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## Focus on Tidbits

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### Troubles in Baptist Land

Should seminary professors be required to support the tenets of their faith? The question troubles some moderate Baptists, who historically have shown a strong bias against creeds. But Southern Baptist Convention president James Merritt believes that requiring seminary professors to agree with the tenets of their faith is not creedalism.

“Since the seminaries were founded,” he says, “professors have had to sign an abstract of principles stating the theological parameters within which they must teach.

“It only stands to reason that any professor teaching in a Baptist school should be willing to fully support that Baptist denomination’s confession of faith,” Merritt says. “So that does not in any sense make it a creed. It just means that we are holding those people who work in the seminaries accountable for what they teach.”

Merritt believes the integrity of the denomination is at stake in the current controversy. “They [the moderates] are upset over what they’ve been upset over for the last 20 years. We have turned our denomination away from theological liberalism—and in fact [we] had theological liberals teaching in our

seminaries—to a denomination [that] has returned to its biblical roots of believing the Bible is the total, inerrant word of God. That’s the real issue.”

Moderates, the term they prefer, testify to their affection for the Bible. But, says one, “there are 14 different definitions of inerrancy.”

Merritt says that the moderates “need to understand up front that there are certain non-negotiables, and I can tell you that the Baptist Faith and Message as it stands is a non-negotiable.”—Quoted in *Christianity Today*, Dec. 4, 2000.

### A No-Brainer

In your house, who do you think is the better listener?—husband or wife? A new study reveals that men and women do listen differently. Men use only half their brains!

Joseph T. Lurito and colleagues of the Indiana School of Medicine in Indianapolis conducted brain scans on 10 men and 10 women while they listened to portions of a novel.

Most of the men showed activity exclusively in the part of their left brain known as the temporal lobe, which is associated with listening and speech. In contrast, most of the women showed activity in the temporal lobe on both sides of their brains.

An anonymous male listener explained that he doesn't need more than half his brain to listen to his wife. She, on the other hand, says that her husband tunes out anything that is more profound than the strategy of a football game.

### Perceptive Perspective

A recent *Christianity Today* published the two major views on punishment of the wicked: Sinners burn forever, sinners burn up. Beatrice S. Neal, professor emeritus of Union College in Lincoln, Nebraska, responded perceptively in a subsequent issue: "Jesus took upon Himself the punishment for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2). Though the punishment he suffered was infinite in quality, it was finite in duration—a matter of hours. If it took a limited time to punish the sins of the whole world, how much time would it take to punish a single individual?"

### Dealing With Darkness

God did not deal with darkness by cursing it, outlawing it, or even by ignoring it, but by creating light! We're slow in learning that, aren't

we! We try to deal with the darkness by retaliation, punishment, military action, legislation, demonstrations. Jesus said to light a candle. Only light will banish darkness.—Felix A. Lorenz, Jr. in the Dearborn Christian church, Dearborn, Michigan.

### The Most Beautiful Picture

An inner-city woman of the street was dying of AIDS. A minister sat by her bed, trying to comfort her, but she broke down crying. "I've made a mess of my life. There is no hope for me. I deserve hell because I ruined my life and many others also."

The minister saw a picture on the dresser. "Who is that?"

"That's my daughter, the one beautiful thing in my life."

"What would you do if your daughter made the same mistakes you have made? What if she asked you to forgive her. Would you?"

"Yes, of course I would. I told you she is the one beautiful thing in my life. There is nothing I wouldn't do for her. Why do you ask a question like that?"

"Because I want you to know God has your picture on His dresser."

