



(BP)

-- BAPTIST PRESS
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

NATIONAL OFFICE

SBC Executive Committee
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203
(615) 244-2355
Herb Hollinger, Vice President
Fax (615) 742-8919
CompuServe ID# 70420,17

BUREAUS

ATLANTA 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232
NASHVILLE 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va., 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223

March 8, 1993

93-42

TEXAS -- 'Ominous shift,' frightening trends confront youth and children's leaders.

TEXAS -- 'Good news, bad news' faces youth leaders in churches.

VIRGINIA -- Washington Redskins coach: success is in relationships.

VIRGINIA -- NASCAR star goes from attitude to gratitude.

TEXAS -- Four women recognized as mentors, role models; photo.

OKLAHOMA -- SBC churches fighting trend of fewer keyboard musicians; photo.

NASHVILLE -- Editors' note.

'Ominous shift,' frightening trends
confront youth and children's leaders

Baptist Press
3/8/93

By Karen Benson

WACO, Texas (BP)--The boy was angry. The couple he lived with in Oregon made him do his homework. So he killed them.

He was 13 years old.

CNN Headline News carried the story on Friday, March 5, 1993.

That same day, consultants in youth and children's work from the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood Commission and the Baptist General Convention of Texas met with researchers from Baylor University to discuss "Youth Ministry for the 21st Century."

What they learned was not pretty.

"Our work is cut out for us," said Tillman Rodabough, professor of sociology, social work and anthropology at Baylor University.

Rodabough also is co-director of the Baylor Center for Community Research and Development, which just completed a study of youth programs in Southern Baptist churches.

"Across America, rich kids, middle-class kids, poor kids -- all deal with risk and neglect on a scale unimagined in previous generations," Rodabough said.

"Problems of poverty, divorce, out-of-wedlock births, inadequate prenatal care, absentee parents, latch-key kids, violence and drugs are no longer confined to the ghetto -- if they ever were," he said.

"We like to think of America as a child-centered nation -- that they are cherished, protected, nurtured and offered opportunity unmatched anywhere else in the world," Rodabough said.

"Closer inspection reveals an ominous shift toward the devaluation of children. We slash school budgets, build adults-only housing, deny working parents the right to spend a few weeks with their newborn babies. It shows."

Other trends and forecasts are just as frightening, he said. For example:

-- Education: More than 1 million children and youth drop out of school each year.

"American children know little about the world they live in, and they do not possess many skills necessary to be productive in our society," Rodabough said.

Fewer than half of all American youth can determine the correct change after purchasing a hamburger and a Coke at McDonald's, he said.

--more--

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

An ABC News poll recently showed that 70 percent of high school students surveyed had never heard of Chernobyl, the worst nuclear accident in history. "One student thought it was Cher's last name!" Rodabough said.

According to the Committee for Economic Development, high school dropouts cost the nation more than \$250 billion a year in lost earnings and foregone taxes, Rodabough said. "This does not include the billions this group will cost us for crime control, welfare and other social services."

-- Violence: Ten children are shot and killed every day in America -- almost 4,000 per year, Rodabough reported. More than 200,000 die of child abuse every year, usually at the hands of family members. Suicide has tripled among youth during the past 20 years.

-- Drugs: Almost a half million drug-exposed babies are born each year -- now nearing 20 percent of all births, Rodabough reported.

"This is one of the saddest indictments of a civilization," Rodabough said.

"I'm sure most of you have interacted with teen-agers who have had their minds blown by drugs. A few years ago, I ran into the once-beautiful, intelligent daughter of a professor friend of mine at another school, and she couldn't carry on a conversation. Had I not known her before, I would have concluded that she had been born severely retarded."

-- Teen pregnancy: One out of 10 teen-agers becomes pregnant every year.

"There is a different system of values out there from the one with which most of you and I grew up," Rodabough said. "Although 'family values' became a glib political catch phrase in the last presidential election, the country has been conspiring against the family," he said.

Perhaps the deregulation of television under the Reagan administration should take some blame, Rodabough suggested. "Now, latch-key kids can go home and watch such interesting programs as 'Oprah Winfrey,' 'Donahue' and 'Geraldo' between 3 and 5 in the afternoon. These talk shows have a combined viewing audience of 40 million -- a third of whom are thought to be under age 18."

The Bush administration also might share the blame for its "continued refusal to regulate the child care industry and the refusal to allow unpaid leave for family emergencies," Rodabough said.

"But there is plenty of blame to go around," he admonished, citing a weak economy that requires both parents to work to maintain a decent standard of living; the increasing self-indulgence in society that pulls both parents from the home in a drive for material possessions; a business system that "blesses" the values of single-minded commitment to the job to the exclusion of family commitments; and a no-fault divorce system that "abandons children to the whims of one or the other parent."

In the face of these trends and the shift toward devaluation of children, those involved in youth ministries in churches are to be "admired," Rodabough said.

"What those of you here tonight do determines the future of our children, of our families, of our churches, of our nation and of our world," he said.

"Each of us in our various vocations addresses the central issue of training the youth from a Christian perspective," Rodabough said. "We must receive these young people in Christ's name and train them up in the way that they shall go."

--30--

'Good news, bad news' faces
youth leaders in churches

By Karen Benson

Baptist Press
3/8/93

WACO, Texas (BP)--When it comes to youth work in churches in the 21st century, there's some good news and some bad news.

That's the conclusion drawn by some consultants in youth and children's work from the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, Brotherhood Commission and Baptist General Convention of Texas at a March 5-6 conference on "Youth Ministry for the 21st Century" sponsored by Baylor University.

--more--

First, the bad news:

-- There is an "ominous shift" toward the devaluation of children and youth in society, according to Tillman Rodabough, professor of sociology, social work and anthropology. He also is co-director of the Baylor Center for Community Research and Development, which just completed a study of youth programs in Southern Baptist churches.

-- There is a vacuum in adult leadership of youth programs. In fact, leadership problems surfaced as one of the major reasons leading to the demise of some youth programs in Southern Baptist churches, according to Larry Lyon, professor of sociology, social work and anthropology at Baylor. He is director of the Baylor Center for Community Research and Development.

-- There are frightening trends in issues affecting youth and children, ranging from school dropout rates to teen-age pregnancy, drugs, violence, poverty and absentee parents.

But alongside the bad news is some good news as well, claimed consultants in youth and children's work from WMU and Brotherhood:

-- The missions spirit is "very much alive" among Southern Baptist young people, according to Tim Seanor, director of Royal Ambassadors for the Brotherhood Commission.

"This is a hopeful sign for the future," Seanor said. "We feel that involvement of youth in mission-action projects around the world gives them opportunities to link response to human needs with the need to share the gospel of Jesus Christ."

As youth are involved in these kinds of projects, Southern Baptists are being seen "as a caring, committed people of God," Seanor said.

-- There are organizations available to Southern Baptist churches that provide for relationship-building between children and youth and adults that can affect positive change in society, the WMU and Brotherhood representatives said.

Brotherhood and WMU offer a full range of missions organizations for Southern Baptist churches. Brotherhood's organizations are Lad Royal Ambassadors for boys in grades one through three, Crusader RAs for grades four through six, Pioneer RAs for grades seven through nine, High School Baptist Young Men for grades 10-12, Baptist Young Men for ages 18-34 and Baptist Men for ages 35 and older.

WMU's organizations are Mission Friends for preschool boys and girls, Girls in Action for girls in grades one through six, Acteens for grades seven through 12, Baptist Young Women for ages 18-34 and Baptist Women for ages 35 and older.

These established programs offer "weekly opportunities to create meaningful relationships which change lives," Seanor said.

"It is through personal relationships, not programs or methods, that people come to know Christ as their personal Savior."

In a sense, RA boys become the counselor's "own," Seanor said. "This bonding is what brings the smile to the volunteer's face when one of his boys accepts Christ or decides to go into full-time Christian service. It is this kind of relationship that is so rare and valuable today. I view the RA programs as a structure where this relationship is encouraged and takes place."

GA organizations offer a similar opportunity for bonding between the leaders and the girls, according to Sylvia DeLoach, GA specialist for WMU. Such bonding is important, "especially when you realize that these are not all just 'church girls,'" DeLoach said. "Some of these girls are the victims, the abused They need the love and encouragement that GA leaders have to offer."

In fact, child advocacy will be receiving more and more of an emphasis in GA materials and programs, DeLoach reported. Even GAs, themselves, will learn how to become advocates for other children, as they become part of a "children's brigade" whereby children learn about issues affecting their peers and learn what they can do to affect change.

"We hope we can capture their attention and let them be a part of changes for themselves and for others," DeLoach said.

--more--

Similar bonding takes place in the Acteens organization as well, according to Marti Solomon, Acteens specialist at WMU.

Recent research has shown Acteens and Acteens leaders especially like the fellowship, freedom and open discussion which an all-girl organization allows, as well as the mission projects and activities through which the girls are involved, she said.

It is WMU's desire that its ongoing missions organizations "provide the kind of foundation that fills our world with the most knowledgeable, most involved, most caring, most missions-minded Christian women and girls," added Sheryl Churchill, manager of the age-level specialists group at WMU.

"That is why we want these organizations to have the kind of help they need, yet have the flexibility needed in today's world."

-- WMU and Brotherhood are offering some new options in missions education and involvement for Southern Baptist churches, particularly to help youth leaders involve more children and youth in missions.

The options are coed in approach, resulting from a combined effort by Brotherhood and WMU.

Time is a "precious commodity in our instant push-button world," Seanor said. "Adults have very little time to share. In order to adapt to these changes, we are offering new approaches to missions education which offer similar opportunities for relationship-building."

These options are "choices that don't compete with each other, but appeal to different needs," Seanor said.

Examples are: "Express Missions," a quarterly resource kit designed for use by youth leaders in leading youth in grades seven through 12 in missions; "Missions MatchFile," a quarterly missions resource packet for children's leaders; and "WorldTrek," offering missions experiences for children in grades one through six.

"These new coed approaches are not seen as replacing our current efforts," Seanor said, "but follow parallel tracks to meet needs of Southern Baptists for coed experiences which are easy to use and require less preparation by leaders."

--30--

Washington Redskin coach
finds success in relationships

Baptist Press
3/8/93

By Michael J. Clingenpeel

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Joe Gibbs is a success.

In 12 years as head coach of the Washington Redskins he amassed a record of 140 wins and 65 losses, leading the Redskins to four Super Bowls and three Super Bowl titles.

In his sophomore season as owner of the Interstate Batteries team on the NASCAR Winston Cup circuit, his car, driven by Dale Jarrett, won the Daytona 500 on Feb. 21.

But none of these made Gibbs feel truly successful. Success, says Gibbs, is defined by relationships.

"I think finding Christ as my personal savior is first. That's my greatest personal accomplishment. Then I think my relationship with Pat and our kids ... that's still the driving force in my life."

This was not always so, according to Gibbs.

Though brought up in a Christian home in North Carolina, and a Christian since age 9, as a young adult Gibbs bought into the world's standard for success: "The world told me to be happy you have to gain a position of power. In my case it was to win football games and make money."

"I bought into that," acknowledges Gibbs, "But I kept feeling that something was missing."

--more--

While he was an assistant football coach at the University of Arkansas, moving up through the ranks of coaching, Gibbs discovered God had a different plan for the world, and his life. The combination of a faithful Sunday school teacher and the birth of his first child convinced Gibbs there was more to life than football and money.

"I finally realized there was another side to the issues the world was telling me. God had a different game plan. It is not in making money, gaining position. People are more important."

Gibbs rededicated his life to Christ, and has been an active church member and unashamed witness for Christ ever since.

It has not always been easy. Thirteen years ago his wife, Pat, suffered facial paralysis due to a tumor. Seven years ago, through a series of ill-advised investments, Gibbs was "virtually bankrupt."

"But I wouldn't trade the down times for anything. I learned more from this than anything. God loved us through it."

Gibbs, a member of Columbia Baptist Church in suburban Falls Church, Va., offered his testimony to 350 people at a breakfast in Richmond, Va., March 5. Five hours after his appearance in Richmond, Gibbs shocked sports fans by announcing his retirement as coach of the Redskins at a news conference in Ashburn, Va.

The breakfast, sponsored jointly by Front-Line Outreach and the office of evangelism of the Virginia Baptist General Board, was an effort to share the gospel with people who might not attend a church to hear a similar message.

Dan Agee, director of evangelism for the VBGB, calls this "side-door" evangelism. "It is an effort to go where people are. In this case the evangelist is a layperson who has a story to tell and will open himself up to tell it."

Last Friday's breakfast was not the first of its type. The idea premiered in Daytona last year, the week of the Daytona 500. Two weeks ago 450 people attended a similar breakfast there for the second consecutive year.

Nor will Friday's breakfast be the last. Gibbs called this concept "an exciting platform" for evangelism. He said his goal was to team up with local churches, denominations and Christian businesses to create opportunities for sharing the gospel.

The idea was created by Norm Miller, an evangelical Christian who is chairman of the Board of Interstate Batteries, the sponsor of Joe Gibbs NASCAR racing team.

Recently Miller employed Tom Green, formerly a Southern Baptist pastor in North Carolina, as president of Front-Line Outreach. He organized Friday's breakfast and plans similar events in the future. Green, who was present at Friday's breakfast to introduce Gibbs, characterized his organization as an effort to create "hands-on missions opportunities for laypeople."

According to Gibbs these outreach events have generated high interest and led to commitments to Christ, "which I get excited about," said Gibbs. Four events are planned this year, with more expected in 1994 in cities hosting NASCAR events.

Through coaching, said Gibbs, he learned the danger of buying into the world's standard of success: "If you're going to live by the world's view, you have to win every time."

This isn't the truth with God. He loves us more when we're failing than when we're winning."

--30--

NASCAR star goes

from attitude to gratitude By Michael J. Clingenpeel

Baptist Press

3/8/93

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)--Ten years ago Darrell Waltrip was a man with an attitude.

In 1981 and 1982 Waltrip was not just any stock car driver. He was the best in the business. In each season he won 12 races, 14 pole positions, and at each season's end he was champion driver of the NASCAR circuit.

--more--

"I became very, very convinced that there was no one who had every driven or would ever drive a race car who was as great as I was," reflects Waltrip, 10 years later.

"If I didn't win, it wasn't my fault. The car didn't run well enough, the guy didn't build the engine right, the car wasn't set up properly, somebody got in my way, NASCAR got after me. There was always some other reason I didn't win. It certainly wasn't my fault."

Then in 1983 Waltrip experienced what he calls "a real awakening." After a wreck at Daytona which left him with a severe concussion, Waltrip's wife, Stevie, began urging him to return to church. Though baptized as a 7 year-old at the Wing Avenue Baptist Church in Owensboro, Ky., for years Waltrip had rationalized that he could not attend church because he raced on Sundays.

At his wife's urging Waltrip agreed to attend Wednesday evening prayer services at a Presbyterian church in Nashville.

There, in August, Waltrip heard the pastor describe how Jesus came to earth, lived a perfect life, and died on the cross for him. It was the personal appeal, that Jesus died "for me," that swayed Waltrip to pray for the Lord to come into his life.

Waltrip, who was in Richmond, Va., March 5 to race in the Pontiac Excitement 400 at the Richmond International Speedway, addressed a breakfast crowd of 350 after Washington Redskins coach Joe Gibbs had shared his testimony. Neither received compensation for their appearance at the event, which was sponsored by Front-Line Outreach of Dallas and the office of evangelism of the Virginia Baptist General Board.

The 45 year-old driver acknowledged "the hardest thing I've ever done is try to live a Christian life in this world."

He recounted the challenges presented to his faith when his wife suffered two miscarriages in 1984 and 1985. Now they are parents of daughters, ages 5 and 3.

Budweiser was his corporate sponsor at the time, and Waltrip struggled with his conscience and the pleading of his pastor and several deacons from his church that he give up his "ride" with Budweiser. Largely on faith Waltrip gave up what he called "the best car and team in racing."

By 1989 he quit second-guessing his decision when he won the Daytona 500 and five other races.

The next year at Daytona he survived a horrific crash which left him with a severely broken leg and out of racing for three months, a period he characterized as "the darkest point in my career and life."

In retrospect he says it was the Lord who enabled him to keep on and return to racing: "The Lord was my closest friend and strongest ally and taught me the most" during this period.

Like Joe Gibbs, who he has come to appreciate since Gibbs entered racing in 1992 as an owner, Waltrip has experienced enormous success as the world defines it. But he readily admits his priorities are to "put God at the top, my family second and racing third."

"If I never win another race, or even start another one, God still loves me."

--30--

Four women recognized
as mentors, role models

Baptist Press
3/8/93

SAN ANTONIO, Texas (BP)--Southern Baptist women from Oklahoma, Colorado, North Carolina and Missouri were recognized as women of excellence during the first National Christian Women's Enrichment Conference March 5-7 in San Antonio, Texas.

Chosen from more than 300 nominations, the four were selected and introduced as "mentors, as role models for us today," said Morlee Maynard, manager of the preschool program section in the Baptist Sunday School Board's church growth-Sunday school division. The board co-developed the conference with Woman's Missionary Union.

--more--

Criteria for nomination included: a leadership position in a Southern Baptist church; support, but not necessarily a member of, WMU; exemplifies love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control; a growing relationship with Jesus; resourceful; sense of dignity and strength of character; and takes responsibility for her feelings and needs as well of those of her family.

Cited were Edna Hill of Lawton, Okla.; Miriam Owens of Pueblo, Colo.; Daphne Strickland of Jamestown, N.C.; and Mary Broyles of Milan, Mo.

Hill, 82, a member of Trinity Baptist Church in Lawton, works half days at Cameron University training nurses. She directs the Adult 6 Sunday school class at her church, holds monthly services at a nursing home, participates in weekly visitation and makes annual mission trips to Mexico.

"She has all the attributes of the gifts of the spirit," wrote Hill's friend, Gene Kinsey, in nominating her. "She is a caring, godly woman and always doing things for others, never thinking of herself. You can feel the love of God flow through her."

Owens, 74, and a member of Lynn Gardens Baptist Church in Pueblo, is a retired elementary school teacher and a "full-time Christian example," according to nominator Glenda Roberts.

Active in WMU and missions and ministry projects, Owens "welcomes new neighbors with a loaf of fresh-baked bread, a friendly smile and an invitation to church. She provides wise counseling to young Christians . . . She has opened her home on several occasions to teen-agers who needed a place of refuge," Roberts said.

Strickland, a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Greensboro, was nominated by Carol Steed Davidson, a member of the Sunday school class Strickland teaches.

"I wouldn't have grown in Christ as much as I have without Daphne Strickland, for she is a living, walking testimony," wrote Davidson who has been a Christian five years.

In addition to her church work, Strickland is a member of the boards of the Guilford Native Indian Center and the Advocacy Center for Children's Education and Parent Training.

Broyles, 73, is semi-retired but still works part-time in a local variety store. A member of First Baptist Church of Milan, Broyles worked with children in Sunday school more than 35 years. She makes daily calls to sick and elderly people, helps with nursing home services and ministers to people in many other ways, according to nominator Maxine Sylvester.

"She does not own a car, but she walks the entire town delivering those things she has baked, running errands for people who are house-bound and visiting shut-ins and patients in the hospital and nursing homes," Sylvester said.

More than 800 women attended the conference.

--30--

(BP) photo mailed to state Baptist newspapers by the SSB bureau of Baptist Press.

SBC churches fighting trend
of fewer keyboard musicians

By Charles Willis

Baptist Press
3/8/93

BROKEN ARROW, Okla. (BP)--While many church musicians are concerned that keyboard musicians could end up in museum displays of mummified pianists and organists, Charles Collins and other music ministers are working to save the species.

A career musician and music minister, Collins is one who has watched a steady decline in keyboard accompanists in churches and has taken steps to reverse the trend by providing keyboard classes at First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow, Okla. And Collins is not alone. While most schools like the one at Broken Arrow offer far more than keyboard studies, the need for keyboard accompanists appears to be more acute than for those who play orchestra instruments.

--more--

"The need exists in many churches for department pianists in Sunday school," Collins observed.

Large churches like First Baptist of Broken Arrow, where Collins helps lead three worship services and an average of 1,600 persons attend each week, do not necessarily have large numbers of trained keyboard musicians.

"When you get into the larger music ministry where you need really fine accompanists, you work the good ones to death," Collins laments.

He said he believes parents of children who study piano bear part of the responsibility for the tendency of children to drop out of music studies when the novelty wears off.

"The parent has to be committed to see that the child follows through. A child can't do everything," he said. "When it starts getting hard and requires discipline, the child may not want to do it and the parent doesn't want to put up with the hassle. But it becomes fun again when they get through the hard work."

In the sixth or seventh grade, sports begin to compete with other interests, he said, and many parents let their children choose what to do.

"But children aren't always mature enough to make those choices," he reflected. "While we aren't always physically able to play sports, music can be enjoyed for a lifetime."

Church music leaders also bear responsibility, Collins said. While young pianists may not be able to pick up a piece of music and begin accompanying the youth choir rehearsing new music, a workable plan can bring the youth accompanist and the youth choir together. An adult accompanist can rehearse with the choir while a youth accompanist is working toward mastering the anthem.

"It doesn't slow the choir down," Collins observed, "and on youth choir tours, three or four or five kids can play different musical numbers. It gives them motivation."

Taped accompaniment tracks contribute to the problem, Collins believes, because recorded music eliminates the need for accompanists to be trained.

"But someone is being denied the opportunity to play or the desire to learn it. Our obligation is to train. The skills of an acceptable pianist can be stretched. It is an offering to the Lord instead of a slick tape done for dollars."

Collins said the school at First Baptist Church of Broken Arrow began with one piano teacher three years ago. Today three teachers have a total of 60 students. Another teacher will have to be found before more students can be added.

For church leaders who want to cultivate keyboard musicians but who may not be able to start a full-fledged school, Collins has some suggestions:

- See who in the congregation has shown interest and has some ability.
- Consider a small piano class. Let students practice on the church's piano.
- Find ways to create a desire to play an instrument.
- Encourage existing accompanists to do further study.
- Contact neighboring churches to see if they offer training.
- Consider paying for lessons for those who have promise in return for fulfilling a keyboard responsibility.

Collins is realistic, but not pessimistic, about the future of the keyboard tradition in churches.

"I want to believe there will always be someone out there who can play."

At the Baptist Sunday School Board, the church music ministries department addresses the needs of keyboard persons through regional and local events, national seminars and through publications such as "Pedalpoint" and "The Church Musician."

According to Sharron Lyon, music design editor for the Sunday School Board, the issue of keyboard musicians "is not just a Southern Baptist problem. Virtually every denomination is experiencing a shortage of qualified pianists and organists."

EDITORS' NOTE: The bombing of the World Trade Center in New York and its possible connection to Muslim fundamentalists in the United States and abroad has renewed American attention on the activities of Islamic extremists. A Baptist Press story released Feb. 1 headlined "Muslim-Christian conflict escalates on many fronts" examined some of those activities, and remains a valid story if you have not yet run it. The story is available by E-Mail from Baptist Press if you no longer have it.

Thanks,
Baptist Press

HOUSE MAIL



BAPTIST PRESS

901 Commerce #750
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

HOUSE MAIL

So. Baptist Library & Archives
901 Commerce
Nashville, TN 37203