

Baptist and Reflector

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Former TBC exec Fred Kendall dies

Baptist and Reflector

JACKSON — Fred Kendall, who headed the Tennessee Baptist Convention from 1956-72, died June 25 in his sleep.

A native of Kentucky, Kendall held degrees from William Jewell College, Liberty, Mo., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.



KENDALL

He was pastor of First Church, Jackson, before becoming executive secretary-treasurer (now executive director-treasurer) of the TBC in 1956. He also served as pastor of First Church, Jellico.

Kendall served Southern Baptists in numerous capacities at both the national and state levels.

He was author of *A History of the Tennessee Baptist Convention*, published in 1974.

Kendall is survived by his wife, the former Edyth Allen, and two sons, Fred Kendall II of Nashville and John Allen Kendall of Jackson. □

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SBC Wrapup: Messengers celebrate 150th, honor Graham, repent racism, vote change

By Wm. Fletcher Allen
Baptist and Reflector

ATLANTA — More than 20,000 Southern Baptists voted for restructuring, honored Billy Graham, repented of racism, and celebrated a big birthday here in the Georgia Dome June 20-22.

The 150th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention's founding was celebrated during the annual session, using the theme "Empowered for the Unfinished Task."

Pageantry each evening celebrated the past and looked to the future in dazzling fashion.

It was a perfect theme for the closing message by Southern Baptists' most famous, best-loved leader, Billy Graham. Graham urged messengers and guests to "...light a candle, with lives on fire for the Lord, to be seen at work throughout the world for the glory of God."

Graham, who recently has been seriously ill, spoke to his Southern Baptist family before giving an inspirational challenge. He was welcomed with thunderous standing ovation and was interrupted several times with long applause.

He was introduced by President Jim Henry as Southern Baptists' genuine hero.

Messengers also amended, then resoundingly approved a major restructuring plan rec-

ommended by the SBC's Executive Committee from its Program and Structure Study Committee (PSSC).

The plan calls for consolidating of some SBC entities, eliminating others, and reassigning certain responsibilities. The vote, taken by ballot after some 40 minutes of debate, was 9,590 for the recommendation and 5,357 opposing, or 64.16 percent to 35.84.

In a press conference later, Program and Structure Study Committee Chairman Mark Brister said the minority voters "would hopefully be able to come along" with the others.

In one of the SBC's most defining historical hours, messengers overwhelmingly approved a resolution on racial reconciliation.

In the resolution brought by the Committee on Resolutions, SBC messengers said, "We apologize to all African Americans for condoning and/or perpetuating individual and systematic racism in our lifetime, and we genuinely repent of racism of which we have been guilty, whether consciously or unconsciously."

In an historic moment after the vote, Gary Frost, SBC second vice president and an African American pastor, embraced President Henry and asked for the privilege to pray.

He told messengers also that he accepted the apology



TOBY EVERETT, pastor of City View Church, Knoxville, and his wife, Janet, stand out in front of the Georgia Dome, site of the 1965 Southern Baptist Convention.

for African American "believers in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who are committed to be obedient to the Word of God and long to see healing and unity in the body of Christ." Frost is pastor of Rising Star Church, Youngstown, Ohio.

"On behalf of my black brothers and sisters, we accept your apology and we extend to you our forgiveness in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ," said Frost. "We pray that the genuineness of your repentance will be reflected in your attitudes and in your actions. We forgive you for Christ's sake." The racism resolution marked the convention's first formal acknowledgement that racism (slavery) was a factor in its founding.

The convention was found-

ed in 1845 after several Southern states determined to continue sending missionaries though their Northern brothers objected to slaveholders' involvement.

Frost later was re-elected with a 2-1 vote over John McKay, music evangelist from Fort Worth, Texas, as was President Jim Henry who was unopposed. Larry Wynn, pastor of Hebron Church, Atlanta, was elected first vice president without opposition.

Wynn is immediate past president of the Georgia Baptist Convention. Other convention officers re-elected are recording secretary David Atchison of Nashville, unopposed, and registration secretary Lee Porter of Florida, to his 19th consecutive term.

— See SBC Wrapup, page 2



CODY WORLEY of Obion settles into the arms of missionary Alvin Doyle as his mother, Sherrie Worley visits with Doyle and his wife, Mary, missionaries in Nigeria. The four were in the Foreign Mission Board's area of the exhibit space in Atlanta. Worley's husband, David, is pastor of First Church, Obion.

Next issue scheduled July 12

BRENTWOOD — Next week if you think you have not received a *Baptist and Reflector*, you're right.

For the first time in many years, the printing schedule will omit one summer issue, the paper of July 5.

The *Baptist and Reflector* is one of a few state papers that publish 50 or more issues per year. Our schedule for many years has been 51

issues each year.

This year, according to Editor Wm. Fletcher Allen, the paper will omit the July 5 issue for financial stewardship.

Allen said this was decided in the budget planning for 1994-95. The paper regularly does not publish Christmas week.

The schedule resumes July 12. Six Sunday School lessons are included this week. □

SBC wrapup: Messengers celebrate 150th...

— Continued from page 1

With another resolution, Southern Baptist messengers registered opposition to Nashville doctor Henry Foster, nominee for the U. S. surgeon general post.

The resolution was debated but messengers approved by a landslide margin their opposition.

The resolution originated from the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission was offered because of Foster's involvement in abortions.

After passage, the resolution of opposition and encouragement to U. S. Senators who also opposed Foster, was sent immediately by facsimile to Senator Phil Gramm, R-Texas, who was at that moment leading a filibuster to prevent Foster's nomination from coming to a vote in the Senate. The nomination was killed because supporters could not muster enough support to end the filibuster.

The restructuring plan organizes the SBC entities in five categories:

- World mission ministries: International Mission Board, formerly the Foreign Mission Board, and North American Mission Board, which will combine the Home Mission Board, Radio and Television Commission, and Brotherhood Commission.

- Church enrichment ministries: Baptist Sunday School Board.

- Theological education ministries: the six SBC seminaries.

- Christian ethics and religious liberty ministries: Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, formerly Christian Life Commission.

- Facilitating ministries: Annuity Board and Executive Committee.

The plan was adopted and appropriate changes to Bylaw 15 were adopted. To gain full



NEW SBC OFFICERS are from left, Gary Frost, pastor of Rising Star Church, Youngstown, Ohio, second vice president; Jim Henry, pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla., president; and Larry Wynn, pastor of Hebron Church, Atlanta, Ga., first vice president.

implementation, messengers at next year's convention must approve the bylaw changes a second time.

Some implementing will begin before then — and these measures have been assigned to the Executive Committee.

The PSSC plan also phases out the Historical, Education, and Stewardship commissions, transferring many of their responsibilities to other SBC entities. It would give the Executive Committee responsibility for the Southern Baptist Foundation located in Nashville.

The two amendments adopted at the outset of the PSSC plan's presentation affirmed the contributions of Woman's Missionary Union, and changed wording relating to the Home Mission Board.

Exclusion of any mention of WMU's role in missions offerings and education in the PSSC restructuring plan led to hot and heavy debate throughout the SBC in the months following its approval in February by the Executive Committee.

The amendment evidently defused much of the perceived

opposition to the plan.

In her annual report to the national WMU which met June 19 in adjacent Georgia World Congress Center, WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien had told the group that "WMU was not born by a vote of the Southern Baptist Convention and we will not die by a vote of the convention."

After the amended motion passed, O'Brien said she was satisfied that WMU had been properly recognized.

The amendment recognized and affirmed "the valued historic relationship" of WMU as an auxiliary to the convention and welcomed "continued voluntary contribution of Woman's Missionary Union" in mobilizing mission prayer support, promoting missions offerings, and stimulating missionary spirit within the SBC.

The day before the adoption of the restructuring plan the Executive Committee had declined to amend the PSSC report to include a statement of support of WMU. The committee did, however, adopt a resolution of appreciation.

In financial matters, mes-

sengers approved an SBC Cooperative Program allocation budget of \$141,629,127 for 1995-96. The budget is 3.7 percent above the current budget.

Messengers also approved a 1995-96 SBC operating budget of \$4,236,254.

In a matter that comes before Southern Baptists frequently, messengers overwhelmingly approved a resolution that calls for an amendment to the U. S. Constitution that would guarantee the right to pray in public places including schools.

Though it was pointed out that such rights already exist, Christian Life Commission representatives argued that such an amendment would strengthen individual rights, especially for students in schools and for people in other public places.

Other SBC actions:

- HMB president Larry Lewis reported that SBC churches are well on their way to reaching many Bold Mission Thrust goals for home missions. The SBC is only 87 short of the BMT goal of 5,000 missionaries by 2000.

- Elected Ronnie Floyd, Springdale, Ark., pastor and incoming chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, to preach the convention sermon next year.

- Heard news that more than 700 persons made professions of faith in pre-convention Crossover Atlanta.

- Heard theme messages from such SBC stalwarts as Herschel Hobbs, W. A. Criswell, James L. Sullivan, and Roy Fish and others.

- In pageantry celebrating the 150th anniversary, messengers were reminded that heated debate as well as missions, has been a part of their history from the beginning.

The annual meeting in 1996 will be held in New Orleans. □

- Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor
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- Office — *Baptist and Reflector*, 5001 Maryland Way, Brentwood, Tenn., 37027
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New writers begin summer quarter Sunday School lessons

Baptist and Reflector

BRENTWOOD — Three Tennessee Baptist pastors will write Sunday School lessons for this quarter, beginning in this issue.

Because the *Baptist and Reflector* will not be published the week of July 4, a summary of July 9 lessons can be found on page 14.

C. William Palmiter, pastor of Bethel Church, Greenbrier, will write the Life and Work series.

Palmiter has been in Tennessee since 1971, serving as pastor of Alpine Church, Chattanooga; First Church, Smithville; and Bethel. He is a member of the TBC Executive Board and has served in nu-

merous roles in the association and state.

He holds the master and doctor of divinity degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Palmiter and his wife, Peggy, have two sons, Christopher and Russell.

Jerry Barker, pastor of First Church, Alamo, will write the Convention Uniform series.

In addition to his present pastorate, Barker has also served as pastor of Cotton Grove Church, Jackson, and First Church, St. Bethlehem, in addition to several Ken-



AUSTIN



BARKER



PALMITER

cal Seminary.

He and his wife, Judy, have two children, Janna and Ken.

Clay Austin, pastor of First Church, Blountville, will write the Bible Book series.

Austin also has served as pastor of Cherokee Church, Jonesborough.

He holds a master of divinity degree from Southern Seminary and a doctor of divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

He is a former trustee officer of Harrison-Chilhowee Baptist Academy, Seymour, and has served in numerous associational roles.

Austin and his wife, Anita, have two daughters, Amber and Alison. □

Messengers adopt PSSC report after WMU amendment added

By Linda Lawson and Lonnie Wilkey
For Baptist Press

ATLANTA — By a vote of almost 2 to 1 (9,590 to 5,357), Southern Baptist Convention messengers adopted after about 65 minutes of discussion, the Program and Structure Study Committee's "Covenant for a New Century," which restructures the SBC.

Approval of the report reduces the number of SBC entities from 19 to 12 and sets in motion a restructuring process to be implemented over the next five years. Messengers also approved a bylaw change listing the entities in the new SBC structure. The bylaw also must be approved by messengers to the 1996 convention.

Two amendments — affirming the contributions of Woman's Missionary Union and changing wording related to home missions — were approved by messengers. Both were termed "friendly" amendments "for the good of the body and harmony of the convention" by SBC President Jim Henry.

An amendment to continue the Southern Baptist Historical Commission, one of three commissions slated to be dissolved, was declared defeated in a show of hands vote. After the vote, a request for a ballot vote was ruled out of order. Some messengers audibly protested the ruling, indicating they felt the closeness of the vote warranted a ballot.

John Sullivan, a convention parliamentarian and executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention, told Baptist Press the amendment failed by approximately a 3-1 margin.

Three times during debate, questions about postponing the vote were ruled out of order. In response to a question from Kyle Harmon of South Carolina, Sullivan noted the motion for a study of convention structure was made at the 1993 convention in Houston and referred to the SBC Executive Committee. He said the committee then was established and an interim



MESSENGER EARL WILSON of Wallace Memorial Church, Knoxville, attempts to make a point of order during discussion on the PSSC report.

report from the committee was given at the 1994 convention in Orlando, Fla.

"It cannot be postponed beyond this convention," Sullivan said. "We can vote it up or down, but it cannot be postponed beyond this convention."

Chief parliamentarian Lester Cooper of Georgia later explained: "Robert's Rules of Order state that in any organization that does not meet within a quarterly time frame — such as our convention, which meets only annually — the motion to postpone definitely may not be used to postpone an order of business beyond the end of that session."

Cooper noted, however, a different sort of motion, such as a proposal to postpone the recommendation indefinitely, would have been appropriate," he explained. "As it was, a motion to postpone definitely was an attempt to kill (the recommendation) outright."

The amendment affirming WMU was jointly presented by Roy Smith, executive director of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and John Bisagno, pastor of First Church, Houston.

It states: "We recognize and affirm the valued historic relationship with Woman's Missionary Union as an auxiliary to the convention, and welcome the continued voluntary contribution of Woman's Missionary Union in mobilizing mission prayer support, promoting missions offerings, and stimulating the missionary spirit within the Southern Baptist Convention."

Bisagno urged messengers to "pass this amendment, put this issue behind us, lock arms, and get on with winning this world to Jesus Christ."

Earlier, PSSC chairman Mark Brister acknowledged he has received questions from Southern Baptists about whether the report gave enough recognition to WMU for its contributions.

"The PSSC unanimously expresses deep gratitude to the WMU," said Brister, pastor of First Church, Shreveport, La. "Thank you, WMU, for supporting, giving, and praying for Southern Baptist missions."

At a press conference later, Brister said "the amendments were consistent with our report."

A day earlier, efforts to recognize WMU in the PSSC report by a few members of the Executive Committee failed. The reason cited by chairman Fred Wolfe was to give messengers the opportunity to do that if they wanted to on the floor of the convention.

After the session, WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien said she was "very satisfied" with the amendment approved by messengers, noting it affirmed WMU's presence and partnership in the denomination.

Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis proposed three wording changes affecting the work of the new North American Mission Board to be formed by a merger of the HMB, Radio and Television Commission, and Brotherhood Commission.

Lewis' wording changes affirmed cooperative as well as direct missions strategies for the NAMB and authorized the NAMB to support shorter-

term missionaries as well as career missionaries. A third change in the endnote of the report calls for larger, primarily southern state Baptist conventions to fund "a greater portion of" their evangelism and missions staff and program.

In a news conference Lewis said state conventions want to continue a cooperative missions strategy with the HMB.

The amendment to continue the SBC Historical Commission was proposed by Slayden Yarbrough of Oklahoma, who is serving as interim director of the agency. "Economically, the proposal (of the PSSC) not only will not save money for missions, it may well result in the loss of funds. He noted the Historical Commission currently receives about one-third of 1 percent of CP funds, or about \$500,000 annually.

"I personally have spoken with several state directors of Baptist history who say that their work will increase if the PSSC report is adopted, that they will ask their states for more money, and that it will come from the CP funds that in the past were designated for the Historical Commission," Yarbrough said, speaking for the amendment which ultimately failed.

The report organizes SBC entities in five categories: world mission ministries (International Mission Board and North American Mission Board); church enrichment ministries (Baptist Sunday School Board); theological education ministries (six SBC seminaries); Christian ethics and religious liberty ministries (Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission); and facilitating ministries (Annuity Board and Executive Committee).

Brister said the SBC restructuring will provide "less funding of bureaucracy and more fueling of ministry."

The SBC Executive Committee was given the responsibility of beginning the implementation of the report. □ — David Winfrey of BP and Greg Warner of ABP contributed to this report.

Tennessee Baptists take part

Crossover Atlanta evangelism effort yields 700 professions of faith

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — More than 700 people made professions of faith in Christ as a result of Crossover Atlanta, according to preliminary reports.

The evangelism thrust preceding the Southern Baptist Convention also trained hundreds of people to share their faith, offered ministry to area residents, and resulted in prospects for local churches.

Tennessee Baptists who participated in Crossover Atlanta, according to information released by the Home Mission Board, were: David and Treva Thompson, First Church,

Carthage; Pat Still, Clearview Church, Franklin; and

Bill Davis, R.L. Benefield, Janice and Wayne Hilton, Jerry and Mary Ellen Locklear, Jimmy Murphy, Janet and Robert Sanders, R.A. and Mildred Sharp, Michael West, and Gaylon Wiley, all of Central Church, Hixson.

Crossover helps saturate an area with the Gospel and creates a climate to discuss spiritual issues, said Darrell Robinson, HMB vice president for evangelism.

Crossover Atlanta included neighborhood surveys, block parties, street evangelism, evangelists preaching in local

churches, and, this year for the first time, a sports ministry in local youth detention centers.

For the neighborhood surveys teams of two went door-to-door in areas near the 65 churches. Surveyors asked residents whether they were involved in a church, sensed an increase in spiritual concerns, or had any prayer requests. The surveys led to opportunities for volunteers to share their testimonies and the plan of salvation.

The teams approached 10,563 homes, conducted 3,588 surveys, and presented the Gospel 1,366 times. They reported 111 professions of faith

and 1,406 prospects.

Local churches hosted 24 block parties. By June 19, 17 had reported about 558 professions of faith. In an evangelistic block party, churches invite local residents for food, entertainment, and fellowship. Members then share a Christian witness with guests.

The parties attracted 4,552 guests. Participants distributed 4,150 Bibles and tracts. A Christian witness was presented 2,260 times, organizers said. At least 868 volunteers worked at the parties.

In the area of sports ministry, a 12-member softball team from Kentucky, spon-

sored by the Brotherhood Commission, played four games and ministered to more than 150 inmates at the youth detention facilities in Fulton and Cobb counties.

Street evangelism teams sang and presented the Gospel through drama, resulting in at least 22 professions of faith.

Crossover helps put the convention in a proper mind-set for its annual meeting, said Toby Frost, HMB associate director of mass evangelism. "It really reminds us of what we're here to do" and allows Baptists to "do the main thing the first couple of days before the convention." □

Resolution acknowledging racism passes

By Connie Davis
Baptist and Reflector

ATLANTA — An estimated 95 percent of messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention voted to pass the Resolution on Racial Reconciliation presented by the Resolutions Committee to the convention. It was one of eight resolutions approved by messengers (see story below).

The resolution admitted racism against African Americans. It was proposed to the committee by the Christian Life Commission to coincide with the sesquicentennial celebration of the SBC, which was founded in 1845 after breaking with northern Baptists in part over the issue of whether slave holders could be appointed as missionaries.

Following the vote, Gary Frost, second vice president of the SBC and an African Amer-

ican pastor in Youngstown, Ohio, accepted the apology of the convention, although he noted he could not speak for all African Americans or African American Christians.

During discussion, Dale Smith of Oxford, Ala., spoke against the resolution. He said the resolution should apologize to all people who have been held as slaves, noting Irish men and women were slaves in the United States. Smith also said the resolution didn't represent all Southern Baptists because some fought against slavery during the Civil War.

Mark Mangrum, pastor, First Church, Whiteville, said such a resolution ought to include all ethnic groups which had suffered prejudice by Southern Baptists during the history of the convention.

Jim Queen of Neighborville,

Ill., spoke for the resolution, saying similar resolutions passed by Illinois Baptists and an association in his area had resulted in better relationships with African Americans.

Carey Kimbrell of Baton Rouge, La., said the resolution discredited the founders of the convention who didn't

start slavery. He moved the resolution be referred to the Historical Commission for study.

Charles T. Carter, chairman of the committee and pastor, Shades Mountain Church, Birmingham, Ala., said the committee felt the resolution acknowledged the founders

were fallible and he noted the convention spoke regarding all races in 1989 and 1993. The motion failed.

After the resolution passed, Frost led the convention in prayer, asking messengers to hold hands and if possible "grab some hand darker than your own." □

Tennessee African American worker responds

ATLANTA — Ken Weathersby of the Tennessee Baptist Convention Missions Department, who works out of Memphis, said the passage of the Resolution on Racial Reconciliation will help Southern Baptist work with African Americans and heal some relationships with members of the National Baptist Convention, a predominantly African American group.

He noted of approximately 2,900 Southern Baptist congregations in the state, 44 are African American.

"Being a black Southern Baptist has been a challenge for many of us," said Weathersby, who

explained he has been accused of abdicating his black heritage to become Southern Baptist.

This action by Southern Baptists may communicate "we're not so concerned about being Euro-centrist or Afro-centrist, but more concerned about theo-centrism. We do not put culture above the Gospel."

He does not try to proselyte other Baptists, he said, but rather tries to model a missionary force which anyone can join.

"We have admitted slavery was wrong and now we can move forward and become the people of God regardless of race," he said. □ — Connie Davis

Messengers pass other resolutions on Foster, school prayer

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — In addition to the resolution on racial reconciliation, messengers attending the Southern Baptist Convention adopted the following resolutions —

■ A resolution opposing the confirmation of Henry Foster as U.S. surgeon general and calling for U.S. senators to "support any filibuster which may be waged against the nomination." It noted Foster favors "absolute abortion on demand."

Charles T. Carter, chairman of the Resolutions Committee and an Alabama pastor, said, "At this very moment in Washington, D.C., the Senate is debating this, and we feel that it is urgent enough that we need to act on it first."

Foster's nomination was killed June 22 after a Republican-led filibuster in the U.S. Senate.

The vote by messengers passed by an estimated 95 percent.

■ A resolution favoring an amendment to the U.S. Constitution to guarantee the right to prayer and other religious expressions in public places where expressions of a "non-religious character" are permitted.

Such an amendment would "protect the freedom of private persons, including students in public schools, to engage in voluntary prayer and other religious expression" in places where expressions of a "non-religious character" also are permitted, the resolution said.

One messenger objected that the resolution does not include any proposed wording of such an amendment. "I cannot possibly vote for anything that doesn't let me know how the Constitution is to be amended," said Larry Bishop, a messenger from First

Church, Norman, Okla., and an attorney.

Kenton L. Hunt, a messenger from First Southern Church, Williamsport, Pa., said he opposed the resolution because students are already legally entitled to pray in school.

But an attorney for the Christian Life Commission, which originally proposed the resolution, told messengers that religious expression in public places is "under sustained attack."

Despite key court rulings and legislation, "school officials and school boards around America are still confused by contradictory decisions by lawyers and judges and civil liberties groups," said Michael K. Whitehead of the CLC.

"We want to put a stop to that kind of discrimination. It's time for us to say no to the justices and to the lawyers and to say yes to the religious liberty given us by God and not by man," said Whitehead, who was applauded by messengers.

■ A resolution calling for a moratorium on the granting of patents on genes of animals and humans.

The resolution — which drew no debate from the floor and was approved on an apparently unanimous vote — criticizes the notion that a genetically altered animal or gene could be patented, which would "grant sole proprietary rights ... for 17 years to the (patent) holder."

Richard Land, CLC executive director, told the Resolutions Committee during its deliberations June 17 that seven genes have already been patented and that a "bio-tech company" holds a patent on a gene believed to be related to breast cancer, so that anyone doing research on the gene must pay a royalty to the company.

According to the resolution, "Patenting genetically-altered animals essentially confers ownership of an animal type. Humans may own individual or groups of animals of a given species, but not an entire species and its progeny."

■ A resolution expressing concern for religious liberty and freedom of conscience around the world, especially in countries where "notable occurrences of oppression have occurred," such as Bulgaria, Russia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Iran, Sudan, Yemen, Cuba, Romania, India, and China.

The resolution urges nations to honor human rights provisions in such documents as the United Nations charter and the Helsinki accord on human rights.

The resolution — which drew no debate and passed on an apparently unanimous vote — calls on the CLC, Foreign Mission Board, Baptist World Alliance, and the Home Mission Board interfaith witness department to investigate and report on infringement of religious liberty by governments and religious groups.

■ A resolution "on the Oklahoma City tragedy," referring to the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City.

The resolution thanked volunteers and professionals who helped in the aftermath of the tragedy and acknowledged the grief of those affected.

One messenger objected to the inclusion of President Bill Clinton among other public figures thanked for their support of "assisting the citizens of Oklahoma and the nation in coping with and recovering" from the bombing.

Wylie Drake, a messenger from First Southern Church, Buena Park,

Calif., made a motion to amend the resolution by deleting Clinton's name.

Drake said he would vote for the resolution if his amendment failed but said he objected to Clinton's inclusion "because of his unbiblical, unBaptist, outspoken stand for sodomy as an accepted lifestyle, (and) ... because of his proactive involvement in the killing of our babies."

Parliamentarian John Sullivan of Florida interrupted Drake to say a messenger cannot attack another personality on the floor of the Southern Baptist Convention. Sullivan said the amendment was out of order.

Simon Tsoi, SBC first vice president who was presiding, called for a vote on the main resolution, which apparently passed.

But Christopher Jacobs, a messenger from Downtown Church, Orlando, Fla., raised a point of order in which he said, "I believe the good brother's (Drake's) previous amendment was in order, just his speaking to it was out of order."

Jacobs moved to appeal the ruling that the amendment was out of order, and the convention voted the amendment was in order.

Tsoi then called for a vote on the amendment, which failed. The resolution itself then passed by an overwhelming margin.

■ A resolution affirming the SBC's "continuing commitment to the theological education of African American students." The resolution passed overwhelmingly, though it drew a comment from Mike Stanton of Mount Calvary Church, Tarrant, Ala., who suggested it affirm such education for all races.

■ A resolution of appreciation for Atlanta and the Southern Baptists who ran the convention. □

SBC heads into next century with new plans, directions

After the June 20-22 meeting in Atlanta, Southern Baptists can no longer doubt that the new century will come with new plans, and a new direction.

The major action of the convention certainly was the overwhelming acceptance of the Program Structure and Study Committee recommendation. It's too late to argue whether enough time was allowed for debate, or whether there will be too much sudden impact. We are involved now in a process that will be long, demanding, time consuming, and hopefully beneficial over the long haul.

Cooperation and patience are two key ingredients in the mix for success.

Passage of the monumental restructuring recommendation, resolutions on racism and a Constitutional amendment on prayer, and the celebration of 150 years of missions and evangelism — the convention is assured of entering the year 2000 with bold new directions on the agenda.

A new structure is moving into place, and Baptists will no longer be encumbered by past and present racial sins. That corner has been turned, forgiveness has been sought and granted.

Implementing the restructure plan will not be easy. As Baptist entities are combined, new identities assigned, other agencies eliminated, and some programs reassigned, there will be some confusion.

However, as the implementation takes place over the next few years, Southern Baptists also will be preparing for a new century. There is nothing dramatic about the reality of a new century; years come and go. But the corporate perception of that strange "2000" on the calendar tends to put a different spin on our efforts. We will cross over onto a new frontier of ministry, missions, and evangelism.

Of the main actions of the convention, the world

will be watching for actions to back up the words. Pundits will point out any mistakes and/or violations of our pledges, plans, and ideals.

However, it is wise to remember that courage is not a cheap commodity.

It is true that some deficiencies are apparent in the sweeping call for restructure. The PSSC admits it does not have all the answers. We will have some surprises, some discoveries, and "I told you so" reminders. But let's keep those within the family, working for the best possible solutions. If the Lord's work can be enhanced and quickened, let's do it.

The world also will be watching Southern Baptists as we strive to live by our repentance of racism. This is a telling point in our history. What we do will be much louder than what we have said. Not only must we abhor and flee from racism toward African Americans, all of us must abhor racism of any kind — toward any group or individual.

It is no secret that Woman's Missionary Union scored a tremendous boost with the amendment to the PSSC report. It has seemed ridiculous all along to omit WMU from mention in the plan.

It is doubtful that the recommendation could have passed without such an amendment. Billy Graham in his closing message on Thursday perhaps put it best when he said, "Thank God you have put your arms around WMU."

It was a smart move, the right move, and passage of the recommendation was boosted by the inclusion. The role of WMU for worldwide missions for more than a century remains unchallenged.

Some other observations about the convention:

■ There is a need for more emphasis on Southern Baptist history than the PSSC plan allows. The archives and records accumulated by the Historical

Commission should not be doomed to gather dust. Baptists need assistance on writing their church histories, and research.

■ Thanks to Morris Chapman and Jim Henry for their honest and justifiable presentations to Billy Graham. This most deserving Southern Baptist is the epitome of God's messengers.

■ Thanks to the committee which selected some of our alltime favorites to lead in theme devotions — Hobbs, Sullivan, Criswell. We will not see the likes of them in many a year.



■ Thanks to President Henry for his platform leadership. He gave messengers a sense of calm and cohesiveness, and he did it with only Baptist parliamentarians. His attitude and use of Baptists to determine Baptist procedures helped avoid frustration for many. He deserved re-election.

■ Thanks to Frank Ruff, representative from the Secretariat of National Conference of Catholic Bishops who said to Southern Baptists, "...I have come to love Southern Baptists and I want to apologize to you now for the times that your brothers and sisters of Catholic churches have not treated you as family. We want to ...ask your forgiveness..." He attended his first SBC in 1967, and has been a faithful observer.

■ The PSSC report and the racism resolution drew much attention, but other positive actions were taken — a good budget, a superb 150th pageant, good reports, and a fine presidential message. Our future is filled with opportunities. □

By Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

Citizenship, patriotism, sacred honor

Haul out the chips, the burgers, and the lemonade. Decorate the table with festive red, white, blue. Thumb through the history book for some favorite sayings of the old patriots.

Independence Day is just around the corner. July 4, that is.

It is all right, of course, to treat this most celebrated civic holiday with some lighthearted activities. It certainly is okay to gather the clan or some neighbors and brag about the way we whipped the British back in 1776.

But such lighthearted behavior should be tempered, it seems, with some well-established facts about this special day for American people.

Independence Day is a day of pride in the establishment of the United States of America. Known around the world prior to 1776 as Britain's thirteen colonies in the new country, the colonies at first did not want freedom.

Leaders of the colonies, we now call ourselves states (or commonwealths), apparently chose to cut the ties only after the motherland refused to grant the same freedoms their homeland citizens enjoyed.

The bonds were strong, and there were many reasons to keep ties with the British and other European countries.

For the colonists, it must have been unsettling at best to consider the consequences of not having a powerful ally in the world of conquest and discovery.

So now we have endured as a nation for

219 years. No, we are not as old as France or Poland or China or Egypt.

But this government which ensures the rights and freedoms and privileges so hard-earned in the beginning, this government is essentially unchanged. It has endured. This government "of the people, by the people, and for the people," has never been overthrown by dictator or despot. It has never flinched when freedom was threatened. Its laws, though not perfect, have supplied shelter to the victims and protection for the weak and defenseless.

Did you ever stop to think about the rights of American citizens which allow you to even speak out against the government? Or to go against what a president or governor thought? Did you ever ponder how it would be like to be shut off from your chosen faith or to be prevented from worshiping your God?

Sometimes Americans act as though all these rights and privileges will last forever, and that they carry no responsibilities, or merit any defense.

We should be thankful that rich and poor people opposed British oppression.

And in Paul Harvey's book *Our Lives, Our Fortunes, Our Sacred Honor*, he wrote about the fifty-six who signed the

Declaration of Independence. He described how those men were captured by the enemy, had their homes sacked and burned, lost sons in the battles, and nine lost their lives.

He closed the book like this:

"I don't know what impression you had of the men who met that hot summer in Philadelphia. But I think it is important that we remember this about them.

"They were not poor men or wild-eyed pirates. They were men of means. Rich men, most of them, who enjoyed much ease and luxury in their personal living.

"Not hungry men. Prosperous men. Wealthy landowners; substantially secure in their prosperity.

"But they considered liberty, and this is as much as I shall say of it, they had learned that liberty is so much more important than security, that they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. And they fulfilled their pledge. They paid the price."

Let us join in making a pledge this Independence Day to thank God for a free nation, and to honor its freedom with our prayers, our honor, and our lives. And let there be sincerity in celebration. □ — WFA



Star spangled banner, emblem of freedom

■ just for today
By Fred Wood pastor emeritus Eudora Church, Memphis

Start with a Smile

Matt: "How long should I cook a potato?" Susie: "Put it in the microwave and leave it there until it explodes." Matt: "What good will that do?" Susie: "Then put another one in and don't cook it quite that long."

Take this Truth

A number of discoveries have been made by people who first of all had a dismal failure at something. Do not be afraid to start over again after you have not succeeded in a project you thought was "fool proof."

Memorize this Scripture

"The vessel of clay was marred ... he made it again another vessel" (Jeremiah 18:4).

Pray this Prayer

Lord, help me to learn how to pick up the fragments and start over again. □

Tennesseans provide views on proposed restructuring of SBC

For Baptist and Reflector

ATLANTA — Tennessee Baptists by and large felt the Southern Baptist Convention needed to be restructured.

Not all were in agreement with how it was done or what the final results will be.

"The restructuring should have taken place four to six years ago," said Robert Campbell, director of missions for Fayette Association.

Noting that downsizing is a corporate trend Campbell said the SBC was late in downsizing. "Hopefully the restructuring will save Southern Baptists considerable sums of money and will help us be more effective with less duplication," he said.

Campbell said he did not know that the proposed structure "will prove to be the best that could have been offered, but if not, Southern Baptists will correct it in the next two to four years."

Minister of Youth Billy Kemp of Central Church, Crossville, said he was cautious about the report.

He said he does not agree with the merger of the Radio and Television Commission into the new North American Mission Board and he opposed deletion of the Historical and Stewardship commissions. "But the convention voted that way and I'll support it."

Layman Phil Roy of First Church, Sweetwater, said he hopes the "restructuring will work out in the long run. I am concerned about the future of the Brotherhood Commission. I don't think the overall plan was well thought out."

Cordova pastor Adrian Rogers of Bellevue Church called the report "wonderful. We have a great cargo ship to deliver the Gospel," he said. He noted that adjustments are necessary. "We constantly do that in our churches and we have to do it in our denomination."

"If the Lord tarries in the future, we'll have to do it again," Rogers said.

Fred Ward, pastor of First Church, Huntingdon, said the restructuring was necessary and the "combining and streamlining of agencies needed to be done. "I would have preferred there would have been more communications with and more involvement by the institutions and agencies involved. By doing that I believe it (the report) would have been received better."

Pastor Ron Blankenship of Haywood Hills Church, Nashville, agreed restructuring was needed because the convention needs less bureaucracy but felt the changes were made too fast, not allowing enough time for discussion and education. More time in the process would have allowed "for more input and creativity from a broader

group of Southern Baptists," he said.

And, though the report was amended to include WMU, Blankenship said, "I think there will be repercussions and anger with continued feelings of disenfranchisement from WMU supporters whether that was the intention of the committee or not."

Don Garner, a layman from First Church, Jefferson City, noted the report was "an effort to balance causes and costs" and that there are still a lot of unanswered questions.

He said Southern Baptists probably would have had to face the issue of restructuring now no matter what happened in the 1970s and 80s, referring to the SBC controversy. "We're all balancing budgets and trying to decide what we can afford," he said.

Doris Conley of Whitwell said that "from what I understand, there are some things I don't approve of totally. We do need some changes. I think it would have been better to have had another year to study the plan and pray about it — and vote at the next convention."

Barney Rickman, a retired pastor from Smyrna, said the "only danger I see in the restructuring is the possibility of centralization of power. But I do believe reorganization was needed. The potential problem is a lack of trust," he

observed.

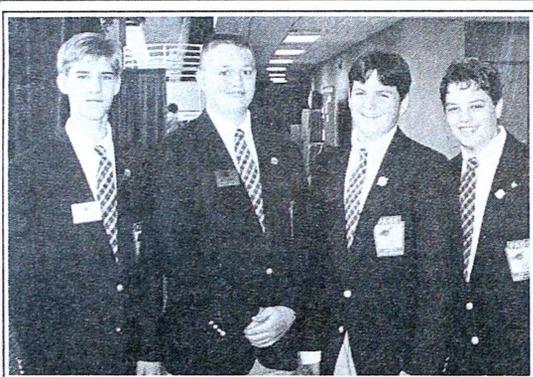
Memphis pastor Tommy Vinson of Leawood Church said he was "pleased with the spirit of the decision-making."

"I am encouraged by the cooperation I have seen with the convention leadership. I'm looking forward to implementation of the changes, and I believe it is a healthy move for the convention."

Tennessee Woman's Missionary Union Executive Director Katharine Bryan said she was glad the amendment about WMU was approved.

"The amendment provided an opportunity for messengers to affirm WMU both past and present. WMU's challenge and responsibility for the future is to continue doing what we do well, to keep our focus on missions, and to continue to provide our churches with quality missions resources."

TBC Executive Director James Porch said many questions need to be answered. "This is an excellent time for the Executive Committee leadership and committee members to strengthen relationships through dialogue with state conventions, SBC agency leadership, and rank and file Southern Baptists. I believe information on the potential impact of the Covenant and the cost for implementation will be received well across the convention. □ — Compiled by B&R staff



Tennessee pages

Four Tennessee Baptist High School Young Men served as pages during the SBC annual meeting in Atlanta. From left, are Matthew Drake, First Church, Gallatin; Jason Roy, First Church, Sweetwater; Carter Bearden, Faith Church, Memphis; and Michael Thelen, Everett Hills Church, Maryville.

Floyd to lead SBC Executive Committee

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Ronnie Floyd of Arkansas narrowly defeated Virginia's T.C. Pinckney June 21 to become chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, Ark., and a member of the Program and Structure Study Committee, was elected chairman by a four-vote margin, 31-27, over Pinckney, a retired U.S. Air Force brigadier general, who lives in Alexandria, Va. Pinckney served the past two years

as secretary of the Executive Committee. He also is editor of the conservative *Baptist Banner* in Virginia.

Floyd was nominated by James Merritt, pastor of First Church, Snellville, Ga., who later was elected vice chairman of the committee. Merritt asked members to consider Floyd, noting his church gave \$200,000 to the Cooperative Program.

Rex Terry, a layman from Fort Smith, Ark., and another PSSC member, was elected secretary. □

Convention motions address variety of issues

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — A call for the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta to set aside time for prayer for Southern Baptist churches that did not baptize anyone last year was one of 44 motions offered from the floor during the 1995 sessions June 20-22.

The motion was made by Clift Brannon of Texas who voiced concern that "10,000 Southern Baptist churches failed to report a single baptism last year."

In calling the convention session to prayer, SBC President Jim Henry announced the Committee on Order of Business will consider scheduling time in future conventions for prayer for these churches.

Most motions were referred to the SBC Executive Committee for further study. Among those motions were:

- a call to provide scholarship assistance to African American students at the convention's seminaries, the funding to come from monies not expended due to the convention's action to discontinue a relationship with American Baptist Theological Seminary, a black Bible college in Nashville that has been jointly sponsored by the SBC and the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc.

- a review of the financial and ministry impact of the "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring passed by the SBC.

- to ask SBC agencies or boards to provide feedback to the originators of motions pertaining to the agencies and boards as to their disposition.

- to ask the Executive Committee seek a means "to include in fellowship and work all Southern Baptists. ..."

- a call for the convention to no longer use the identifier "black" to refer to African American churches and programs.

- a request for messengers to be given more opportunity to discuss matters brought to the convention floor.

- a call to create a national Southern Baptist newspaper which is affordable and provides "the true message of the great positive things" taking place in the convention.

Several motions were assigned to specific agencies. Among those was a motion from Knoxville pastor Robert Burch of Calvary Church concerning guidelines for sabbaticals. That motion was referred to the Sunday School Board.

A motion by Mike Womack of Calvary Church, Erwin, addressed the portability of medical insurance for foreign

missionaries and other convention employees. That motion was referred to the Foreign Mission Board.

The Denominational Calendar Committee will study a motion calling for the first Thursday of every May to be named Southern Baptist National Day of Prayer.

A motion was referred to the Annuity Board for its trustees to conduct an investigation and audit into the purchase of all electronic data equipment over the past five years.

Several motions were ruled out of order. Among those was one offered by Mark Mangrum, pastor of First Church, Whiteville. He moved that the staff of Southern Baptist seminaries "be active members of Southern Baptist churches that support and actively give to the Cooperative Program and are not affiliated with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship."

One of the most unusual recommendations came from Jesse Russell of Saratoga, Texas, who asked the convention "that single Christians be labeled 'unclaimed blessings' and accepted within that status by the convention." While sympathetic with his motion, the Committee on Order of Business ruled the motion was "out-of-bounds." □

Graham's 'hero' status with Southern Baptists keeps growing

By Wm. Fletcher Allen
Baptist and Reflector

ATLANTA — SBC President Jim Henry-introduced evangelist Billy Graham as his "hero" when he spoke here in the Georgia Dome June 22.

I understand, Brother Jim, he is my hero also. But more than that, years ago, the simple Gospel message of salvation that Billy still preaches introduced Jesus Christ to me in a way I had not understood before.

It was in Township Auditorium, Columbia, S. C. that as the very young evangelist Billy Graham preached, the Word warmed my heart and I made Christ Lord of my life.

The message was the same — simple, urgent, true, biblical, and personal.

So as I sat in this immense place in June 1995, I thanked God for Billy Graham, for sparing him yet a little longer. I wanted to be here, to see him and hear him perhaps for the last time.

Yes, I was teary-eyed when the audi-



INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN Southern Baptist evangelist Billy Graham speaks to messengers to close out the 1995 annual meeting in Atlanta.

ence stood, and when the applause grew louder. I knew we all were recognizing not so much the man, but the way he has let God lead his life; his selflessness, his devotion to the Savior.

My heart warmed when he completed his message and walked away from the podium. I heard a lone messenger shout, "We love you, Billy!" And my heart responded, "Yes, we do. Godspeed, you stalwart soldier of the cross, Godspeed. You have not sought nor accepted hero status. But you truly are a hero."

I put aside my notepad and got out a fresh one when he began sharing his heart with his Southern Baptist family.

I wanted this one to be a record of my personal impressions of his June 1995 conversation with people who love him. I'll keep it.

I had intended to write for readers some of the things he said. Perhaps I will at a later time. For now I can just remind us all that he preached the simple, pure, biblical, Christ-honoring Gospel to us.

It was good to hear Billy Graham talk about the challenges before us as we serve the risen Lord. It was good to hear his humor that he might not find suitable in a crusade message.

It was good to hear him talk about his recent serious illness, and how he ministered to hospital patients by day and counseled troubled nurses at night.

It was good to see the flame of evangelism still burning brightly in his soul.

It was good to see him standing tall there in front of his huge Southern Baptist family, filled with courage and love for people.

It was good to hear him embrace WMU. But the best thing about the hour was his honesty with us. He did not soft-pedal the urgency of Southern Baptists' role in winning the world for Christ. He thanked us for being brave enough at last to confess our guilt for shunning others.

Billy, you foot soldier for Christ, thank you for being obedient to him. □

SBC devotional speakers address convention theme of 'empowered'

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Southern Baptists must be empowered for the future with a cooperative spirit, evangelistic fervor, and commitment to inerrancy, theme devotion speakers told messengers celebrating the convention's 150th anniversary at the Georgia Dome.

Nine speakers addressed the convention theme, "Empowered for the Unfinished Task."

Southern Baptists "must abandon self" and work together like the people who started the convention in order to complete their mission," SBC Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman said in the opening devotion.

Roy Fish, professor of evangelism at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, reminded messengers of their historical roots. "Aggressive evangelism" was in the blood of those who helped form the SBC in 1845, Fish said.

W.A. Criswell, senior pastor

emeritus of First Church, Dallas, told messengers the past and future of the Southern Baptist Convention are bright because of a commitment to the inerrancy of the Bible.

This commitment "on the part of our forefathers and upon our leaders of our convention at this present moment is a harbinger of portent and a promise of the direction of our convention and our churches in the years that are yet to come," he said.

But it is the individual churches that represent the power of the SBC, noted Robert E. Naylor, president emeritus of Southwestern Seminary.

A current seminary president, Paige Patterson of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., focused on Southern Baptist education, saying it must be characterized by respectable scholarship, reverent scholarship, courageous scholarship, and liberating scholarship.

Retired Sunday School Board President James L. Sul-



SOUTHERN BAPTIST STATESMEN James L. Sullivan, left, of Nashville, and Herschel Hobbs of Oklahoma, former seminary classmates, find time to visit during the SBC annual meeting.

livan observed the churches of the convention have been unified by Sunday School that presents Southern Baptists an opportunity "to unite ourselves behind the Bible that we are arguing about."

He urged those attending to be like Daniel, with the "Bible hidden in the heart, revealed in the light so the world will see the message

revealed in us."

Through the 150-year history of the SBC, the denomination has contributed a distinctive soul competency as perhaps its greatest contribution to religious thought, Baptist statesman Herschel Hobbs of Oklahoma City said.

Soul competency, Hobbs said, "means that I can be a Baptist, Methodist, Presbyter-

ian, Jew, or a Muslim — but I am responsible to God for my choice. ... God does not coerce the individual, or else he would make us puppets on the string of faith."

Through its various programs the denomination has produced individuals like Alma Hunt and Greg Horton.

"I am a product of the local Baptist church," said Hunt, the 85-year-old retired executive secretary of WMU. "I come with a bias in favor of missions," she told the audience, noting that it was a missions organization in church that turned her toward a lifelong interest and commitment to missions.

Horton, a South Carolina layman and businessman, noted that "if you're reading God's Word and praying, it's hard to be fighting with one another in your homes, in your churches, and out there in the marketplace.

He urged the audience to follow the Bible's teaching of forgiveness to receive God's blessing. □

Baptism, pageantry highlight Southern Baptist celebration of history

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Southern Baptists were reminded that heated debate, as well as missions, had been part of their history from the beginning, in a theatrical pageant celebrating the convention's 150th anniversary on the first evening of the 1995 meeting.

But it was the living example of their continuing commitment to winning that drew sustained applause

June 20 when Bernard Miller, pastor of the First Missionary Baptist Church, Griffin, Ga., baptized his son, Brian, before the crowd.

Brian Miller's baptism gave messengers the opportunity to celebrate a historic event that had taken place hours earlier when they overwhelmingly approved a racial reconciliation resolution.

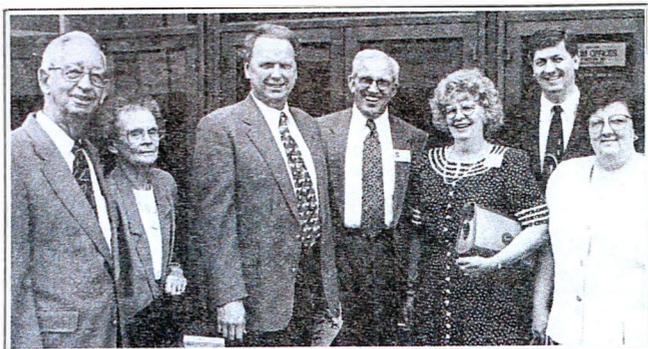
Actors and actresses in period costumes, as well as narrators, told the

story of Southern Baptists. Video showed how Southern Baptists continue to fulfill the Great Commission and the objective of the convention's founding. Choirs, orchestra, soloists, and the congregation sang and played the story of salvation and missions.

The primary goal of the celebration was "to focus attention on our founding purpose," doing missions work in the United States and around the world," said Marshall Walker, chairman of the

sesquicentennial work group. The planners wanted to help Southern Baptists "understand those people were just normal people trying to find God's will and work together," said Walker, special events coordinator for the Baptist Sunday School Board.

On the closing night of the celebration June 21, Southern Baptists were challenged to step into empty missionary shoes to complete the unfinished task of winning the world to Christ. □



FRIENDS attending the convention together include, from left, George and Vada Williams, Clinton; Evangelist Henry Linginfelter, Alcoa; George Gilbert, pastor, Northwest Church, Knoxville, and his wife, Joyce; and Bill Daniel, pastor, Ball Camp Church, Knoxville, and his wife, Cathy.



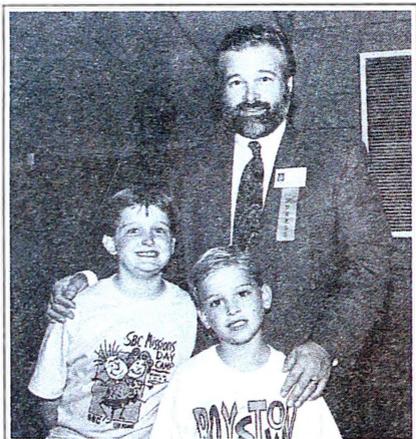
THE ROY FAMILY, from left, Will, Yvonne, and Phil, who are members of First Church, Sweetwater, pause outside the convention area.



PAUSING IN THE exhibit area are J.G. and Betty Wise. He is pastor of Woodland Church in Brownsville.



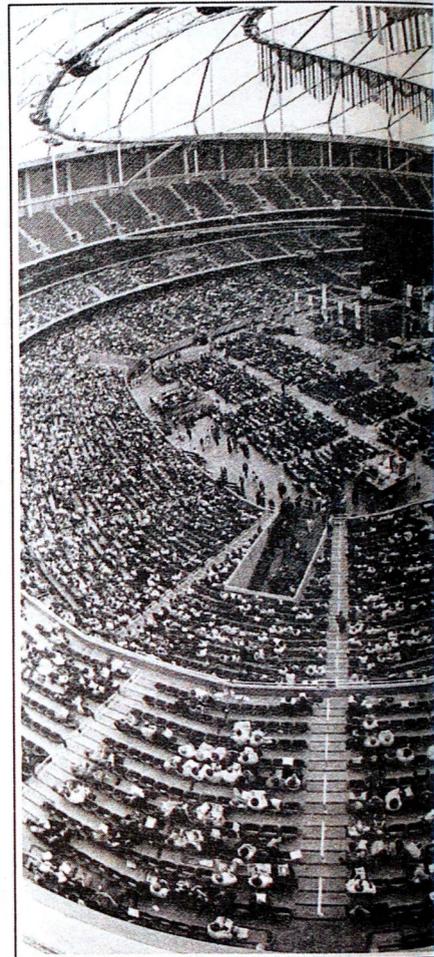
MICHAEL SMITH, pastor, Second Church, Memphis, with his wife, Grace.



SAM HOUSE, who works at the Sunday School Board and attends Crieewood Church, Nashville, attended with sons Travis, left, and Tyler.



PAT STILL, left, of Clearview Church, Franklin, and the Charles Pratts. Pratt is director of missions, Haywood Association.



DIRECTORS OF MISSIONS Frank Proffitt, left, Sevier County Association, and Omer Painter, right, Tennessee Valley Association, visit with Tommy Williams, pastor, Fort Robinson Church, Kingsport.

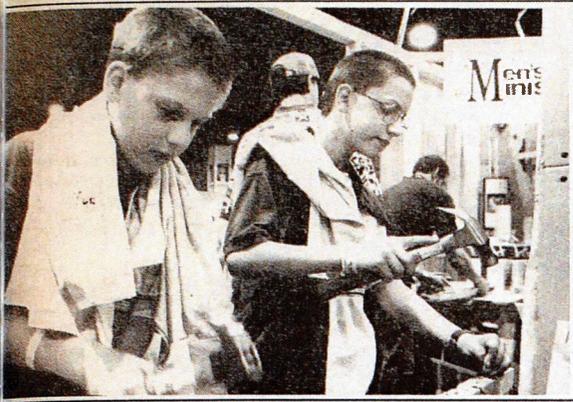


VISITING IN THE exhibit hall are Raymond Holloway, left, and Mike Holloway, both of Ward's Grove Church, Murfreesboro. Holloway is pastor of the church.



CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE member, Doug White, pastor, Olive Church, Knoxville, at wc

Convention news

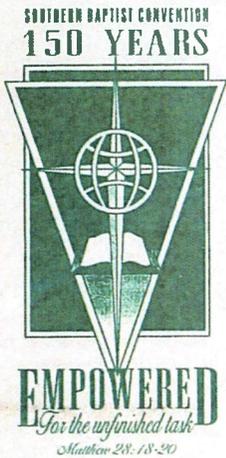


BROTHERS Clint, left, and Clay Gravatt of Memphis, compete at nail driving at the Brotherhood Commission booth in the exhibit area. The Commission offers missions education and opportunities to men and boys. The boys' father, Dale, is pastor of Wells Station Church in Memphis.



VISITING WITH Keith Currey of Union University at its booth are Bill Northcott, pastor, First Church, Covington, and his wife, Sandra.

1,500 Tennessee Baptist messengers participate



ANN AND ROBERT Campbell of Fayette Association, where he is director of missions.

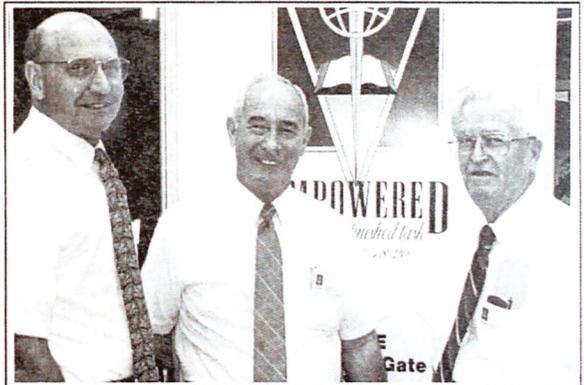


THE MCMILLENS, from left, Sarah, John, and Ken, who is director of missions, Riverside Association, pause in the exhibit area.

MESSENGERS, including more than 20,000 who registered for the convention, meet in Atlanta's Georgia Dome June 20-22.



RESTING during a lunch break are father and son, Barney Rickman, left, retired pastor, Smyrna, and Gary Rickman, director, TBC Church Annuity Programs Department.



GATHERED IN the exhibit area are, from left, Ben H. Walker, Ernest Condee, pastor, and Ed Smith of Inskip Church, Knoxville.



PASTOR JAMES WHITE, left, of Faith Church, Atlanta, laughs with M.B. Howard of Covington as they discuss the furniture being built for the church at the Brotherhood Commission booth in the exhibit area. Howard is a Missions Service Corps volunteer leading the project.



FRED AND LINDA CLIFFT pause during the activities. He is pastor of Friendship Church, Beech Bluff.



JOHN AND TERESA COMPTON attend activities of the convention. He is pastor of First Church, Dickson.

Pastors' Conference voices Christ 'High and Lifted Up'

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — More than 13,000 pastors and their spouses enjoyed a season of inspiration during the 1995 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference at the Georgia Dome, a structure known more for gridiron clashes than spiritual confabs in Atlanta.

The June 18-19 conference focused on a "High and Lifted Up" theme, preceded the opening of the 1995 Southern Baptist Convention, June 20-22.

"I am here to encourage you, to tell you there is a reason to be encouraged despite the extreme difficulty you may be facing," John MacArthur said. "We need a vision of the glorified Christ."

MacArthur, pastor of Grace Community Church, Sun Valley, Calif., told the conference, "We need the Lord high and lifted up so we can get things in perspective. We are called to minister in a sense of awe, of reverence, of holy fear."

The future of the United States is contingent upon Christians proclaiming Christ high and lifted up, Fred Luter warned.

"I believe America's greatest problem is she's suffering from a severe case of spiritual malnutrition," said Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Church, New Orleans. "And the only remedy, the only antidote, the only hope is for the church to stand up and be the church and lift him up and proclaim the name of our Lord and Savior to a dying world."

Ravi Zacharias, an Atlanta-based speaker and author, noted violence in society is now being blamed by psychologists on a lack of fathers in the home. "If there are no fathers in the home and violence is breaking out, what else could we have expected when we evicted the creator Father, the Father who has made us? We have evicted him

from the cosmic scene. That's why we are living in a world which has gone so wrong."

Evangelist Junior Hill from Hartselle, Ala., said the times demand the Gospel be preached in season and out of season. "Sometimes the man of God looks at things too carefully and misses what God is doing — seemingly more interested in Barna (a public opinion researcher) than the Bible," Hill said, cautioning an obsession with the winds of opinion often brings discouragement.

"When it is a good time, a good opportunity, and a good occasion and when it is not a good time or a good opportunity or a good occasion, the Gospel should be proclaimed," Hill said.

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, Ark., insisted, "It is time for revival. It is time for us to repent of sin, to seek God with our whole heart and for God to take a God-powerful, soul-searching, glory-filled revival. It can happen. You need to let go and let God do what he needs to do."

"Whatever you do, don't miss heaven," exhorted Paige Patterson, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

"An adequate consciousness of both heaven and hell would increase our gratification to God and stir the waters of our baptismal pools," Patterson noted. Preachers remain too sensitive of what others are going to think, he noted saying many are more afraid of preaching about hell than going there.

"Culture has almost blinded us to the yawning chasm of eternity," Patterson said.

God has given the church eternal values that will survive through history and that will work in any culture, said Gene Getz, senior pastor of Fellowship Bible Church North, Plano, Texas.

"The tragedy of today is that we too often serve the organization instead of allowing the organization to serve the purpose of Jesus Christ," Getz said.

He said the question every body of believers in history must ask is: "Do we have the structure to carry out these supra-cultural dimensions of the faith?"

"It is so easy to lock into tradition rather than the truth — into form over function," Getz said. "Our methodology should grow out of our commitment to the Word of God."

Jerry Vines said sin is as old as the Garden of Eden yet as current as what is happening in the U.S. today. "Sin is a serious matter — our contemporary culture would have us believe otherwise," said Vines, co-pastor of First Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

"The Bible teaches sin is a poison of satanic origin that has infected the whole of mankind," Vines said. He

said everywhere sin steps it leaves its mark and upon everything it touches it leaves its stain. "Sin is the leprosy of the heart," Vines said.

Sinners don't need their transgressions whitewashed; they need to be washed white, he added. "It is the high cost of cleansing sin that required the shedding of blood on Calvary," Vines said.

"It was on Calvary that Jesus Christ was between two thieves high and lifted up," said John Phillips, author and minister from Memphis. The occasion of Christ's crucifixion, he said, brought a "horror of great darkness" in which God reached out and put his hand on the sanctuary.

The veil in the temple was to keep the people out of the presence of God, Phillips said. "For 1,500 years the veil stood between the holy place and the holy of holies and God was saying, 'Don't you dare come in here,'" he said. By renting the veil, "God was saying 'Come on in, whenever you like and stay as long as you like. Ask for anything you like.'"

Adrian Rogers said when one recognizes Christ as his Savior he is born for battle. "You were born for victory — God is calling us to victory." Rogers said the people of God must take hold of the weapon of God but let God's strength be their strength.

It is time Christians depended on God and what he can do, Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Church, Cordova, said, telling the Georgia Dome crowd they can expect trouble if they are true to their calling. "Don't get the idea it is always going to be all honey and no bees," he said.

With an emphasis on strengthening the family in the midst of this battle, Jerry Sutton, pastor of Two Rivers Church, Nashville, noted it is not just secular families who are under attack today. "Many ministry families are on the rocks."

Sutton challenged his listeners to make family a priority by loving one another, modeling what they believe and guiding and guarding their children.

"The homes of pastors are under greater attack and experience greater crises than ever before," agreed Danny Akin, asking rhetorically what it was that caused pastors to become disasters as husbands.

"I have never met a man who lost his ministry because they spent too much time with their wife and children," said Akin, dean of students at Southeastern Seminary. "My church will not suffer if I give my best to my Savior, wife, and children."

"While men are looking for strong starters, God is looking for finishers," Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Church, Dallas, told conference attendees.

"If we finish strong, it's because of the one within us. He alone can get us across the finish line," Graham said, emphasizing that Christians must be determined to "Stay after souls, stay in Scripture, keep family strong, and be

accountable to others."

Johnny Hunt, elected as president of 1996 Pastors' Conference, said: "It is my prayer that Jesus will continue to be lifted high." Bob Pittman, of Kirby Woods Church, Memphis, was elected as the conference's vice president. □

Fight evil with good: Colson

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Telling Southern Baptists "you can't just sit there," Chuck Colson urged participants at the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference June 18 to become politically active and to "overcome evil with good."

Colson, a member of First Church, Naples, Fla., is founder and chairman of the board of Prison Fellowship Ministries, an international organization of more than 60,000 volunteers ministering in prisons in 69 countries. One of its most visible ministries, the Angel Tree, provided Christmas gifts to children of inmates in more than 430,000 homes last year.

Colson, an aide to former president Richard Nixon, was imprisoned for his role in the Watergate scandal that led to Nixon's resignation as president.

A month after his release from prison, Colson recalled, he was invited to speak to the 1975 Pastors' Conference. "It was there that I discovered Southern Baptists and shortly after I was baptized and joined a Southern Baptist church," he said.

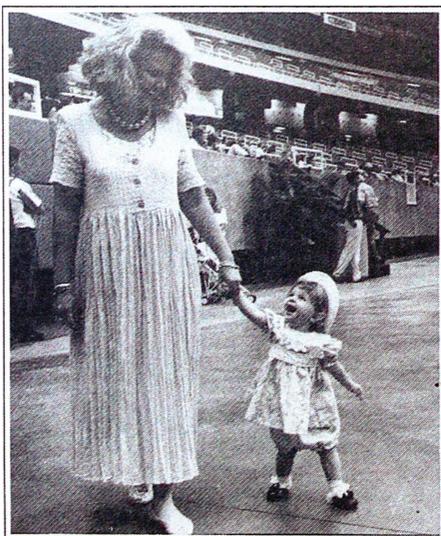
"But look at what has happened in those 20 years. The year 1975 was the year of the evangelical," he observed. Noting the popularity of presidential candidate Jimmy Carter and athletes professing their Christianity in public, he added, "It was the biggest thing to be born again."

"Now 30 percent of Americans don't want a fundamentalist as their neighbor," he said. "How have we gone from the most fashionable group to the most feared group?"

He then warned that liberties in America are "under assault." Citing a recent ban on the tradition of singing "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" at a school commencement, he said, "The real threat, however, is not just the oppression of Christianity. The real danger is that we will become so fearful of crime that we will sacrifice our liberties for order."

Illustrating ways to establish order, he said, "I have a 'Colson's Law' that says there are two restraints in human nature: in here, the restraint of the heart, and out there, the restraint of bayonets."

Describing three ways Christians can overcome evil, he said, love one another, love others, and adopt a world view. "We must tell them there is no virtue attainable outside of Christ. Christians do out of love what secular humanity is paid to do. Our job is to explain that." □



FOURTEEN-MONTH-OLD McKenzie Hoskins of Kingsport enjoys a break with her mother, Marlinda, during the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference June 19. McKenzie's dad, Bill, is pastor of Higher Ground Church in Kingsport. The conference was held in Atlanta's Georgia Dome.

Speakers support role of WMU in SBC

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — The value of WMU was echoed by numerous comments from speakers during the June 18-19 WMU meeting at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta.

That omission was addressed by SBC messengers June 20 when the restructuring was amended to include a statement of affirmation of WMU's work and contributions to SBC life.

During the WMU annual meeting, one of the 37 missionaries commissioned by the Home Mission Board during Monday's closing session explained that his going into career missions was a direct result of the grace of God and because of WMU.

Ron Lewis, appointed as a church planter in Calabash, N.C., told of his release from a 15-year drug habit when he was saved and a later call to missions after being dragged to a WMU mobilization meeting.

"Don't forget where you were when God found you," said Lewis.

William O. Estep, professor at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, writer of a history of the Foreign Mission Board, told the group that "the SBC would not be what it is today without the WMU." He added, "If the WMU is left out of the Covenant for a New Century (restructuring plan), the SBC will be less than it is today."

Carolyn Miller, re-elected for a fifth one-year term as WMU president, said, "Have no fear, we will be the missions organization for the Southern Baptist Convention."

In his challenge to the missionaries at the commissioning service, HMB President Larry Lewis said that the relationship of WMU to the HMB "will continue as it has in the past

in the years ahead."

HMB Executive Vice President Bob Banks told the group that the HMB could not have survived throughout its history without the support of the WMU and that "there were times when missionaries would have been called home from the field," had it not been for the WMU.

Anise McDaniel, a 101-year-old woman from Clinton, Miss., told the gathering, "The world has come to our doorstep. We don't have to go overseas to do



RUTH MCNABB, Tennessee WMU president of Elizabethton reports on Project HELP: Hunger, which she helped lead.

missions. There's a wonderful opportunity to do missions at home."

She also said dedicated women will "do the work and keep the principles of Christianity. No matter what we're called, dedicated women will do the work."

Her words supported an earlier report from Linda Johnson, a home missionary based in Atlanta, who told the women about the Christian witnessing effort planned for the 1996 Olympics in the city. These include a sports New Testament with the plan of

salvation, a throwing disc which functions as a tract with the plan of salvation in six languages, lapel pins for conversation starters, and an interactive pocket guide to the Olympics which is also a tract.

As part of an introduction to the WMU's next ministry emphasis, former SBC President Jimmy Allen told the story of the physical destruction of his family by AIDS. Allen, chaplain at Big Canoe Chapel, Big Canoe, Ga., said his daughter-in-law and her daughter have died from AIDS. And a grandson and Allen's other son are dying.

WMU is producing materials to help churches minister to people with AIDS. WMU suggests several avenues of involvement: prayer, education, and local and global ministry. Practical prayers would be in asking God for a vaccine, for preventive education, therapies and methods for compassionate care.



ENJOYING THE WMU annual meeting were, from left, Johanna Dilworth, Ida Miller, and Bobby Turner, all members of West Hills Church, Knoxville. The WMU annual meeting was held June 19-20, prior to the SBC annual sessions in Atlanta.

A mission offering during the meeting raised \$10,046 for the WMU's Vision Fund.

Earlier WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien reminded the women that in 1994 they had led in the pro-

motion of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions of nearly \$86 million and for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions for \$37.18 million. □

O'Brien calls for inclusion in report

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

ATLANTA — Woman's Missionary Union was "not born by vote of this convention, nor will we die by it," Dellanna O'Brien told participants at the WMU national annual meeting.

In her report June 19, O'Brien said WMU's "mandate for service issues from a far higher authority — the Father himself." And she issued a call to seek a revision to the Program and Structure Study Committee plan for restructuring the SBC which was to be presented to messengers during the opening day of the convention June 20.

O'Brien opened her report by listing numerous accomplishments of WMU from all levels — local churches, associations, state conventions, and nationally. "Were we given access to God's computer so that we knew the amount of time given lovingly by WMU members, and could attach a dollar cost, the value of service would be staggering.

"How much has it cost the SBC? Not a dime. You have done for God what you would not have done for money," she said.

O'Brien acknowledged WMU efforts in the last year have been "generated in a time of great uncertainty for our organization" due in part to the Program and Structure Study Committee report which was released to and approved by the SBC Executive Committee in February.

The report did not state the contributions of WMU over the years; however, it assigned primary responsibility for the promotion of the home and foreign mission offerings to the respective SBC mission boards.

WMU traditionally has led in the promotion of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Since the beginning of the offerings more than a century ago,

\$2,070,191,092 has been given, O'Brien said.

O'Brien noted she has been assured by FMB President Jerry Rankin, HMB President Larry Lewis, and others that WMU will continue to be "a vital part of missions education and the promotion of our missions offerings."

"However, what is to be decided on Tuesday (June 20) is not the assurances of these men and many others, but the acceptance or rejection of the formal restructuring report. Only that will endure throughout the years to come."

The WMU leader noted she has been told WMU cannot be given a ministry statement because "we are not accountable to the convention, since our trustees are elected by our membership, and not the SBC. In the governance of our denomination, I suppose this is true.

"However, what person could deny the steadfast loyalty and exemplary service of the membership of WMU? How can we support a report which so easily dismisses the contributions through the years and which refuses to acknowledge the ongoing need for the work of WMU?" asked O'Brien, who was interrupted several times by applause during her report.

She said she could not imagine Southern Baptists supporting the PSSC report as it now stands. "I urge you to seek a revision which will include Woman's Missionary Union," she told the audience.

The WMU leader noted the "need of the world is too urgent, the call to share Christ with the lost of our generation and the next is too demanding to sideline the hundreds of thousands of committed, loyal partners in missions.

O'Brien promised, however, that if attempts to include WMU in the PSSC report were to fail, "all is not lost."

"God has given us a song, an anthem of praise to the God who desires that not one soul should perish. He has not taken that song away.

"He includes us still in his covenant for a new century. He does indeed have a place for us." □



O'BRIEN

WMU conducts business

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Woman's Missionary Union executive board approved a 1995-96 operational budget of \$14,879,000 and selected Louisville, Ky., as the next site for a National Acteens Convention during its semi-annual meeting June 17. The board met prior to the 1995 annual WMU meeting.

The budget represents a zero-based budget with no losses.

The Louisville NAC meeting

will be held July 1-4, 1998. NAC is a national gathering for Acteens, WMU's organization for girls ages 12-17 and their leaders.

In other business, the executive board set the 1996 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal at \$100 million and \$50 million for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering goal. It also approved the components of the 1996-97 social issue emphasis, Project HELP: Child Advocacy. The project will seek to involve Southern Baptists in meeting the needs of children. □

Henry: New covenant, spirit needed for SBC's future

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Southern Baptists should recall but not linger in the past and charge toward the future with a new covenant and tolerant spirit, urged SBC President Jim Henry.

The annual president's address to the Southern Baptist Convention came immediately after messengers voted June 20 to adopt a "Covenant for a New Century" restructuring plan for the convention's 150th anniversary.

"It's a two-edged sword we must carry," said Henry. "One edge looking back in appreciation; the other moving ahead in anticipation.

"To change the world, there are things we must change internally and externally. New paradigms can mean new possibilities. The status quo will not do in a rapidly changing world."

Citing Joshua 1:1-7, Henry said covenants are not new, but just as Joshua faced "a series of choices that would keep the continuity of the covenant," Southern Baptists, too, must do certain things to ensure the covenant.

First, there must be a commitment to the purpose, which is found in "giving, building churches, missions, and

evangelism," the Orlando, Fla., pastor said. "Our business is to take the land."

Second, the past must be commemorated to remember God's faithfulness during the conquest, to teach future generations, and as a testimony to the nature of God.

Henry acknowledged that one of the biggest challenges faced by Southern Baptists is "passing on the Baptist identity," which he pledged to do even with the dissolution of the SBC Historical Commission as proposed in the restructuring.

Third, Henry noted there will be perils to face.

Perils of impurity will "wink at the flaps of the tents of our hearts — personally, as churches, as denomination ... Power, possessions, position, prestige, prominence, promiscuity, like Haman's gallows, stand ready to hang us."

He called for tolerance when faced with perils of incompatibility. "We have brothers and sisters in Christ who have decided differences in philosophy and in some cases doctrine and adherence to the integrity of Scripture who have opted to their chosen Jordan.

"Most of us have crossed the Jordan and stand ready to make a renewed ef-

fort to take the land. We have some who have crossed the Jordan with us, who have a tendency to narrow the meaning of conservatives until it becomes a lasso of legalism."

Henry said Southern Baptists have not been "our best" under a "dedication of narrowness. The great mainstream of our people are biblically conservative and committed to the SBC. We must steadfastly resist the tendency to pit conservative against conservative, but foster a spirit of trust built on the unifying work of the Holy Spirit who binds our hearts in mutual love."

Henry cautioned Southern Baptists against "two tendencies. One, to forget the dramatic renewal to biblical integrity, that kept us from sliding down the slippery slope of compromise. That must be a guarded commitment never relinquished.

"The other is a tendency to be biblically correct but reflect a spirit that is not of our Lord Jesus Christ." Saying he was quoting Charles Stanley, Henry added, "God can use a man who may be in error, but whose spirit is right; but a man who is right in his theology, but wrong in his spirit, is a hindrance to God."

"How then, shall we live as a family

of faith?" he asked. "We must show a practical demonstration of love. The word love should not be just a banner. We must do whatever must be done at whatever cost to show this love." □

Commission execs express sorrow, hope

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Leaders of the three Southern Baptist agencies eliminated by the convention's restructuring expressed sorrow over the decision and hope that the responsibilities of their agencies will continue.

Approved by messengers during the Southern Baptist Convention sesquicentennial meeting, the restructuring will eliminate the Historical Commission, Education Commission, and Stewardship Commission. The Baptist Foundation will be merged with the SBC Executive Committee rather than existing as a separate organization.

During his report to messengers, Ronald Chandler, executive director of the Stewardship Commission, said he felt like the man sentenced to death. When asked how he wanted to die, the man replied, "old age."

Established in 1961, the Stewardship Commission is the convention's youngest agency.

"I hope that in the new organization stewardship will have a high visibility and be given the resources needed to assist the churches," Chandler told Baptist Press. "I would anticipate higher funding for Cooperative Program promotion now that the Executive Committee will have it as one of its responsibilities," he added, "and that would be good."

The most vocal dissent to the restructuring plan of the Program and Structure Study Committee came from the Historical Commission. During messengers' discussion of the proposal, Slayden Yarbrough, interim executive director, offered a motion to amend the proposal and not dissolve the commission. The amendment was defeated.

"I thought I had a fair hearing," Yarbrough said, while noting that many people who wanted to address the proposal did not get a chance to speak before President Jim Henry announced time had elapsed and called for the vote. "An issue this significant should have had a longer discussion period," Yarbrough said.

The six seminary presidents will be given responsibility for preservation and operation of the library and archives.

In a prepared statement, Stephen Carleton, executive director of the Education Commission, said, "Our Baptist colleges and schools have meant far too much to the Southern Baptist Convention, its churches, and its causes to stop their momentum now.

"It is my hope the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools will continue to exist and assume the important functions of the Education Commission," he stated. □

Ten Southern faculty take offer for early retirement

Baptist Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Ten faculty members of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary have accepted an early retirement package fashioned by seminary administrators at the request of a faculty committee.

The plan, which was approved by seminary trustees in April, provides a package of salary and benefits linked to the faculty member's length of service. A total of 29 faculty qualified for the plan, which required that age plus length of service equal 65. The package was developed after a request of the seminary's Faculty Committee to provide an early retirement alternative.

The 10 faculty who accepted the early retirement package are Raymond Bailey, preaching; Betty Bedsole, Ron Boud and Maurice Hinson, church music; William Cromer and William Rogers, Christian education; Anne Davis and Donoso Escobar, church social work; Wade Rowatt, psychology of religion; and Marvin Tate, Old Testament. All retirements take effect July 31.

Seminary officials have also announced a modest reduction in administrative staff, including a net elimination of two administrative positions in business services, one in academic administration, and eight clerical positions. Half of the eight clerical positions were eliminated by attrition, and occupants of the other positions are eligible to apply for campus job openings. □

SBTS alumni resign from roles

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

ATLANTA — Citing changes at the institution "that grieve us," two Southern Baptist Theological Seminary alumni leaders have resigned from the alumni organization.

Walter G. Nunn, pastor of University Church, Huntsville, Ala., president of the alumni association, and Howard Cobble, pastor of Severns Valley Church, Elizabethtown, Ky., immediate past president, in a press conference June 21 announced they were distancing themselves from their Louisville, Ky., alma mater.

Another alumnus, Susan McBride of Fredericksburg, Va., who originally accepted the nomination as national alumni president-elect, refused to allow her name to be presented for election by the alumni association. In addition, at least four state association alumni presidents (Missouri, Virginia, West Virginia, and Hawaii) have resigned. Two other state presidencies are vacant due to people moving, said a representative of the seminary's alumni office.

Southern Seminary spokesman Michael Dudit said the event was "much ado about nothing."

Cobble, the immediate past presi-

dent, has no further responsibilities, Dudit said, while Nunn, who would have become the immediate past president in September, would only have been a member of the alumni association's executive council.

"It's not like there is a major upheaval in the alumni association," Dudit said. He said it would have been more significant had incoming president Gary Redding, pastor of First Church, North Augusta, S.C., announced his resignation.

In a prepared statement Nunn and Cobble noted "some of the changes being implemented in our alma mater grieve us."

Cobble and Nunn said they could not "agree in good conscience with these changes and the style in which they are being implemented. A lack of compassion and a heavy-handed administrative style are not consistent with the Gospel of love and Christian fellowship.

"The narrowing of theological parameters for faculty, the lack of concern for the feelings and needs of seminary employees and students, the move by the president to impose his theological biases on the institution ... bring us to a position where we can no longer in good conscience provide leadership for the school's alumni." □

Committee on Committees approved by messengers

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Seventy people from 35 state and regional Baptist conventions were elected by messengers to the June 20-22 Southern Baptist Convention to serve on the SBC's Committee on Nominations.

The committee will bring nominations of Baptists to the 1996 SBC meeting in New Orleans to serve on the various SBC boards, commissions, and committees.

The committee is made up of two people from each state or regional convention — one layperson and one in church-related vocational work.

Tennessee — Robert M. Ward Jr., Washington Avenue Church, Cookeville; Marion Nelson Wilson, First Church, Old Hickory □

■ Sunday School lesson commentary

Editor's Note: The *Baptist and Reflector* will not be published July 5. Following are condensed Sunday School lessons for July 9.

Bible Book — July 9

Israel's idolatrous practices condemned

Focal passages: Ezekiel 4:1-3; 8:14-16; 9:4-5; 11:22-23

Before looking at the focal passages, take a few moments and read the whole text. Even a quick look through chapters four-11 will help the reader understand why Ezekiel's congregation will not want to hear his message. The destruction that is about to come is unprecedented. The spiritual blindness of the people is evident. Even the temple is infiltrated by idolatrous practices. These verses bring vivid illustrations to the minds of Ezekiel's audience as well as today's reader.

A picture of destruction — ch. 4:1-3

If actions speak louder than words, then Ezekiel's prophecy must have screamed destruction to the people. His sermon becomes a visual representation of the devastation that will happen to Jerusalem.

A picture of corruption — ch. 8:14-16

Nowhere is the corruption more evident or deadly than in the worship practices of the people. Verses 14-16 illustrate the ultimate in spiritual corruption.

A picture of separation — ch. 9:4-5

Even in the midst of destruction, the faithful will be spared. Not everyone had turned their back on God.

A plan of reduction — ch. 11:22-23

The final insult for the great city was not physical destruction, but the removal of God's presence. The "glory of the Lord" left the city.

If there is any lesson or truth to be learned it is that those who have known the presence and blessing of God cannot choose to ignore that relationship. God holds the faithful accountable for what we do with the resources of his blessings. — Clay Austin

Convention Uniform — July 9

A call for justice and righteousness

Focal passages: Amos 4:4-5; 5:18-24

Another way of expressing the title of the lesson is "Practice What You Preach." A key theme in Amos is God's disapproval of his people coming to worship him and at the same time mistreating other people in daily life. Friends, no amount of singing, praying, teaching, and preaching can substitute for treating other people right and neither in God's eyes is worship a cloak for sins against God and other folks.

The wrong kind of worship — ch. 4:4-5

There were two major problems with their worship. One was they were wor-

shipping for the wrong reasons. The second and key problem was that they somehow had deluded their thinking to believe that their worship practices could take the place of true Godliness.

The right kind of worship — ch. 5:24

"But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." Throughout the years this verse has been considered the key verse in Amos.

There are some important lessons we can learn from this Scripture. First, we need to avoid selfish indulgence. Second, let worship be a time of confession and praise of God. Third, we all need to ask ourselves a key question that Amos forces us to honestly consider. How does your life outside the house of worship measure up to what goes on in worship? — Jerry Barker

Life and Work — July 9

Recognition of Christ's supremacy

Focal passage: Colossians 1:13-23

Like the false teachers of our own time, the false teachers in Colossae did not deny the existence of Jesus Christ. They simply demoted him by giving him less than the pre-eminence he deserves. Paul establishes the pre-eminence of Christ first by showing that he is the Savior. "He delivered us" means that he rescued us from danger. We are

powerless to deliver ourselves from the guilt and penalty of sin, but Jesus did.

Paul explains how Christ is the supreme creator through two descriptive titles: the image of the invisible God and the firstborn over all creation. The first century usage of the word "image" may be summarized as authentic reproduction of God, an agent of God in creation and redemption, and the revelation of God's power, wisdom, and majesty. All three meanings converge in the person of Jesus. Also, here "firstborn" simply means first in importance or first in rank. Jesus Christ is not a created being because he is eternal God. Firstborn of all creation means Jesus is Lord of all creation.

Christ is also number one in the church as expressed in three titles: head, beginning, and firstborn. — C. William Palmiter

Waynesboro church to celebrate 150 years

Philadelphia Church, Waynesboro, will celebrate 150 years of ministry on July 2.

Retired Tennessee Baptist Convention Executive Director Tom Madden will deliver the morning message. The celebration will include a covered dish luncheon and music from The Masters Quartet in the afternoon. □



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Life and Work Series for July 2

Focal Passages:
Colossians 1:1-12

Concern for spiritual growth

By C. William Palmiter

Christians today do not have to contend with the same set of wild doctrines making the rounds in Colossae. But the fundamental issues presented in this New Testament letter are still relevant ones: how to maintain loyalty to Christ, how to understand the meaning of Christian discipleship, and how to recognize God at work in the circumstances of our lives. These issues directly confront our morality and values, the New Age heresies, and the disintegration of family life.

Colossae was a declining one of a group of three cities in the Lycus valley of which the other two were Laodicea and Hierapolis. Paul includes the believers in Laodicea as those for whom he prays (2:1) and both Laodicea and Hierapolis are mentioned in association with the ministry of Epaphras (4:13). The proximity of these cities facilitated the sharing of this letter between them. More than likely Paul had not visited any of these cities. Epaphras is the one who taught the believers in this area the Gospel (1:7) and Philemon, in whose house the church meets, is a convert of Paul's ministry (Philemon 19). It is likely in Ephesus that Epaphras responded to the Gospel and then took it back to Colossae which was his home (4:12).

Writing from prison, Paul identifies himself in the opening as an apostle of Jesus Christ. Geldenhuys defines an apostle as one clothed with the authority and endowed with the power of the Sender. While Paul is an apostle, Timothy is our brother. This high calling is due to the grace and mercy of God's will who has chosen him. The word grace has a wealth of meaning in the New Testament focusing on salvation of God apart from man's deserving. It is appropriately linked to the word peace which is the healthy experience with God based on God's grace.

Paul's thanksgiving is not just a temporary feeling of gratitude but rather a constant experience. God is described as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faith, commitment and loyalty to Jesus must result in love which has as its pattern the generous love of God freely given without expecting anything in return. Faith and love are what really matters. Stored up in heaven means that the hope is assured by God, guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is truth, in contrast to the false teachings about the world that competed for the Colossians' allegiance and for ours. The spread and growing influence of the Gospel to men the whole world over shows its power. The graciousness of God is God's loving approach to us in Jesus Christ. Paul frequently uses this term grace to emphasize that a right relationship with God is not due to our efforts.

Beginning in verse 9, Paul's intercessory prayer assures the Colossians that he prays for them to understand the depths of the Gospel and all that it has to offer. The Christian life should never be stagnant, but a growth in insight into how the mind and attitude of God are revealed in Jesus' example. While Paul stresses that we cannot earn friendship with God by our active goodness, he makes it clear that good deeds naturally flow out of our love and loyalty for the Lord. Knowledge of God is not only knowing that he exists, but obeying his will. This brand of spiritual intelligence results in a life that pleases God. □ — C. William Palmiter is pastor of Bethel Church, Greenbrier.

Condemnation of national wrongdoing

By Jerry Barker

We have been focusing on two of the greatest non-writing prophets of Israel: Elijah and Elisha. Most of this quarter we will turn our attention to four of the great eighth-century writing prophets: Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. Amos and Hosea directed their messages to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, while Micah and Isaiah spoke primarily to the Southern Kingdom.

Amos, the right man — ch. 1:1-2

This was a time of superficial prosperity. The sins of the people were leading the nation toward ruin. God chose a man who was down to earth and plain spoken to warn the people. Amos, a herdsman from Tekoa in Judah, was called of God to preach to the Northern Kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jereboam II (787-746 BC).

Amos, the bright man — ch. 1:3 - 2:5

Amos grabbed the attention of his audience by condemning the sins of their pagan neighbors and of Judah. I'm sure his audience was "Amening" the condemnation of the sins of six pagan nations who were Israel's neighbors and other enemies or competitors. Amos condemned Damascus or Syria for their brutal treatment of captives in Gilead (1:3-5). He called into account Gaza and the Philistines for selling folks into slavery (vv. 6-8). Amos condemned Tyre and the Phoenicians for a similar crime (vv. 9-10). The Edomites were condemned for hatred (vv. 11-12). He then condemned the Ammonites for atrocities against pregnant women (vv. 13-15). Finally as the last of the pagan nations, he condemned the Moabites, for sacrilege against bodies (2:1-3).

The sin of Judah in chapter 2:4-5 was the people despised the law of the Lord and turned to the lies of

idolatry. All eight of the pronouncements in Amos 1-2 began with symbolic numbers. "Three" stands for more than enough, full or complete, and "four" stands for more than enough. God's judgment was coming as these nations had gone beyond the boundary of God's tolerance.

Amos, the man of sight — ch. 3:1-2

Amos saw the nations crumbling because of their sin, and he saw that Israel was in the same boat. In verse 2 we read, "You only have I known of all families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Now the people of Israel strongly would "Amen" the first part of verse 2, but the second part of the verse points out their obligation as God's chosen people. They viewed being chosen more in terms of privilege than responsibility.

As we have viewed the lesson for today, let us be made aware that if we are blessed by God, then with that goes the responsibility to live for God and share his blessings with the rest of his creation.

Also, let us be aware that God condemns wrongdoing of any nation and any people. God does judge those who disobey him. As we have viewed the sins of the pagan nations, of Judah, of Israel, the question becomes what sins in our lives do we need to ask God for his forgiveness?

Finally, let us be aware that God's patience is long suffering. The Bible shares in Psalm 103 about his long suffering. However as the lesson points out there was a time when the patience of God turns to the judgment of God (2:4-5). God is always eager to share his forgiveness, but sometimes we step over the boundary of patience. We need to face up to our sins, and we need to be sensitive to the need of seeking God's forgiveness. □ — Jerry Barker is pastor of First Church, Alamo.

Convention Uniform Series for July 2

Focal Passage:
Amos 2:4-8; 3:1-2

Ezekiel's call to proclaim God's Word

By Clay Austin

Ezekiel was a prophet called to minister during a time of national crisis. In 598 BC Ezekiel was among the unhappy band who was forced to make a trek toward Babylon. His call to service was a powerful reminder that even though Jerusalem was a city taken captive, God was alive, well, and still working on behalf of his people. Ezekiel began to understand that God's power was not diminished in Babylon and that God's power could be demonstrated without Jerusalem! Like most prophetic messengers, Ezekiel offered the people a proclamation that was a mixture of judgment and hope. The word from God he delivered was a reflection on the meaning of his name, "God strengthens."

Although there are several views on the place of writing, traditionally, Ezekiel has been divided into two parts. Chapters 1 through 24 contain messages delivered before the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC. The people are warned that they should not expect to return to their homeland soon. The warning is also given that those who remain in Judah will soon be in Babylon also. Chapters 25 to 48 are messages delivered after the fall of Jerusalem. The people are told that God is with them and he will restore the nation to their homeland.

A prophet is commissioned — vv. 2-6

Bible Book Series for July 2 Focal Passages: Ezekiel 2:2-6; 3:17-21

In the Holy tradition of being a prophet called from God, Ezekiel encounters God through his spirit. The spirit of God will be the source of his power and determination. The message that Ezekiel is to deliver will not depend on the ability of the prophet. Prophets rarely deliver "popular" messages and Ezekiel was no exception. Those who speak for God must believe that God will use the message regardless of the immediate or visible results, and the messenger must know that they have been empowered by God. Ezekiel's introduction to his prophetic task insures that he has a message and that he knows the source of the power to deliver the message.

Immediately God reveals to the prophet the complexity and difficulty of the message he is to deliver. Israel had a history of being a stubborn people with a devotion to God that was often inconsistent. God does not try to deceive the prophet about what he has been called to do. God reminds him that the people have both "rebelled" and "transgressed." The call of Ezekiel is not that unlike the call of those messengers of the New Testament in Jesus' ministry. Jesus often discouraged the enthusiastic when he told them

the nature of their task. The prefix to every message Ezekiel will deliver is found in verse 4. God said, "... and you will say to them. Thus says the Lord God." God was saying plainly to this man, you must have the backbone to tell the people exactly what I intend for them to hear.

The challenge — ch. 3:17-21

Having received his commission Ezekiel moves to the exiles "beside the river Chebar" (v. 15). The mere presence of the prophet causes a disturbance in the community. After waiting for seven days, God issues a challenge to his messenger. God challenges Ezekiel to be a "watchman." In ancient communities the watchman had a great responsibility with a singular purpose, to warn the people of approaching danger. Ezekiel's challenge is to warn a nation of spiritual danger that does not want to hear the truth!

Notice in verses 18 to 21, that the primary responsibility the prophet bears is the warning. God does not hold Ezekiel accountable for the results. His success will come in his faithfulness to deliver the message, not in how the people respond. □ — Clay Austin is pastor of First Church, Blountville.

Missions leaders urge open minds, hearts

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — With unprecedented opportunities at home and abroad for sharing Jesus Christ with unsaved individuals, Southern Baptist mission executives called for increased denominational response through prayer, giving, and willingness to serve as missionaries.

Both Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin and Home Mission Board President Larry Lewis told the first-ever joint FMB-HMB pre-SBC missions rally the doors of opportunity to preach the Gospel in heretofore unexpected places are swinging wide open.

Rankin cited examples of countries, such as Albania and Mongolia, that only a few years ago were closed to Christian witness but today are experiencing strong church growth. He said he sees biblical prophecies that Christ would be preached to all the world being fulfilled with the worldwide opportunities that have developed in the past few years.

Lewis cited as part of that trend strong Southern Baptist growth in U.S. inner cities and other rural areas where the denomination has traditionally not been particularly effective.

The pre-convention missions rally was held during two Sunday morning worship services and a joint Sunday School program at Atlanta's Second Ponce de Leon Church. □

African American Fellowship backs racial reconciliation

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — The Resolution on Racial Reconciliation gained unanimous support of the African American Fellowship during its annual meeting June 18-19 prior to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Atlanta.

Begun three years ago, the organization's purpose is to help sensitize the SBC and its entities to concerns of the African American community and to encourage the fellowship and cooperation of African American churches in the SBC.

The Resolution on Racial Reconciliation was a focus of discussion during both a Sunday morning worship service at Christian Fellowship Church, College Park, Ga., and a Monday business meeting at Greenforest Church, Decatur, Ga.

The resolution did not originate with the fellowship, but was initiated by associational directors of missions in various metropolitan areas throughout the nation, Frost said. □

Campus ministers focus on 21st century

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — As the year 2000 draws near, campus ministers across the nation are considering the challenges a new century will bring to their efforts to share the Gospel message with college and university students.

In their annual meeting, held June 16-18, prior to the Southern Baptist Convention in Atlanta, the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers explored the theme, "Charting a Course for the 21st Century." Meeting on the campus of the Georgia Institute of Technology, approximately 50 campus ministers heard keynote addresses, met in small-group seminars, and conducted business.

Lloyd Allen, a former pastor and campus minister who now heads the department of Christian studies and philosophy at Mississippi College, Clinton, spoke on "Avoiding the Mire of Inauthentic Spirituality."

Musicians address worship topics

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Southern Baptist musicians focused their attention on the theme of "We Are God's People" at a two-day conference preceding the 138th session of the Southern Baptist Convention.

About 200 attended the sessions at Peachtree Corners Church, Norcross, Ga. Seminars addressed the topics of worship planning, pageants, administration, and the differences between psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

During a business session, Bill Green, director of the church music department for the Oklahoma Baptist Convention, was installed as president of the organization. □

Directors of missions address relationships

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Local Baptist associations are uniquely positioned to help Southern Baptist churches. That was the underlying message for the Conference of Associational Directors of Missions in a meeting fo-

cused on nurturing the relationships vital to effectiveness June 18-19.

Affirming that the church is primary and that the association is the most effective organization for helping them, T.O. Spicer, the group's president, urged members to "shoot with the precision of a rifleman" as they help their churches deal with challenges such as the technological revolution and the need for revival.

"All of you have witnessed the irony of seeing a church in a graying community call a youth minister," he said, urging the associational missionaries to gather information from community leaders and share it with churches to help them recognize and adapt to age-group shifts.

The first annual fellowship meeting for retired directors of missions was held. Carl Duck, retired director of missions for Nashville Baptist Association, reported there are 625 retired directors of missions and that 44 retirees and wives attended the first fellowship meeting. □

Arguments rooted in history, chaplains told

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — Southern Baptists must understand the roots of their differences to have any hope of resolving them, a senior statesman of the denomination told an assembly of chaplains Monday.

James L. Sullivan, a former president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, a past SBC president and an esteemed veteran of denominational life, spoke twice to Southern Baptist chaplains in their annual convocation, held at Atlanta's Dunwoody Church. The conference was hosted by the Home Mission Board chaplaincy division.

William M. Pinson, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, also addressed the group at a noon luncheon. He praised chaplains for ministering in parts of society that churches rarely penetrate effectively. Because they are uniquely called and gifted, "the inaccessible is made accessible," he said.

The controversy that has troubled Southern Baptists since 1979 can be traced to the J.R. Graves' Landmark Movement. Graves' campaign against J.M. Frost's fledgling Sunday School Board was motivated by Graves' business interests in publishing religious literature. Though Graves and his followers left the SBC

decades ago, the argument continues between those who see literature publishing as a ministry and those who see it as a chance to make money, he said. □

Baptist computer users travel info highway

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — A field trip to cyberspace was one of several close encounters offered to members of the Southern Baptist Computer Users Association during their 23rd annual meeting, June 16-17.

SBCUA was one of the first groups of Southern Baptists to tour the new headquarters of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board in Alpharetta, Ga., where the meeting was held.

The adventure in cyberspace included learning how to access the Internet via CompuServe, the carrier of SBC-Net. Members received a list of 85 Christian resources currently available on the Internet, including the Bible and Bible studies, devotionals such as "Our Daily Bread," resource tools and several popular Christian magazines such as "Focus on the Family."

Members also visited "the school of the future" as they experienced the operation of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary's new compressed interactive video project which allows professors to teach one class simultaneously at more than one location and offers students attending classes at extension center campuses the opportunity to interact in person and in real time with professors and classmates on the main campus. □

Researcher predicts change for churches

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — The church stands at a "hinge of history," said David Schmidt during the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Research Fellowship June 17.

"God has called the church to take risks," said Schmidt, owner of a Wheaton, Ill., research firm, in presenting the results of a study of churches throughout the southeastern United States. Seventy percent of the churches in the survey were Southern Baptist. "Most of the things affecting the growth of the local church are under the control of that church," he said.

"The church must take risks to reach people. It is a matter

of change or die," Schmidt insisted during the conference at the Colony Square Hotel in Atlanta prior to the June 20-22 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Working with the research division of the South Carolina Baptist Convention, Schmidt said the study revealed churches need to look beyond traditional paradigms.

Church leaders must become more intentional in assimilating new believers into the church family, focusing on keeping disciple-making efforts cutting-edge and in developing small groups in order to give church members a sense of community, he said. □

Hispanic Fellowship expands membership to include churches

Baptist Press

ATLANTA — In action its leaders described as historic, the Hispanic Southern Baptist Fellowship voted to incorporate and to become a fellowship of churches, not just pastors, at its pre-Southern Baptist Convention meeting June 17-18.

The unanimous vote means the fellowship will begin work on a constitution and bylaws. The group also approved a new name, the National Fellowship of Hispanic Southern Baptist Churches, although it may change because of widespread dissatisfaction with it, a leader said.

There are 3,478 Hispanic Southern Baptist churches and missions with about 350,000 members.

Rafael DeArmas, newly elected fellowship president, said, "My hope is that we use this to give our Hispanic churches an opportunity to do what Baptist churches do, particularly Southern Baptist churches. What Southern Baptist churches do better is cooperate and do missions work through the Cooperative Program.

Growth stemming from the organization can be in the future of not only Hispanics but other ethnic groups, said Russell Begaye, director of language church extension at the Home Mission Board. Begaye's department oversees outreach and ministry to 106 ethnic groups with more than 7,000 churches.

"Southern Baptists will have to intentionally invite ethnic leaders to be involved in the structure. At this point, that really has not been done, and it needs to happen," said Begaye. □