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2 SBC agency heads sign
evangelical-Catholic document

By Louis Moore

Baptist Press
3/30/94

Nashville (BP)--Larry Lewis, president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and Richard Land, executive director of the SBC Christian Life Commission, both signed the historic document "Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium" which was released March 29 in New York City.

The 25-page document is non-binding on the Southern Baptist Convention. In its introduction, the document says, "This statement cannot speak officially for our communities. It does intend to speak responsibly from our communities and to our communities. In this statement we address what we have discovered both about our unity and about our differences."

The statement was signed by a group of evangelical and Roman Catholic leaders who met Sept. 28-29, 1992, to lay the groundwork for the document. Spearheading that meeting were evangelical leader Chuck Colson of Prison Fellowship and Roman Catholic thinker Richard John Neuhaus of the Institute on Religion and Public Life.

The statement itself was drafted by a committee composed of Neuhaus, Colson, Kent Hill and George Weigel. Lewis and Land offered six pages of critiques of the first working draft, and most of their concerns were incorporated in the fifth and final draft of the document.

The document calls for reduced conflicts between evangelicals and Catholics and more cooperation on social issues such as abortion, education, pornography, religious liberty and racial relations.

"We hope it (the document) will create a climate encouraging more official actions" to bring evangelicals and Catholics together and to better understanding and cooperation at the grass roots, Neuhaus told the New York Times.

Land said the statement reflects the fact that "the relationship (between evangelicals and Roman Catholics) has reached the stage where we can not only talk about points where we agree but we can honestly, openly and dispassionately lay out the areas where we diverge on doctrine and other matters."

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Lewis told Baptist Press, "It was an effort to build bridges between Catholics and evangelicals on those critical issues of our day.

"We do evangelism not proselytizing," Lewis qualified. "Understand that Southern Baptist witnessing efforts are not directed at proselytizing anyone, but to bringing people to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ which is the responsibility of all Christians. Our evangelistic efforts are not geared toward church membership. We are not wanting people to join a Baptist church but to accept Jesus Christ as Savior."

However, Lewis said, "I feel like evangelicals have a lot more in common today with conservative Catholics than we do with liberal Protestants who deny the cardinal doctrines of our faith like the very deity of Christ and his atoning death and resurrection."

Darrel Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism, noted, "There is no change in our approach to evangelism or view of Catholics or any other faith. We want to evangelize every person who has not accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior whether they are Baptist, Catholic or have no church affiliation or background. After that decision is made, then God will lead a person to a church."

The statement specifically urges both groups to avoid "misunderstandings, misrepresentations and caricatures of one another."

The document makes a strong distinction between witnessing about one's faith in Jesus Christ as Savior to another person and "sheep stealing" which is the proselytizing of members of another Christian group to make one's own numbers larger.

"It is understandable that Christians who bear witness to the gospel try to persuade others that their communities and traditions are more fully in accord with the Gospel," the statement says. "There is a necessary distinction between evangelizing and what is today commonly called proselytizing or 'sheep stealing.' We condemn the practice of recruiting people from another community for purposes of denominational or institutional aggrandizement. At the same time, our commitment to full religious freedom compels us to defend the legal freedom to proselytize even as we call upon Christians to refrain from such activity."

It also says, "It is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytize among active adherents of another Christian community."

The document affirms the historic Protestant principle of justification by grace through faith because of Christ.

"All who accept Christ as Lord and Savior are brothers and sisters in Christ," the document says. "Evangelicals and Catholics are brothers and sisters in Christ. We have not chosen one another, just as we have not chosen Christ. He has chosen us, and he has chosen us to be his together. However imperfect our community with one another, however deep our disagreements with one another, we recognize that there is but one church of Christ. There is one church because there is one Christ and the church is his body."

The document says the group affirms the infallibility of the Scriptures but notes that evangelicals and Roman Catholics differ seriously on the role of tradition and the inspiration of church leaders throughout church history.

"We do not presume to suggest that we can resolve the deep and long standing differences between Evangelicals and Catholics," the document says. "Indeed those differences may never be resolved short of the Kingdom Come."

One social issues, the document says:

-- "We will persist in contending to secure the legal protection of the unborn. Our goals are to secure due process of law for the unborn, to enact the most protective laws and public policies that are politically possible, and to reduce dramatically the incidence of abortion.

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-- "We will do all in our power to resist proposals for euthanasia, eugenics, and population control that exploit the vulnerable, corrupt the integrity of medicine, deprave our culture, and betray the moral truths of our constitutional order.

-- "In public education, we contend together for schools that transmit to coming generations our cultural heritage, which is inseparable from the formative influence of religion, especially Judaism and Christianity."

-- "We contend together for a comprehensive policy of parental choice in education. Parents are the primary educators of their children; the state and other institutions should be supportive of their exercise of that responsibility.

-- "We contend together against the widespread pornography in our society, along with the celebration of violence, sexual depravity, and anti-religious bigotry in the entertainment media.

-- "We contend for a renewed spirit of acceptance, understanding, and cooperation across lines of religion, race, ethnicity, sex and class.

-- "We contend for a free society with a vibrant market economy.

-- "We contend for public policies that demonstrate renewed respect for the irreplaceable role of mediating structures in society -- notably the family, churches and myriad voluntary associations.

-- "We contend for a realistic and responsible understanding of America's part in world affairs. Realism and responsibility require that we avoid both the illusions of unlimited power and righteousness, on the one hand, and the timidity and selfishness of isolationism, on the other."

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SBC Christian Life Commission
criticizes North Carolina editor By Herb Hollinger

Baptist Press
3/30/94

NASHVILLE (BP)--Officials of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission have sent a four-page letter severely criticizing three editorials in the Biblical Recorder, newsjournal of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, to every Baptist pastor in the state.

Although state Baptist papers have on occasion criticized SBC agencies, it is believed to be the first time a SBC agency has sent a letter to state pastors criticizing a state agency. The commission's March 15 letter was sent to 3,547 pastors at a cost of about \$1,300. North Carolina is second in number of Southern Baptist churches -- Texas has 4,200 churches -- among the states cooperating with the SBC, according to 1992 statistics.

At issue in the letter are three editorials concerning two matters: the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the church-state test known as the "Lemon" test. One of the editorials calls for abolishing the CLC.

CLC Executive Director Richard D. Land and commission trustee Charles D. Page, pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., signed the lengthy letter.

R. Gene Puckett, Biblical Recorder editor, called the letter "long and defensive; it speaks volumes about CLC's guilt at the points I have made."

The letter says the CLC has no desire to engage in a "public brawl" between Baptist organizations, as "such family feuding is an embarrassment to the family and to our Father."

But, truth is important, the letter reads, and "North Carolina Baptists have a right to know the truth when one of their leaders bears false witness. And we have the duty to tell the truth and trust the people after we have followed the prescription of Matt. 18:20 to privately confront him and ask him to make amends."

The CLC said officials have "confronted" Puckett by phone, by letter and by memorandum, through three staff members, "but the result was only more reckless disregard for the truth."

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The letter said Puckett's dislike for the CLC "has mutated into outright distortion of truth and his festering animosity has erupted into personal attacks and a call for disbanding and defunding of the CLC."

Puckett, contacted by Baptist Press, said the "letter is typical of the way the leadership of the CLC operates. They are masters of cleverly and subtly distorting the truth. When persons who know the issues catch them with their hand in the cookie jar, the CLC always swings into action with political bashing. Truth is never a factor."

Puckett, editor of the 61,000-circulation paper since 1983, said he is actually grateful the letter was sent to N.C. pastors.

"The reputation of the CLC in North Carolina is very poor among authentic and informed Baptists. This attack on the Recorder will only serve to enhance the credibility and stature of the paper," Puckett said.

Some of the points raised in the CLC letter revolve around at what point in time did the CLC support the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and whether it at first opposed the legislation which was passed last year by Congress.

Puckett says, in his Dec. 11 editorial, the CLC opposed the RFRA. The CLC says this characterization is "absolutely false."

"We called Dr. Puckett and requested a correction and an apology," Land and Page wrote in the letter. "We also informed him that our general counsel would be sending a letter to the editor. Dr. Puckett printed the letter from Mike Whitehead, but, as if to add insult to the original injury, (he) not only did not apologize and correct the record, but wrote an additional editorial (Jan. 15), which further distorts the factual record."

Apparently, the CLC waited some time before publicly supporting RFRA because of some concerns about how the legislation might impact pro-life laws.

Puckett said the issue is timing "and the key word is first."

The CLC says the "first" major religious organization to oppose RFRA was the United State Catholic Conference, because of possible conflict with pro-life laws. But the CLC's delay in publicly supporting the RFRA should not be considered opposition, the letter says in a lengthy explanation. The CLC also has the responsibility of handling the moral issue of the sanctity of human life for the SBC.

The CLC endorsed RFRA in August 1991, after essentially one year of analysis, "to the chagrin of the National Right to Life Committee and other pro-life organizations, including the United State Catholic Conference." Eventually the USCC also endorsed RFRA.

The letter to pastors also accuses Puckett of endorsing the position of the American Civil Liberties Union and others that a woman's "right to choose" abortion is protected by the free exercise clause.

"In other words, your (N.C.) editor believes abortion is a religious freedom right which, if deprived to any citizen, has been eliminated for all."

But the letter continues, (the CLC) supports religious liberty consistent with "our Baptist heritage. We do not believe religious liberty is an absolute freedom which has no limits (such as Christian Scientists denying life-saving medical treatment to children)."

Puckett's characterization of the CLC's position on RFRA was completely contradicted by a letter to the editor sent by Forrest Montgomery, counsel of the National Association of Evangelicals, the letter says. "Mr. Montgomery labeled the editor's statement about the CLC's position on RFRA as unsubstantiated ... the CLC never opposed RFRA."

Even though Montgomery asked for a retraction and apology to the CLC, Puckett chose not to print his letter to the editor, the CLC says in its letter.

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Regarding the "Lemon" test which the U.S. Supreme Court uses in separation of church and state cases, Puckett's Feb. 26 editorial says the CLC's amicus brief, filed in January of this year, exposes the CLC as being "soft on separation of church and state." The brief in a New York special school district case, the CLC contends, contains the same legal analysis as a 1991 brief in a high school graduation prayer case.

"If Dr. Puckett read our 1991 brief, he should not have been surprised when he read our 1994 brief. The editorials suggest to us that he has read neither," Land and Page wrote in their letter to pastors.

Land and Page claim that Puckett calls the CLC's position not "separation" but "accommodation." But, the CLC claims its position, as spelled out in the briefs, affirms the historic Baptist commitment to separation of church and state, but explains that the metaphor means that the institution of the church is to be kept separate from the institution of government.

"It does not mean that religious persons or principles must be separated from government. In fact, the free exercise clause means that government must accommodate the private religious choices of citizens, independently derived. Government should never use its law-making power, or its taxing and spending power, to coerce, induce or distort religious choices."

In Puckett's Feb. 26 editorial he calls for the abolishing of the CLC because the agency has become a "secular political action committee."

But the CLC counters, "As Dr. Puckett knows, the term 'political action committee' has legal significance, and there is no basis in fact or law to apply this label to the CLC. This is a false representation of a material fact about the nature of the CLC activities and belies the malicious spirit with which Dr. Puckett is writing."

The letter to the pastors concludes by saying the CLC fulfilled its duty to make the pastors "aware of the facts."

"What North Carolinians choose to do with the facts is up to you."

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Southwestern's Tolar
named acting president

Baptist Press
3/30/94

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--William B. Tolar, vice president for academic affairs and provost at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has been named the school's acting president.

The announcement came March 29 at a press conference called by trustees. Tolar's appointment was made by the executive committee of the seminary's board of trustees, according to trustee chairman Ralph W. Pulley Jr.

Pulley, a Dallas attorney, in a written release called Tolar, 65, "a man of impeccable character and unusual qualifications to fill this interim position. He is respected by the faculty, students and the Baptist constituency all over the world. We are indeed most fortunate to be able to secure his services. He gives a sense of security and his stability and expertise will move the seminary in the right direction."

The new acting president said he "made this decision with some personal reluctance because my calling, training and passion for nearly 40 years have been for teaching and preaching and not for administration."

Tolar said his acceptance of the acting president should not be considered as an endorsement of the trustees' March 9 firing of former president Russell H. Dilday.

"My acceptance of these responsibilities does not mean that I concur with the action of dismissing Dr. Dilday nor the manner in which it was done. He is a cherished friend of 46 years and a great leader. It would please me beyond all words if a reconciliation could be made between him and the board of trustees," Tolar said.

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Trustees did not consider others for the position, according to Lee Weaver, trustee vice chairman from Fort Worth. Said to be the "prime candidate," Tolar would be acceptable to all in the denominational controversy, Weaver said.

Dilday told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in an interview that Tolar is the "best option" to bring order and calm in the chaos among the faculty and students, although he was not sure an interim president was needed.

Tolar said his goal is to help faculty, students and staff "redeem the remainder of the semester" and to allow the seminary to continue its academic excellence.

"My first commitment is going to be the internal affairs, trying to keep our academics moving so we maintain academic excellence. I really want to do everything possible to maintain for our student body a meaningful experience this semester."

Tolar said he also is committed to maintaining academic freedom at Southwestern.

"I'm committed to that as an academic person and cannot continue in the present position if I feel that academic freedom is threatened," he said. "This would be one of my high commitments -- that these professors be allowed to research, study and present different views with our commitment known that we are committed to the Scriptures, and to God, to the Christian faith, no apology there, but that we do have the opportunity to explore and examine and look at different issues."

During the press conference, Bruce Corley, dean of the school of theology, read a statement issued by the faculty and administrative staff of the seminary. The statement endorsed Tolar's selection as acting president.

"Dr. Tolar has been a trusted senior colleague and administrator at Southwestern for nearly 30 years and especially in the grave situation of recent days, he has acted with wisdom, poise, and integrity. We believe him to be the best person to lead the seminary now through these troubled days," according to the statement.

"Our sense of direction, commitment to our student body and eagerness to do God's work are strengthened by his choice, but we reiterate the resolution approved by the faculty on March 10 that we do not concur with either the action taken by the board of trustees with regard to (Dilday), or the manner in which the action was carried out."

Robert E. Naylor, president emeritus of Southwestern, praised Tolar for his "biblical faithfulness. He is accepted in Southern Baptist churches as a great preacher. This is an indication for all of us that the trustees mean to carry on in the same conservative position that makes Southwestern great."

Tolar holds the bachelor of arts and master of arts degrees from Baylor and the master of divinity and doctor of theology degrees from Southwestern. Both Baylor and Southwestern have honored Tolar with their respective distinguished alumni awards.

Along with his administrative duties as a vice president, Tolar is distinguished professor of biblical backgrounds. He was elected to the seminary faculty in 1965, after teaching 10 years at Baylor University.

A popular conference speaker and teacher, Tolar has studied, traveled and lectured in 53 countries and on five continents. He has been to Israel more than 40 times, including leading several tour groups.

Tolar is a member of the American Association of University Professors, the American Academy of Religion and the Association of Baptist Teachers of Religion.

He and his wife, Floye, have two grown children, William and Lora.

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Scott Collins and Herb Hollinger contributed to this story.

Trustee reps answer questions
about Dilday's access to office By Toby Druin

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)--An "overabundance of caution" and "business world protocol" prompted Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary trustees to order the lock on Russell Dilday's door changed and his computer access code erased, according to trustee leaders.

But if they had it to do over again, said Miles Seaborn, they might have done it differently, possibly sending someone with Dilday to his office to get his personal belongings rather than locking him out.

Seaborn, pastor of Birchman Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, and Lee Weaver, also a member at Birchman and newly elected trustee vice chairman, were questioned about the events of the March 9 firing after the March 29 introduction of William B. Tolar as the seminary's acting president.

Weaver said the changing of the locks was "not a reflection on anyone personally. We didn't know what to expect."

He and Seaborn, chairman of the trustee committee seeking a new president, noted that 200 to 300 students were crowded around the entrances of the room where the trustees were meeting. Weaver also noted that a similar crowd had gathered in 1989 when it was rumored that Dilday was to be dismissed, and the trustees were uncertain what would result when the firing was announced.

"It was done according to protocol of the business world," said Seaborn, who insisted that Dilday hadn't been locked out of his office, but that his access had been limited.

Changing the locks and computer code were not meant to belittle Dilday or "rub salt into the wounds," Seaborn said. "But we didn't know what all he had access to through the computer. He is a computer whiz.

"We were not trying to limit (access) to his personal records. We were just saying there are certain things at this time that need to be sacrosanct, sacred, to the institution. It was not meant to be malicious."

Seaborn said the action was taken "as much for Dilday's benefit as for anyone else. Who knows with all these kids around here, that somebody could have walked in and taken a souvenir.

"When we look back," he said, "all of us think it might have been over-caution on our part, an overabundance of caution. But misguided as it might have been, it was for his (Dilday's) protection."

John Earl Seelig, acting director of public relations, said he had been asked at a Lions Club meeting what all the fuss was about changing the locks on the president's office.

"Several business executives said, 'What is the big deal? It happens in businesses all the time,'" said Seelig.

Seelig also took issue with reports that the firing has cost the seminary \$15 to \$20 million in gifts and pledges. Spokesmen for the Southwestern Council who cited those amounts in a memo to news media must have been thinking of people who said they were planning to give but had changed their minds, Seelig said.

"The seminary didn't know they were planning to give," said Seelig, who noted that only \$2 million in cash and about \$5 million in pledges had been committed to the seminary's current Vision for Excellence campaign.

According to the Dallas Morning News, a three-page memo circulated by the chairman and past chairman of the Southwestern Council estimated the seminary had lost "at least \$15 million in gifts and pledges" and that 20 council members had resigned.

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Neither council chairman John McNaughton and past chairman Jerry Yowell, both of Fort Worth, were resigning from the council but they wrote in their memo the firing had done "irreparable damage" to the seminary and noted the loss "will continue to rise as individuals, institutions and foundations cancel their gifts and pledges."

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Art Toalston contributed to this story.

Alcohol advertising bill
may be near first vote

By Tom Strode

Baptist Press
3/30/94

WASHINGTON (BP)--A bill requiring warning messages in alcohol advertisements is expected to be voted on soon for the first time by a congressional committee.

The Senate Commerce Committee may consider the Sensible Advertising and Family Education Act shortly after Congress reconvenes April 11. Congress began a two-week recess March 25.

The SAFE Act will require health and safety warnings to be in all alcohol ads broadcast on radio and television or printed in newspapers, magazines or promotional displays.

The print warnings contain more information than the broadcast ones and also include a toll-free telephone number providing more details on alcohol use. The broadcast warnings are:

-- SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: If you are pregnant, don't drink alcohol. Alcohol may cause mental retardation and other birth defects.

-- WARNING: If you are under the age of 21, it's illegal to buy alcoholic beverages.

-- WARNING: Alcohol is a drug and may be addictive.

-- WARNING: Don't drink and drive or operate heavy machinery.

-- WARNING: Don't mix alcohol with medications and other drugs.

-- WARNING: Alcohol poisoning can kill you. Don't drink too much too fast.

-- WARNING: Drinking increases your risk of high blood pressure, liver disease and cancer.

The SAFE Act, which is S. 674 in the Senate, was introduced in two previous Congresses without receiving a committee vote.

"We have labored for four years to see the SAFE Act come to a vote, and now that time is almost at hand," said James A. Smith, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission's director of government relations.

"We believe we have a chance to pass the bill in the Commerce Committee, but this will only happen if concerned citizens are involved. The well-heeled interests which oppose the SAFE Act are formidable foes," said Smith, who is on the steering committee of the coalition supporting the bill.

The alcohol and broadcasting industries have mounted strong opposition to the legislation.

Democratic members of the Senate Commerce Committee are Chairman Ernest Hollings, S.C.; Daniel Inouye, Hawaii; Wendell Ford, Ky.; Jim Exon, Neb.; Jay Rockefeller, W.Va.; John Kerry, Mass.; John Breaux, La.; Richard Bryan, Nev.; Charles Robb, Va.; Byron Dorgan, N.D., and Harlan Mathews, Tenn. Republican members are John Danforth, Mo.; Bob Packwood, Ore.; Larry Pressler, S.D.; Ted Stevens, Alaska; John McCain, Ariz.; Conrad Burns, Mont.; Slade Gorton, Wash.; Trent Lott, Miss., and Kay Bailey Hutchinson, Texas.

The bill will require at least 10 votes on the committee in order to reach the Senat floor.

The chief sponsors of S. 674 are Strom Thurmond, R.-S.C., and Paul Simon, D.-Ill.

The companion bill in the House of Representatives is H.R. 1823. Joseph Kennedy, D.-Mass., and Joseph Conyers, D.-Mich., are the prime sponsors.

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Students opt for spring break
of care for flood-ravaged town By Marc C. Whitt

WINFIELD, Mo. (BP)--"You all changed my town totally and I want to follow in your footsteps!"

Those words written by a 13-year-old expressed appreciation to 47 Campbellsville College students and staff who spent spring break not on the sunny beaches of Florida, but in the mud and debris of flood-stricken Winfield, Mo., 40 miles northeast of St. Louis.

Members of Campbellsville's Baptist Student Union and a several college staff members traveled to Missouri March 11-17 to rebuild homes and lives wrecked by the Midwest's "Flood of '93."

Although homes received much attention from the group, lives crushed by the flood's destruction seemed to be what received the most repair, said Tiffani Merrick, a junior from Nicholasville, Ky., and mission trip coordinator.

"Before we went to Winfield, the people there told us they wanted someone just to listen to them for a change," Merrick said.

According to Merrick, citizens of Winfield were disturbed that several governmental and nonprofit agencies had come to their community and had quickly left without them being able to express their grief.

"They needed people to love them. Probably the most productive thing we did was to have real conversation with them," Merrick recounted. "This community was in such need when we arrived. Even though we arrived as strangers, they invited us into their lives. We treated them like people, not flood victims."

Before the flood devastated Winfield, it was a town of more than 700 people. Today, only 592 remain in what was described by the Campbellsville group as a place where hopelessness lingers in the lives of those who still call Winfield home.

The town, which lies two miles from the banks of the Mississippi River, was reported to be one of the two hardest-hit towns in Missouri. Much of that destruction resulted from a major levy which broke nearby.

From viewing pre-flood pictures of Winfield, Merrick said that the small town was once occupied by beautiful homes. "Today, trash and mud have made it into a slum. It's a sad, drastic change for one community to experience."

Rebecca Mishler, a junior from Dunnville, Ky., said the trip made a definite impact on her own life. "I tried to put myself in their shoes," she said. "These people have had a lot of bitterness bottled up inside. There was a lot of devastation. We all asked each other, 'What if this had happened to our families?'"

One lady whom the group had met told about seeing her house and lifelong belongings swept away in a matter of seconds when the levy broke.

Mishler said that more than three-fourths of the homes in Winfield have been abandoned.

"In spite of the destruction," she said, "we were there to offer them some hope."

According to Joan Stansbury of the Campbellsville's office of campus ministries, Winfield will never be the same following the college's impact on the community.

"We did as much, if not more, spiritual rebuilding as physical rebuilding," Stansbury said.

"Our students who worked with the Back Yard Bible Club noticed the hurt in the children's eyes. Once the children and adults saw that we sincerely cared about them, they were totally open with us."

Problems among the youth's population were abundant, Merrick said. Drugs, alcohol and sex had replaced what some might term as traditional small-town values and activities.

"Many of the kids told us that if you didn't have a car and some money for a trip to St. Louis, there wasn't much to do," Merrick said. "Apparently, there are several cases of teen-age pregnancy in the local school system, especially in the middle school."

In another story, Stansbury told of a 5-year-old girl who had "fallen in love with our group."

"This little girl would bring her paint brush, gloves and box lunch every day to help us," Stansbury said. "She stayed with us all day long for two days. Her mother said she would get up the first thing in the morning to go to work."

That same 5-year-old later asked Campbellsville student Richard Smith of Owensboro, Ky., if she could have his Bible. Smith explained to her that his grandmother had given him this Bible and because of that, it meant a lot to him.

But Smith could see in her eyes how much she wanted it, so he gave it to her, Stansbury said.

Yet another situation, more than any other, moved Campbellsville's group.

"A rather rugged-looking man, who was in his early 40s, came to us in a special way," Stansbury said. "This man had long, stringy hair and wore dangling earrings. Just by his looks, I'm afraid many people wouldn't have helped him. But he wanted our help!

"Before the flood had destroyed his home, he had lived down by the levy in a house that stood on 12-foot high stilts.

"From the time he lost his house, he has been living in a house where six feet of water once stood.

"He lived in filth. There was mold growing on mold. The smell was horrific.

"There were no walls inside, only stud frames. His carpets were filled with dirt and grime. The house was barely livable.

"Campbellsville's students and staff came in and cleaned his house, painted his fence, cleaned the kitchen and bathroom spotless, vacuumed the carpet, told him how much God loved him and then we listened."

Stansbury said that in talking with him, the Campbellsville group discovered he was on his second marriage and was presently separated from his wife.

After much prayer with him and for him, the man surrendered his life to Jesus Christ on the third night of a revival the Campbellsville College BSU was conducting for the community.

"He had several problems," Stansbury said. "Each night our group had 'family time' and had prayer for him and his wife. The third night before the service, we held prayer for him again. We had such a burden for this man.

"After we had worked so hard on his house, he just sat outside and stared at it," Merrick said. "He said he had to go outside and look at his mailbox to see if it really was his house."

Proof of Campbellsville College's efforts were demonstrated in a video recorded by the office of campus ministries.

Sue Healey, disaster relief coordinator for Winfield, said:

"I would never have wanted to be without you. You have brought such vitality and life and the Spirit has come with you. Believe me, you have just changed things

"The people that you have worked with . . . all the people you have touched over there, their hearts are singing. I know I speak for the pastor (Mark Miller of First Baptist in Winfield), myself and Jamie Cox (disaster relief coordinator for First Baptist Church) when I say that we love you and it's more than the physical work you did, it's the impression and feelings that you are leaving with us

"They have noticed some of the things that you have done and you have touched them spiritually and emotionally. You have made them stop and think. I've seen unity in that neighborhood that I have never seen before. You have brought people together.

Healy said the community "is going to come back and believe me, you are the major part in this and have started us in the right direction."

Citizens from Winfield are planning to visit Campbellsville College next fall, according to Healey.

Campbellsville College, founded in 1906, is a comprehensive coeducational institution which emphasizes liberal arts and sciences, business, teacher education and professional studies. Located in south-central Kentucky, the college is affiliated with the Kentucky Baptist Convention and has an enrollment of 1,163 students, the largest ever in the history of the college.

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Witt is director of Campbellsville College's public relations and marketing office. (BP) photos available from the office, (502) 789-5213.

16-year-old Karrie intent
on reaching her school

By Ferrell Foster

Baptist Press
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GRANITE CITY, Ill. (BP)--The rattle of lockers and the muffled roar of conversation sounds the beginning of another day at Granite City High School. Teen-agers gather in groups, some standing and some sitting on the brown tile floor, waiting for the day's first bell.

One group sitting on the floor slowly grows to include seven students. The only thing different about this group is the Bible in one girl's hand and then the bowed heads of all seven.

They gather every morning in the same place, for the same purpose -- a devotional and prayer time.

Sixteen-year-old Karrie Cowin leads the 15-minute sessions. She began doing so last September, early in the school year, her first at Granite City High.

The group started with three students, grew to 23 in October, dropped back to two in November and now has inched back up to seven.

Cowin is a sophomore with a big smile, a bold spirit and a love for Jesus. She is convinced Christ's second coming will happen soon, and she wants as many people as possible to be ready for that day.

Cowin and others in the prayer group "want to reach my school" for Christ, she said emphatically. Teachers and parents are not able to communicate the gospel in public schools, so "who's going to reach the students? Us. It's our responsibility to. It's my responsibility to reach the people around me.

"We're going to be the ones who God's going to look at in heaven and say, 'Why didn't you reach this person in your algebra class? Why didn't you talk to this person?' Not my parents. My parents aren't going to be responsible for the lives that I see every day."

Not only are the teen-agers praying, some are witnessing, sharing their faith with other students.

But the reach of the group extends beyond the school's walls. One of the participants has asked the group to pray that his parents will accept Christ as Savior, Cowin said. That request has been written down, awaiting the day when an answer will come.

Cowin has "always been a bold witness," said her mother, Karen. At Karrie's fifth birthday party, her parents discovered Karrie sharing the plan of salvation with her friends.

When she was 11, Karrie felt a call to missions. When her parents also felt that call and were appointed to serve in Brazil, the younger Cowin "wasn't just going along for the ride," she said.

Foreign service for Jerry, Karen and Karrie Cowin was cut short by a medical problem, and Jerry is now pastor of Suburban Baptist Church in Granite City.

In Brazil, "I was able to experience and view life in a totally different way," Karrie said. "I was feeding the hungry; they were coming to my door."

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Now back in the States, she sees "awesome opportunity" in her school. During Foreign Language Week, she spoke Portuguese over the intercom and prayed "a blessing upon the school," although probably no one else, including school administrators, knew about the prayer.

When Karrie first arrived at the school, she asked if there was a prayer group there. She was told about the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, which meets once every two weeks. "I'm by no means athletic," she said. But, "if there's a Christian group, it's my responsibility to support it, not divide it." So she attends.

Three weeks into the school year, two students asked her about having a prayer time before classes each day. The two didn't show up, but Karrie and three others did. And, with that, the daily prayer gathering began.

It grew to as many as 23 teens, all of them sitting on the floor. The school offered to let them meet in the cafeteria, but the group chose to stay in the hallway as a testimony to others. "We didn't want people to come and hide behind cafeteria walls."

Difficulties came, however, and the group dwindled to two -- Karrie and a friend, Laura.

"I was discouraged," Karrie recalled. She asked God, "What am I to do now?" She said God made it clear she was to focus on quality, not quantity, to "be committed, stick to it."

Karrie also looked at herself. "I can be very intimidating," she admitted. "Blunt" was another description of herself. But God helped her learn to be less so. She began to share responsibilities in the group. "This is not my prayer group . . . This is our group," she said.

Gradually, others began to join Karrie and Laura. Then two tragedies hit the school. A teacher died, as did the spouse of another teacher.

One morning a teacher whom Karrie did not know well walked past the group, then stopped, came back, knelt by Karrie and asked the students to pray for a need. "It really encouraged me," Karrie said.

"I wish we had a thousand more kids in our school like Karrie," said Steve Balin, superintendent of the Granite City school system. "Or I wish they were standing there at that locker . . . I wish I were standing there, too."

High school principal Dave Painter said the prayer group has presented no problems. "It definitely had to be student-led and interdenominational," he stated.

"We've had prayer groups over the last four or five years. They've come and they've gone. This is nothing that unusual."

But this group has lasted almost an entire school year and has survived discouragement.

Peer pressure against the group has been limited. Cowin hears an occasional comment from someone poking fun, but "people are always going to talk," she said.

Talking is something Karrie likes to do, especially to God.

"I love to talk and experience a conversation with God," she said. "I wake up talking to him, and I always go to sleep talking to him." And through the day, there's "just chit-chatting . . . He cares about the little things in life."

She has a 30-minute devotional in the morning and a 30-minute time for meditation in the evening. "I lay there and let him talk," she said of the meditation. "It's not that I hear this booming, loud voice . . . It's a lot of spirit talk. All of a sudden this peace can just fill in my soul, and I know that he's heard my prayer, and that he's going to take care of everything, and that he has a plan and purpose for my life."

Family also is an important part of Karrie's life. She is the youngest of five children and the only one still living at home.

On the mission field, she and her mother became very close while home schooling in preparation for their return to the States. Karrie said she talks to her mom about everything. The other day, the two had their "first argument." Dad refereed, and it ended in tears.

The family seldom watches television.' "We mostly sit around the table and talk," Mrs. Cowin said.

"We do a lot of family things," Karrie added. "Walking our dogs is an adventure." And, she noted, her parents "have never treated me as a little child. They've always respected my opinions."

As for the future, Karrie has sensed a call to ministry. She envisions service as a missionary doctor in Africa. But she realizes the coming years might reveal new insight into her calling. "My Africa may not be the continent," she said. But it will be "a place God has set aside where only I can go."

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Dallas-area church gives visiting
Clinton family a standing ovation By Orville Scott

Baptist Press
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DALLAS (BP)--While in Dallas for the wedding of his brother March 26, President Bill Clinton and his wife and daughter visited at First Baptist Church in Richardson, where they heard a message by his former pastor, Brian Harbour.

Harbour came to the Richardson church from Emmanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Ark., where he was pastor of then Arkansas Governor Clinton for four and a half years.

"He (Clinton) faithfully sang in the choir at Emmanuel, and Chelsea was brought up in our choir program. Hillary often came over to worship with us when she was not leading Bible study at the Methodist church," Harbour said.

When the presidential family arrived at First Baptist in Richardson for the 9:30 worship service, they shook hands with many of the members before entering the sanctuary to a spontaneous, standing ovation.

In his sermon, Harbour said, "The cross is the answer to the problems of mankind."

The problems of alienation, emptiness and despair can be overcome by remembering Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, providing the world peace and hope through God, Harbour said.

In the closing prayer, Mack Hampton, a deacon, asked for wisdom for the president and for safety in his travels.

Following the service, the Clintons and Harbours chatted for several minutes beside the presidential limousine.

"We talked mostly about personal matters, such as how our kids are progressing," said Harbour.

"The Clintons said they were impressed with our choir and how warmly they sang."

On Saturday, a member of the church's youth department, 15-year-old Stephen Nash, had called the Dallas hotel where the Clintons stayed and left a message with a presidential staff member inviting the family to church.

"I reminded them that Dr. Harbour was the Clinton's former pastor and told them I'd be glad to take Chelsea to Sunday school and show her around," Nash said.

Nash's brother, John Andrew, 12, wrote a note and handed it to the President. It said, "I appreciate your coming to my church and hope some day you'll come again."

Clinton thanked him warmly for his letter.

"It was an exciting day," said Harbour.

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