

(BP)

**SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
-- BAPTIST PRESS
Historical Commission, SBC
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention
Nashville, Tennessee**

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 Martin King, Chief, 1350 Spring St., N.W., Atlanta, Ga. 30367, Telephone (404) 898-7522, CompuServe 70420,250
DALLAS Thomas J. Brannon, Chief, 333 N. Washington, Dallas, Texas 75246-1798, Telephone (214) 828-5232, CompuServe 70420,115
NASHVILLE Linda Lawson, Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37234, Telephone (615) 251-2300, CompuServe 70420,57
RICHMOND Robert L. Stanley, Chief, 3806 Monument Ave., Richmond, Va. 23230, Telephone (804) 353-0151, CompuServe 70420,72
WASHINGTON Tom Strode, Chief, 400 North Capitol St., #594, Washington, D.C. 20001, Telephone (202) 638-3223, CompuServe 71173,316

October 25, 1995

95-170

NORTH CAROLINA--Copyright laws, publishers hold Bible hostage, prof says.
KENTUCKY--Temperance movement maintains its local, national vigilance.
KENTUCKY--Volunteers recount lessons from town's wet-dry vote.
KENTUCKY--Alcohol use costs: beyond \$100 billion.
ALABAMA--Alabama town addresses potential racial tensions.
IOWA--Iowa Baptists establish state Baptist convention.
COLORADO--Dinosaur church's stance keeps it from extinction.
LOUISIANA--Hungarian's Olympic efforts didn't fill spiritual void; photo.
KENTUCKY--Lectures address preaching in age of pervasive paganism.
KENTUCKY--Music dean urges balance of unbelievers' needs, wants.

Copyright laws, publishers
hold Bible hostage, prof says By Dwayne Hastings

Baptist Press
10/25/95

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP)--Recalling a practice common in the Middle Ages, a Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor said Oct. 24 the Bible has been chained to a new pulpit.

Maurice Robinson, professor of Old Testament at the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary, said the chains of copyright legislation have effectively restricted the distribution of Scripture.

The current copyright law, passed in 1978, negatively impacts the common good by extending a "reasonable" 56-year period of protection that had been the law since 1909, Robinson said during the school's Fall Faculty Lecture series.

Warning that Congress is considering legislation which would extend the term of a copyright even further, he explained the Copyright Law of 1978 stipulates a maximum protectable period as the life of the author plus 50 years.

"Any further extension will likely benefit the publishers rather than the original authors or their immediate heirs," Robinson said, calling on the Christian community to awaken and dispatch a strong cry to reclaim the biblical text from those "who have made it proprietary merchandise."

The charging of a license or royalty fee so that a consumer, book publisher or software programmer can use an "editorially restored" version of the Bible is "unethical and unconscionable," Robinson said, who declined to copyright his own 15 years of work in editing the Greek text of his work, "The Greek New Testament according to the Byzantine/Majority Textform."

Robinson, whose doctoral work was in textual criticism, said the majority of text in "so-called" modern English Bible translations is identical to the wording of the "older public domain versions." He said anyone familiar with contemporary English would be able to update the text nearly as well as those doing the modern translations.

Robinson noted the popular New King James Version (NKJV) and the New American Standard Bible (NASB) are simply modernizations of earlier public domain works.

"You will hear that the numerous editors and translators of both the NKJV and the NASB labored diligently and strenuously over a period of many years," Robinson said. "All this is well and good, but despite all the hoopla, the end result in either version is a product which the average English-speaking person with simple common sense could instantly create as he or she read from the original KJV or ASV."

To prove his point, Robinson said he had electronically compared the entire Greek New Testament text of the 1994 Nestle 27th edition against the 1881 Westcott-Hort Greek text, which is in the public domain. Out of 138,000 words, Robinson found only 300 that varied between the two texts, and even these differences "were known from previously published editions, critical apparatus or collations of the past century," he said.

Robinson said he has modernized a sample chapter from the 1901 edition of the American Standard Version and found his modern English was 96 percent identical with the wording of the NASB. "In the 4 percent where differences of rendering occurred, either my own or the NASB rendering could have been acceptable," he added.

Ample evidence, Robinson explained, that "in textual matters as elsewhere, there is nothing new under the sun."

Robinson said the issue boils down to money: "Licensing and royalty restrictions imposed upon the simple modernizations of those versions reflect a bold attempt to seize the rights to God's Word from his people and financially to restrict the free distribution of that word until the proper fee be paid," he charged in his faculty lecture.

God himself was the initial publisher long ago, Robinson said. "The Word of God is the peculiar possession of the people of God. It should not become the exclusive property of various publishers and license providers who dole out divine revelation for a fee."

He said Broadman & Holman, the publishing arm of the Southern Baptist Convention, must pay a 16 percent royalty to the Lockman Foundation for each copy of the NASB sold, thus raising the consumer's cost to purchase the Bible. The Lockman Foundation owns the copyright on the New American Standard Bible.

Admonishing publishing houses for encumbering the distribution of the Bible, Robinson said, "The Word of God in any form should be free to use with no restrictions or hindrances to hobble the user. License and royalty fees have become attached to the text of the Word of God primarily because publishers are more interested in the almighty dollar than they are in commitment to serving almighty God."

Robinson said publishers are entitled to make a profit on each copy they sell, yet he questioned the extent of their earnings off versions of the Bible which are in reality modern renditions of public domain translations. "The awful truth is that Bible publishing is a huge profit-making enterprise, and most publishers seek to enlarge their profits by every means available."

Targeting the International Bible Society among others, Robinson said while the production of New International Version (NIV) was funded by "the freewill gifts of God's people to the International Bible Society, the exclusive rights to the NIV were sold to the profit-oriented Zondervan corporation."

"The NIV text should have become freely available to God's people with no restriction or royalty fee attached," Robinson continued. Yet Zondervan "has imposed on publishers some of the most outrageous license and royalty restrictions that have ever been attached to a translation."

"When Bible publishers can demand \$10,000 royalty fees for a license to utilize a contemporary translation, something is clearly amiss," Robinson mused.

He also took aim at the Christian music industry, berating Christian composers who "ostensibly write their music for the glory of God but demand copyright-based ransom fees from our churches, whether by CCLI or other licensing arrangements."

"The songwriters and musicians themselves had best sort out their priorities and decide whether their music is written freely and dedicated to the glory of God or whether money is the ultimate object."

Robinson proposed creating a team of scholars to fashion a public domain equivalent of the NKJV or NASB from the original source works, the KJV and the ASV. He indicated a willingness to head up such an effort to produce a non-copyrighted work.

He praised those who might release their work without anticipation of large profits, saying "such a quality is sadly lacking among the commercial Bible publishers and even within the Bible societies."

"These groups have a common desire to make merchandise out of the Word of God," Robinson concluded, "and this is nothing more than the deceitful handling of the Word."

--30--

Temperance movement maintains
its local, national vigilance

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press
10/25/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--When voters in Elizabethtown, Ky., turned back a recent effort to legalize liquor sales, it marked Claude Witt's sixth victory in seven tries during the 1990s.

The Kentucky Temperance League executive director was nowhere near the voting booth Oct. 3 in Elizabethtown, located 45 miles south of Louisville. Yet he helped map out organization and strategy for the volunteer force that convinced 59 percent of the voters to keep the city dry.

Arguing about liquor sales might seem a moot issue more than 60 years after Congress repealed Prohibition. Not to Witt, program chairman for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and a member of Louisville's Farmdale Baptist Church.

"I don't think it's been lost," he said of the temperance movement's campaign to turn Americans away from the bottle. "Every time I'm successful in winning a wet-dry vote, I've won a victory for the Lord.

"I don't know how many people would lose their lives, families or jobs if a community goes wet. In Elizabethtown, there could have been 34 package stores. I know from past battles that the town would have needed increased jail space and police, and seen more court cases and emergency room visits."

That is a message spread nationwide by a federation of 36 state temperance organizations and 22 denominations in the American Council on Alcohol Problems (ACAP). It has century-old roots in the Temperance and Anti-Saloon leagues, the male counterparts to the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU).

Based in St. Louis, Mo., ACAP has strong Southern Baptist involvement; 19 of the 36 statewide temperance organizations are headed by Southern Baptist pastors, for example.

"Prohibition wasn't a failure," said Curt Scarborough, ACAP's executive director since 1987 and president of the Christian Civic Foundation (CCF), which fights booze in Missouri. He cited statistics showing per-capita alcohol consumption dropped from 2.6 gallons the year before Prohibition began to about half a gallon in the midst of the 12-year-long dry period.

"The consumption rate and crime rate went down drastically," Scarborough said. "The reality of what happened and how it's been portrayed are two different things because of the number the media has done on us. Diseases like cirrhosis of the liver and the numbers of people in prison and mental hospitals all went down."

A member of suburban First Baptist Church of O'Fallon, Scarborough was a pastor in three states over a 20-year period before joining the temperance movement in 1975. He got involved through writing curriculum, with education remaining one of ACAP'S primary thrusts.

--more--

Since approximately 80 percent of the American public uses alcohol, temperance groups don't advocate a return to Prohibition. Instead, they stress abstinence as the best lifestyle, Scarborough said, while working on legislative remedies to reduce public outlets for beer, wine and liquor.

Among its victories are restoration of the drinking age nationally to 21, the 1993 increase in federal excise taxes on beer and wine and passage of legislation mandating warning labels on alcohol packaging, the ACAP leader said.

The federation is now pushing to restrict television advertising aimed at underage drinkers, a fight Scarborough said can be won. At heart, though, he would like to see beer and wine ads go the way of cigarette advertising, which were banned from the airwaves 25 years ago.

The group also supports decreasing the blood-alcohol levels that constitute drunk driving. While most states use between .08 and .10 percent content, ACAP argues it should be lowered to .04.

That could be done federally by withholding highway funding, the method used to raise the drinking age, Scarborough said. But he sees that as unlikely because of the current political trend towards states' rights.

The group also works to enlist and unite churches in opposing liquor. Approximately 60 temperance and denominational leaders -- including Richard Land, executive director of the Christian Life Commission -- met in St. Louis in September for its summit on alcohol problems.

The group drafted a statement which warned that alcohol is a potentially addicting drug, is a significant factor in social disruption and is a major cause of premature death, disease and injury. It also outlined a four-point plan of cooperation calling for churches to:

- reach out to bring hope to alcoholics and families which are dysfunctional because of alcohol problems.

- launch educational programs for all ages to warn of alcohol's dangers and help counteract the social pressures which glamorize its use.

- support increased controls on advertising, lowering of blood-alcohol levels for drunk driving and higher taxes to cover the economic social costs caused by consumption.

- advocate an alcohol-free lifestyle for their members.

Despite ACAP's status as a clearinghouse for national legislative and educational efforts, Scarborough said the primary opportunity to publicize its work via the news media comes during tragedies. An alcohol-related Kentucky car-bus crash in 1988 that claimed 27 lives is one example, he said. Ironically, many of the victims lived in Elizabethtown or surrounding Hardin County.

"That's the best time, when we can lay something at the feet of the alcohol industry that's too big to be ignored," he said. "In my state and city it's nearly impossible to get anything into the local press. That's the reason much of what we do is through the Christian community, pastors and the Christian press."

Still, wet-dry battles in localities across the country are best carried out by statewide temperance councils and local churches, Scarborough said.

For Witt, that means a never-ending string of such votes in Kentucky, where 75 of the state's 120 counties are dry. Another 30 percent are termed "moist," where the county is dry but a city within the county allows liquor sales, he said.

Less than two weeks after Elizabethtown voted, a woman in Danville, Ky., declared her intent to form a petition drive to legalize liquor there, Witt said. In addition, another town council in the state is rumored to be considering legalizing sales.

Witt contended it is best for those communities to stay dry, as Elizabethtown has for the past 53 years. Residents there voted to oust alcohol in 1942, nine years after Congress lifted the constitutional ban. He said town residents reacted to widespread disorderly conduct, drunken fights and stabbings that accompanied the return of liquor.

"The rosy picture the industry tries to paint of alcohol is a myth," said Witt, whose father and uncle died in accidents caused by drunk drivers.

--30--

Volunteers recount lessons
from town's wet-dry vote

By Ken Walker

Baptist Press
10/25/95

ELIZABETHTOWN, Ky. (BP)--After fighting successfully to keep the seat of Kentucky's Hardin County dry, participants in the all-volunteer effort say those who face similar measures in their own city or county should be prepared for a nasty fight.

The best approach for abstinence advocates is sticking to safety issues and facts about the damage caused by alcohol abuse, advised the volunteer coordinator for Elizabethtown's steering committee.

"The newspaper and everyone who wrote letters (to the editor) kept referring to church people trying to dominate people's thinking," said Roy Keith, a member of Severns Valley Baptist Church. "In today's world, the less 'churchy' a campaign the better."

Local committees can obtain assistance from their state's temperance group, such as the assistance provided to citizens by the Kentucky Temperance League. Director Claude Witt met several times with the ministerial association and citizens last summer.

Though he counseled them on precinct organization and how to obtain information from state agencies, and provided a list of registered voters, Witt said Elizabethtown's people were responsible for the campaign's success.

"We try to make it as local as it can be," Witt said. "We don't want (opponents) saying someone from outside spearheaded this. Once we help groups get going, we fade into the woodwork."

After meeting with Witt, an ad-hoc citizens' group sponsored a rally at Severns Valley Baptist and formed KIDS -- Keep It Dry and Sale-free. To guide the organization, they selected a six-member steering committee of three pastors and three lay members. (Besides Keith, the other Southern Baptist on that committee was prayer coordinator Rick Trumbo, a member of Berean Baptist.)

Keith said 400 persons volunteered at the rally and nearly all played some kind of role. A telephone committee contacted 70 percent of 12,000 registered voters, another erected 1,500 "vote no" signs and one group led a drive that gained a 2-1 dry edge among absentee voters. On election day, the transportation committee shuttled more than 100 voters to the polls.

During the campaign, KIDS also supplied the public with information about the dangers of alcohol. For example, it cited Hardin County's accident rate, the state's lowest for counties over 50,000 population. Neighboring wet counties' accident rates range from 31 to 260 percent higher, said Johnny Melloan, an advertising executive who directed KIDS' publicity campaign.

However, he added, despite efforts to stress safety issues and avoid religious and moral grounds, opponents routinely distorted their positions.

"It's not a very nice thing," said Melloan, a Christian Church member. "In many instances, when we put out documented facts, the newspaper attacked it like it was the most misleading thing we could do. "The main thing I learned is when there's dollars involved, people will say and do anything. We were attacked in the media in ways you see happen nationally. I didn't think it would happen in a nice, conservative, Mayberry-oriented type town."

The emotional flare-ups included a split in the ministerial association. The Louisville Courier-Journal reported that a minister supporting a dry vote compared moderate drinking to "moderate fornication and stealing" and someone who serves wine to an abortion doctor.

That resulted in the formation of a watchdog group of ministers. While not advocating a wet vote, they complained the dry forces were putting out misleading information about problems in a wet community, the newspaper reported.

--more--

However, a member of the "moderates" refused to comment further to Baptist Press, saying, "I don't want to dredge up old issues. The people made their decision."

The controversy led Witt to point out the importance of sticking to issues and avoiding personality attacks in a wet-dry election.

"We always attempt to get the point across that people shouldn't make statements that are going to divide the community by pointing fingers at individuals," he said. "They need to educate people about the drug itself."

--30--

Alcohol use costs:
beyond \$100 billion

Baptist Press
10/25/95

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)--The cost of alcohol use in America is staggering. Consider:

-- The aftermath of alcohol use cost the United States more than \$100 billion in 1994, or \$404 for every man, woman and child. (Source: National Clearinghouse for Drug & Alcohol Information, Rockville, Md.)

-- Alcohol is the greatest factor in contributing to crime, with police, judges and prosecutors saying it is involved in at least 80 percent of crimes. (Source: Louisville Courier-Journal.)

-- Alcohol is responsible for 68 percent of manslaughters, 54 percent of murders and 48 percent of robberies. (Source: National Clearinghouse.)

-- Each month, as many as 500,000 persons are victims of alcohol-related crime. (Source: Courier-Journal.)

-- Violent crimes committed by people under the influence of alcohol has dramatic annual costs, including \$2 billion in medical care, \$8 billion in lost earnings and other costs and \$48 billion in pain, suffering and lost quality of life. (Source: National Commission Against Drunk Driving.)

-- Every dollar spent treating alcoholics saves \$11 in costs associated with drinking. (Source: Courier-Journal.)

-- During 1993 in Kentucky, alcohol was involved in 30 percent of traffic fatalities. (Source: Kentucky Accidents Facts 1993.)

--30--

Information provided by Temperance League of Kentucky.

Alabama town addresses
potential racial tensions

By Rebecca Day

Baptist Press
10/25/95

ELBA, Ala. (BP)--Like many other towns where blacks and whites live and work together, Elba, Ala., has experienced a few incidents of racially motivated crime.

When Maxwell Hooks was chief of police, he determined to do something to lessen the chance of future problems.

"We had a few isolated incidents, but that's how big things get started," said Hooks, an African American who recently became director of safety and security for Dorsey Trailers in Elba. "We are trying to put an end to it before we have a full-blown situation."

Hooks took steps several months ago to bring ministers together to discuss his growing concern about racial tension in the Elba community. Several church and community leaders, both white and black, were present at the first meeting.

"There's no sense in us all sitting around here waiting for something to happen," Hooks told the ministers. "We need to do something to prevent it."

Mart Gray, minister of music and youth at First Baptist Church, Elba, recounted, "It became apparent in the meeting that, though we knew each other's faces and names, we knew little of what each other really had on their heart concerning racial issues."

--more--

The group met several times and decided their first step to bring Elba's churches together should be hosting a community service, which was well attended from both the white and black communities, Gray said.

The success of the efforts prompted Gray and minister Keith Ellison of Harris Temple Church of God in Christ to plan a joint event for their churches, with First Baptist hosting Harris Temple for a barbecue supper. After the supper, the Alabama Mass Choir, a statewide group directed by Ellison, presented a concert in the sanctuary, which was filled to capacity.

And the efforts continue. A new ministerial association has been started in Elba with ministers from both black and white churches, and a community Thanksgiving service has been planned for the Sunday before the holiday, Gray said.

The ministers are planning other events as well. "We want to bring small groups together and get to the heart of the issues," Gray said of plans for community focus groups and forums to improve race relations.

"The real work of bringing about change in our community is yet to be done," Gray said.

"We know a warm, fuzzy feeling won't solve the deep-seated racial problems that have existed for years in our community, in society, but we feel we have taken a step in the right direction. We have at least brought together those who already know the common bond of Christ and challenged them to lead the way in bringing about a brighter tomorrow."

--30--

Day is a writer for The Alabama Baptist newsjournal.

Iowa Baptists establish
state Baptist convention

By Trennis Henderson

Baptist Press
10/25/95

WINTERSSET, Iowa (BP)--Declaring that "Our Time Has Come," Iowa Baptists officially organized the Baptist Convention of Iowa during their annual meeting Oct. 20-21 at First Baptist Church of Winterset.

More than 300 messengers and guests gathered for the historic event at the same church where the Iowa Southern Baptist Fellowship was established in 1972. Southern Baptist work began in Iowa in 1954 with the establishment of Fairview Baptist Church near Anamosa. Since then, Iowa Baptist work has grown to include 12,000 members in 103 churches and missions.

"We believe this is not just our time, but it is God's time," emphasized fellowship president Ed Gregory, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church, Cedar Rapids. "God is continuing to do his mighty work here in the state of Iowa."

In a display of harmony which permeated the two-day celebration, Gregory was unanimously elected president of the new state convention. All other officers also were elected unanimously, including John Shaul, pastor of the host church, as convention first vice president, and recording secretary Jonette Appleton, re-elected as recording secretary. Lonney Hulsey, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Glenwood, was elected to the newly created position of second vice president.

Preaching from 1 Samuel 7:1-17 in his president's address, Gregory said, "We come to set in place a milestone, a marker on our spiritual journey as God's people in Iowa In the fullness of his time, God has brought us here today and because he has brought us here, we are here to stay."

Noting that the children of Israel experienced both physical and spiritual victories under God's leadership, Gregory said, "We, too, must never forget that the real key to our past, our present and our future is not just our knowledge of who God is, but our relationship to him."

Challenging Iowa Baptists to "accept the challenges and responsibilities of the future," he added, "We have just begun to reach Iowa for Christ."

In addition to Iowa Baptist leaders, program personnel included representatives from the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board, Annuity Board and Baptist Sunday School Board.

--more--

Arkansas Baptist Executive Director Don Moore and Missouri Baptist Executive Director Don Wideman shared greetings from the two conventions which have been influential in helping establish new churches in Iowa. The churches in Iowa organized in 1965 as an association affiliated with the Missouri Baptist Convention and Missouri Baptists continue to work closely with Iowa churches. The Arkansas convention entered a missions partnership with Iowa Baptists in 1992. A proposal to extend the partnership through 2001 was approved by Iowa messengers and will be voted on next week by Arkansas messengers.

Affirming that Iowa Baptists' success "just lifts your vision of what believers can do when they work together," Moore added, "I'm real glad Arkansas Baptists can say they have had a part in it." He said Arkansas Baptist volunteers have conducted 43 missions projects in 42 Iowa Baptist churches during the past four years.

Wideman described Iowa Baptists' move to convention status as "a growth step, a passage and a mark of maturity." He urged church members to continue to expand their ministry because "the people here deserve to hear the gospel and to know the Lord."

In addition to organizing as a convention, Iowa Baptist messengers adopted a new constitution and mission statement, outlined convention priorities through the year 2001 and approved a 1996 budget goal of \$1,077,973.

The mission statement declares that "the Baptist Convention of Iowa shall exist under the Lordship of Jesus Christ to assist and encourage local congregations in the fulfillment of their biblical mission, and to promote fellowship and cooperation among them."

Priority goals for the next five years focus on prayer and worship, discipleship and stewardship, evangelism and church starting, and ministry and fellowship. The priorities also include a commitment to "attempt to share the gospel with every person in Iowa and include him/her in a New Testament church."

Primary income for the 1996 budget includes \$633,387 from the Home Mission Board and \$341,343 from Cooperative Program gifts. The budget calls for 22 percent of the state's CP receipts, a half percent increase over last year, to be channeled through the national CP.

Wyndell Jones, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Iowa, delivered the meeting's closing message. Preaching from Esther 4:14, Jones emphasized, "This is our turning point in the history of God's people called Southern Baptists in Iowa We must move together as an army of God."

Jones challenged Iowa Baptists to reach the unreached people in the state, "call out the called" and become a missionary-sending state.

"We need to think of ourselves as God's people on mission in Iowa," he said, urging participants to "pay the price in prayer that God's will may be our greatest priority.

"Our time has come to be a light in Iowa and to the world," he concluded.

Iowa Baptists also heard words of challenge and encouragement from:

-- Morris Chapman, SBC Executive Committee president: "You've come here by faith and by faith you'll continue to fulfill the Great Commission Faith, put simply, is finding God's way."

-- Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president: "God is doing a mighty work all across America. If you're anxious to be of benefit to the gospel and reap great harvests, now is the time God is saying, 'I sent you not to raise budgets and build buildings, but to reap.'"

-- Paul Powell, Annuity Board president: "Until we weep over our cities like Jesus did, we will never reach our cities or our state or our nation for our Lord."

Next year's convention meeting will be Nov. 1-2 at Crestwood Baptist Church, Des Moines.

**Dinosaur church's stance
keeps it from extinction**

By Clay Renick

DINOSAUR, Colo. (BP)--It was a moral stand-off in a one-church town. But the pastor was a fighter pilot with a commitment to do right.

"We took a stand," said Homer Pattison. "We really felt that's what the Lord wanted us to do."

The former Air Force pilot and his wife, Alma, came to Dinosaur Baptist Church back in 1991. Dinosaur is in the northwest corner of Colorado near the Utah border. The nearest large city is Grand Junction, 100 miles to the south.

The area is rich in shale oil. And exploration boosted the population in the early 1980s. But it was too expensive to recover.

Dinosaur had 340 people when Pattison arrived. And Sunday morning services averaged 50 people. That's when the moral stand-off occurred.

Some of the local people wanted gambling. They joined 70 other sites around the state in a petition for ballot approval. Pattison fought the move.

Voters defeated the pro-gambling initiative in a statewide ballot.

Then Pattison noticed a compromise in several of his church members. Two were living together but not married. Pattison approached them to explain the Bible's view.

They refused to change. Pattison returned with another church member.

"It became clear to them that we were going to pursue the next step and bring it before the church," he explained.

The couple withdrew their membership. Others stopped going to church. The attendance dropped to 13 in Sunday school and 14 in worship services.

"We did a lot of praying about it," he said, noting he and his wife "felt like the Lord wasn't through with us here yet."

They decided to switch times for the Bible school and work with the children on Tuesday afternoons. The adult class moved to Wednesday nights. In three months the attendance climbed to 48.

They also had 22 new members to join. Eight were through baptism.

"The Lord did it," Pattison said. "We just made ourselves available."

It even affected the couple who lived together. They decided to get married and are back in church.

Growth continues for the congregation despite the town's namesake.

"Love 'em, but stand for what God stand for," said Pattison. "That's a victory."

--30--

**Hungarian's Olympic efforts
didn't fill spiritual void**

By K. Michele Trice

**Baptist Press
10/25/95**

PINEVILLE, La. (BP)--Karoly "Karcsi" Schupkegel, ranked third in the world on the pommel horse in 1993, spent the afternoon of Oct. 20 on Louisiana College's campus sharing his testimony and demonstrating some of the finesse that has made him an Olympic gymnast.

Schupkegel, a Romanian born to Hungarian parents, is in the United States on a religious visa, speaking to college and high school students about his gymnastic career and about the conversion experience that changed his life.

He began in gymnastics at age 6, after being "discovered" while climbing trees in his yard in Romania. "I was climbing trees, so I could have a better view," he said, "and this old man called to me and asked me to come down.

"He was a former gym coach and asked me if I would be interested in gymnastics," Schupkegel recounted. After taking the stranger home to meet his parents, it was decided he would indeed be given the opportunity to participate in gymnastics.

--more--

"My father was himself a weight lifter and envisioned that for me," Schupkegel said. "He thought that this would be good for a few years to begin me on some weight training."

His father would never see his son compete as a weight lifter, but the world would eventually see Schupkegel compete as a gymnast.

"Gymnastics matched my character. It was the right thing for me at the right time," said Schupkegel, now of Hungary. "I give all glory to God for that. I was blessed with the ability, and he watched over me."

God was not the one receiving the glory in Schupkegel's life, however. Under great strain from his status in the gymnastic world and his contract with the gymnastic "club" he worked for, Schupkegel joined other athletes as they sought to escape the pressures in alcohol and other vices.

"I was an alcoholic by the time I was 16 or 17," he said. "I was in very bad shape mentally, and I was struggling with my life. I had reached a point of immorality that even the heathens wanted nothing to do with me."

One evening after practice, a friend came to him and told him he could see that Schupkegel was searching and was struggling. That friend led Schupkegel to the Lord that evening as he shared with him the way Jesus had come into his own life and the difference that had made.

"I prayed a simple prayer, 'God, if you are a reality, come into my life and change me. I have tried to change myself, and I cannot do it.'"

And his life changed. "I felt like all the angels stood up in heaven and honored that prayer, like the Father and Jesus said, 'Here is our son, he comes home.'"

At the time, he was living in a communist country, and to be a Christian was seen as a crime against society. The country was very "man-worship centered" and in a state of chaos. It was not like it is in the United States, with a church on every corner, he said.

In 1993, after being ranked third in the world on the pommel horse, Schupkegel quit gymnastics to pursue full-time ministry. "I felt the Lord telling me it was about time, but I couldn't understand why because my career was ascending. There were those people who were disappointed about my decision, but I obeyed the Lord's call to be a servant, and I have been very satisfied in that."

When he returns to Hungary after this visit to the United States, he will be applying for a visa that would allow him to return to the United States to attend school. At this point, he is considering Louisiana College, upon the recommendation of his soon-to-be mother-in-law, Shirley LeBlanc of Alexandria.

He met his future bride, Michelle, when she visited Hungary with her family several years ago. "I had met her dad first and had a tremendous fellowship with him," he said. "The Lord spoke to both of us, and we feel confident that our decisions are in the Lord."

A man who has known the fame and personal glory of competing in the Olympics in Barcelona with the Hungarian team -- "I always think of how all nations came together for that one event and how God can use that," he recalled -- has dedicated his life to spreading the Word of God through his testimony.

"I think there is something so powerful in the testimony of God. This generation has a theology of God, but very few people have a real experience of his power and love."

--30--

Trice is associate director of Louisiana College's office of public relations. (BP) photo available from the office.

Lectures address preaching
in age of pervasive paganism

Baptist Press
10/25/95

PINEVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Today's preachers proclaim their message in a society where pervasive "paganism" challenges the truth of the gospel, according to the editor of an evangelical journal for preachers.

--more--

"Our culture has changed. As preachers of the gospel, we can ignore that reality and continue to do battle with yesterday's methods," said Michael Duduit, editor of Preaching magazine, speaking at Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, Ky. "Or we can recognize the changing environment and adapt our methods accordingly."

The paganism in today's culture involves the actual revival of the religions of the ancient Greco-Roman world, he said.

Duduit, who also is an adjunct professor of preaching at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., delivered the James Berry Lectures, Oct. 2-5, at the college.

Duduit noted that paganism also functions under a more common term in modern society -- New Age. New Age groups typically stress mystical experience, out-of-body experiences and astrology, he said. In addition, Duduit said, an increasing number of Americans are interested in witchcraft, known in New Age circles as wicca.

"A characteristic of contemporary paganism -- which corresponds to ancient paganism, is the attitude that all religions or belief systems are equally valid, with no single, 'revealed' truth that is appropriate for all," Duduit said.

The greatest danger paganism poses to the church is not that massive numbers of Christians will leave the church and become active followers of a pagan religion, Duduit said. "The far greater danger is that a majority of Americans -- both in and outside the church -- will adopt attitudes and philosophies shared and shaped by contemporary paganism."

Duduit emphasized that the apostle Paul confronted paganism in his culture by finding "points of contact with which he could relate the gospel to them." Today's preachers, he maintained, should, like Paul, understand their identity as missionaries. "We preach to people whose attitudes are shaped by a pagan culture -- through public education, through media -- and we must recognize that fact even as we act to counter its influence," Duduit said.

He suggested four "keys" to help those "preaching in a pagan society":

-- Be relevant. Preachers must use language that is contemporary and understandable to their listeners. They should also emphasize practical application of Scripture.

-- Be energizing. Preachers need to take a lesson from the preaching of Jesus and use strong contemporary illustrations. A conversational style of delivery is helpful as is varied vocal inflection and body movement. Preachers must also be good stewards of their time in the pulpit.

-- Be positive. People in today's culture are hungry for good news. While effective preachers will not ignore biblical truths about sin, salvation and judgment, they should approach these issues with a word of hope.

-- Be challenging. While many people in a pagan culture will reject the claims of the gospel, others will discover they need the gospel to fill their spiritual hunger. Preachers should not back away from proclaiming the demands of Christ.

--30--

Music dean urges balance
of unbelievers' needs, wants

By Pat Cole

Baptist Press
10/25/95

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP)--Churches must not allow "seeker sensitive" methods to overshadow the gospel's high demands on Christ's followers, said worship specialist Harold M. Best.

Churches have attempted to communicate the gospel in culturally relevant ways throughout the history of Christianity, said Best, dean of the Conservatory of Music at Wheaton (Ill.) College, in an address at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Yet he said that biblically based seeker sensitivity must balance both the wants and needs of unconverted people or risk compromising the gospel message.

--more--

"If there is no tension, no dissonance, seeker sensitivity -- classical, popular, liturgical, charismatic or convergent -- collapses into the most pragmatic and faceless kind of market research," stressed Best, who delivered the Hugh T. McElrath Lectures in October at the Louisville, Ky., school.

Best noted that many attempt to limit the term seeker sensitive to those who follow the user-friendly trends of contemporary churches. "This is a shame," he said, "because seeker sensitivity can be as transforming as Pentecost itself, as varied as cultures in all their variegation."

During his lectures, Best emphasized Scripture teaches God initiates seeking. "There is one primary seeker and an army of commissioned or delegated seekers," he explained. "The primary seeker is God. The delegated seekers, the ambassadors, are those whose primary task it is to show ambassadorially that God is a reconciling, pursuing, uncompromising, loving Redeemer."

Christians, Best said, should be "sensitive seekers" who imitate Jesus' example of speaking the truth without compromise. Christ's extension of "gracious welcomes" should not be seen as standing by themselves, he said. "Jesus seemed often to create a culture of dislodgment, puzzlement, mystification and mystery. It is clear that he proceeded this way in order to remain true to the truth, to be sure that its unchanging nucleus was not softened or obscured by a fallen reading of what culture is and what it expects."

Sensitive seekers will proclaim a message that cannot extend welcome "without offending, convicting and sometimes estranging," Best maintained. "A biblically sensitive seeker, while aware of the need to communicate clearly and love unconditionally, need not succumb to the seeker's way of defining how these truths are to be communicated. In our seeking, we must comport ourselves the way Christ did."

HOUSE MAIL

(BP)

BAPTIST PRESS
901 Commerce #750
Nashville, TN 37234

F
I
R
S
T

C
L
A
S
S

Southern Baptist Library
and Archives