



Teaming up with former communists and hard-line anti-reformers in government and the media to pass the law, Orthodox leaders at first were spreading the word falsely that Baptists and other evangelicals favored the restrictions.

The only dissenter in Parliament's initial 166-1 vote was Father Gleb Yakunin, a born-again Orthodox priest closely tied to a martyred Orthodox dissident, Father Men. Men wrote a booklet, "What It Means to Be a Christian," explaining that after-life salvation required more than a line in the Orthodox roll book. He believed a true Christian must be converted through a relationship with Jesus Christ. He was bludgeoned to death with the butt end of an ax.

The Southern Baptist Convention's first vice president, Jay Strack of Dallas, told Yakunin and Yeltsin's top advisers meeting in Yeltsin's Kremlin office Aug. 16 many Americans are willing to invest tax dollars to help Russia secure freedom for its people, but warned that no single act could reverse their interest in the fledgling democracy more than its ignoring religious conscience.

Strack, a trustee of the denomination's Christian Life Commission, had not planned the meeting. It grew out of an impromptu opportunity after a banquet at which officials welcomed him and others to Moscow, where they have offered humanitarian aid and preached the gospel.

At the meeting were Yeltsin's law adviser, religious adviser, chief of staff and chief of the department of defense. Strack also met with several members of Parliament.

"There's great confusion over our motive," said Strack. Yeltsin's advisers said Parliament seeks to portray their president as a weak-kneed beggar with his hands out to the West, blackmailed by the U.S. government and its churches to adopt their standards or risk losing financial support.

Russia has never known religious freedom, and for that reason is afraid of its by-products. "You know what they all wanted to talk about? The Waco situation," Strack said. "They wanted to know, how do we answer that we'll not have a group of religious zealots and militants (that would require) our army to take over?"

Strack was referring to the incident earlier this year in Waco, Texas, where federal agents stormed a Branch Davidian compound, whose cult leader was stockpiling weapons for a conflict with authorities. In a blaze that leveled the religious community, scores of people died.

"In their mind that image had been played over and over again. The Waco deal came up on Friday night (at the banquet), ... in private conversations on the phone, (and) ... from 8 in the morning to a little after midnight (the day of the Kremlin meeting)."

Strack told the advisers how he opened a window to get some relief from the heat recently and, with the cool air, "everything in the world came in. We talked about (the fact) that there's a price for freedom." He assured them evangelicals have nothing to sell them. "I had to stress our motive over and over again. I had to say, 'We're not trying to make you like America.'"

Strack told them Russians and Americans are working together to fight the Mafia, to advance space efforts, to reduce arms confrontations and to further human rights throughout the world. "But the one area we must work together in is this area that can make the Russian people good. We have a genuine concern for what happens to the people of Russia.

"Russia has to make some tough decisions," Strack told them. "Are we going to change it from the inside? That's what only the power of the gospel can do."

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Need for volunteers continues  
in flood that 'just won't quit'

By Jim Burton

Baptist Press  
8/26/93

ST. LOUIS (BP)--The Midwest Flood of '93, the disaster that "just won't quit," continues to beckon volunteers for cleanup as torrential rains keep floodwater up, particularly along the Mississippi River.

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As Illinois, Iowa and Missouri receive more rain, Southern Baptist Brotherhood disaster relief volunteers report some homes in rural Illinois still have up to eight feet of water. The Mississippi River continues to register about 12 feet above flood stage in St. Louis.

"The challenge of this disaster is that it doesn't seem to end," said Jim Furgerson, Brotherhood Commission national disaster relief director.

"With tornadoes and hurricanes there is a short period of devastating impact. When the impact ends, recovery begins. With this flood, the period of impact is lasting longer than a month," he explained.

The Missouri Baptist Convention has issued a call for 300 volunteers in St. Charles County for the weekend of Aug. 27-29. For Labor Day weekend, they need 600 volunteers working across the state.

Missouri Baptists will have 27 command centers along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers from which volunteers will work. The command centers, usually established at churches, will help the Missouri Baptist response over such a wide geographical area, said Don Anders, a Missouri Baptist Convention associate state missions director.

Anders anticipates the recovery lasting into November and says there will be "a number of homeless people in Missouri this winter because of the lack of housing, particularly in the rural areas."

After the initial mud-out and cleanup stages, Anders predicts it will take three to six weeks for structures to dry enough before rehabilitation and new construction can begin.

Missouri emergency management officials are requiring cleanup volunteers to have tetanus and diphtheria vaccinations; typhoid and Hepatitis A are advisable.

Rob Carr, Illinois Brotherhood director, said it is still difficult to estimate the volunteer cleanup needs in some areas of Illinois because the water has not receded enough to determine the full extent of damage. He is continuing to work with community leaders and FEMA to determine the necessary volunteer response.

Southern Baptists have contributed an estimated 9,000 volunteer work days in the flood areas, Furgerson said.

State Brotherhood disaster relief mobile kitchens from Illinois, Missouri, North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee continue to prepare meals for flood "survivors," as they're calling themselves, and volunteers in five cities along the Mississippi River.

The South Carolina and Oklahoma Brotherhood mobile feeding units have been deactivated in Ste. Genevieve, Mo., and Hannibal, Mo. First Baptist Church in New London, Mo., now is preparing an estimated 200 meals a day from its church kitchen to serve the Hannibal area.

Volunteers wishing to help in Missouri and Illinois should call their state Brotherhood office to get an assignment.

Contributions for disaster relief may be sent to the Brotherhood Commission, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104, (901) 272-2461.

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Writer sees God's hand  
in floods, hurricanes

By Ferrell Foster

Baptist Press  
8/26/93

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (BP)--Hurricane Hugo strikes the East Coast in 1989 with devastating results. An earthquake rocks San Francisco during the 1989 World Series. Hurricane Andrew sweeps across south Florida in 1992. The Mississippi River floods homes and farmland in 1993.

Is God trying to get America's attention? Claude King believes the answer is yes.

King is a Southern Baptist Missions Service Corps volunteer attached to the Home Mission Board's Office of Prayer and Spiritual Awakening. He is best known for his collaboration with HMB prayer leader Henry Blackaby in producing the popular "Experiencing God" study.

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King was in Springfield, Ill., Aug. 23-24 for the Illinois launch of "Fresh Encounter," a new project by Blackaby and King. Fresh Encounter presents what is described as "God's pattern for revival and spiritual awakening" and it seeks to identify "ways God's people may have departed from him," according to one of the books produced for the study.

There is a pattern to recent natural disasters in America, King said. Each involved massive destruction, yet relatively little loss of life.

King said that pattern is consistent with biblical testimony of how God deals with his people and reflects a "progressive" discipline as God seeks to get people's attention.

Not all natural disasters or calamities should be viewed as God's discipline, King said. But such occurrences "ought to be a call to prayer," King said in an interview with the Illinois Baptist newsjournal. Christians should "ask a few questions" and "look at our nation" as they seek to determine if God is disciplining them.

"I think we ought to take very seriously the things that happen to us," King told about 100 people attending the conference. "Our national forefathers would have known immediately what was going on."

To illustrate how the United States has changed, he cited government proclamations during the Civil War. In 1863, one stated:

"... insomuch as we know that by his (God's) divine law nations, like individuals, are subjected to punishments and chastisements in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war which now desolates the land may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins ..." (as quoted in Fresh Encounter materials).

"Do you see how far we have departed from God," King stated, noting the implausibility of the United States government adopting such a proclamation today.

We "owe our very life as a nation" to God, he added.

But the focus of Fresh Encounter is not on God's discipline, King said. That is only one aspect of "God's pattern for revival and spiritual awakening" revealed in Scripture, he noted.

Throughout history God has been on a mission to bring world redemption and spiritual awakening, King said. And Scripture reveals a pattern among God's people: They tend to depart from him, he disciplines them, they cry out, then they either "repent or perish." Judgment comes to those who will not repent. For those who repent, revival follows and moves the people back into God's mission of world redemption and spiritual awakening.

"We're living in some dark days in our nation," King said. "The darkness around us seems to be growing darker and darker." But, "the problem is not with the darkness. The problem is with the light. The light is not shining forth to dispel the darkness."

Revival is needed among God's people yet "most of us have never really experienced genuine revival," King said. "We haven't seen a sweeping spiritual awakening" in America in this century.

King said Blackaby asked the question, "Why has God not seen fit to send a great revival to our nation?" Fresh Encounter is the answer Blackaby believes he received from God in answer to his question.

"When we depart from him, God's plan for world redemption shuts down," King stated. "He continues to discipline until he gets our attention, ... until we cry out."

And when God has the attention of his people, he applies his Scriptures as a "plumb line" to indicate how they have departed from him and what they need to do to return.

"God brings us to a place where he gives us an option," King said. "If we repent and return to him, ... God is the one who brings revival."

King is "tremendously encouraged" that "global revival" is on the horizon.

God wants revived leaders and is raising them up "all across the nation" and across denominational lines. Many Christian leaders are finding they are not "the lone voice in the wilderness," King said. "They're a crescendo" calling for repentance.

"God has prepared America like a tinderbox, and it really won't matter where the fire falls, ... it's going to sweep the nation ... and the world.

"We're on the frontier and our eyes will see things that people have prayed for centuries to see," King said.

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Prof says 'March on Washington'  
needs celebration, reflection

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press  
8/26/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--The resounding words of Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech still ring clearly 30 years later in the memory of Glen Stassen.

On Aug. 28, 1963, Stassen stood on the Mall in Washington as King delivered his now-famous call for racial equality from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial.

"There were 200,000 people there who heard King's dream that little black children and little white children would walk hand in hand," said Stassen, now a professor of Christian ethics at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. "This was a tremendous lifting of our spirits. We soared."

The events during the "March on Washington" provided both an impetus to civil rights legislation and "a lifting of spirits" for Americans, said Stassen, who at the time was a doctoral student at Duke University in Durham, N.C.

As the nation observes the 30th anniversary of the march, America stands in need of a similar spiritual uplift, Stassen emphasized. "A lot of the division we have now comes from not having healed our past shame and not celebrating that we like our nation better and ourselves better because we had the civil rights movement. We desperately need church leaders and political leaders who will lead us to celebrate and affirm the difficult steps forward that we have taken and lead us to new action."

Some people feel they cannot celebrate advances in civil rights because there is much work left to do, Stassen said. Others, he noted, linger in the "throws of reaction."

Prior to the "March on Washington," organizers were worried the march might be poorly attended or it would turn violent, Stassen recalled. When the large throng of peaceful demonstrators assembled in Washington, a sense of achievement pervaded the crowd, he said. "The struggle for civil rights was a hard struggle. It brought out the racist opposition. There were a lot of defeats before victory."

Racial segregation in America was a "spiritual sickness, a sickness unto death," Stassen said. Had the nation not moved toward an integrated society, catastrophe loomed ahead, he stressed. "If there had been no civil rights movement, if we still had segregation and discrimination, we would be like South Africa. We would have much more violence and polarization."

Both celebration and confession, Stassen said, are needed to bring further national healing on the race issue. He praised both the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America and the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission leadership for recent actions which call on Baptists to repent for racism.

The Peace Fellowship in May issued the "Birmingham Confession," asking Baptists to acknowledge and confess a "failure of nerve" on the part of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee in September 1963. The Executive Committee failed to pass a proposed resolution expressing sorrow for the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Ala. Instead, it passed a resolution that denounced racism but omitted any reference to the Birmingham incident. The bombing, which occurred just three days before the Executive Committee meeting began, resulted in the death of four black children attending Sunday school.

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Richard D. Land, CLC executive director, said in July he was filled "with an overwhelming sense of sadness and grief" when he learned of the Executive Committee's decision not to address the bombing specifically. Ben Mitchell, the CLC staff member assigned to the issue of race relations, added the SBC owes apologies to the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Both Land and Mitchell found out about the Executive Committee episode after the Peace Fellowship issued its confession.

For the most part, Southern Baptists also had little to say about the "March on Washington," said Henlee H. Barnette, senior research professor at Southern Seminary. The march was largely ignored in Southern Baptist pulpits and in state Baptist newspapers, Barnette said.

Barnette, who became involved in the fight for racial equality in the late 1940s, was unable to attend the march. Yet his eyes were glued to the television screen as King addressed the crowd. "I remember wishing that I had been there," he said, adding several of his students participated in the event.

The importance of the march in raising the national consciousness cannot be exaggerated, Barnette said. "It amplified what many had been saying at the local level. This called attention to the civil rights movement at the national level and even the international level."

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Rise in volunteerism prompts  
concern for conserving results      By Shari Schubert

Baptist Press  
8/26/93

ST. LOUIS (BP)--Few farmers would consider their harvest complete if their beans were combined, but still in the field. Likewise, the spiritual harvest reaped in evangelistic crusades such as two this summer in Kenya and Tanzania is not truly complete until new converts have been disciplined and brought into the fellowship of a local church.

While Baptists are rejoicing over the recent report of 9,000 decisions for Christ during evangelistic efforts led by short-term mission volunteers, past experience suggests it may be difficult for missionaries and nationals in the two countries to conserve the results.

Missourian Harold Cummins, a former Southern Baptist missionary to Kenya, was involved in a study of follow-up efforts after the 1990 Kenya Coastal Crusade during which 56,323 decisions or inquiries were reported. The crusade involved 60 missionaries and 540 short-term volunteers from the United States working alongside Kenyan Christians. The study was led by Jim Slack, Foreign Mission Board church growth analyst based in Richmond, Va.

Follow-up has been inadequate in most instances, Cummins told Word & Way, Missouri Baptists' newsjournal. Research indicated more than 75 percent of decisions made during the Kenya Coastal Crusades were not followed up. A number of reasons were noted:

- Many of the addresses given by new converts were post office boxes, making it difficult for church members to locate the individuals for visitation.
- The number of missionaries and pastors is small in proportion to the need, and national pastors typically are bivocational, which limits the time they have to do follow-up work.
- Adequate printed materials were not always available.
- Some crusade services were held in public places where there was no local church.

"The loss was abominable" from that type of setting, Cummins said, stressing the need for relating evangelistic efforts to a nearby church or mission.

In contrast, some of the best results in discipling converts were noted in places where the evangelistic work was accompanied by an effort to start a new church by career missionaries and Kenyan Baptists, he said. Eighty-four new congregations were organized during the Kenya Coastal Crusades.

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Cummins pointed to a need for "better-managed volunteerism" that coordinates short-term mission projects with long-term missionary goals.

Last year more than 10,000 Southern Baptist volunteers participated in missions projects overseas. Jim Hooten, a former missionary to Kenya and Uganda now serving as associate director of the Foreign Mission Board's volunteers in mission department, said volunteerism is a wonderful source of support for overseas mission efforts, but he emphasized, "Our core is the career missionary."

Southern Baptist missionary Ralph Boyle, who currently serves in Mbeya, Tanzania, offered a similar perspective. "I wouldn't want to say we should put all our eggs into volunteer missions," he said. But sometimes volunteers can "do something unique and special that can't be done any other way."

The presence of Southern Baptist volunteers in local churches overseas sometimes gives an added sense of "credence" to the work those churches are doing, Boyle noted.

Volunteers themselves typically gain a greater awareness of missions and of prayer, he added. He estimated several thousand people in the United States were praying for the recent evangelistic effort in Mbeya.

Volunteerism often leads to increased giving to Southern Baptists' Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions, noted Bill Peacock, interim director of the volunteer department. He said the FMB also is seeing an increase in appointments of people for career or long-term service who previously have participated in short-term volunteer projects.

But volunteer projects do involve work for missionaries. For the three weeks during which missionaries and 17 local churches were involved in the crusade effort, "it was 100 percent of our time," Boyle noted.

Hooten affirmed the increase of interest in volunteerism over the last 12 years or so but said with it has come a concern that volunteers be deployed in such a way they don't overwhelm the career missionaries.

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**Baptists aid black community  
struck by Virginia tornado**

By Julie Jenkins

Baptist Press  
8/26/93

PETERSBURG, Va. (BP)--"Notice: This building is unsafe and its use or occupancy has been prohibited by the Building Official."

Many houses on Pocahontas Island near Petersburg, Va., bear this warning, posted on a red card, after the Aug. 6 tornado damaged some 40 of the Appomattox River island's 60 residences. The Petersburg Baptist Association has been among the first groups to mobilize rebuilding efforts for this low-income community.

"Our first priority is to put people back into their houses," said Dennis K. Myers, moderator for the Petersburg association and coordinator for disaster relief.

According to Myers, an Aug. 12 meeting to organize clean-up and restoration strategies involved state representatives; Petersburg city manager Valerie Lemmie; director of Southside American Red Cross Gary Rudolph; Lloyd Jackson, director of Baptist Men for the Virginia Baptist General Board; and 10 to 12 Baptist churches.

Myers explained Baptist volunteers decided to focus mainly on residential Pocahontas Island because its needs were immediate and because the rebuilding of Petersburg's Old Towne area -- also damaged by the tornado -- required professional attention to historic preservation policies.

City manager Lemmie said the island also holds historical significance. It is "a community that represents three to four generations of (pre-Civil War) free blacks" and is a "self-sufficient and independent" group, she said.

Lemie said she was pleased with the immediate response from the city and volunteers after the devastation. The storm caused about \$11 million worth of damage in Petersburg alone.

A dozen workers from Mount Pleasant Baptist Church in Colonial Heights, Va., repaired Thomas O. Booker's island home -- destroyed on Booker's 89th birthday -- with some help from First Baptist Church of Hopewell, Va., volunteers.

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Mount Pleasant's pastor Julian Yuille said the crew replaced Booker's central and porch roofs, broken windows, screens and siding. Booker did not have storm disaster insurance.

B.J. Clark, a Mount Pleasant member and general contractor, supervised the repairs and worked several days directing volunteer groups to manageable project areas on the island.

Myers said the process of communicating and coordinating among the various relief agencies has been slow, although the calls from churches eager to help keep rolling in. "I don't want to take (volunteers) down there until we have houses assigned," he explained.

Western Heights Baptist Church in Petersburg took 17 workers with chain saws and rakes down to the island three days after the tornado struck.

The church's pastor, Wayne Dishman, said they decided to help Pocahontas residents because they felt the island's distress might be overshadowed by the rebuilding of nearby costly businesses, like Southpark Mall's Wal-Mart and the Old Towne district. The Old Towne area had been newly renovated less than six months prior to the tornado.

Volunteers from Monumental Baptist Church in Petersburg reported a positive response from their clean-up efforts. Acteen Christy Lovorn, 18, said, "It was amazing to see the outpouring of love from church groups" after the storm.

Lovorn said their efforts provided "a great opportunity to witness," as some of her group wore Acteens T-shirts which sparked some of the residents' curiosity. "It wasn't just rebuilding their homes, but rebuilding their spirits," she said.

The Baptist General Association of Virginia allocated \$5,000 in voluntary contributions to the Petersburg association, strictly for disaster relief. Myers said \$1,000 covered approximately 175 meal vouchers for the merchants and workers in the Old Towne district, while more of the money will buy materials to rebuild Pocahontas Island homes.

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Jenkins, a senior at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va., was a summer intern at the Religious Herald, Virginia Baptists' newsjournal.

**Baptist teens rushed to help  
victims when tornado hit store**      **By Julie Jenkins**

**Baptist Press  
8/26/93**

COLONIAL HEIGHTS, Va. (BP)--Six youth and their three counselors from a Baptist church found themselves pressed into emergency service when a tornado struck a shopping mall between Richmond and Petersburg, Va.

The group from First Baptist Church in Hillsville, Va., entered the Southpark Mall parking area around 1:30 p.m. Aug. 6 as a tornado ripped through a Wal-Mart store, killing two cashiers and a shopper and injuring some 30 people.

Becky Gunter, the church's youth minister, said the group had decided to visit Petersburg's historic district and several shopping malls while waiting out the rainstorm. They were planning to catch a contemporary Christian music concert at Kings Dominion amusement park later that evening.

But God had other plans, the group agreed. Gunter said the incidents which brought them to the Wal-Mart store evidenced how "the timing was impeccable." An extremely slow gas pump, some miscalculation in direction and the torrential rains delayed the group until their van approached several hundred yards from Wal-Mart as the tornado hit.

The funnel would have sideswiped their van had not one of the youth, James Tigner, directed the driver, "Go right. Greg, turn right." Numerous cars to the left of their van sustained shattered windows as "the pressure dropped so drastically," Gunter recounted.

After the group's initial shock, she said, "the Lord just kicked in and gave us the strength to help others."

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All nine decided to enter the devastated Wal-Mart area minutes before police began taping off the area to others, said Stephanie Anderson.

Anderson and Kristie Montgomery, both youth group members, picked glass out of a woman's hand, while the group's three counselors and one youth carried several wounded from the store entrance. Only Gunter actually entered the store, from which she sustained a cut to the arm requiring stitches.

Other Hillsville youth provided first aid and comforted two mothers whose babies needed medical attention.

Gunter said Virginia Baptist Youth Evangelism Conference T-shirts all nine were wearing gave the group an appearance of unity and calm amid the devastation. "Our shirts said 'Not Ashamed,' and that represents the ultimate of what we did," by helping others in the name of Christ.

Gunter described their Sunday morning worship service following the events as powerful. Whereas many adults extended condolences for the group's unusual experience, Kristie Montgomery, according to Gunter, exclaimed, "Don't feel sorry for us. We were exactly where God wanted us to be."

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Contemporary Christian music  
focus of Baptist's new book

By Mark Wingfield

Baptist Press  
8/26/93

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Is contemporary Christian music a tool of the devil or a legitimate expression of Christian faith?

That's the question debated in many churches and homes -- especially among parents and children -- and the question addressed by Steve Miller in a new book, "The Contemporary Christian Music Debate," published by Tyndale.

Miller is a Southern Baptist with earned degrees from Columbia Bible College, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. He most recently served on the staff of Flat Creek Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., and now works in Eastern Europe with Reach Out Ministries.

In the opening lines of his book, Miller writes, "After years of research, I have reached this conclusion: Contemporary Christian music is a medium whose day has come for families, churches, evangelists, and to an increasingly greater extent, foreign missionaries."

He urges all Christians to study the issue with open minds and get beyond emotion.

Among the questions he addresses:

-- Have scientists proved that rock music harms both mind and body? No, he contends, refuting point-by-point several studies to the contrary.

-- Does contemporary music use the same kind of beat used by African tribes to call upon demons? There is no universal "demon beat" copied from African tribes, he asserts.

-- Do contemporary styles lead to moral corruption? No, but the lyrics and lifestyles of some secular rock groups offer a strong immoral influence that must be countered, Miller says.

-- What does the Bible say about music and styles of worship? A variety of styles and forms of praise are called for in the Bible, he says, urging church leaders to use discernment in knowing what to use when.

-- How can parents talk to their children about music? Miller speaks against record burning but suggests steps parents should take to communicate with their children about music.

-- How can churches use contemporary Christian music without alienating those who object? By helping Christians move beyond a "fortress mentality" and see the need to reach the unchurched, Miller says. He illustrates this point with examples of how several churches have found a use for contemporary music.

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