

June 18, 2002
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Dated Material — Deliver by Wednesday, June 19

SBC messengers embrace new president, EKG initiativeBy **Trennis Henderson**
& **David Winfrey**
Editor & News Director

ST. LOUIS—A new strategic ministry plan and a new convention president were embraced by messengers to last week's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in St. Louis.

The two-day event was punctuated by messages from President George W. Bush, former Taliban prisoners Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer and Campus Crusade for Christ founder Bill Bright.

The annual gathering also saw its share of controversy as a speaker at the pre-convention Pastors' Conference labeled Mohammed a "pedophile" and homosexual activists attempted to disrupt SBC President James Merritt's convention address.

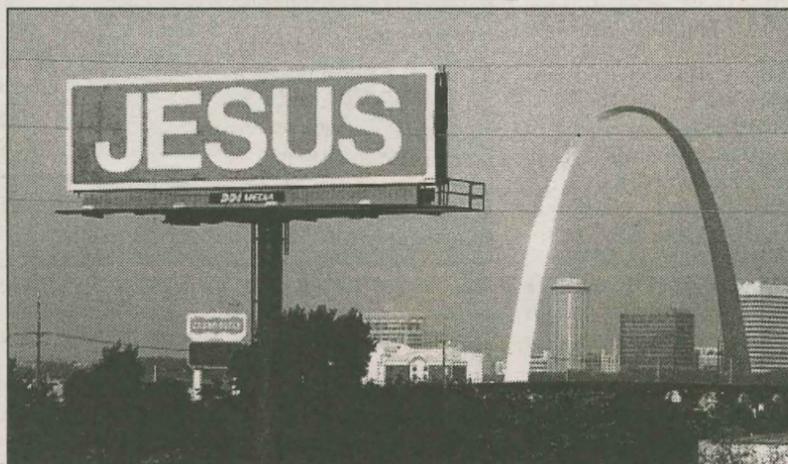
Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, was elected SBC president and Paul Pressler, a key architect of the "conservative resurgence," was elected first vice president, both in unopposed elections.

Messengers affirmed two major ministry initiatives. "Empowering Kingdom Growth" urges Southern Baptists to "seek first the King and His Kingdom" through "holy living, sacrificial service and global witness." "Kingdom Families," an emphasis of the Southern Baptist Council on Family Life, will debut next year during a Kingdom Families Rally in conjunction with the 2003 SBC meeting.

Speaking via satellite during the SBC's opening session, President Bush said Southern Baptists are "faithful followers of God and good citizens of America."

Baptists have influenced American history, championing principles of religious tolerance and freedom and "the ideal of a free church in a free state," he added.

"Since the earliest days of our republic, Baptists have been guardians

**SIMPLY JESUS** Billboards stating simply "Jesus" were displayed throughout St. Louis as the Southern Baptist Convention held its annual meeting in the Gateway city June 11-12. (BP photo by Bob Carey)

of separation of church and state, preserving the integrity of both," Bush said. "Yet you never have believed in separating religious faith from political life. Baptists believe, as America's founders did, that religious faith is the moral anchor of American life."

Curry and Mercer, relief workers in Afghanistan accused of sharing their Christian faith with Muslims, spent 105 days in Taliban captivity before being rescued last November by U.S. Special Forces.

"Muslims don't know that God loves them," Curry said. "We ended up showing the 'Jesus' film, and that's what got us into prison."

The two American women "got caught in the middle of some huge plan of God ... so the whole world would pray for Afghanistan like never before," she added.

Mercer said her prayer for all Christians "is that we would be people of faith and take God and His Word and go for it, no matter what the cost."

Urging Southern Baptists to seek spiritual revival, Bright said the keys to revival are to embrace the cross, die

to self, be filled with the Spirit, experience new life and "walk in the light."

The June 9-10 Pastors' Conference featured messages by retired Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North and former SBC presidents Adrian Rogers and Jerry Vines.

Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., sparked controversy when he described Islam founder Mohammed as a "demon-possessed pedophile."

Newly elected SBC president Jack Graham defended Vines' remarks as historically accurate but other Christian and Muslim leaders were quick to criticize Vines' comments.

Eric Vickers, executive director of the American Muslim Council in St. Louis, told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that Vines' statements are "offensive to Muslims, Jews and Christians."

"We need to educate him and pray for him," Vickers added.

Other convention business during the two-day meeting included:

■ Referring 10 motions proposed by messengers to various SBC entities for consideration, including two proposals seeking to rescind the re-

quirement of SBC missionaries having to sign an affirmation of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message statement. Other motions called for the SBC Executive Committee to recognize and accept gifts from only one convention in each state and urged the North American Mission Board to withdraw chaplaincy endorsement from any ordained female previously endorsed by the board.

■ Adopting 10 resolutions addressing such issues as the sexual integrity of ministers, partial-birth abortion, the war on terrorism and prayer for peace in the Middle East.

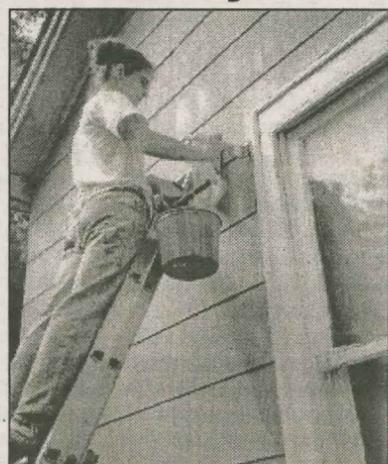
■ The defeat of Lee Porter, SBC registration secretary for 25 years, by Missouri director of missions Jim Wells. Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd, who nominated Wells, said it was "time we practice ... shared leadership" rather than elect Porter to a 26th one-year term.

This year's SBC annual meeting highlighted the theme, "The Highest Power for the Greatest Task." The gathering attracted only 9,609 messengers, the second straight year registration has dipped below 10,000. Continuing a trend toward fewer participants, this year's registration fell 16,000 short of the 25,607 messengers at the 1987 SBC annual meeting—the last time the convention was held in St. Louis. Prior to 2001, messenger registration had dropped below 10,000 only once in more than 25 years.

Prior to last week's meeting, hundreds of Crossover evangelism volunteers joined 80 area churches in ministering to their communities through door-to-door survey work, neighborhood parties, street evangelism and other activities. More than 1,800 people made professions of faith in Christ, according to Southern Baptist North American Mission Board statistics.

Next year's SBC will be June 17-18 in Phoenix.

With additional reporting by Marv Knox, Jennifer Rash, Charlie Warren and Mark Wingfield

Kentucky teens take hammers, paint brushes to HopkinsvilleBy **Clarissa Hutcherson**
Staff Writer**KENTUCKY CHANGER** Volunteer Emily London, a member of Horse Cave Baptist Church, puts the finishing touches on a house her team painted last week in Hopkinsville. The weeklong missions event, which involved nearly 200 teens, was one of three Kentucky Changers weeks scheduled this summer. (Photo by Clarissa Hutcherson)

HOPKINSVILLE—What do hammers and nails, nearly 200 sweaty youth and several run-down homes have in common? They were all part of Kentucky Changers in Hopkinsville last week.

The annual summer ministry of the Kentucky Baptist Convention Brotherhood department organized 16 teams from 15 churches from as far away as Barbourville in Eastern Kentucky and as nearby as just down the road.

A total of 234 teenagers and adult organizers and supervisors repaired damaged roofs, installed vinyl siding, painted houses and fences and accomplished other tasks for homeowners who could not afford the repairs or do them on their own.

The teams combined workers from various churches. Wendi Miller, a Kentucky Changer from Post Oak Baptist Church in Russellville, said the

weeklong experience taught her a lot about teamwork, especially how to get along with others.

The youth work hard for eight-hour shifts in the hot sun, but that isn't their only purpose for being there. They also minister to the people in the community, especially homeowners.

Youth are expected to prepare physically and spiritually for the week. Teams must first complete a missions experience in their own community before they can participate in Kentucky Changers, explained Dwayne Doyle, a KBC mission education specialist.

Youth also study "The Blue Print Devotional Book" during the two weeks before the trip. Written by two former Kentucky Changers, the book covers such topics as talking with non-Christians and interactions with homeowners and team members.

"The devotional really gets us in the mindset that it is not for us, but for God," said James Powell, a Kentucky Changer from Bethlehem Baptist

Church in Mount Eden.

Kentucky Changers also are expected to complete a follow-up mission project when they return home, Doyle said.

"A lot of youth get the idea that missions is a one-week trip that you go some place far away to do," he noted. "But Kentucky Changers teaches that missions is a lifestyle."

Tom Ashburn, a family doctor from Barbourville and team physician for the week, praised Kentucky Changers, noting it exposes youth to both service and worship.

"We were studying (the Old Testament book of) Nehemiah where they were building the wall around Jerusalem, a perfume salesman helped to build the wall," Ashburn said. "It is the same way here. We have cheerleaders, football players and more doing construction. ... The youth notice that the bookworm they used to look down to may actually be a great carpenter."

□ See Kentucky Changers ..., page 3

"Kingdoms built by man shall not endure. ... The only lasting kingdom is the Kingdom of God."

SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman

Ministry plan calls on SBC to pursue 'Kingdom growth'

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

ST. LOUIS—"Empowering Kingdom Growth," a long-term ministry initiative to "seek first the King and His Kingdom," gained messenger approval during last week's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in St. Louis.

The ministry plan took shape in an eight-member Cooperation Task Force formed two years ago during a joint meeting of state convention executive directors and SBC agency heads. The proposal, endorsed in February by the SBC Executive Committee, expanded the initial study group to a 12-member EKG Task Force.

The plan approved by messengers describes EKG as "an initiative designed to call individual Southern Baptists to renew their passion for the Lord Jesus and the reign of His Kingdom in their hearts, families and churches from which God can forge a spiritual movement marked by holy living, sacrificial service and global witness."

"How important is it for us to pursue the Kingdom of God?" SBC Executive Committee President Morris Chapman asked messengers. "Kingdoms built by man shall not endure; they have no lasting heartbeat. ... The only lasting kingdom is the Kingdom of God."

Playing off the proposal's "EKG" acronym, Chapman said, "The spiritual health of our nation is declining rapidly. The heartbeat is growing faint. The patient is growing weaker."

Insisting that "there's an emergency in the land," he added, "Many are in spiritual refugee camps starving to death for the Bread of Life. God is looking for a man, a woman, a teenager after His own heart who



EKG EVALUATION Unveiling the Southern Baptist Convention's "Empowering Kingdom Growth" ministry initiative, SBC President James Merritt, center, told reporters, "If this convention does business as usual, our best days are behind us, not ahead of us." Merritt, co-chairman of the EKG Task Force, was joined by co-chairman Carlisle Driggers, right, executive director of the South Carolina Baptist Convention and Morris Chapman, president of the SBC Executive Committee. (BP photo by Kent Harville)

will sacrifice self to live for Jesus' sake.

"EKG is not a program," Chapman said. "It's a vision. We're praying for God to transform that vision into a grassroots movement, one that will sweep our hearts clean."

Chapman said Southern Baptists seeking to be an effective part of EKG must ask themselves three questions: Am I a Kingdom person? If not, how can I be? If so, how shall I live?

"Enough of denominational competition. Enough jostling for positions," Chapman urged. He also encouraged Southern Baptists to put aside self-absorbed worship, sterile invitations, prayerlessness, worldliness, greed and pride.

The proposal adopted by messengers encourages "all Southern Baptists to give prayerful consideration in personal, congregational and denominational life to the challenge of seeking the King and His Kingdom."

Convention leaders signed a five-point covenant "with each other and every willing Southern Baptist," pledging to:

- "Make the Kingdom of God the priority of our own personal lives."

- "Dedicate the energies and resources of the ministries we lead to seeking first the King and His Kingdom."

- "Cooperate with each other and the family of Southern Baptists as we pursue Kingdom principles and practices."

- "Give ourselves to servant leadership that will assist and enable local churches in their ministry."

- "Pray that a new passion for Jesus breaks out among our people, our families and our churches from which God can forge a spiritual movement marked by holy living, sacrificial service and global witness."

EKG's launch comes one year after Southern Baptists concluded

their 25-year "Bold Mission Thrust" ministry emphasis. That effort, which sought to share the gospel with everyone on earth by the year 2000, fell short of several key goals in such areas as baptisms, church starts and Bible study enrollment. Much of BMT's momentum was sidetracked by the 20-year battle for control of the denomination.

SBC President James Merritt, co-chairman of the EKG Task Force, said a key difference between EKG and BMT is that the new initiative acknowledges "Southern Baptists alone cannot win this world to Jesus Christ; it's an impossibility. We must join hands ... with other like-minded groups."

"If this convention does business as usual, our best days are behind us, not ahead of us," he warned. "Our whole reason for existence as a convention is missions and evangelism. We've got to be about the business of being Kingdom-minded."

Noting that "we don't have set goals" to measure the success of EKG, Merritt said when Southern Baptists focus on Kingdom priorities, "the results will follow."

EKG is based on an emphasis developed a decade ago by the South Carolina Baptist Convention. Carlisle Driggers, executive director in South Carolina, serves with Merritt as task force co-chairman.

Reiterating that "this is not a program," Driggers described EKG as "simply calling us to be obedient to Jesus and helping His Kingdom come on earth."

"My hunch is many of the people in our churches are ahead of us" in pursuing Kingdom ministry in such areas as volunteer missions, Driggers added. He said convention leaders "have responded to what our people already are yearning for and doing."

Southern Baptist initiative seeks to build 'Kingdom Families'

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

ST. LOUIS—Pledging to help strengthen "Kingdom families," the Southern Baptist Council on Family Life highlighted plans for a "Kingdom Families Rally" in conjunction with next year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Phoenix.

The council, chaired by former SBC President Tom Elliff, was created during the 2000 SBC annual meeting. The nine-member group has spent the past two years developing a strategy to address moral and spiritual issues facing today's families.

"Something terrible is happening to families in America," said Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla.

Citing a number of examples of family crises, Elliff said statistics indicate 88 percent of the children who grow up in evangelical churches leave the church by age 18. He listed pornography, financial struggles and lack of meaningful conversation between parents and children as other problems plaguing the family.

A divorce rate among church members similar to that of unchurched people is another sign of family crisis, Merritt noted. He said the number of divorces in the nation affect an estimated 1 million children a year.

Emphasizing the need for effective premarital counseling, Elliff warned pastors against performing

weddings for couples who "don't meet the biblical requirements for marriage."

Pastors who do so, he added, "have forfeited not only your conscience but your calling and you've forfeited your privilege to minister to them at all."

"It's time for us to save the family," Merritt told messengers. It's time to build Kingdom families. Let's come home to the heart of God." That can be accomplished, he said, through a God-given strategy for Kingdom families.

While stopping short of sharing specific details about the plan to be unveiled next year, Elliff described it as "a simple and time-honored ministry for virtually divorce-proofing the families in your church."

In addition to an emphasis on premarital counseling, he said the strategy will call for Southern Baptists "to set aside at least one night every week where families listen to one another and to God."

The Kingdom Families Rally will be a two-hour event June 19, 2003. Scheduled speakers include Elliff; Gary Chapman, author of "The Five Love Languages"; and Dennis and Barbara Rainey of FamilyLife Today.

James and Shirley Dobson of Focus on the Family and author Beth Moore, president of Living Proof Ministries, will address the rally via satellite.

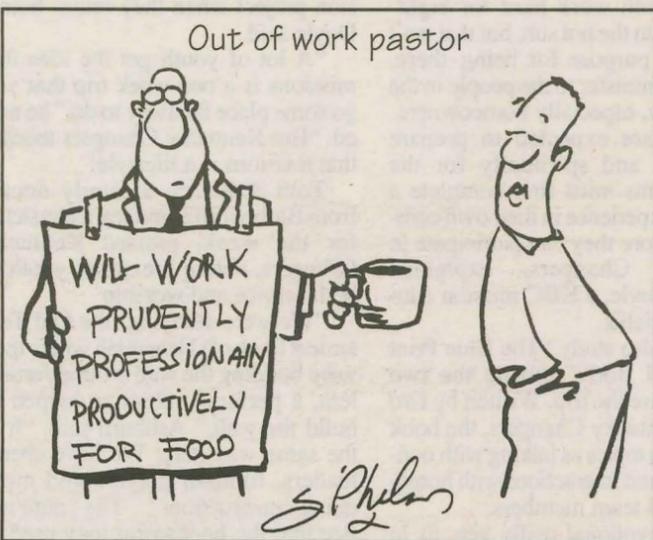
In addition to the Council on Family Life report, other Executive Committee proposals approved by messengers include:

- A 2002-03 CP allocation budget of \$176.9 million, a decrease of more than \$1.3 billion from the current year. The decrease mirrors a \$1.3 billion drop in CP giving during the 2000-01 fiscal year. Designated giving, however, grew by \$6.8 million last year.

- A 2002-03 SBC operating budget of \$7,305,652, including \$5.87 million from the Cooperative Program. The budget is an increase of more than \$200,000 from the current year but a decrease of nearly \$45,000 from CP gifts.

- An SBC bylaw revision specifying that proposed resolutions be submitted for consideration at least 15 days prior to the SBC annual meeting.

- Future sites for the SBC annual meeting, including Nashville, Tenn., in 2005 and Greensboro, N.C., in 2006.



Kentucky Baptists help with annual Crossover event

By David Winfrey
News Director

ST. LOUIS—LeAndrea Bell and Leah Hoffman were about to finish their morning assignment of door-to-door surveys when they knocked on a screen door and were greeted by the harsh barking of large dog standing on the other side.

No one was coming to the door, so the two teenagers from Bellview Baptist Church in Paducah wrote "Big Dog" on their survey sheet, wedged some information about a local church into the door and decided to move on.

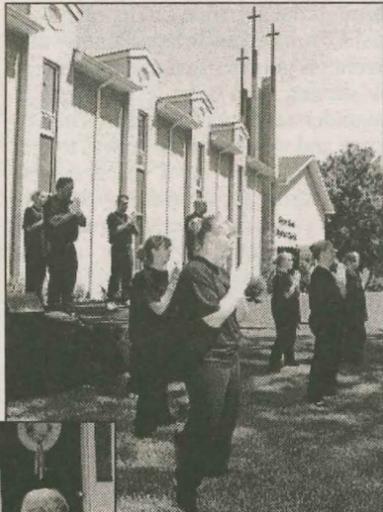
It was just one more adventure in their morning as they gathered information for Ballwin Baptist Church and talked about the Christian faith to people willing to answer their interview questions. The two already had interrupted two teenagers making out, interviewed an agnostic and bought brownies from a boy at a yard sale.

Bell and Hoffman were among the hundreds of volunteers from St. Louis and around the country who participated in Crossover, a concentrated effort to share Christ's love with St. Louis residents before the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Crossover dates back to 1989, from officials seeking to stem criticism for holding the annual meeting in Las Vegas added evangelistic work to the weekend program before the denomination's annual meeting.

More than 60 churches in the metropolitan area took part in Crossover St. Louis. Most either coordinated door-to-door survey work or hosted neighborhood parties. Other activities included prayer walks and visits to the employees at strip clubs in East St. Louis. Scores of out-of-state volunteers arrived early to help.

Chad Davidson, minister of music and youth at Bellview, said he had wanted for many years to bring a group to Crossover. "It's been a dream of our church and mine that we would



CROSSOVER ST. LOUIS More than 40 Kentuckians were in St. Louis for the evangelistic event. ■ Left: Bill Page, pastor of Crittenden Baptist Church in Crittenden (left), does door-to-door survey work with a St. Louis church member. ■ Above left: Members of Lebanon Baptist Church in Bagdad perform an interpretive movement at a block party. ■ Above right: (From left) Leah Hoffman, LeAndrea Bell and Kathy Steadham of Bellview Baptist Church in Paducah walk through a neighborhood where they spent the morning doing evangelistic surveys. (Photos by David Winfrey)

get to do a Crossover." The event helps teach out-of-state participants how to share their faith when they get back home, he added. "It's teaching them to love people. It's teaching them that they need to be a bold witness to their neighbors and their community."

For the surveys, the SBC North American Mission Board prepared maps and address lists for the pairs of people willing to knock on doors. The surveys ask residents what local churches can do to make a difference as well as the resident's views on matters of faith. At the end, the pollsters asked the residents if the survey team can explain their Christian faith and how the homeowners can be sure they are going to heaven.

Bill Page, pastor of Crittenden Baptist Church in Crittenden, visited homes with Jim Stahlman, a member at Bogey Hills Baptist Church.

"Have you done this before?" Page asked just before they started.

"Never," Stahlman replied.

"Well, don't worry," Page said. "He (God) does the saving, not us."

Page said he took a Sunday away from his own church to help another congregation because he wants to help

other churches get more deeply involved in evangelism.

He said Crittenden's members have seen 60 people become Christians through the FAITH evangelism program of LifeWay Christian Resources. "When you see that, you want other churches to experience that."

Coby Boyd, pastor of Bogey Hills Baptist Church, was grateful to have volunteers from Kentucky, Florida, Illinois and Maryland to knock on doors. "It's not the most comfortable thing in the world, but it's quite a huge blessing, and I'm honored to have them."

Bob Curtis, pastor of Ballwin Baptist Church, called the survey information an "invaluable tool for the long haul." Responses will provide a reservoir of information about area residents' beliefs as well as locate prospects for later visits, he said.

Church "block parties" combined games, face painting and music with food and refreshments to attract residents and introduce people to the churches.

Pastor Jeff Edington of Lebanon Baptist Church in Bagdad and his wife, Debbie, brought their "Hands for Christ" performance team to help with a party at Geyer Road Baptist Church.

The 13 teenagers and 15 adults

raised \$1,900 in order to make the trip, said Mrs. Edington, who co-directs the team with her husband. "God has supplied double what we need. It has been amazing."

Across the Mississippi River, Baptists in Illinois held block parties and prayerwalks while other volunteers ventured into the region's topless nightclubs in a ministry reaching out to the dancers and waitresses who work there.

About three dozen women took gift bags for dancers and waitresses in seven of the strip clubs that dot southwestern Illinois. Three other clubs did not let the volunteers enter, but two of those agreed to distribute the gifts to their women employees. The bags contained New Testaments and gospel tracts as well as scented candles, toiletries, gum and jewelry. In addition to their club visits, the women delivered bags and chilled bottled water, with a gospel message on their labels, to pass out in some of the lower-income areas.

Curtis said there's no way to measure what Crossover will mean to St. Louis. "You don't know what kind of long-term impact this is going to have on a metropolitan area."

With additional reporting by Michael Leathers, editor of the *Illinois Baptist*

More than 560 Kentuckians register for SBC

ST. LOUIS—A total of 565 Kentucky Baptists registered as messengers for last week's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in St. Louis.

The Kentucky messengers represented 231 churches, according to a report from SBC Registration Secretary Lee Porter.

That's approximately one-tenth of the 2,397 churches in the Kentucky Baptist Convention. Not all KBC churches belong to the SBC, but the vast majority do.

Although the St. Louis location was within relatively easy driving distance, especially from Western Kentucky, only one congregation had a full list of the 10 messengers most churches could send: Highview Baptist Church in Louisville.

Kentucky churches with nine messengers were Buena Vista Baptist Church in Owensboro, Clifton Baptist Church in Louisville, Green Ridge Baptist Church in Lewisburg, Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington and Unity Baptist Church in DeMossville.

Kentucky Changers summer missions event continues to grow

Continued from page 1

Daniel Vickers, a Kentucky Changer from Barbourville Baptist Church, compared the week of missions work to Jesus' ministry.

"When Jesus fed the 5,000, He supplied their needs before reaching them spiritually. That is what we are doing, we are supplying people's needs in order to be able to reach them spiritually."

Jessie Quarles, a housing rehabilitation specialist for the city of Hopkinsville, praised the weeklong program.

"We are impressed not just by the work, but that these children bring hope," she said. "On television, you always see bad kids, so to see kids who truly love the Lord and can work on a hot roof and still say they are having fun is truly a blessing."

Quarles said it still has homeowners from last year's event telling her how much they appreciated what the young people did for them.

Homeowner Essie Spurling said, "This means everything to me. ... I know God loves me, He has took care of me. He shows His love through these kids."

This is the ninth year for the Kentucky Changers program, which continues to grow. Kentucky Changers has added a third weeklong project this summer. In addition to the Hopkinsville event, workers will be in Frankfort June 22-29 and in Marshall County July 6-13.

One hundred and fifty participants are expected in Frankfort and more than 300 workers are expected in Marshall County. Last summer, 317 people participated, and this summer or-

ganizers expect more than 700 participants.

Doyle said Kentucky Changers continues to grow because youth want to experience missions, not just hear about it.

Many former Kentucky Changers now out of high school wanted to continue the experience, so convention leaders added a project to the Frankfort event for college students. Rather than rehabilitating an older home, approximately 25 college students will work on a "blitz build" for a new Habitat for Humanity house, Doyle said.

Crew chief Rick Livingston said, "Kentucky Changers makes a difference by showing that no matter where you are or who you are, no matter how old you are or what color you are, you can open your heart and let God use you."



LOOK OUT BELOW Kentucky Changers volunteer Cayce Jackson (center), a member of Mt. Carmel Baptist Church in Hickman, pushes the remains of an old roof from the top of a house while George Jamison (left), a member of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Mt. Eden, and Kerry Fain, a member of First Baptist Church of Somerset, continue tearing off the roof so it can be replaced. (Photo by Clarissa Hutcherson)

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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Bridge age gap

I read with interest and dismay the pastor's May 21 response to a concern raised by a senior church member.

It seems the "fields are white unto harvest." The opportunities are greater than ever for outreach ministry within the church itself, especially for youth and senior adults willing to work.

How are we attempting to blend the various age groups in our churches? The promotion of each Sunday school class within a specific age group is fine. In some churches, however, the elders all are on the "west wing" or "The Last Hallway to Death" (as it is called in one church) for Sunday school. When it is time for church services, the white-haired folks usually are sprinkled throughout the congregation. But do the people know each other? Do the youth and elders know each other?

I would like to encourage churches to think intergenerationally. Intergenerational ministry seeks to promote the mutual exchange of energy, talent and ideas among generations. This can result from a highly motivated congregation that is committed to youth and an intergenerational ministry integrating youth in the whole life of the church. Intergenerational ministry involves people worshipping together and working across various ages to share the love of God.

If we, as a Christian community, cannot promote an atmosphere of love, harmony and concern among various age groups, how can we expect this from the world? Consider bridging-the-gap activities such as youth and elder dinners with storytelling and music by both age groups, adopt-a-grandparent programs or community outreach programs where diverse age groups could join hands in home repairs.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the youth knew the elders well enough to

actually come forth to pray for them and with them—and vice versa? We have such a wonderful opportunity to allow the Master to guide and use us in His work.

*Pearl Anderson
MSC Intergeneration Consultant
London*

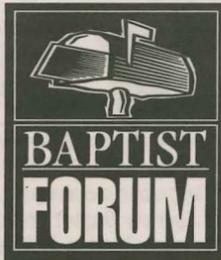
'Intemperate remarks'

If the reports in the news media of Jerry Vines' remarks about Mohammed at the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference are accurate, then he owes an apology to all Muslims, all Christians in the United States, all Southern Baptists, all missionaries and all Christians in Muslim countries.

He may have done more harm to the cause of Christ in one "sermon" than many Christians will be able to undo in the rest of their lives. His intemperate remarks have fed the flames of hatred and resentment. May God

have mercy on us all.

*Joe M. Thomas
Owensboro*



An unfolding story

Joe McKeever's "The least I can do is read it" article in the June 4 issue hopefully encouraged people to read the Word. However, the notion of beginning in the Gospels "until you practically know the story by heart" to be able to comprehend the Old Testament is exactly opposite as it has been revealed to us.

The New Testament is not supposed to provide the context for the Old Testament. Instead, the Old Testament, beginning with God's purposes in creation, shows His movements throughout history as He is saving a people for His own glory. Genesis 1-11 describes the devastating ramifications of sin. The prophets call chosen Israel back to covenant faithfulness after God saved them from slavery in Egypt.

PARTNERS IN THE MISSION

Lest we forget the children

The Monday morning session of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference last week in St. Louis was the best that I have attended in the past 22 years. The focus was on the important task we have to teach our children and leave a legacy of faithful service to God.

John Sullivan, executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, reminded us of the importance Moses put on the children when he turned down Pharaoh's compromise offer to allow the Jewish men to go into the desert to worship as long as they left the children behind.

Sullivan shared that the only way to leave a legacy of faith is to teach the children. We have numerous opportunities in family settings and gatherings to teach the faith.

Kevin Cosby, senior pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church in Louisville, also focused on children with the

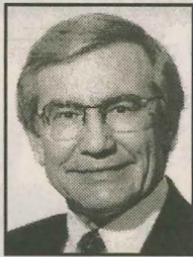
theme, "Make Room for the Children." Preaching from Matthew 18:2, he spoke about how Jesus placed a child

"in the midst of them" and not on the periphery. We must make room for the children in the family and in the church. If we do not make room for the children, future generations will not have faith and hope.

Ken Davis, a humorist from Nashville, continued the theme by emphasizing that "we must discover and leave a legacy of joy." He

reminded us that Jesus intended for believers to experience the joy of their salvation and that joy is possible because God loved us enough to send Jesus to die for us.

Jay Strack, president of Student Leadership University in Orlando, Fla., concluded the session by using Proverbs 22 to make the point that children deserve adults who will be models, mentors and motivators.



Bill Mackey

As the story unfolds and one takes note of all the sinful rebellion against God, God's offer of forgiveness through the sacrifice of His own Son Jesus Christ takes on significantly different proportions that are not evident by starting with baby Jesus. There is no understanding of why Jesus had to come and why His mission was to die.

Missionaries have learned that when sharing the gospel they are better off to start in Genesis and not with Jesus. Such chronological storying has increased the response to Christ through comprehending the entire Bible story line.

The least we should do is read it—in the order in which God clearly intended us to understand it.

*Jeff Moran
Louisville*

Diverse worship

Though I applaud Jim Adams for his appeal for proper worship methods ("Worship humbly," Western Recorder, June 11 issue), I would recall the Scripture that says, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

I would also recall the Bible's admonitions against judging others. I think that would include setting "standards" for worship.

Finally, I think there are times that are right for both kinds of worship, reverent and celebratory. "Hallelujah!" and "Praise the Lord!"

*E. Carolyn Tucker
Dixon*

What are you thinking?

The Western Recorder considers letters on any subject for publication, provided they don't make a personal attack. The maximum length for a letter is 300 words. Baptist Forum is limited to Western Recorder subscribers, unless someone is responding to a story or editorial of which they are the subject. Submit by mail, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253; fax, (502) 244-6474; or e-mail, wesrec@ntr.net.

"Rules without relationships result in rebellion," Strack warned. Parents must be on an adventure with God and each other in order to provide the model their children deserve.

During the summer months church leaders and families will have numerous opportunities to minister to children. Vacation Bible school is an unparalleled opportunity to equip children with faith.

Consider how you can make room for children in your car, home, church and schedule (see Mark 10:13-16).

Let me conclude by also sharing my appreciation for outstanding music provided at the Pastors' Conference by the St. Stephen Baptist Church choir and orchestra. Kevin James, minister of music, directed inspiring worship and praise.

We are grateful for the sacrifice of each choir member and supporter to make all of the necessary arrangements to be present and represent Kentucky Baptists at this important meeting.

Bill Mackey is executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention

STEWARDSHIP

College savings plans provide diverse options

By Don Spencer

Recent tax law changes affect how parents might want to save

for their children's college costs. Three common approaches are: Uniform Gifts to Minors, Education IRAs



FINANCIAL FORUM

and Section 529 plans. Let's compare some of the features of these plans:

■ **Maximum contribution limits per account.** Education IRAs are limited to \$2,000 per year and UGMAs to \$11,000 without exceeding gift tax exclusions. The \$11,000 limit also applies to 529 plans but the entire \$55,000 for a five-year period can be given in the first year.

■ **Taxes of account earnings.** UGMAs are taxable. Education IRAs and 529 plans both are tax-deferred and subject to a 10 percent penalty but tax-free if used for qualified education expenses.

■ **Account ownership and control of withdrawals.** UGMAs belong to the student and are totally controlled by the student when he or she is of legal age. Education IRAs belong to the student and are totally controlled by the student at age 30, even if not used for education purposes. 529 plans are owned and controlled by the account owner. Thus, if a parent or grandparent establishes an account for children or grandchildren, they continue to control the account. If one child or grandchild does not use the account for education, the owner may transfer the funds to another child or grandchild for qualified education use and still avoid all taxes.

■ **State tax deductibility for contributions.** UGMAs and Education IRAs are not deductible in states. Section 529 plans sometimes are deductible.

I favor the Section 529 savings plans for college savings. These plans are available through many mutual funds and are sponsored by various educational institutions. There are many differences in the investment options and in the cost structures, so individuals should carefully compare the various plans.

Section 529 plans come in two varieties: variable savings plans and pre-paid tuition plans. The variable savings plans offer the prospect of higher investments returns, but the owner assumes the added investment risk. Pre-paid tuition plans allow the contributor to lock in future tuition rates at current prices.

Don Spencer is a certified financial planner and directs the Kentucky Baptist Convention's annuity department

Dual-career couples should help establish mutual goals

Q: My husband and I are in the midst of conflict about our jobs. We met in graduate school and got jobs in the area. We discussed the issue of having a dual-career marriage before our wedding. It seemed simple then. Six years later, he wants to move because he feels stuck in his job. I'm on track to advance in our firm. What can we do?

The job track is difficult for everyone in this economy. But, as you've discovered, it's especially difficult for married couples. Some people who value traditional marriages would argue that the husband's career comes first at all times. Others might argue that it's important for a woman to pursue her career first, especially if having children is in the future.

Both perspectives seem to miss the point. The real issue is to do whatever seems to be better for the two of you. Mutuality is the foundation for Christian marriage. Determining a solution that's best for both of you can be a real challenge. The ideal for couples with dual careers is to live in an area where both of you can find professional opportunities and fulfillment. The reality is that sometimes that's impossible. Even taking turns pursuing a career doesn't always work out.

The best starting point is for you and your husband to evaluate your long-term goals to help determine what to do. The job each person has becomes part of that person's identity. So working out a solution is critical for the health of the marriage.

If you and your husband remain in a stalemate about making a decision, seeking counseling could be helpful. A professional listening to both of you might be a good investment in the long-term health of your marriage and careers.—*Suzanne Coyle*

Q: At times my teenager seems so selfish. How can I teach him to be more giving?

While it is easy to find examples of teens who seem to think of no one but themselves, many teenagers also can be extraordinarily generous when given the opportunity. When adolescents embrace the spirit of generosity as a part of their identity, they begin to model the attitude expressed in the story of the poor widow in Zarephath (1 Kings 17:7-24) who was willing to help the prophet Elijah. She is a great reminder that giving is less about having a plethora of resources and more about having a big heart.

What are you modeling for your teen? Does he see you tithing to your church? Are you willing to help others even when times might be tough for you? Are you living below your financial means or are you consistently spending more than your monthly income? When you go to a restaurant, are you generous with your waitress? Do you ever tip the cleaning person at the hotel?

Encouraging your children to have a spirit of generosity can be fun. For example, what if you decided as a family that whenever a financial blessing came your way, you would find a way to make someone's day? Suppose that a part of the family vacation budget had to do with finding someone to help on your journey. What if part of every Christmas involved doing something tangible for someone less fortunate?

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Each person should give as he has decided for himself. There should be no reluctance, no sense of compulsion; God loves a cheerful giver." A critical question for all Christians as we seek to model our Heavenly Father might be, "Am I smiling as I'm giving?"—*Scott Wigginton*

Family Forum writers are Suzanne Coyle, director of Cornerstone Counseling for Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children; David Garrard, minister to children at St. Matthews Baptist Church in Louisville; Jon Rainbow, a clinical gerontologist and professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; James Stillwell, minister to singles at Immanuel Baptist Church in Lexington; and Scott Wigginton, director of LifeCare Counseling at Walnut Street Baptist Church in Louisville. Send questions for Family Forum to Western Recorder, Box 43969, Louisville, KY 40253 or e-mail us at wesrec@ntr.net.



Kingdom growth requires Christlike love

Southern Baptist Convention leaders made a point to accentuate the positive during last week's SBC annual meeting in St. Louis.

Two major ministry initiatives—"Empowering Kingdom Growth" and "Kingdom Families"—were rolled out for messenger approval. EKG calls on "all Southern Baptists to give prayerful consideration in personal, congregational and denominational life to the challenge of seeking the King and His Kingdom." Who could disagree with such God-honoring goals?

"Kingdom Families" promises to "usher in a new era of family focus in Southern Baptist life." Details of the plan will be unveiled next summer during a Kingdom Family Rally in conjunction with the 2003 SBC.

But those items weren't the only good news shared during the June 11-12 annual meeting. Convention leaders also promoted an ecumenical spirit, inviting speakers from two interdenominational ministries to address messengers.

Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer, relief workers with Shelter Now International, shared testimonies about being imprisoned in Afghanistan by Taliban officials and their eventual rescue by U.S. Special Forces. Bill Bright, founder and chairman of Campus Crusade for Christ, preached the convention's closing sermon.

Even during business sessions, most messengers sought to sidestep potential controversy. Motions seeking to reverse recent requirements that SBC missionaries sign an affirmation of the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message statement—the most controversial issue leading up to this year's convention—quickly were referred to the SBC's two mission boards for consideration rather than allowing floor debate.

When it came to putting Southern Baptists' best foot forward, however, former SBC President Jerry Vines apparently didn't get the memo.

During the SBC's pre-convention Pastors' Conference, Vines sparked widespread protests when he labeled Mohammed, the founder of Islam, "a demon-possessed pedophile."

New SBC President Jack Graham and other convention leaders defended Vines' view as historically accurate, but other leaders in the Christian, Jewish and Islamic faiths decried his words as "hateful," "short-sighted" and "deplorable, divisive rhetoric."

While ministers of the gospel must be straightforward and prophetic, that should never be confused with being mean-spirited or arrogant. Ephesians 4:15 challenges followers of Christ to "speak the truth in love." While the truth of Vines' words might be open to interpretation, they certainly didn't come across as loving toward Muslims.

Rather than criticizing another faith's leader, a more effective way to impact the Muslim world with the gospel is to consistently reflect the perfect love of Christ. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." That same commitment still works 2,000 years later.

Contrast Vines' comments to the words and actions of Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer who risked their physical lives to share Jesus' love with Muslims in Afghanistan.

In their new book, "Prisoners of Hope," Mercer writes, "As my vision about sharing God's love with the poor overseas became clearer, I had begun to pray this way: 'Lord, send me to the hardest place. Send me where others do not want to go—or are afraid to go.' ... The sacrifice of my personal comfort and security seemed well worth the risk."

Faithfully sharing the love of Jesus—that's a sure way for Southern Baptists to empower Kingdom growth.

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



Trennis Henderson

Was Vines' claim right or wrong?

By Mark Wingfield
Texas Baptist Standard

ST. LOUIS—Was Mohammad, the prophet of Islam, a "demon-possessed pedophile" who married a 9-year-old?

That's the message carried around the world from the pulpit of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference, where former Southern Baptist Convention President Jerry Vines made the assertion in a sermon June 10.

Islamic leaders in the United States reacted with shock and anger over Vines' comments.

"It's really unfortunate that a top leader in a mainstream Christian church ... would use such hate-filled and bigoted language," Ibrahim Hooper told the Dallas Morning News. Hooper is a spokesman for the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Shakur Bolden, president of the Islamic Center of Northeast Florida, told the Times-Union, "We don't let the bad eggs define our way of life just as he would not let the Ku Klux Klan or the Irish Republican Army or other fanatical Christian organizations define mainstream Christianity."

But is there any truth to what Vines said?

While "demon-possessed" might be a subjective assessment, Webster's Dictionary does offer a clear definition of "pedophile": a person with a "sexual perversion in which children are the preferred sexual object."

By numerous accounts, Mohammed had multiple wives, including at least one young girl.

"The Wives of the Prophet," a Muslim-written resource, gives brief descriptions of 12 wives of Mohammed. It notes Mohammed's third wife was named A'isha. She was "married to the prophet in the 10th year of prophethood, when she was 6 years old, but the marriage was only consummated when she was 9 years old."

Christians may have difficulty understanding the lifestyle of Mohammed, according to a resource page written by the University of Georgia Islamic studies faculty. "Unlike Jesus, who lived a celibate life, Mohammed was married," the report notes. It adds that Muslims "are not alarmed by his numerous marriages" since that was not unusual for a powerful Middle Eastern leader and most of the marriages were contracted to seal political ties with the tribes of the wives.

Even if Baptists find truth in what Vines reported about Mohammed, making such a declaration in such a public setting as the SBC Pastors'

Conference did nothing to enhance goodwill between Muslims and Christians, some observers noted.

Frank Ruff, a representative of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to the SBC, predicted Vines' comments would hurt the SBC.

"It is shortsighted because they will have less credibility," Ruff told the Houston Chronicle. "I would expect the derogatory remarks about Islam would increase hostility of Muslims toward Christianity."

"When Vines seeks to discredit the Islamic faith, he opens the Christian faith to stinging criticism about its own flaws," said Robert Parham, executive director of the Baptist Center for Ethics in Nashville.

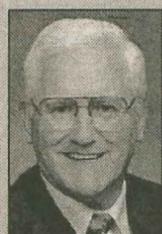
Rather than casting stones at Mohammed, Christians should practice the Golden Rule, Parham said. "Just as we hope our own faith will not be disfigured by flawed biblical characters, we should avoid besmirching flawed characters in other religions."

But other Baptist leaders said the comparison is not just between important figures in Christianity and Islam but between the founders of each religion.

New SBC President Jack Graham, for example, noted that in contrast to Islam, Christians worship "a pure and perfect Savior." He said Christians have a duty to God and to the world to proclaim that message.

Defeat ends Lee Porter's 25 years as registration secretary

ST. LOUIS—Last week marked the end of an era as Lee Porter was defeated after serving 25 years in the office of the Southern Baptist Convention's registration secretary.



Porter

Porter first was elected to office before the conservative sweep of power in the SBC. Despite recent years of political infighting, he survived numerous challenges. This time he lost 1,222 to 1,839 to Jim Wells, a director of missions from Branson, Mo.

After this election, Porter declined to talk extensively on the end to his 25-year tenure. He said he has "no problem" with his defeat. "I've ducked this many times."

Porter, 72, said he hasn't kept track of how many years he was challenged for the office. Though he was challenged, his credibility and the integrity of the SBC voting process was not questioned throughout his tenure—which spanned the most contentious political period of the SBC's history.

His attention to detail and setting aside of personal bias might best explain Porter's long tenure, even while another largely administrative elected post, recording secretary, went to a conservative years earlier.

While votes at the SBC haven't always gone his way, Porter said recently, "What I have tried to do is keep the election—every vote—totally honest."

In nominating Wells, Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church in Springdale, Ark., focused on two reasons for electing someone other than Porter as registration secretary.

First, that Porter has served for 25 years, while SBC presidents are limited by the SBC Constitution to two years of consecutive service. "We as Southern Baptists believe in shared leadership," Floyd said. "It's time we practice what we believe. One way you do this is to share the leadership of this very strategic position."

Second, Floyd affirmed electing a like-minded officer, saying of Wells, "He is one of us."

Floyd made a "good political speech," Porter said.

Porter was a longtime employee of the SBC Sunday School Board, editing the Advanced Life & Work Bible study material. In retirement, he lives in Lawrenceville, Ga.

Compiled from reporting by Marv Knox of the Texas Baptist Standard and Associated Baptist Press

Texan Jack Graham new SBC president

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

ST. LOUIS—The Southern Baptist Convention elected the builder of one of its largest churches and the architect of its controlling political movement to its top offices June 11.

New President Jack Graham and First Vice President Paul Pressler faced no opposition during balloting at the SBC annual meeting in St. Louis.

In a contested race for second vice president, California pastor E.W. McCall Sr. defeated two other pastors.

Messengers also re-elected the convention's recording secretary but declined to re-elect its longtime registration secretary.

Graham is pastor of the 20,000-member Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, a Dallas suburb. Prestonwood averages more than 12,000 people in worship each week-end and has added more than 2,000 new members per year during the 13 years he has been its pastor.

Graham was president of the SBC Pastors' Conference in 1992 and now is a member of the SBC Executive Committee. His "PowerPoint" preaching ministry is transmitted broadly via radio, television and the Internet. Recently, he was named TV preacher for the "The Baptist Hour," a weekly worship program produced by the SBC's North American Mission Board.

He is a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

During a news conference, Graham said the principles of integrity and accountability support the request that SBC International Mission Board missionaries sign an affirmation of the 2000 version of the Baptist Faith & Message statement.

"It's a good idea to ask missionar-



NEW OFFICERS Dallas-area pastor Jack Graham, center, was elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention during last week's annual meeting. With Graham, are, from left, recording secretary John Yeats, first vice president Paul Pressler, second vice president E.W. McCall Sr. and registration secretary Jim Wells. (BP photo by Augie Boto)

ies to affirm" the Baptist Faith & Message, he noted. "Baptists are not a creedal people, but we are a confessional people."

He also said he shared outgoing president James Merritt's stated concern that the SBC is losing its passion for evangelism.

"The natural drift for Christians ... is to drift away from evangelism and missions," he acknowledged, lamenting the fact many Baptist churches never baptize any new Christians.

Pressler is credited with being a co-designer of the movement that gained control of the convention during the past two and a half decades.

Decades ago, Pressler teamed up with Paige Patterson, now president of the SBC's Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, to launch the movement. They realized that by continuously electing like-minded SBC presidents, they could direct the process for nominating and electing trustees of SBC institutions. The plan succeeded, and by the early 1990s, they controlled all SBC institutional boards.

Throughout the process, Pressler traveled the nation, decrying what he called "liberalism" in the SBC and rallying people to attend the SBC annual meetings to vote for the presidents.

In nominating Pressler, Richard Land lauded Pressler for championing the cause.

"All of us who call ourselves

Southern Baptists owe an incalculable debt to this great Christian, to this great Christian statesman," said Land, president of the SBC's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Pressler, a retired Texas appeals court judge, has been a member of the SBC Executive Committee and International Mission Board. He is a graduate of Princeton University and the University of Texas School of Law.

McCall, the second vice president, is pastor of St. Stephens Baptist Church in LaPuente, Calif. He received 61 percent of 2,469 votes cast.

McCall has served on the SBC Committee on Committees. He also is past president of the African-American Fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention.

The other candidates for the office were Robert Collins, pastor of Plaza Heights Baptist Church in Blue Springs, Mo., a Kansas City suburb, and Ernie Don Rogers, pastor of First Baptist Church of Beaver, Okla.

Recording Secretary John Yeats, editor of the Baptist Messenger, weekly newspaper of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, was re-elected by acclamation.

But Lee Porter, who has served the convention as registration secretary since the 1978 annual meeting, lost to Jim Wells, a director of missions from Branson, Mo. Wells received 1,839 votes, compared to Porter's 1,222.

Motions include Baptist Faith & Message, state conventions

Out of order

Two motions were ruled out of order:

- A motion asking that "every college receiving endorsement from any entity of the convention have a statement of inerrancy that will be signed by staff and trustees of that institution."

- A request that all nominees for SBC offices provide information about Cooperative Program giving as a percentage of their churches' budgets.

ST. LOUIS—A dozen motions, including two related to mission boards requiring missionaries to affirm the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message, were offered by messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting June 11-12. None of the motions, however, were debated by messengers.

The convention's committee on order of business referred 10 motions to agencies for review. Two motions were ruled out of order.

Motions that are referred to agencies carry no weight of messenger endorsement, although the agencies are required to report back next year how they considered and dealt with the suggestion.

Two referred motions would have rescinded the requirement of SBC missionaries to sign an affirmation of the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. Both motions focused on missionaries who were appointed under the 1925 or 1963 versions of the Baptist Faith & Message.

Both motions were referred to the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board for consideration and were not debated by convention messengers.

"We trust the trustees to study this and make the decision," said Ron Rogers, chairman of the committee on order of business.

But Robert Casey of Parkview Baptist Church in Gainesville, Fla., and Bruce Prescott of First Baptist Church, Norman, Okla.—the two originators of the motions—appealed the decision of the committee to refer.

"I hope we will honor the service of our missionaries in the past," Casey said. "They have served God, the convention and the people they were appointed to serve in a faithful and honorable way. We should not force them to sign the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. ... This does not apply to any candidates appointed after the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message."

Prescott noted the numerous references about accountability that come with discussions of the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. "If trustees can hold missionaries accountable, who holds the trustees accountable?" he asked. "I believe it is the messengers who meet here this week. We will thwart the constitution if we do not allow them to speak on this issue and vote."

A voice vote to schedule debate on

one of the referred motions failed.

A motion referred to the SBC Executive Committee would instruct the Executive Committee to recognize and accept gifts from only one convention in each state.

Bob Stephenson of First Baptist Church of Norman, Okla., said he offered the motion because the SBC treats dual-convention states differently. In Texas and Virginia, conservatives have formed new conventions, and the SBC recognizes both the historic convention and the new convention.

But in Missouri, the SBC has refused to recognize a new state convention formed by opponents of fundamentalism who still want to support SBC missions causes. Stephenson said the SBC should be consistent.

Other motions referred to agencies by the committee on order of business were:

- A call for NAMB to withdraw chaplaincy endorsement from any ordained female. NAMB trustees recently voted not to issue future endorsement to female chaplains who are ordained. Many ordained females currently endorsed by NAMB have

begun seeking alternate endorsement. (The motion was referred to NAMB.)

- That changes be made in wording in the "Eternal Life" witnessing tract produced by NAMB. (Referred to NAMB.)

- That NAMB develop evangelism strategies to reach disabled people, including the learning disabled. (Referred to NAMB.)

- Instructing the Annuity Board to pull all investments in companies that sell alcoholic beverages. (Referred to the Annuity Board.)

- Asking the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission to monitor recent structural changes within the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other government agencies and "inform us of the ramifications such changes may have on our religious liberty." (Referred to the ERLC.)

- Asking LifeWay Christian Resources to develop a ministry focused on children of ministers and missionaries. (Referred to LifeWay.)

- Asking LifeWay to develop a training program based on "spiritual missionary empowerment" through praying, fasting and doing good deeds. (Referred to LifeWay.)

Resolutions address pastor purity, Middle East, TNIV

ST. LOUIS—As Roman Catholic bishops prepared to forge a tough national policy to deal with the pedophile priest scandal, the Southern Baptist Convention last week adopted a resolution calling all churches to support abuse victims and cooperate with authorities in the prosecution of abuse cases.

"We urge all our spiritual leaders to hold one another accountable to the highest standards of Christian moral practice," said the resolution, passed overwhelmingly on the last day of the two-day annual meeting of the SBC.

"We call on civil authorities to punish to the fullest extent of the law sexual abuse among clergy and counselors," it said.

SBC Resolutions Committee Chairman Frank Harber said the resolution was prompted by the Catholic crisis but is directed at Southern Baptist ministers.

"It's actually a message to ourselves among our own ranks to have the highest standards of integrity, of accountability, that we would police ... ourselves," said Harber of Colleyville, Texas. "And it is in no way a charge ... to the Catholic church but it is an alert to ministers of our own denomination."

He said the Catholic Church is "most definitely in our prayers."

The resolution was passed two days before U.S. Roman Catholic bishops began a three-day meeting in Dallas, adopting a tough national policy on the crisis that has rocked the U.S. church for the past six months.

Other resolutions spoke to such contemporary issues as the war on terrorism, peace in the Middle East and opposition to partial-birth abortion. Most of the adopted resolutions were reported out from the convention's resolutions committee.

But Kentuckian Rick Reeder, a messenger and a director of missions from Princeton, made a motion from the floor that the convention go on record this year encouraging the president and congress to make the ban on partial-birth abortion a high priority.

He noted that a presidential veto was unlikely from George Bush, making the passage of such legislation timely.

A two-thirds majority was required for consideration of resolutions proposed directly from the floor outside the committee process—a rarity at SBC meetings—but this one easily passed with an overwhelming affirmative vote.

Other resolutions spoke to:

■ **The war on terrorism.** Southern Baptists "wholeheartedly support the actions of the United States government, its intelligence agencies and its military in the just war against the terrorist networks," the resolution states.

■ **Prayer for peace in the Middle East.** The statement expressed support for the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign state, denounced revenge and states that Israel must be accountable to the same standards of national righteousness as any other nation.

■ **Today's New International Version.** The convention went on record as being unable to commend the Today's New International Version of the Bible, published recently by Zondervan, and the resolution requests agencies, boards and publishing arms of the SBC to refrain from using this translation. An amendment passed from the floor specifically directed LifeWay Christian Resources not to carry the TNIV in its book stores, something President Jimmy Draper already had pledged.

■ **"The sufficiency of Scripture in a therapeutic culture."** The resolution states: "We affirm that there are real conditions that warrant legitimate

medical treatment, but we reject the assumptions of the therapeutic culture that offer a pharmacological solution for every human problem. ... We call on Southern Baptists to reclaim practical biblical wisdom, Christ-centered counseling and the restorative ministry of the care and cure of souls."

■ **Judicial nominations.** Noting a 20 percent vacancy for U.S. Court of Appeals judges, the resolution calls on the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee to give a fair hearing and timely decisions on judicial nominees from the president.

■ **St. Louis security.** Police and other personnel were commended for their handling of potentially disruptive demonstrators at the convention, most notably members of Soulforce, who protested Southern Baptist and Christian teachings against homosexuality.

■ **Martin Burnham.** The resolution stated that messengers "grieved the loss of our brother in Christ" and extended deepest sympathies for his widow, Gracia, their children and family. Southern Baptists were encouraged to increase their commitment to pray for Southern Baptist missionaries.

Compiled from reporting by Religion News Service, Baptist Press and Bill Neal, editor of the Georgia Christian Index

Not this time

Other proposed resolutions the resolutions committee declined to address or that were addressed by adopted resolutions included:

■ Opposing anti-Semitism.

■ Supporting Israel and recognizing Israel as the Promised Land.

■ The priority of evangelizing people with disabilities.

■ Renaming Easter as "Resurrection Day."

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Thomas: Extend God's invitation to lost world

By Lonnie Wilkey
Tennessee Baptist & Reflector

ST. LOUIS—Texas pastor Claude Thomas challenged Southern Baptist Convention messengers to extend God's invitation to become a part of the only Kingdom in the world that never will fail.

In the convention sermon June 11, Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church of Euless, Texas, noted that "kingdoms rise, and kingdoms fall. Business empires flourish, and business kingdoms fail. Financial kingdoms rise, and financial kingdoms fall. Religious kingdoms rise, and religious kingdoms fall. Political kingdoms rise, and political kingdoms fall.

"But there is one Kingdom that is reliable, one Kingdom that is unshakable, one Kingdom that is invincible, one Kingdom that is eternal, one Kingdom that will never fall—and it is the Kingdom of God and His Christ," Thomas declared.

As a young man, Thomas said, he grappled with the concept of the Kingdom of God. Finally, he concluded "the Kingdom of God is the righteous rule of God that has been supremely made known in and through Jesus Christ, God's Son and our sovereign Savior."

When Jesus came into the world, He already had the Kingdom on His heart, Thomas said, noting that Gospel writers record Jesus using the word "Kingdom" 85 times.

Jesus came to introduce the Kingdom of God, His preaching centered on the theme of the gospel of the Kingdom, the greatest sermon He preached called people to seek first the Kingdom of God, and the model prayer Jesus taught instructed His followers to pray for the Kingdom to come, Thomas said.

"Jesus came with the Kingdom of God on His

heart. And tonight, Southern Baptists, we want to leave this place with the Kingdom on our hearts."

Basing his sermon on the parable of the banquet found in Luke 14:15-24, Thomas suggested what Christians will do if they have the Kingdom of God on their hearts: They will extend an invitation that comes from the Master's heart and have a passion to share it.

"We need to understand that we are the servants of the King. And we are not inviting people to a funeral but to a feast," he declared.

"What people need and want most in life—love, forgiveness, peace, joy, security, contentment and hope—they find only at the table of the Lord."

Christians who have experienced the joys of God's Kingdom, should tell

others who are searching for those joys, Thomas said.

"If we have been to the table, and the platter of God's love has been served and we have eaten from the plate of forgiveness and drawn from the pitcher of His joy, ... does it not stand to reason that we have found something that we need to tell others about?"

Thomas recounted a story recently published in *The Commission* magazine about an elderly man who went to evangelize a village where no one followed Jesus.

He went to one home three times and was beaten on each visit. Then he went back a fourth time, and the owner did not oppose him. He listened, and the whole family prayed to place their faith in Jesus Christ.

"One person with a passion will accomplish more than a hundred with an interest," he said.

"We need to leave here with the Kingdom on our hearts and a passion to extend the invitation until everyone has been invited and the house of God is filled."

With additional reporting by Mark Kelly for Baptist Press

Merritt urges SBC: Stay faithful to fight, faith and finish

By Mark Wyatt
California Southern Baptist



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Snellville, Ga., delivers the president's address during opening session of the Southern Baptist Convention, held last week in St. Louis. (BP photo by Sandy King)

"Christianity is not for the faint of heart. There is no place for conscientious objectors in the Kingdom of God"

James Merritt

ST. LOUIS—In a speech occasionally punctuated by the arrests of shouting gay-rights protesters, the outgoing president of the Southern Baptist Convention warned the "danger of a lukewarm spirit" has replaced liberalism as the greatest threat to the SBC.

James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Snellville, Ga., used his final SBC presidential address June 11 to call the nation's largest non-Catholic denomination to faithfulness and a renewed emphasis on evangelism.

"We face a secular culture that is becoming increasingly strident and militant in its anti-Christian, anti-truth, anti-God mentality, and I fear the danger of facing this spirit with a lackadaisical heart," Merritt declared. "We face a world whose heart is becoming increasingly cold that needs to feel the hot fire of evangelism, and I fear the danger of seeing this need with a lackluster passion."

Merritt cited 2 Timothy 4:7-8 as a "blueprint" for Southern Baptists to be faithful until the biblical promise of Christ's return is fulfilled. An approving audience responded with sustained applause as Merritt first urged Baptists to be "faithful to the fight."

"Christianity is not for the faint of heart. There is no place for conscientious objectors in the Kingdom of God," Merritt said. "When you come to Jesus, He does not invite you to a picnic. He calls you to a fight."

Merritt cited a newspaper account of a speech by a Dartmouth College professor who noted Christian songs and prayer in schools now are "under proscription" while abortion, pornog-

raphy and homosexuality have become commonplace.

"When the school inflicts books on youngsters ... which deliberately undermine the moral and religious convictions of parents, it is termed 'education.' But when parents complain, they are portrayed as 'narrow-minded' or 'intolerant.'"

"More and more, we are being told to sit down, shut up, go along and get along, be inclusive, be tolerant, be nice and be quiet. We are told we ought to keep politics out of the pulpit, but I believe whenever the political impacts the spiritual and the moral, we have the biblical responsibility to address the political."

Merritt appeared undeterred as St. Louis police arrested a dozen protesters inside the Edward Jones Dome while he was speaking. The protesters, who began walking toward the platform individually or in pairs, did not resist arrest but continued shouting slogans against Southern Baptists'

anti-homosexuality stance as they were led away.

Referring to various protest groups who frequent SBC meetings, Merritt said, "They have let me know in their correspondence, 'We are not going away.' Well, I've got news for the pornographer, the adulterer, the homosexual, the pedophile and the abortionist: We are not going away either."

"We may be a denominational David standing against a world full of Goliaths, but we have the slingshot of truth in one hand and the Rock of Ages in the other, and we are guaranteed to have victory in Jesus. And so, Southern Baptists, until He comes, be faithful to the fight."

Merritt also called on Baptists to be faithful to the faith.

"I want to say to every preacher here, regardless of your style of worship, whether you are sinner-sensitive, seeker-sensitive—I don't care if you don't have enough sense to be sensitive—keep the faith," Merritt said.

Responding to popular church growth methods, Merritt said Baptists should be faithful to preach the faith. "We are being told today by some church-growth gurus, baby-boomer experts and church-marketing agents, 'Don't preach on hell, don't talk about money, don't mention politics, don't be controversial.'"

"We ought to be real in the way we practice the faith, and we ought to be relevant in the way we preach the faith. But we should never shy away from preaching the whole counsel of God," Merritt said. "Drama is wonderful, praise and worship music is refreshing; but what God has promised to honor above everything else is the preaching of His word."

Citing a study by the SBC's North American Mission Board, Merritt said 84 percent of Southern Baptists "are not regularly involved in personal witnessing of any type." Baptists must get back to evangelism and realize "just like Jesus Christ, we have come to seek and to save that which was lost," he declared. "If we ever lose that distinctive, we will fall by the wayside and join the ranks of other denominations whose corpses litter the religious highway today."

In addition to being faithful to the fight and the faith, Merritt said Baptists also must be faithful to the finish.

"God is not concerned with how fast you run in your race, but how far you start the race; it's how you finish the race that counts with God. All that matters is that you hit the finish line with His approval."

"My fellow Baptists, let us run our race the same way. Let's hit the tape with chest out, head high, running harder and faster than we did from the beginning."

Merritt expressed appreciation for President Bush's leadership in the war against terrorism. "But ... far greater than the task of freeing this world from the horror of terrorism is the task of freeing this world from the tyranny of sin."

"Every Southern Baptist pastor, every Southern Baptist church and this entire denomination has been given the highest power to carry out the greatest task," he said in conclusion. "So until He comes, let us exercise this highest power carrying out this greatest task being faithful to the fight, faithful to the faith and faithful to the finish."

Soulforce promising to expand and escalate future protests

By David Winfrey
News Director

ST. LOUIS—Gay rights activists picketed the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting for the third year in a row, this time trying to disrupt President James Merritt's address and promising to continue escalating their level of protest.

The past two years, demonstrators with Soulforce organized civil disobedience outside the convention arena, resulting in dozens of arrests. This year, in addition to protests and 37 arrests outside, police arrested 12 activists inside the convention hall

when they attempted to interrupt Merritt's address.

Individually, the protesters stood and walked down the aisles toward the podium, shouting slogans. St. Louis police responded quickly, arresting the demonstrators and walking them outside of the convention hall.

"My sisters and brothers, hear us please," shouted one woman. A man yelled, "People are being done violence by Southern Baptist teachings." "Listen to me," screamed another.

Soulforce exists, leaders say, to combat the anti-homosexual teachings of religious organizations, which Soulforce leaders say lead to the suffering of homosexuals.

For more than 30 years, Soulforce founder Mel White was a pastor, seminary professor, communication consultant and ghostwriter for such clients as Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, Oliver North and Pat Robertson.

In 1993, White publicly acknowledged that he was homosexual and said he could reconcile his Christian theology and his sexual orientation. Formerly married, today he lives with a homosexual partner.

During last week's demonstration outside the SBC meeting hall, Soulforce protesters stood across the street from the dome as groups of four to six demonstrators walked toward the building's main entrance. They were met by police who arrested them.

The 37 protesters arrested outside were charged with demonstrating and with failure to obey the reasonable direction of a police officer, according to Schron Jackson, a spokeswoman for St. Louis City Police. Bond was set at \$200, she said.

The 12 demonstrators inside were charged with trespassing, first degree, motivated by discrimination, a class-D felony, Jackson said. Those charges were reduced to misdemeanors, and the 12 were released on recognizance bonds, she added.

Through their slogans, T-shirts, pamphlets and banners, Soulforce organizers repeatedly claimed Southern Baptist teachings result in violence against gay and lesbian people.

"Children are kicked out of their homes if they come out as gay or lesbian," said Jean Holton, an organizer from Davis, Calif. "Some people have believed that the Leviticus code, literally interpreted, means that folks can be put to death because of their sexual orientation."

In a letter to Merritt, White asked the SBC president to repudiate a statement attributed to Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore that White said underscores the attitudes of some Southern Baptist leaders.

"The state must use ... confinement and even execution to prevent the subversion of children toward this criminal (homosexual) lifestyle,"

White quoted Moore as stating in a legal opinion.

Merritt said he was out of the country two weeks and was not familiar with the statement he was asked to repudiate. "I don't have a response to a statement that I haven't seen."

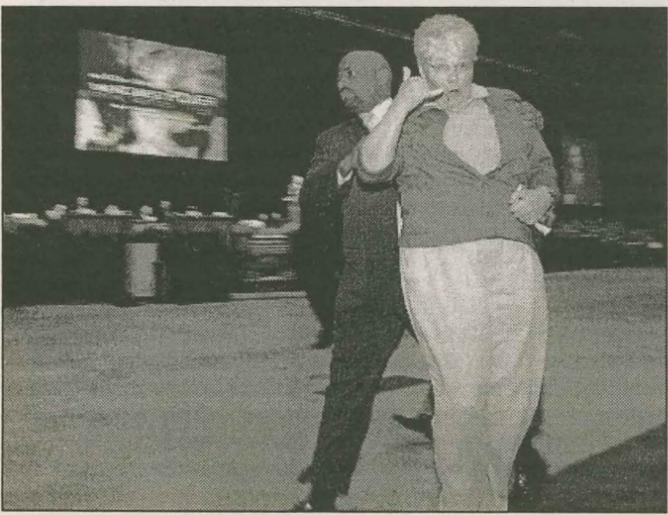
Regardless, he said he could not foresee any reason to talk with Soulforce representatives. "Unless, with one exception: If they wanted to talk about repentance and coming to faith in Christ, repudiating their lifestyle, then I'd meet with them."

Merritt said Southern Baptist and Soulforce leaders have little to discuss. "First of all, I don't accept their premise that the fact that we preach the truth about homosexuality perpetrates violence against homosexuals. We've made it very plain we don't believe in violence against anyone, homosexual/heterosexual," he said. "At the same time, we believe the Scripture is very plain, and there's no need to debate what Scripture's already settled."

White said the demonstrators, feeling ignored by SBC leadership, "will escalate again next time."

In addition to protests at the annual meeting, White said the group is planning protests at strategic churches. "We hope, by the end of this year, we'll have a vigil at every (SBC) Executive Committee member's church, month after month after month."

CALL ME An unidentified female member of the gay-rights group Soulforce is escorted from the St. Louis America's Center by security during James Merritt's presidential address. The woman was telling Merritt to call her. City police arrested a dozen activists inside the arena who walked toward the podium shouting slogans during Merritt's address. (BP photo by Morris Abernathy)



Bush thanks SBC in video address

By Marv Knox
Texas Baptist Standard

ST. LOUIS—God will praise Southern Baptists as “good and faithful servants,” President George W. Bush predicted in an address broadcast by satellite to the Southern Baptist Convention June 11.

During a 12-minute broadcast, Bush repeatedly expressed appreciation for Southern Baptists. Messengers reciprocated with repeated applause, giving him a standing ovation when he concluded.

Bush marveled that the SBC has grown to about 16 million members.

Historically, Baptists have included early American religious liberty pioneer Roger Williams, as well as evangelist Billy Graham, “a man who has played such an important role in nurturing my faith,” Bush said.

Southern Baptists also have counted among their number U.S. presidents, such as Harry Truman, he added, not mentioning the two most recent Southern Baptist presidents, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton.

Baptists have exerted an extraordinary influence on American history, championing principles of religious tolerance and freedom and “the ideal of a free church in a free state,” the president said. “The Baptist form of church government was a model of democracy, even before the founding of America.

“Baptists understood the deep truth of what Rev. Martin Luther King said, ‘The church is not the master or the servant of the state, but rather the conscience of the state,’” he said.

The president emphasized the importance of implementing faith. “Faith without works is dead,” he said, citing James 2:17.

“Our democratic government is one way to promote social justice and the common good, which is why the



PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS President George W. Bush speaks live via satellite to messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention last week in St. Louis. (BP photo)

Southern Baptist Convention has become such a powerful voice for some of the great issues of our time,” he said.

Bush listed a litany of those issues his administration holds in common with the SBC.

“We believe in fostering a culture of life and that marriage and family are sacred institutions that should be preserved and strengthened,” he said to sustained applause. “We believe a life is a creation, and children are gifts to be loved and protected, not products to be designed and manufactured by human cloning.

“We believe that protecting human dignity and promoting human rights should be the center of America’s foreign policy.

“We believe that our government should view the good people who work in faith-based charities as partners, not rivals,” he added. “We believe that days of discriminating against religious institutions simply because they are religious must come to an end.”

He championed concepts of civility and tolerance toward “humans beings created in the divine image.”

“Yet you also know that civility does not require us to abandon deeply held beliefs,” he said. “Civility and firm resolve can live easily with one another.”

Bush noted faith propels people to care for others in need and affirmed his audience’s response to that challenge.

“For some people, Jesus’ admonition to care for the least of these is an admirable moral teaching, (but) for many Baptists, it is a way of life,” he asserted.

Faith also provides comfort during times of grief, he said, stressing that truth has become much more evident in the wake of Sept. 11, when people across the nation and world turned to prayer and found power in faith.

Bush observed Americans have held to important faith-born truths, “that suffering is temporary, that hope is eternal and that the ruthless will not inherit the earth.”

On a personal note, he thanked Southern Baptists for their prayers on his behalf. “Many of you have prayed for my family and me,” he said. “We have felt sustained and uplifted by your prayers.

“I want to thank you all for your good works. You’re believers, and you’re patriots, faithful followers of God and good citizens of America. And one day, I believe it will be said of you, ‘Well done, good and faithful servants.’”

As the applause from messengers’ standing ovation began to die down, SBC President James Merritt came to the podium and declared: “President Bush may be a Methodist, but he’s the closest we’ve had to a Southern Baptist president in a long, long time.”

After Bush spoke, presidential assistant Tim Goeglein expressed “heartfelt thanks and a sense of gratitude from each and every staff member of the Bush-Cheney administration.”

Since Sept. 11, White House staff have been “overwhelmed with e-mails, letters and phone calls from Southern Baptists,” Goeglein said.

Bright calls state of U.S. church a ‘scandal’

By Mark Kelly
Baptist Press

ST. LOUIS (BP)—The sad state of America’s churches is one of the great scandals of Christian history, Bill Bright told messengers during the closing session of the Southern Baptist Convention June 12 in St. Louis.

“One of the great scandals of the centuries is the condition of the church of Christ in America today,” said Bright, founder of the worldwide evangelistic organization Campus Crusade for Christ.

“The fires burn brightly in other parts of the world and in some parts of America, but, oh, we need to pray for revival and believe God for revival and begin in our own hearts.”

That revival will only come, however, when Christians surrender to the lordship of Jesus Christ, confess the sins that hinder God’s Spirit and live every moment in the power of the Holy Spirit, he said.

“Now, some will say that’s not realistic,” Bright said. “All kinds of problems plague us daily, but if we

truly understand (Who Jesus is), we are not hindered by circumstances.

“God often uses circumstances like illness and loss of loved ones, financial reverses for our blessing. And if we know how to say thank you in all things, and we learn how to praise Him during trials and tribulations, ... God blesses that expression of faith.”



Bright

Bright knows firsthand about illness and trials. Doctors gave him only a year to live in 2000 when he was diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis, an incurable ailment afflicting the lungs. He wore an oxygen tube while speaking to the SBC assembly and had to stop several times with coughing spasms.

“But I am standing before you by the grace of God. I am praising Him, though I am ready at any moment to go. ... I can tell you that the last year of my life has been the most fruitful, productive and most joyful year of my life,” Bright said.

“I am on this oxygen 24 hours a day,” he said, “but circumstances do not contribute to misery. It’s our lack of understanding of Who God is and His wonderful, holy purpose for us

that frustrates so many.”

Campus Crusade for Christ has more than 25,000 staff and more than 553,000 trained volunteers in 196 countries. Their “Jesus” film has been translated into more than 730 languages and viewed by more than 4.5 billion people in 234 countries. More than 2.5 billion copies of Bright’s “Four Spiritual Laws” have been distributed in more than 200 languages.

But Bright has not been content with those achievements. He is involved in the launch of a new project, the Global Pastors Network, which intends to train 5 million lay pastors to start 5 million house churches around the world.

“To surrender yourself totally, irrevocably, without reservation to the living Christ is the greatest privilege man can know,” Bright said. “This is life. To live the self-centered life is to live in self-imposed spiritual poverty.”

After Bright’s message, SBC President James Merritt quoted 19th-century Baptist evangelist Dwight L. Moody, who said, “The world has yet to see what God can do with one man totally committed to Him.”

“I believe we heard from that man today,” Merritt said.

Former Taliban captives: Share God’s love ‘whatever the cost’

By Trennis Henderson
Editor

ST. LOUIS—Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer, relief workers imprisoned in Afghanistan for three months by the Taliban, urged Southern Baptists to spread the gospel faithfully, even though “it might cost you everything.”

The Baylor University graduates, who worked in Afghanistan with the Shelter Now International relief ministry, were arrested last August on charges of sharing their Christian faith with Muslims. They were freed Nov. 15 in a dramatic pre-dawn rescue by U.S. Special Forces.

Rather than focusing on their arrest, captivity and rescue, however, the two women emphasized their motivation for



GOOD NEWS Heather Mercer, right, and Dayna Curry speak to reporters before their address to messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention in St. Louis. The women were among eight westerners arrested by the Taliban in August 2001 and imprisoned until November for sharing their faith in Afghanistan. (BP photo by Van Payne)

ministry as they spoke to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in St. Louis June 11.

Prior to enrolling at Baylor, Curry said, she was involved in drinking, drugs and had an abortion. Noting that she was “full of guilt and covered with shame,” she said God brought people into her life who helped get her back on track.

“As people prayed for me, my heart was healed and God cleansed me,” she said. “It allowed me to experience God’s presence. I just learned how to fall in love with God, how to spend time with Him on a daily basis.”

As she experienced God’s love and forgiveness, Curry said, she discovered that “we’ve got to give that love away.”

Citing statistics that indicate 2.5 billion people never have heard the Christian gospel, she added, “I realized that God was just looking for anyone who was willing to go.”

When she served among impoverished mothers and children in Afghanistan, Curry said, she frequently was asked, “Why did you leave your great, rich America and come to our poor country?”

“It was easy to share about our faith; it was so natural,” she said. “It was awesome to be able to say, ‘Because God loves you; He loves the Afghan people.’”

Mercer said people urged her not to go to Afghanistan with Shelter Now, warning that the Afghan people “don’t really want to hear what you have to say.”

“That’s a big, fat lie,” she declared. “There are 2.5 billion people waiting to hear about the love of Jesus.”

“In going to Afghanistan, we wanted to see the glory of God fill that nation through the establishment of the New Testament church in that country,” she explained. “The question I found myself asking in prison was: ‘If I want to see the New Testament church established, what is it going to take?’”

Amid the uncertainty and fear during 105 days in captivity, “I found myself wrestling with God. I asked God, ‘Why do we have to be in prison?’”

Reaching the point where she was willing to sacrifice her life to advance God’s Kingdom, Mercer noted: “It might cost everything to see the people of Afghanistan come to know Jesus. It might cost the church of Jesus Christ to see His church established around the earth.”

Even facing such tremendous costs, she added, “We’ll find out in the end it really cost us nothing because Jesus is all we wanted anyway.”

“What if all of us said, ‘Yes, God, we want to see Your glory fill the earth whatever the cost’? His kingdom would come. My prayer for all of us is that we would be people of faith and take God and His word and go for it, no matter what the cost.”

WMU hears challenges to plug into God's world vision

By Jennifer Rash & Charlie Warren
Alabama Baptist and
Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine



"I needed to be able to completely forgive because I needed to be completely forgiven."

Debbie Morris, author of "Forgiving the Dead Man Walking"

ST. LOUIS—Forgiveness is powerful but often difficult, a kidnapping and rape victim told participants at the national Woman's Missionary Union annual meeting June 9-10.

Debbie Morris, author of "Forgiving the Dead Man Walking," captivated the audience at the meeting, held before the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in St. Louis.

Morris was kidnapped and raped several times during a 30-hour ordeal when she was 16. The death row story of one of her abductors, Robert Lee Willie, was portrayed in the movie "Dead Man Walking."

Forgiving the man who traumatized her took years, Morris testified.

"Jesus says we are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us," she said. "Sometimes that is easier said than done. Some people are downright unlovable."

But forgiving the man who later would die in the electric chair was the only way to free herself from the relentless emotional torture she dealt with daily, Morris said. She found forgiveness was the path to escape the bitterness, fear and depression that had engulfed her.

"I learned the hard way that sometimes there is no justice here on earth for some of the things we experience,"

she said. "Sometimes there is no resolution."

As she waited for Willie's execution, Morris cried out to God for help. She asked God to reveal Himself to her again.

"I needed God's healing and needed to experience God's grace," she said. "I needed to be able to completely forgive because I needed to be completely forgiven."

WMU participants also heard a faith challenge from Henry Blackaby, author of the "Experiencing God" Bible study.

Calling for a "highway of holiness" from the nation's churches, he said America's turmoil springs from the failure of church leaders to trust God totally.

"God permits things, but never maliciously or arbitrarily," he said. "The primary message of 9/11 was to God's people: 'I am beginning to remove the hedge of protection from America because of the sin of My people.'"

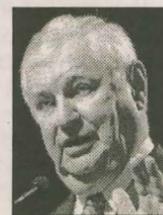
Church leaders are far from where God intends them to be, and God has a right to expect a greater impact from God's people, Blackaby said.

"God is saying to His people in North America: 'Given the Resurrection, Pentecost and the blood of my Son, I hold you accountable for making a difference in the nation.'"

In her report, WMU Executive Director Wanda Lee offered glimpses of how God is using WMU.



Lee



Blackaby

The WMU conference also included testimonies from SBC missionaries who serve at home and abroad.

Cheryl Derbyshire and her husband, Drew, have served as medical missionaries in Thailand for 10 years. "We didn't go to give out medicine," she said. "We went to share the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Their patients often hear, "This is medicine for your body, (but) we want to give you medicine for your soul," she said.

Mark Custalow, who coordinates Native American work for the North American Mission Board, said the spiritual orientation and culture of Native Americans make

them prime candidates for an outpouring of God's Spirit.

"I am a product of the missionary work of those who came to my reservation many years ago when I was a child," he said. But nine out of 10 Native Americans do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ, he added.

"We must see the harvest field from God's vantage point," Custalow said. "Satan has a stronghold on our people, and it's only by the prayers of people like you that it will be released."

They are perpetual

You would agree, would you not, a majority of the tithers and primary financial supporters of your church are over age 55? Has your church begun to offer them a way to perpetuate their giving for the benefit of the church after they are gone?

What if they were given the opportunity to establish perpetual funds that would continue to provide, after they die, the same level of contributions they were giving during their lifetimes? For example, an individual or couple giving \$2,000 per year could establish a \$40,000 perpetual fund that would begin contributing to the church at their deaths. Someone contributing \$5,000 annually could establish a \$100,000 perpetual fund. Not only would such funds bear the names of the givers as a legacy to their commitment to the mission of the church, but the funds also would replace their contributions to the church after they are gone.

The amount of the original principal would never be used. Only the income earned from investments would be used. The church member could specify in the agreement the use of all or part of the income or leave that decision to the church.

Investing in eternity through perpetual funds is an idea whose time has come. If your church is interested in establishing a planned giving program like this and incorporating it into its ongoing stewardship program, please call toll-free Laurie Valentine or me. We have developed a model for churches to use. We would be happy to meet with the appropriate leadership group in your church to present and to discuss its merits.

Let us not forget these biblical stewardship reminders: First, God owns everything (Psalms 24:1); second, He has entrusted it to us (Genesis 1:26); third, He holds us accountable as stewards (Luke 16:2); and fourth, He holds us accountable at death in the final distribution (Luke 12:20).

Rather than being blind-sided by the potential loss of income for the mission of your church, give this giving concept your prayerful consideration. Even if your church does not formalize this as a stewardship option, you still can establish such a fund directly with the Kentucky Baptist Foundation.

Barry Allen is president of the Kentucky Baptist Foundation, 10605 Shelbyville Road, Louisville, KY 40223; (888) 254-5701; www.ky.baptistfoundation.org

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Cosby challenges pastors: 'Make room for the children'

ST. LOUIS—Urging Southern Baptists to "make room for the children," Kentucky Baptist pastor Kevin Cosby asked, "If babies had a choice regarding the home they could be born in, would they choose your home?"

Cosby, pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church in Louisville, was among 15 speakers at the two-day Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference held prior to last week's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Other speakers included retired Marine Lt. Col. Oliver North, former SBC presidents Adrian Rogers and Jerry Vines and SBC presidential candidate Jack Graham, who was elected by messengers two days later.

Cosby, quoting Matthew 18:2, noted that Jesus "took a little child and placed him in their midst."

"God is asking Southern Baptists today, 'Do you have room for children in your thoughts, in your plans and in your affections?'" he noted. "I believe this is the preeminent question God is asking Southern Baptists."

Warning that "we have children who can rap but who cannot read. We have children who can use a gun but not a mop. We have children who can make babies but cannot make their beds," Cosby emphasized, "Our children today need a blessing."

"The generations overlap and there is a blending of the harmonizing of the generations," he added. "The old must recognize the value of the new. The new must grow to appreciate the wisdom of the old."

"Every generation must leave its

hopes, dreams and unfinished tasks in the hands of its sons and daughters," Cosby told the Pastors' Conference crowd. He said future generations "continue our dreams, they correct our dreams, they constitute our dreams."

"The essence of the gospel is to make room for the children," he declared. "The only reason you are saved is because when you were on your way to hell, Jesus made room for you. Will you make room for the children?"

The conference's closing session featured a patriotic, flag-waving tribute to the nation and members of the armed forces. The salute featured soldiers rappelling from the ceiling of the Edward Jones Dome, a huge American flag being unfurled and an indoor fireworks display.

In the afterglow of the star-spangled spectacular, North told conference participants, "We will persevere not because of our airmen and soldiers fighting ... but because we have a country that is turning back to God and turning to prayer."

North, a central figure in the Iran-Contra affair during the Reagan administration, is now a broadcaster and author.

Recounting the events of Sept. 11, North declared, "Despite what the media reports, ... America ought not

be afraid. They say we should be afraid to gather in large crowds like we are tonight. But I've got news for the media. If you know where you are going, you should never be afraid to gather with fellow believers."

"I pray this nation will be the godly nation it is intended to be," he added. "There is no other place on this planet with the opportunities we have ... and it deserves our prayer."

Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., captured national headlines and unleashed a barrage of protests when he labeled Mohammed a "demon-possessed pedophile."

"We are hearing today, are we not, that all religions are the same," Vines said. "They

would have us believe that Islam is just as good as Christianity. I am here to tell you Islam is not as good as Christianity."

"Christianity was founded by the virgin-born Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ," he affirmed. "Islam was founded by Mohammed, a demon-possessed pedophile who had 12 wives and his last one was a 9-year-old girl."

"Allah is not Jehovah, either," Vines added. "Jehovah is not going to turn you into a terrorist that will try to bomb people and take the lives of

thousands and thousands of people."

Ibrahim Hooper, a spokesman for the Washington-based Council on American-Islamic Relations, told reporters, "It's really unfortunate that a top leader in a mainstream Christian church ... would use such hate-filled and bigoted language."

In other Pastors' Conference sermons:

Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, spoke about "the call of the pastor."

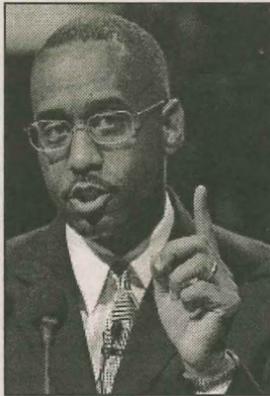
"God is calling us to a call of greatness. God is calling us to be great under His glory," he noted.

"Faith is an incredible adventure," he said. "Life and ministry are not a dress rehearsal. We get one chance to build a legacy for the generations to come."

Adrian Rogers, three-time SBC president and pastor of Bellvue Baptist Church in Cordova, Tenn., underscored the need to live under Kingdom authority.

"The future of this nation is in this room and in houses of worship all around America," Rogers said. "As the West goes, so goes the world. As America goes, so goes the West. As Christianity goes, so goes America. As evangelicals go, so goes Christianity. As Southern Baptists go, so goes evangelicals."

Baptists need the power of Kingdom authority Rogers insisted. "The question isn't, 'Are we afraid of the devil?' The question is, 'Is the devil afraid of you?'"



Cosby

Pastors elect Brunson to lead 2003 conference

Mac Brunson, pastor of First Baptist Church of Dallas, was elected president of the 2003 Pastors' Conference.

Brunson, who preached immediately prior to the election of officers, was nominated by former Pastors' Conference President Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.

Vance Pitman, pastor of Hope Baptist Church in Las Vegas, Nev., was elected vice president. He was nominated by his father, Robert Pitman, pastor of Kirby Woods Baptist Church of Memphis, Tenn., who also spoke at this year's conference.

Hal Kitchings, pastor of Morrison Heights Baptist Church in Clinton, Miss., was elected secretary. He was nominated by Pastors' Conference speaker Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church of Pensacola, Fla.

Recognizing Justina Davis

By Robert Dunston

Each year at Cumberland College's annual Honors Day convocation, a female graduating senior receives the Gorman Jones Campus Leadership Award. The award recognizes the recipient for her leadership abilities across campus.

Justina Davis, daughter of Robin and Joseph Davis of Birmingham, Ala., received this year's Gorman Jones Campus Leadership Award. Davis graduated from Cumberland College with a major in history and political science and a minor in psychology.

Davis actively served in Cumberland's Student Government Association. She helped organize Homecoming, campus improvement and study break events.

Davis also was one of three founding members of the Minority Alliance Council. She served as secretary of the organization and recently as president. Davis led her other officers in organizing a variety of events on campus for Black History Month.

Davis also has been involved in athletics on Cumberland's campus as a member of the volleyball team. Her leadership and skill made her a vital part of the team.

During her senior year Davis was one of the nominees for Cumberland's representative to the Mountain Laurel Pageant. Her nomination indicated the high esteem the faculty and her fellow students have for her.

An active member of Zion Star Baptist Church, Davis has helped with vacation Bible school. She also plans to become involved in the church's tutoring program following her graduation.

Davis plans to further her education at the Law School of the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. Her goal is to practice criminal or corporate law.

Davis' commitment and leadership abilities have made Cumberland College a better place. We thank her and pray God's blessing on her as she continues to lead and serve.

Robert Dunston is chairman of the religion department at Cumberland College, 6000 College Station Dr., Williamsburg, KY 40769

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE



Prayer and participation

Just as you have embarked on a busy summer season, the Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children family is doing the same. I hope you will mark your calendar to participate in and pray for these upcoming events.

June 19-22 is KBHC Kids Camp at Georgetown College. Please pray for our kids and staff as they participate in Bible study, worship and recreation. I hope you also will remember the Baptist Student Union Son Celebration team in your prayers as they lead our youth during camp. Thank you, Kentucky Baptists, for making this and other Christian education/recreation events possible through your donations to the annual camp fund.

June 23 is the date for Alumni Homecoming at Glen Dale Children's Home. If you spent time at Glen Dale as a resident, I hope you will join us for a day of fun and fellowship. For details, contact Glen Dale at (270) 369-7380.

June 24 is our final regional golf event which takes place in Richmond. If you want to play, call us at (800) 456-1386. The 2002 championship is Aug. 12.

Throughout June and July there are several adoption education opportunities scheduled. These events

are free and will take place at Highland Baptist Church in Louisville. Please give KBHC Pregnancy and Adoption Services a call at (800) 928-5242 for details and to register.

On Aug. 10, the Journeymen Quartet will perform at our second annual "We'll Be There" Benefit and Auction in Owensboro. Last year's event was great fun and raised approximately \$20,000 for KBHC programs in the Owensboro-Daviess County area.

KBHC returns to Main Street Kentucky this year during the Kentucky State Fair Aug. 15-25. I hope you will stop by our space in the South Wing to see us.

Keep watching the Western Recorder, Baptist Children's Messenger and our Web site, www.kbhc.org, for information about activities this fall including open houses at our Dixon Center, Glen Dale and Spring Meadows. Thank you for your prayers and participation this summer. I hope you and your family have a safe and happy season.

HOMES FOR CHILDREN



Bill Smithwick

Bill Smithwick is president of Kentucky Baptist Homes for Children. Contact KBHC at (800) 456-1386 or at www.kbhc.org

REPORT ROUNDUP

■ **Annuity Board.** President O.S. Hawkins noted that last year trustees approved restructuring investment funds to a registered mutual fund environment called AB Funds Trust. Hawkins challenged messengers to begin taking the issue of wellness to heart. "During 2001 at least one-half of the medical claims paid out were for preventable diseases. As a whole, we are overweight and do not exercise enough."

■ **Baptist World Alliance.** Spokesman Tony Cupit noted that BWA exists to unite Baptists worldwide, lead in evangelism, defend human rights in matters related to religious liberty, respond to people in need and train national leaders for the next generation of Baptist churches. BWA encompasses 201 member bodies in more than 200 nations, with a combined membership of more than 43 million baptized believers and a community of about 100 million people, Cupit said.

■ **Committee on Nominations.** Two Kentuckians are among 70 Southern Baptists named to the SBC's 2002 Committee on Nominations: Jerry Gifford, pastor of Valley Station Baptist Church in Louisville, and Mary Dee Warren, a member of Carlisle Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville. The committee, which nominates people to serve on the SBC's boards, commissions and committees, will present its report to the 2003 SBC annual meeting. Kentucky Baptists on the SBC Committee on Committees, which nominated Gifford and Warren, are Chris Butler, pastor of First Baptist Church of Leitchfield, and Lisa Merithew, a member of Carlisle Avenue Baptist.

■ **Council of Seminary Presidents.** Paige Patterson, chairman of the SBC's Council of Seminary Presidents, exhorted Southern Baptist pastors to call out men and women in their congregations interested in seminary training. Nearly 4,000 students are enrolled in Seminary Extension courses, added Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville.

■ **Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.** Cloning is the most critical issue of the day, ERLC President Richard Land told messengers. "At stake is whether man will be as God created him or will we allow man to play God ... and clone humans for profit," he said. "We are whistling past the graveyard if we don't think God is going to rain judgment on a civilization that allows an abomination like that." Land urged messengers to call their senators, backing the "Brownback bill," which would ban human cloning.

■ **Woman's Missionary Union.** WMU leaders noted that by the end of 2001 the agency's Christian Women's Job Corps ministry had expanded to include more than 150 sites in 35 states and the District of Columbia. The ministry helps low-income women develop skills to become self-sufficient. WMU connected with volunteers through several mission festivals and placed 759 Acteens in mission assignments. Also in 2001, WMU distributed almost 200 water purifiers to Southern Baptist mission personnel in 30 countries, trained 10 church and denominational leaders as Missions Innovators and concentrated on literacy ministry.

Mohler asks churches to hold SBC seminaries accountable

By Michael Foust & Jeff Robinson
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

ST LOUIS (BP)—Southern Baptists must hold their seminaries accountable to teach the orthodox gospel of Jesus Christ, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary President Al Mohler said during the school's report to the Southern Baptist Convention June 12.

"Hold your seminaries accountable to these truths," he said. "Hold us accountable to our confessions of faith. ... Make certain that we are producing not only those who have the right answers theologically, but that we are producing those who are ready to take the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to the furthest parts of the world."

"Make certain we are producing preachers who will preach without apology and without compromise."

Mohler, president of Southern Seminary since 1993, said preaching the gospel of salvation through faith in Christ alone provides the ultimate answer to society's fundamental problem—sin.

Messengers watched a video showcasing the seminary's stance on such controversial issues as human cloning, biblical translations and open theism (the belief that God's knowledge of the future is limited).

The video introduced Jerry Johnson as the new dean of Boyce College, Southern's undergraduate school. The video also highlighted the seminary's student evangelism efforts.

Touching on the World Trade Center attacks, Mohler told messengers that Southern Seminary is on the forefront of providing people with biblical answers to life's ultimate questions.

Churches led by ministers who are faithfully preaching the gospel hold the key to answering such questions, Mohler said. It is critical that Southern Baptist seminaries remain grounded upon biblical truth, he added.

"In the aftermath of Sept. 11 we are told that everything has changed, that America is a fundamentally different nation and that the world must be seen as a different place," Mohler said. "There is, of course, some truth in that. Perceptions have changed, strategies have changed, foreign policies and military policies have changed. But we must ever be reminded that the most fundamental issues have not changed."

"The problem of human sin has not changed. The gospel of Jesus Christ has not changed and the Word of God has not changed. We can put it this way: The problem has not changed, the answer has not changed and our authority has not changed."



Mohler

A time to catch our breath, but not much more

Our regular school term ended three weeks ago. We have a three-week break between the end of our regular term and the beginning of summer school. Three weeks might sound like a long time, but it seems to have been just a few days.

We have had more than 100 volunteers on campus to help with more than two dozen projects in the past three weeks. Keeping these wonderful friends busy is a big job. Our maintenance and construction staff could not keep up with all their work without the help of our volunteers. Three other groups will arrive this weekend to help next week.

The three-week break has come and gone, and for the life of me I don't know where the time went. Tomorrow the students will return for summer school, so it is back to our regular routine of caring for their needs.

Summer school is not a favorite activity for most students. If you ask them what exciting things they want to do during the summer, few, if any, include going to school. However, summer school is very useful for those students who come to us with low grades and test scores. They need the additional tutorial help they have been receiving. If we allowed them to sit the summer out, they would struggle to get back on track again this fall.

Some of our summer school students came to us late in the school year with failing or low grades. Many were just getting settled in when the school year ended. The short time they were here and the poor grades they brought with them did not give us enough time to determine if they should be promoted to the next grade. Summer school will give them the opportunity to show us they can do the work, with the motivation of be-

ing promoted if they do well.

Other students attend summer school to earn extra credits for an advanced diploma. These students often cannot take all the classes they would like and still be involved in the co-curricular activities they enjoy so much during the regular school year.

The final group of summer school students is new to Oneida Baptist Institute. They either could not enroll earlier because the school year was nearly over, or they recently decided to enroll. Their reasons for attending summer school are much the same as other students: poor grades and study habits, needing the tutorial help we provide or family conflict that might be caused by academic problems.

Summer school is a good time for them to begin their Oneida journey. There are fewer students, so the faculty and staff can devote more time to the needs of the new students. The academic staff can evaluate the new students so we will better know which ones are struggling as a result of limited academic abilities and which ones simply need

the structure and discipline Oneida offers. Adjustment to dormitory life also is easier in the summer. In the summer, there normally are two or three students per room instead of the usual four. Making friends and understanding the rules are less difficult with fewer students.

While the break between the regular school term and summer school passed too quickly, we are excited about the opportunities summer school gives our students.

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THIS IS ONEIDA



W.F. Underwood

Training church planters

How we can reach a pagan generation is a primary concern for Ron Perry, associate professor of pastoral ministries. "Culture Shift," the title of a textbook used in one of Perry's classes, reflects the need to address the gospel to a changing world. "I want to help our students be faithful to Scripture and also do effective ministry to this generation," Perry said.

Completing his fourth year at Clear Creek, Perry came from a five-year pastorate at First Baptist Church of Gainesville, Fla. He also was adjunct professor at Florida Baptist College. "Many students and professors were members of our church. We employed some of the students on the church staff. I enjoyed talking with students about theology and pastoral ministry," Perry stated.

"God moved me to become involved as a teacher to help young men develop pastoral skills and lead growing churches. I knew very little about Clear Creek, but it is one of the most practical schools you can find, and I appreciate our conservative theological stand."

Has he missed the pastor's role? "I miss the good relationships I had with deacons and the opportunity to help people in grief." He is interim

pastor at First Baptist Church of Pineville.

He teaches evangelism, introduction to ministry, ethics, apologetics and church planting. As director of Clear Creek's Center for Church Planting, he coordinates with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board in training students for new church starts.

The program involves required coursework, assessments and practical field experience. Through his leadership we have hosted church planters from West Virginia, Ohio and Tennessee. We are discussing a van ministry that will take student church planters and church strengtheners to the Dayton, Ohio, area.

Don't we have plenty of churches now? Perry responded, "Some people think we have a church on every corner and there is little need for church planting. Many older churches will die, and we also need leaders willing to do church differently. We need pastors with a new view to take the same gospel to a younger generation. 2 Corinthians 4 motivates my calling to preach Christ as Lord and never lose heart."

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

CLEAR CREEK CHRONICLE



Bill Whittaker

Draper talks about LifeWay's mission & TNIV

ST. LOUIS—LifeWay Christian Resources is about much more than just books or Sunday school literature, the agency's chief told messengers last week.

"We are about the God-given mission of supporting churches in their efforts to reach people with the transforming message of Jesus Christ,"



Draper

Jimmy Draper said during his report to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

"LifeWay is committed to helping churches become dynamic participants in the growth of God's Kingdom by identifying needs and opportunities and providing biblical solutions that will lead them to success in those efforts," Draper pledged.

Technology has changed the way LifeWay can respond to the issues of the day, he noted. Within an hour after the first plane struck the World Trade Center Sept. 11, LifeWay employees posted photos, text and a call to prayer on their Web site.

"In the first two weeks, we provided eight crisis-related Bible study lesson plans. We were amazed at the response. Those lessons were downloaded more than 218,000 times, and 6,300 more viewed them online," Draper said.

Draper also pledged last week that LifeWay stores will not carry the Today's New International Version Bible. "We will not be selling it in our bookstores," Draper said during a LifeWay breakfast for pastors.

The TNIV, unveiled by the International Bible Society and Zondervan earlier this year, has generated much controversy as more than 160 evangelical leaders have lined up for or against the translation.

During the breakfast Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said he is impressed with LifeWay's Holman Christian Standard Bible, available in New Testament already and slated for a full release in 2004.

"When I first heard about the Holman Christian Standard Bible, I was not excited about it," Mohler said. However, "the changes in the last several months have convinced me that in the end this is an important thing for Southern Baptists to do, if for no other reason than that we will have a major translation we can control."

Compiled from reporting by Lonnie Wilkey, editor of the Tennessee Baptist & Reflector, and Baptist Press

IMB's Rankin: God is shaking the nations

By Jennifer Bryant
Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

ST. LOUIS—Messengers to this year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting saw visible results of prayers they offered at last year's meeting in New Orleans.

During the report of the International Mission Board, President Jerry Rankin reminded messengers that last year messengers were asked to pray for a pastor in China who had been wrongly imprisoned. The New Orleans convention implored God for the release of Pastor Yun.

Soon after last year's annual meeting, the pastor was "miraculously released," Rankin said during his report last week. And then he introduced Yun, who addressed messengers via video and then in person.

Yun reported he had been beaten and treated unfairly but praised God for his release. He led messengers in prayer, speaking in his native tongue.

SBC President James Merritt stepped to the podium and asked Yun's interpreter to come forward. He told Yun that Southern Baptists "salute you as a soldier of the cross. You are a brother in the Lord, and we love you."

The crowd erupted in applause while Yun exclaimed, "Glory to God" and "Hallelujah."

Rankin reported the IMB has 5,284 Southern Baptist missionaries stationed around the world. "God is indeed empowering Southern Baptists and calling us to obedience," he said.

More than 1,100 new career and

two-year missionaries were dispersed all over the world in the last year, and 34,000 Southern Baptist volunteers participated in overseas missions, he added.

Rankin presented Merritt with a crystal globe and praised Merritt for honoring his promise to visit all 15 regions of the world during his two-year presidency.

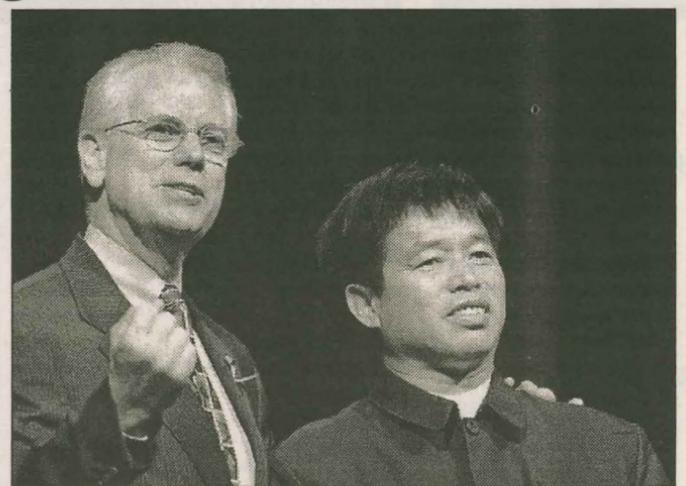
"I saw that missionaries are making incredible sacrifices," Merritt replied. "They have incredible joy and passion. I saw God at work where I didn't even know God was at."

When messengers were allowed to ask questions, John Pettigrew of Edgefield Baptist Church in Edgefield, S.C., asked why missionaries are required to sign an affirmation of the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message.

Rankin replied that missionaries always have been accountable to the convention. "They have always been asked to affirm the statement. We felt it necessary to let Southern Baptists know missionaries are in line" with SBC beliefs.

Rankin said "no missionary, as of yet, has been terminated" because of failure to sign the affirmation. "Some have left or retired."

Tommy Hamm of Huddell Baptist Church of Huddell, Texas, asked Rankin if doctrinal problems were not being detected in the rigorous missionary screening process, making affirmation of the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message necessary. Rankin insisted there were "no problems." However, "to make sure there were no questions, we felt we could give



assurance" to all Southern Baptists by having missionaries sign the affirmation, he added.

Bob Casey, pastor of Parkview Baptist Church of Gainesville, Fla., asked what Rankin's position was regarding obtaining the Lottie Moon Offering trademark and regarding the IMB's association with Woman's Missionary Union.

Rankin said an agreement was made in 1994 between the IMB and WMU. WMU is the primary supporter of the offering and gives all receipts to the IMB.

During Rankin's report, he interviewed several people who are involved in sharing the gospel message around the world. "God calls us to go to the powerless," he said. "It's a glorious calling and an awesome task and desperately needed to a lost and dying community."

ANSWERED PRAYER
Jerry Rankin, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board, introduces formerly imprisoned Chinese house-pastor Yun as Rankin presents his agency's annual report to SBC messengers. (BP photo by Sandy King)

NAMB's Reccord asks Baptists to join the race

By Stella Prather
Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine

ST. LOUIS—Holding up a relay baton, Bob Reccord, president of the North American Mission Board, challenged messengers attending the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting to join NAMB in the race to win North America to faith in Jesus Christ.

"Your missionaries are on mission and running the race," Reccord declared as more than 50 Mission Service Corps volunteers stood in the audience holding batons. "They are ready to slap these batons in your hands to complete the race" in taking the gospel to America.

"We need your hand," he said.

Reccord reported that many Southern Baptists are faithfully striving to reach the evangelistic finish line. He conducted a personal interview with two "soul-winning sprinters," Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga., and Vance Pitman, pastor of Hope Baptist Church of Las Vegas, which was started last year by Hunt's congregation.

Via video, messengers also heard other mission volunteers and workers who shared how God is using them in telling people around the nation about Jesus.

One race has led volunteers and

missionaries to several U.S. cities where NAMB has focused evangelistic efforts. In Phoenix, for example, Reccord reported record numbers of baptisms, missions giving, church starting and professions of faith.

In another ongoing race to share Jesus, Reccord praised Baptists for their willingness to aid disaster victims in New York and Washington, D.C., during the last nine months. Since Sept. 11, volunteers have distributed more than 1.2 million meals in the two cities and cleaned 700 apartments in New York, he said.

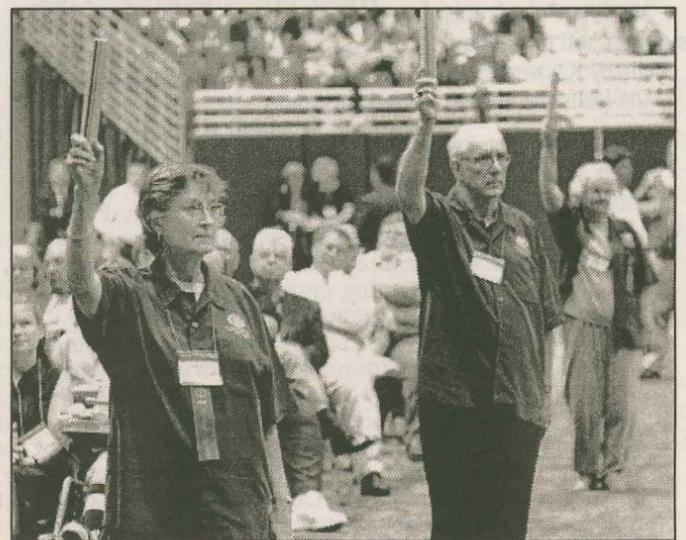
"Because of the cooperative work of Southern Baptists in New York, ... The New York Times published ... a story which reported that residents said, 'Tell those Yankee contract workers to stay home; give us more Southern Baptists.'"

Noting that this relief ministry has in part resulted in the establishment of a new church near Ground Zero, Reccord said, "The new church plant has started because Southern Baptists don't just offer temporary help; Southern Baptists give eternal help."

Looking to the future, Reccord said NAMB will join efforts with several SBC agencies in 2003 to enlist 1 million Southern Baptists as prayer warriors. By 2004, the SBC will seek to equip 1 million "soul winners." And in 2005, NAMB leaders are praying



Reccord



for 1 million baptisms.

Reccord urged messengers to commit to take part in a mission project somewhere in North America between now and 2003.

"North America needs Southern Baptists to go on mission right here in North America," he exclaimed. "Our cities need you, ... our campuses need you. Where is God calling you?"

Noting that Baptists are good about praying for missions and opening their checkbooks to support mission causes, Reccord said, "We just need to get people to go."

"We can't do it on our own. Will you take the baton? Take the anchor leg, and will you run to the end of the finish line?"

PASSING THE BATON
Missionaries with the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board literally wait to pass their batons to messengers listening to the annual NAMB presentation. During the NAMB president's report, Bob Reccord challenged SBC messengers to pick up a baton from a NAMB missionary to show their commitment to personally participate in a mission trip during 2003. (BP photo by Richard McCormack)

PRAYER PARTNERS

Please pray for these people and projects, which are part of Kentucky Baptists' partnership with Baptists in Poland, Europe and New England:

- University students who visit a coffeehouse open twice each month by missionaries in Warsaw, Poland. "Please pray that the students will be responsive to the message of Christ," missionaries write.

- A soccer ministry begun last month among the Roma/Gypsies of Romania. Missionary Journeyman Rob Dixon is leading the effort, which includes a Bible study at weekly practices and testimonies and gospel presentations at halftime of the games.

- Missionaries Scott and Sandra George as they begin a new church near a university in Lisbon, Portugal, and the five youth who form the core team.

- Opportunities that have opened to work with children near Warsaw, Poland, this summer and missionary Bethany Kaczmarek as she leads the efforts.

- Missionary Jeff Paden, who serves in Lithuania, the country with the highest suicide rate in the world.

- Church planting efforts in Maine.

Mountains to the Mississippi

Compiled by staff

- **BASKETT**—Advance Church called **Jerry Percy** as pastor.

- **CADIZ**—East Cadiz Church celebrated homecoming June 2. Former pastor **Ronnie Sivells** was guest speaker.

- **John Mitchell** resigned as pastor of Trigg County Church.

- **CYNTHIANA**—Silas Church called **Curtis Coots** as full-time pastor. He was bivocational pastor for nine years.

- **EARLINGTON**—Suthards Missionary Church called **George Brooks** as pastor.

- **FRANKLIN**—First Church called **Freddy Morris** as minister of youth and children.

- **GILBERTSVILLE**—Gilbertsville Church called **Johnnie Davis** as pastor.

- **GUSTON**—Hill Grove Church will celebrate its 180th anniversary June 30. Former pastor **Dan Francis** will speak at the 11 a.m. service. Activities include a 1:30 p.m. music service. For information, call (270) 828-3155.

- **HENDERSON**—First Church called **Todd Linn** as pastor.

- **Hyland Church** called **John Gaters** as minister of music and education.

- **Joe Hopkins** resigned as minister

of music at Immanuel Temple to become dean of music at Converse College in South Carolina.

- **New Hope Church** called **Brian Whitman** as pastor. He previously was minister of music at Mount Pleasant Church in Smith Mills.

- **HICKMAN**—**Champ Thomas**, former pastor of West Hickman Church, is serving in full-time evangelism in Memphis, Tenn.

- **LEXINGTON**—**Aaron Reed** resigned as minister of education of Grace Church.

- **LOUISVILLE**—Walnut Street Church called **Mark Monfalcone** as interim minister to students.

- **LOWES**—Mount Olivet Church called **David Sphinx** as pastor.

- **MELBER**—Melber Church called **Clifford Sutton** as pastor.

- **PARIS**—Spears Mill Church honored **Lois Claypool** for 40 years as church organist. **J.T. Rafferty** is pastor.

- **PRINCETON**—**Lester Watson** resigned as pastor of Chapel Hill Church.

- **Fairview Church** called **Jeff Boone** as pastor. Former pastor **Terry Davis** resigned due to health reasons.

- **VERSAILLES**—**Mickey Hyder** resigned as pastor of Glens Creek Church.

Speakers urge Baptists to pursue 'highest power for greatest task'

By Tony Cartledge
North Carolina Biblical Recorder

ST. LOUIS—Interpreting the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting theme, "The Highest Power for the Greatest Task," five ministers from across the nation challenged Southern Baptists to be faithful in proclaiming Christ to the world.

Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Community Church in Lake Forest, Calif., put a twist on the theme, saying, "You only get the highest power when you do the greatest task."

"If you want God's anointing on your life, you must care about what God cares about most, the redemption of lost people," Warren said.

Believers who seek the highest power must abandon all distractions and focus on seeking first the Kingdom of God, he added. "What's distracting you?"

Bob White, executive director of the Georgia Baptist Convention, said the church began with boldness but has become powerless and needs to reclaim its heritage of bold preaching.

Jesus' words in Acts 1:8 call believers to share the gospel boldly, White said, suggesting that if the church had been more focused on evangelism, the world would be

Christian and the events of Sept. 11 would not have happened.

Former SBC President Jerry Vines, pastor of First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., said Southern Baptists need encouragement to live out their calling.

In Acts 18:9-10, God offered the promise of His presence, the promise of His protection and the promise of potential, Vines said.

Alabama evangelist Junior Hill pleaded with messengers to proclaim the cross of Christ unashamed.

"The twin gods of political correctness and religious pluralism" seek to cover the cross so as not to offend the secular world, Hill said. "But I am not ashamed of the cross!"

Terry Fox, pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Wichita, Kan., said a model church is "a church that is impacting its community for the Lord Jesus Christ."

Fox said the model church had three characteristics—the right attitude, the right atmosphere and the right agenda.

"Soul-winning must be the No. 1 agenda of the church," he said, emphasizing that Christians are not called just to make peace and feed hungry people, but "to lift up the cross of Jesus Christ."

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT: Sanibel Island, Fla. Two-bedroom, 2-bath condo for vacation rental. Large pool, tennis courts, canoe, kayak, screened porch, lovely beach. www.sanibelcondo.net. Call Pat, (502) 895-8752.

HEALTH: Affordable healthcare. Pre-existing conditions accepted. Only \$54.95/month, entire family. Doctors, hospitals, prescriptions, vision, dental and more. The non-insurance solution. Call toll-free: (877) 889-8844. www.healthcaredeal.net.

SEEKING: Secretary, Family Ministry Department. Position requires 3 to 5 years experience. Strong organizational and computer application skills required. Attractive compensation package. Contact Administrative Services Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, Ky., (502) 244-6468.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for small, historic rural church in Johnson County. New brick sanctuary, convenient location, willing workers and unlimited possibilities. Send resumé to: Dean Murray, Box 742, Paintsville, KY 41240.

SEEKING: Full-time youth minister. Qualifications: experience, masters degree. Church size: 350; youth group size: 50-60. West Main Baptist Church, PO Box 242, Artesia, NM 88211-0242. Phone: (505) 746-3258; fax: (505) 748-2322.

SEEKING: Worship leader for growing church with both contemporary and traditional worship in the Northern Kentucky/Cincinnati area. Send resumé to: First Baptist Church Cold Spring, 4410 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076. No phone calls accepted; resúmes accepted until July 15.

SEEKING: Bivocational pastor for an inner-city church. Madison Avenue Baptist in downtown Covington is in search of a bivocational pastor to lead the church in providing ministry to a neighborhood population composed of drug abusers, prostitutes, homosexuals and single and teenage families. The church is 150 years old, has a Sunday school and worship center that can accommodate approximately 400. The current membership has a median age of 65. Ideally, the person God has for this ministry will have an understanding of inner-city life and feel comfortable serving a population with various body piercings, hair-length and markings. Those using a suburban church model need not apply. Please send resumé to: Search Committee, Madison Avenue Baptist Church, 10 East Robbins St., Covington, KY 41014.

SEEKING: Administrative secretary, Communications/Media Department. Position requires 3 to 5 years experience. Must have strong business writing and computer application skills. Contact Administrative Services Department, Kentucky Baptist Convention, Louisville, Ky., (502) 244-6468.

SEEKING: Young adult minister position available—full-time plus great benefits package. Council Road Baptist Church, Bethany, OK. More than 6,000 membership. E-mail resumé to: rushing@councilroad.org. For additional church information, visit Web site at www.councilroad.org.

SEEKING: Part-time youth minister. Send resumé to: St. John Baptist, 1775 St. John Road, Frankfort, KY 40601, or e-mail: sjb@fewpb.net.

SEEKING: Part-time minister of music. Please send resumé to: Personnel Committee, Salvisa Baptist Church, PO Box 75, Salvisa, KY 40372.

SEEKING: Part-time church musicians. Immediate opening for qualified choir director/musician. Responsibilities include providing choral and keyboard music for weekly Sunday morning worship services and other occasional special services (Maundy Thursday, Christmas Eve), directing and accompanying choir during weekly rehearsals. Excellent piano and directing skills required as well as good interpersonal and communication skills. Organ and/or bell choir skills a plus. Competitive salary offered based on qualifications, experience and potential level of involvement in church music program (approximately 20 hours per week; open to shared positions). Interested applicants should contact: Buechel Presbyterian Church, 4032 Bardstown Road, Louisville, KY 40218; (502) 499-0977, Laverne or Carol.

SEEKING: Ormsby Heights Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., is receiving resúmes for the position of minister of music. This position is full time with the possible addition of a second ministry area (education, missions, administration, etc.) to be determined by the candidate's interests, experience and skills. Ormsby Heights is a conservative church with a blended style of worship (gospel, hymns, praise/worship, contemporary) and a very strong interest in developing contemporary worship opportunities targeting young adults. Please send resúmes to: Ormsby Heights Baptist Church, 2120 Lower Hunters Trace, Louisville, KY 40216.

SEEKING: We are prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of youth. This would include grades 7-12. Please submit resumé to: Lancaster Baptist Church, 201 Richmond St., Lancaster, KY 40444.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church of Owensboro, Ky., announces a new combined position available for an assistant worship minister who also will serve as minister to singles. In conjunction with this, there will be opportunities for this person to assist with college students. Experience in music ministry is required, while experience with a singles ministry is highly desirable. A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university is required; a master's degree from an accredited graduate school or seminary would be desirable. This will be a full-time position with full benefits. Please submit resumé to: George Thacker, chairman, Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 904, Owensboro, KY 42302.

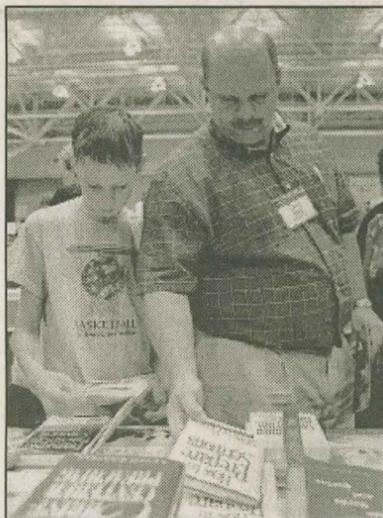
SEEKING: Minister of students and education for Southern Baptist church. Position may or may not expand to full-time. Interested applicants send resumé to: Search Committee, PO Box 21705, Owensboro, KY 42304-1705.

SEEKING: First Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Ky., is seeking a full-time music associate/organist. These positions currently are combined but may be separated in the future. Please send a resumé to: Richard Suggs, minister of music, First Baptist Church, 621 E 12th Ave., Bowling Green, KY 42101, or call the church music office: (270) 842-0331, ext. 104. Experience required; at least a bachelor's degree (music/arts) is preferred.

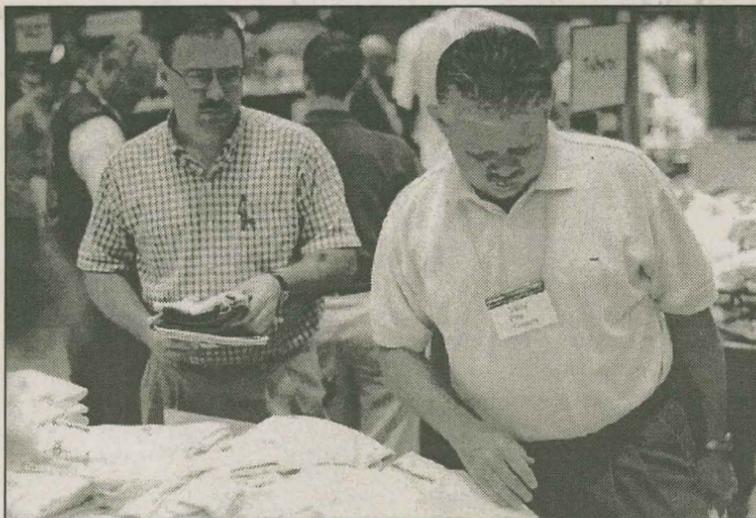
Scenes from the SBC



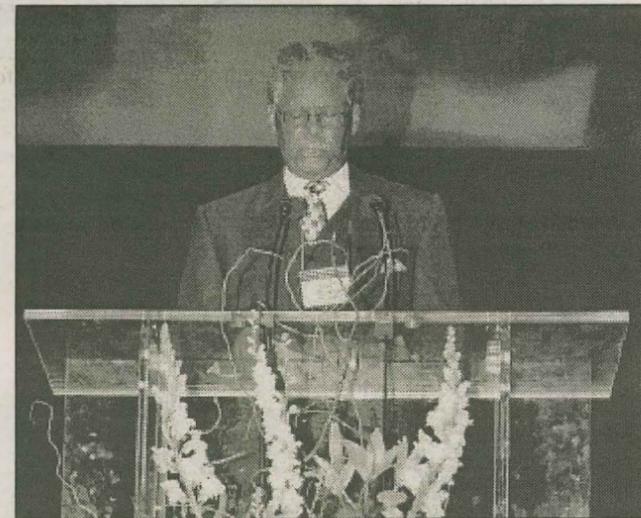
ST. STEPHEN'S CHOIR Approximately 300 choir members from St. Stephen Baptist Church in Louisville traveled to St. Louis to sing for the session of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference where their pastor Kevin Cosby preached.



BOOKS REVIEW David Hardy, pastor of Pilot Oak Baptist Church, and his son, Caleb, look over books at the convention bookstore.



JUST BROWSING Jim Lyons (left), pastor of Edgewood Baptist Church in Nicholasville, and Larry Fite, a member at Edgewood, look over T-shirts at the LifeWay Bookstore in the America's Center convention hall.



OPENING PRAYER Lincoln Bingham, cooperative ministries consultant for the Kentucky Baptist Convention and pastor of St. Paul Missionary Baptist Church in Louisville, prays to open a session of the SBC.



CATCHING UP Richard Oldham (left), pastor of Glendale Baptist Church in Bowling Green, talks with Mike Routt, former pastor of Rose Hill Baptist Church in Ashland, shortly before Oldham offers the opening prayer for one of the sessions.



LEARNING MORE Randall Burns (center), pastor of Monticello Baptist Church in Provo, and his wife, Delia, listen to Robert Hawley of LifeWay Christian Resources explain about training conferences at the agency's Ridgcrest and Glorieta national conference centers.



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