



WESTERN RECORDER

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FOR THE RECORD

SBC preview

Most of this week's Recorder is devoted to advance coverage of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta June 20-22:

■ Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis has opposed the proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention. See page 2.

■ Editorial: Reorganization should be considered piece by piece. See page 5.

■ Highlights of convention schedule. See page 6.

■ Commentary: Does WMU have a place? See page 6.

■ Reorganization plan shows no price tag. See page 8.

■ State foundations question a proposal to eliminate the Southern Baptist Convention Foundation. See page 9.

■ Proposed resolutions on repentance for racism are gaining momentum in advance of the SBC annual meeting. See page 9.

■ Ethnic and language missions leaders met with two representatives of the Program and Structure Study Committee last week. See page 10.



UNITED FRONT About 80,000 South Korean students made public commitments to missions May 20 during a massive student missions conference in Seoul. The students pledged to pursue some form of overseas missions or serve as part of a corps of volunteers who will move quickly into North Korea if there is unification of the two nations. The students marched forward to make their commitments during a rainy service in Olympic Stadium. Thousands stayed in the rain for more than an hour after the service ended to pray with a great outpouring of emotion. (BP photo by Don Martin) See story on page 12.

Questions loom about plans to merge agencies

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

ATLANTA—The day he learned of the proposed restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis immediately thought about the new \$20 million office building his agency was constructing in suburban Atlanta.

Lewis asked his staff: How could a building designed to accommodate 350 HMB employees be modified to house the new North American Mission Board, to be created by merging the HMB and two other agencies?

That question still looms as HMB staffers prepare to move into the 184,000-square-foot facility June 9.

And it is symbolic of a larger question Lewis and other SBC executives have been asking ever since the restructuring plan was unveiled in February: Is it wise—or even possible—for the HMB, Brotherhood Commission and Radio & Television Commission to be rolled into one agency based in Atlanta?

The SBC's Program and Structure Study Committee last week. See page 10.

Moving? See page 4 (6606)

Reorganization will highlight SBC business

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

ATLANTA—A proposal for denominational reorganization is expected to highlight business sessions at this year's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In the apparent absence of a contested presidential election, the only other business action likely to take prominence is a proposed resolution on repentance for racism. Current SBC President Jim Henry of Orlando, Fla., is eligible for re-election and is the only announced candidate for the post this year.

Throughout the June 20-22 meeting in Atlanta's Georgia Dome, a projected crowd of 25,000 messengers will celebrate the SBC's sesquicentennial.

They also will hear a variety of reports and inspirational messages. Evangelist Billy Graham will deliver the convention's closing message.

But convention observers predict debate on the reorganization proposal will garner much of the spotlight. The plan was drafted by a seven-member Program and Structure Study Committee appointed by Fred Wolfe, chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

The reorganization proposal already has been approved by the Executive Committee but must be approved by SBC messengers this year and again next year. It would reduce the number of SBC agencies from 19

to 12.

While most parts of the reorganization proposal have been praised, a few parts have generated intense questions and some outright opposition.

The most controversial elements are:

■ Virtually ignoring Woman's Missionary Union and assigning some of its current responsibilities to other SBC agencies.

■ Merging the Home Mission Board, Radio & Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission into a new North American Mission Board.

■ Eliminating the Historical Commission and assigning its work to the six SBC seminaries and the Sunday School Board.

SBC leaders have said the proposal will be presented as a single package.

However, a number of critics of the proposal have called for it to be divided for separate votes on each component.

The other major business item expected to surface is a proposed resolution on repentance for racism. Supporters of this resolution have tied

New options for Kentucky seminary considered

By Marv Knox
Editor

ELIZABETHTOWN—Seeds of a new seminary may have been sown this spring, as Baptists from across Kentucky met to consider alternative ways to train ministers in the state.

Thirty-seven Kentucky Baptist ministers, most of them pastors, met May 30 in Elizabethtown in the wake of controversy at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

The 136-year-old seminary, for generations the flagship of progressive Baptist scholarship, has come under conservative control in the past five years. And recent conflicts with new President Al Mohler—including the forced termination of a female theology professor, the firing of the female dean of the social work school and the threat of lost accreditation—have caused numerous Kentucky Baptists to think about looking elsewhere to train ministers.

The Elizabethtown gathering did just that, reported Dwight Moody, one of the organizers of the meeting. □ See Ministers discuss ..., page 3

their cause to this year's celebration of the SBC's 150th anniversary, noting the convention was formed largely out of a dispute over whether slaveholders could serve as missionaries.

Resolutions similar to this have been adopted by a number of associations and state conventions in the past two years.

Proponents say the resolution would put down a marker of repudiation for "racist" actions and attitudes of the convention in the past and send a clear signal to African-Americans that the SBC today is open to all races.

Opponents of the resolution say it is unnecessary because one generation cannot repent of the sins of a previous generation.

For the resolution to be considered by messengers, it must be reported out of the SBC resolutions committee. Recently appointed members of that committee have indicated they will allow messengers in Atlanta to vote on a version of the resolution.

The theme of this year's annual meeting is "Empowered for the Unfinished Task," based on Matthew 28:19-20.



BAPTIST BITS

■ **Bob Terry** has been named editor of the Alabama Baptist, succeeding Hudson Baggett, who died last November. Terry, 52, has been editor of Missouri Baptists' Word & Way newspaper since 1975. He previously was associate editor of the Western Recorder.

■ **Oklahoma Baptists** will reduce the percentage of undesignated gifts they forward to global causes through the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee if the proposed 1996 budget is adopted in November. The state convention's executive board has recommended reducing the percentage of receipts passed on to the SBC from 42 percent to 40 percent.

■ **Bill Tanner**, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma since 1986 and former president of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, has announced plans to retire June 30, 1996.

■ **Thirty-one students** received degrees from Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Va., May 27, the largest graduating class in the school's four-year history. The graduates included 16 men and 15 women from six states and one European country.

HMB president calls for delay in restructuring plan

ATLANTA—The head of the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board is opposing a reorganization plan for the denomination, scheduled for a vote during the SBC annual meeting June 20-22 in Atlanta.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis said the vote on the restructuring proposal should be delayed until detailed studies are available on the impact, costs and savings in the far-reaching plan.

Lewis' statements drew a sharp rebuke from Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee, which appointed the study committee and approved the report with less than 36 hours to review it.

"It is regrettable that the president of the HMB does not support the report of the Program and Structure Study Committee," Chapman said in

a statement. "But this does not lessen the strong belief of the committee members that it is important for our Southern Baptist people from local churches across this country to decide the wisdom of the report."

Chapman called adoption of the report "critical to the future of the SBC."

In his letter dated May 25, Lewis recommended the restructuring proposal be referred back to the SBC Executive Committee. "Concerns raised by the trustees and leaders of the various agencies need to be addressed," he wrote.

The letter was sent to Home Mission Board trustees, SBC officers, members of the Program and Structure Study Committee that drafted the plan, and members of the SBC Executive Committee.

The reorganization, proposed after

an 18-month study, would reduce the number of denominational agencies from 19 to 12. Among the committee's recommendations: combining the Atlanta-based Home Mission Board with two other SBC agencies—the Brotherhood Commission in Memphis, Tenn., and the Radio & Television Commission in Fort Worth, Texas—to form a new North American Mission Board, located in Atlanta.

Lewis said he had intended to voice his concerns about the proposal at a meeting of HMB trustees in April, but a spontaneous "time of revival" broke out, shortening time allotted for business. The trustees planned to hold a special meeting to discuss the report, but called it off because no one from the study committee agreed to participate and fewer trustees than a quorum said they could attend.

In a cover letter to his 12-page "response" to the restructuring committee's report, Lewis noted many HMB trustees "have asked my opinions about the report and recommendations."

Among concerns noted by Lewis were:

■ The committee members' understanding of mission strategy. "I am not aware that any of them have very much experience or expertise in missions," he wrote. "Their expertise appears to lean heavily toward corporate and mega-church management, and their experience is primarily in the South."

■ The scope of the committee's recommendations for the new North American Mission Board. "I believe the committee went beyond the scope of its assignment in seeking to instruct

□ See HMB president ..., page 10

Coppenger elected Midwestern's president

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (ABP)—In a special meeting June 2, trustees unanimously elected Mark Coppenger president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Coppenger, 42, the Southern Baptist Convention's top public relations officer, will become the seminary's third president Aug. 1. He succeeds Milton Ferguson, who has held the post since 1973.

Trustees of the Kansas City, Mo., school met in closed session June 1 to interview Coppenger, who has been vice president for convention relations with the SBC Executive Committee since 1991. The trustees then met in an open session the next morning to vote.

"We've come with feelings that God has led us in this process, and we're so thankful and grateful to him," trustee Chairman Lewis Adkison of Colorado said.

Search committee member Ronnie Rogers of Arkansas said God impressed on him several qualifications

to look for in a presidential candidate. He said the next president of Midwestern should be a man who has a proven record as a leader, who has a heart for evangelism and missions, who is academically prepared and who is "decidedly an inerrantist."

Midwestern is the fifth SBC seminary to elect a president since conservatives began gaining control of the denominational structure in 1979. The sixth school—New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary—is expected to announce a nominee to replace its retiring president soon.

Coppenger, an apologist for the conservative movement, previously was director of the State Convention of Baptists in Indiana.

He earlier earned a doctorate at Vanderbilt University and taught philosophy at Wheaton College six years before entering Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1981. He received the master of divinity degree from the seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1983 and then served five

years as pastor of First Baptist Church in El Dorado, Ark.

Coppenger and his wife, Sharon, sat on the stage facing the audience, along with Ferguson and Adkison, as trustees were led through a roll-call vote. Twenty-six members of the 34-member board were present and voted unanimously to elect Coppenger.

"In God's grace, I say that we gladly accept," Coppenger responded. "We are honored. God is a mighty God and a God of grace and grandeur and patience. I ask the Father, before all (of) you, to be more fatherly than he's ever been in my life, to care for us as we seek to lead this seminary with you."

With about 600 students, Midwestern is the smallest of the SBC's six seminaries and is located on the edge of the Southern Baptist stronghold, the Deep South.

Coppenger will be paid an annual salary of \$67,400 plus benefits, for a total compensation package of approximately \$88,000.

Hunt says he'll nominate Henry

WOODSTOCK, Ga. (ABP)—Georgia pastor Johnny Hunt says he plans to nominate Jim Henry for re-election as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, which meets in Atlanta June 20-22.

Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., near Atlanta, said June 2 he has been asked to nominate Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church in Orlando, Fla. Henry is expected to face no opposition for a second term.

Henry's election to a first term last year broke a 15-year tradition of electing SBC presidents from a "conservative resurgence" party which wrested control of the convention from moderates in the 1980s.

Henry, who said his election marked a "shift in emphasis, not a repudiation" of the conservative movement, last year defeated Fred Wolfe, who had the backing of most of the past conservative SBC presidents.

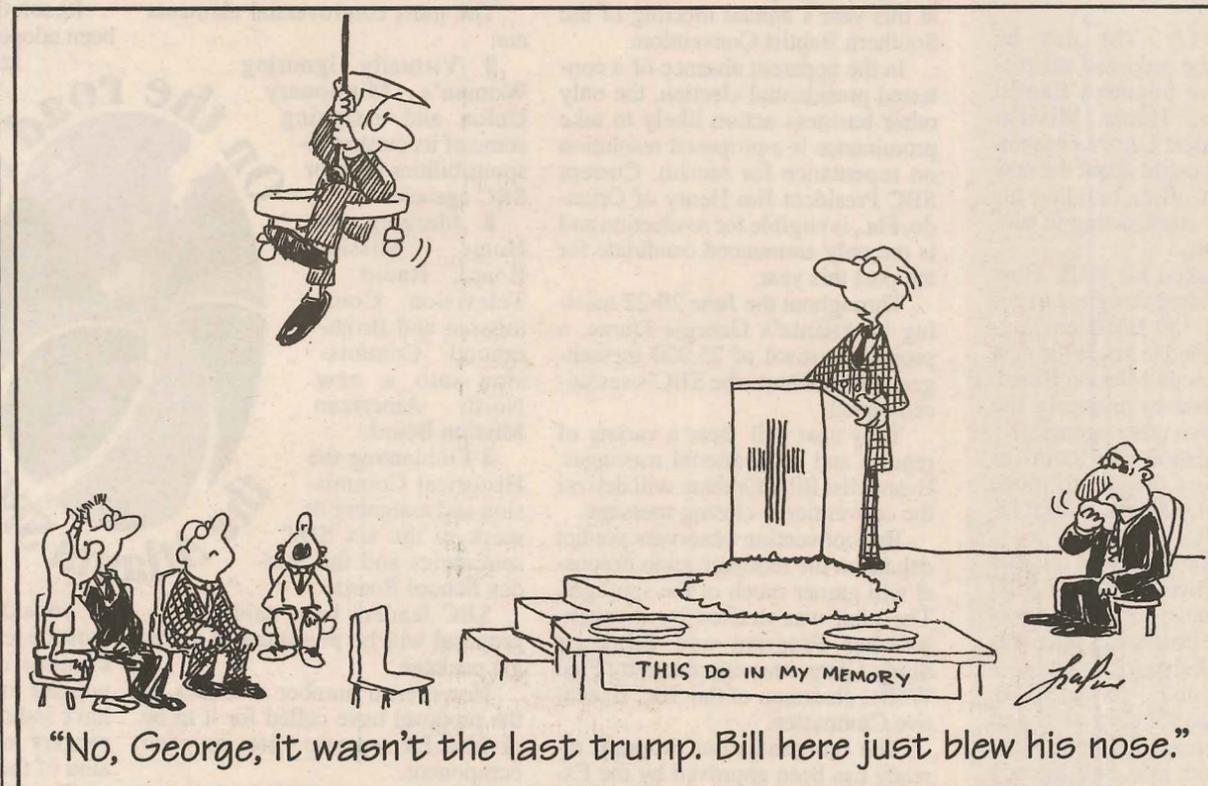
Hunt said he has "not always been a supporter" of Henry, but is "a personal friend and have been for 20 years."

Hunt's nomination is expected to carry added significance if he is elected president of the SBC Pastors' Conference a day earlier. Hunt will be nominated for the Pastors' Conference post by Fred Lowery, pastor of First Baptist Church of Bossier City, La.

Another Georgia pastor, James Merritt of First Baptist Church of Snellville, has said he will nominate Larry Wynn for first vice president.

Wynn, pastor of Hebron Baptist Church in Dacula, Ga., since 1978, has been president of the Georgia Baptist Convention and vice president of the SBC Pastors' Conference.

No other candidates have been announced for any SBC post.



Ministers discuss options for new Kentucky seminary

Continued from page 1

Participants formed the Kentucky Consultation on Baptist Theological Education and discussed a range of alternatives, said Moody, pastor of Third Baptist Church in Owensboro.

"Our real desire—the only reason for coming together—was to help bring about the very best options for Kentucky Baptist folk," added Bob Long, pastor of Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville and the other meeting organizer.

"I don't see this as anything that is anti-Southern Seminary," Long added. "But many people perceive a vacuum in theological education in Kentucky. Lots of schools are approaching Kentucky Baptist people with the idea of establishing other kinds of theological education formulas.

"Those who gathered in Elizabethtown would like to see the interests of Kentucky Baptists protected."

The meeting was closed to the press, but Moody and Long agreed to be interviewed afterward.

The new group initially decided to examine three possibilities, Moody reported. They are:

- A Kentucky branch of the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, Va., a moderate school created after conservatives took over Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

- The Richmond seminary participates in a consortium of theological schools in the area. It receives support from Virginia and North Carolina Baptists, as well as the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

- A Kentucky branch of Baylor

University's Truett Theological Seminary. Baylor, a Texas Baptist school in Waco, already offered master's and doctor's degrees in theological studies. Baylor started Truett Seminary after conservatives took control of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in nearby Fort Worth.

Truett officials previously have talked about operating satellite campuses, including a site in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

- A new institution uniquely related to Kentucky Baptists.

Advocates of a new Kentucky school have discussed the advantages of developing a school that implicitly understands the special needs of Kentucky Baptist churches and the culture in which they minister.

Both Long and Moody acknowledged other possibilities are likely to arise as the group conducts its study.

Participants at the Elizabethtown meeting empowered Moody to appoint a steering committee to help the group conduct its investigation. Moody hopes to name the steering committee members this week.

Their work will be guided by a purpose statement approved in Elizabethtown. The statement says: "We agree to work in cooperation with each other and with others across Kentucky to provide quality theological education for present and future generations of Baptists. We believe that such quality can be defined as uniquely and distinctively Christian, Baptist, biblical and missionary. We will work together to fulfill this process. We covenant to work as one so long as conscience allows."

The purpose statement was developed from an address Moody presented to the group and which he quoted in the interview.

"Kentucky Baptists need an institution of ministry preparation and theological education that is defined and directed by the following four words—'Christian,' 'Baptist,' 'biblical' and 'missionary,'" Moody said. "These four words represent the four fundamental elements of the life and work of Kentucky Baptists."

Regarding "Christian," Moody told the group: "The basic confession of all believers is 'Jesus Christ is Lord.' This confession speaks of a way of being, a way of living, a way of thinking. ...

"'Christian' needs to describe not just the doctrines that are believed, but the spiritual atmosphere of the seminary community," Moody said in an interview. "Such a seminary values truth-telling, cultivates humility, practices forgiveness, exhibits patience, extends mercy and treasures friendship."

Concerning "Baptist," Moody noted: "As Baptist Christians, we are convinced that God's plan for the ages requires us to be faithful to who we are as Baptists. ... We affirm our identity as Baptists and resist any effort to redefine us with words like 'Reformed,' 'evangelical,' 'Calvinistic' or 'Protestant.'"

Of "biblical," he said, "The Bible is the word of God and is therefore free among us."

The Bible "stands over all creeds, confessions and theological opinions," Moody asserted. "Baptist

Christians seek in the Bible the proper way to correct, confirm and/or conform our theological and ethical judgments to the very word and will of God.

"We protest any effort to cram God's good word into the constraints of some man-made theological system, be it Calvinistic, Arminian, Catholic or Orthodox. At the same time, we recognize the usefulness of statements of faith that summarize biblical teaching and convey the essence of biblical thought from one generation to the next."

And on "missionary," he insisted: "Kentucky Baptists are missionary Baptists, and no multi-word description of who we are is complete without recourse to this word. ... How can Baptists commit the training of their leaders into the hands of people unless this great word 'missionary' stands at the very center of institutional identity?"

In his address, Moody referred to the Southern Seminary situation, although he did not mention it by name.

"We are deeply troubled by the turmoil that has overtaken one of our institutions. Those elected to govern that institution have clearly stated their intent to change its doctrine and direction.

"The implementation of their governing strategy has brought nothing but dissension, division and distrust to the institution and its constituencies. ... We are convinced this cauldron of controversy will boil over into our churches, scalding our people with the same mixture of confusion and conflict."

"We are deeply troubled by the turmoil that has overtaken one of our institutions. ... We are convinced this cauldron of controversy will boil over into our churches, scalding our people with the same mixture of confusion and conflict."

Dwight Moody

Lives of 3 Greensburg men changed by missions

By Joyce Sweeney Martin
Staff Writer

They aren't pew-sitters anymore.

Not since they've caught the vision of how God can use them to bring about change in Kentucky, the nation and the world.

That's what Pastor Ty Clenney says about three young men from Greensburg Baptist Church who have been involved in hands-on missions experience over the past three years.

The seeds of the young people's missions challenge were sown through the church's Woman's Missionary Union and nurtured through exposure to missions in Baptist Student Union, according to Clenney.

And for Chad Curry, John Cowherd and Clay Kelly, those seeds have produced a variety of assignments in state, home and foreign missions—assignments which have changed the course of their lives.

Curry's first missions assignment may not have taken him far from home, but he says the summer he spent as a BSU summer missionary in Owen County set him on a different path.

It was while working with chil-

dren and youth in vacation Bible schools and creative arts that the Western Kentucky University student learned he "didn't have to be as big as Billy Graham to make a difference in people's lives," he said.

Previously, Curry had thought missionaries were "such special people and I was so ordinary."

But as the summer of 1994 progressed, Curry realized God could use him.

"Once I focused on what he wanted and not on my inhibitions, I knew I could make a difference," he said.

In fact, Curry believes that summer in Owen County freed him up to go anywhere in the world.

This summer "anywhere" will be a two-week mission to Uzbekistan in the former Soviet Union. He and his new bride, Shannon Patton of Rich Pond Baptist Church in Bowling Green, will serve through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board's Global Student Involvement as cultural exchange service workers.

"Ultimately, we want to be career missionaries in Central Asia," the 21-year-old said.

John Cowherd's mission service took him out west to serve in summer missions through the Southern

Baptist Home Mission Board. In 1992, the University of Kentucky student worked in Yavaipai Association in Arizona. Cowherd moved from church to church leading vacation Bible schools, youth revivals and doing light construction work.

He spent the summers of 1993 and 1994 in the Baptist Neighborhood Center in inner-city Albuquerque, N.M.

In addition to leading youth Bible studies and children's day camps, Cowherd participated in food and clothing ministries and made minor repairs to the Baptist Neighborhood Center.

Summer missions provided the "wake-up call to who God is what he desires from me," Cowherd said.

After graduation this summer, he plans to enroll in seminary.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world in Ethiopia, Clay Kelley, a University of Louisville graduate, has found his place of service through the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board.

Kelly, an engineer, began his two-year assignment in November 1993, coordinating water projects in Ganaheer, Ethiopia. He also serves as a Sunday school teacher in a local church.

BLUEGRASS BURGEO

- **Software available.** Free copies of the software to access CompuServe and SBCNet are available from the Kentucky Baptist Convention. SBCNet is a Southern Baptist database and forum housed on the CompuServe network. Residents of Louisville, Lexington and Owensboro may access CompuServe with a local phone call. Residents elsewhere may access CompuServe for less than the cost of a long-distance call. CompuServe has a basic monthly fee of \$9.95. There is an additional \$7.95 per month fee to join SBCNet. To get the free startup software, contact Douglas Hays, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Box 43433, Louisville, Ky. 40253, (502) 245-4101.

- **Cumberland sends out 57.** Fifty-seven Cumberland College students will serve as summer missionaries this year in a variety of locations and roles.

- **Overseas reunion.** Two Kentuckians who were classmates at Campbellsville College 43 years ago were unexpectedly reunited in England recently through church work. Roberta Gentry Bumgardner, a native of Mount Washington, teaches in the Department of Defense Dependents School in Lakenheath, England. Ray Magruder, a Valley Station native, is pastor of Stukeley Baptist Church in Cambridgeshire, England. The two recently met at a monthly Baptist fellowship.

- **Youth camp at Cumberland.** Cumberland College has been named one of seven sites for a popular youth camp called "Seesoning" this summer. The camps are sponsored by Concoctions of Spartanburg, S.C. The Cumberland camp will be July 10-14. Several Kentucky Baptist churches, including Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington and Walnut Street Baptist Church of Louisville, have participated in "Seesoning" camps in South Carolina in the past.

WESTERN RECORDER

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*Earnestly contend for the
faith which was once for
all delivered to the
saints.—Jude 3*

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Don't trademark

Providence Knob Woman's Missionary Union is extremely puzzled and displeased concerning the attempt by Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin to have "Lottie Moon Christmas Offering" trademarked.

Why would he even consider such a move? Countless hours of prayer, work and sacrifice have been channeled into this very worthy cause for many years. If "nothing has changed," why was this not discussed with the WMU organization?

We do not understand the secrecy behind this move, and will be anxiously awaiting the outcome.

Mrs. Andy Garmon
Mrs. Joe Causey
Mrs. Fred Meador
Rockfield

Poignant reminder

I write this letter as a seminary student attending a non-Southern Baptist seminary.

The recent activities of Al Mohler and Southern Seminary trustees serve as a poignant reminder of the dictatorial theology and practice that caused me and others to turn elsewhere for our education.

I am a Kentucky Baptist attending Princeton Theological Seminary. I have made friends with Southern Baptist students from Kentucky, South Carolina, Texas, Alabama and Louisiana who all would have attended Southern Baptist seminaries were it not for the narrow mind and spirit that pervades SBC schools.

We were called to serve as leaders and lead as servants. Several of us have received merit-based fellowships. We have been called and gifted by God and now find it necessary to go elsewhere for the preparation we

Night light

Upon the bed his mother had for years slept, Marshall now sleeps when he spends nights with us. Not yet having succeeded in his real preference to sleep between Alice and me, he has come to accept this as "his" room; "his" bed.

Not many weeks ago, before our own bedtime, a Bible story and prayers, Alice and I retreated as usual to unfinished business before our own bedtime. One of us heard his bedroom door open and found him sitting quietly on the stairs. Back to bed he was quickly ushered. A few minutes later, the floor cracked at the top of the stairs.

"Marshall, it's bedtime. Let's go, buddy," I said, walking him back into the room. He began crying.

"What's wrong?" I asked.
"It's dark," came the high-pitched reply. Only then did I recall that at his home he was in the "night light" stage.

In a moment, I was back from the bathroom with the small night light we keep plugged in there for guests. With the click of the switch, a modest light removed the darkness of his room. Tucking him in with another

need for ministry.

It is ironic that we chose a school known for its tradition of Reformed theology while many Southern Seminary leaders embrace this tradition in its five-point form. The irony is heightened as our identity as Southern Baptists has been strengthened, not by returning to a particular confession of the gospel, but by recognizing the variety, vitality and distinctiveness of being Southern Baptist.

Southern Seminary leaders consider us "liberal" for our choice, but we find it to be God's way of allowing us to learn and serve in a context that is academically open and critical, fair and compassionate—qualities once part of Southern Seminary.

Eric Thurman
Owensboro

BAPTIST FORUM

Real family values

The Western Recorder's editorials regarding legislation supported by Ralph Reed's Christian Coalition and the new Congress are right on target.

Both groups appear to have a new inerrant Bible with direct verbal inspiration from Newtonian republicanism. It is called the "Contract with America." But how does it stack up against the real word of God?

The Contract wants to curtail or eliminate many programs that help the poor. Many children, mothers, immigrants, ethnic minorities, senior adults and the physically challenged will suffer without the benefits that now help them maintain a ray of hope for the future.

In Kentucky, over 34,000 babies, preschoolers and pregnant women would lose nutrition supplements. Approximately 72,000 children would lose food stamps. Other programs affected would be Head Start, the school lunch program, Medicaid

and Aid to Families with Dependent Children.

On the other hand, the Bible repeatedly speaks of these same people as the ones needing care and justice.

The new proposals also call for an increase in military expenditures. In the Bible, however, we see a Jesus—the Prince of Peace—who tells his disciples to "turn the other cheek" and "forgive your enemies."

Many other provisions in the Contract generally oppose the biblical principles of mutual responsibility and social justice.

Yes, Christians, read the Contract, but first compare it to God's covenant, and decide which one really advocates for family values.

Tony Aja
Louisville

Cartoon appalls

As workers in the school lunch program at Third District Elementary School of Butler County, we were utterly appalled at the recent cartoon regarding prayer during lunch at school (WR, May 23).

How can a "Christian" criticize others in such a manner as was displayed? We do not believe this is the appropriate conduct for followers of Christ to even consider, much less publicize.

We realize that school lunches may not always be exactly what we would like or choose, but we know of no cases where anyone eating our food has actually died. We work hard with what we have in order to prepare food that is healthy, appealing and satisfying. We attempt to do our best even though we may not be able to please everyone. We resent the implications represented here.

Nyla H. Van Fleet
Huntsville
Elaine Grubb
Morgantown

not had since their marriage almost three years ago.

With the bedroom door left cracked for mutual use of the bathroom and our light out, I heard them giggling as their dog, Kota, made noises from his crate in the dark nearby. Kota seemed confused by the new location of their "bed."

In the not-so-dark darkness, I lay there feeling good about being together again with Mike and Shawn; in "their" house; in "their" world. I felt connected again with her; their muffled laughter a gentle joy flowing over my being. As the days of our visit extended, lives connected from our busy Kentucky lives, I discovered that I had needed this visit more than I had known.

Telephone calls and letters have their important place in the lives of friends and family. They help keep back the shadows of extended separation.

But in the subdued darkness of the room, I had discovered that I, like Marshall, also needed a "night light;" that being with loved ones, long absent, turns on the "night light" of my soul.

And I went to sleep with a smile on my face.

William W. Marshall is executive secretary-treasurer of the Kentucky Baptist Convention.

ON MISSION TOGETHER



William W. Marshall

kiss, he was soon on his journey of sleep.

I have thought a lot about Marshall and the night light. The time will come when he will no longer need it to sleep; another phase of his life passing. But for now, the night light meets a need of this little guy.

To sleep, we prefer the dark; the darker, the better. Admittedly, when traveling we sometimes leave the bathroom light on in the motel room. But I suspect our reasons for that are different from Marshall's reasons.

Over the Memorial Day weekend, we spent a few nights with Shawn and Mike in their one-bedroom apartment near the campus of Cornell University, where Shawn is a graduate student. They insisted we sleep in the only bed in their small quarters while they slept on a futon on the floor of an adjoining room. Light from a nearby streetlight made unnecessary any night light.

It had been two-and-a-half years since we had visited them in New York, our visits with them limited to their brief holiday visits with both families here at home in Kentucky. This visit would give us time for fun and a quality of togetherness we have



Evening light

By John Lepper

What image comes to mind when you think of aging? In "Caring for Folks from Birth to Death," Albert Meiburg uses two images. He suggests that for some people growing older is like a twilight and for others it is like the dawning of a new day.

The prophet Zechariah speaks of a "unique day" in which "at evening time there will be light." He wasn't speaking of Daylight Savings Time nor of the electric light. Instead, he was talking about a new Jerusalem, a time when God will reign.

This image of light in the evening is one which also can apply to the aging process. We can regard our older years as the end of the day, or we can see them as the dawning of a new day. Admittedly, as we get older, the number of remaining years is less than at an earlier age. The issue here is not the length of days, but the quality of days.

Whether we view aging as dawn or twilight depends on our attitude. Is life something to be grasped? If this is our attitude, we may focus on the twilight as we feel life slipping away. If we view life as a gift, we can see the ending of one phase of life and the beginning of a new phase. Aging becomes the dawning of a new and exciting day.

How do you view change? If you fear change, then major changes related to aging will be scary. How have you adjusted to changes which have occurred throughout your life? As we learn from past changes, we can be less fearful about an unknown future.

Zechariah spoke of a glorious time in which there will be light in the evening. He could think about this drastic turn of events as positive because he believed in a God who would battle Jerusalem's foes, a God who would exert his rule over all.

Maybe we need to adopt Zechariah's attitude. Surely the God who is king over all has the power to see us through all the changes of life. His power is not confined by time or space, by age or youthfulness. With this view, we can see aging as the dawning of a new day, not the twilight of a day far spent.

John Lepper is director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention's family ministry department.

Send your questions about children, teens, marriage, singles or aging to "Family Forum," Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, Ky. 40253.

Reorganization should be considered piece by piece

Southern Baptists will celebrate and make history this month. Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting will celebrate the SBC's 150th anniversary. They also will vote on the most massive SBC reorganization ever considered.

Several parts of the reorganization plan could produce huge benefits. Its mission statement clearly defines the convention's purpose, places the local church at the center of our common relationship, and focuses on high principles of missions and evangelism. The plan purports to increase the efficiency of the convention. And it could enable the convention to be more responsive to modern challenges.

Despite its benefits, the plan also raises numerous concerns. This is to be expected any time such sweeping change is proposed. However, much concern regarding reorganization has merit:

■ What's to become of WMU? Because the SBC does not elect Woman's Missionary Union's board of directors, the reorganization committee left WMU out, claiming it's not accountable to the convention. Still, WMU—always an auxiliary to the convention—was told, "Nothing has changed." But the committee's refusal even to include the WMU mission statement in its report, coupled with the Foreign Mission Board's attempt to copyright "Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," suggests otherwise. WMU could get shut out of meaningful participation in the SBC.

■ Is this plan really going to work? Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis has called for delay of the vote, pending feasibility studies. The reorganization committee has no answers regarding the cost and efficiency, much less long-range viability, of the changes.

■ Can integrity be preserved? The plan would kill off the Historical Commission and shuffle much of its work to the Sunday School Board, whose credibility in recording its own history has been suspect. The plan also would bring the Southern Baptist Foundation under the Executive Committee, whose interests would conflict as it manages funds for the SBC while benefiting from its own decisions.

■ How will the SBC relate to states? The plan would cut home missions support for Southern states like Kentucky, meanwhile expecting them to take up the slack and maintain full support for the SBC. But with limited dollars, the old-line states would be forced to make budget decisions which could undermine the viability of the Cooperative Program, the SBC's financial lifeline.

Most SBC leaders have indicated they intend for convention messengers to vote on the reorganization plan as a whole. They should reconsider. If messengers cannot deal with concerns one-by-one, the fate of reorganization could be imperiled, even if the proposal passes.

Marv Knox

While some portions of the Southern Baptist Convention reorganization proposal would be beneficial, others raise grave concerns among many Southern Baptists of every political stripe. Messengers to the SBC annual meeting should be allowed to amend the proposal and vote on it piece by piece.

An opportunity for repentance

Southern Baptists will get a chance to repent of their racism when they celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention this month. A resolution expressing repentance and seeking forgiveness for personal and corporate racism is the most fitting way to mark the founding of a convention conceived in slavery.

Baptist sons and daughters of the South started the SBC in 1845, after the American Baptist Home Missionary Society refused to appoint slaveholders as missionaries. Racism branded the SBC like a birthmark.

For several decades, Southern Baptists have tried to wash that stain away. The SBC Christian Life Commission provided solid leadership during the civil rights movement. The convention has decried racism in resolutions. We elected an African-American as vice president last year. We have started more than 1,600 African-American churches in the past 25 years. Based on sheer numbers, the SBC is the most racially inclusive, as well as ethnically inclusive, denomination in the country.

But, as Martin Luther King said 30 years ago, 11 o'clock on Sunday morning still is the most segregated hour of the week in America. We can—no, we must—do more.

Southern Baptists have argued over whether we can repent of the racism of our forebears who launched the SBC. We must lay that disagreement aside. Our generation holds more than its share of racism. We should take the opportunity of this hour to repent of our racism, denounce our racist past and stand boldly for racial equality now and in the future. Then, rather than write the words on paper and record them in a book, we must write them on our hearts and live them in the world.

Marv Knox

A warm-hearted, cool-handed prez

A president with a warm heart and cool hands will preside over the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting this month.

For years, Jim Henry has shown he's a warm-hearted, caring pastor. When he attended an anniversary celebration at huge a church a few years back—a pastorate he had left more than 15 years before—he stood in line for hours and called practically every person by name. That's a remarkable feat. And today, at the mammoth First Baptist Church of Orlando, he's still known as a people's pastor.

That warm spirit has dominated his tenure as SBC president. He's an encourager, a builder.

When Henry announced his presidential appointments this spring, he claimed to make good on his promise to broaden the circle of SBC leadership. He apparently kept his pledge. Reports indicate Henry chose solid members of cooperative churches, without regard to SBC political infighting. That's not to say he's a president of all Southern Baptists; he still required fidelity to the conservatives' cause. But he didn't recruit purely political partisans. That's a refreshing change.

Henry also has a cool hand. He's a calm and collected leader, who will preside well. His care and compassion comes out in the way he deals with people, and that will be evident as he wields the SBC gavel. In another refreshing change from the recent past, Henry has announced he will not hire an outside parliamentarian to rule over SBC proceedings. That's a huge symbol of trust.

Southern Baptists should pray for President Jim Henry as he leads this historic SBC annual meeting.

Marv Knox

With 5th grade graduation on the line, Spunky spent the weekend elsewhere

We endured one minor disappointment this past weekend, the last of the school year.

Lindsay didn't bring Spunky home.

Spunky's a yellow-and-black baby chick. She's rare—the only bird hatched from 18 eggs incubated in Mrs. Kleine-Kracht's fifth grade class.

(Those long odds against hatching remind me of an incubator incident when I was a kid. Mrs. Pruitt's science class waited and waited for a brood of chicks to hatch. Finally, she announced someone had turned the incubator too high, and the birdies flew to that Great Nest in the Sky. "You mean they're fried?" a student asked, incredulous at the prospect. "They're not fried. They're shaken and baked, and I

helped," confessed the culprit who turned up the heat.)

But back to Spunky. ... Mrs. K-K told her class the chick could go home with the first student who brought a note from mom or dad saying it's OK.

About that time,

Joanna walked into the room on PTA business. "Lindsay's lucky!" huffed a chorus of young voices. Seems all the kids assumed Lindsay's mom would zip off a Spunky note.

But Mrs. K-K was just finishing her talk

about Spunky, "... and I will be very concerned about her health."

Well, Lindsay wasn't hatched yesterday. She isn't sure how fatigue and distress factor into the mortality rate of baby chicks, but she figured the cohabitation of Spunky and our dog, Betsy, in our house for a weekend would prove fatal for the bird.

According to the homicidal scenario, Betsy's dreams would come true. Spunky would scratch her way

across the floor in an unguarded moment, and Betsy would help herself to her first

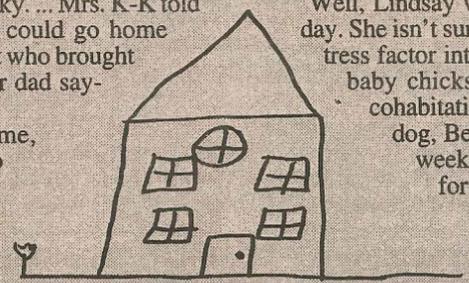
chicken dinner. The only good that could come from this situation would be that we'd know for certain Betsy's a Baptist dog who enjoys "dinner on the grounds."

In the other scenario, Spunky would succumb to panic and distress from Betsy's incessant barking at the fluffy intruder into her domain. We haven't seen studies on Fowl Fatality Syndrome, but we're relatively sure Spunky would catch it. And die.

So, Lindsay didn't ask her mom for a note. She didn't want to be the first kid in the history of the world to flunk fifth grade because her dog killed the class mascot.

But at least we know she's mastered cause-and-effect logic during her career at Dunn Elementary.

Marv Knox



down home

BAPTISTS

Highlights of SBC annual meeting

■ **Tuesday morning, June 20.** Session begins at 8:15 a.m. Committee on order of business; "Empowered in our Cooperation," Morris Chapman; introduction of business and resolutions; "Empowered in the Churches," Robert Naylor; Executive Committee report; president's address by Jim Henry.

■ **Tuesday afternoon, June 20.** Session begins at 1 p.m. Committee on order of business; introduction of business and resolutions; "Empowered in the Scriptures," W.A. Criswell; committee on nominations report; election of officers (first); Executive Committee report; "Empowered in our Distinctives," Herschel Hobbs; committee on committees report; introduction of business and resolutions; election of officers (second).

■ **Tuesday evening, June 20.** Session begins at 6 p.m. Sunday School Board report and presentation; "Empowered in Sunday School," James Sullivan; committee on order of business; business and

introduction of new business and resolutions; election of officers (third); sesquicentennial presentation.

■ **Wednesday morning, June 21.** Session begins at 8:30 a.m. "Empowered in Evangelism," Roy Fish; election of officers (fourth); seminary presentation and reports; business; resolutions committee; election of officers (fifth); convention sermon by Al Mohler.

■ **Wednesday evening, June 21.** Session begins at 6 p.m. Business; "Empowered in Missions," Alma Hunt; Woman's Missionary Union report; Foreign Mission Board and Home Mission Board presentation.

■ **Thursday morning, June 22.** Session begins at 8:30 a.m. "Empowered in the Laity," Greg Horton; "Empowered in Education," Paige Patterson; business; resolutions committee; message by Billy Graham.

Convention week activities

■ **Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.** Georgia Dome. Begins at 2 p.m. June 18 and concludes with an evening session June 19.

■ **Woman's Missionary Union.** Georgia World Congress Center. Begins at 2:20 p.m. June 18 and concludes with an evening session June 19.

■ **Southern Baptist Church Music Conference.** Peachtree Corners Baptist Church, Norcross, Ga. June 18-19.

■ **Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Directors of Missions.** Sheraton Gateway Hotel. June 18-19.

■ **Southern Baptist Hispanic Fellowship.** Briarlake Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga. June 17-18.

■ **African-American Fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention.** Worship service 5 p.m. June 18, Christian Fellowship Baptist Church, College Park, Ga. Business meeting 11 a.m. June 19, Greenforest Baptist Church, Decatur, Ga.

■ **Chaplains convocation.** Dunwoody Baptist Church. June 19, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

■ **Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers.** Baptist Student Center of Georgia Tech. June 16-18.

■ **Preaching and Worship Conference.** Wieuca Road Baptist Church. June 18-19.

■ **Southern Baptist Research Fellowship.** Colony Square Hotel. June 17, noon to 9 p.m.

■ **Southern Baptist Computer Users Association.** Home Mission Board's new building in Alpharetta, Ga. June 16-17.

■ **RAPHA luncheon.** Georgia World Congress Center. June 19, noon-1:30 p.m.

■ **SBC Executive Committee.** Hyatt Regency Hotel. June 19, 2 p.m.

■ **Founders Conference breakfast,** Hyatt Regency Hotel. June 20, 7 a.m. (\$)

■ **Ministers' Wives Luncheon.** Hyatt Regency Hotel. June 20, noon. (\$)

■ **Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists.** Georgia Dome. June 21.

■ **Open house and dedication of new Home Mission Board building.** June 21, 3 p.m.

■ **Golden Gate Seminary luncheon.** Georgia World Congress Center. June 21, 1 p.m. (\$)

■ **Midwestern Seminary luncheon.** Georgia World Congress Center. June 21, 1 p.m. (\$)

■ **New Orleans Seminary breakfast.** Hyatt Regency Hotel. June 21, 7:30 a.m. (\$)

■ **Southern Seminary luncheon.** Georgia World Congress Center. June 21, 1 p.m. (\$)

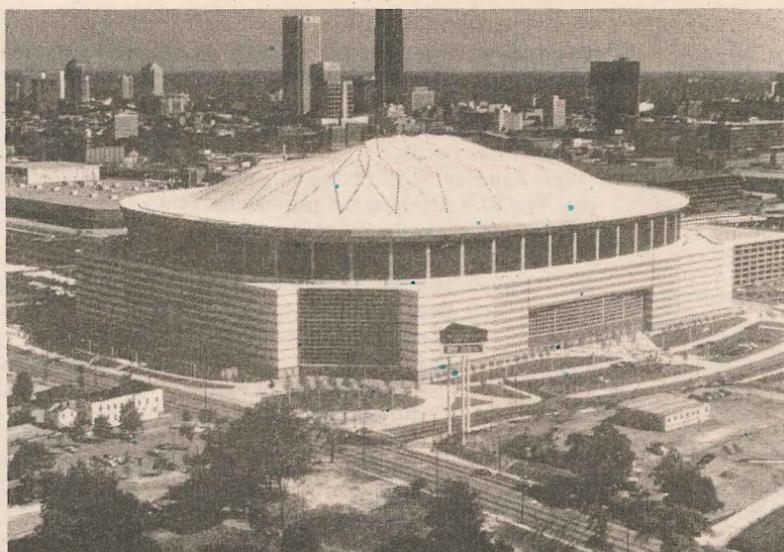
■ **Southeastern Seminary luncheon.** Georgia World Congress Center. June 21, 1 p.m. (\$)

■ **Southwestern Seminary luncheon.** Omni Hotel. June 21, 1 p.m. (\$)

■ **Georgetown College dinner.** Georgia World Congress Center. June 20, 5:15 p.m. (\$)

■ **Clear Creek Baptist Bible College reception.** Omni Hotel. June 20, 9 p.m.

(\$) indicates a ticket or reservation may be required to attend



CONVENTION SITE Atlanta's new Georgia Dome will be the site of this year's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, June 20-22. (BP photo)

GUEST COMMENTARY

Does WMU have a place?

Thirty-five years ago, after much soul searching and heart-wrenching prayer, my husband and I chose to leave our church—part of a denomination that had lost its zeal—to become members of a newly formed mission, the first Southern Baptist witness in the area. Membership in a Woman's Missionary Union circle (later Baptist Women) helped me know about and support prayerfully and financially the work of our missionaries. Ministry and evangelistic witness also were a vital part of the involvement of members in this Baptist Women organization.

Learning about our missionaries was exciting. I am enthralled by the life stories of such stalwart Southern Baptist mission pioneers as Annie Armstrong and Lottie Moon. Their strong commitment and dogged determination to do that to which God had called them is an example, an inspiration to me. The selfless giving of time, energy, money and sometimes even life itself of these and other admirable women is worth noting. I am proud to be a Baptist woman, a member of Woman's Missionary Union. It is a privilege to build upon the foundation laid by our foremothers.

The Southern Baptist Convention this year celebrates its sesquicentennial. Though formed as an auxiliary, Woman's Missionary Union has been an accepted partner, a relationship that has steadily grown during her 107 years. WMU has taught and nurtured missionaries, future missionaries and missionary supporters. WMU has raised considerably more than \$2 billion for SBC causes, primarily for the mission boards.

Now, the 21st century offers the promise of newness. To meet that challenge, a committee of the SBC is proposing a Covenant for a New Century, a massive restructuring of the convention. This plan appears to have several very good features. The problem I see in some of the downsizing that SBC will do, should the plan be approved, is that diminishing some of the structure appears to centralize authority and power, removing it further from the people.

As a Baptist, I believe in an informed membership and in a people-led, non-hierarchical organization or non-hierarchy. As a God-called missions-minded woman, I believe in the role of Woman's Missionary Union. Missions education and the promotion of the Lottie Moon Offering for foreign missions and the Annie Armstrong Offering for home missions historically have been the role of WMU, which started both. WMU consistently has performed those missions responsibilities. Why are these now to be assigned to other agencies? What is the purpose, the reasoning behind this assignment of traditional WMU tasks to other agencies?

Many have suggested it is be-

cause WMU elects her own board. And the restructuring committee speaks of accountability linked to responsibility.

No other organization in the world ever has done what WMU has done, to literally raise billions and give it all away. And that is the united effort of WMU. Have we not proven ourselves to be worthy? Are we not responsible? Are we not accountable?

The boards have been told they will be free to partner with whom-ever they choose to accomplish their tasks. The presidents of both mission boards stated magnanimously they would "expect" to continue to utilize WMU's promotion efforts. But our role is not defined. Therefore, WMU is in the precarious position of having to rely upon mere verbal statements made by men who have limited years of service remaining.

Few are aware of the proud heritage of WMU.

In 1920, because of her deep concern for the welfare of underpaid ministers and their families, WMU began the offering for ministerial relief and annuity.

In 1925, WMU urged the adoption of the Cooperative Program and has served as its major promoter throughout the years since.

In 1931, more than one-half of the Cooperative Program money was given by Woman's Missionary Union.

In 1940, WMU pledged \$1 million to retire SBC debts—and exceeded that pledge.

On and on we could go, but these illustrate my point. I reiterate: I am proud to be a Baptist woman, a member of Woman's Missionary Union.

Alberta Gilpin, Missouri Baptist Convention missions education and ministry development team leader, said, "It's time for more than half of the Southern Baptist Convention to realize that they are being completely ignored."

Dellanna O'Brien, executive director of the Southern Baptist WMU, stated, "Unless there is some designation in the report about the WMU, we become simply a group left to the decisions of the directors of other agencies."

Missions education, missions support (the offerings) and even ministry to women all have been assigned to others. Truly something is askew when all WMU does is taken from us and assigned to others!

I would encourage Southern Baptists to get the facts. Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Vote your conscience.

WMU has served faithfully and well. Now we ask, "Is there a place for WMU in the 21st century? Or are we to be denied our place in the effort to win the world for Christ?"

Dee Gilliland, executive director
Kentucky Baptist WMU
Louisville

Questions loom over plan to merge 3 SBC agencies

Continued from page 1

Structure Study Committee believes it is both possible and wise to enact the merger. Creating the new North American Mission Board is one of the centerpieces of their sweeping proposal, which must be approved by messengers to SBC annual meetings this year and next year.

The merger would bring all the SBC's domestic missions efforts under one roof. Benefits are suggested to include greater coordination and cooperation and a reduction in expenses through fewer trustees and consolidation of overlapping support functions.

"The assignment of this new agency is reaching North America for Christ, using every appropriate means of evangelization and church planting," the committee report explains. "By bringing the assignment and resources of the current Radio & Television Commission into this structure, the new board will include as a strategic focus the use of communication technologies in the evangelization of North America. The current Brotherhood Commission will bring to this new board the focus upon the mobili-

zation of volunteers for missions, disaster ministries and missions education."

Although executives of the three current agencies had been interviewed by the study committee, they were not involved in formulating the study committee's recommendation.

While the three agency heads—Lewis of the HMB, James Williams of the Brotherhood Commission and Jack Johnson of the RTVC—have said they're willing to make the merger work if Southern Baptists vote for it, trustees of the three agencies have expressed concern about the plan more openly.

Trustees of both the Brotherhood Commission and RTVC stopped just short of outright opposition to the plan in their spring meetings.

Questions raised about the merger

go beyond traditional attempts to defend agency turf, although trustees of the various agencies admit their role is to defend their agencies.

"Our concern is for the Radio & Television Commission," explained Wyman Copass, pastor of Yellow Creek Baptist Church in Owensboro and chairman-elect of RTVC trustees. "We just want to be sure that our investment as Southern Baptists is handled in the best way possible."

Copass sees many potential benefits to the merger, but he still struggles with some unanswered questions.

"First and foremost, is this going to enable us to do a better job of preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ?" he asked. "Is it going to give us a better position to do that? In the long run, is it going to give us more finances to do that?"

Details to answer such questions

are scarce at this point. The HMB's Lewis noted "very little has been done" in the way of impact studies.

"People constantly ask me the simple question, 'Can we absorb the staff of these other two agencies into our building?'" he said. "The only answer I can give is, 'I don't know,' since nobody has yet told me how many people would be involved, and nobody has really done the study to see if our studio facilities are in fact adequate to accommodate 12 hours of programming every day through a network such as ACTS."

For the short term, both agency heads and the study committee agree working out the physical merger of the three agencies will take extraordinary efforts. But in the long term, the inconvenience would pay off in greater ministry and efficiency into the next century, the study committee contends.

Nevertheless, logistical questions are dominating the discussion as messengers prepare to debate the restructuring proposal in Atlanta June 20-22 and—ironically—attend dedication ceremonies for the HMB's new office building the same week.



Unanswered questions

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

ATLANTA—As messengers prepare to vote on a proposed merger of the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board, Radio & Television Commission and Brotherhood Commission, many questions remain unanswered.

Among them:

■ What size staff will the new mission board have?

No one knows for sure. The Program and Structure Study Committee has said this would be a decision for the new trustee board to make. Obviously, some overlapping positions in service areas such as accounting, public relations and secretarial staff would allow for reductions.

Currently, the HMB employs about 350 people in Atlanta, plus more than 5,000 missionaries who live around the United States and its territories. The Brotherhood Commission has 80 employees, and the RTVC has 100.

The new 75-member trustee board would be constituted in June 1997, and its first task would be to hire a president. Other staffing decisions presumably would flow from that.

■ How many employees of the Brotherhood Commission and RTVC would move to Atlanta?

Both James Williams of the Brotherhood Commission and Jack Johnson of the RTVC have expressed concerns at this point. While no clear prediction can be made, both men believe they would lose a significant number of staff members in the move.

Johnson speculates only 30 percent to 40 percent of the RTVC staff would be willing to relocate to Atlanta. The rest are talented communications professionals with marketable skills who probably would not

have difficulty finding other jobs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, he said.

■ Would the new HMB building be adequate to house the North American Mission Board?

Although currently configured to accommodate 350 employees, the new HMB building could be reconfigured for up to 500 employees, President Larry Lewis said. That would require putting offices in ground-floor space intended for use as warehouse space.

Reconfiguring office space is one thing; reworking television studios is another. RTVC officials say their biggest concerns are about losing their two recently renovated studios in Fort Worth with no guarantee of what facilities can be built in Atlanta.

The one studio in the new HMB building is about half the size of the larger of the RTVC's two studios. And it was designed for industrial-level video production, not commercial broadcast production.

Johnson said "everybody understands" the Atlanta studio is inadequate.

"I don't believe there's any thought at all to force us into those facilities," he said. But deciding what to do—building additional studios or leasing space or renovating the HMB studio—would be a decision for the new agency's trustees.

■ How long would it take to make the changes necessary for the merger?

The Program and Structure Study Committee's report calls for trustee boards of the three current agencies to be merged in 1997 and for the complete restructuring to be executed by the year 2000. RTVC and Brotherhood officials have suggested it would take that long or longer.

■ Would it be possible for the North American Mission Board to have offices in more than one location?

Both Johnson of the RTVC and Williams of the Brotherhood Commission have floated this idea, and some of their trustees favor it as well. The idea would be to link the three units of the new North American Mission Board by computer.

Asked if the Program and Structure Study Committee was open to this possibility, Chairman Mark Brister replied simply, "No."

Committee member Ronnie Floyd of Arkansas said leaving the RTVC in Fort Worth is not an option. "If we're going to have an entity called the North American Mission Board, we do not want them spread out in three parts of the country."

■ Would the RTVC and Brotherhood Commission gain resources through the merger with the much-larger HMB?

Trustees and staff from both Brotherhood and RTVC have hinted at this. Program and Structure Study Committee member Floyd mentioned it in responding to a question about how the RTVC will pay for moving its facilities.

"Because the finances of the present Home Mission Board are much greater than the finances of the RTVC, that is going to get them into a source, a pool, of financial strength that they've never known," Floyd said. He noted the RTVC would become "one of the major players in that source."

However, HMB President Lewis warned that financial pool may not be as deep as it appears.

The vision of extra money to spend is a "deception," Lewis said. The HMB has been "in a cutback mode about as long as I've been in this office," he said.

Lewis also expressed concern that the RTVC would "bring more liabilities than assets" to the marriage. He said he believes RTVC assets, even if the agency's

Fort Worth facility were sold, probably would not cover RTVC's current indebtedness of more than \$3 million.

■ Would the proposed structure of the North American Mission Board give appropriate balance between the various agendas it carries?

Trustees of both the Brotherhood Commission and RTVC have expressed concern that their entities would have lesser representation on the merged trustee board and therefore could get the short end of the resource stick.

Williams also has said repeatedly that he fears the "entrepreneurial" spirit of the Brotherhood Commission will be quashed under the larger bureaucracy.

On the other hand, even the largest partner coming into the merger faces the potential of de-emphasis, said Bob Curtis, chairman of HMB trustees.

The proposed structure places all of the HMB's current divisions and departments in one new division on the same level with "technology and communications" and "missions education and volunteers" divisions. Yet some current HMB departments include more personnel than the entire staffs of RTVC and Brotherhood combined.

■ How much momentum for ministry would be lost as energies are devoted to making the merger work?

All parties involved agree it will be a monumental task to merge the three agencies into one new entity. But no one can predict how much of a drain or boost to ministry that will be during transition.

Curtis said he fears the HMB's growing work in enlisting volunteers, starting churches and increasing SBC baptisms could suffer in the short term.

With reporting by Brian Smith and Shari Schubert of Missouri's Word & Way

BAPTISTS

REORGANIZATION OVERVIEW

ATLANTA—Here's a brief overview of the proposed reorganization of the Southern Baptist Convention to be considered by messengers to this year's annual meeting June 20-22:

■ **Origin:** Based on a motion made by a messenger to an annual meeting, the chairman of the SBC Executive Committee appointed a seven-man Program and Structure Study Committee to propose restructuring the convention's agencies. After an 18-month study, the committee presented its sweeping report last February and it was approved by the Executive Committee.

■ **Approval required:** The changes proposed in the reorganization must be approved by messengers to two consecutive SBC annual meetings.

■ **Historical context:** This is the biggest overhaul in the convention's century-and-a-half history, and the first major study of structure since 1959. Proponents say it will propel the denomination into the 21st century with a leaner organization and sharper focus on missions.

■ **Centerpiece of the plan:** A first-ever mission statement for the convention's work which says, "The Southern Baptist Convention exists to facilitate, extend and enlarge the Great Commission ministries of Southern Baptist churches, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, upon the authority of Holy Scripture and by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit."

■ **Paradigm shift:** The proposal replaces old "program statements," which define the parameters of work for the various SBC agencies, with "ministry assignments" aimed at serving the needs of local churches.

■ **Home missions consolidation:** A new North American Mission Board would combine the resources of three existing entities—the Home Mission Board, the Brotherhood Commission and the Radio & Television Commission. This agency would focus on "reaching the United States and Canada for Christ, using every appropriate means of evangelization and church planting."

■ **Funding changes:** The plan calls for a concentration of home missions dollars in states where Southern Baptists comprise less than 10 percent of the total population. The other, more established state conventions like Kentucky would be expected to assume funding for their own mission efforts, which have been funded jointly with the Home Mission Board.

■ **Name change:** The Foreign Mission Board would be renamed "International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention."

■ **WMU omitted:** The committee recommends the SBC's two mission boards "assume primary responsibility for promoting their own mission offerings," the Lottie Moon foreign mission offering and the Annie Armstrong offering for home missions. Traditionally, Woman's Missionary Union, an SBC auxiliary, has claimed the lead role in promoting the annual offerings, which provide about half of the support the mission boards receive. The proposal also gives WMU's traditional missions-education assignment to the North American Mission Board and the task of providing women's ministries, also previously carried by WMU, to the Sunday School Board.

■ **New assignments:** The Sunday School Board would take on new assignments for ministries to men and women, stewardship education and capital fund-raising. The SBC Executive Committee would gain additional responsibility for managing endowment funds invested on behalf of SBC agencies and promoting the Cooperative Program.

■ **Agencies eliminated:** Five Nashville-based agencies would be eliminated—the Stewardship Commission, Education Commission, Historical Commission, the Southern Baptist Foundation and the Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary.

■ **History shared:** With the elimination of the Historical Commission, responsibility for maintaining the SBC's historical records would be given to the six seminary presidents.

Reorganization plan shows no price tag

By Shari Schubert
Missouri Word & Way

ATLANTA (ABP)—The most massive reorganization ever of the Southern Baptist Convention will come to a vote June 20-22 without a price tag.

Southern Baptists will be asked to exchange their current denominational structure—19 agencies and institutions spending \$631 million a year—for a streamlined 12-agency structure that will cost ... well, no one knows.

The reorganization is proposed by a seven-member Program and Structure Study Committee, which says the Southern Baptist denominational machine run smoother and cheaper. Money will be saved by reducing the number of agency trustees and eliminating duplicated support services, the committee says.

But some observers are asking why the Program and Structure Study Committee did not include any estimates of expected savings or anticipated costs.

"It is simply impossible to give an exact dollar figure," said committee Chairman Mark Brister, pastor of Broadmoor Baptist Church in Shreveport, La. "We do know that substantial savings will come."

That assumption has been questioned by several affected agencies.

Trustees of the Brotherhood Commission, which is eliminated in the plan, noted that claims of improved fiscal efficiency and more effective performance "are not substantiated by any data included in the report."

The Brotherhood trustees asked for further study, "to include impact statements and standard business case documentation."

Brister maintains that doing a cost study was not the committee's responsibility.

Asked if any estimates had been

made of costs or savings related to the committee proposal, Brister responded: "To do a study of the depth that you are talking about would have required an outside consultant and cost Southern Baptists hundreds of thousands of dollars. We (the committee members) completely volunteered our time.

"Our purpose was to look at structure," Brister continued. "We did. Cost savings was not the goal, but it (is) one of the many wonderful results. Our goal was to affirm who we are as Southern Baptists, and make sure that our denomination fulfills the mission."

The Brister Committee anticipates significant cost savings by reducing the cost of travel, meals and lodging for trustees attending meetings of SBC boards. If the committee's recommendations are adopted, the number of trustees serving SBC agencies would be reduced from 917 to 621.

The frequency of trustee meetings and the amount spent on each meeting varies from agency to agency.

The Home Mission Board has three meetings per year of its full 90-member board, spending about \$45,000 per meeting.

The Radio & Television Commission spends \$12,000 to \$15,000 for each meeting of its 30-member board, which meets three times per year.

If a similar expenditure of \$1,500 per year per trustee were typical for other agencies, elimination of 296 trustee positions could save more than \$400,000 a year. But that represents only half of 1 percent of the SBC's total budget.

The Program and Structure Study Committee also anticipates money can be saved by downsizing and by consolidating services that currently are handled separately for different agencies.

The committee proposal does not specify what jobs would be eliminat-

ed. That is an "implementation matter" that would have to be determined by the trustees, Brister said.

Richard McCartney, former executive vice president of the RTVC, speculated the merger could save hundreds of thousands of dollars in personnel costs.

But moving the RTVC studios from Fort Worth to Atlanta could cost several million dollars, he added.

If the operation is moved to Atlanta, McCartney said, "we're looking there at several million dollars worth of building (costs), probably considerably more than our present facility would get in a sale, simply because not too many people are looking for television production houses, and Fort Worth is now in a fairly depressed building market."

The Brotherhood building in Memphis, Tenn., is estimated to be worth about \$1.25 million. Prior to the release of the restructuring report, officials had been working toward the possible sale of that building and construction of a new headquarters in Memphis at an estimated cost of about \$3.75 million. That proposal now is on hold.

Other potential costs include:

■ Relocating employees.

■ Severance benefits for employees whose jobs are eliminated.

■ Employee time spent planning and implementing the restructuring.

■ In-house or contract labor to merge various services and computer databases.

■ Legal fees for changing articles of incorporation, preparing articles of dissolution and articles of merger and rewriting bylaws.

Many of the costs of implementing the restructuring are one-time expenditures. Anticipated savings presumably would be ongoing. But no documentation is available to show how long it would take for ongoing savings to recover front-end costs.

Lee Beaver, a retired St. Louis businessman and former Missouri Baptist Convention president, said that ideally, a for-profit company considering a merger or reorganization would want to recover its costs in two years, although three-to-five years would not be unheard of.



SBC messengers advised to travel by Marta

ATLANTA (BP)—If you're going to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Atlanta, plan ahead to avoid traffic delays and other obstacles, officials advise.

Major construction projects are underway across the area in preparation for next summer's Olympics. Construction could tie up International Drive, a key traffic artery for the Georgia Dome and Georgia World Congress Center, noted Jack Wilkerson, convention manager.

Even without construction delays, Atlanta's busy highways frequently slow to a crawl during peak morning and afternoon commuting times.

The best advice for messengers is to travel by MARTA, Atlanta's rapid-rail system, Wilkerson suggested. MARTA has been cited as among the nation's most efficient and safest

mass-transit systems. It serves the major convention sites, as well as downtown and midtown hotels and the airport.

Special four-, five- or six-day MARTA passes for unlimited travel will be available for \$8, \$9 and \$10, respectively, Wilkerson said. MARTA passes will be sold in the vicinity of the SBC registration area in the Georgia Dome. Tokens for single rides on MARTA cost \$1.25 and may be purchased at any MARTA station.

Annual meeting sessions will be held in the new Georgia Dome, while several other events and the exhibit hall will be housed in the adjacent Georgia World Congress Center.

Both the Georgia Dome and the Georgia World Congress Center are served by the same MARTA station, W1 on the west line.

The SBC registration area will be at the lower level of the Georgia Dome at Gate C.

Messengers who drive into downtown for each day's sessions may choose from a variety of parking options, Wilkerson said. Parking will cost \$6 per day in the Georgia Dome parking decks or varying amounts at independently owned parking lots nearby. Messengers also may park at outlying MARTA stations and ride the train into downtown.

Among other helpful tips:

■ Food will be readily accessible at concession stands in the Georgia Dome, at restaurants in the Georgia World Congress Center and in the food court of CNN Center.

■ The telephone number for the SBC office at the convention will be (404) 865-7300.

BAPTISTS

State foundations question cutting SBC Foundation

By Greg Warner
Associated Baptist Press

ATLANTA (ABP)—Should the Executive Committee, which already oversees the Southern Baptist Convention's \$137 million annual budget, be allowed to manage another \$167 million in investments that benefit Baptist work?

That's what will happen if messengers to this summer's SBC annual meeting approve a major reorganization proposal. The plan calls for dissolving the Southern Baptist Foundation, the SBC's investment service, and giving its assets and assignment to the powerful Executive Committee.

Reorganization planners have said the Foundation possibly would function as a subsidiary of the Executive Committee.

Although the Foundation produces about \$10 million a year in income for SBC agencies and other Baptist causes, its work goes on largely unheralded. Talk of its elimination has ignited no firestorms of protest among Southern Baptists, who are more concerned with how the proposed restructuring affects Woman's Missionary Union and mission work.

But the proposal has caught the attention of the Foundation's best customers—the 32 state Baptist foundations, who account for almost half of the money invested through the national agency.

"We do not believe that combining the board of directors of the Southern Baptist Foundation with that of the Executive Committee will serve the best interests of Southern Baptists," wrote Robert Ross, president of the Association of Baptist Foundations, in a letter to SBC leaders April 5.

The state foundations were set up to help Baptists and others invest their money through means such as wills and trusts and distribute the income, usually to Baptist causes.

Some of those state foundations—at least the larger ones—manage their own assets. But most invest at least some money in the SBC Foundation.

Some of the smaller state foundations are administered almost completely by the SBC Foundation.

Southern Baptist agencies likewise invest their reserve and endowment funds through the SBC Foundation, although the Foundation won't say which agencies or how many. And the Foundation's 35 trustees include representatives of each of the SBC agencies.

Those same SBC agencies, which often are the beneficiaries of the trusts and wills managed by the Foundation, receive most of their funding through the Executive Committee. Assigning the SBC's investment service to the Executive Committee would create at least the appearance of impropriety, several state foundation directors said.

A conflict of interest could result when the Foundation becomes "answerable to the beneficiary," namely the Executive Committee and its related agencies, said George Borders, president of the Florida Baptist Foundation.

"We are concerned with a healthy distance that should exist between the boards of the Southern Baptist Foundation and the Executive Committee due to the fiduciary responsibilities inherent in managing trust and endowment funds," wrote Ross, president of the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma. Ross asked for a meeting with SBC leaders to air the group's concerns.

Other concerns expressed by state foundation executives include:

■ That the Executive Committee will be tempted to use Foundation investment decisions to pursue its own moral or political agenda. Last year the Executive Committee tried to withhold funds from the SBC Annuity Board until that agency could guarantee it was not investing in any companies that endorse abortion.

■ That replacing the Foundation's current trustees with Executive Committee members will deprive the institution of experienced money managers and financial experts, considered one key to its past success.

■ That transferring the Foundation's assets—including complex endowments and trusts—to the Executive Committee will create a web of legal complications.

■ That by leading the Foundation to do more estate planning for potential benefactors—a task previously left to the state foundations—the Executive Committee could spark competition between the state and national levels. Benefactors could be led to endow the Cooperative Program, which the Executive Committee controls, at the expense of colleges, children's homes and other traditional beneficiaries.

Despite these issues, the state foundation directors' primary concern is with the Foundation's autonomy.

"The independence issue is THE issue," added the SBC Foundation's president, Hollis Johnson. "People want independent folks managing their money."

That's no ill reflection on the members of the Executive Committee, Johnson said. It's just the nature of the business.

Borders and others are concerned that those who have trusted the Foundation to manage their investments will lose confidence in the institution if it loses its independence. More than 1,200 accounts could be moved somewhere else if problems were perceived.

Concern over the Foundation's independence is part of a larger debate over the Executive Committee's place in a revamped SBC.

Under the reorganization plan, which eliminates seven of the SBC's

current 19 agencies, the 80-member Executive Committee would take over the roles of the Foundation as well as the Stewardship Commission, which promotes financial support of the Cooperative Program, the denominational budget.

As a result, the Executive Committee, which already decides how to spend Cooperative Program money, also would determine how it is raised and how some of it is invested.

Proponents say those changes are necessary to streamline an unwieldy denominational structure. But critics fear the expanded role of the Executive Committee represents a dangerous consolidation of power in a committee that has proved itself susceptible to denominational politicking.

"It was never intended to become a super committee with hierarchal authority, but that is what it has become," Slayden Yarbrough, a professor at Oklahoma Baptist University, wrote recently in the college's newspaper. Yarbrough is chairman of trustees of the SBC Historical Commission, another of the SBC agencies marked for elimination.

"Using its power of allocation and appropriation of funds, it has placed great pressure upon agencies to conform to its political agenda," Yarbrough wrote. "In so doing, it has violated the bylaws of the SBC constitution ... that 'The Executive Committee shall not have authority to control or direct the several boards, agencies and institutions of the convention. That is the responsibility of trustees elected by the convention and accountable directly to the convention.'"

Morris Chapman, president of the Executive Committee, said such fears are unfounded.

"Southern Baptists have always been careful not to empower any one entity with authority over other entities," said Chapman, the SBC's chief executive. "The Executive Committee understands that it exists to serve our churches across the country and to be a facilitator among the SBC entities. Nothing in the report gives any added power or leverage."



Resolution on repentance for racism gaining momentum

By Ferrell Foster
Illinois Baptist

ATLANTA (ABP)—When Southern Baptists celebrate their 150th anniversary, they will be asked to repent of the racism most agree played a central role in the founding of their convention.

Two Southern Baptist Convention agencies and a group of Baptist leaders from metropolitan areas have submitted resolutions on racial reconciliation to the SBC resolutions committee. The committee will decide on the resolution they will present to messengers at the SBC annual meeting in Atlanta June 20-22.

All three proposals note Southern Baptists' connection to slavery in the last century and call on today's Baptists to repent of racial bigotry in their own lives.

"We acknowledge that slavery is

where we began," said Jere Allen of Washington, D.C., a leader among a group of metropolitan ministers who have submitted one resolution for consideration. The metropolitan ministers' resolution already has been adopted by several associations and state conventions.

The SBC Christian Life Commission hosted a "Racial Reconciliation Consultation" May 22. Participants, including about equal numbers of Anglo and African-American Southern Baptists, produced a second resolution for consideration.

Earlier in May, the SBC Historical Commission approved a "Declaration of Repentance and Rededication."

These three proposals, along with other information, are being forwarded to the resolutions committee for consideration, said Mark Coppenger, vice president for convention relations for the SBC Executive Commit-

tee.

Supporters of a resolution on repentance say timing is significant since this year's convention is meeting in the heart of the South and on the SBC's 150th anniversary. The SBC was formed in 1845 largely in a dispute with Northern Baptists about whether slaveholders could be missionaries.

The 37,000 churches affiliated with the SBC include about 1,000 predominantly black congregations. In recent years, the SBC Home Mission Board has allocated major resources for starting and strengthening African-American churches.

But some within the SBC believe the convention's past is weighing down current efforts in missions and evangelism. Southern Baptists have used resolutions to condemn racism before, but they have not spoken to the role of slavery in the denomina-

tion's founding, said Allen, executive director of the District of Columbia Baptist Convention.

Although today's Southern Baptists did not participate in the practice of slavery, the resolution proposed by Allen's group explains, "We continue to reap the bitter harvest of the resulting inequality."

Southern Baptists can't repent of the sins of their forebears, Allen said, "but we acknowledge that slavery is where we began."

Some people, especially in the North and Northeast, still believe the SBC is a "racist denomination," Allen said, "and it is hurting our efforts to reach out to more blacks as well as whites in these areas."

Allen said white Southern Baptists need repentance "for our own healing." He likened the situation to an adult who has refused to acknowledge abuse as a child.

Critics fear the expanded role of the Executive Committee represents a dangerous consolidation of power in a committee that has proved itself susceptible to denominational politicking.

Although today's Southern Baptists did not participate in the practice of slavery, "we continue to reap the bitter harvest of the resulting inequality."
From a proposed resolution on racism

BAPTISTS

35 ethnic leaders meet with Mohler and Brister

Henry will allow debate on restructuring

ORLANDO, Fla. (BP)—Messengers to this year's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention will be given adequate time to discuss the proposed restructuring of the denomination, President Jim Henry has pledged. "I want to give the people opportunity to discuss the recommendation and to ask questions," Henry said. The seven-member committee which drafted the restructuring proposal has discouraged any attempt to amend the report. While Henry said he would allow for discussion, he did not indicate whether he would rule any proposed amendments out of order. Henry said he will meet with his six parliamentarians in Atlanta to "determine the best way to present the report and give people a chance to respond. We will follow 'Roberts Rules of Order, Newly Revised' concerning amendments. "I will do everything possible to be fair, and I have six capable brothers to help me. I want the people to have freedom to speak," Henry said.

By Mark Wingfield
News Director

LOUISVILLE—About 35 language and ethnic leaders outlined concerns about the proposed reorganization of the Southern Baptist Convention during an informal meeting with two members of the SBC Program and Structure Study Committee June 2.

Afterward, the Home Mission Board official who convened the meeting said he was "very encouraged."

However, the two representatives of the restructuring committee—Mark Brister and Al Mohler—apparently were not able to make any specific pledges in answer to the ethnic leaders' concerns. The restructuring proposal is now out of the committee's hands, and its fate and implementation lie with the Southern Baptist Convention and its Executive Committee.

Russell Begaye, director of language church extension with the HMB, convened the meeting in conjunction with Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. No press representatives were invited to observe the meeting, but Mohler, Begaye and two other language missions leaders agreed to an interview afterward.

Begaye said the 35 language and ethnic leaders represent a wide range of responsibilities and ethnic groups. "The key word we were looking for was 'intentionality,'" Begaye explained. "Ethnics must be intentionally involved in the denomination."

Ethnics must no longer be "stepchildren" in the SBC, he said. "We want to be a part of the new structure."

Based on this theme, Begaye said the language and ethnic leaders outlined four primary concerns about the restructuring proposal:

■ A desire for the SBC's language and ethnic work to retain a national strategy rather than opening the door to many regional strategies.

As written, the restructuring proposal calls for most old-line Southern states to assume total control of home missions work within their borders. Language missions leaders said they fear this will lead to neglect of language and ethnic work in key states due to a lack of resources and strategy.

Mohler said this should not be a threat to language and ethnic strategy, since the new North American Mission Board still will carry a mandate for developing national strategies. However, he did not suggest any means by which the North American Mission Board will hold sway over large state conventions that may no longer receive funding from the mission board.

Also, the idea of making the old-line states more self-sufficient was not the committee's, he said, but is merely a re-emphasis of a goal previously adopted by the SBC.

■ That the new Great Commission Council—intended to be a coordinating group between the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board—must include some ethnic leadership.

As suggested in the committee's proposal, this council will be comprised of 14 people, by virtue of holding administrative or trustee positions with the two mission boards. Few, if any, of those positions currently are held by ethnics, noted Daniel Moon, an HMB consultant on Korean ministries.

The language missions leaders suggested a change should be made in the criteria for who sits on the Great Commission Council to ensure ethnics will have a place at the table.

Mohler called this a "keen suggestion" which he will be "pleased to forward" to those responsible for implementing the reorganization. However, no change will be recommended by the committee before the report is presented to the SBC annual meeting for a vote, he indicated.

■ How the global ministries of Southern Baptist ethnics will be included in the reorganization.

The current SBC structure does not take full advantage of all Southern Baptist ethnics have to offer, the leaders said.

Ethnic leaders have promoted several ideas that have not been embraced in the current SBC structure, but which ethnic leaders would like to see included in the new structure.

For example, the Foreign Mission Board currently won't appoint an ethnic person to serve as a missionary in his or her home country, Begaye said. Ethnic leaders think it would make good sense to send ethnic missionaries to countries where they already know the culture and language.

Another issue is "how ethnic fellowships can partner with the SBC to send missionaries into countries where they have affinity groups," Begaye said.

Mohler and Brister apparently offered no concrete answer to this question, saying the end results will be determined by those who manage the new SBC structures.

■ The "silence" of the reorganization committee on ethnics and language missions.

While the report makes occasional references to "all people groups," it does not explicitly address the presence of the SBC's large number of ethnic and language groups. Language missions leaders have wondered why their influence was not mentioned and why no specific statements were made to highlight the importance of language missions.

Mohler said the committee did not intend to send any negative signals. "It is unfair to criticize the report for its silence on any number of issues," he said.

During the interview session after the meeting, Mohler spoke effusively about the importance of language missions work and of giving language and ethnic church members opportunities for national leadership.

"Hearing the statements Dr. Mohler has made—even in this interview—is very encouraging," Begaye said. "I sense a willingness to bring ethnics into the structure of Southern Baptist life."

Southern Baptist ethnics have criticized the makeup of the seven-member Program and Structure Study Committee, which included no ethnics, no blacks and no women.

In the post-meeting interview, Mohler was asked if the positive dialogue led him to believe ethnic representation should have been included on the restructuring committee.

He said: "I believe God called together seven men who were able to work together in remarkable harmony and consensus. I am thankful for our committee. ... However, we didn't name ourselves."

Now that the reorganization plan has been laid, in the next phase of implementation, "without question ethnic leadership must be central partners," he added.



HMB president asks to postpone restructuring decision

Continued from page 2

the HMB/NAMB how and where to do missions," Lewis wrote.

■ Costs, impact and projected savings of the merger of three agencies into one North American Mission Board. "It appears to me that a recommendation of this magnitude should be supported with adequate data and cost projections," Lewis wrote. "Doesn't the Bible decry the foolishness of setting out to build a tower without having carefully counted the cost?"

■ A mission statement for the proposed new agency that "seems to minimize the important relationships we have with associations, state conventions and ... churches" as partners in missions strategy.

■ The formation of a new Great Commission Council to coordinate work of the SBC's two mission boards. The two boards currently communicate through an interagency council with no authority. The restructuring proposal, however, seems to place the Great Commission Council in an authoritative role over the two mission boards with reporting re-

sponsibilities to the convention and Executive Committee. Such a move could usurp the role of the mission boards and bring the mission boards "more tightly under the control of the Executive Committee," Lewis said.

■ Giving the North American Mission Board primary responsibility for promoting the annual Annie Armstrong home missions offering. Lewis said the HMB already works to promote the offering, in cooperation with other agencies, but he wishes the report "had contained a strong affirmation" for Woman's Missionary Union, the SBC's auxiliary, "and a word of appreciation for their illustrious history of mission support."

■ Giving the North American Board responsibility for Canada. Currently the HMB and Foreign Mission Board cooperate in Canada. Since Canadian Baptists choose to function as an autonomous national body rather than a subsidiary of the SBC, "it appears to me it would be more appropriate for them to be serviced by the International Mission Board," successor to the FMB, he said.

■ A recommendation that larger

Baptist state conventions assume greater responsibility for their own mission work while the North American Board focuses energies in new-work areas. This element of the plan "has the potential for the most serious repercussions," Lewis said.

The change would hinder Southern Baptists' national strategy by effectively reducing the board to a regional entity, he said. Also, he noted, Baptists are losing ground in the South, making it an area of greater, not of diminished missions need. A denominational strategy needs to focus on large cities, Lewis said, including many in the South.

Lewis also questioned new terms used in the report to describe areas of the board's work, limiting its personnel assignment to "career" missionaries (most HMB appointees now are mission pastors funded only part-time by the board) and giving the North American Board responsibility for "direct" mission strategies, presumably in place of cooperative, joint-funding arrangements with state conventions and local churches.

Should the recommendation not

be referred back to the Executive Committee, it is "imperative" that amendments be allowed at the convention, Lewis said, citing speculation that any attempt to amend the report from the floor might be ruled out of order.

In his response to Lewis, Chapman said the restructuring committee and other SBC leaders desire for the report to be adopted as a whole. However, "the final decision rests with the messengers attending the SBC," he noted.

Chapman attempted to address Lewis' concerns point by point, often using phrases such as "nothing could be further from the truth" or "nothing could be further from the minds of committee members."

Chapman said Lewis' letter places scrutiny on the cost efficiency of the restructuring proposal. Cost savings "no doubt" will result, Chapman said, but the committee's emphasis was on vision rather than finances. He urged Southern Baptists to ask, "Are we financially driven or vision pulled?"

Compiled from Associated Baptist Press and Baptist Press reports

One version of Religious Equality Amendment leaked

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A key member of a political coalition of religion-based conservatives broke ranks May 22 and went public with a version of a proposed constitutional amendment to lower the wall of separation between church and state.

The move by Lou Sheldon, chairman of the Traditional Values Coalition, came under criticism by members of a broad working group of conservatives who have labored for eight months to reach consensus on a Religious Equality Amendment. Architects of the effort hope to draw wide support not only from conservative Protestants, but also Roman Catholics and Jews.

"He (Sheldon) violated an agreement among members of the working group" not to make anything public until there was a consensus, said Steve McFarland, director of the Center for Law and Religious Freedom, the advocacy arm of the Christian Legal Society.

Michael Whitehead, legislative counsel of the Southern Baptist Convention's Christian Life Commission, said his group also believed "the best approach is to keep working and not

discuss these texts in public." The CLC, he said, is not ready to endorse the text Sheldon made public.

Sheldon defended his decision to release one of several proposed amendments under review in conservative circles.

"The understanding was that we (the working group) would wait until it (the language) was somewhat jelled," he said.

But, he added, "we were getting beat up so bad by the left, being accused of wanting a theocracy," that it was necessary to respond.

Sheldon's move is one of many ongoing—and sometimes competing—efforts to shape the national debate over religious expression in public places.

Religious conservatives have long felt that Supreme Court decisions, especially the 1962 and 1963 rulings barring organized prayer and Bible reading from the public schools, have discriminated against religious belief.

Efforts to overturn those decisions, however, have been consistently frustrated in Congress and the courts.

With conservatives now in control of Congress, however, many groups

see an opportunity to redress their grievances.

The working group of religious conservatives represents one such effort. It includes legal experts from a number of organizations, including the National Association of Evangelicals, the Christian Legal Society, the American Center for Law and Justice, the Southern Baptist Convention Christian Life Commission, as well as the Traditional Values Coalition.

The three-paragraph text made public by Sheldon is one of several drafts of an amendment being developed by the group.

The version Sheldon released says government may not "abridge the freedom of any person or group, including students in public schools, to engage in prayer or other religious expression" wherever non-religious expression is permitted.

It also would allow the federal and state governments "to give public or ceremonial accommodation to the religious heritage, beliefs or traditions of its people."

Although some drafts of the proposed constitutional amendment have been leaked to the press in past weeks,

Sheldon's was the first public release of a specific text by a member of the working group.

McFarland said Sheldon's draft "is substantially in the right direction" but that he was "premature" to make the draft public. He criticized Sheldon's move on two counts.

First, there is no consensus on the language of an amendment, he said. The Christian Legal Society and the SBC Christian Life Commission, for example, have problems with the language on "ceremonial accommodation" because they fear it could allow government to promote one religion over another, he said.

In addition, McFarland said the working group had not yet consulted with potential supporters in the Roman Catholic Church, conservative Jewish groups or some mainline Protestant denominations.

The Constitution subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee, where a proposed amendment would first be considered, has announced it will hold hearings June 7 in Washington and June 10 in Harrisonburg, Va., examining "religious liberty and the Bill of Rights."

This version of the proposed Religious Liberty Amendment would allow federal and state governments "to give public or ceremonial accommodation to the religious heritage, beliefs or traditions of its people."

Diverse coalition gears up to defend RFRA

WASHINGTON (RNS)—A coalition of 60 religious and secular groups, often at odds on issues such as school prayer and abortion, have joined together to protect a landmark religious-liberty law many of them spent three years seeking to enact.

In a brief filed with the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, which covers Texas, Louisiana and Mississippi, the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion said federal District Judge Lucius Bunton erred in March when he ruled the 2-year-old Religious Freedom Restoration Act unconstitutional.

In addition to the Baptist Joint Committee and the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, the coalition includes the American Jewish Congress, the National Council of Churches, the U.S. Catholic Conference and the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as minority religious bodies such as the American Muslim Council, the Church of Scientology, the National Sikh Center and the Native American Church of North America.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act, known as RFRA, was craft-

ed to ensure that citizens have the widest possible latitude in religious expression.

Bunton, the first federal judge to rule the law unconstitutional, said RFRA intruded on the power of the courts because it sought to undo a previous U.S. Supreme Court decision on religious freedom.

In that 1990 case, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld a law banning the use of peyote, a hallucinogen, in ceremonies of the Native American Church. It greatly expanded government's right to interfere with and regulate a wide variety of controversial religious practices.

The widely hailed RFRA, passed in response to the peyote decision and strongly backed by the Clinton administration, requires government officials to show a compelling interest before interfering with religious expression. In addition, the government must prove it has used the least restrictive means available when it does interfere.

Bunton ruled RFRA was legally flawed in a case involving the city of Boerne, Texas, and Roman Catholic Archbishop Patrick Flores.

The case arose after Boerne denied a local Roman Catholic parish a permit to demolish part of its church, built in 1923, so it could expand its sanctuary. The city said the local church fell within a historic district.

The archdiocese, representing the Boerne parish, sued after it and the city reached a stalemate, claiming the city had violated RFRA by limiting the parish's free exercise of religion.

The coalition brief, prepared by the New York-based American Jewish Congress, blasted Bunton's arguments, saying that by passing RFRA Congress had enforced a constitutional right rather than usurped judicial power.

The brief drew parallels between the 14th amendment, adopted after the Civil War to correct court "mistakes" upholding slavery, and RFRA, which it said Congress passed to correct the high court's 1990 "mistake" in the peyote case.

Phil Baum, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, said he knew of no other church-state brief "so widely endorsed by such a broad variety of religious and civil liberties organizations as we see in this case."

Mainline leaders blast 'Contract with Family'

NEW YORK (ABP)—Any "contract" with the American family must advocate well-being for the poor because they also are part of God's family, a group of religious leaders asserted May 16.

The executive coordinating committee of the National Council of Churches adopted its statement on the eve of the release of the "Contract with the American Family" by Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition. The statement alluded both to the Christian Coalition's "contract" and the "Contract with America" Congressional agenda.

The committee acknowledged that opposing tax cuts for the rich, protecting immigrants and keeping a federal welfare program are not popular.

"We need to stand for what is right, even if it is unpopular," said United Methodist Bishop Melvin Talbert, president-elect of the National Council of Churches.

The executive committee said it intends to "reclaim the biblical concept of the whole family of God, not simply focus on the nuclear family."

The committee said its action was rooted in "concern for providing an alternative to what currently attempts

to be the single voice of Christians in the United States."

The leaders vowed to organize and mobilize a grassroots network including state and local ecumenical and interfaith groups.

"We have our own message for the president and for the Congress," said Mary Cooper, associate director of the council's office of public policy in Washington. "It is that people are more important than weapons stockpiles and tax cuts. The way to balance the federal budget is not by taking money out of the pockets of poor people."

CLC to aid Mississippi school

PONTOTOC, Miss.—The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has agreed to help a Mississippi school district under legal fire for school-sanctioned prayer and devotional readings over the intercom system.

The CLC and its legal counsel, Michael Whitehead, have agreed to help the school district defend itself against a lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union and People for the American Way.

The lawsuit challenges a longstanding practice of daily Bible readings and prayer over the school intercom system and an elective Bible history course offered at North Pontotoc Attendance Center in Pontotoc, Miss.

The case, *Herdahl vs. Pontotoc School District*, was filed in federal court in December 1994 on behalf of Lisa Herdahl, the mother of six children.

A district judge granted a preliminary injunction against the practice of students' praying over the intercom and set a trial date for March 1996 to consider making the injunction permanent.

Many residents of the rural Mississippi area have rallied in support of the school board.

On May 28, CLC Executive Director Richard Land addressed an early-morning prayer breakfast and morning worship services at First Baptist Church of Pontotoc.

"I want you to know that people all across America are praying for you," Land said. "Your struggle to exercise your heritage and your rights as citizens of the United States is an inspiration and an encouragement to many people across the country, and it is a symbol of the struggle for the nation's soul."

Whitehead said the Mississippi case provides "a classic example" of the need for a constitutional amendment on religious liberty. The CLC and other religious conservative groups are promoting passage of a Religious Equality Amendment in Congress.

Such an amendment would allow students to "pray in peace, over the P.A. system or over a peanut butter sandwich," he said.

Based on a Baptist Press report

WORLD VIEW

■ **The city government** of Sofia, Bulgaria, has moved one step closer to confiscating property where Baptists were building a school, orphanage and church. In its most recent action, Sofia's mayor and city council referred an investigation of the Baptist project to the Commission for Education and Culture, which claims to be hostile to it. European Baptist Press Service, which has followed the story, has called for prayer vigils to sway the mayor, council and Bulgarian people to stop persecuting Baptists.

■ **Eighty-nine Southern Baptist medical** volunteers recently treated 14,245 patients in clinics near Valencia, Venezuela, leaving in their wake 2,295 new Christians. The volunteers provided free, basic medical care in poor communities in and around Valencia, a central Venezuelan city about 80 miles west of Caracas, the capital. The 2,300 people who accepted Christ included a 112-year-old Venezuelan, the oldest patient treated.

80,000 South Korean students commit to missions

By Don Martin
SBC Foreign Mission Board

SEOUL, South Korea (BP)—Rain mixed with tears on the cheeks of thousands of South Korean students who dedicated themselves to missions May 20 in the Seoul Olympic Main Stadium.

More than 80,000 Korean students signed mission declarations at the "Student Mission 2000" meeting held in conjunction with Global Consultation on World Evangelization.

The students marched into the Olympic stadium in a cold, misting rain to commit themselves to missions. Many entered the stadium in a colorful parade with students carrying flags from every nation and singing "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations."

"This kind of intensity, this kind of commitment is moving," said Tom Wolf, teaching pastor of The Church on Brady in Los Angeles and chairman of the missions department at Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif.

The students pledged to pursue some form of overseas missions or serve as part of a corps of volunteers who will move quickly into North Korea if there is a unification of the two nations.

South Korean President Young-Sam Kim challenged students and the consultation delegates through a videotaped address. "Today's world is in great need of the love and service of fellow human beings and going beyond the interests of any one particular race," he said.

Later, raising their right hands, the

Korean students promised before these international witnesses to work for church renewal, to pray and work for Korea's unification and to dedicate themselves to world evangelization.

"I made a commitment to long-term missions," said He Jung Kim, 20. "I can't explain what God has said to me, but this evening confirmed that God is calling me. This was the biggest event in my life."

Byung Hoon Oh, 26, a student at Han Yang University, hopes to follow through with this commitment in China. "I had thought about doing something for God through missions. Tonight, I finally made that commitment. As a Korean, I have seen people come here to tell us about Christ. It's time now for us to go as God gives us a mission. Missionaries came

here to give away the gospel. It is now time to pay for that debt of service."

The evening program lasted nearly four hours. Despite the late hour, cold mist and sporadic rain, thousands of students lingered to pray.

Well after most of the stadium lights were turned off, many students bowed to pray in groups on the stadium track. Some stood while others kneeled on the wet ground, soaking their pants and dresses as they prayed on their knees for more than an hour.

In the stands, many of the delegates stayed to pray and watch a new generation of missionaries worship God.

"I felt as we watched those students pray for such a long time after the program that we were sitting in the bleachers of the future," Wolf said. "This is an excellent way to begin."

Central Asian Christians find unity in first joint meeting

SEOUL, South Korea (BP)—Christians from the former Soviet Union's Central Asian republics met together for the first time ever during the Global Consultation on World Evangelization, held May 17-25 in Seoul.

"What we saw happen in this meeting was phenomenal," explained a Southern Baptist worker with an unreached people group in Central Asia.

The Central Asia meeting brought together Christians from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan

and Turkmenistan.

"We had Kazaks, Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, Turkmen and Western expatriates from different churches. There were Russian Baptists, Pentecostals, charismatics—all sitting down at one time," the Baptist worker said.

At first the meeting was conducted in English and guided by Western workers who were mostly from the United States and Western Europe.

"Some of the (Western) expatriates had gotten together earlier and agreed that our common hearts' desire was to see nationals from each

area doing great things for the Lord in their home countries—sending their own missionaries, reaching their own people," the Southern Baptist worker said. "We wanted to step back and support and not lead."

As the meeting progressed, the Central Asians were asked to tell what God was doing in their respective countries. As they talked, the mutual need for trained church leaders emerged.

Excitement about this shared conviction spread.

By the last hour of the meeting,

discussion had shifted to the Russian language and the Western expatriates could only listen as the group caught hold of a shared vision.

"I don't think an expatriate said a word in the last half of the meeting. It was incredible to see this shift of leadership."

"We had Russian Baptists and Pentecostals—who traditionally haven't even believed each other to be real believers—talking together about their common needs in the work," the Baptist worker said. "The change in this meeting was incredible."

Building good memories

School is out which is welcome news for the children and teenagers in the care of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. I remember that as a student I was always glad to hear that final bell of the school year and know that I had a whole summer of fun to look forward to.

The staff of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children work hard to make summer a great time for the children in care because part of the healing process for young people who have been battered by life is to build positive memories. We want them to have good memories of the thrill of canoeing down a river to offset the terrible ones of being beaten. We want them to be able to think of the fun at vacation Bible school instead of the gnawing pain they once felt from going hungry. We want sounds of laughter to balance the screams of rage they once heard.

Our residential facilities and foster homes will be helping children build memories in many different ways this summer. Glen Dale young people are this week enjoying camp. During this week each year, the entire routine and schedule of the campus changes as young people participate in games,

crafts, exciting physical activities, and times of spiritual growth. In addition, children in the care of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children will be attending vacation Bible school, going on mission trips with churches, swimming and playing on their campuses, enjoying special programs and much, much more. A number of our young people will even be working to help others in need by taking part in World Changers building projects. This summer will be one of fun activity matched with plenty of time to rest, relax and simply enjoy not being in school.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Curtis C. Mooney

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment here to thank all of you who are making this possible for these young people. Many of you have recently sent us gifts that are being used to provide these many summertime activities. Even though you might not be there to see the smiles, hear the laughter, and feel the joy, I hope you take special pleasure in knowing you had a part in building some wonderful new memories!

Curtis Mooney is president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children, 10801 Shelbyville Rd., Middletown, Ky. 40243.

Thanks and yes

By Stuart Collier, chaplain
Tri-County Baptist Hospital

Some younger folks may not remember Dag Hammarskjold, but many of us remember him as a beloved secretary-general of the United Nations. He died tragically in an airplane crash in the 1960s en-route to a foreign country on official business.

In *Markings* he wrote these lines of poetic prayer:

For all that has been, Thanks!

For all that will be, Yes!

Those words are what we once called a philosophy of life. As I think about them I wonder if I can say the same about my life as a whole. I think about people in the hospital and their families and I wonder if they can see the picture big enough to say "Thanks" and "Yes."

That led me to think about Oklahoma City's bombing as a symbol of meaningless evil. Some people think it shows the world is a terrible place, evil is in control, and the end is near.

That, in turn, reminded me of John the Baptist who had foretold the coming of Jesus and baptized him with great hope. Then John was imprisoned and became very discouraged when Jesus did not seem to be the expected Messiah.

He sent his disciples to Jesus and asked, "Are you, or are you not, the one we are waiting for?"

Jesus answered, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: The blind receive their sight and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up and the poor have the good news preached to them." In other words, these are signs of God's Kingdom among us.

Just as the nation is overwhelming the victims' families with love, so Baptist hospitals are participating in God's love that, without fanfare, is healing and loving the world. Seeing Baptist Healthcare as the loving arms and hands of God gives it a lot of Christian meaning and lasting importance.

Baptist Healthcare Foundation helps make it possible through receiving, multiplying and passing on financial gifts from people who care and want to make a lasting difference in people's lives. The foundation invites you to join them in supporting the sharing of God's love in this wonderful way.

Any questions or comments concerning this article, Baptist Healthcare System or Baptist Healthcare Foundation should be directed to Charles W. Cox Jr., president of Baptist Healthcare Foundation, 4007 Kresge Way, Louisville, Ky. 40207 (502) 896-5003.

PEOPLE

Point of Grace to kick off YouthFest '95 Friday night

NASHVILLE (BP)—Point of Grace may not have walked away with any Dove Awards this year, but the contemporary Christian quartet has been soaring ever since being named new artist of the year at the 1994 Dove Awards program.

Although gaining an international reputation now, the group of four young women is no stranger to Southern Baptists. They got their start at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas, sang during last year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., and will perform at this year's SBC Pastors' Conference in Atlanta.

Point of Grace also will bring their upbeat gospel message to YouthFest '95, the Kentucky Baptist youth evangelism conference, this Friday night, June 9. More than 6,000 Kentucky teenagers and youth workers are expected to attend YouthFest '95 June 9-10 at the Frankfort Civic Center.

Point of Grace, formerly known as Say So, got its start at Ouachita in 1991 when Oklahoma natives Terry Lang Jones, Denise Masters Jones and Heather Floyd teamed up with Shelley Phillips of Little Rock, Ark. Their big break came two years later when they were "discovered" by a Word Records producer during a

"Praise in the Rockies" gathering in Colorado.

The women were offered a recording contract and their debut album generated six consecutive No. 1 hits—the only group in history to produce that many hits on its first album. The group's latest album, "The Whole Truth," already has produced another No. 1 hit with the single "The Great Divide."

The New York Times has described Point of Grace as "the Supremes of Christian rock." USA Weekend magazine has compared them to the secular pop group Wilson Phillips.

How has commercial success and growing fame impacted the group?

"It definitely was great to receive the new artist of the year award last year," Phillips noted. "It gave us validity and name recognition."

"We are so excited to be where we're at," she acknowledged, but even with the growing recognition coming their way, "we're still the same old girls."

Although the group didn't bring home any Dove Awards this year, they were nominated for four awards, including artist of the year, group of the year, inspirational album of the year and a song of the year nomina-

tion for the single "Jesus Will Still Be There."

Affirming the individuals and groups who did win this year, Phillips pointed out, "We're still very much the newest of the new. It was a bitter-sweet feeling but it was an honor to perform" on the nationally televised awards show.

Their apparent "overnight success" came more gradually, Phillips explained. "It built gradually into what it is day by day." Even so, it often feels like "all of a sudden we blinked and we had this ministry."

The women say they try to use their ministry to point out the simple truths of the gospel.

"People are ready to hear songs with blatant, simple, honest Christian lyrics," Phillips said. "I think people are ready to get back to the basics."

Citing the success of "Jesus Will Still Be There," Denise Jones added, "They're just hungry for simple truth. ... There are so many people searching for love and God is the answer."

During a recent concert in North Little Rock, Ark., Terry Jones told the enthusiastic crowd, "Our prayer this whole year is that we would be one in Christ. That's a message our churches need to hear today too—we are all one in Christ."



POINT OF GRACE Denise Jones, Terry Jones, Heather Floyd and Shelley Phillips compose the group Point of Grace, which will perform Friday night at YouthFest '95 in Frankfort.



PRESIDENT & CEO

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SEEKING: Baptist Children's Home, Carmi, Ill., is seeking applicants for the position of supervisor of residential care. Must have MSW or equivalent degree in human services, plus 2-years experience. Contact Doug Devore, P.O. Box 579, Carmi, IL 62821. Phone number: (618) 382-4164.

SEEKING: Full-time minister of youth. Send resumé to Karen Singleton, First Baptist Church, 200 South Lincoln Blvd., Hodgenville, KY 42748.

SEEKING: Hickory Grove Baptist Church seeks a full-time pastor. Please send resumé, tapes and videos to Bob Winter, 3051 Magnolia Ct., Edgewood, KY 41017.

SEEKING: Big Bone Baptist Church, Union, Ky., is accepting resumé for a part-time youth minister. Would prefer a husband/wife team. Send resumé to Big Bone Baptist Church, 11036 Big Bone Church Rd., Union, KY 41091.

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BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST

PEOPLE

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- Safety for Kentucky teams working in Russia.
- The need for another couple to work with partnership coordinators Larry and Joy Lindsey in Russia.
- Children's camps to be held across Russia this summer.
- Mission Service Corps volunteers who serve in Utah/Idaho.
- Kentucky medical teams who will go to Russia.
- Evangelism teams that will go to Utah/Idaho this summer to present the gospel in predominantly Mormon towns.
- Kentucky volunteers to begin to catch a vision of opportunities for the new Boston partnership, to begin in 1996.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by Ann Tatum

■ **CAMPBELLSVILLE**—David Henderson resigned as minister of education of Campbellsville Church to accept a similar position at First Church in New Port Richey, Fla.

■ **FORT WHITE, Fla.**—Truett George Sr., lifelong resident of Kentucky, died May 24 at his son's home. He was a charter member of Fourth Avenue Church for the Deaf in Louisville and a deacon since 1948. He was one of seven founders of the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf. George is survived by three sons, 11 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

■ **FRANKFORT**—Phil Ball resigned as administrative pastor of Immanuel Church May 31.

■ **LEWISPORT**—Friendly Grove Church called Randy Stallings Jr. as pastor and ordained him to the gospel ministry April 30.

■ **LEXINGTON**—East Hickman Church will celebrate its 208th anniversary June 25. Dick Wilkins will celebrate his 15th anniversary as pastor.

■ **LOUISVILLE**—Parkland Church called Harold Price as minister of education and activities. Price previously was minister of education at Warren Church in Augusta, Ga. He will begin his new ministry July 9.

Keith Fidler resigned as youth minister of Fern Creek Church.

Valley Station Church will celebrate its 40th anniversary Sept. 17. An afternoon service will follow a noon dinner on the grounds. For more information call the church at (502) 937-1730.

■ **MIDDLESBORO**—First Church called Lori Kirk as summer youth worker. She is a graduate of Centre College in Danville.

■ **MURRAY**—Westside Church called Rob Roy as minister of youth/recreation. He previously was part-time minister of youth at DeHaven Memorial Church in LaGrange.

■ **OWENSBORO**—William Alvey, retired pastor and member of Walnut Memorial Church, has earned the diploma in pastoral ministries from the Seminary Extension Independent Study Institute.

■ **RADCLIFF**—Gene Waggoner, pastor of Stithon Church, announced he will retire May 31, 1996. Waggoner will have served in a pastoral capacity 40 years and pastor of Stithon Church for 35 years. He will be available for pulpit supply, mission trips, Bible studies and conferences.

■ **TAYLORSVILLE**—Plum Creek Church celebrated its 185th anniversary June 4 with an all-day event. Pastor Daniel Brown spoke at the morning service. Kenneth Hollis and A.J. Hensley were afternoon speakers.

Two Kentuckians named by HMB

ATLANTA—Two women with Kentucky ties were appointed missionaries by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in May.

Lexington native Jennifer Fannin will serve in New Orleans. Former Louisville resident Tina Choi will serve in Philadelphia.

Fannin, a graduate of the University of Kentucky, will serve as assistant director of the Carver Baptist Center in New Orleans. She recently graduated from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with a master's degree in social services and from the University of Texas at Arlington with a master's degree in social work.

Fannin, who previously served as a semester missionary and US-2

missionary in New Orleans, said, "I believe God has called me to the mission field—in particular to the inner city."

Choi, a native of Seoul, South Korea, will serve as church and community director for Greater Philadelphia Baptist Association. She is a former member of Milton Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville and a graduate of the University of Louisville.

She and her husband, Bong, currently reside in Broomall, Pa., where she is a social worker.

"One of my personal goals would be to work with African-American and refugee children and prepare them to grow independently," she said.



Bong and Tina Choi



Jennifer Fannin

Class of 1995

The class of 1995 is now history, and we begin to think already of the class of 1996. While over half of the '95 class came to Oneida with low or failing grades, more than half graduated with advanced diplomas.

As I prepared for the commencement service, I reflected on the students who made up the class. Two or three had just been here a few months, others for two or three years. There were some who had been here for six or seven years.

As I thought of each of these young people, I remembered the struggles we had encountered with some. As hard as it had been to forgive "seventy times seven," I knew that some in the class would not be graduating if we had not been so forgiving and long-suffering.

Others in the class were less difficult. These young people had come from many backgrounds and had a variety of expectations. While they encountered some bad days along with the good ones, the good days far outnumbered the bad.

I also thought of those many students who had been a great blessing to us. These young people were always appreciative of the kindness and love they had received at Oneida. Many of these students had been Christian role models for other young people. They were able to show their peers that it is possible to be a Christian and still have fun and do many exciting things.

As my mind drifted, I remembered the story Jesus told about a master who was going into a far country. He called in three of his servants. He gave five talents to the first, two to the second and one to the third.

I thought of those parents who had brought their children to us. They were in effect trusting us to care for their children (talents) until they returned.

I realized that there were some in this class who had come to us with five talents. With our help, they had worked to double their talents. It had not always been easy. Because they had been given more, more was expected of them. Others came to us with two talents. They also worked to be good stewards. Finally, I thought of students who had come to us with less than the others, but made little or no effort to make improvements.

When I addressed the parents, family and friends, I told them it was time for us to return to them what they had entrusted to us. I told them I was very happy to report that the vast majority of these young people had doubled their talents.

Most who had received five talents were being returned with ten. These young people had been very busy and had invested their time wisely. They had studied hard and had made many sacrifices to reach their goals.

I was also happy to report that most who had received two talents now had four. These students had also worked hard to progress and achieve success. They had not been given as much and less was expected, but they had used wisely what had been entrusted to

them.

Then, just as in the story Jesus told, there were others who had been entrusted with less, and some of these had done very little to use what they had been given. They spent little time with studies or extracurricular activities. They were content to watch T.V. and skip homework. They decided that anything requiring much effort was too difficult. I was unhappy to return them with little to show for the opportunities they were given.

Some say the Bible is outdated. In looking at our graduates, I find it remarkably up-to-date!

W.F. "Bud" Underwood is president of Oneida Baptist Institute, Oneida, Ky. 40972

THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Facing the crisis of adaptation

Florida Baptist State Convention Executive Director-Treasurer John Sullivan recently wrote: "Every institution goes through a crisis of adaptation. Societal changes (and how rapidly they occur), patterns of education, hunger for stability are all factors in the crisis of adaptation." Stetson University recently lifted its 100-year-old ban against alcoholic beverages on campus. Sullivan responded, "My comments are from one Baptist preacher, but quitting or compromising on any social issue that destroys as many people as alcohol abuse is not acceptable as a spiritual model of positive adaptation."

I thought of Sullivan's comments when I strolled across the campus of a college with a national reputation and stated Christian emphasis. Near the student union building a "smoking triangle" was nicely landscaped for students.

My alma mater has replaced the traditional yearbook for a slick paperback to encourage diversity and student expression. Major articles, with photographs, featured the campus drag queen competition and homosexual roommates.

Our admissions director tells me our transfer prospects are increasing because many students are fed up with schools that have jettisoned moral standards.

Clear Creek has some standards: Students can't use tobacco, alcoholic beverages or narcotics. Sexual promiscuity can get you ejected without an appeal. We even have a dress code that calls for "decent, moderate and modest" apparel. Our men wear ties to class.

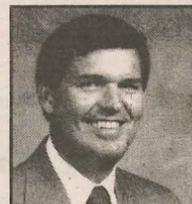
Without being legalistic we expect the campus family to "speak with love, kindness and compassion," and to "act toward others the way Jesus would in similar circumstances." We believe "each person involved in the college should maximize his influence for Christ both on and off the campus."

The academic dean and I share the search for and recommendation of faculty. We wouldn't even consider someone who thought of homosexuality as an "alternate lifestyle." Nor would we want someone who sacrifices Bible truth at the altar of contemporary culture. Christ is Lord of culture; we must adapt to his teachings.

There are differences of interpretation on secondary doctrinal issues. But there is a bottom line. I agree with John Sullivan: "If an institution cannot complement the ministry of the churches, it must be extremely careful not to negate it."

Bill Whittaker is president of Clear Creek Baptist Bible College, Pineville, Ky. 40977

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

MINISTRY

Junkyard church gives 'salvage' new meaning

CHICAGO (RNS)—Pastor Ellsworth Barclay needed hubcaps for his wife's Dodge Dynasty. Erma House, manager of Star Auto Rebuilders & Parts, was seeking a spiritual lift.

That was in 1991. And Sunday mornings at the South Side junkyard have never been the same.

Barclay, ordained in the Church of God, delivers weekly sermons in the open air, just feet from rusting Oldsmobiles, cast-off Cadillacs and trashed kitchen stoves. His congregants are the yard's employees, their relatives and a few others who roam this noisy, shabby strip of South State Street.

A recent Sunday ritual was like most others since Barclay began preaching at the site: A few men unfolded wooden chairs on the narrow, dusty sidewalk, hauled out a cloth-covered, makeshift pulpit and two pots of artificial plants, passed around a few well-worn Bibles and waited quietly for the service to begin.

"I'm used to a church building," said Exie Holden, the junkyard's

business manager, as she seated her three granddaughters. "But when God gives you a special place, it's OK to obey."

Barclay came to Star Auto Rebuilders nearly four years ago, after the hubcaps were stolen from his wife's car. When he mentioned his position as an associate minister at Chicago's Greater Bethesda Baptist Church, House asked for help.

"I was feeling kind of bad that day. A friend of mine was having some problems," House recalled. "I asked him to pray for her. ... I didn't think he'd come around this long."

But Barclay, an 81-year-old retired postal clerk, has acquired a devoted following, from Sunday's dozen parishioners to five times as many on Christmas and Easter. In this gritty, inner-city neighborhood, his sermons offer a weekly measure of peace.

"This guy makes you feel better," said James Moore, a recovering alcoholic who has worked at the junkyard since it opened a decade ago. "Since he came here, he taught me a

lot."

For Moore and many of the poor and homeless who frequent the area, the informality of the curbside ministry is more welcoming than a traditional church setting.

"A lot of people go to church just to see what their neighbors are wearing. I don't have to put on stockings. I don't have to duty up here," said House, wearing a ripped, yellow cotton shirt and blue straw hat. "It's just like family."

Throughout the service, stray dogs laze underfoot or curl up along the corrugated metal wall around the junkyard. Wooden crosses are nailed up, next to advertisements for used fenders, bumpers and stoves—"real good deals," the sign promises. Buses and cars lumber up and down the block. The occasional driver honks a horn.

"The first time me and my partner rode by, he said 'Now what ...? They even have a church on the street,'" said Eugene Williams, a Chicago police officer who idles in his patrol car

every Sunday, catching snippets of the sermon and dropping coins in the collection plate.

Worshippers are never daunted by the elements, even during Chicago's bruising winter months, Williams said. Barclay layers long johns and overcoats. The group huddles together for warmth.

"People said it couldn't be done," said Holden, lending a degree of elegance in her fur stole, black dress and matching hat.

Business is supposed to stop during the hour devoted to worship. But as Barclay launched into his sermon on this Sunday, two crews of firefighters came by to borrow a junked car for rescue practice. A young man stopped in for a refund on a faulty wheel cylinder. Another customer hoped to sell a truckload of scrap metal, but was stopped short by House.

"I'm trying to get the Holy Ghost in me so I can go and get my work done," she said, turning back to the hymn.

"I'm used to a church building," said Exie Holden, the junkyard's business manager. "But when God gives you a special place, it's OK to obey."

'Carpenter Shop' mobile unit to be featured at Atlanta SBC

By Jim Johnston
SBC Brotherhood Commission

COVINGTON, Tenn. (BP)—The way George Smith sees it, his barn is his Sunday school classroom.

"I can't teach, but I can build furniture," he said. "I think God wants you to do what you can to serve him. This is how I do it."

On a cool May evening, Smith and seven other volunteer members of Baptist Builders used their gifts to serve God. Smith's barn, half stocked with bales of hay and the other half converted into a workshop, was heavy with the scent of sawdust.

In one corner, a table under construction will be delivered to a church in Mexico. Elsewhere lay parts of 12 pews, two deacons' benches, a Lord's Supper table and a pulpit.

These pieces of church furniture won't be in Smith's barn long. Soon they will be transported to Atlanta, site of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, and then to Faith Baptist Church.

At the Atlanta SBC, Smith's barn will be replaced by the "Carpenter Shop," a working exhibit sponsored by the Brotherhood Commission. The annual meeting is the first stop for this new mobile woodworking shop. Later the Carpenter's Shop will be taken on a national tour, along with volunteers who will build affordable furniture for churches in need.

The Carpenter Shop was the idea of M.B. Howard, a 71-year-old Mission Service Corps volunteer from Covington, Tenn. He's been in the ministry of constructing furniture and toys for churches for more than 15 years, but he wasn't satisfied he and his volunteers were meeting enough of the needs.

So he decided to take his act on the road.

The 14-foot trailer is equipped with everything a craftsman needs to

build furniture, from drill presses to table saws. When it goes to a church or an association, all it needs is a few volunteers to transform it into a furniture factory.

Baptist Builders volunteer Mike Partin, retired from the Navy, has no doubt the Carpenter Shop will be a success. From his trips and association with Howard, he's seen what a ministry furniture-building can be. He's anxious to see the work he's doing in the old barn transported all over the country.

"I believe in missions," said Partin, chairman of deacons at Oak Grove Baptist Church near Covington. "This is a way to get involved. You're really giving people and churches something they need when you give them furniture."

"It's been great for me. My wife and I are thinking about getting a motorhome and going around doing missions work. We're just waiting to see where the Lord leads. But this is where it all started."

B.J. Avery had a similar start in missions. Howard enlisted him to work on a furniture project three years ago, and now the employee of Memphis Light, Gas and Water is using three weeks of his vacation time to volunteer for missions projects.

Avery traveled to Puerto Rico last summer on a World Changers youth construction project and will be the construction coordinator for this summer's World Changers project in West Memphis, Ark.

Avery's friends don't always understand why he chooses to serve and sweat during his time off from his job.

"They ask me sometime why I do this," Avery said. "They can't figure it out. I tell them the reason I do it is because it's important. It's important to serve the Lord and help people. And it makes me feel good. I just need a little time to go deer hunting. Other than that, this is my vacation."

Baptists & Methodists share spare

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)—The Oklahoma City bombing may have seriously damaged the building of First United Methodist Church, but it has led to a strengthened relationship between Baptists and Methodists.

First United Methodist Church, located across the street from the bombed federal building, sustained major damage in the blast. The 100-year-old church building must undergo extensive repairs, leaving its congregation without a home for several months.

Keith Arledge, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, saw the plight of the homeless Methodists and decided his church could offer help.

The two churches now share Trinity Baptist Church's facilities.

The Methodist church's need was "tailor-made for a Trinity response," Arledge said.

Each Sunday, the Methodists use the sanctuary while the Baptists are in Sunday school, then the Baptists use the sanctuary while the Methodists are in Sunday school. The facility also is open

to the Methodists other times during the week, and a Methodist staff member sits in on Trinity staff meetings to help coordinate church calendars.

"What we're trying to do is make our facility as open and accessible as we can," Arledge said. "It is working very well."

He said one key to success is the fact that the two congregations are very similar: They have similar praise-centered worship styles, are committed to reaching their community, have decided to stay

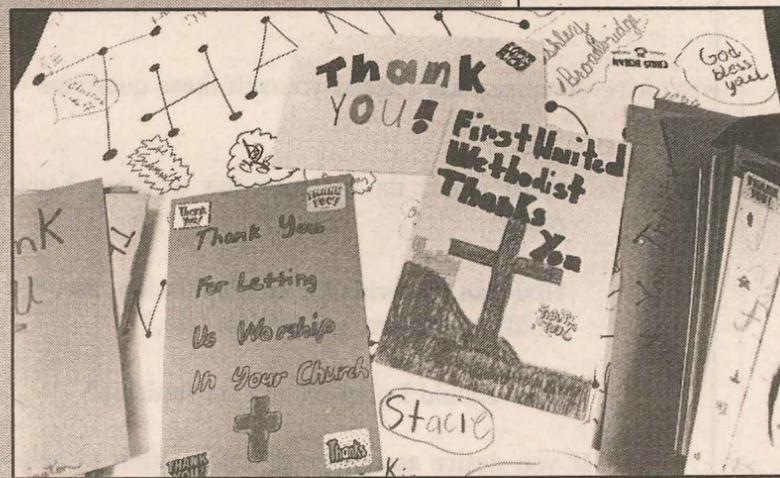
in the downtown area and are evangelical.

Arledge said the offer was extended without charging rent, but he said the Methodists have offered to help with utilities, custodial costs and parking lot security, as well as donating \$1,000 per month to the church budget.

First Methodist averages around 800 in worship services, while Trinity has around 350.

"With many of our older members, this brings back memories of when we used to fill the sanctuary on our own," Arledge said.

He said the church was happy it



could provide such a service to fellow Christians.

"We don't have a lot of money, and we don't have a lot of people," he said. "But we do have a large facility. We believe in being good stewards of this facility by using it wisely."

"This was just a response to a specific need," Arledge said. "It is in keeping with 1 John 3:17: 'If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?'"

THANKS Thank-you notes are displayed at Trinity Baptist Church in Oklahoma City from the youth of First United Methodist Church. The Baptist church is sharing its facilities with the Methodist church while repairs are made to the Methodist building. (BP photo by Jim Veneman)



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Left to right, Richard Carnes, president; Janet McCarter, administrative secretary; Barbara Spencer, public relations assistant; Laurie Valentine, trust counsel.

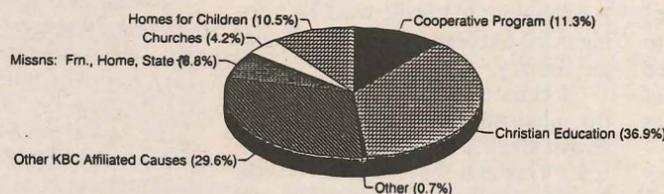
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-- You may have asked yourself these questions --

- What can I do to leave the world a better place?
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