



# AND SO IT GOES



By Paul S. Williams

## Evangelical?

**W**e've devoted a fair amount of attention this issue to *Evangelicalism and the Stone-Campbell Movement*, a book edited by William R. Baker. The book asks, "Are we evangelicals?" To which I am inclined to ask, "Why should I care?"

I am busy searching for a senior minister for a new church in Manhattan, trying to do my part to make sure our church-planting organization, GYCM, stays in the black, and generally running around frantically each and every day, just like you are. I have more pressing things to do than ruminate over whether or not I am an evangelical.

But let's ask a couple more questions. What if, by calling myself an evangelical, I am cutting myself off from a part of the family, creating unnecessary boundaries? What if it causes me to end conversations before they ever really begin? There was a time when this movement of churches focused great energy on unity. Then we thought we'd gotten a corner on truth, and unity was all but forgotten. And now, if we're going to unite with anybody, it seems easier to hang out with the evangelical crowd. After all, we're already following

their business models and joining their associations. But do we lose something in the process?

I wear several hats. I direct a church-planting organization, serve as editor-at-large of *CHRISTIAN STANDARD*, and work a few weeks a year as an on-air host with *Worship*, the overnight programming on your local PAX-TV station. *Worship* features scenes of nature and soothing music and, three times each half-hour, a host tells a story. Most of our hosts are Christian church ministers.

We are careful with our scripts. Even though our programming is on in the middle of the night, our *Worship* audience is pretty large and varied. We don't want to sound like funda-

mentalists, or evangelicals, or Catholics, or mainline Protestants. We just want to sound like Christians. We want to draw as large an audience as possible to hear the story of Christ, to be drawn into that story, and to seek out His community. And we find it easier to accomplish all of that if we simply try to be "Christian." But then I guess that's what you might expect from a group nurtured by the principles of the Stone-Campbell Movement.

Does calling oneself an evangelical end conversations before they ever really begin?

## Seen & Heard

Compiled by S. J. Dahlman

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has **suspended 27 gene-therapy studies** while it investigates the case of a French toddler. The toddler was cured of a deadly immune deficiency known as the "bubble boy disease" by gene therapy, but has developed an apparent leukemia-like side effect. It is the second time in three months that health officials interrupted studies because of the side effect.

—Associated Press

Israeli geologists are examining a stone tablet describing repair plans for

King Solomon's temple. The origin of the stone is unclear, making authentication difficult. The tablet, about the size of a legal pad, contains a 15-line ancient Hebrew inscription that resembles verses from 2 Kings 12. If verified, **the tablet could strengthen Israeli claims** to a disputed site in Jerusalem's Old City where two major mosques stand. Muslim clerics insist that no Jewish shrine ever stood on the site.

—Associated Press

**More Americans give to religious organizations than to any**

**other cause**, regardless of household income. Thirty-five percent of Americans with an income of under \$45,000 give to religious causes, more than three times the percentage that give to health-related groups and private foundations, the next highest categories. Just over half the Americans with incomes more than \$100,000 give to religious organizations, almost twice the percentage of the next most popular categories, educational and health-related institutions.

—Simmons Market Research, reported in *American Demographics*, December 2002–January 2003