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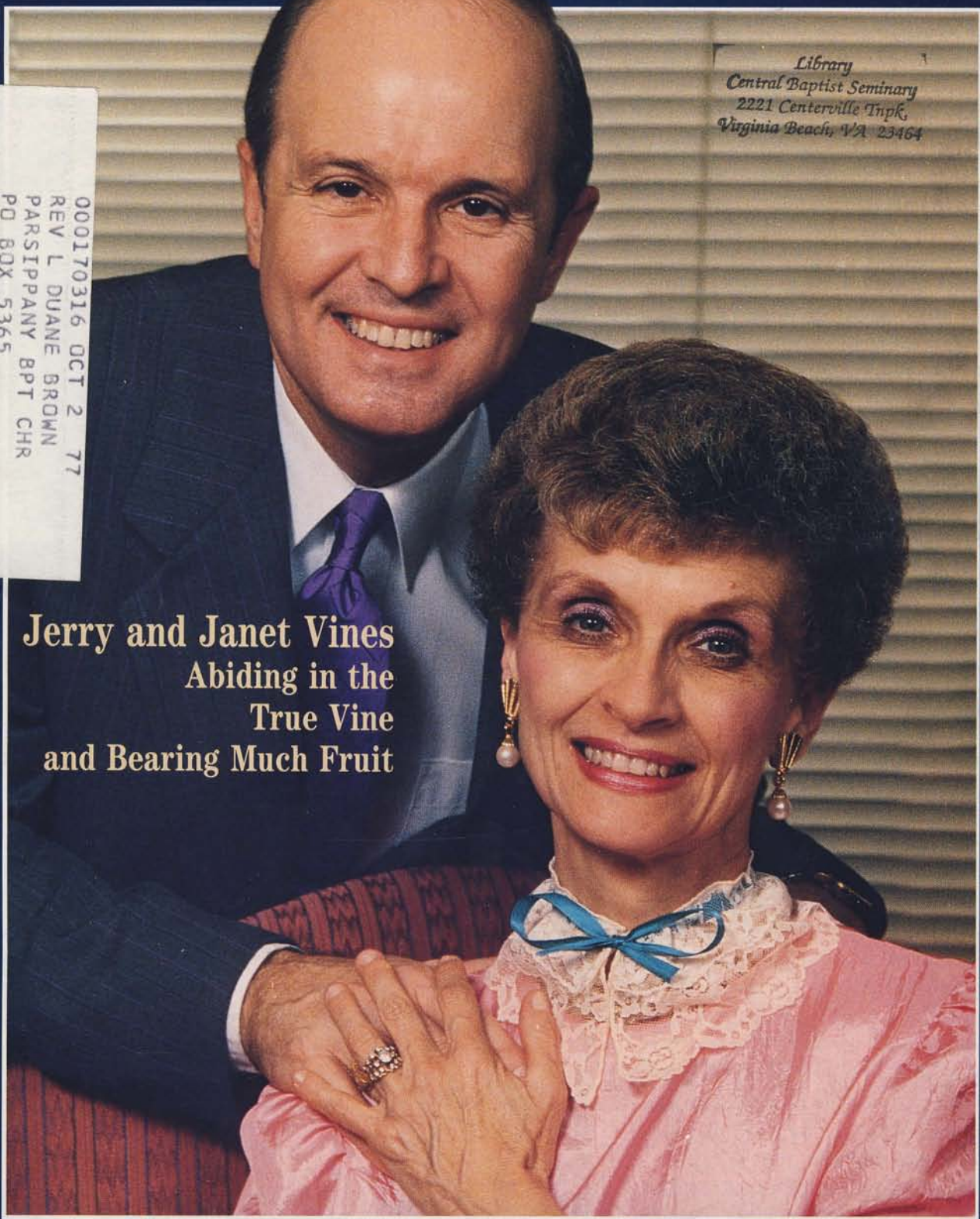
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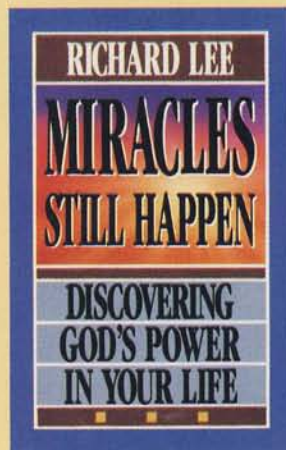
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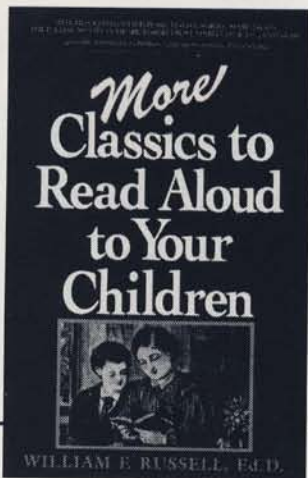
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Cover photo by Cathy Watson



■ **Cover story:** Jerry Vines, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, hopes to set "a tone and create an atmosphere where healing can occur."

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■ Georgi Vins, formerly imprisoned in the Soviet Union for engaging in Christian ministry, is now an energetic and relentless international spokesman for the cause of persecuted Russian churches. Joel B. Curry relates Vins's story of faith.

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■ The Southern Baptist Convention—this nation's largest Protestant denomination—dates back to pre-Civil War days. Periodically rocked by controversy, the dust from one of the organization's most heated battles seems to be settling. What will the future hold?

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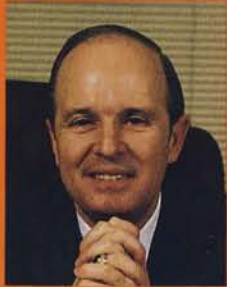
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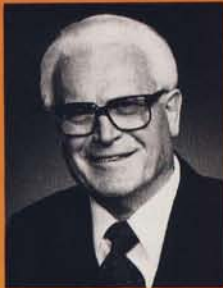
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■ **Very popular**

Your monthly publication has proven to be very popular among the men here at the prison. It is always passed around among many of the men and enjoyed by them. It has proven to be very helpful and instructional as well as interesting.

W. James Pall, Chaplain
State Correctional Institution
Dallas, Pennsylvania

■ **Money can't buy happiness**

I must confess my uneasiness with the emphasis in John M. Koessler's article, "Help Your Pastor to Stay." I do agree that the local church is biblically responsible to take good care of the pastor financially. Should this be the consideration that motivates him to stay?

I started out 25 years ago with a big financial package of \$50 a week, serving as full-time youth director. If money will help a man stay, I should not have gone to that church. Over the years since that humble beginning, I have been treated fairly well.

At the expense of being misunderstood or appearing "super-pious," I thought "men of God" should be spiritual enough to consider the will of God as the reason for staying. A financial package will be the primary attraction and consideration of "hirelings" but not to "good shepherds." Those who are motivated by money will flee to greener pastures when another church offers bigger packages. Some men stay in denominational churches with great financial packages at the expense of [not] separating themselves from Liberalism.

Many men have moved in times of discouragement while few ever think of moving when they see the blessing of God upon their ministry. Money has no power to buy happiness, even in the ministry.

As I see it, a financial package is a distant third to the will of God and

the sense of fulfillment. If people want to encourage their pastor, then follow his leadership wholeheartedly and invest time with personal involvement in reaching others for Christ. If he's a godly man, he'll stay and "give his life for the sheep."

Bob Wallace, Pastor
Galilean Baptist Church
Cedar Hill, Texas

■ **State is not interfering**

W.N. Otwell ("Texas Pastor Stands Firm," May) seems to be doing a good thing in giving out free food to the poor and hungry. He may be sincere in his efforts, but I believe he is wrong in not obeying Scriptures such as 1 Peter 2:13. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of

man for the Lord's sake."

Obtaining a permit to prepare and hand out sandwiches is no different from securing a license to drive a car or to get married. I feel that some of our Christian brothers are overreacting and have carried the principle of separation of church and state too far.

When we started a ministry to troubled teenage girls in 1971, we were told by a veteran in this kind of work to see if we could get a state license. We have one and the state is not interfering one bit in the spiritual ministry we offer to the girls. Furthermore, our home has been open for 18 years while others have been closed.

There was a time when I might have felt similarly to Brother Otwell, but thank God for some wise

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counsel from godly men who helped me develop a clear biblical perspective on the issue. I am afraid Satan is having a field day discrediting our ministries in the eyes of an unbelieving world because of a stubborn refusal on the part of some to cooperate in reasonable health and safety matters.

Bill Cowell
Victory Village
Hutchinson, Kansas

■ **Beautiful**

The cover of your March issue is beautiful. It very closely resembles the water springs at Cesarea, Philippi, at the foot of Mount Hermon in Israel.

Are copies of this picture by David Heath available for purchase? If so, I'd like to get the information to order one.

Joe West
New Concord, Ohio

Editor's note: Unfortunately, prints of the painting used on our March cover are not available for purchase. However, other works by Mr. Heath are available through commercial galleries.

■ **Appreciate**

I sincerely appreciate the good article on our church in your May Preaching & Pastoring section. During the kick-off of the 200th Anniversary Services, we had over 1,000 people in attendance and fed 800 people at a luncheon. The pastors who spoke were a tremendous blessing to our people throughout the week. The congressman and civic leaders were a blessing as well.

Thank you so much for the well-written, accurate article.

J. Aloysius Hopson III
Pastor-Teacher
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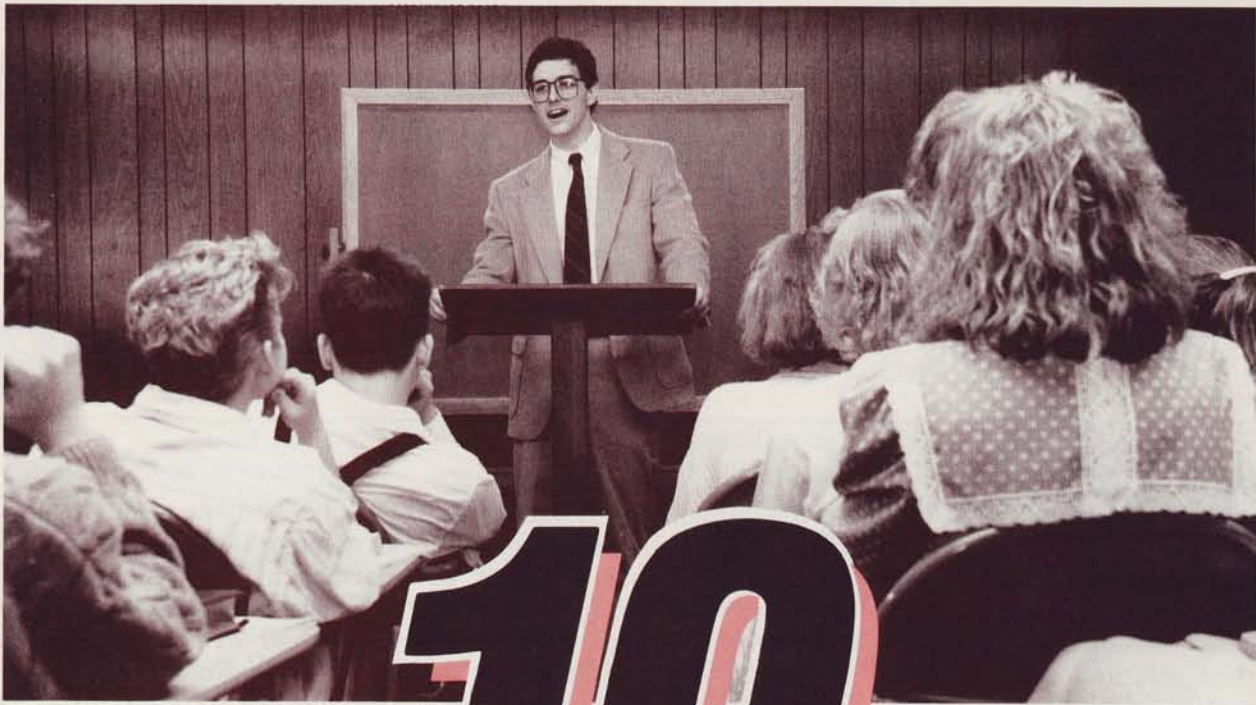
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The SBC: Revived and Rebuilding

Josiah was only 8 years of age when he came to the throne in Jerusalem. These were dark days for Judah. Under Manasseh, Josiah's grandfather, they had endured more than a half century of apostasy. Josiah's father was so wicked his servants conspired to have him assassinated in his own house. During this time the temple had fallen into disrepair. Its broken timbers were mute testimony to the spiritual condition of the nation.

When young Josiah saw the condition of the temple, he commissioned its renovation. The carpenters set to work. At this time Hilkiah, the high priest, made a most remarkable discovery. He "found the book of the law in the house of the Lord" (2 Kings 22:8). What a state of affairs! The Word of God had not been preached for so long that they had actually lost the Book! A great revival followed. High places were torn down. Idolatrous priests were removed. Worship was restored, and another generation was spared before the judgment of God fell.

Recent events in the Southern Baptist Convention cause me to reflect on this amazing story. More than two decades ago a few modern-day Josiahs began to assess the condition of their churches and schools. What they saw moved them to prayer and action. Churches that were once great outreach centers for

world evangelization had grown cold and had fallen into spiritual disrepair. Schools founded to train pastors and missionaries had become "high places" of idolatrous intellectual pursuits. But worst of all, they found

**God has blessed
as year after year
we have seen
the SBC presidency
retained by God-fearing,
Bible-preaching,
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pulpits where the Word of God was never preached. They had lost the Book in the house of the Lord!

A few visionaries like Paige Patterson dared to believe this great giant could be revived and rebuilt. But first the Word of God would have to be returned to its rightful place in her pulpits and classrooms. W.A. Criswell's book *Why I Preach That the Bible Is Literally True* broke like a bombshell in the convention, generating intense debate. A strategy for taking control of the leadership began to take shape. With this came a chance to reshape the seminaries by replacing Liberal

board members with Conservatives. The last decade has been critical as the Liberals (who prefer to be called "Moderates") unleashed every weapon they could to regain control. But God has blessed as year after year—sometimes in elections too close for comfort—we have seen the SBC presidency retained by God-fearing, Bible-preaching, fundamental, Conservative leaders.

They said it couldn't be done. But it has been done! As we look ahead to the closing decade of this century, the Southern Baptists may very well be modern-day Josiahs leading the way in reestablishing the priority of the local church, reasserting the inerrancy of the Bible, recommitting to world missions and evangelism, and returning to education that is truly Christian.

I believe this can happen. When the Word of God is preached, the power of God is unleashed. There is no limit to what God can do. In this issue we applaud many of these recent developments in the SBC. We realize that what happens in the SBC cannot help but impact the entire Christian world.

We encourage our readers to pray that this spiritual revival might continue and that it might spill over into other denominations and churches to revitalize our ministries and refocus our work. ■

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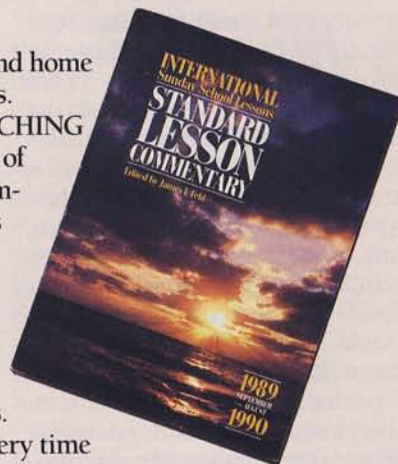
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SBC Looks to the

Moments after the election of Jerry Vines to the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1988, Paige Patterson, president of Criswell College, informed reporters that "the course correction has been complete. Controversies don't go on forever."

Like any democratic body, the Southern Baptist Convention has been periodically rocked by controversy, but in the last 10 years the nation's largest Protestant denomination has undergone its most crucial test. The dust is settling now. The battle is done. And for another year, control of the SBC returns to a fundamental, Conservative Jerry Vines. What does the future hold for the SBC?

Southern Baptist Past. In order to fully understand the course of the SBC, we must understand the purpose, structure, and history of the organization. Prior to 1845, Baptists in America were affiliated with the Triennial Convention and the American Baptist Home Mission Society. Baptists in the South, however, felt that the Home Mission Society neglected mission work in the Southern states. The society was aware of the neglect, and once offered to pay any missionary \$100 per month, instead of the usual \$100 per year, if he would work in New Orleans. There were no takers.

The antislavery movement was another problem. Practically every aspect of Southern life depended on slave labor, and the Southern Baptists simply could not foresee an end to slavery. Many of them did not think slavery was right, but since it had been firmly rooted long

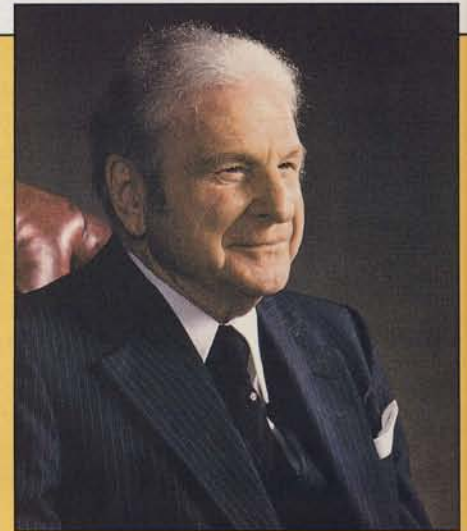
before they were born, and they could not see a practical way to end it, they tried to follow Christ within the established system. They were concerned about the spiritual welfare of their slaves. They allowed them to worship, serve as deacons, and preach to other slaves. But when the Northern Baptists began to push the antislavery movement, the Southern Baptists had no recourse but to withdraw.

In a vain hope to keep peace, the Triennial Convention and the Home Mission Society declared their neutrality on the slavery issue, but when the Alabama Baptist Convention asked if the board would appoint a slaveholder as a foreign missionary, the board flatly stated that it would not.

The shot, as it were, had been fired and there was no retreat. Soon 293 men met in Augusta, Georgia, for a consultative convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention was officially formed. William B. Johnson of South Carolina, a former president of the Triennial Convention, was elected president. The convention's purpose was to carry "into effect the benevolent intentions of our constituents, by organizing a plan for eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the whole denomination in one sacred effort, for the propagation of the Gospel."

Unlike the Triennial Convention, which did little but promote foreign missions, the new convention chose to include all objects of the churches' concerns. Like an elder brother who offers advice and leadership without interference, the convention allowed its churches independence and equal rights. Participating member churches were those who contributed funds. These two aspects of the convention have not changed.

The Southern Baptist Convention weathered the Civil War, a disruption in society and severe financial strain. There were controversies revolving around theological questions: did Baptist churches possess an unbroken succession from the first church in Jerusalem? Could a Southern Baptist church al-



"Jerry Vines is very personable, totally uncompromising doctrinally, yet he will go the extra mile to maintain harmony and peace."

—Charlie Martin

by Angela Elwell Hunt

Past for Future Success

low a Methodist minister to preach in its pulpit? Can a member take the Lord's Supper outside the church where he is a member? The most damaging controversy concerned missionaries: who had the right to appoint and direct missionaries, the churches, or the SBC mission board?

Though questions and contro-

versies raged and the convention nearly split in 1859, the SBC survived its fledgling years to become a powerful network of cooperating churches with missionaries around the world. The emphasis on missions remained strong, and the emphasis on education continued to grow as other seminaries and colleges were established. Social concerns were addressed through the founding of hospitals and social programs.

In 1954 the SBC Christian Life Commission approved the Supreme Court decision declaring race segregation in public schools to be unconstitutional. The Court's decision, said the committee, was "in harmony with the constitutional guarantee of equal freedom to all citizens, and with the Christian principles of equal justice and love for all men." The convention founded by slaveholders had come a long way.

In 1924 Modernism reared its ugly head, and most Southern Baptists stood strongly against it, but evolution was hotly debated. Many felt the convention should take an unequivocal stand against it. Others felt such a statement would undermine the freedom of scientific investigation and discussion that should exist in Southern Baptist colleges. The evolution issue raised a storm in the conventions of 1925 and 1926, but a statement by then-president George McDaniel reaffirming the teachings of Genesis stilled the strife.

In 1925 at Memphis, the SBC adopted its first formal confession of faith. Now called "The Baptist Faith and Message," it was written in part to respond to charges by J. Frank Norris, a former SBC loyalist. Norris attacked Southern Baptists for allegedly teaching evolution in their colleges, tolerating

"Modernistic" views of Scripture in their seminaries, and making an idol of the denomination in their churches.

In 1962 another controversy spurred a second confessional statement by the SBC. At this convention the messengers adopted resolutions declaring the entire Bible to be the inspired Word of God. Southern Baptist leaders wanted it to be clear that Baptists place their faith in the Bible, not in human doctrinal statements.

Southern Baptist Present. The most recent controversy began in Houston in 1979. At a preceding Pastors' Conference the SBC seminaries had been attacked, and the resulting concern at the convention was *inerrancy*. But creeping Liberalism had come to light in the SBC, although many claimed the battle over inerrancy was simply a ploy to install Conservatives in powerful political positions.

The problems soon became all too obvious. Eyebrows were raised when Mercer University, the nation's second largest Baptist university, was named by *Playboy* as the ninth best party school, replete with sexy coeds who show "true Southern hospitality."

In a "My Turn" column in the December 21, 1987, *Newsweek*, Rachel Smith says that when she attended a Baptist college, "I was encouraged to decide for myself what I believed about the Scriptures. Stories like the Creation, the Tower of Babel, Noah and the Flood, seemed to fit into the category of theological myth. What was I to do with New Testament issues such as the Virgin Birth, miracles, and the Resurrection? Fundamental beliefs were being called into question, yet I discovered I could think freely and be a person of faith."

"I am praying that our fundamental, Bible-believing people will become so numerous and so dedicated until the voice of the Moderates subsides into an indistinguishable whisper."

—W.A. Criswell





What happened to the Baptist message of faith in the Bible? Conservative pastors and church members wondered, while Liberals kept calling "fundamental beliefs" into question.

In response, two factions developed, each bitterly opposing the other. The group who believes in biblical inerrancy is called "Fundamentalist," or "ultra-Conservative," by the opposing group. The group who believes that the Bible may be only partially inspired, or inspired myth, calls itself "Moderate." Others call them "Liberal."

The Liberals claim the Fundamentalists have arisen purely for political purposes and power plays. The Fundamentalists claim the Liberals have taken Southern Baptist seminaries, literature, and agenda far beyond what is acceptable to God-fearing Baptists.

After the 1988 and 1989 elections of Jerry Vines as president of the convention, Conservative leaders breathed a sigh of relief. Over the last 10 years a succession of Bible-believing presidents has appointed Fundamentalists to leadership

positions. The convention, for all practical purposes, is back on track. Even if a Liberal were elected president in the near future, Fundamentalists now placed on boards of the various SBC agencies could not be displaced until their terms expire.

SBC leaders want nothing more than to put the past behind them and restore peace. Many see Jerry Vines as an ideal peacemaker. "He is very personable, totally uncompromising doctrinally, yet he will go the extra mile to maintain harmony and peace," says Charlie Martin, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Indian Rocks. "He is a peace-loving person, and if the other side will allow him, he will do a lot to restore harmony in the convention."

Paige Patterson says Vines will influence the convention in three areas. "He's totally uncompromising in his commitment to the Word of God and the lordship of Christ. He's probably one of the most fully prepared pastors in terms of his theological grasp. His general attitude is sweet and gentle. He's so approachable even people who don't agree with him find they love him."

If peace cannot be found, there remains the question of what will happen to the Liberals in the con-

vention. A few have aligned themselves in the Southern Baptist Alliance. Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission in Nashville, believes, "Many of them will discover that their caricature and stereotypes of inerrantists are erroneous. Many of them will discover that their equation of inerrancy with cultural Fundamentalism is incorrect. Many of them, I believe, will find in dialogue with inerrantists, valid reasons for returning to the Conservative theology of their adolescence and young adulthood. Some will be forced to come to a decision about their present beliefs versus historic Southern Baptist beliefs on issues, and will have to decide whether they can function comfortably with the tension between the two."

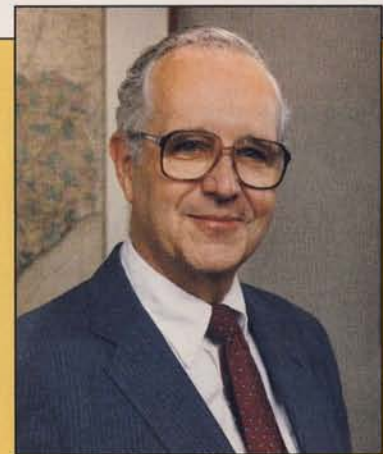
"Like sin and the Devil," says the outspoken W.A. Criswell, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Dallas, "we shall have the so-called Moderates among us. I am praying that as time goes on, our fundamental, Bible-believing people will become so numerous and so dedicated until the voice of the Moderates subsides into an indistinguishable whisper. This is a hope and a prayer."

"Within the next five or so years the gulf between the Bible-believing people in the convention and the Liberals will become more evident.



"The issue is not political. It is scriptural. When they see the stronger missions emphasis and keener evangelistic thrust, those people will come on in."

—Bob Tenery



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It is like the Scriptures say in the Book of Amos. 'Can two walk together, except they be agreed?' A man who believes the Bible, and a man who does not, have difficulty belonging to the same institution. They have even more difficulty outlining the work that is to be done. May God grant victory to His Bible-believing people."

Bill Hann, pastor of Mid-Cities Baptist Church in Westminster, California, knows of some Moderates who plan to join the American Baptists or the Episcopalians. "There are probably some churches that will stay in the SBC and form a fellowship within it. Others may stay in their local churches and do ministry on a local basis and not get involved in convention work or denominational affairs."

Bob Tenery, a pastor and editor of the *Southern Baptist Advocate*, believes the opposition group is made up of both Moderates and Liberals. "The hard-core Liberals will probably pull out and form another denomination," he says. "But now only 50 churches of the SBC's 37,000 have identified with the Southern Baptist Alliance. If they can gather more churches, they may well disassociate themselves from the SBC."

"Many of the Moderates, however, are Conservatives, but have

been confused over the issues, due in part to the bias of the Baptist press and state newspapers. The issue is not political, as many have said. It is scriptural. Baptists have been told there is a 'takeover' movement, but how can you 'take over' something you're already a part of? We're just exercising our rights.

"Baptists are going to see we're not the piranhas we've been portrayed to be. When they see the stronger missions emphasis and keener evangelistic thrust, those people will come on in."

Charlie Martin believes the situation of 10 years ago will reverse itself. "When Conservative churches didn't want to use Liberal literature or to support Liberal seminaries, we designated our support monies," he explains. "I believe now the Liberals will do the very thing they used to criticize the Conservatives for doing."

What will happen to the Moderates? Jerry Vines has only a three-word answer. "Time will tell."

The convention now faces the task of realigning the SBC seminaries with the Baptist Faith and Message. Bob Tenery says the Conservative trend in the convention will naturally be reflected in the seminaries. "Some are already more Conservative than others. In Southern and Southeastern the

trend is seen more clearly. Golden Gate is already Conservative. Southwestern and New Orleans will continue their Conservatism and will be less amenable to Moderates on their faculties than in the past."

The clash in seminary ideology has presented problems in the past. "You can't take a graduate from a seminary with a Liberal tradition and put him together with a graduate from a Conservative school and expect them to cooperate within the association," Tenery explains. "If we're going to have unity, our seminaries need to be doing some things from the same approach. We don't need cookie-cutter graduates, but we need to come at things similarly."

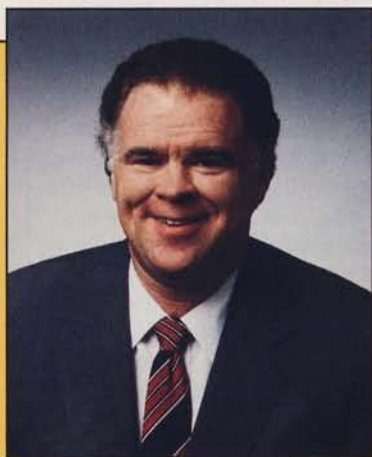
When Tenery graduated from his Southern Baptist seminary he had taken five courses in evangelism, but only recently have some seminaries installed departments of evangelism. "We've got to do more than turn out counselors," he emphasizes. "Our graduates must be well-grounded in evangelism, Sunday school work, church operations, and so forth."

"Southern Baptist seminaries differ in so many deep-seated ways," says Criswell. "One of the seminaries, Southeastern, has been

continued on page 60

The only problem the Conservative movement has had is the misrepresentation of its motives and purposes by those who are resisting return to biblical theology."

—Paul Pressler



"The energy we've spent on the issues of the last 10 years will be channeled into more productive areas."

—Paige Patterson



Leading SBC with



“I like this time in history. The challenge of reaching people for Christ is so great in our age.”

“He’s a man of few words, but he is warm, kind, gentle, and of great strength,” says Janet Vines.

“His is a name above reproach.”

No one knows a man as well as his wife, and Janet Vines is no exception. She describes her husband as a “quiet, deep, spiritually minded man who walks with God.” Hundreds of others who know Jerry Vines agree with her.

At the Southern Baptist Conven-

tion in San Antonio in June 1988, Jerry Vines was elected to the one-year post of convention president with 50.5 percent of the vote. In this year’s election he received 56.5 percent of the vote. Vines follows a long list of Fundamentalist presidents such as Adrian Rogers, Bailey Smith, Jimmy Draper, and Charles Stanley.

For a preacher, Jerry Vines is a man of surprisingly few words. Perhaps he has simply learned the invaluable wisdom of holding his tongue, but a glib chatterer he is not. He is a man of deep conviction,

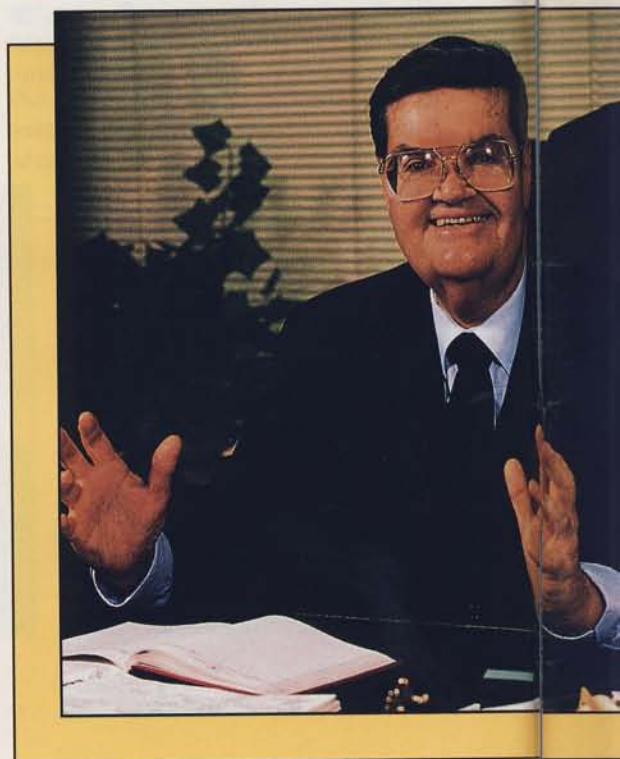
great personal concern, and an insatiable faith in both God and the 14.7 million Christians in the Southern Baptist Convention.

He grew up with a Christian family in Carrollton, Georgia, and was saved at 9 years old. His first job was as a bag boy in a local grocery store. But when he was 16 the Lord began to deal with him about his future. “I had a clear-cut call from the Lord to preach,” says Vines. “It came about over a period of weeks and resulted in a time of full and final surrender to God’s call on my life.”

Today Jerry Vines and Homer Lindsay serve as co-pastors of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida. The 20,000-member church is still growing. Currently they are involved in a program to build a new 10,000-seat auditorium. The two men split preaching and pastoral responsibilities.

Vines, 51, says he is honored to be pastor of the greatest group of Christians he has ever known. “I’m Southern born and Southern bred,” he grins, “and when I die I’ll be Southern dead. I’m still a country preacher, and I’m pastor of the world’s largest country church.”

It’s a challenging time to be pastor of any church, Vines agrees. “I like this time in history because it’s an exciting time to be a Christian. The challenge of reaching people for Christ is so great in our age. The



Peace and Calmness

increasing secularization of our society creates a real challenge for those who believe the gospel."

He has taken this challenge from his own church to the members of 37,000 churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. "My greatest opportunity is to be used of God to call Southern Baptists to a renewed commitment to personal soulwinning," he says. He was not elected to office on a mandate of making peace with warring factions or whipping seminaries into shape. His mandate comes from God, and it is simply to lead people to Christ.

If someone were to give a million dollars to the SBC, Vines says he would like to see it applied to home and foreign missions. His greatest fear is that Southern Baptists will become "keepers of the aquarium rather than fishers of men."

Vines never aspired to fill any office in the convention. "My ambition is to be what God wants me to be. I have always felt that the office should seek the man, not the man the office."

“My ambition is to be what God wants me to be. I have always felt that the office should seek the man, not the man the office.”

With this attitude, he became president with no worries, doubts, or

misgivings about the job. "I had great peace and calmness in my heart," he recalls. "I try to measure my success by what the Bible teaches me to be and do."

Convention leaders feel sure his commitment to personal evangelism will unify Southern Baptists. "Jerry Vines is a person who is mainly interested in reaching lost souls for a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ," says Judge Paul Pressler. "His loving, gracious approach will be healing, and his deep spiritual convictions will lead Southern Baptists in the right direction."

Bob Tenery, pastor of Burkemont Baptist Church in Morganton, North Carolina, says Vines will "continue the Conservative trend through his appointments. He is a good, solid, traditional Southern Baptist. He's unbending in his

Co-Laboring in Ministry

Those who visit the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida, usually come away a little breathless. "It's more like a small city than a church," one visitor remarked. The church's parking garages, the four-story building for youth, the large bookstore, a skating rink/gym, and a sanctuary seating 3,500 are all very imposing. The facilities are spread over five city blocks on prime property in downtown Jacksonville. Not surprisingly, the church has not one pastor, but two. Homer G. Lindsay, Jr., and Jerry Vines serve as co-pastors of the great Southern Baptist Church.

Is being a co-pastor a help or hindrance to a man's ministry? Homer Lindsay finds his role extremely practical and helpful. "It's a blessing because it gives me someone to counsel with. We don't have to face our problems alone. It has been a special blessing for me to have Jerry Vines here, because recently I suffered two severe heart attacks, and Jerry Vines was able to carry on the work. Sharing the preaching load is also a great help."

Lindsay preaches at the late Sunday morning service and on Wednesday evenings. Vines preaches the 8 a.m. Sunday morning service and

on Sunday nights. The arrangement allows both men to function at their best.

Homer Lindsay says soulwinning is the greatest challenge of the ministry. He began his ministry in 1952 at a small mission in Miami with 42 members. He and his church made soulwinning a priority, and since that time he has seen "37 years of church growth." By keeping the minds of the people on reaching the lost, Lindsay says, people will learn how to love Jesus and be thankful. A loving attitude benefits a church in other ways, too. "We've never had a church fuss, fight, or

commitment to Scripture as the inerrant Word of God. This is being reflected in a new emphasis to our convention on evangelism as part of the Conservative trend."

Vines says his intention as president is to "set a tone and create an atmosphere where healing can occur in our denomination. I hope to challenge Southern Baptists to a recommitment to personal evangelism."

As president of the convention, his may be a complex job, but Vines tries to keep things simple and in their proper perspective. His favorite words to live by are found in Nehemiah 7:1. "Now it came to pass." Vines says, "I've learned that whatever you are experiencing, it did not come to stay. It came to pass. That's a comfort, especially with some of the days I've had!"

The men who have influenced him greatly are pastor W.A. Criswell, evangelist Jess Hendly, and writer-teacher Warren Wiersbe. Vines is a student of the Word, and says that if his house were on fire and his family safe, the first thing he would grab on the way out is his Greek New Testament.

Jerry Vines does not minister

alone. In May 1960 he was pastoring a church in Carrollton and in walked Janet, a pretty, gentle, Atlanta girl. Although they had attended the same college, they had never met. Jerry looked up and said to himself, "I'm going to marry that

"I hope to challenge Southern Baptists to a recommitment to personal evangelism."

girl," and he did.

"We were engaged in two dates and married in four months," recalls Janet. "That was 28 years ago and we've only grown closer since. The Lord drew us together in His timing, and Jerry is my greatest asset, my encouragement and support."

A devoted father, Vines planned his travels around his boys' athletic schedules during their high school days. "He has always been there for us," Janet says. Today the Vines children—Joy, Jim, Jodi, and Jonathan—are grown. The young-

gest, Jonathan, is a student at Liberty University.

How does he feel about that accomplishment? "I feel great," he laughs. "I'm glad and grateful they have reached maturity. They all love the Lord and are serving the Lord."

Janet has found that a personal ministry has sprung from her role as a pastor's wife. She leads a Tuesday morning ladies visitation program. She is often asked to speak to women's groups and she enjoys reading and playing the piano. "My first love is my home," she smiles. "I know that's not tremendously exciting, but it makes me happy."

She supports her husband in his work at the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville as completely as she can. "I'm faithful to church services and I substitute teach in our church. Mrs. Lindsay and I also teach a Sunday evening new member's class of several hundred ladies.

"I don't have a pastor's heart," she says, her gentle laugh punctuating every sentence, "but I can offer a wife's viewpoint. When he considered the presidency of the

continued on page 60

disruption," he says. "Love and serenity have marked my ministry through the years. We just want to reach lost people."

Though he has never experienced a church "fuss," he has known frustration. "In my first church we had no staff other than me," he recalls. "We had 1,000 in attendance in Sunday school before we were able to add our first staff member. Wearing so many hats and raising a family with four children—there was a lot of pressure in those days. Working 60 to 80 hours a week and being on call 24 hours a day was difficult. But in my ministry today, I can truthfully say that no phase is frustrating."

Lindsay has not been alone during those 37 years of ministry. His wife, Shirley, has been by his side, and they now know the joy of

grandchildren—they have five.

Lindsay now finds his greatest joy in seeing spiritual children and grandchildren. "Seeing children who have grown up in the church, married, and have children of their own gives me great pleasure," he says. "Younger people who read this won't understand; you have to experience it to understand it."

Lindsay grew up in Tennessee as the son of a preacher. When the elder Lindsay accepted the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, young Homer was in the eighth grade. When Homer Lindsay, Sr., retired, Homer Lindsay, Jr., assumed the pastorate. "There's been a Homer Lindsay pastor here for 49 years," he says, smiling.

Lindsay offers this advice to younger pastors. "There are three killers of preachers: laziness, sex,

and money. It is easier to avoid Satan's traps in these areas if you're aware of them."

Why does a man continue to pastor a large church after two serious heart attacks? "Several years ago," he says, "the Lord became very real in my life; I became very aware of His presence. The experience literally transformed my life. This awareness came about after time, as a result of spiritual growth, and is available to all Christians. I'm not talking about the baptism or the sealing of the Holy Spirit, but the dwelling of Christ within you. All Christians are not aware of it, because sin and a lack of obedience prevent it. In 1 John we learn that Christ is light and in Him is no darkness at all. This dwelling of Christ

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America's New Cloisters: Apartment Housing

Barbara Oden was ready to leave apartment buildings behind forever. For eight years she had served as the manager of an apartment complex in bustling Houston, and she was ready for a change of pace. She saw an article on the Southern Baptist Convention's mission service corps and she volunteered to serve.

After her training Barbara telephoned the director of the Westview Mission Center, a ministry of the First Baptist Church of Houston. She was hoping to work with youth, she told Harvey Kneisel, and she had completed her orientation and training. Was there some area where she could be of service?

Kneisel agreed to interview Barbara, and while she drove to meet him the phone rang in Kneisel's office. It was the manager of a nearby apartment complex. She was desperate for help. "Can't you find someone who would be willing to live here and help me keep my people?" the manager asked.

"When Harvey Kneisel promised her he'd try to find someone, and then learned minutes later that I had been an apartment manager for eight years, he nearly fell through the floor," Barbara laughs now. "Evidently God was leading me in this direction. I didn't want to go into apartment ministry, but through this God has given me a ministry to young people, adults, and children who would never be reached through the church."

Today 44-year-old Barbara Oden stands on the frontier of a new and virtually unnoticed mission field: American apartment complexes. Her work is rewarding, appreciated, and in demand, she says. The only problem is a lack of laborers for the harvest.

With two volunteer couples, \$100



"The only way to reach these people is from the inside out. We must make them want to leave their apartments and come to what we have to offer."

per month, and two empty apartments, Barbara says she can start and maintain a mission church in any apartment complex. She has already begun 32 in Houston, and 58 complexes are on a waiting list.

In 1985 there were 88 million housing units in the United States. Of those, 16 million were apartments. That number is growing. In densely populated cities where land is virtually unavailable, people are literally building homes on top of one another. Forty-seven percent of Houston's population lives in apartment housing, says Barbara, and 98 percent of those apartment dwellers do not attend church anywhere.

Why would apartment managers ask Barbara for a mission church? Because what she offers benefits the entire multifamily community. To begin an apartment ministry, Barbara asks the owners for two free apartments and freedom for a layman or chaplain to conduct Bible study and worship within the complex. In return she offers to maintain a full program of wholesome family activities for all residents.

The apartment managers are thrilled with the results: lower

vandalism, increased occupancy, and higher retention rates. "The apartment people want their property to be better than the others around it," Barbara says. "And our activities create a community atmosphere that people don't want to leave. The residents tell their friends, the crime rate goes down, and people are occupied with things that give a good feeling."

The Oaks of Wood Forest apartments in Houston had a 79 percent occupancy rate when Wood Forest Church began a ministry there. Seven months later, occupancy was 96 percent. Manager Tony Luna told the *Baptist Standard* he was pleased to be doing so well in Houston's overbuilt apartment market. A sign at the complex entrance announces, "Fun Activities for All Ages."

Volunteer Jean Rhodes, a middle-age single, lives in one of the free apartments to coordinate the work. The other apartment is used as the activity room and for worship.

Apartment buildings are filled with lonely people with unspoken needs. "When you live in a house," Barbara explains, "you get to know your neighbors and you have a sense

of community. But apartments are very impersonal. People don't know their neighbors beside them or the people who live below them."

The apartment mission churches are not allowed to conduct door-to-door visitation, and most apartment dwellers in urban areas are so tired of fighting city traffic they are reluctant to venture out on weekends except for recreation.

"The only way to reach these people is from the inside out," says Barbara. "We must make them want to leave their apartments and come to what we have to offer. Then we can share with them."

Pastor Steve Rice of Lutheran Social Services in Columbus, Ohio, shares Barbara's philosophy. He oversees a program designed to place chaplains in "nontraditional settings": industrial centers, hospi-

tals, malls, trailer parks, condos, and apartment buildings. Why?

"Because it is an outreach to where people live, rather than having them come to where we have worship

"Many are turned off to religion, but by establishing good relationships we can share the love of God where they are."

services and Bible study," he says. "Many people are angry with God or turned off to religion, but by establishing good relationships, we gain

the opportunity to share the love of God where they are."

In her work with apartment residents, Barbara has found that they are often emotionally needy. "I can't believe that people are hurting like this," she says softly. "Apartment dwellers are often unstable, unsettled, transient, and their problems seem to engulf them. They're running from one place to another looking for answers."

Rice agrees. "In most large cities, people seek apartment housing as an alternative, especially if they are going through a life change such as divorce, recent marriage, or retirement." Rice once helped police talk a distraught woman out of committing suicide. Another time he was there to comfort a woman when her husband died.

Behind the many windows in

Jim Whitmire Minister of More than Music

Fifteen years or more had passed since most of us had seen Jim Whitmire. In position once again at a choir reunion, I wondered if he had any inkling of how much he influenced those who sang in his choirs. Fifteen years ago at the First Baptist Church of Merritt Island, Florida, there was no youth pastor. Instead we had Mr. Whitmire, as we called him, who was our spiritual leader and told us things like, "You can't go to the movies on Saturday night and expect to have your thoughts centered on worship at eight o'clock Sunday morning."

He came to the growing church immediately after his graduation from seminary.

After serving 12 years at Merritt Island, Jim Whitmire was called to Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee. For 10 years he worked solely with Bellevue's youth

by *Angela Elwell Hunt*

**He taught us music.
He taught us
about family life.
He taught us
responsibility.
He taught us
character
in a thousand ways.**



choirs. He particularly enjoyed working with youth because "they follow leadership so obediently, and they're not encumbered by children, families, jobs, and so forth. They're at that time of their lives when everything is before them; everything is exciting. They're visionary. They can be anything and go beyond themselves. They may be scared to

death, but in their enthusiasm and lack of maturity they will attempt things that adults won't."

Today at Bellevue, Whitmire oversees a music ministry involving 2,300 people ages 4 through adult. The music program includes graded choirs, ensembles, an orchestra, hand-bell choirs, and annual presen-

apartment complexes are people with special needs. Barbara has found that most apartments in Houston are occupied by single parents and their children. Most of the children stay alone while their parents work, and the apartment ministry-activities room gives them a place to go for wholesome fun and an answer to being alone.

The activities room offers sewing, crafts, aerobics, and sports clinics for children and teenagers. Adults, too, enjoy the activities which range from English lessons to weekend retreats and camping.

"The world is anxious," Barbara says. "That's why there are so many people in bars—they are just looking for something to do. We offer something for everyone. If we find a need we try to fill it."

Barbara's one frustration arises from the urgency of the need. "In the last

three months we've reached 250 people who would never have gone to church. They have never heard the gospel. But

**"God has given me
a ministry
to young people,
adults, and children
who would never
be reached
through the church."**

when we provide them with a place where they can go, they will open to us.

"When I first started I had interested churches and no apartments

lined up. Now I have 58 apartment complexes waiting, and I have to talk to 15 or 20 churches to get one to commit to this work. We can use everyone who is willing, whether they are able to serve as a live-in lay couple, run an activity, or bake cookies for the kids."

The best thing about the work, says Barbara, is "seeing lives changed that would not have been reached through the church. Many of these people don't know the first thing about God and Christ. We've been able to see entire families change, and that's a wonderful thing to see."

Barbara Oden is willing to talk with anyone who is interested in apartment ministry. For more information call her at (713) 957-2000 or write Barbara Oden, 8405 Wednesbury Lane, Houston, Texas 77074. ■

tations such as the Singing Christmas Tree, Living Pictures (Easter), and a Fourth of July Celebrate America presentation.

This past year has been a banner year for the Bellevue choirs in more ways than one. The choirs used fabric banners in every production. After singing at the Southern Baptist Convention, where the choir featured 53 banners displaying 53 names of Jesus, other churches began calling for information on how to make or rent the beautifully sewn and embroidered banners.

Whitmire says banners are sprinkled liberally throughout Scripture. Banners are featured prominently in the Old Testament as symbols of warfare, and singing is a part of spiritual battle, Whitmire believes. "We must teach the church that praise and singing are warfare, and for someone to stand silent in a worship service is like a soldier who has been equipped but will not go into battle. Everyone has a voice, whether he can sing on pitch or not. We are all commanded to make a joyful noise and admonish one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. I read the other day that worship and service are a state of *heart*, and musical sound is

a state of *art*. We should not confuse the two."

The best thing about his job, says Whitmire, is discovering talent. "I've been able to watch people grow to the point where they have confidence, and they are able to see lives

**He let us know
that nothing was quite
as important
as giving our best.**

changed by what they're doing. That's a blessing to me."

Whitmire was saved as a 15-year-old while teaching a Vacation Bible School class. He walked toward the altar during the invitation to surrender to full-time Christian service. Years later he realized that he truly surrendered his life to Christ at that moment. He planned for a vocation in the ministry, and during his college years he felt the Lord leading him into musical ministry.

But musical ministry under Jim Whitmire is more than singing, music, and rehearsals. It is a mindset, a point of view. The choir feels

itself a part of worship and a leader of worship. Sitting through a Whitmire choir rehearsal without learning a spiritual lesson is impossible. He raises his arms to bring the choir in, then looks around and gives a reminder, "Smile, choir!" He lowers his arms abruptly. "You know, in seminary we were taught there is a heartache in every pew. Sing to that person with a heartache. Give him a smile. And if you don't feel like smiling, well, smile on faith. Because we know the Saviour, we can smile in the assurance that He is in control of everything. If you've got family problems, or money problems, you know that everything is in His hands. So smile on faith—live on faith!" He raises his arms again. The choir smiles.

How is success measured in a music ministry? Whitmire feels there are several ways. He finds success in seeing people use their God-given talents. He feels that programs have been successful when they result in salvation decisions. "But I think the greatest thing is when the choir, the director, the orchestra, and the people sense the Holy Spirit is there, saying, 'Amen'

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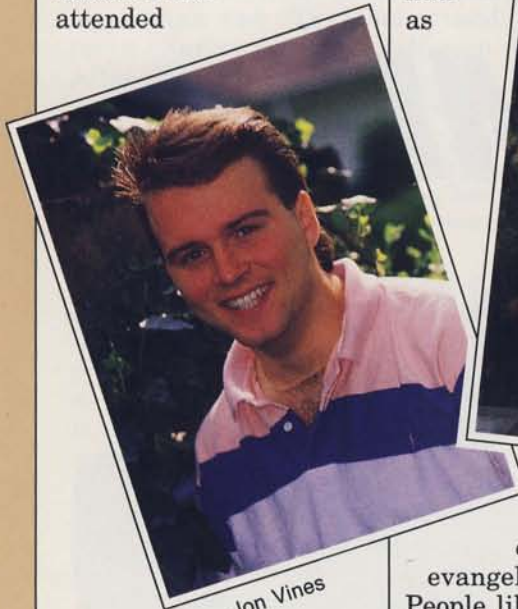
The Evangelical Alliance Mission
P.O. Box 969
Wheaton, IL 60189-0969

Why Do Southern Baptists Choose Liberty?

Although its roots stem from an independent Baptist philosophy, Liberty University attracts a large percentage of Southern Baptists to its campus each year. In fact, over one-third of the student body at LU is Southern Baptist.

Why do these students attend Liberty rather than a Southern Baptist college or university?

Jon Vines, a junior at Liberty University, is the son of Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines. "Dr. Falwell had mentioned my coming to Liberty to my dad after I graduated from high school. I had attended



Jon Vines

several other colleges before coming to LU and was just not happy at any of them. I felt the Lord was leading me to come to Liberty, and I felt I needed to be

in a more spiritual atmosphere. Besides, I had always heard good things about Liberty."

Steve Smith, a senior, is the son of Southern Baptist evangelist Bailey Smith.

"What drew me to LU was that it had such a good balance. I wanted a school with high standards, but at the same time I wanted one with a vision for the lost. No other school had as



Carmen Patterson

strong an emphasis on evangelism as Liberty. People like J.O. Grooms and Sumner Wemp have served as my mentors because of their witness to the lost and their passion for soulwinning." Steve is a public speaking major and plans to attend South-

western Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, this fall.

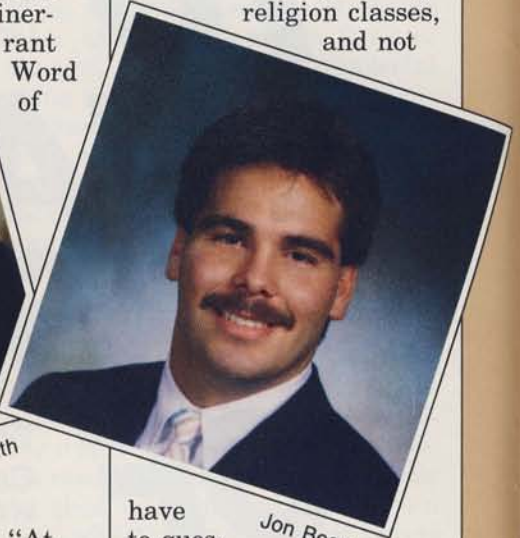
Carmen Patterson is the daughter of Southern Baptist leader Paige Patterson. Carmen says she chose Liberty over Southern Baptist schools because of its stand on



Steven Smith

the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. "At Liberty I can be taught by Bible-believing teachers who take a strong stand on the Bible and don't waiver." Carmen is a psychology major.

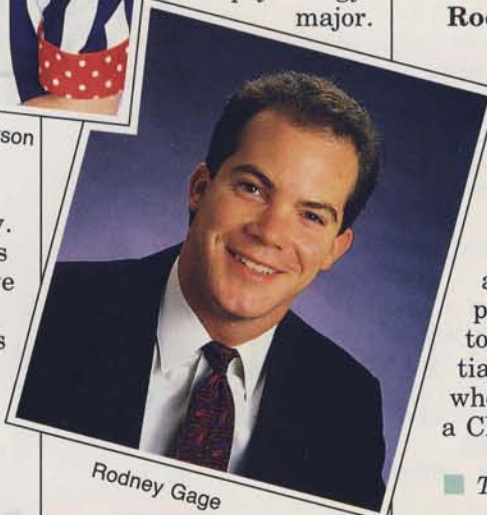
Jon Beasley, a 1988 graduate of Liberty University, is the son of Southern Baptist leader Manley Beasley. Jon transferred to LU from a Southern Baptist college because he did not agree with the doctrines that were being taught by the religion department. "At LU I could go to my religion classes, and not



Jon Beasley

have to question what I was being taught, because it was what I believed. LU held me accountable spiritually, and I wanted to be associated with Dr. Falwell and with what Liberty University stands for. Liberty made me stronger even in those doctrines I already held."

Rodney Gage, also a 1988 LU graduate, is the son of Southern Baptist evangelist Freddie Gage. Rodney chose Liberty "because of its strong biblical emphasis and its Conservative professors. I wanted to be in a good Christian environment where I could grow as a Christian."



Rodney Gage

■ Tamara L. Pugh

“Expect the Unexpected” from Mark Lowry

“Expect the Unexpected.”

The words attack you in bold, cursive letters all over the public relations material and “in concert” signs of singer-humorist Mark Lowry. But for this 1980 Liberty University graduate, the words are more than just a nice motto or cliché. They are his testimony.

Lowry’s life began taking unexpected turns as a self-proclaimed “hyperactive” kid. While doing musicals with a local drama group in Houston, he was so good that Broadway choreographer Tommy Tune suggested Mark give the New York stage a try. Mark said Yes. His parents said No.

So the energetic Lowry turned his attentions from the stage to music. At age 11 he began touring with his own Southern gospel group, Mark Lowry and the Impacts.

Not the ordinary hobby for an 11-year-old.

But before long he discovered there was something missing from his Southern gospel sound—the gospel.

“I had grown up in the church, but I wasn’t a Chris-

tian,” he recalls. “I was singing gospel music, but I didn’t have the gospel living in me.”

At 14 he attended a church youth camp, “something I’d never been able to do,” he says. There he gave his life to Jesus Christ. From then on he gave up his plans of a “nine-to-five business career” and allowed God to call the shots.

After graduating from Liberty with a degree in youth ministries, he surrendered to a full-time ministry in music. He traveled for eight years as a soloist, performing an average of 125 concerts a year in churches and at youth rallies.

In addition to his solo work he ministered with evangelist Jerry Johnston’s “Life Exposure” cru-



Photo by Dawn Smoot

ades for teenagers. Mark would “warm up” the crowd with a humorous 10-minute monologue before Johnston spoke to the young audience about suicide and drug abuse. Together, Johnston and Lowry reached 300,000 teens each year.

“Laughter is the best way to disarm people,” Mark says, reflecting on his time with Life Exposure. “Because I tell true-life stories, people relate to me. If I have their attention I can talk with them about the hope we have in Christ.”

In August of 1988 Mark’s life took another unexpected turn. He performed for 10 minutes at the Christian Artists Seminar in Estes Park, Colorado, hosted by Sandi Patti and Dallas Holm. By the time he left the stage the crowd was on its feet, and Mark Lowry was on his way.

Within four months he was the newest member of the New Gaither Vocal Band, a contemporary, four-voice group founded by gospel music legend Bill Gaither. The group performs at con-

certs with the Bill Gaither Trio.

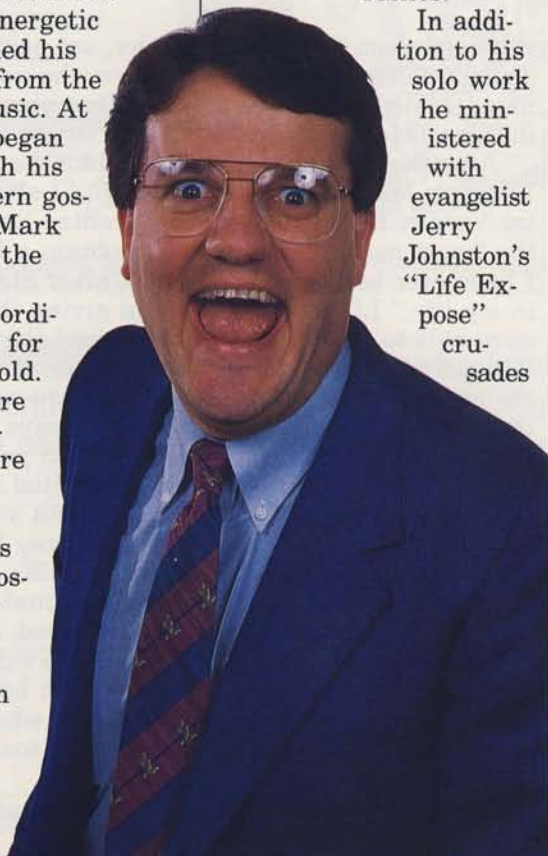
“Mark adds more than a voice to the Vocal Band,” Gaither said. “He adds energy, intelligence, and spirit.”

Of course Mark takes a humorous approach to his new job. “It’s a modern-day miracle to sing with someone who is in the hymnal,” he says of Gaither.

But he readily admits that his transition has not been all fun and games. “Joining the Vocal Band has been a challenge for me. Over the last eight years I have worked alone, but I love the challenge of harmonizing with the group, creating new material, and working with the Gaither audiences.”

Singing with the Vocal Band has put Mark in some unexpectedly good company. The list of Vocal Band alumni includes Larnelle Harris, Steve Green, and cofounder Gary McSpadden, whom Mark replaced. That’s not too bad for a hyper kid who dreamed of a simple nine-to-five job.

■ Robert Bunn



LIGHT Ministries: Behind the Iron Curtain

Pronounced tension and heightened nervousness was clearly visible on the faces of the Liberty students and staff members standing in line. They looked at one another with uncertainty. Soviet customs officials vehemently refused to grant permission for the group to bring more than 2 Russian Bibles each into the USSR, despite a recent ruling allowing each visitor the right to bring in 20. Agents had already removed excess Bibles from several suitcases and stacked them on the counter. Finally, after an exasperating argument, an official agreed to honor the ruling, returned the confiscated Bibles, and let the group clear customs. This was the group's first experience with perestroika and



An LU student and a staff member distribute Bibles to 50 pastors and evangelists from the Soviet Union.

glasnost, the restructuring and openness of Soviet society which has yet to receive wide acceptance within the Communist party.

LIGHT Ministries of Liberty University sponsored this unique missions exposure trip behind the Iron Curtain, involving over 30 students and staff personnel. The 13-day itinerary included visits to the Communist countries of Hungary and the USSR, with brief stops in West Germany and Austria.

The group experienced many cultural differences, as well as surprising similarities, especially in Hungary, but what stood out in the minds of most participants was attending a service at the Moscow Baptist Church (the only evangelical church in a city of 9 million) and afterwards distributing the 750 Bibles they brought with them.

"For me," said LU Campus Pastor Rob Jackson, "the most outstanding fact of this trip was how God orchestrated the circumstances surrounding the delivery of the Bibles, New Testaments, and Christian books." Through a chain of events some would call coincidences, the Lord allowed the Bibles to be brought in at a time when pastors and evangelists from across the USSR were meeting at the Moscow Baptist Church. Peter Deyneka, president of the Slavic Gospel Association,



Moscow Baptist Church is the only Evangelical church in the city of Moscow, a city of 9 million people.

through whom the Bible distribution was coordinated, stated, "God was in this whole movement."

After the service, which Liberty's Missions Director Vernon Brewer called the "most moving service I have ever been part of in my life," LU students were able to meet with Russian youth and with the evangelists. During this moving season of fellowship the students personally handed Bibles to eagerly awaiting Christians. Kim Walder, a senior elementary education major, felt this was the "happiest night of my life since I became a Christian... to see the joy on their faces when given Bibles."

Paul Davis, a junior marketing and psychology

major, sat next to three women who were begging, actually crying, for Bibles. "I had never seen anything like that before," he said. "I always took for granted how easy it is to obtain a Bible in the United States."

In giving these Bibles to Soviet believers, Vernon Brewer firmly stated, "We are not just going to leave these Bibles with you, go back to the United States, and forget about you. We are going to pray for you—faithfully! We are praying that countless people will be saved, and that one day we will see them, and you, in heaven because of what we are doing here tonight."

■ Howard Erickson



Campus Life: The LU Bookstore

The Liberty University Bookstore offers many valuable services to members of the campus community and to visitors.

The store carries a large variety of souvenirs and memorabilia imprinted with LU logos—from quality clothing to cups, pens, paperweights, and bumper stickers. It also serves as an on-campus convenience store, providing health and beauty aids for those who are not able to shop off campus.

Students can stop by the store to grab snacks between classes or to pick up school supplies, textbooks, and other academic supplements. The LU Bookstore has a large selection of gospel music by artists ranging from the Sounds of Liberty to Steve Green

and Sandi Patti.

One can find a large stock of best-selling books by authors such as Charles Swindoll and John MacArthur, as well as published works from some of Liberty's own writers—Dr. Falwell, J.P. Moreland, Elmer Towns, and others.

The bookstore offers graduation regalia, announcements, gifts, and a large line of greeting cards and plush animals. It provides part-time jobs for over 20 student workers each year.

To be placed on the LU Bookstore's mailing list, write to Liberty University Bookstore, Box 20000, Lynchburg, Virginia 24506, or call toll free: (800) 446-6510.

■ TLP

Richard Herrin and "Son"— Inspirational Graduates

On May 8 a very special graduate crossed the platform at Liberty University. His name is Richard Herrin, a 28-year-old from Fort Worth, Texas.

Cerebral palsy confines Richard to a wheelchair, yet he successfully completed Liberty Home Bible Institute this year.

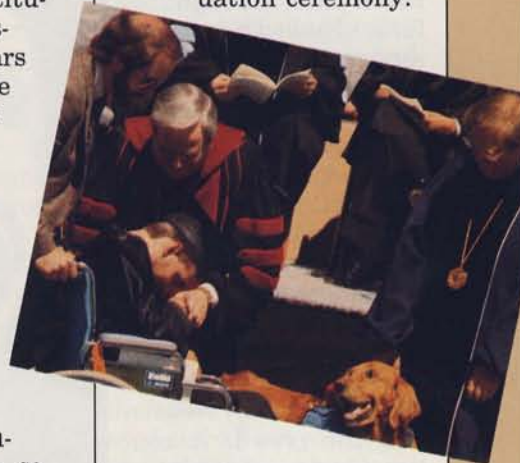
Richard was institutionalized in a nursing home several years ago. While there, he developed the desire to live alone. Several benefactors got him a hydraulic lift system that enables him to get in and out of the bathtub and out of bed. Now he can live on his own.

Richard has trouble using his hands, so his dog, "Son," pulls his wheelchair for him. Son also picks up things for Richard and remains a constant friend.

Before coming to Lynchburg for his graduation, Richard discovered that an airline would permit dogs on board only if the owner was totally blind. This meant

Son could not come to Richard's graduation.

Richard felt this was unfair. He brought reporters to his home, and through public pressure he led the airline to change its policy. Richard and Son flew to Lynchburg and both participated in the graduation ceremony.



Richard has been called to Christian ministry and speaks to church youth groups. He shares his conversion testimony and then he usually leads them in Bible study.

Richard Herrin is an inspiration to everyone.

■ TLP

C A L E N D A R

June

June 12-August 4—TRBC Children's Camp
Hydaway

July

21—Dr. Falwell speaks at First Baptist Church,
Springdale, Arkansas

August

20—Dr. Falwell speaks at Evangelical Free
Church, Rockford, Illinois
23—LU fall semester begins

R.G. Lee

His Impact on the SBC

A hush fell over the crowd. The vote for the 1948 president of the Southern Baptist Convention had taken place the night before. Now the "messengers" were ready for the results.

Outgoing SBC President Louie D. Newton, pastor of the Druid Hills Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, approached the podium to make the announcement.

"Dr. Robert G. Lee has been elected the president of the Southern Baptist Convention," Newton told the crowd. A continued wave of applause swept through the hall.

Lee was certainly no stranger to the ranks of the SBC. After graduating from Furman University, he had held the pastorates of several denominational churches. At the time of his election he was pastor of the Bellevue Baptist Church in Memphis, Tennessee, one of the largest churches in the convention.

Lee had addressed the SBC at New Orleans in 1929 and again at the Southern Baptists' 1947 meeting in Saint Louis. He had stood in the pulpits of various state conventions. He served as president of Tennessee's Southern Baptists on more than one occasion.

The man from Memphis had even been nominated for the convention's presidency twice before 1948. In the 1935 convention at Memphis

by **Robert Bunn**



R.G. Lee was a pulpiteer of the highest caliber. His anointed eloquence exalted Christ and never failed to carry the hearer heavenward.

David from the obscurity of a sheep pasture and made him king of a great nation, so God has taken me from that poor little old farm... and placed me in a high denominational place."

Lee worked long, hard hours to ensure that neither the Bellevue Baptist Church nor the Southern Baptist Convention would suffer because of him. His first term was marked by strong leadership in the areas of prayer and personal evangelism.

When the Southern Baptists met for their 1949 convention in Oklahoma City, Lee was the unquestioned choice for president again. However, he would face more difficulties before the end of this convention than in his entire first term.

In *Payday, Everyday*, his autobiography, Lee describes two incidents in the 1949 Southern Baptist Convention that stuck out in his memory and were significant to his terms as SBC president. The first dealt with an address to the convention given by W.E. Perry.

he was defeated by John R. Sampey, a respected professor at the Southern Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. In 1946 he was beaten by Newton on a vote that required a recount.

But this was 1948. The SBC had chosen a man who would not take his responsibility lightly.

"I looked over the vast throng and thought of our 30,000 churches and nine million members—and I, the chosen leader," Lee once told his brother in a letter recalling his first presidential address to the convention.

"I am grateful that as God took

In addition to being a prominent Negro pastor in Oklahoma City, Perry was also vice president at large for the National Baptist Convention, United States of America.

Before speaking to the Southern Baptist crowd he told Lee, "I was born in a log cabin in Mississippi. I have been working and waiting 50 years for this hour. And, please sir, don't ring me down."

Lee promised he would not, and Perry preached to the crowd during its Saturday morning session. After the speech Lee called Perry to his side at the podium and recounted the similarities between the two men, both in background and in current denominational position.

Then the Memphis preacher reminded the convention of another similarity shared by the two men: the same Saviour died the same death so that both men, regardless of race, could live in the same heaven eternally.

"This is a parable of black and white, written in red," Lee said in conclusion.

While the event itself may not seem significant, one must consider the entire context of the situation. The Southern Baptist Convention had its very roots in racial issues. The convention came out of a split in May 1845, with Northern Baptists who opposed slavery. By the late 1840s and early 1950s the entire nation was bracing itself for the race-related fires that would burn in America in the decade following the Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decisions of 1954 and 1955.

Lee's action with Perry set the tone for the convention's racial attitude at a critical point in its history. As the editor of one Baptist newspaper stated, Lee's actions "accomplished more for good race relations than all the academic theorizing in the world."

The second memory recalled by Lee in his autobiography concerned an amendment presented to the 1949 convention by E.P. Allredge.

As presented, the amendment would bar anyone "who belongs to or affiliates with any state or local council of churches... sponsored by the Intercouncil Field, Department of the Federal Council

or... its six affiliated Councils" from serving in any elected or appointed SBC position.

In 1940 the World Council had invited the SBC to merge; but the convention declined, stating it could never become a member because it

**He led the members
into a closer walk
with God,
encouraged love
between brethren
of all races,
and put to rest an issue
that could have easily
split the convention.**

did not speak authoritatively for its member churches as the World Council did. It was only an "advisory committee" of sorts.

The SBC also had problems with a Liberal mainstream that ran throughout the World Council and its affiliates. In 1948 the convention declined to send even an observer to World Council meetings, and has stated many times since that it would never "compromise Baptist principles to enter into organic connections" with council churches.

Yet the Allredge Amendment held strong appeal for some Southern Baptists, even though the denomination traditionally opposed the Federal Council organizations. Lee himself was a strong opponent of such councils, but he saw danger in the Allredge attack.

Passage of the amendment would make the convention more than just the "advisory committee" it had been designed to be. The amendment's passage could ultimately make it a governing body that could lord its authority over member churches.

In an effort to avoid a possible split, Lee made a direct appeal to the entire convention. He handed his gavel to Vice President Porter Bailes and made what biographer John Huss called "one of the briefest and most effective speeches of his entire life." In fewer than 100

words, Lee affirmed his stand against the council, stated that any action at that time would do more harm than good, and motioned to table the amendment.

The convention responded with an overwhelming vote of agreement.

Because the motion was only tabled, the possibility of its revival hung over the convention's 1950 meeting in Chicago. But Lee, after being elected to his third presidential term, knew the time was right to effectively kill the resolution. He hit the topic hard in his presidential address, so hard that the issue never resurfaced.

At the 1950 convention many messengers urged Lee to seek a fourth term, but he refused. The strain of travel and juggling both a pastorate and the presidency had taken its toll. Lee knew it was time to return full time to Bellevue.

One cannot underestimate the impact Lee's three terms had on the Southern Baptist Convention. He led the members into a closer walk with God, encouraged love between brethren of all races, and put to rest an issue that could have easily split the convention. All this from a man who gave his life to Christ while plowing his father's cornfield.

As a boy, Lee had prayed to become a pastor and to preach to large crowds. He found an answer to his prayers through his position with the Southern Baptist Convention.

Likewise, the members of the SBC found answers to their prayers in a president named Robert G. Lee.

■ **Robert Bunn** is a free-lance writer in Louisville, Kentucky.

Magnificent Men in a Muddled World

by R.G. Lee

This sermon was first preached during the last quarter of 1949 on the "Baptist Hour" program carried by the American Broadcasting Company.

"Quit you like men" (1 Cor. 16:13). [Discharge your obligations like men.]

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"Tom Thumb," who died at 45, was 20 inches tall. He never weighed over 22 pounds. He was noted for littleness.

The need now is for men noted for bigness—men who love great undertakings; men who go forth under the drumbeat of great convictions; men who do not seek neutrality in issues of right and wrong; men who love God more than gold and pleasures; men who strengthen the defenses of civilization by acknowledging Christ's claims.

You men are—

Men Amid a Muddle. This muddled world gasps for breath. Spiritual mercury falls low. Faith's wings are clipped by reason's scissors. The Bible is summoned to appear at the bar of human reason. Undisciplined Liberalism goes nowhere so fast it arrives out of breath, talking more and more of less and less.

Christianity is subjected to merciless analyses. Our lame, unregenerate humanity is set down in the midst of educational institutions and scientific marvels but remains a beggar still. Our world has fever worse than did Peter's wife's mother, leprosy worse than Naaman, blindness worse than eyeless Bartimeus, insanity worse than Gadara's wild man. Such a world lives in the day of judgment but likewise in a day of grace.

If you quit yourselves like men, you will be—

Men Magnificent in Manhood. Magnificent—like Enoch, who "walked with God" in a world "repulsive as a jubilee-house of crime"; like faithful Abraham, the friend of God, who had prayer power; like Joseph, who refused the dirty proposals of Potiphar's wife; like Jacob, who conquered crookedness; like Moses, who "chose to suffer affliction with God's people"; like Samuel, who lived a holy life; like Caleb, who "followed the Lord fully"; like Joshua, never stopped by obstacles; like Job, who, amid calamities, had faith in God; like Elijah who faltered not when opposed by superior numbers; like Daniel, who would not defile himself with booze; like Jehoshaphat, who "prepared his heart to seek God"; like John the

Baptist, who preferred duties he owed God to dangers that came from man; like Barnabas, "a good man, full of the Holy Ghost and faith."

We need men who sell Christianity by sample, not by symbol. One does not sell diamonds by

The need now is for men of great convictions; men who do not seek neutrality in issues of right and wrong.

showing paste jewels, or health by exhibiting a dissipated face and emaciated muscles, or the fruit of the Spirit by the works of the flesh. One cannot sell faith if he is a doubter, or sobriety if he drinks booze, or truth if he is a liar. We must be "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh"—seeking no advertisement for ourselves but so living as to publicize God.

If you men quit yourselves like men, you will be—

Men Magnificent in Money Matters. Money is that by which you reach in service beyond personal action. Jesus said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth" (Matt. 6:19).

Money testifies in orphanages, seminaries, famine-smitten and pagan nations as to Christianity's meaning. Money tells whether you are merciful or miserly, covetous or Christlike—whether you prefer transient values to permanent good. Money may deny your declarations of loyalty to Christ—give the lie to your profession by saying that you love God less than gold.

We need men like Robert Arthington, a Cambridge graduate. He lived in a single room. He cooked his own meals. He gave foreign missions five hundred thousand pounds. A slip of paper was found after his death, on which he had written these words: "Gladly would I make the floor my bed, a box my chair, and another

box my table rather than that men should perish for want of the knowledge of Christ."

Selfishly hoarded or un-Christianly used, money cankers the soul, neutralizes faith in God, destroys the vitals of Christian life. If you men make money, then make money prove that you love God with your pocketbooks as much as with your hearts. Pay God His tenth. Make your money weigh something for God. Put it to work for God through our agencies and institutions. Be not miserly and mediocre but mission-minded and magnificent in money matters.

If for Christ you quit yourselves like men, you will be—

Magnificent in Membership. I do not mean membership in lodges and clubs but membership in a gospel church, the custodian of God's heavenly treasure. A true church calls sinners to the mercy seat, lifts up Christ's Cross so that sinners might look to Christ and be saved. The church offers solutions to life's problems, strength to the weak, life to the dying.

Let not your church lose its power, the gospel of Jesus. See to it that the Bible is recognized as the inerrant Word of God, that Christ's Cross is not relegated to the background, that Christ's deity is not called into question, that reason takes not the place of revelation.

A real church has no other purpose than to preach the gospel. Ever has the church been called to bring men to Jesus, to save souls—not to solve political problems, foster civic affairs, chaperone worldly saints, institute mere reforms that lack regenerative force. You men need the church, not as a loose connection in which you have occasional and superficial interest, but as the prime interest in your lives.

We need men in this bruised and dying world who will be "instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:13), who will not play with sin; men of clean mouths, hands, hearts who abhor evil, cleave to the good, despise the works of the flesh; men who are so claimed by Calvary that the Cross is an experience in their lives; men who love with the impelling of the indwelling Spirit, who refute the accusation that in

Christian warfare men are chocolate soldiers. We need men who are doers of the Word, not hearers only; men who "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things"; who, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, live soberly, righteously, godly in this present world."

If you quit yourselves like men, you will be—

Magnificent in Winning Men.

Be not remiss in caring for souls, in bringing men into right relation to God. This is the greatest work you can do—greater than writing best-sellers, making fortunes, winning high political office, or leading armies to victory. Winning men to faith in Jesus is the greatest work that ever moved God's heart in compassion, or stirred angels' wings in flight, or laid claim on Christian abilities—the only work big enough to cause Jesus to come down from the heights of deity to the depths of humanity, to call sinners to repentance, and to give his life a ransom for many.

You men should plead with lost men to accept Christ as Saviour and Lord. All your efforts for Christ should culminate in this one great work. Your toil, your love, your prayers have for their ultimate end the bringing of souls to Christ. The lost who know you should never be able to say, "No man cared for my soul."

Now, some words to you who have never repented of your sins and trusted Christ for salvation; who, if you meet God without Christ, will wish you had never been born. By your unbelief you pour contempt on the wisdom of God. Be not so foolish and sinful.

But—

Make the Master Your Master. Basely wicked it is to reject Christ—to look with cold indifference on the agencies of the Cross. Great it is for a sinner to come to Christ and be saved, and to be mastered by the Master who Himself mastered stormy seas so that they became whispers—mastered devils so that they gave up their habitations in men—mastered Satan until he fled like a booted cur—mastered death so that the dread enemy yielded up his prey—mastered the grave so that it became a gate that opens from a desert

to a garden.

For 10 years a man named Palmer walked so low through sin that he was utterly forsaken, cast off even by his own wife. One night he wandered into a mission and heard about a Saviour. He went back

See to it that the Bible is recognized as the inerrant Word of God, that reason takes not the place of revelation.

every night for a week and listened. Chords that were broken began to vibrate once more. After the service one night, he groped his way through the darkness to an old board fence near the house where his wife lived. There behind the fence he threw himself down, hoping he might peep through the cracks and see at the window yonder his little girl whom he was no longer permitted to visit. At sunrise, Palmer—wary, hungry, lonely, heartsick—crept to the feet of Jesus. A bright light was filling his heart. He got back a good business position and also his former home. Everywhere he went, he told what a dear Saviour he had found.

Are you away from God, your soul in darkness, homesick and sin-sick? Creep up to Christ's pierced feet. He will forgive you—love you.

Then, mastered by the Master who saves, making Christ's will your law, Christ's command your joy, Christ's hardest marching orders will be the music of your life, until the pierced hands that opened to you the gates of grace shall open to you the gates to glory.

■ Adapted from *The Sinner's Saviour*; Copyright 1950, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee. ■

Whitmire continued from page 22

to what you're doing. When someone says, "That really changed my life." Well, that's success."

"I believe the greatest area in which a minister of music can work is the graded choirs. If you don't have a youth choir now, you can grow one in a matter of years, but you'll have to stay in one place to reap the fruits of your labor. You can grow them from the graded choirs up and teach them the joy of praise.

"When I first gave up the preteen choir, it hurt me, but I turned it over to a lady who has done far more than I could have. When I turned over the youth choirs, it bothered me because I had always been a youth choir man, but now it's growing far more than if I had stayed. If I hadn't had those choirs, I wouldn't know how to judge if they were doing well."

As we sat in the reunion choir, lost in memory and nostalgia, someone quipped that Mr. Whitmire had "Dick Clark disease." He had not changed from the man we had known. Mr. Whitmire wants to be remembered as "a man of God, one who was jealous for God's reputation." We remember him as far more than that.

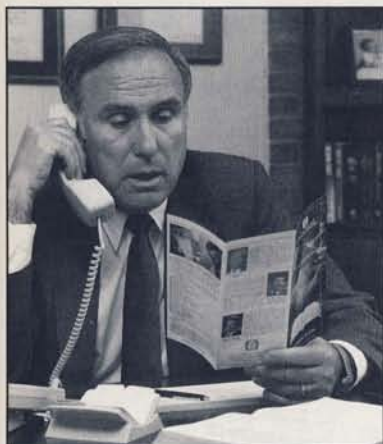
He taught us music. We literally performed in front of thousands of people. For awkward, rough high school students, it was a period of polishing. We learned to sing, to conduct ourselves like ladies and gentlemen, and the importance of getting back to the bus on time!

He taught us about family life. He and his wife, Linda, had met and married in college. They had six kids, and Mr. Whitmire often stopped a rehearsal to share a lesson he'd learned about God with his kids as his teachers. He always spoke of Linda with love, respect, and admiration. We were in awe of her. She was beautiful and secure in the warmth of her home. Secretly we all hoped we would have a marriage like the Whitmires' someday.

As our 200-member reunion choir stood to file into the packed auditorium, I felt something I had never known in high school—jitters. But I remembered Mr. Whitmire's admonition to smile on faith. As usual, the Lord had Mr. Whitmire's choir in His hands. ■

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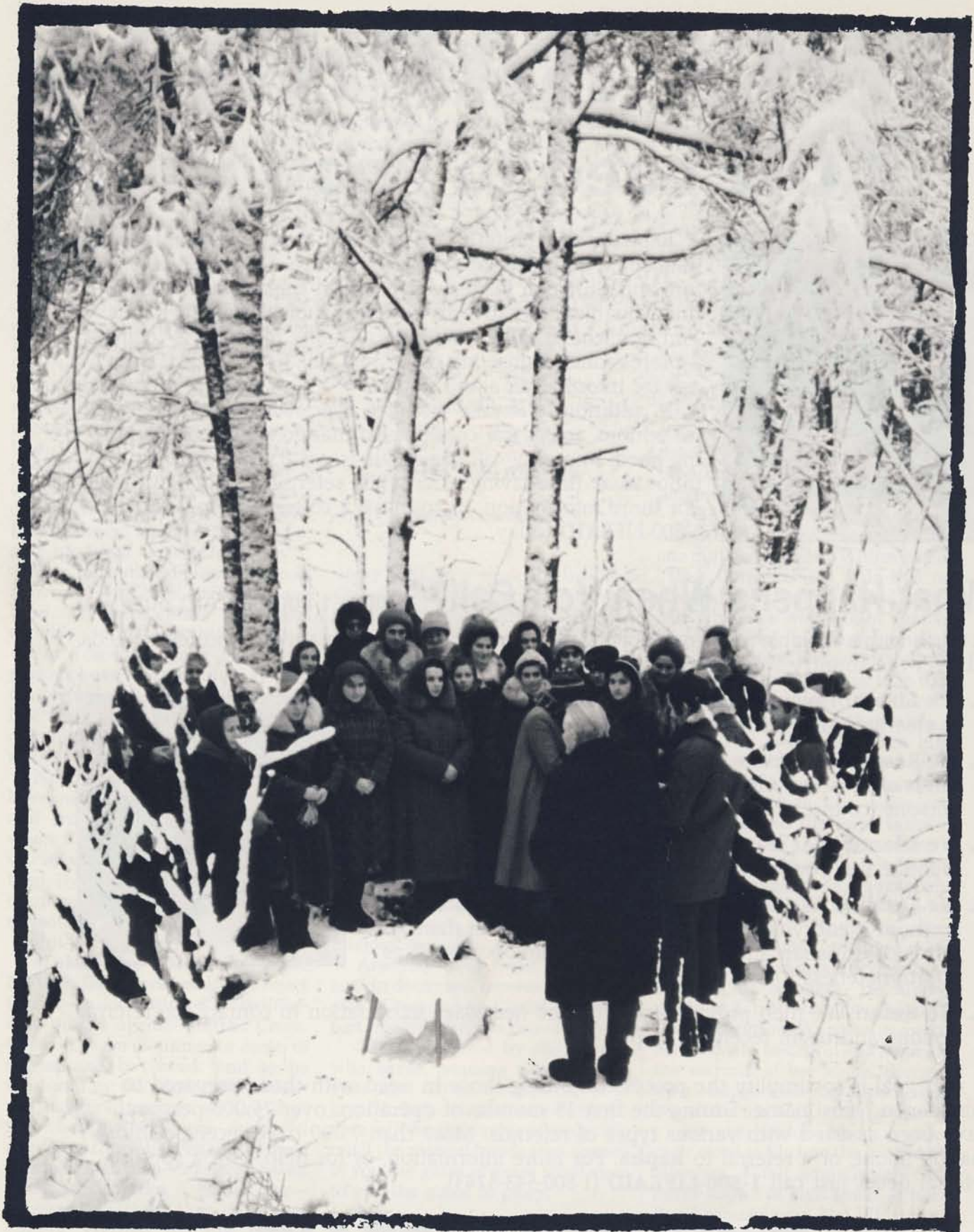
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THE INDEPENDENT BAPTIST CHURCH of Kiev, preparing to celebrate Communion. Georgi Vins was first arrested in 1963 while preaching in the forest to the Kiev congregation.

GEORGI VINS

SPOKESMAN FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH

BY JOEL B. CURRY

On April 27, 1979, a light mist filled the afternoon air over New York's Kennedy International Airport.

Aeroflot Flight SU-315 descended out of the low cloud cover and touched down as usual, but did not taxi to a terminal gate. Instead, the blue and gray Ilyushin jet proceeded to Pan Am Hanger 17 in a remote area of the airport.

When the plane came to a halt near the hanger, two fuselage doors opened, one at the front of the passenger compartment and one at the rear. Airport workers rolled a stairway up to each open door.

Timing was very important. U.S. State Department officials waited at



IMPRISONED in the USSR because of his Christian activities and released by the Soviets in 1979, Evangelist Georgi Vins now preaches in pulpits across the United States.

the rear stairway. Two Soviet spies, convicted of stealing classified information about U.S. military satellite systems, climbed the front stairs. As the two spies stepped into the plane, out the rear door came five former Soviet prisoners, including a Baptist evangelist who had served half of his 10-year sentence for engaging in Christian ministry activities.

Only a few hours earlier, KGB agents had taken Georgi Vins from a cell in Moscow's Lefortovo Prison, given him a new suit of clothes, and escorted him onto the flight to New York.

Vins's Communist captors thought they finally had rid themselves of a persistent, effective



DEDOVSK, near Moscow, 1986. Government agents break up a worship service and drag some worshipers away for questioning. Their only crime is that they have not registered their church with the Soviet government and agreed to abide by the severe restrictions the government requires. Those restrictions prohibit most evangelism, even the evangelism of children by their own parents.



A BRIEF GLIMPSE through the courthouse window might have been this child's last look at his father for many months or years.

forget that others remained in Soviet labor and concentration camps because of their Christian activities.

As a Soviet citizen he was arrested three times for preaching the gospel and other ministry activities—in 1963 for preaching at a church meeting in a forest near Kiev (15 days in jail); in 1966 for Christian activities (three years in a labor camp); and in 1974 for “harming the interests of Soviet citizens under the pretext of carrying out religious activities” (sentenced to five years in a concentration camp and five years exile in Siberia).

The third arrest came as a result of his activities as general secretary of the Council of Evangelical Baptist Churches, an association representing about 2,000 independent Baptist congregations who refuse to submit to atheistic control.

“The prosecutors used the 23rd Psalm, among other accusations, as evidence against me at that trial. They called it ‘anti-Soviet.’ That’s ridiculous to call the 23rd Psalm ‘anti-Soviet.’ The Bible was written long before the Soviet state even existed.”

Less than two months after Vins arrived in the United States, CEBC leaders in the Soviet Union appointed him CEBC secretary abroad, and a year later he established International Representation for the CEBC to speak in behalf of the persecuted church. International Representation is headquartered in Elkhart, Indiana.

Goals of International Representation include informing the world about Soviet persecution of Christians, providing aid to the persecuted church, and uniting Christians around the world in prayer and support for those who are not allowed the freedom of worship.

CEBC churches form a large portion of the unregistered churches of the Soviet Union. The unregistered churches trace their history to the 1929 religious legislation imposed by the Communists in an effort to control, limit, and eventually eliminate religious activity. The 1929 laws required churches to register with the government and to abide by certain restrictions, among them strict limitations on the times and numbers of worship services and virtual bans on evangelism, Bible study groups, and the produc-

church leader. Instead they had provided 2,000 persecuted Russian churches an energetic and relentless international spokesman.

Before his first day of freedom in the United States ended, Georgi Vins decided the Lord had given him a new ministry involving the Soviet Union’s persecuted Christians.

“Among the many prisoners who were sentenced for religious activities, why was I released? I think the Lord had His plans,” he recalls. “He had laid on my heart a firm resolve to always stand with the persecuted church. So this would be my ministry, my life in the free world. I believe he wanted me to be a voice in the West for all those who are suffering. God did it all. I had nothing to do with my leaving the Soviet Union and coming to the United States. All the actions were taken at high levels.”

Vins paid a great price for his faith, and he was determined not to



IVAN ANTONOV, a Baptist pastor, was in his second year of exile in Teya, Siberia, when he was released by the government late last year. He was sent to Siberia in June 1987 after having completed a five-year sentence in a Soviet labor camp. In all, he has served 23 years in prisons and labor camps for the crime of preaching the gospel. Despite health problems, Antonov has a strong spirit and shows no sign of ending his gospel ministry. Of his exile, he wrote in a letter, “After arriving, I met the local authorities and was able to tell them about what God has done for me.”

tion or distribution of literature.

After enacting the 1929 legislation, the government closed all the seminaries and destroyed most theological books. About 25,000 Baptist pastors and Christian workers were imprisoned, and 22,000 of them perished.

One of the pastors who died in the labor camps was Georgi Vins's father, Peter Vins, an American who had gone to Russia in 1926 as a missionary. "When I was 2 years old, my father was arrested. He came home again after three years. He was with us about three years, and then when I was 8 years old he was arrested again. That was the last I saw him. He died a prisoner because of his faith.

"My father was a great influence for me. His testimony and his faith won me to the Lord. And from a young age the Lord was speaking to my heart. When I was 16 I repented of my sin and was baptized. When I was 18 I started preaching. I knew what the consequences would be, but it was the Lord's work for my life."

Vins's mother had been arrested when she was 64 and sentenced to three years. Along with his wife and children, she was allowed to join Vins in the United States. "She had headed up a ministry that took care of prisoners' families, caring for their physical and spiritual needs. They organized help for them, kept track of where the prisoners were, and did other things for the families across the USSR. We use a lot of the facts they gather in our publications at International Representation to help tell the truth about the oppression."

The persecution of Christians in the USSR is just as real today as it has been in the seven decades of Communist rule in Russia, Vins emphasizes. The Soviet government's present effort to depict openness and freedom attempts to hide what is really happening in the country.

Thanks to the prayers of Christians around the world, in November 1988 many people serving terms in Soviet prisons because of religious activities were released by the Soviet government. They include all



SENT TO disrupt the meetings and arrest the pastors of the unregistered churches, uniformed police and plainclothes KGB agents also hear the gospel.

of the CEBC pastors who were serving prison sentences.

There has been less harassment of Christians at meetings of the unregistered churches in recent



A PASTOR and violinist, 47-year-old Eugene Pushkov was serving an eight-year term of Siberian exile for the crime of encouraging young people to make music to the glory of God. He was released late in 1988. The father of eight children, he began serving his exile in a remote village near Tomsk, Siberia. Finding Christians at the village, he began meeting with them for worship services. The authorities sent him to another village where there were no believers, in an effort to punish and isolate Pushkov. But rather than isolation, they had provided him a new mission field.

months. KGB and local police show up at meetings, however, to take photos of worshipers and church leaders, warning of possible resumption of arrests in the future.

In addition, the government allows Bibles to be sent into the Soviet Union if they are addressed to individual believers.

You can participate in providing copies of Scripture to fellow believers in the Soviet Union. Russian-language Bibles are available at no charge, along with addresses of individuals who need them in the Soviet Union. You supply the postage for mailing them. To participate, write Georgi P. Vins, International Representation, PO Box 1188, Elkhart, Indiana 46515-1188.

■ **Joel B. Curry** is a free-lance writer in Warsaw, Indiana. He is attending Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, preparing for full-time Christian service.

COMMENTS FROM GEORGI VINS

Parents' Rights. Laws restrict the rights of parents to tell their own children about the Lord.

"In 1963, when my wife and I lived in Kiev, the authorities wanted to take our children from us because we were teaching them about God. They told us not to read the Bible with our children and that if we chose to pray it should never be in our children's presence.

We told them we would continue to do what we thought was right—we would continue praying and reading the Bible with our children. They said they were making arrangements to take our children. But in our case a lot of other Christians wrote a petition to the government and threatened to demonstrate in Moscow if that happened. So the government backed off.

The Unregistered Church. There are a dozen different Christian denominations in the Soviet Union now. Each has registered churches and unregistered churches. The unregistered churches have chosen not to submit to government controls over worship, evangelism, the right to meet, and other biblical issues.

Christians in the persecuted church are very close to each other, like a big family. From city to city across the country, they know each other and keep up on what's happening.

The unregistered churches across the Soviet Union run the Christian Publishing House. They secretly print magazines, gospels, Bibles, song books—in many languages of the nations that make up the Soviet Union. The printing is still done in people's basements. Some of the printing presses are homemade. Others have been taken in from the West.

The government searches for the printing teams. When they find them, they arrest them, imprison them, and confiscate the equipment. None has been discovered in the past two years, though.

The Soviet Prison System. One of the main differences between the Soviet and the U.S. systems is that Soviet prisoners have to earn their keep. Prisoners work in many forced-labor industries such as cutting timber, lumberyards, mining, or agriculture.

I worked in a factory that made desks and tables. Half of the 100 rubles a month I earned went to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. That paid for upkeep of the camp and the guards' salaries. Twenty rubles went for food, five for the prison uniform, and so forth. I had about nine rubles left each month to use for things like a pen and paper, tooth powder, and soap.

Soviet prisoners are sentenced to what is called

"general" or "ordinary regime," if they are first-time offenders and their crime isn't great or serious. There's also "strict regime" — harsher conditions, harder work, fewer letters, parcels, and visits. That's for worse crimes or your second term. "Special regime"

is even worse, for repeated sentences.

The worse the regime, the more dangerous the work you are forced to do.

Special regime prisoners do the most dangerous work to repair and clean up nuclear submarines. They do not get special uniforms or any kind of protection. They are just sent in to do the job regardless of the risk to their health.

The Soviet "Openness." The changes we see today—Mr. Gorbachev meeting with some church leaders and things like that happening—have not actually changed the structure, the system, or the direction that they are going.

You see, the Soviet constitution guarantees freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, but none of that actually exists.

There might be a little bit of freedom right now, but it is only temporary. That is because the Soviet system is built on deceit and lies. The Soviet system says that there are two views of things—right and wrong. "Right" is defined by what is useful to the government today.

Therefore, the Soviet constitution is just a sheet of paper, and there are unwritten laws that reflect what is in the interests of the Soviet government for today. And tomorrow, the unwritten laws change because the Communists' needs change. So today, some freedom. Right now, Bibles can go in through the mail. Tomorrow, if it suits the government's interests, the Bibles we mailed into the country will be confiscated.

Mr. Gorbachev tries to portray religious freedom. He meets with people in the hierarchy of the Orthodox church for the television cameras. But those people are appointed by the government, and then the government uses them to do their work in the West. They speak for the church. But in reality they speak for the government.

Here is an example of the real state of religious freedom. When openness was being publicized for Billy Graham's visit, one of our CEBC leaders, Ivan Antonov, a godly man, was arrested for Christian activities.

All the present talk of openness, the new freedoms so many people are talking about, Mr. Gorbachev's meetings with church leaders, these are just publicity stunts. The purpose is to fool people in the West. ■

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W E C A N N O T L E T T H E M

STAND ALONE!

“IF THEY ASK US NOT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL WE WILL NOT OBEY THEM. WE HAVE BEEN COMMANDED BY JESUS TO PREACH THE GOSPEL. THIS WE MUST DO.”

From the outside there is little indication of the exciting physical and spiritual growth occurring within the Second Baptist Church. Its auditorium seats only 1,200, but current attendance regularly exceeds 4,000, straining the present facilities to the maximum. Church leaders strive to solve the problems created by this rapid growth. Foremost among these is the need for expanded facilities, but surrounding high-rise housing crowds the church, making expansion at the present location impossible.

Yet the Second Baptist Church of Oradea has a greater problem. It is located in Romania, a nation whose Communist regime firmly opposes the growth of Christianity. In 1985, while conducting crusades across Romania, Billy Graham preached to over 35,000 people at the Second Baptist Church. Local Communist officials assured Graham of positive action on behalf of the church. Since then the government has continually vacillated, refusing to honor any promises made, and has instead placed increased pressure on church leadership in an attempt to stop the exciting growth of this church.

While lack of government action is frustrating to copastors Paul Negrut and Nicolae Gheorghita, it is not surprising. Since they became pastors of this church, broken

promises and persecution have been their lot in life. They face these things willingly. But being told they may construct new facilities at a different location, then being told they must instead remodel existing facilities (within extremely restrictive and unrealistic guidelines), has both pastors ready to attempt forcing the issue. They have asked us in the West to assist them by raising a voice on their behalf, making Western officials more fully aware of the human rights violations and abuses occurring there.

On a recent trip to Romania I met with these men of God and had the unusual privilege of preaching at the Second Baptist Church. On several occasions Communist authorities have told the pastors not to preach the gospel. Pastor Nick firmly believes that, although he has “a scriptural motivation to obey the government, it must be within biblical guidelines. If they ask us not to preach the gospel we will not obey them. We have been commanded by Jesus to go into all the world and preach the gospel. This we must do.”

Sitting on the platform I was overwhelmed by the commitment I saw on the faces of the people thronging the auditorium. The place was packed. Hundreds stood in the aisles, many for three hours and more. Others in adjoining rooms listened through the public address system. Pastor Paul said some church members have not had a seat in the main auditorium in over 15

BY VERNON BREWER

years.

I was honored to be allowed to preach to people who had been through so much for their faith, even more so after being informed the government said not to receive foreigners to preach. Pastor Nick agreed to this, explaining, "Foreigners are those without Jesus Christ as Lord. I will allow only brothers and sisters in Christ to share the pulpit."

Asked if he had ever seen anything he considered a miracle, Pastor Nick responded, "The most evident miracle is that the church is increasing despite all that the people are facing." The Second Baptist Church of Oradea is the largest Baptist church in all of Europe, a fact the Communist government does not appreciate. This accounts for the excuse Pastor Paul says the government is giving concerning failure to honor promises about constructing a new building: "How, in a Communist country, can the government allow a 3,000-seat church building when the local fine arts theater seats only 650?" Paul's response? "Because more people *want* to go to church." The government's prediction nearly 50 years ago that Christianity would die out in one generation has gloriously not come true.

The people of Romania are open and eager to receive the gospel. For nearly 50 years they have lived in a society where decisions are made for them, with no alternatives. They are ready for alternatives, something with a firm foundation. A recent study revealed that 30 to 40 percent of Romanian adults have psychological disorders. Pastor Paul, who graduated from the national university as a clinical psychologist, sees how this has resulted from the oppressive system they live in. Insecurity, distrust, and constant worry about what you say and do has contributed to this dilemma.

For Christians the oppression can be worse. Persecution can take the form of job loss, inability to gain promotion, or refusal to attend the university. If the Christian has an active testimony he may be mocked or ridiculed by coworkers, at the instigation of Communist officials. None of this has stopped or even slowed the growth of the church.



The authorities are not pleased with this growth and have tried many things to stop it. They have even said the church must go to allow for more housing, while offering no alternatives for the church to rebuild, thus attempting to limit growth by squeezing people out.

I asked both pastors how we in America could help. Pastor Paul said that just by coming to Romania we helped. "This showed us we are not alone. You love us and care for us. And you pray for us."

Pastor Nick reiterated this sentiment, further stating that, besides prayers, he requests American Christians "to get in touch with different levels of government, requesting them to ask the Romanian government to grant Christian liberty." One way would be to honor the promises made, allowing churches to expand and Bibles to be printed and distributed.

Pastor Nick said that "the risk is great" in confronting the govern-

ment, "but it is worth the cost to accomplish God's purpose." Both pastors feel that everything which can be done to them has been. "What more can happen? Jesus said, 'If you follow Me you will have difficulty.' My life is in Jesus' hands. Either I will live or die."

Pastor Paul echoed this thought, saying, "We trust our lives, and the lives of our children, to God. We thank God for the freedoms we do have, albeit limited, and are not concerned with the hardship and sorrow, but instead with what more can we do for God."

We cannot let them stand alone! Believers in Romania are our brothers and sisters in Christ. This demands our involvement on their behalf. Let us raise our voices together.

■ **Vernon Brewer** is vice president of student development at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia.

David Ring: From Victim to Victor

A young evangelist from Orlando, Florida, steps up to the church's pulpit. He walks with an obvious limp. His uncontrollable trembling causes some curiosity among the congregation's faithful. His slurred speech makes listeners strain as he begins his sermon with a smile.



questions, but no one had the answers he needed. Before long he told his family members to give up on him. He wanted to die.

But one sister refused to give up. Through her encouragement David continued in school. On April 17, 1970, she convinced him to go to church, and he accepted Jesus Christ as his Saviour. His whole attitude toward life changed.

"I became a somebody because Jesus came into my life," he says. I became a brand new creature. I don't want to die

"I know what some of you are doing," he says matter-of-factly. "You're looking me up one side and down the other. That's OK. I'm looking you over, too."

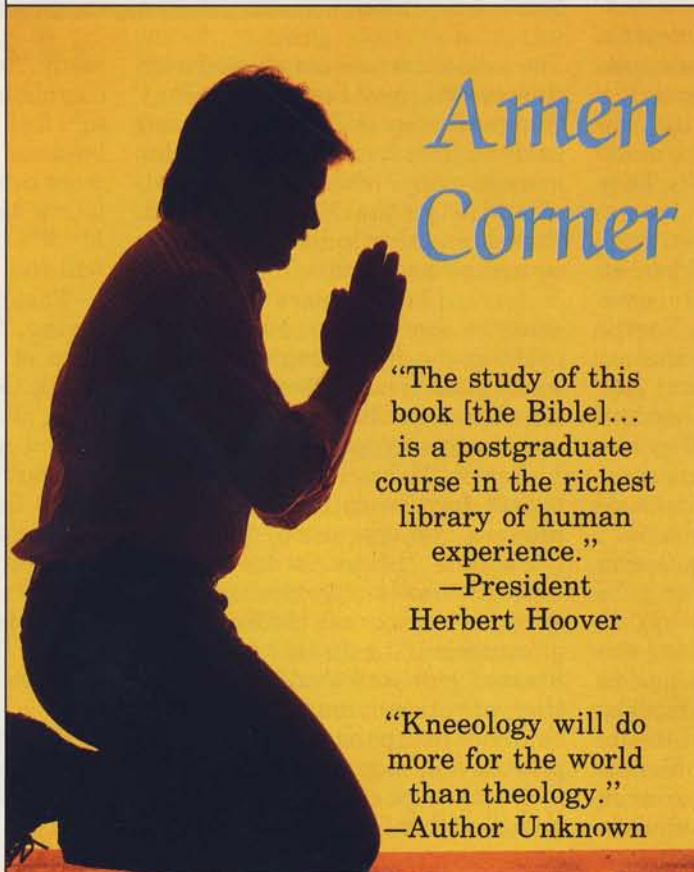
Now his humor flows easily, but there was a time when David Ring was not this happy. From the beginning, life went wrong for the young preacher.

He was born with cerebral palsy. "If you don't know what that is, when I was born the oxygen couldn't get to my brain," he explains. "Therefore, I was born dead for about 18 minutes. That's why I walk with a limp, and that's why I talk funny."

From there, David's life took a series of turns from bad to worse. His father, a Baptist minister, died from liver cancer in 1964. In the summer of 1968 his mother began her own battle with the disease, a battle she eventually lost

in October of the same year.

The death of his parents left 15-year-old David with a long list of



Amen Corner

"The study of this book [the Bible]... is a postgraduate course in the richest library of human experience."

—President Herbert Hoover

"Kneeology will do more for the world than theology."
—Author Unknown

anymore. I have something worth living for."

The young convert soon realized that God had more in store for him. David surrendered to preach the gospel in 1971. "I was in my bed minding my own business, and God said, 'David, I want you to preach,'" he recalls. "I said, 'Lord, take a second look. I've got cerebral palsy.' He took that second look and still called me to preach.

"I got my Bible and turned to Philippians 4:13. 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.' And I'm not going to let a cerebral palsy body slow me down from bragging on Jesus."

In the past 16 years David has been true to his word, bragging on the Lord all over the country. In 1988 alone he spoke 200 times. He has addressed youth conferences, revivals, high school assemblies, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

In 1981 he married Karen—after family members had told him no woman would ever marry him. They have two daughters and a son. Instead of being a victim of cerebral palsy, David has become a victor in Christ.

He has only one desire for his ministry. "It's my prayer wherever I go, that when we leave, the people will never be the same—not because David came, but because the Lord Jesus came."

■ Robert Bunn

Activating the Unchurched

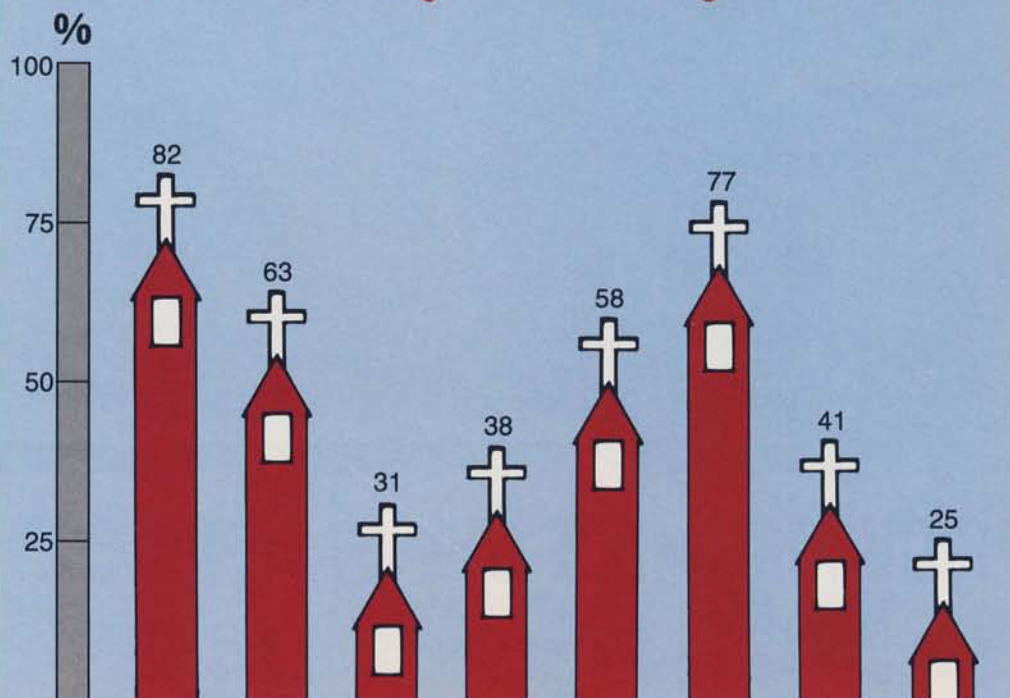
A new Gallup survey indicates that there is considerable potential for a return of the "unchurched" to more active church life. The unchurched today are, by many measures, more religious than they were a decade ago, suggesting that they may be on the verge of becoming more active. For example, 44 percent say they have made a commitment to Christ, up from 38 percent a decade ago, and 72 percent say they believe Jesus is God or the Son of God, up from 64 percent a decade ago.

A larger proportion of the unchurched (48 percent) are providing religious education for their children than in 1978 (43 percent).

Fifty-eight percent of the unchurched say they would "definitely," "probably," or "possibly" return to church, up from 52 percent in 1978. Factors that might lead to their return include: a change in their family situation; a pastor or rabbi with whom they can openly discuss their spiritual needs; good youth programs.

Sixty-eight percent of the unchurched say they would invite others to join their religious congregations. Invitation

Levels of Traditional Religious Belief among the Unchurched



- 82 percent cite a religious affiliation.
- 63 percent believe the Bible is the literal or inspired Word of God.
- 31 percent say religion is "very important" in their lives.
- 38 percent say religion is "fairly important."
- 58 percent believe in life after death.
- 77 percent pray to God at least occasionally.
- 41 percent pray to God at least once a day.
- 25 percent say they have had a powerful "religious experience."

and evangelism are virtually ignored by the mainline churches, certainly an important reason why they have lost members in the last few decades. One American in three was invited to become involved in a church over the past year, and about half say they responded favorably.

Members of minority groups do not feel alienated from the churches. Only 8 percent of blacks and 3 percent of Hispanics say they have ever felt unwelcome or excluded from any church because of their race or ethnicity. There is no difference in un-

churched status by race or ethnicity. However, among the unchurched, religion is more important to Hispanics than to blacks or whites, suggesting that unchurched Hispanics are likely to become church members.

The percentage of all children receiving religious training is up, from 60 percent in 1978 to 69 percent in 1988. Those who have had religious training as children—particularly confirmation training or training in the home—are more likely to be church members as adults.

Many of the reasons why people become inac-

tive are practical and can be readily handled. For example, one in five (22 percent) of those who say they were away from church for two years or more said this happened after they moved.

■ Adapted from *The Unchurched American*, published by the Princeton Religion Research Center, Princeton, New Jersey.





Rebuilding in a Day of Reproach

In this day of reproach, God is looking for Nehemiahs—people with broken hearts, believing prayers, bold visions, and busy hands—to “rebuild the walls.”

Broken Hearts. Nehemiah wept when he heard about the sad plight of the people in Jerusalem. How the outsiders must have laughed as they saw the ruins of Jerusalem! How some people are laughing and ridiculing God’s work today!

Believing Prayers. Sitting down and weeping is not enough. We must also kneel down and pray. Nehemiah prayed to a great God who alone had power great enough to do the job. Ten times in the Book of Nehemiah we find this man praying to the Lord. What an example he is to us.

Bold Visions. Nehemiah asked God to make him a part of the

answer to his prayer. He had a vision of what God could do to restore the city of Jerusalem, and he took his life in his hands when he asked for a leave of absence.

Busy Hands. Nehemiah’s job was to rebuild the city walls, restore the gates, and remove the rubbish. We have these same responsibilities today. The

walls of separation have fallen down, and almost anything can get in. The gates speak of authority, for that is where the people transacted their business. God’s authority is fallen in some places, and “every man does that which is right in his own eyes.” As for the rubbish—plenty has piled up to hinder the work of the Lord.

Like Nehemiah, we do not have to lay a new foundation, for the old one is still solid. Nor must we look for new materials; what God has provided is still good. This is indeed a day of reproach, but by God’s grace, we can make it a day of rebuilding and rejoicing as we faithfully do the work of the Lord. Hallelujah!

■ Warren Wiersbe

Church News

MAP International has designed an **AIDS Resource Kit** to help Christians develop a compassionate and informed response to the syndrome. The material addresses the causes of AIDS, its potential impact on life in America and the developing world, and the special challenge this new health threat presents to Christians.

The kit includes: Videotaped interview with Dr. C. Everett Koop, retiring Surgeon General of the US Public Health Service; directory to the key resources on

AIDS available to the American public; guide to promote group discussions on AIDS using the resource kit; and other reports.

MAP provides medicines and medical supplies to mission hospitals and clinics in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, and sponsors community health programs to help villagers take responsibility for their own health care.

For more information about the AIDS Resource Kit or about MAP International, write to MAP International, Box 50, Brunswick, Georgia 31520.

Thomas C. Pratt of Zeeland, Michigan, has been elected president of Prison Fellowship Ministries, effective July 1. Pratt, 53, is currently senior vice president of Herman Miller, Inc., Zeeland, one of the nation’s leading furniture companies. He has served on the Prison Fellowship board for two years.



Photo by David Singer

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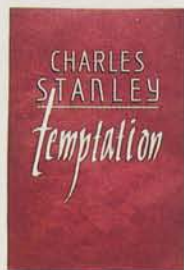
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(The **JOYFUL WOMAN** is regularly \$3.00 per copy and \$13.95 a year by subscription. Please allow 4 weeks for receipt of first issue.)

TEMPTATION

by Charles Stanley

The Devil made me do it! Well sure, but doesn't the Devil make us do *all* the bad things we do? Isn't it OK to blame that X-rated movie in the hotel last week on the Devil?



Or how about that little drink in secret or that not-too-quick scan of the pornography display in the convenience store? Isn't the Devil to blame for these temptations and the failure that followed?

Charles Stanley, senior pastor of the world-famous First Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia, says no to all these questions. No, the Devil did not make us watch the movie, look at the magazine, or take that drink.

Speaking from personal and pastoral experience, Stanley examines the temptations that so easily beset many Christians, and demonstrates from the Bible that neither God nor man accepts our excuses as anything but self-delusions and lies to God and self. Stanley shows how temptation + sin = death and how any Christian who *chooses* to live right can face up to those temptations and overcome them. It does not follow, says Stanley, that temptation must of necessity lead to surrender. *Temptation* is written to Christians who are genuinely seeking to overcome besetting sin in their lives. This category of readers, of course, includes all of us because no one in this life is ever free from temptations. Stanley points out that while temptation covers itself with many disguises, it always seeks out our weakest point, the "chinks" in the armor God gave

each of us at the point of salvation, and these weaknesses become the focus of sin's power.

Lust for power, for sex, for money and status, makes us human and vulnerable to being tempted. But God is greater than that which attempts to divert us from His service, and temptations are expected to be too weak to cause the proper Christian to fall into actual sin.

This is not a book for "aisle athletes" who run down to the altar at

every invitation seeking forgiveness for giving in to some temptation, but having no real intention of staying clean. For those who seek permission to continue practicing some secret sin, look elsewhere. But if a reader sincerely desires to deal with temptation with God's power and chooses to accept personal responsibility, this is the perfect book on temptation. Highly recommended without reservation (Oliver-Nelson, 191 pp., \$12.95). **David R. Miller**

An excerpt from TEMPTATION

I have heard people say, "If you are truly filled with the Holy Spirit, you will be above temptation." That is not only unbiblical; it is antibiblical. The Bible teaches just the opposite. Jesus was certainly filled with the Holy Spirit. Yet not even He escaped temptation.

This particular misunderstanding is the reason many people fail to pray on a regular basis for their spiritual leaders. They falsely assume that these spiritual giants have no problems, much less any serious temptation. Your spiritual leaders need your prayers more than anybody else. Satan is probably working overtime to bring them down. He knows that when godly men and women fall, seeds of

doubt are planted in the minds of all those who held them in esteem. What's worse, it confirms to the lost world what they already suspected: "The church is full of hypocrites and liars; there's nothing to religion." Pray for your pastor and church leaders! They struggle with the same temptations you do. Nobody is immune.

As long as you are on this earth in its present condition, you will be faced with temptation. The more "spiritual" you become, the more of a target you become. As your spiritual maturity and responsibility increase, so must your sensitivity to and dependence on the Holy Spirit. If the Son of God never reached a point where He was above being tempted, it is highly unlikely you would ever reach such a point in this lifetime, either.

Booknotes**A MOTHER'S MANUAL FOR SUMMER SURVIVAL**

by Kathy Peel and Joy Mahaffey

A Mother's Manual for Summer Survival is a treasure trove of techniques for making the most of the

summer, and a guide to all-year family fun and building relationships.

Full of easily implemented, inexpensive, simple ideas, this soft-cover book can be quickly scanned and referred back to again and again. A few suggestions may remind you of things you did when you were young, many will be totally new to you, and several may trigger new ideas of your own. None will require

more than a minimal amount of time, effort, or money.

Some of the chapter titles are "300 Things to Do When Kids Say, 'I'm Bored!'," "Laugh It Up," "16 Hours in the Car Without Sedatives," "Fun Around the Table," "Getting a Little Help Around the House," "Super Summer Jobs," and "Character Growth."

Highly recommended, well worth the price, and published by a name you can trust (James C. Dobson's Focus on the Family), *A Mother's Manual for Summer Survival* would make a great gift for any parent (Focus on the Family, 203 pp., \$7.99). **Kay Raysor**

TRUE CHRISTIANITY

by John W. Whitehead

Christianity holds the only hope for today's humanistic society.

For centuries, the Christian community has heard this and known it was true. But while a lot gets said, very little seems to get done.

In *True Christianity* Whitehead takes a serious look at why Christians are failing to make a difference for Christ in our world. He notes the problems facing the church of God and examines methods that have not worked, such as accommodation and legalism.

Most importantly, Whitehead not only diagnoses the disease but also offers a cure. In his final section he presents solutions to Christian apathy. His suggestions are more than space-fillers; they hit home with practical power.

If you do not like straight talk or ruffled feathers, you might need to pass on this one. But if you are searching for real, relevant help to impact your world for Christ, *True Christianity* deserves a look (Crossway Books, 123 pp., \$5.95).

Robert Bunn

BRINGING IN THE SHEAVES

by George Grant

Bringing in the Sheaves is a well-researched, statistically accurate look at poverty in our nation today. This moving and convicting book should be mandatory reading

for all benevolent committee program members in every church and church organization. The author has captured a "bird's-eye view" of the devastating problems surrounding poverty that usually go unnoticed, and are not experienced by many Christians.

George Grant shows that the poverty-stricken need more than a handout. They need a steady diet of the Word of God, and the gospel of Jesus Christ. He points out that the Christian faith reforms sinners with new and constructive values, and that biblical charity should not be built on the flimsy foundation of guilt and sentiment, but rather on God's law. Grant challenges the church to react to poverty in a responsible and scriptural way, not with a quick handout that can often lead to a permanent welfare situation. We must not only sustain the poor, but we must also restore them. *Bringing in the Sheaves* is excellent reading for anyone in the ministry of reaching out to others with the

love of Christ, and Grant challenges us all to do that (Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 221 pp., \$9.95). **Bill Martin**

LIVING FOR ETERNITY

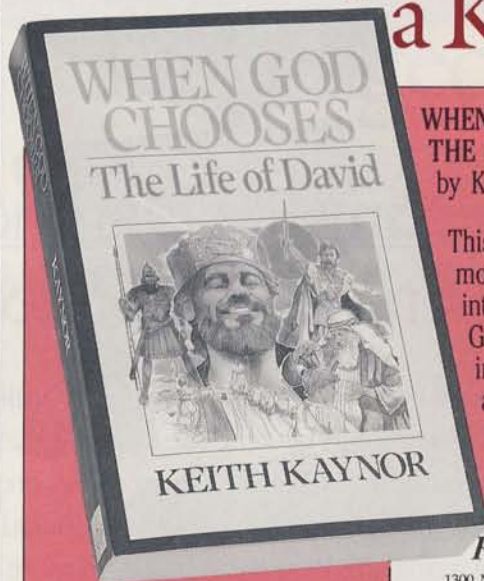
by Dave Breese

I like this book. It is challenging, instructive, and truthful. Today, Christians who really live the victorious Christian life are rarities. Dave Breese has some important things to say regarding the believer's walk with God. Some of us are on the high road, but a good number of us are on the low road, tangled up in briars and alligators. The Bible offers help and direction.

This study of 2 Peter 1:3-11 clearly presents interesting and practical ways to learn about the eight imperatives of life contained in this passage. As you read the book you will no doubt find yourself desiring to further develop these character qualities in your own life.

The average Christian's casual

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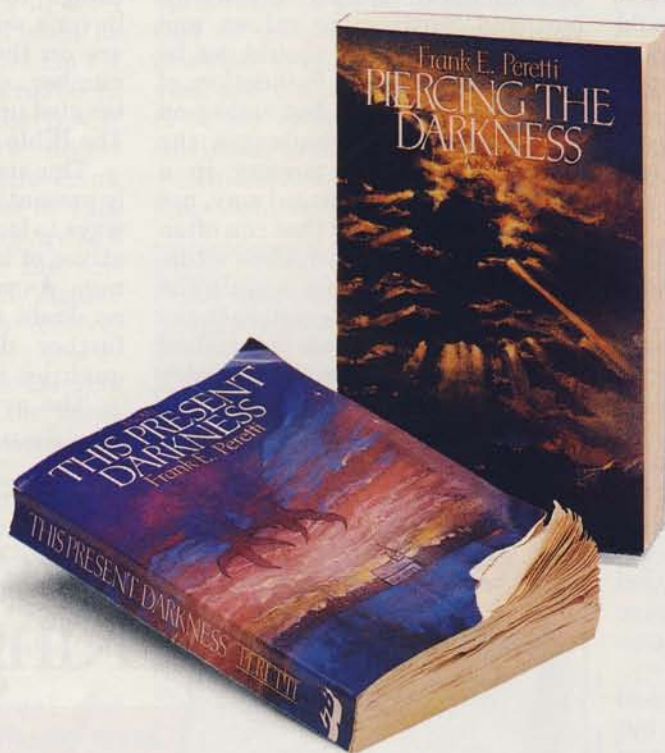
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approach to Jesus and His cause steals joy and hope. The high road involves obedience to the Great Commission, for it brings the invigorating fresh air of real purpose.

Dave Breese has a kindly way of speaking to the church about the way things are and what we as individuals should do about our own lack of diligence. "We cannot expect to become world-class Christians until we know the meaning of the word *diligence* and put it into practice as we seek to live for eternity" (Moody Press, 143 pp., \$5.95). **Rick Buck**

PERILS OF POWER

by Richard Exley

Where has this book been? It is past due. The pain of infidelity has never been so graphically portrayed in words: the pain of the unfaithful minister, but—even more so—the pain of the faithful spouse. No man can read this book unmoved. If he has already been, or is being, unfaithful, this book will challenge him to complete repentance. If he has always been faithful, this book will motivate him to continue steadfast in his heart and life.

Exley so clearly exposes the subtlety by which an adulterous lifestyle is generated, that there is no excuse for any man of God to fall into it. The restoration of the marriage and the restoration of both the minister and the church are fully explained in sensible and scriptural principles. This is a must book for every Christian worker (Harrison House, 153 pp., \$9.95).

Donald R. Rickards

Bookworm's Bulletin

Favorite Psalms, by John Stott. Moody Press, 127 pp., \$14.95.

Growing Wise in Family Life, Bible Study Guide, by Charles R. Swindoll. Multnomah Press, 175 pp., \$4.95.



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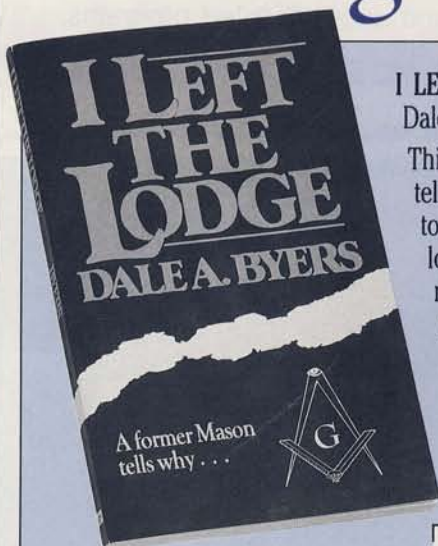
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Dale Byers

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Christian Children Persecuted in America

by Tim and Beverly LaHaye

Persecution of Christians is not limited to foreign countries and adults. Growing reports around the nation indicate that many campus radicals of the sixties are now schoolteachers, some of whom do everything they can to dis-

criminate against Christian children in public schools.

A fourth-grader in Florida, thinking she was complying with her teacher's invitation to "bring cards to class for each student," incurred the wrath of her teacher by giving cards with a smiling face and the message, "Smile, God loves you." The little girl was humiliated when forced to retrieve each student's card because of an erroneous interpretation of "separation of church and state."

Only a bigoted Humanist could find a First Amendment violation in such a reference to God. Only a lawsuit by Concerned Women for America attorneys forced such discrimination to be halted in that school.

The humiliation of the child could not be reversed by the courts—only loving parents and the grace of God could do

that. These parents, in addition to standing up for their rights in court, gave themselves to lovingly show their daughter that she was suffering for "His name's sake," and that our Lord offers blessing for those who suffer for Him. In that sense they were able to turn such a trauma into a spiritual asset.

Christian school-age children in our public schools can expect to be discriminated against and persecuted today. Although not all school administrators or teachers are antagonistic, it only takes one to psychologically traumatize a child. That is when spiritual lessons need to be applied with lots of parental love, so the child is strengthened by the experience in knowing he is suffering for the Lord's sake. Such experiences often provide an ideal time for strengthening child and parent relations.

Christian parents can do two other things. One is to send their child to a Christian school where such discrimination is not permitted. The public schools, for the most part controlled by Christianity-hating Secularists, are not going to get better for Christian students. The only hope for fairness in our so-called "pluralistic schools" is some form of voucher where parents can choose which school they want their students to attend.

And second, Christians need to elect leaders to local, state, and national office who realize that tax-paying Christians, just like all other citizens, should have the right to send their children to the school of their choice without having to pay for it twice, once in tuition and once in taxes. ■

"He causeth His Wind to Blow"

For many days the earth was dry, dusty, and tired-out looking. The leaves on the trees seemed almost dead. Every animal, flower, and tree on the farm seemed to be begging for rain.

But it did not come. More days passed. More sticky hot nights. "Why doesn't it rain, Mom?" one of the girls asked me before we went to bed.

"Not the right condi-



tions, I guess," my husband answered for me.

"Not enough prayer, maybe," I said in a low voice. Then before the children went upstairs I suggested, "Why not all of us pray, and really believe that it will rain!"

None of the children answered me. All tramped upstairs.

My husband seemed to fall asleep as soon as he touched the bed. At least his breathing sounded as though he were. I did not feel sleepy for some reason. It was too hot to sleep, for one thing. The living room seemed much cooler. There I sat with the lights out... thinking... meditating... praying.

"Where two or three are gathered together"—that's what the Bible tells us, I thought, going over in my mind all the ways I had heard of to pray.

Pray and believe that you will receive—that was a good bit of advice about prayer. Even before you get what you pray for, believe you have it, and begin thanking God for it!

"Thank you, oh God, for all the rain we have ever received on this farm. Thank you for the rain we will be getting soon. How good everyone and everything will feel when it rains. The corn that is so dry and dusty will sort of lift up its arms in thanks when it feels the cool rain. The sheep will bleat their thanks. The children will run and play tomorrow in

the wet fields. Thank you, God, for all your wonderful blessings. Amen."

Already it seemed different as I sat there in the dark. The air did not seem quite so oppressive. Or did I just imagine that I felt a slight breeze?

The farmhouse was so quiet. No sound even in the tall pines outside, the pines that nearly always talked in low whispering sighs, especially at night.

The air was different!

Suddenly I knew I had felt a stirring of air—cooler air.

Psalm 147:18 came to my mind. "He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow."

In the southwest a low rumble of thunder came.

With a thankful prayer on my lips I hurried to the door leading outside. I felt like laughing and crying and praying—how could I feel all three ways at once? I wondered.

The catalpa trees were moving now with the wind. The lightning showed me Scotty, our collie dog, standing with his nose lifted up in the air—waiting.

Yes, the rain did come. I suppose the conditions were right. And the prayers helped. Indeed, I found out the next morning that all the children had prayed for rain, too!

As I walked beneath the pine trees, feeling the soft springiness of the rain-soaked earth that next morning, two more verses from Psalm 147 seemed to make a

fitting prayer. "Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God: who covereth the heaven with clouds, who

prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains" (vv. 7-8).

■ Grace V. Schillinger



When Your Parent Lives with You

"I'll never live with my daughter!" my mother once said to me. But failing health, finances, and loss of a spouse often dictate the decision for aging parents and their children.

If a parent or other relative comes to live in your home, begin right, and you will have less cause for guilt, rebellion, and resentment on both sides.

You cannot replace the husband or wife of a parent. A recently widowed parent is lonely, but you cannot help that loneliness by attempting to replace the

one who has died. The desires and interests of your own spouse come first, regardless of the parent's loss. Be firm about needing privacy. Speaking the truth in love may not be well-received, but that is your parent's problem, not yours. Be compassionate, however, remembering that the aged person often has lost not only a spouse but a home, neighbors, church, friends, and the ability to handle finances or drive a car. These are real and distressing losses for anyone who must move in with an adult child.

Be a helper, not a slave. A medical examination of a parent helps to assess real needs. You have not been hired as a nurse-companion. You are a daughter or a son willing to help when necessary, to encourage independence when possible. Some parents, however, refuse to be helped at all, and therefore do not bathe or dress properly. Firmness is needed, as well as reminders. Give encouragement and praise for the things they do well.

Prepare your parent's room in a practical way. Using some of your parent's own furniture enhances feelings of security. Arrange good lighting and install a night-light. Hang a bulletin board for pictures and reminders. Throw rugs are dangerous. Since many old people often fall out of bed, a bed rail may be helpful. Remove the inside lock to the bedroom door

to ensure entry in the event of an emergency.

Have rules. Even if this is painful, rules are necessary. In your home, your parent must follow family routines, not expecting help at inconvenient times unless it is unavoidable. Be clear about mealtimes, entertaining, and the rights of children who may be living at home. If your parent's health permits, encourage sewing, crafts, small repairs, dusting, reading, and watching television. Devices are available for the hearing-impaired so the TV volume may be lower. During pleasant weather, encourage your parent to sit or walk outside if able. Occasionally invite an older friend to visit your loved one in privacy.

Forgive the past. Remembering a past relationship harmed by a parent's neglect, alcoholism, or abuse makes dealing with the present more difficult. Choose to forgive your mother and

father. Making that a decision rather than an emotion helps you to live together amicably in the present. You too may one day be an older parent. Counseling with a pastor, friend, or mental health professional may be needed.

New options today make living together easier. Many communities have adult day-care centers to relieve the care-giver or help the one who works outside the home. Home health care, now more easily available, eases the family burden. Your local Commission on Aging can suggest types of assistance. If mental problems (senile dementia or organic brain syndrome) are present, see your parent's doctor and write (enclosing a stamped, self-addressed envelope) to Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Association (ADRDA), 360 N. Michigan, Chicago, Illinois 60601, for information

and the local chapter nearest you.

Many families welcome the baby-sitting, housekeeping, and cooking many live-in grandparents are able to do—especially when there are two working parents. However, an elderly person may require so much nursing care that a family needs to consider nursing-home care.

Before you decide to have a parent live with you, think it through. Is it the only option financially? Does your spouse approve? Have you previously had a comfortable relationship with this parent? With today's families suffering increased stress, the health of all members must be considered.

Above all, remember one doctor's wise words: You can provide for your parent's comfort, but not for her happiness. That is her decision.

■ Marilyn Fanning

Teaching Children to Solve Problems—Biblically

Children need to learn to take responsibility for their own feelings and emotions and realize they cannot blame everyone else for their problems. Sibling rivalry offers the opportunity to learn the value of compromise in some cases and the necessity of forgiving in all circumstances.

There is a biblical plan for coming to satisfactory solutions to

problems. The Bible clearly states that we are to *confront* problems we have with other people. We are to seek and offer forgiveness and reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-17). In confrontation with others, we come to

understand that there are always two sides (or more) to any argument.



The next step involves *communication* with the person. James 1:19-20 states that we should be "swift to hear, slow to speak." We learn from Proverbs 15:1 that in this communication stage we should use soft words and a

gentle tone to avoid anger. In order to hear the other person's side

and make your own side understood, you must mentally distance yourself from the problem at hand. Pretend that it is happening to someone else, not to you personally. This will help you to control your anger, and self-control is a sign of strength (Prov. 16:32).

The last step comes after both parties have heard each other out in a calm atmosphere. Now there must be some kind of *conclusion* with which

both parties can be satisfied. This may involve compromise on both sides, or one side may decide that it really is not important enough to fight over, and he gives in. Occasionally the solution may come about through the understanding that one side was right and the other side was wrong.

The Christian parent can help his children resolve difficulties by walking through these three steps of confrontation, communication, and conclusion. In doing so, the Christian parent will be giving his children one of the most valuable life skills they will ever need—the gentle art of getting along with others.

Using these three simple steps for reconciliation, I have seen 4-year-old children talk over and resolve their problems all by themselves.

Confrontation. When one child has a problem with another child, the two need to sit down and cool off before they face each other. They need to confront the absolute fact that their behavior has hurt another person.

It may take a bit of time for them to stop slyly kicking each other in the shins or poking each other in the ribs, but sooner or later they will be able to sit quietly, facing each other. When they can speak calmly, without anger and without shoving blame onto the other, they are ready to go on to the next step.

Communication. This step can take place

only when both children have somehow acknowledged each other's feelings. Communication involves a two-way pattern of listening and speaking. Both children need a chance to tell their side and explain their feelings. Then they

need to listen to the other side. In this way the children can find the cause for their anger, accept responsibility for their own actions and feelings, and come to a sensible conclusion that

is reasonable and satisfactory to both parties.

Occasionally one child will want to talk out the problem and the other child will remain adamant against it, choosing rather to nurture a grudge. In that case, explain to the cooperative child that he has done everything he could to try to solve the problem. Suggest that he try again later to talk it out, but now he should just find something to do that will make him happy. We must choose to make ourselves happy by changing our attitude and forgiving the party who has wronged us. After all, we cannot make someone else change. We can only change ourselves.



Communication is vital to human understanding. A child who will not talk out a problem, who refuses to face responsibility for his own actions and feelings, who continues to blame everything on others, and who will not forgive, will find life as

unforgiving and as hard as he is. A child like this needs patient help, extra love and understanding, a firm and consistent discipline program, and possibly professional help.

In confronting their feelings, children need to know that there is nothing wrong with feeling angry, but there is something very wrong with making others miserable because of that anger. The child who insists on moping around all day, feeling sorry for himself, and assuming that if he is not happy it must be someone else's fault has not learned personal responsibility. He has not learned to turn the situation around by taking control of his feelings. He has not learned to overlook faults in others and still remain friends. He has not learned to forgive.

In order for children to take charge of their

problems, they must learn not to let problems take charge of them.

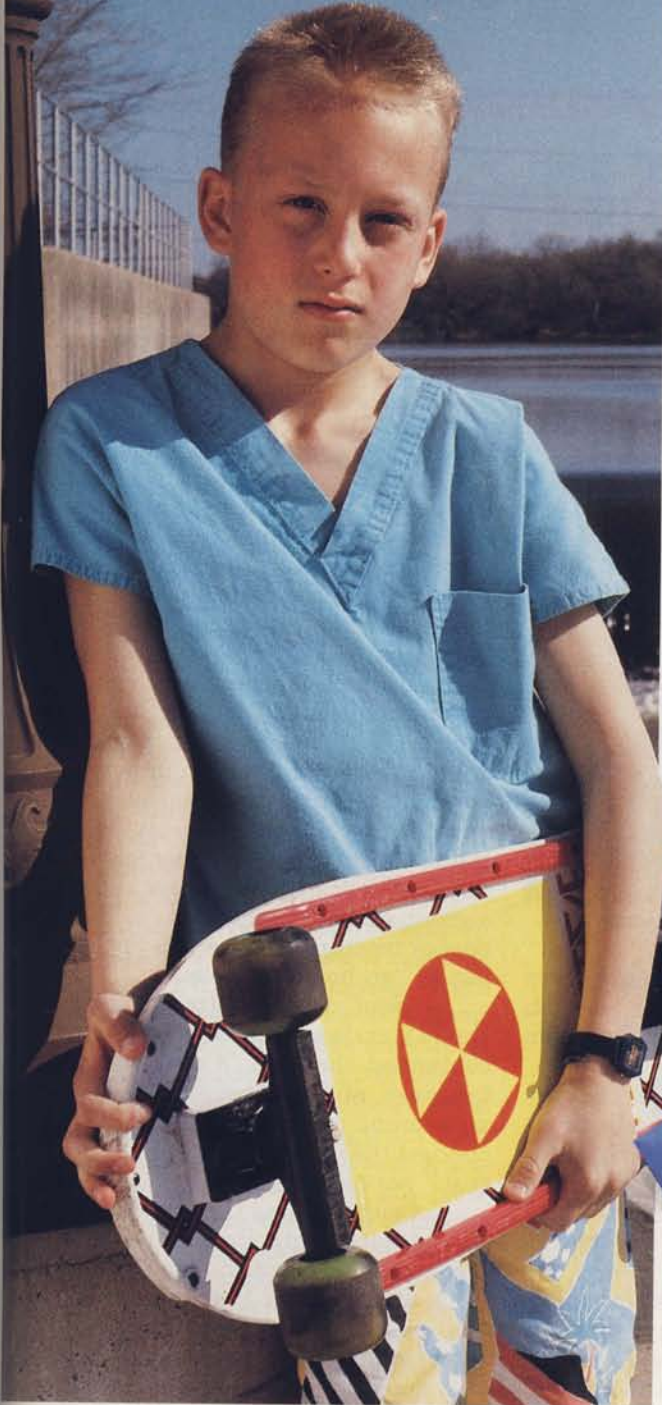
Conclusion. The solution to the problem should be mutually satisfactory to both children. Compromise, forgiveness, and fair play enter in here. Sometimes an apology and a quick hug is all that is required. Other times you may need to help the children come to a fair conclusion. For example, if the children decide to share the swing, you may have to set a time limit for each turn.

At times, a neutral arbitrator is necessary, but for the most part you should teach your children to solve their own problems. In this manner you will not be the judge who doles out the verdicts all the time. However, you should hear your children's solutions to make sure they are fair. Some children will give in to others every time, afraid to stand up for their own rights. Use discretion to help your children deal with differences and talk out solutions.

Even though you are not responsible to solve all your children's problems and make sure they are always happy, you *are* responsible to teach them how to deal with life and how to accept their own actions and feelings. By your own good example you will speak volumes in front of your children.

■ Kay Fauss

What on earth would make this kid want to attend school on a Sunday?



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Vines Elected President

SBC Conservatives Win Again

Over 20,000 messengers from nearly every state in the union converged on Las Vegas, Nevada, June 13-15 for the 132nd session of the Southern Baptist Convention. Nearly 15 million baptized people belong to the SBC, the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination.

The convention's most significant event occurred the opening day when staunch Conservative incumbent president Jerry Vines, co-pastor of the First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Florida, was reelected for a second term by a tally of 10,764 votes, compared to challenger Daniel Vestal's 8,248 vote count.

Vestal, pastor of the Dunwoody Baptist Church in suburban Atlanta, though a professing biblical inerrantist, was nominated by David Sapp of the First Baptist Church of Chamblee, Georgia, and supported by the so-called Moderate-Liberal or "Centrist" faction.

"He seeks to share presidential appointments with all Southern Baptists committed to the healing process," Sapp said. "We are tired of all the divisiveness."

Because the presidential appointees to the committee on committees in turn designate nominees for the committee of nominations, which then selects names for vacancies on all the trustee boards of the six SBC seminaries and some 20 other major agencies, the contest for the presidency is of prime importance.

"Southern Baptists have settled the issue of the Bible," claimed the newly elected president, Jerry Vines, but that does not mean the denomination's 11-year-old controversy is over. "What I mean by that statement is that Southern Baptists have overwhelmingly affirmed we believe the Bible is



Vines addresses a news conference.

without error. Those who say there are errors in the Bible are in pronounced minority in Southern Baptist life.

"I do not think it means that the administrators of our institutions, that the trustees of our institutions understand clearly the direction Southern Baptists want to go," Vines explained at a press conference.

"I believe the process of theological renewal is under way. I am confident that in a loving and Christlike manner theological problems, in God's good time, will be resolved."

A notably gentle man, Vines reacted quickly when he was described as part of a "Fundamentalist faction."

"If you mean by Fundamentalist that I am one of those who believes in the fundamentals of the faith, Yes. But if you mean that I would fall in the category of a legalist, an unloving person, an Ayatollah Khomeini or a Jim Jones, then the answer is No. I would like to be known as a Bible-believing Christian."

As for his appointive policy, he was firm, "I will appoint the best Baptists I can find. I will not knowingly appoint anyone who believes there are errors in the Bible."

A different approach was expressed by losing candidate Dan Vestal. He told reporters that for the past 10 years there has been a "forced conformity" within the convention that has "disenfranchised and excluded a great number of Southern Baptists." He said such an approach "polarizes and divides." While not ruling out another run for the presidency in 1990, Vestal told a group of 400 "Centrists" on Wednesday morning that he was just going to "go home and pastor."

A Baptist committee leader, David Currie of San Angelo, Texas, contended that the "Conservative takeover of the convention is a movement out of control." He claimed the issue is "power and control," not theology.

Notwithstanding these and other strong statements, President Vines pledged to "restore the joy" and to focus attention on evangelism and healing. All public business and reporting sessions seemed to move very smoothly with no sharp public debate and few really controversial issues coming to the floor. An action to set up a Washington office for a new Religious Liberty Commission was postponed until next year.

The budget of some \$137 million, containing funds for all SBC agencies, boards, and seminaries and including foreign and home missions, was slightly less than earlier budgets. Special designated denomination-wide campaigns for foreign missions (the Lottie Moon Offering) and for home missions (the Annie Armstrong Offering) have dramatically increased, however.

Photo by Jim Veneman

Among the subsidiary sessions was the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists. Pastor Jerry Falwell of the Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, spoke to the gathering of several thousand people. He commented in his address on church-planting that "the cloud of God," a reference to the Shekinah over the ancient tabernacle and in Solomon's temple, seemed now to be over the Conservative Southern Baptists, as they were winning multitudes to Christ and building great churches.

On Saturday before the convention early arrivers spent the day in visitation and soulwinning throughout Las Vegas. They reported nearly 400 professions of faith and found 15,000 prospects for local churches. Following the evangelists' conference, some 2,000 people went out on the Las Vegas strip, passing out thousands of Bibles and tracts in the heart of the entertainment district.

Other newly elected convention officers are First Vice President Junior Hill, an evangelist from Alabama, and Second Vice President Ernest Myers, executive director of the Nevada Baptist Convention.

To summarize the outlook for the nineties this writer suggests that next year will be an acid test, when the convention meets in New Orleans. If Dan Vestal, or someone else who advocates dismantling the presidential appointive power and broadening the leadership spectrum, should happen to win the presidency, many Southern Baptists may reassess their relationship to the convention. The Conservative resurgence could be halted. On the other hand, if the Conservatives retain leadership and proceed with their program, thousands of Moderates may gravitate to the Southern Baptist Alliance, an organization already in place, some of whose leaders have discussed joining the American Baptists. Next year no incumbent will be running. Both sides will be sure to campaign for a majority.

■ **James O. Combs** is editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*.

Moral Majority Disbands with "Mission Accomplished"

At a news conference of the Religion Newswriters Association Dr. Jerry Falwell announced that after successfully completing its mission, Moral Majority, Incorporated will disband effective August 31.

"Ten years ago, in June of 1979, I traveled to Washington, DC, and officially organized the Moral Majority. This organization was born out of a deep personal concern over the moral dilemma that gripped our nation at that time," said Dr. Falwell.

"In the early 1960s voluntary prayer had been removed from pub-

lic schools. Academic quality in our public schools virtually disappeared. In 1973 abortion had been legalized in this country. The divorce rate was approaching 40 percent. The drug epidemic was now in full force. Pornography had exploded as a legitimate multibillion dollar industry in this nation. Teenage pregnancy had become a major American phenomenon.

"I had conferred with many religious Conservatives about what might be done. I had talked with political mechanics in Washington about a possible course of action. In a spring meeting at the Thomas

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Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia, Paul Weyrich of the Free Congress Foundation made the statement, 'There is a moral majority in this country.'

"The name was born at that moment. The organization was properly chartered several weeks later."

During its 10-year course the organization has been credited with the election of Ronald Reagan in

1980, the demise of a dozen or so Liberal U.S. senators, and the registration and involvement of millions of Evangelical voters.

The formation of Moral Majority helped pave the way for other Conservative groups like Concerned Women for America, the Rutherford Institute, Freedom Council, and many others.

Consequently, counter groups

like Norman Lear's People for the American Way were formed to combat the efforts of the New Right, as the Conservatives came to be called.

Dr. Falwell went on to say, "Pollster Louis Harris reported in 1984 that the Religious Right comprised 20 percent of the electorate. Others in 1988 suggested the percentage to be even higher. In the last 10 years Moral Majority and Liberty Federation have raised and spent over \$69 million for education, voter registration, and political lobbying.

"In 1986 I decided to devote less time and energy to political matters in order to spend more time in Lynchburg.

"Then on November 3, 1987, I officially resigned as president of Moral Majority and Liberty Federation. At that time I assumed the position of chairman of both organizations, but have spent very little time and energy in this area, choosing rather to focus my energies on Thomas Road Baptist Church, the Old-Time Gospel Hour, and Liberty University. My schedule for the past three years would reflect this dramatic change of focus.

"I feel I have performed the task to which I was called in 1979. The Religious Right is solidly in place, and like the galvanizing of the black church as a political force a generation ago, the religious Conservatives in America are now in for the duration.

"For that reason, on the 10th anniversary of Moral Majority, as its founder and chairman and with the approval of the board of directors, we are formally announcing the dissolution of Moral Majority, Incorporated, concluding its operational purposes no later than the end of the fiscal year, August 31, 1989."

In commenting on his future plans, Dr. Falwell said, "My call from God has always been as the pastor of a local church and chancellor of Liberty University. I have spent the last three years moving back to that position. That is now an accomplished fact, and my full intention is to spend the remainder of my years preaching the gospel of Christ and training young people to serve the Lord through the ministry of Liberty University." ■

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taken over by leaders who believe in the infallibility of God's holy revelations in Scripture. If the number of Bible-believing people in the SBC continues to grow, it will finally turn our Southern seminaries into great fundamental, Bible-believing, and Bible-teaching institutions."

Paige Patterson realizes that the professors make a difference. "My hope is that the seminaries will hire faculty people who have no questions about the full reliability of the Bible, and call professors who are concerned about evangelism and church membership. The day of the ivory-tower academician, unrelated to the church and the needs of men, needs to be a thing of the past."

Southern Baptist Future. There is a feeling of expectation among Southern Baptists. Both Liberals and Conservatives feel that the next five years will bring changes. Conservatives hope those changes will bring them back to

where Southern Baptists began.

Paul Pressler, a state appellate court judge who serves on the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention, is sure the convention is moving in the right direction. "I feel the only problem the Conservative movement has had is the misrepresentation of its motives and purposes by those who are resisting a return to biblical theology," he says. "As Conservatives lead in our institutions, the fears generated by others will dissipate. Southern Baptists at large will see the tremendous benefit in missions and evangelism that comes from biblical theology, and will recognize the purity of the motives of those who have sought a return to this basis."

Paige Patterson says the next few years should be relatively peaceful. "The energy we've spent on the issues of the last 10 years will be channeled into more productive areas."

Richard Land points to his new situation as a change for the better. "I'm executive director of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and I'm very pro-life," he says simply. "That's a change."

Bill Hann feels the local church will play a larger role in the convention of the nineties. "The local church is coming into more prominence in the convention now," he says. "There's been a tendency for programs to work from the convention level down, but now the programs are beginning at the church level. Churches are looking to other churches for ministry models and program ideas, and these ideas are working their way up."

Charlie Martin agrees. "There needs to be a sweeping change in some programs, in the children's department for instance. For years we've been using the same 1950's material. Many Southern Baptist churches have abandoned dying SBC programs to use the AWANA program and had amazing success. Evangelism Explosion, a Presbyterian program, has been so successful in Southern Baptist churches that the convention came out with a copy, Continuous Witness Training.

"For years I was embarrassed when kids came back from seminaries or Baptist colleges and told me what their professors were teaching.

I felt I had to apologize for being a Southern Baptist. Now the convention has gone back to its roots and is once again Bible-believing and evangelistic. With the changes we've seen, I don't have to apologize anymore."

Through the years, no matter what problems assailed them, the people of the SBC have remained evangelistic. The tripod of emphases upon which the convention was built—missions, evangelism, and education—has remained strong through the years of challenge and turmoil. The years of greatest challenge and opportunity are yet ahead. ■

Vines *continued from page 18*

SBC, he asked me about it because he's always concerned about his family. But when Jerry goes to the Lord and makes a decision, it has always been the right decision.

"We are both private people," she explains. We can be happy just being together not saying a word. I know what Jerry's thinking and he knows what I'm thinking. I know him better than anyone, and I know that my husband is a wonderful, Christlike man."

Thousands of Southern Baptists agree that Jerry Vines has the qualities necessary to lead the nation's largest Protestant denomination and promote healing between various factions. And Jerry Vines rests at peace in the knowledge that whatever difficulties and challenges arise, they, too, will "come to pass." ■

Lindsay *continued from page 18*

is a combination of turning your back on sin and turning to Jesus.

"I believe the greatest need of America's churches is to return to our first love. Many people need to be saved, the saved need to be revived, and we need to rid ourselves of compromise and indifference. I lay the tragic moral condition of our country at the feet of the church. Men of God need to become men of God again, and preach the Word without fear of the favor of men. I hope the Southern Baptist Convention is going to lead this nation in renewal and revival, but we must first have it ourselves." ■

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Fired Publisher Accepts Position at *Moody Monthly*

Dennis Shere, a former Ohio newspaper publisher who was fired for refusing advertising from a homosexual rights group, has accepted a job as executive editor of *Moody Monthly* magazine.

"We're extremely pleased Dennis will be working with us," Jerry Jenkins, vice president in charge of periodicals at *Moody*, told United Press International. "Apparently one of his long-range goals was to work for a Christian magazine. The opportunity just became available to him earlier than he anticipated."

The *Dayton Daily News* fired Shere last year after he rejected a promotional advertisement submitted by the Dayton Gay and Lesbian Center.

"I have tried to balance my Christian perspective with the demands of running a newspaper," Shere said after the incident. "My conscience and concern for this community would not allow me to compromise on this issue."

Dr. Koop Resigns As U.S. Surgeon General



Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, best known for his fight against smoking and the AIDS epi-

dem, has announced plans to resign his position effective October 1, 1989.

In a two-paragraph letter to President Bush, Koop gave no explanation for his decision to retire after more than seven years as the nation's doctor and foremost authority on medical affairs. He joined the Reagan administration in 1982 after an illustrious 35-year career in pediatric medicine.

A vocal abortion foe, Koop received criticism in recent years from some religious groups, which oppose his controversial position on AIDS education, condom distribution, and sex education.

In a letter acknowledging Koop's decision, however, President Bush praised the 72-year-old surgeon, saying, "In tackling some of the toughest public health issues facing our country and the world, you spoke with knowledge, wisdom, conviction, and courage."

James Mason, assistant secretary for health, will name an acting replacement for Koop once the position is vacated.

Fundamentalist Journal Wins Award Of Excellence

Fundamentalist Journal, for the second year in a row, received the Award of Excellence in Christian Journalism for the Organizational Division at the Evangelical Press Association Convention, held May 8-10.

Entries for this top-honor award are judged on writing, content, graphics, and impact of the publication as a whole, as well as how the publication serves its intended audience within its stated aims and purposes.

FJ placed second for a single color photo by Cathy Watson of "My



5-Year-Old Warrior" and fourth for a black-and-white photo by Brian Sullivan of an abortion protester being arrested. Both photos appeared in the October issue.

In September *FJ* celebrates its seventh anniversary. Editor Deborah Huff oversees the publication that has over 125,000 readers.

"Religion In Media" Awards "Angels" To Jack Van Impe TV Ministry



"Jack Van Impe Presents," a Michigan-based Christian weekly telecast, was recently presented a silver "Angel," the religious television industry's top award, for excellence and "outstanding contributions to weekly Christian programming."

The Angel, equivalent to the secular TV industry's Emmy, was awarded by Religion in Media, a national, nondenominational religious programming group from Hollywood, California.

Rexella Van Impe, anchorperson on the news commentary-type program and wife of the principal speaker, received the organization's prestigious "Gold Angel," recognizing her years of tireless and talented service in Christian TV programming. The gold statuette, inscribed, "Rexella Van Impe, Woman of God," was presented by Mary Dorr, executive director of Religion in Media.

The Van Impes have received six Angels in the last 10 years, including top awards for the ministry's prime-time specials on the Middle East, the occult, and the AIDS crisis. In 1988, during his 40th anniversary of ministry, Jack Van Impe also was presented the "Gold Angel" lifetime achievement award.

Bush Vows Continued Support For Tuition Tax Credits

Meeting recently with Evangelical Christian leaders, President Bush said despite rumors, he still favors tuition tax credits for private schools.

Bush assured a group representing the National Association of Evangelicals that his position concerning tax breaks for parents of children in private schools has not changed.

He added, however, that such a program is presently too expensive to implement.

NAE Director Robert Dugan, Jr., and 19 other Evangelical leaders requested the meeting after Bush told a privately schooled Hawaiian student that his parents should not receive a tax break.

"I think it's the obligation of all taxpayers to support a public education system," the White House transcript quotes the President as saying. "Then, if on top of that, if your parents think they want to shell out—in addition to the tax money—tuition money, that's their right."

In his meeting with the Evangelical leaders, however, Bush said he supports the tuition tax credit concept but wasn't clear enough in his conversation with the student.

Top Gospel Singers Named At Annual Dove Awards Ceremony



Singers Sandi Patti, Amy Grant, and Wayne Watson each won top awards at the 20th Annual Gospel Music Association Dove Awards show in April.

Patti, who has dominated the awards show throughout the 1980s, was voted gospel music's best female singer for the eighth consecutive year. Patti also garnered four other honors: Top inspirational song for "In Heaven's Eyes," top

inspirational album for *Make His Praise Glorious*, choral collection album of the year for *Sandi Patti Choral Praise*, and top instrumental album for *A Symphony of Praise*.

Grant was named top artist for the third time in her career. Her victory ended Patti's two-year reign as top artist. In addition, Grant received additional awards for best contemporary gospel album and short-form video. Both awards were for her album *Lead Me On*.

Watson was voted male vocalist of the year and also won song of the year honors for "Friend of a Wounded Heart."

The new gospel group Take 6 was named group of the year and best new artist. In addition, the group won top black gospel album for *Take 6* and best contemporary black gospel song for "If We Ever."

Winners were chosen by singers, songwriters, and musicians in the Nashville-based Gospel Music Association.

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Dealing with Differences

Christians have differed with one another since the earliest days of the church. Peter and Paul disagreed about how the church should deal with the Gentiles. Paul and Barnabas disagreed about the potential ministry of John Mark. Disagreement over personal preferences or even doctrinal differences in nonessentials is a hallmark of the Baptist distinctive of spiritual liberty.

Writing to the church at Rome, the apostle Paul said, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Rom. 14:10-12).

Everybody has an opinion—and almost everybody thinks his opinion is right. Unfortunately, the same is true of Christians who differ on doctrinal and personal issues. If you do not believe it, just ask them.

Some issues in the Christian life are nonnegotiable. We cannot disagree on the essential truths of biblical Christianity and still claim to be Christian. Those truths include the person and work of Christ, His Virgin Birth, vicarious Atonement, and literal Resurrection.

However, much of the conflict within the church today is over peripheral issues on which believers differ because of varied interpretations of Scripture. While both parties may be sincere in their beliefs, obviously both cannot be correct. Paul was well aware that all his readers in the church at Rome claimed to be followers of Christ. Yet, they were divided over the issue of eating meat that had been offered to idols. The apostle urged them to see that there was a deeper issue at stake.

by **Richard G. Lee**

As he opened his discussion Paul said, "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). He raised five crucial questions.

Am I fully persuaded about my beliefs? The Bible promises us that the "Spirit of truth" will guide

When we shift our beliefs from Scripture to man-made traditions, we are in danger of losing the truth.

us into "all truth" (John 16:13). Thus, biblical truths are revealed by God, written in Scripture, and illuminated to us by the Holy Spirit.

When we shift our beliefs from Scripture to man-made traditions, we are in danger of losing the truth. Unless our beliefs are centered in the Word of God, our faith is vain and meaningless. We might as well close the doors, mute the organ, send the congregation home, and turn out the lights!

Are my beliefs pleasing to the Lord? In Romans 14:8 Paul states, "For whether we live, we live unto the Lord." Christ must live through us if our lives are to attract others to Him as they see Him in us. Our lives must back up our beliefs if our testimony is to have any real affect on the unbelieving world. The whole issue of integrity hinges on this matter.

Will my beliefs and practices stand at the judgment seat of Christ? All believers will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ to have our faithfulness of service evaluated for reward or

judgment—not for the purpose of attaining salvation. Everything we have ever done for God will be evaluated. Even our thoughts and intentions will be revealed. Every secret sin will be exposed. Whatever will not stand the test of His judgment will be consumed. All the world will know us for what we really are before God.

Will my beliefs cause others to stumble? The apostle Paul advised that "no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Rom. 14:13).

Some personal beliefs and preferences may not be wrong in themselves, but they may cause others to stumble in their walk with God. We may be free to do many things that we ought not do if they cause others to stumble.

Are my beliefs of real and lasting importance? Paul reminded the Roman Christians that the "kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. . . . Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:17, 19).

We are to major on the essential truths of God's Word and not become sidetracked arguing over personal preferences and peripheral convictions that unnecessarily divide the body of Christ.

How are we to deal with the fundamental doctrines of our faith? Absolutely and without wavering! But in matters of personal preference, with kindness and patient understanding toward others.

■ **Richard G. Lee** is senior pastor of Rehoboth Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia.

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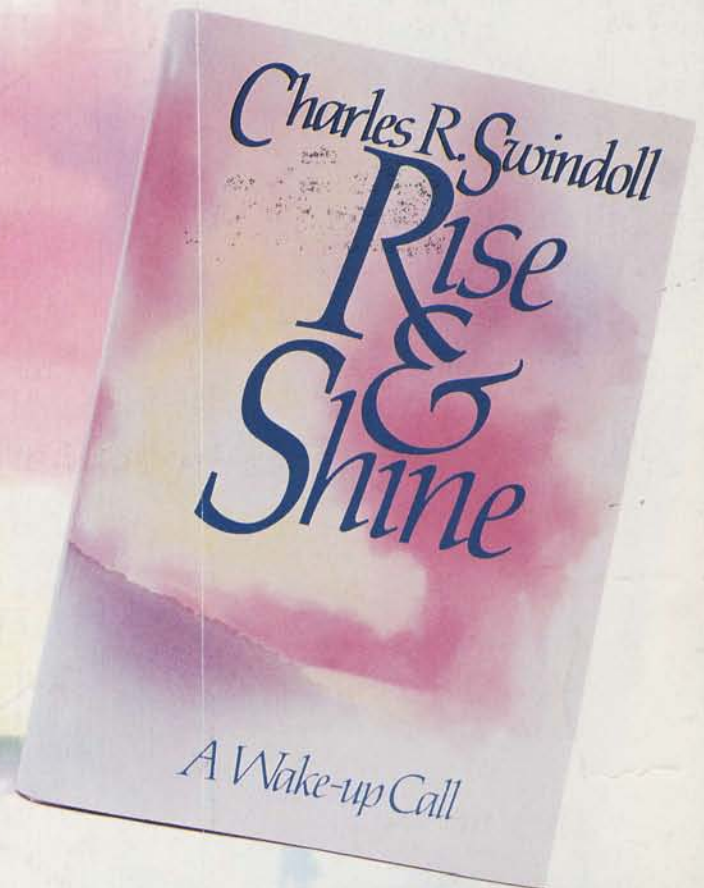
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Steve Smith, a senior speech communications major from Atlanta, Georgia, plans to enter seminary. His father, Dr. Bailey Smith, is a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention.



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