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FLORIDA--Quiet time enables Henry to maintain perspective.
GEORGIA--HMB hosts Elliff, prayer convocation.
VIRGINIA--SBC vice president: 'Either resurrect it, or bury it.'
MISSOURI--Preaching week at Midwestern continues spiritual atmosphere.
KENTUCKY--Bivocational pastor wins suit over work on Sunday.
ALABAMA--Alabama judge not afraid to stand for his beliefs.
TENNESSEE--New Orleans missions trip brings couple 60 children.

**Quiet time enables Henry
to maintain perspective**

By Ken Walker

**Baptist Press
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ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)--Although Jim Henry has written new book on maintaining perspective, that hasn't freed him from the challenges of grappling with the Information Age.

"I'm a fellow struggler," said the recent two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention. "There's so much to do and so much information that comes across my desk that sometimes I feel like I'm drowning in paper."

The way he keeps a positive outlook is through his morning quiet time, he said, zealously guarding his practice of prayer and Scripture meditation. And, after 36 years in ministry, he reserves certain evenings to relax and takes longer vacations.

One reason he wrote "Keeping Life In Perspective: Sharpening Your Sense of What's Important" is to encourage Christians to retain their sense of balance. It is vital to avoid society's rampant materialism and other forces pulling families apart and damaging our nation's integrity, he said.

The pastor of First Baptist Church of Orlando, Fla., hopes his first book in 11 years also will be used to draw unbelievers to Christ; early reports indicate it has deeply touched many readers.

Co-authored with research assistant, Marilyn Jeffcoat, much of the book draws on Henry's sermons. However, it includes his life experiences and other vignettes that give it a practical, down-to-earth flavor.

Based on what he sees from his hectic vantage point, he believes there is a need for more discussion of the topic.

He recalled a recent lunch with a middle-aged pastor who is sagging under the stress of caring for aging parents, church finances and congregational duties. The man compared himself to a Ronald McDonald figure with children flocking around to grab lollipops from his oversized pockets.

"He feels when he's invited into a church, people are picking out of his pockets and when he comes to the end of the street he's empty," Henry said.

"I think all of us (pastors) feel the same way. Most of the people we deal with are reaching for something. Either they have an agenda or they're hurting and need encouragement. You're constantly giving. You have to guard your time to keep something coming in or you'll get wiped out."

However, in his book the megachurch leader cautions people not to get carried away with how bad things are in the modern age. The "good old days" weren't really that great, he writes. An avid historian, Henry has read extensively on the Civil War era and is astounded by the greed and corruption that tainted the government more than a century ago.

Still, the nation's forefathers had a strong Judeo-Christian ethic that today is lacking, Henry said. In many areas, a man's word was a trustworthy bond, he said, an admirable trait that has given way to the idea that lying, cheating and stealing are OK because they're so common.

Pointing to research that shows most Americans regularly lie and Christians' ethical behavior isn't much better than non-Christians', the pastor said believers have a responsibility to become models of virtue.

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"I don't know if we can convince others of the value of integrity," he said. "The only way they can be convinced is through an experience with God, which comes from developing intimacy and a responsive spirit to the Holy Spirit.

"Hopefully, they will see some people around them who mentor the faith. People who they can plug into and see integrity on parade, because they see so little of it around them."

Henry said the church also has a responsibility to help the nation regain its family foundations. That means providing young people a better understanding of marital responsibilities before they reach the altar, he said.

First Baptist Orlando strives to do that via classes, seminars, special speakers and retreats that review biblical principles of marriage. If the body of Christ doesn't teach values and proper treatment of a spouse, he said, the job won't get done.

"We have divorces in our church like everywhere else," said Henry, who will observe his 37th wedding anniversary in December. "But I've married several hundred couples over the years and less than a dozen are divorced.

"It's not because I married them but because we took seriously the preparation and helped them so there are some roots that stabilized the marriage."

As daunting as the task of repairing a wounded society may appear, the veteran clergyman sees a blessing in so many feeling overwhelmed: It may be God's way of humbling us so we can lead less-complicated lives.

"I hope we can do it, and help our family and church to do it," Henry said.

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Walker is a freelance writer in Louisville, Ky., and co-author of a book, "Ultimate Warriors," to be released in October.

**HMB hosts Elliff,
prayer convocation**

By Lynne Jones

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ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP)--Tom Elliff, Southern Baptist Convention president and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., issued a "Call to the Cross" to the staff and board of the Home Mission Board Sept. 9.

Elliff visited the home office of the SBC agency to lead the three hour prayer convocation. The convocation was one of eight, the other seven held on seminary campuses. HMB President Larry Lewis said the purpose of the convocation was to seek God's face and repent of sins.

"We are meeting to focus on Jesus. We are meeting to capture the full meaning of 'surrender.' We are meeting to seek him for a great spiritual awakening in our time ... but also to pledge ourselves to the crucified life regardless of his divine disposition toward our nation," Elliff said.

Elliff was joined by Avery Willis, Foreign Mission Board vice president and author of "Master Life" discipleship program, and Henry Blackaby, HMB director of Prayer and Spiritual Awakening and author of "Experiencing God" discipleship study. Ron Owens, HMB associate to director of Prayer and Spiritual Awakening, led the praise and worship time of the convocation with his wife, Patricia.

Willis said, "We are world ambassadors of the cross. We have been given a ministry and a message of reconciliation. We didn't come today to talk about revival. We came today to come back to the cross."

"Unless God impresses the cross on our hearts, revival is not going to come," Willis added.

Blackaby said the cross is the most decisive moment in history and in the life of the individual who confirms Jesus as Lord.

"The cross delivers us out of one kingdom into another. The cross creates a new creation. And, the cross is a simple introduction to life a life of holiness," Blackaby said.

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**SBC vice president: 'Either
resurrect it, or bury it'**

By Michael Clingenpeel

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--"Either resurrect it, or bury it."

With that commission from the local director of missions, Fred Luter accepted the call to be pastor of Franklin Street Baptist Church in New Orleans a decade ago. The church only had 63 members, and was located in the Big Easy's decaying inner city near the infamous French Quarter.

Without denominational support, a result of Franklin Street's previous record of mismanagement, and with no pastoral experience, Luter struggled with a strategy to resurrect the congregation. Finally he decided, "If this is God's church, let's do it God's way." He established three priorities: the Bible would be the final authority, leadership would be held accountable for church attendance and a "consistent life," and the focus would be on discipling and developing men.

Ten years later Franklin Street is building a 2,000-seat sanctuary and has three morning services every week in its current worship area seating almost 500. "Everybody is welcome at Franklin Street Baptist Church but the fire marshall," laughs Luter. In addition the predominantly African American congregation has led the Louisiana Baptist Convention in baptisms for the past two years.

Luter, elected second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention when it met in New Orleans in June, told the story of his church's growth in a dialogue with pastors from the African American Fellowship of Virginia Baptists last month at the Baptist Building in Richmond.

"My thing was not building a big church," said Luter. "My thing was to make disciples that would make an impact on our city."

The impact is undeniable, particularly among African American males. Forty percent of his congregation is male, a remarkable percentage of involvement for his community, according to Luter.

"Because of the situation I want men in leadership positions. Men draw men." The key to male involvement is the pastor, added Luter. "The pastor must be involved in your Brotherhood. They need to hear your testimony and know you didn't always have a Bible in your hand."

Luter, the second African American to serve as an SBC officer, was cautiously optimistic about recent SBC efforts at racial reconciliation. "Racial reconciliation is fine, but you cannot mandate it. The SBC action was a step in the right direction, but every church is autonomous and some do not have an open door policy."

Luter was in Virginia to preach revival services at Salem Baptist Church in Goochland.

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**Preaching week at Midwestern
continues spiritual atmosphere**

By James A. Smith Sr.

**Baptist Press
9/10/96**

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--Following three days of preaching which emphasized the importance of faithfulness in ministry, evangelist Junior Hill shared "practical exhortations" concerning the "danger of drifting" at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

The Sept. 3-6 "Week of Preaching" chapel services continued an atmosphere of spiritual activity which had begun the first day of classes with an impromptu prayer service from a hilltop overlooking the Kansas City, Mo., campus.

Warning those in the gospel ministry "the things of God can slip away from us and we can lose the sweetness of Jesus Christ," Hill asked, "Have you ever noticed that the propensity to drift always leads you to drift away from God?"

A 30-year veteran of vocational evangelism, Hill spoke in the final chapel service Sept. 6 from Hebrews 2:1-3 and urged those in the seminary community to examine the devotional, confessional and evangelistic aspects of their lives.

Communion with God is "your first responsibility," Hill reminded the seminarians.

"Is there a time where you get alone with God and you adore him, praise him, exalt him, magnify him?" Hill asked while choking back tears. "Is there an intimate communion with the Savior?"

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Hill had advice for seminary students who claim to be too busy to spend time alone with God: "You better pack your bags and go home. If you don't have time for intimacy with the Savior, you're busier than God ever wanted you to be."

More important than academic achievement, "the greatest qualification you can ever have is that you've been with Jesus," Hill asserted.

The lack of confession of known sin in a believer's life is another evidence of "drifting from God," Hill said, noting becoming casual about sin follows a lack of intimacy with God.

"Men don't get away from God because they sin. But men sin because they get away from God," Hill said.

Hill illustrated the devastating effect of sin in the believer's life by telling the story of a Baptist preacher who ultimately left his wife following years consuming pornography.

"Are you honest to God in your confession?" Hill asked the students.

"The clearest evidence of spiritual drifting is when you come to the place where you lose your burden to see somebody else get saved," Hill said, offering his third practical exhortation.

Hill told the audience of a car salesman in his hometown who had sought spiritual help from Hill because he recognized the evangelist. By the time he attempted to answer a letter from the man -- his third request for help -- Hill tearfully said that his wife had stapled to the letter a newspaper article reporting, "Local car salesman shoots himself to death.

Although a prominent preacher, author of books and one who helps people know how to live, Hill confessed "a lonely man crossed my path and I didn't care" because "I let the intimate, sweetness of Jesus slip by through activity and I lost my interest in God."

Hill's preaching evoked responses of conviction from students, faculty and guests who had joined the chapel services. On the final day, a pastor visiting the campus testified to the audience, "It's tough out there on the front lines" but noted his soul had been refreshed during the week of preaching.

Following the final sermon, Midwestern President Mark Coppenger commented, "I pray what happens these two weeks you'll never get over," looking toward Midwestern's Sept. 11 observance of the ongoing revival convocations led by SBC President Tom Elliff. The convocation at Midwestern will be the sixth of seven seminary meetings.

"I beg you to beg God for more light than you've had in a long time," Coppenger urged the students. "Don't let go of what God's doing until he does the whole work in you."

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Bivocational pastor wins suit over work on Sunday

By Mark Wingfield

**Baptist Press
9/10/96**

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (BP)--Western Kentucky University has been ordered to pay \$5,000 in damages plus back pay to a bivocational minister who was fired from the university's staff when he refused to work on Sundays.

The Kentucky Commission on Human Rights ruled June 20 in favor of Alfred Cook, a former plumber for the university who also serves as pastor of two rural Baptist congregations. The commission further ordered the university to reinstate Cook's employment.

Cook claimed he was fired from the maintenance crew at the state university in Bowling Green in November 1993, after his schedule was changed to include Sunday work, which he refused to do.

The university maintained Cook's problem could have been worked out in time, if he had been willing to work some on Sundays. Later, the university also suggested Cook could have swapped out his Sunday work schedule with other maintenance employees, if any were willing to swap.

The university further said the person who fired Cook was not authorized to do so, thereby making his departure a resignation rather than a firing.

Cook maintained it was against his religious convictions to work at all on Sundays. And since he believes no one should work on Sundays, he could not ask another employee to take his Sunday work, he said.

The commission ruled Cook had been the victim of religious discrimination.

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Under Kentucky statute, the commission's ruling carries the weight of law, but its rulings may be appealed in circuit court. Western Kentucky University filed an appeal with Warren Circuit Court July 15. The appeals process is expected to take several months.

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**Alabama judge not afraid
to stand for his beliefs**

By Laurie A. Lattimore

**Baptist Press
9/10/96**

GADSDEN, Ala. (BP)--Judge Roy S. Moore is no stranger to conflict over his Christian faith. And if one didn't know better, one might think the judge invited it.

Although this Alabama Baptist doesn't relish battling separation of church and state issues, he is not afraid to take them on.

Under fire for hanging the Ten Commandments in his Etowah County courtroom and offering occasional prayers before jury selection, Moore has most recently come under attack for a divorce case he is hearing that involves allegations of a lesbian affair by the mother. The woman and her attorney have asked Moore to step down from the upcoming hearing that has attracted state and national attention, claiming his fundamentalist Christian beliefs will prejudice his ruling.

Moore has refused both requests and has set the final hearing for Oct. 7-8.

"If I step down, that would mean anyone could just go shopping for a judge who thinks like they do," said Moore, member of First Baptist Church, Gallant. "They just don't like what I stand for, and I'm certainly not going to step down because of what I believe."

For Judge Moore, standing up for his Christian beliefs is part of his oath to God, no matter what challenges that may provoke.

"When you do what you believe, you are going to run into problems," Moore said.

The complaints of his presence in the Etowah divorce case stem from his personal legal battle over the Ten Commandments.

Moore will go before Judge Charles Price Sept. 11 in Montgomery County Circuit Court to defend his display of the Ten Commandments and prayers in the courthouse. As with the judge's other public legal battles, his entourage of supporters will congregate at the courthouse just before the 1:30 p.m. trial.

With great energy and authority, Moore likes to quote George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Roger Sherman and James Madison to prove his case that America is grounded in a belief in God.

Citing George Washington's inaugural address: "... it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly implore His protection and favor," Moore contends it would be wrong not to give God credit in his courtroom.

"For me to acknowledge God in my courtroom is not a violation of my duty -- it is my duty," he said.

This insistence on fulfilling his duty, made the judge an easy target for the American Civil Liberties Union, which filed a lawsuit against Moore in March 1995. In conjunction with the Alabama Free-Thought Association, the ACLU claims First Amendment rights are violated because the courtroom prayers and Ten Commandments on the wall represent an establishment of religion.

The Sept. 11 trial is a declaratory judgment filed by the governor to request the state's position on the issue of prayers in the courtroom. Gov. Fob James has voiced his support of Moore's position in 1995 and approved the state paying \$85 an hour to offset the legal fees of Moore's attorney.

Both sides have requested summary judgment, but Moore said no matter what the outcome, the case will go to the Alabama Supreme Court and possibly to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"We will fight this all the way to the Supreme Court, and I think we will be successful," Moore said. "They say I am coercing people by displaying God's law. I am just one small courtroom in one state, so does that make all our American money saying 'In God we Trust' and every monument in Washington, D.C., referring to God coercive too? I don't think so, and I don't think what I'm doing is either."

Moore grins at the thought of challenging the Supreme Court over the issue. He claims God and religion were not considered synonymous by the founding fathers when they wrote the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Religion was the means by which individuals practiced their belief in God. The establishment clause of the First Amendment was a protection against the government telling citizens they had to worship and how to do it. In this way, Moore said, acknowledging God was not equated with establishing a religion.

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The forefathers' intent was distorted, he contends, when the courts began interpreting acknowledgment of God as a religion, making a belief in no God a religion as well. Moore believes that not allowing the Ten Commandments on his wall or prohibiting voluntary student prayer in school is an unconstitutional establishment of a religion.

"You cannot be neutral (with the Supreme Court's interpretation)," Moore said. "To be neutral about Jesus is to be against him."

Moore's legal case before the Montgomery court is based on the historical test invoked in a 1983 Supreme Court case where the court ruled it constitutional to open the Nebraska Legislature with a prayer every day -- a practice in place for more than 100 years. This tradition of prayer, the court said, represented "a tolerable acknowledgment of beliefs widely held among the people of this country."

The ACLU, however, claims a legislature and court are different because people in court are there under compulsion. Referring to *Stone v. Graham*, where the Supreme Court ruled against a Kentucky statute requiring schools to post the Ten Commandments because attendance was required, ACLU believes a courtroom is more like a school than a legislature.

The traditional test for establishment of religion cases stems from the 1971 Supreme Court case, *Lemon v. Kurtzman*. The Lemon test determines whether a particular action violates the First Amendment by noting if it serves a religious purpose, advances or inhibits religion, and if there is excessive government entanglement in religion. If an action violates any part of the test, it is unconstitutional.

J. Brent Walker, legal counsel for the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, said in 1995 about Moore's defense that while the Supreme Court bases many cases on the Lemon test without referring to it by name, most lower courts still follow it. In fact, a federal district court in the Eleventh Circuit -- which includes Alabama -- ruled in 1991 that a North Carolina judge could not open his court sessions with prayer. In 1993, the Fourth Circuit said the Cobb County (Ga.) Courthouse violated the second prong by hanging the Ten Commandments in the building.

"I don't think the Lemon test is valid," Moore said. "If I tell someone there can be no references to God, I have just established a religion -- atheism. If we exclude God, we're establishing religion." Walker maintains that a zone of neutrality toward religion can be accomplished. "I disagree 100 percent that the Lemon test excludes God. It ensures neutrality," he said.

Despite the strong convictions from those who disagree with Moore's crusade, the judge can't reverse his equally strong convictions that the acknowledgment of God has been wrongfully shut out from society and illegally banned from such places as public schools and his courtroom.

"I am not off base on this," the judge said as he pulled more historical documents supporting his belief in America's Christian heritage. "I'm doing my duty to uphold the Constitution, which mandates we acknowledge God."

"I don't think we have to hide our faith, and I wish we would understand that acknowledging God is not establishing a religion."

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**New Orleans mission trip
brings couple 60 children**

By Connie Davis

**Baptist Press
9/10/96**

ELIZABETHTON, Tenn. (BP)--During a mission trip, his first, to New Orleans, Joe Ledford saw children in "helpless and hopeless" circumstances, he said. He kept thinking about children when he returned home. He wondered how he could prevent such heartbreak.

Ledford, a member of Lynn Valley Baptist Church, Elizabethton, Tenn., and his wife, Linda, who also worked in New Orleans, talked with Becky Brumitt of Watauga Baptist Association about their concerns. Brumitt, another member of the mission team, suggested they work with children in a Big A Club she had started in a government-subsidized community.

That was two years ago, and the couple now claims as "their" children about 60 children they have met through Big A Club.

"Maybe that's why we didn't have birth children, because we wouldn't have time to do this," said Ledford, who is Elizabethton bureau chief of the Johnson City Press.

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The ministry not only has changed their lives, but has changed their church, noted Ledford. Before the couple met the children, the church had realized its need for more children. Ledford, as Sunday school director, had led the congregation to pray for more children to attend.

After getting acquainted with the children who attend Big A Club, the Ledfords encouraged their church to buy a van. They use it to transport children not only to Big A Club, which meets at the Watauga Association office, but also to transport them to Lynn Valley church. Sunday school classes have doubled in size and a children's choir is planned. Parents of children have made professions of faith and joined the church as a result, added Linda Ledford.

One reason for the results, said Brumitt, is the commitment of the Ledfords, who visit the children regularly to meet their families.

Similar ministries are being conducted by Baptists of the association in two other Big A Clubs, one at another government-subsidized community and one at Unaka Church, Elizabethton, which holds a club on Saturday mornings for children who live in that rural community. Also First Baptist Church, Hampton, plans to begin a club.

Barbara Grindstaff, director of the Unaka Baptist Church club, said, "There are kids galore in these hollers that don't go to church. I just wish that every church would just try it."

Anyone wishing to donate Big A Club materials, which are out of print, should contact Brumitt at the association.

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