years ago.

There, in a community consisting mostly of Hispanic immigrants, CBF missionary Wanda Ashworth is guiding a group of girls now making jewelry under the name "Tropical Treasures."

Participants in all three programs learn important business skills while also being mentored in their emotional, social, and spiritual growth. Through their tithes, they're also learning to help others: the Delta Jewels helped to finance Kidd's first trip to train the girls in Homestead, while the GORGEous Gals contributed to a second visit. The women in Nada

also used some of their fund to buy \$25 Kroger gift cards for 16 senior adult families in the community.

To be successful, the co-ops must have access to quality supplies at a reasonable price. As a personal ministry, Kidd started a non-profit called "Embracing Hope Designs." She purchases materials in bulk to obtain lower prices and sells smaller lots to the co-ops, passing along the cost savings.

Ben Newell is anxious to see "Business as Ministry" expand. He's working on plans for Kidd to travel to South Dakota and train workers on Indian reservations, where four of the nation's poorest counties are found. Kidd has also been asked to train Hispanic women in colonias along the Texas/Mexico border, where other counties are located. When the General Assembly in Houston rolls around July 2-3, Newell hopes to have five co-ops selling products there and through other outlets.

To assist with sales and marketing for the various groups, Newell established a non-profit network called Open Hand Enterprises. Jewelry is sold primarily through church contacts maintained by CBF field personnel. It's also sold through mission fairs, state CBF meetings, WMU meetings, and even through retail outlets in Little Rock, Ark., Memphis, Tenn., and

Raleigh, N.C. Newell is hoping that others will assist in growing a larger network of sales outlets through consignment or straight sales options.

While the efforts thus far have proved successful, they've also helped to demonstrate just how complicated it can be for someone to emerge from poverty. People receiving Supplemental Security Income through government programs, for example, can earn only limited income before losing benefits. And, some of the neediest people in America are undocumented, and thus unable to earn income legally. Providing a needed hand up can require sponsors to navigate a complex web of regulations in order to provide helpful ministries without violating legal restrictions.

Undaunted, the Newells and others are pressing on, not only with the Delta Jewels, but also a variety of other development projects.

Persons interested in supporting Open Hand Enterprises can contact Ben and Leonora Newell (870-995-3518, bnewell22@gmail.com) or CBF's short term assignments and partnerships manager Chris Boltin (770-220-1607, cboltin@thefellowship.info).

The ministries provided through Together for Hope are supported by CBF's Global Missions Offering. **BT**



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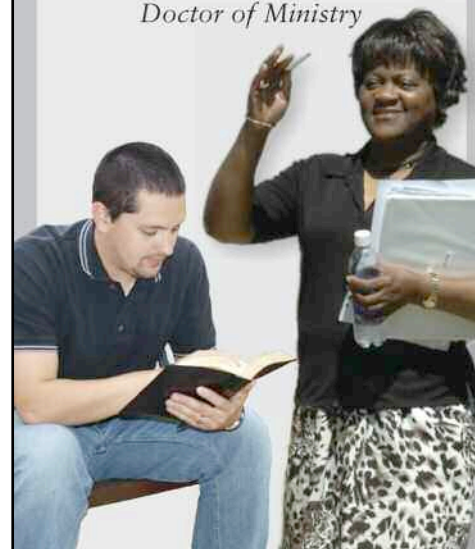
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The service was uniquely reflective of Millard Fuller's abundant life.

'Master builder for God' remembered simply

Hundreds gathered beneath the pecan trees of the once highly controversial Koinonia Farms near Americus, Ga., Feb. 4, to bury and honor Habitat for Humanity International founder Millard Fuller who died unexpectedly early the previous morning at age 74.

On an unusually cold morning in Southwest Georgia, well-bundled admirers of the man who gave away his personal wealth to invest his life in eliminating substandard housing sang impromptu hymns before an open red-clay grave as the family arrived.

Linda Fuller, who shared fully with her husband in the Christian enterprise now known worldwide, began the service by

quietly placing a single rose and a hammer marked with a cross on top of the unvarnished pine-box casket.

Chris Fuller, Baptist campus minister at Mercer University and oldest of the four Fuller children, thanked those in attendance for their support of his family during their time of grief. Yet he added that his father had a unique way of making everyone feel like family.

"You are all his brothers and sisters," said Chris.

He told how four decades earlier his father had led a burial service in that same setting for Bible scholar Clarence Jordan — his mentor, author of *The Cotton Patch Gospels* and founder of Koinonia Partners that challenged the racial inequalities so prevalent in the rural South.

A second speaker, Judge George Peagler, called Millard a "master builder for God" and spoke of how his entrance into heaven might be the first gift he received without trying to give it away.

In addition to hymns of faith, the crowd sang "Happy Birthday" as one of Millard and Linda's daughters had done spontaneously as a two-year-old at Jordan's burial in 1969.

The service was not only similar to Jordan's interment four decades earlier, but also uniquely reflective of Millard Fuller's abundant life.

It was simple. The man who could make money so easily had long ago made a life-changing spiritual decision to "not store up treasures on earth."

It was quick. The service was held the day after his death certificate was signed.

It was inclusive. The interracial crowd was reflective of Millard's wide embrace. An African-American funeral home in Americus handled the limited arrangements.

For the first time in 74 years, perhaps, the energetic, visionary Christian was still. But his mission has been multiplied.

One hammer has been silenced. Thousands of others tap in his memory. **BT**

The family has requested that memorial gifts be made to the Fuller Center for Housing, 701 South Main St., Americus, GA 31709.

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Tom Corts led Samford for 23 years

By Bob Allen
Associated Baptist Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Former Samford University President Tom Corts died unexpectedly Feb. 4 of an apparent heart attack.

Corts, 67, was president emeritus at Samford, a Baptist-affiliated university in Birmingham, which he led from 1983 until his retirement in 2006. After that he served briefly as executive director of the International Association of Baptist Colleges and Universities.

He also served as interim chancellor of the Alabama College System in 2006 and 2007. He had recently returned home to Birmingham after serving the Bush administration as coordinator of basic education for all United States government assistance to the developing world, an appointment he accepted in 2007.



Tom Corts

Corts' 23 years at Samford's helm were some of the brightest in the school's history. During his tenure Samford's endowment grew from \$8 million to \$258 million. Thirty new buildings were constructed on campus, and Corts signed and presented more than 17,000 diplomas.

"There is no way to measure the impact of Tom Corts' life and ministry on this university and the thousands of lives whom he touched," said a statement from Samford President Andrew Westmoreland, who succeeded Corts at Samford in June 2006. "We have all lost a great friend."

Corts was born in Terre Haute, Ind., the

fifth of seven children in his family. He grew up in Ashtabula, Ohio, and graduated from Georgetown College in Kentucky in 1963. He went on to earn a master's degree and doctorate from Indiana University.

Corts was president of Wingate College (now Wingate University) in North Carolina for nine years before becoming Samford's 18th president.

He was a former president of the

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, an accrediting agency for 11 states spanning from Virginia to Texas, and a founding director of the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

Corts was an ordained minister and a member of Birmingham's Brookwood Baptist Church. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Marla, and by three grown children and six grandchildren. **BT**

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Once You Step in Elephant Manure, You're in the Circus Forever

By Ed Grisamore

Ed Grisamore, a columnist for *The Macon (Ga.) Telegraph* and an active member of Macon's First Baptist Church, has written a biography with that tired ol' title (just kidding): *Once You Step in Elephant Manure, You're in the Circus Forever*.

It is subtitled, *The Life and Sometimes of Durwood "Mr. Doubletalk" Fincher* — a colorful character previously unfamiliar to me despite a good bit of fame.

Fincher was raised in Macon's cotton mill village, Payne City. A chunky boy with a creative mind and loving mother, he took to entertaining others rather than athletic prowess.

He was nurtured in faith at nearby Bellevue Baptist Church where he kept a perfect Sunday school attendance record going for many years.

Breaking out of the mill cycle, Durwood went to college and then became a teacher in Columbus, Ga. With his affable personality, he recruited students into drama who otherwise would not have done so.

There he encountered Eloise Hope who was often called on to entertain corporate guests at nearby Callaway Gardens with her "doubletalk." It became Durwood's path to the brighter spotlight.

"I never really practiced it, and I could never teach it to anybody," Eloise said in the book. "I really considered it a God-given talent."

By definition, doubletalk is "speech that is purposely incoherent but made to seem

serious by mixing in normal words and intonations."

Though it could not be taught, Fincher mastered doubletalk through observation and lots of practice.

His incoherent speech has befuzzled IBM executives, television stars and even an Atlanta cop writing him a traffic citation. Pitcher and prankster John Smoltz (now of the Boston Red Sox) brought him in to "interview" some of his Atlanta Braves teammates, coaches and announcers.

In corporate settings, Fincher is introduced as "Dr. Robert Payne," an expert on whatever subject the group is addressing. The fake identity is a tribute to his home in Payne City. At other times he takes on whatever identity works best to fool the next victim of his humor.

The late Allen Funt of *Candid Camera* tagged him as "Mr. Doubletalk." Durwood has appeared on numerous television shows with the likes of host Regis Philbin, NBC weatherman Al Roker and letter-turner Vanna White trying to decipher his rambling questions.

The most pleasing part of the book is the generosity of Durwood Fincher. He gives freely of his wealth and invests personal time with those in need.

He has close, personal relationships with persons living well below his high-rise Atlanta condo. These are moving stories of a man who cares deeply about others.

Obviously, this is one "lint-head" who has never forgotten his roots.

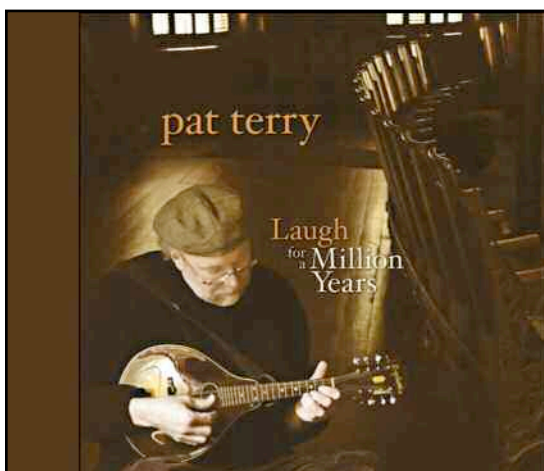
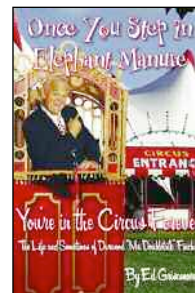
After moving to Atlanta many years ago, Fincher became active in Peachtree Presbyterian Church through a friendship with the daughter of then-pastor Frank Harrington. But he explains the denominational switch differently.

"Never in a million years did I think I would switch parties," he explained. "Of course, people laugh when I tell them I used to be Baptist, but came into some money so now I'm Presbyterian."

Most importantly, he is a generous Christian who considers writing a check (in pencil, his regular pew-mate says) and placing it in the offering plate to be an important part of his weekly worship experience. She laughs about the Sunday when he forgot his checkbook and instead dropped a note in the plate that read: "See me next Sunday."

A DVD is tucked inside the back of the book. It is the rightful place. I'd suggest reading the story as told by Ed — then popping in the disk to see Durwood at work.

For more, visit doubletalk.com ... and watch your step. **BT**



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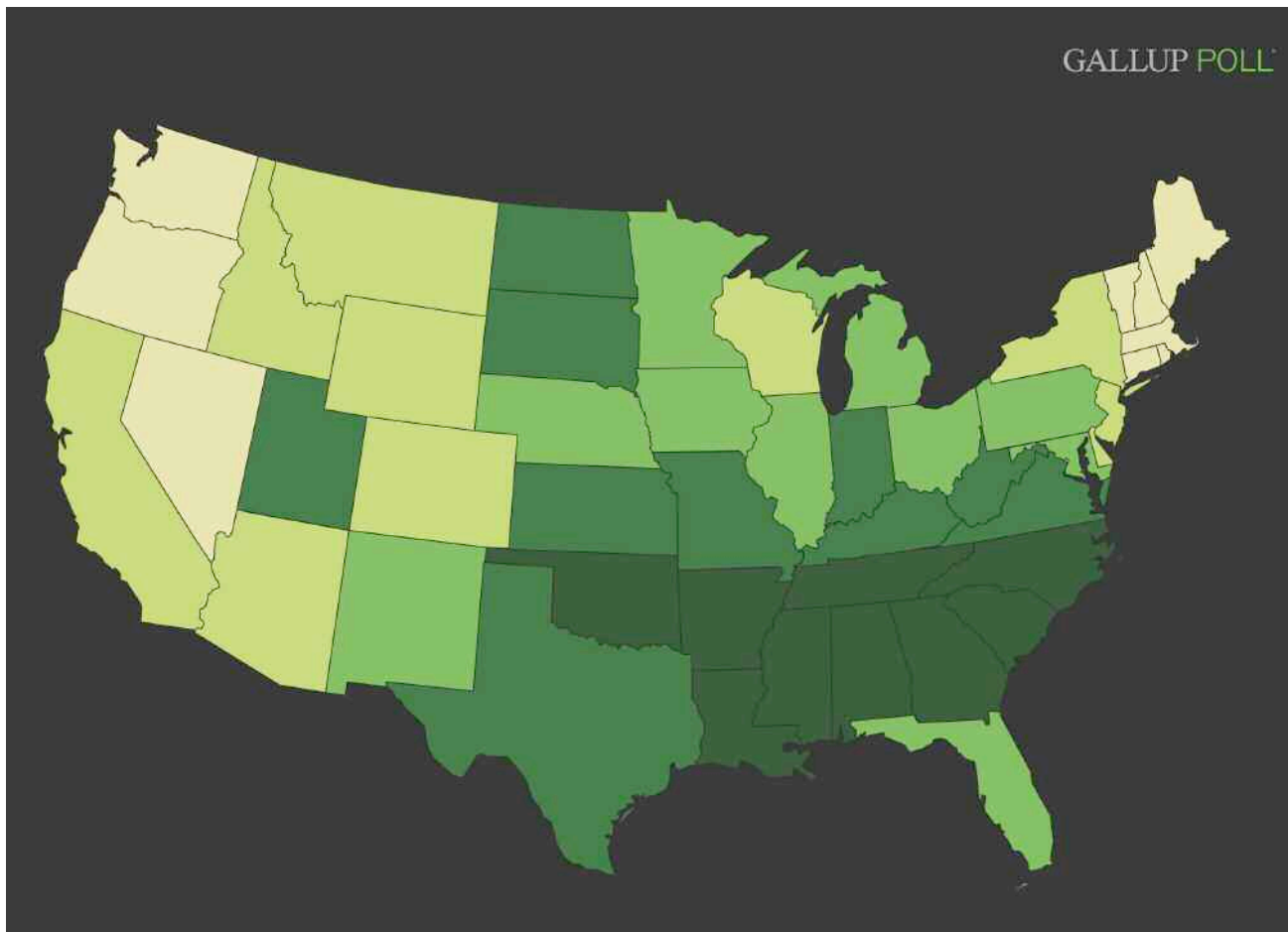


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who believes?

Survey finds God big in Mississippi, not so much in Vermont

WASHINGTON — Want to be almost certain you'll have religious neighbors? Move to Mississippi. Prefer to be in the least religious state? Venture to Vermont.

A new Gallup Poll, based on more than 350,000 interviews, finds that the Magnolia State is the one where the most people — 85 percent — say yes when asked “Is religion an important part of your daily life?”

Less than half of Vermonters, meanwhile — 42 percent — answered that same question in the affirmative.

Joining Mississippi in the top “most religious” states are other notches in the Bible Belt: Alabama (82 percent), South Carolina (80 percent), Tennessee (79 percent),

Louisiana (78 percent), and Arkansas (78 percent).

New England predominates in the top “least religious” states: Following Vermont are New Hampshire (46 percent), Maine (48 percent), Massachusetts (48 percent), Alaska (51 percent) and Washington (52 percent).

“Clearly, states in the South in particular, but also some states in the Southwest and Rocky Mountains ... have very religious residents and New England states in particular, coupled with states like Alaska and others, are irreligious,” said Frank Newport, editor-in-chief of The Gallup Poll.

The reasons why, however, are far less clear, observers said.

For example, some might attribute the religiosity of Mississippi to the high percentage of African-Americans — long known for being comparatively highly religious — who live there.

State of the States *Importance of Religion*

- Most Religious
- More Religious
- Average
- Less Religious
- Least Religious

“Mississippi is still No. 1, even if we look only at whites,” said Newport. “Whites in Mississippi are also very religious.”

Overall, Gallup researchers found that 65 percent of all Americans said religion was important in their daily lives. The total sample of 355,334 U.S. adults, including respondents with land-line telephones and cellular phones, had a margin of error of plus or minus 1 percentage point. Some states had margins of error as high as plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Newport was surprised that one state — Utah — did not make the “most religious” list, given the state’s large Mormon population.

“They apparently have two kinds of people in the state,” he said. “They have the very religious and devout Mormon population, but it also looks like they have a lot of nonreligious people.”

Mark Silk, director of the Greenberg Center for the Study of Religion in Public Life, said Gallup’s findings reflect research conclusions from the upcoming American Religious Identification Survey, which he is working on with other scholars.

“New England is now slightly ahead of the Pacific Northwest in terms of the high rate of unchurched people,” said Silk, co-author of *One Nation, Divisible: How Regional Religious Differences Shape American Politics*.

Although evangelicalism may be making some inroads in Western states such as Washington and Oregon, he



attributes the predominance of New England states in the “least religious” category to other demographic trends in the Northeast.

“What we are finding ... is a considerable drop in New England in the Catholic population,” said Silk, whose center is based in Hartford, Conn.

And it’s a matter of them moving away from the church, he said, not the region. “Catholics are holding their own nationwide because of Latino immigration but, relatively speaking, there’s little of that in New England.”

Silk suspects some Catholics have left the church because of the Catholic sex abuse scandal that first erupted in Boston, which “kind of pushed some sort of relatively loose affiliation Catholics over the edge.”

For his part, Newport said Catholics overall no longer are more religious than the average American — when it comes to stating the importance of religion or in attending church services — but it’s hard to specify exactly why New England states figure so prominently in the “least religious” states.

“They’re about average and that’s a change,” he said. “It used to be you’d find Catholics significantly higher. ... I don’t know to what degree that would affect what’s going on in New England.” **BT**

Following is Gallup’s entire list of states, in order of what percentage of respondents said religion is “an important part” of their daily lives:

- Mississippi (85)
- Alabama (82)
- South Carolina (80)
- Tennessee (79)
- Louisiana (78)
- Arkansas (78)
- Georgia (76)
- North Carolina (76)
- Oklahoma (75)
- Kentucky (74)
- Texas (74)
- West Virginia (71)
- Kansas (70)
- Utah (69)
- Missouri (68)
- Virginia (68)
- South Dakota (68)
- North Dakota (68)
- Indiana (68)
- Nebraska (67)
- New Mexico (66)
- Pennsylvania (65)
- Florida (65)
- Maryland (65)
- Ohio (65)
- Iowa (64)
- Minnesota (64)
- Illinois (64)
- Michigan (64)
- Delaware (61)
- Wisconsin (61)
- District of Columbia (61)
- Idaho (61)
- Arizona (61)
- New Jersey (60)
- Wyoming (58)
- Colorado (57)
- Hawaii (57)
- California (57)
- Montana (56)
- New York (56)
- Connecticut (55)
- Nevada (54)
- Rhode Island (53)
- Oregon (53)
- Washington (52)
- Alaska (51)
- Massachusetts (48)
- Maine (48)
- New Hampshire (46)
- Vermont (42)

What do these churches have in common?

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

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Fernwood Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C.
First Baptist Church, Ahoskie, N.C.
First Baptist Church, Aiken, S.C.
First Baptist Church, Anderson, S.C.
First Baptist Church, Asheville, N.C.
First Baptist Church, Bladenboro, N.C.
First Baptist Church, Cape Girardeau, Mo.
First Baptist Church, Carolina Beach, N.C.
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First Baptist Church, Clemson, S.C.
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First Baptist Church, Southern Pines, N.C.
First Baptist Church, Spruce Pine, N.C.
First Baptist Church, Tifton, Ga.
First Baptist Church of Wheaton, Silver Spring, Md.
First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C.
Forest Hills Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C.
Franklin Baptist Church, Franklin, Va.
Georgetown Baptist Church, Georgetown, Ky.
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.
Jersey Baptist Church, Lexington, 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.
Lambeth 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.
Second Baptist Church, Lubbock, Texas
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, Seneca, S.C.
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.

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