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TENNESSEE--SBC Education Commission to close at end of year.
GEORGIA--Ga. board addresses concerns raised by Kirby Godsey book.
ATLANTA--Ga. journal examines Godsey book via editorial, pro-con reviews.
MISSOURI--Revival convocations part of process: Elliff.
DALLAS--Texas board targets comments questioning Clinton's salvation.
NORTH CAROLINA--She has plenty of insight into 2 seminary presidents.
ALABAMA--Gallup study examines fears faced by American teenagers.
TENNESSEE--Christian schools manager, consultant named at BSSB.
TENNESSEE--Editors' Note.

**SBC Education Commission
to close at end of year**

By Herb Hollinger

**Baptist Press
9/12/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The Southern Baptist Convention's Education Commission, created in 1915, will shut down Dec. 31, the seven-member staff in Nashville, Tenn., has been told.

The commission was scheduled to be dissolved at the end of June 1997 as part of the denominational restructuring, reducing the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12. The "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring plan was approved by the SBC in 1995, with a final bylaw approval in June 1996. The new SBC structure is to be in place at the end of the June 1997 annual meeting in Dallas.

The Education Commission voted in late June to leave the final details of when the commission would dissolve up to its administrative committee. Commission chairman E. Douglas Hodo, president of Houston Baptist University, notified commission employees of the closure through Executive Director-Treasurer Stephen P. Carleton in late August.

The closure at the end of the year surprised the staff, according to Carleton, who said, "My only regret ... is that I feel responsible for misleading my staff. After the SBC in New Orleans approved the budget I submitted, which would have funded the agency through June 19, 1997, I gave the staff false hope that this was a date they could use for personal planning."

Carleton said the commission "had every right" to set the closure date. Still, Carleton said some of the staff had turned down opportunities to take other jobs because the commission had provided generous retention incentives to encourage staff to stay until the agency closed.

An aim of the Dec. 31 closure, legally a merger with the SBC Executive Committee, is to allow funds to be channeled to the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools (ASBCS), which has agreed to assume some of the functions of the Education Commission.

The commission will request the SBC Executive Committee, meeting in Nashville Sept. 16-18, to endorse a proposal to channel \$150,000 over two years from the commission's 1996-97 budget to help the ASBCS develop a staff. After the Dec. 31 closure, the SBC Executive Committee would be responsible for distribution of the remaining funds of the commission. The commission's 1996-97 budget is \$370,148.

Hodo told Baptist Press the commission's administrative committee was to give its employees "fair and equitable treatment ... our highest priority." Through a severance package, retention pay dating back to July 1995, and four and a half months' notice, Hodo said the administrative committee feels "we've done that." In addition, the commission has asked the Implementation Task Force, the group working with the SBC agencies affected in the restructuring, to help commission employees find positions, if possible, in other SBC agencies.

Another priority was to help the ASBCS get started and assume the functions of the commission. Hodo said the commission hopes to assist ASBCS by "passing on" resources, software, databases and possibly some hardware.

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Also, Hodo said the commission desires, when it closes, to pass on some funds to the SBC, possibly as much as \$150,000 to \$200,000. If the agency continued to June 1997, it might only have \$60,000 to \$100,000 to give the convention, Hodo explained.

Carleton said the commission has been "extremely generous in their treatment of me The three years (at the commission) have been three of my most fulfilling." Speaking of the proposed funds for the ASBCS start-up, Carleton said "if the only way to receive a monetary grant to help (ASBCS) operate was to terminate all the employees of the (commission) Dec. 31, then it is probably a worthy sacrifice in the long run."

Tim Fields, assistant director of the commission, said, "Although a job loss of this nature carries with it a lot of stress and anxiety for entire family systems, the members of (the commission) have been more than fair by providing generous severance benefits for employees."

Fields said he was appreciative of 26 years with several SBC agencies, the past eight with the Education Commission.

"I have had several firm job offers with other Baptist entities, but at the request of the (commission), backed by their offer of retention pay, I made the choice to stay with the (commission) until closure in order to facilitate an orderly transfer of programs, materials and data (to ASBCS)," Fields told Baptist Press. "I feel the commission's request to the Executive Committee for start-up funds is critical to the success of this transition."

At a June meeting, the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools authorized the employment of an executive director and necessary staff. The ASBCS will meet Sept. 26 at the University of Mobile (Ala.).

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**Ga. board addresses concerns
raised by Kirby Godsey book**

By William Neal

**Baptist Press
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MT. VERNON, Ga. (BP)--The Georgia Baptist Convention's executive committee, meeting Sept. 9 at Brewton-Parker College, passed a resolution chastising Mercer President R. Kirby Godsey for the doctrinal error of his new book, "When We Talk About God . . . Let's Be Honest."

While the voice vote in favor of the resolution was not unanimous, it did draw overwhelming support, with little discussion.

The resolution notes "that a person who serves as a leader among Baptists should be faithful in word and deed to Baptist doctrine" and it states Godsey "has departed significantly from Baptist doctrine."

It calls upon Godsey to "prayerfully reconsider his theological convictions and refrain from publishing, verbally or otherwise, doctrine which is foreign to Baptists' traditional understanding of Scripture which is misleading to unbelievers, and which alienates large segments of our Convention, heightens resentment among Georgia Baptists, and places the University's relationship with this Convention in jeopardy."

The resolution also calls for the Mercer board of trustees to address the stated concerns with the president and exchange reports with the executive committee, having the executive committee chairman address the trustees, and the trustee chairman address the executive committee at their respective December meetings.

The resolution had been hammered out by the smaller administration committee prior to the full executive committee meeting. It was presented by administrative committee chairman Jerry Songer after executive committee chairman Lester Cooper explained the procedural rules to be followed in the presentations and any subsequent debate.

Godsey was offered the opportunity to speak following the reading of the resolution. He shared his conviction "Jesus Christ is the center and soul of my life" and "salvation is a gift of God's grace, received by faith alone."

Admitting to differences of opinion, Godsey called upon the executive committee to refrain from becoming a "Sanhedrin of hostility and judgment Our calling is not to war among ourselves about issues that separate us." The president did not specifically address the particular issues that were of concern.

While reaction to the book itself has been mixed, Godsey's belief in universalism has attracted stinging criticism from many Baptists who see the book as heretical.

An additional "resolved" clause to the original resolution was offered by Truett Gannon, pastor of Smoke Rise Baptist Church in Stone Mountain: "Be It Further Resolved, that we all demonstrate love as we deal with the resolution of this dilemma." That recommendation was approved unanimously, reflecting the body's pain and uncomfortableness with having to deal publicly with this latest controversy.

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The administrative committee made the decision beforehand to be proactive in dealing with the issue rather than simply waiting for it to be brought up from the floor of the executive committee. Executive committee chairman Lester Cooper is credited by many for creating a climate that helped avoid acrimonious debate from the floor of the executive committee meeting. Cooper is an experienced parliamentarian who has served for two years as chief parliamentarian for the Southern Baptist Convention.

The issue is certainly not closed as far as the executive committee is concerned. They are likely to revisit the issue in their December meeting to which the chairman of Mercer trustees has been invited to bring a response from that board.

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**Ga. journal examines Godsey book
via editorial, pro-con reviews**

By Keith Hinson

**Baptist Press
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ATLANTA (BP)--A new book by Mercer University President R. Kirby Godsey has stirred controversy in Georgia over universalism and has prompted the state's Baptist newspaper to examine the issue.

William T. Neal III, editor of The Christian Index, praised the theological candor of Godsey's new book, "When We Talk About God, Let's Be Honest" (Macon, Ga.: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 1996). But, Neal suggested, Godsey's views are quite different from those of most Baptists.

"While there is much about Godsey's faith with which I can identify, I would certainly disagree with many of his theological tenets," Neal wrote in an Aug. 29 editorial. "I dare say that most Georgia Baptists would be uncomfortable with such positions as his belief in universalism."

Another writer also took issue with the book's universalism. Timothy A. McCoy, pastor of Ingleside Baptist Church in Macon, said Godsey's theology is "quite at odds with more than 300 years of Baptist confessions of faith."

McCoy, who wrote one of two reviews of the book in the Index's Aug. 29 issue, cited Godsey's comments on page 202: "Universal redemption means that while God will never coerce, God will never abandon. God's caring pursuit of all persons will endure, and God's forgiveness knows no boundaries. Time is not a boundary. Death is not a boundary. Hell is not a boundary. ... God's patient grace will finally win all persons to the new creation."

But another reviewer praised the book's "keen analysis" and "the brightness of Godsey's candor." Timothy L. Owings, pastor of First Baptist Church, Augusta, Ga., suggested the book can be a source of positive challenge for one's own spiritual journey.

"The reader cannot help but wrestle with Godsey's confessional perspective while calling into question his or her own," Owings wrote. "Read this book. It will challenge your mind and engage your heart. Your faith will be strengthened both by your agreement and disagreement with Godsey's insights."

McCoy also acknowledged Godsey's "candor and honesty" but added, "There has been no joy for me in finding that his journey has led him to embrace 'a different gospel.'"

Besides universalism, McCoy cited from the book other objectionable doctrines, such as: that the Bible is not infallible; that the Bible should not be elevated as final authority above spiritual experience and the church; "that the essence of our being is good;" "that each of us is God incarnate;" that Jesus is not God; that Jesus did not have to die; that God may not be omnipotent; and that "doctrinal soundness is arrogant theological nonsense."

Owings urged readers to evaluate Godsey's work as a whole. "Taken out of context, the sentence 'The crucifixion is not the saving act of God' (p. 124) may move some to throw the book into the fire. Careful readers, however, will discover that Godsey is saying the crucifixion -- as part of our Lord's entire life and ministry -- is not the totality of God's saving work."

Baptists should not make the mistake of assuming Mercer faculty members share the views expressed in Godsey's book, Neal wrote.

"Several professors at the new Mercer School of Theology have told this editor privately that Godsey has never attempted to impose his theology on their teaching and that they have complete academic freedom," Neal stated. "They hope to be evaluated on the merits of their own work rather than the writings of the university's president."

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Furthermore, Godsey's role at Mercer is primarily administrative, Neal noted, adding, "This issue of influence would probably be more accentuated if Godsey were actually teaching theology courses at Mercer."

Neal said his greatest concern in the controversy is the possibility of overreaction, such as cutting Mercer's funds from the Cooperative Program budget of the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia.

"I hope and pray that Baptists can agree to disagree in love and with respect," Neal urged. "That means we will choose not to express our displeasure with one brother's opinions by penalizing an entire institution or its students and faculty."

Although he saw the timing of the book's publication as unwise, Neal spoke highly of Godsey. "The truth is I personally like Kirby Godsey and he has always been a gracious Christian gentleman in our encounters. My disagreement is strictly with his theology and his decision to publish such a controversial book while still at Mercer's helm," Neal explained.

McCoy's book review quoted John A. Broadus, a Baptist leader of the 19th century, who said in his 1883 sermon to the Southern Baptist Convention: "In every case we must remember -- the man may be noble and devout, worthy of respect and esteem -- the opinions he teaches may be very hurtful to devoutness in others, and requiring earnest opposition."

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**Revival convocations
part of process: Elliff**

By James A. Smith Sr.

**Baptist Press
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KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP)--A series of revival convocations held primarily at SBC seminaries has created a "stream of prayer which will impact our convention and nation," according to SBC President Tom Elliff, who organized the meetings.

Following the convocation at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Elliff said, "We have tried to cast this whole issue not as an event or a series of events, but as part of a process by which we're calling people to the cross.

"I hear wonderful things about what God is doing in the lives of students, faculty and preachers," Elliff said. "I'm excited about what the Lord is doing."

More than 500 people gathered for the three-hour meeting Sept.

11 under a tent in the center of the Midwestern campus. Participants came from South Dakota, Michigan, Indiana, Oklahoma, Kansas and Iowa joining the seminary community and others from metropolitan Kansas City, Mo.

The day began at 7 a.m. on a hilltop overlooking the campus with about 40 students, faculty, staff and visitors led by Midwestern President Mark Coppenger reading Scripture and praying for the convocation.

The gathering then broke into small groups, each of which went to a strategic point on the campus for further prayer.

Prayer also was an integral part of the convocation gathering. Individual, small-group and corporate prayer punctuated the worship. Even after the formal service ended, small groups huddled over persons who requested intercession as God was working in their lives.

Later in the afternoon, about 40 students, faculty, staff and visitors were joined by Elliff and other convocation leaders for a time of further prayer and testimonies of spiritual victory.

Preaching from Matt. 16:24-28, Elliff said the cross "is a prerequisite to spiritual growth. There is no way forward in your spiritual life apart from the cross. ... The cross is before you. Until you die, there is no progress for you."

Elliff asked the crowd, "Do you want to go forward with God? You die."

The principle of the crucified life begins with denial of self. "There is an enemy in your bosom called 'self,'" Elliff said, noting many pastors fall into the trap of seeking larger churches and incomes rather than following Christ.

Elliff said the appeal for the crucified life falls on deaf ears in many congregations because of the presence of unregenerate church members who have never truly repented of their sin, Elliff said.

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"My conviction is that we have victimized each other with the preaching and teaching of what we might call the synthetic gospel. It looks like the real thing, it feels like the real thing, but it's not the real thing. And we love it because it doesn't take as much care or attention as the real thing," Elliff said to a chorus of "Amen!"

Contending the scope of the problem of unregenerate people can be found "in all strata of our churches," Elliff said, "One of the problems we are facing today in calling our nation to awakening is that we are asking many congregations to experience something that is reserved for the regenerate, and they can never experience it because they have never come to Christ."

Elliff was joined for the convocation by Henry Blackaby, director of prayer and spiritual awakening at the Home Mission Board and author of the widely used "Experiencing God" discipleship materials and Avery Willis, Foreign Mission Board senior vice president. Ron Owens, Blackaby's associate at the HMB, and his wife, Patricia, lead the musical worship throughout the convocation.

Relating a recent overseas trip in which he was "interrogated" about items in his suitcase, Elliff said the Holy Spirit acts like an airport metal detector searching for things that are forbidden.

Continuing the analogy, Coppenger told the gathering sometimes it takes repeated trips through the device to reveal the item which is setting off the alarm. "What a liberty it is when you finally say, 'There it is,'" Coppenger exclaimed.

Willis reminded Coppenger and the audience after the offending item is found, "don't go back to the little blue plastic bowl and get it."

Students and faculty at Midwestern described the convocation as helpful for their spiritual lives.

"What I experienced was the need to surrender it all to Christ, quit holding onto my agenda," said diploma of theology student Marc Rimato. "I'm now willing to let God use me for whatever he wants to use me." Rimato, who is from Lake Jackson, Texas, is the president of Midwestern's Student Body Association.

Although many Christians believe the cross concerns salvation, Don Whitney noted "the cross is always central to the Christian life and not just salvation."

Midwestern's assistant professor of spiritual formation, Whitney said, "It's refreshing to hear such a lengthy emphasis on the cross. ... We don't need new hearts to go in the same old directions. We need new directions." Whitney stressed the need for reformation in doctrine, methods and ethics in the church. "We need reformation as much as we need revival."

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Martin F. King contributed to this story.

Texas board targets comments questioning Clinton's salvation

**Baptist Press
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DALLAS (BP)--The Baptist General Convention of Texas executive board adopted a resolution Sept. 10 asking BGCT entities to instruct invited guest speakers to refrain from promoting or defaming any political candidate or party, questioning a political figure's salvation or "engaging in partisan politics which hinders the ability of the BGCT to reach people for Christ."

The resolution, which passed by a substantial margin after about 30 minutes of discussion, was presented during miscellaneous business by Phil Lineberger, a former BGCT president and pastor of Williams Trace Baptist Church, Sugarland, Texas.

In introducing his resolution, Lineberger said it addressed statements at a Labor Day weekend spiritual awakening retreat sponsored by Texas Baptist Men made by Richard Owen Roberts of Wheaton, Ill., who said he believed President Bill Clinton "is not a Christian."

Earlier in the board meeting, Bob Dixon, executive director of Texas Baptist Men, told the board the retreat was never intended to be political in nature and TBM always had attempted to avoid any kind of partisan politics.

Dixon also said TBM does not support any political party, secular or denominational. He said participants at the retreat -- held at Mt. Lebanon Baptist Encampment near Dallas -- prayed for the president.

Lineberger described his resolution as "affirming Bob Dixon and the Texas Baptist Men in their position" regarding the statements made by Roberts.

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After Lineberger introduced his motion, Brian Harbour, pastor of First Baptist Church of Richardson, Texas, asked for permission to address the board as a "personal privilege."

He told of having been Clinton's pastor while the president was governor of Arkansas and a member of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, and he questioned whether Roberts had "ever talked with the president about his faith ... or prayed with him."

"I had the privilege to do that," Harbour said, and added it "never occurred" to him to question whether Clinton was a Christian.

After the discussion, current BGCT President Charles Wade, pastor of First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas, briefly addressed the board and noted questioning whether a "deacon or a pastor or a fellow member" is a Christian "is not a minor matter."

Salvation, he said, "is the most precious gift anyone can have and for anyone to question it is a grave issue."

Wade said people do not have to wait until they are perfect to share what they know, and that is that Jesus Christ saves.

Roberts, at the retreat, was quoted as saying, "God has put in the White House a man who looks just like evangelical Christianity -- one who thinks he is something that he is not." Roberts, president of International Awakening Ministries, continued, "Unless I am completely out of step with God, the dear man is not a Christian."

Clinton has been "defrauded by false doctrine" permeating churches today, Roberts said. Current-day American evangelicals believe regeneration -- being born again -- follows repentance and faith. But, according to Roberts, the new birth is totally an act of God that does not follow any human action.

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She has plenty of insight into 2 seminary presidents

By Lee Weeks

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WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) Dorothy Patterson knows a thing or two about seminary presidents. With two in the family, she should.

One is her husband -- Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary since 1992. The other is her younger brother -- Charles Kelley Jr., who assumed New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's presidency in March.

"I have never known two men who are more committed to personal quiet time," Dorothy Patterson said. "Both of them have always been committed from early years."

While their faithfulness to seeking God's face has remained constant, much has changed about the duo's relationship over the last 40 years.

Patterson, once Kelley's football coach and mentor in the faith, is now a colleague and brother in ministry.

"Nowadays we talk a lot about how you do seminary," Patterson said.

No longer the only seminary president in the family, Patterson speculated his wife's standards for theological excellence may have risen.

"Little did I know that what would happen at New Orleans would cause me to become my wife's second-favorite seminary president," Patterson laughingly said Aug. 27 while introducing his brother-in-law to the Binkley Chapel audience on Southeastern's Wake Forest, N.C., campus.

"And in case you are unaware of it, Chuck is only the second man ever to live who is sinless," Patterson said jokingly. "At least if you talk to her (Patterson's wife) about it, that is the case. I, on the other hand, would give you somewhat of a different reading on that, but in any event that is Dorothy's position on the whole deal."

Dorothy Patterson is quick to call her husband's hand on his exaggerated suggestion about her esteemed brother.

In fact, she said, the similarities of her two favorite theologians, both of whom she's known for more than 40 years, can only be explained providentially.

"They both have a tremendous godly heritage," she said. "They are Baptist-bred."

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Both are natives of Beaumont, Texas, where they grew up attending the First Baptist Church under the preaching of Patterson's father, T.A. Patterson, who served as executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas for many years.

Kelley, 44, is the son of Charles Kelley Sr., a deacon in the church. The retired funeral home director also serves on Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary's board of trustees.

Both seminary presidents graduated from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, earning master's and doctorate degrees.

"They both love to read and to learn," said Dorothy Patterson.

While their backgrounds and interests are similar, the two men's leadership styles are as different as night and day.

"He's probably more of a black-and-white person, quickly," Kelley described Southeastern's president. I'm more of a consensus builder. I generally build consensus first and then move aggressively. He sets the vision out there first and builds consensus along the way and that's probably one of the differences. We both end up with the same thing, with the consensus of people around the direction that we are going."

Having listened to countless sermons by both husband and brother, Dorothy Patterson said she feels she knows their varied styles better than anyone.

She said her husband employs a more traditional style and is more technical in his delivery while employing an extensive vocabulary.

Kelley is more animated in his preaching, often quoting Scripture texts by the chapter and delivering a wide range of facial expressions while employing words like "dude" and "wow."

"From the preaching perspective, they both really know how to deliver an illustration," she said.

As for personalities, Dorothy Patterson described her husband as a "fun-loving prankster."

Of her brother, she said: "He's a ham. ... Dr. Kelley is much more outgoing."

Patterson credits her husband, who is 10 years Kelley's senior, with helping mold the junior seminary president into the biblical scholar he is today.

During Kelley's summer visits with the Pattersons, Dorothy said, Paige would hide Chuck's comic books and make him memorize books of the Bible and Scripture before returning the comic books.

"I always thought that he was an extremely good kid," Paige Patterson reminisced. "Here was a kid who obviously had a bright mind. ... I did feel that there was no question that Chuck would be greatly used of God."

Kelley, who served as professor of evangelism occupying the Roland Q. Leavell Chair of Evangelism at NOBTS as well as director of the Leavell Center for Evangelism and Church Growth prior to accepting the seminary's presidency, said Paige Patterson taught him how to share his faith.

Kelley said Paige's fervor for witnessing made an indelible impression on him as a 13-year-old while visiting St. Louis for the Southern Baptist Convention.

"Every time we'd get in the cab, he (Paige) would witness to the cab driver. We'd done that three or four times and he got in another cab. He asked the cab driver, 'Sir, has anyone ever told you how you can become a Christian?' And the cab driver said no and Paige said, 'Well, my young friend here is going to explain it.'

"That was an important thing," Kelley said. "That's when I began to learn that I could share my faith. So he's been very instrumental for me in developing a solid foundation theologically and a love for the Word of God and a real heart for evangelism."

Kelley said Patterson has been part of the family for as long as he can remember.

"He began dating my sister when they were in the second grade," Kelley recollected during his chapel address. "So, all of my life the guy has been hanging around our house. He thought it was his divine responsibility, personally assigned by God to give me grief and give me a hard time and he took it very seriously. He would tickle me. He would hassle me. He would beat me up. He was always much, much older so I never had any chance at all."

But the relationship between the brothers-in-law took on a whole new dimension, Kelley said, when he became a sophomore in high school.

Upon arriving about 2 a.m. one morning, during a visit to the Kelley household, Paige decided to greet Chuck, now a bulky football player, by wrestling him from a deep slumber.

"So without even thinking," Kelley said, "I just picked him up and threw him against the wall. The rules changed. He never bothered me anymore."

With the passing of time, however, Kelley said, his appreciation for Patterson has continued to grow.

"Over the years, he became more and more just a real mentor and help to me," Kelley said. "A lot of what I know about theology and the Word, I learned from him. He taught me, too, a passion for evangelism."

Patterson, who earned his doctorate in theology, said he continues to be enlightened by Kelley's theological insight.

"To have spent his whole life in evangelism he never ceases to amaze me about what he knows about the wider field of theology," Patterson said.

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Gallup study examines fears faced by American teenagers

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP)--America's teenagers have a lot to worry about -- drugs, drinking, eating disorders, sex, AIDS, street crimes, violence at school -- and statistics prove they're on a dangerous path in many areas.

Young people are growing up scared, concluded researcher George Gallup, using data from three scientifically controlled samplings of teens for what he called "a reality check" to separate facts from impressions and to determine how teens really experience the world. Those "realities" are published in the book, "Growing Up Scared in America and What the Experts Say Parents Can Do About It."

Gallup organized his findings around four "at-risk" behaviors which make for a frightening world: violence, sex, health issues and drug and alcohol addiction. Then, 15 experts responded to the Gallup study, offering parents advice for helping their troubled teens. Following are excerpts from the research findings and the experts' advice:

On home and school:

- 25 percent of teens report being regularly afraid for their safety.
- 28 percent know peers who have guns or knives at school.
- 28 percent believe weapons in school are a problem.
- 21 percent have had a best friend attacked by someone with a lethal weapon.
- 26 percent of teens say they have been hit or physically harmed by a parent or by another adult in the household in the past year.

Kathryn Whitfill, president of the National Parents and Teachers Association, said parents need to work with the schools, such as patrolling the hallways and forming neighborhood walk groups to take kids to and from school. She also recommended parents knowing who their child's friends are and who they will be with when they go out, which she emphasized is not interfering in the child's life.

"It's really just protecting their child's life," Whitfill said. "You can't protect them forever, but you can keep them from walking into a buzz saw."

Robert McAfee, president of the American Medical Association, said violence is a learned behavior. "By the time you get to school, you have already decided how you are going to solve conflicts," he said. "The violence you see between your father and mother or the violence done to the teens themselves invariably predicts how they will respond when, for instance, Johnny pushes them off the swing."

Teen sex: Will kids heed the warnings?

- 53 percent of high school students have engaged in sexual intercourse.
- 1 in 11 abortions in America is performed on a woman age 18 or under.
- 46 percent of teens support abortion rights.
- 37 percent object to abortion in any circumstance, down from 44 percent in 1991.
- 97 percent of teens have had AIDS education.
- 82 percent of teens think condoms should be distributed in school.

Tijuana James-Traore, director of Planned Parenthood Federation of America's pregnancy prevention program, stressed the need for teaching teens how to avoid compromising situations. Telling teens about the physiology of sex and just to say "No" when a situation arises is not enough. Parents need to help their kids determine when they are ready for sex.

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"They need to have discussions on it to provide their ideas for guidance and model some behaviors that teens can use in their own lives," James-Traore said, adding parents should not feel uncomfortable talking about sex or be afraid to say "I don't know" to a child's question. The same sexual pressures that have always plagued teenagers are still evident, but today's teens also must worry about AIDS, a fatal sexually transmitted disease.

Unwanted teen pregnancies and AIDS make teen sexuality more complicated -- and more dangerous -- than ever. "We're living in a culture now where sex is out of control in many ways, and that problem is reflected in young people," said Thomas Lickona, professor of education at the State University of New York. "We could say that sex education in this country for the last two decades has been a public health failure."

When it comes to AIDS, most kids report they have learned of the risks and the harm. The problem, experts say, is the mixed messages they are given about how to prevent it.

Lickona noted teens are told abstinence is the only foolproof prevention of pregnancy and AIDS, but sex can be safe with consistent use of condoms. "For teens that represents a green light," he said. "That's extremely deceptive, and there are enormous risks physically, emotionally and spiritually for kids who engage."

While many professionals argue for teaching about condom use to teens because a majority are having sex anyway, Lickona favors teaching that the only safe sex is in a monogamous, committed, adult relationship in which the partners are married. Either way, all recommend parents and teens communicate.

Drugs and suicide:

- 21 percent of teens drink regularly, down from 41 percent in 1982.
- 80 percent say they have "very easy" or "fairly easy" access to alcohol.
- 40 percent of fifth-graders had already tried alcohol and some were binge drinking at that point, a University of Minnesota professor reported.

- 21 percent say they have been in a car at least once with someone their age who was under the influence of alcohol.

- 99 percent think crack is dangerous.

- 98 percent view cocaine as very dangerous

- 83 percent view marijuana as very dangerous.

- 11 percent say they have smoked marijuana.

- teen suicide has gone from 2.7 per 100,000 cases in 1950 to 11.1 per 100,000 cases in 1990.

- The five biggest factors leading to suicide are drug abuse, not getting along with parents, peer stresses, problems of growing up and alcohol abuse.

- 59 percent of teens say they know someone who has attempted suicide.

- 26 percent know someone who has succeeded.

- 55 percent say they have discussed the topic with friends.

- 37 percent say they have considered taking their own lives.

For serious problems such as these, the experts recommend being a good listener and paying attention to kids and their moods. Lanny Berman of the Washington School of Psychiatry said parents need to give their children freedom during adolescence but must still be attentive to their child's fears and irrational reactions to such fears.

"Sometimes we act as cheerleaders when what they really need is a good ear," Berman said.

The experts also advise parents to be good examples with alcohol use for their children; reinforce anti-smoking, anti-drinking, anti-drug messages; take teen depression seriously; and teach coping skills to teens for being hurt, lonely and angry.

Health: Future heart victims:

- 52 percent of teens say they can't concentrate on homework because they are too tired.

- 74 percent of males play on team sports, 40 percent play individual sports and 72 percent go to gym class regularly.

- 47 percent of females play on team sports, 26 percent play individual sports and 63 percent go to gym class regularly.

Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop said the major public health problem is that people are warned about their health habits after it is too late.

"We tell people to watch what they eat after they are obese. We tell them they shouldn't smoke after they have lung disease. We tell them not to drink after they already have a drinking problem. We tell them to exercise after they have problems with their heart," he said.

Said Gallup, "There is growing awareness that young people, strained by fatigue, are more likely to engage in risky behavior, whether this is skipping classes to catch up on sleep or to avoid tests for which they are not prepared, or more physically harmful behavior such as alcohol abuse or drug experimentation."

The best advice, Koop and other health experts suggest, is to establish early patterns with children for healthy eating and regular exercise. Both will decrease fatigue and early health-related problems. Such habits also will increase self-esteem and reduce risks of depression and rebellious behavior.

Good values: The answer to teen problems:

-- 96 percent of teens want lessons in honesty.

-- 77 percent support instruction on the Golden Rule.

-- 92 percent believe tolerance for races should be taught.

-- 84 percent believe schools should teach about various religions to increase tolerance.

-- 95 percent of teens say they believe in God and 76 percent of those believe God plays an active role in their lives.

The above statistics show teens are begging for values instruction, Gallup contended. And the most logical solution to these teen problems, the experts agree, is parents providing their children a strong foundation with good character, judgment and values.

Lickona said the most important teaching tool parents can use is to teach by example and always respect their children. When children become teenagers, they are more likely to imitate the behavior they watched, particularly if they respect their parents.

"When my father would try to teach me a lesson, I listened because he was the same person who fixed my bike and went fishing with me," Lickona said. "Kids care about our values because they care about us and know that they are important to us."

Gallup added, "As every expert we consulted insists, nothing is as essential in fighting the risks faced by our youth than a solid, early grounding in right and wrong, often rooted in religious faith. In combatting drug abuse, crime, suicide, irresponsible sex or poor health, nothing works like good character."

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Compiled by The Alabama Baptist newsjournal. Joyce Sweeney Martin contributed to this story.

**Christian schools manager,
consultant named at BSSB**

**Baptist Press
9/12/96**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--A Christian schools leader and a specialist in children's education have been named manager and consultant, respectively, in the Christian schools and media services department of the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Glen Schultz, southeast director for the Association of Christian Schools International, based in Snellville, Ga., will become director of Christian schools, home schooling and church weekday early education work at the board on Oct. 1.

Pam Boucher, a children/preschool specialist in the board's discipleship and family youth-children-preschool department, assumes the role of ministers of preschool-children's education consultant.

Schultz has developed and coordinated services for approximately 600 Christian schools in eight states since 1989, conducting conventions, conferences and seminars, as well as overseeing accreditation and certification among other administrative functions.

Earlier, he was a teacher, principal and superintendent at Lynchburg Christian Academy for 16 years and a teacher in the Gowanda (N.Y.) Central School for five years.

He holds the B.A. degree from Roberts Wesleyan College, Rochester, N.Y., and the M.Ed. in school administration and the Ed.D. in education, leadership/policy studies from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville.

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He is affiliated with the International Fellowship of Christian School Administrators and the International Fellowship of Christian School Board Members.

Prior to coming to the board in 1995, Boucher was director of the children/preschool ministries department for the California Southern Baptist Convention. Earlier, she was minister of childhood education at First Baptist Church, Ellisville, Mo., and minister to children at Plymouth Park Baptist Church, Irving, Texas.

She holds the B.S. degree from Dallas Baptist University and the M.R.E degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Mancil Ezell, director of the Christian schools and media services department, said "the search process for these two critically strategic positions was as spiritually rewarding as any I've conducted in my years as a manager. Indeed, the board is fortunate to have the experience, commitment and competence of these two professionals."

Creation of the Christian schools and media services department was announced in late June as part of a reorganization of the church leadership services division to incorporate assignments from the Southern Baptist Convention as part of the "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring. At that time, David Tiller, a 15-year board employee, was named director of the church media program.

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EDITORS' NOTE: Five (BP) photos (horizontal) have been posted in SBCNet News Room to accompany the (BP) story, "Brotherhood president visits eastern N.C. disaster area," dated 9/11/96.

Thanks,
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