

# TENNESSEE'S BAPTIST & REFLECTOR

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## this week's news

- Adult Homes directors consider Belmont Plaza purchase. — Page 2
- Messengers elect Tom Elliff as SBC president. — Page 3



NEW SBC OFFICERS

- Former Tennessee pastor Jim Henry delivers SBC president's address. — Page 6.
- Resolutions address a variety of issues. — Page 7

See next week's paper for more news and features from the SBC annual meeting.

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## Disney cautioned by messengers' resolution

# SBC challenges 2000 A.D. with new structure

By Wm. Fletcher Allen  
*Baptist and Reflector*

NEW ORLEANS — At their 139th annual session here June 11-13, Southern Baptist messengers gave final approval for total restructuring, elected Tom Elliff president without opposition, and warned Disney Productions with a stern resolution against a pro-homosexual stance.

The three-day meeting was one of the most historic sessions held in the convention's 151 years. Bylaw 15 changes were approved for the second time, opening the door for Covenant for a New Century.

The restructure plan and first vote on a necessary convention bylaw change were approved last year. In contrast to last year's session, there was only a pittance of opposition. The report of the Implementation Task Force of the Executive Committee was overwhelmingly approved at this year's session.

Restructuring includes all Southern Baptist agencies, boards, commissions, and institutions. Held amidst Southern hospitality in the massive

Superdome facility, the meeting was marked by a surprisingly low messenger registration.

Report of the Implementation Task Force, chaired by Bob Reccord, was heartily approved. The timeline for implementation calls for detailed transition plans to be finalized by the ITF and the various boards by September of this year.

The plans are to be executed by June 1997 when the Executive Committee reports to the SBC. The ITF will monitor implementation of Covenant for a New Century until June 1998.

From then until 2000, the ITF will monitor "the status of new ministries, review Annual Ministry Plans and budgets, and reports to the Executive Committee," which reports to the Southern Baptist Convention in June the final implementation.

Covenant for a New Century, approved last June, sharpens Great Commission focus by reducing the number of SBC entities from 19 to 12 and creates a North American Mission Board to replace the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood



**TBC PARTNERSHIP MISSIONS** Director Terry Sharp, left, talks with Pastor Tim Walker of Dalewood Church, Nashville, and his wife, Kathy, during a break at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

Commission, and Radio-Television Commission. Others are eliminated.

The 13,706 messengers were far fewer than the projected figure of 18,000 to 20,000. The registration total was the lowest since 1981, and the smallest for a Bible-belt city since 1968.

This was only the fourth time since 1980 that fewer than 17,000 messengers have registered.

Last year 20,658 registered for the Atlanta meeting. It was generally felt that election of a new president and discussion of the restructuring would draw more attention.

Convention messengers also defeated an attempt to direct the Annuity Board to severely limit its investment processes, urged President Bill Clinton to change his view on abortion, passed a \$145 million budget. — See SBC, page 2

## Pre-SBC evangelism thrust brings record harvest

By Sarah Zimmerman  
*For Baptist Press*

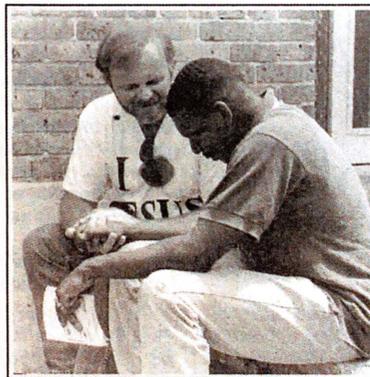
NEW ORLEANS — The city known for jazz, cajun cooking, and sensual nightlife received an invitation to eternal life when Southern Baptists gathered for their annual meeting. At least 2,659 people accepted the offer, and one church was started as a result.

During a pre-convention evangelism thrust known as Crossover New Orleans, volunteers gave away food and New Testaments, conducted neighborhood surveys, witnessed on the streets of the French Quarter, and shared the Gospel in four prisons. In addition, volunteer teams witnessed in low-income housing communities throughout the week.

The number of professions of faith is a record for convention-related evangelistic activities, said Keith Walker of the Home Mission Board evangelism staff. He attributed the numbers to a greater prayer effort underscoring the witnessing this year.

Fred Dyess, director of missions for the Baptist Association of New Orleans, said, "It was a blessing to see people witnessing

all over the place. I know our churches will follow up on people who made decisions and take what they learned and do it again. We're trying to take the Gospel to every household by the year 2000, and this was a good start."



**MIKE WEST**, left, a member of Central Church, Hixson, prays with a resident of the St. Bernard Housing Community during Crossover New Orleans.

Wayne Jenkins, director of evangelism for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, said, "This will have a real impact on the city." Crossover participants saturated the area with Gospel presentations and strengthened local churches.

Six weeks before Crossover, members of Memorial Church, Metairie, La., began ministry in the St. Bernard Housing Community, home to 6,000 residents. With help from other churches and volunteers, a Crossover block party served as a kickoff event for a new church that met for the first time June 9 on the St. Bernard property.

At the block party, 800 hot dogs were served, in addition to red beans and rice. About 230 people made professions of faith in Jesus Christ, said Don Whatley, Memorial's minister of missions. More than 100 professions of faith were recorded at the Sunday church service.

Residents are "hungry to know that somebody loves them and cares for them," observed Ed Pope, North Dakota Baptist Convention evangelism director, one of dozens of volunteers who participated in the event. ■

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- ▶ **Office — *Baptist and Reflector*, 5001 Maryland Way, Brentwood, Tenn., 37027**
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# SBC challenges 2000 A.D. with new structure...

— Continued from page 1 and collected \$281,000 for African American churches which recently have been victimized by arsonists.

Not only did messengers express outrage at the burnings with the resolution and monetary offering, presiding President Jim Henry referred to the crimes in his address and in an earlier news conference.

He urged pastors, church and state convention leaders to "go home and take collections and free up resources to assist in rebuilding."

He said in his news conference that he hopes the offering will help show "that we have come a long way since some earlier days when these kinds of things happened and there was no response from our convention and evangelicals."

Henry, former pastor of Two Rivers Church, Nashville and now at First Church, Orlando, added that more than 17,000 Southern Baptist volunteer construction workers are prepared to assist the congregations of the burned churches in rebuilding. James Williams, Brotherhood Commission president, agreed.

Richard Land, Christian Life Commission executive, said the best way to stop "these racist acts of violence is for Christians to reach out in reconciliation ... thus utterly frustrating the base and sinful motives of arsonists."

The convention's actions follow a racial reconciliation resolution adopted during last year's convention, apologizing to Blacks for condoning and perpetrating racism.

A task force has been established to implement the resolution in a practical manner at the denominational level.

Eliff, pastor of Del City Church, Oklahoma, had no opposition in his run for the presidency. He called for Southern Baptists to "Step up to the plate and be the people of God he expects us to be."

On divisive issues in the SBC, he said, "I'm not interested in encouraging people who want to divide, split, and to tear apart the fabric of our convention."

He added, "It's not these conservative groups that are causing that. It is convention groups that would take Southern Baptist money and send it to non-Southern Baptist organizations."

His answers to interview questions strongly indicate his close adherence to the conservative direction of the SBC.

Bob Anderson, pastor of



**PASTOR TOMMY FUTRELL, right, of Southside Church, Johnson City, and his wife, Roberta, look over a Pastors Conference program. The conference was held in the Louisiana Superdome prior to the 1996 annual Southern Baptist Convention meeting.**

Parkview Church, Baton Rouge, La., was elected first vice president by a vote of 3,423 to 2,884. Anderson defeated Fred Powell, president of Communicators Ministries, Richmond, Mo., who was nominated by Jerry Johnson, pastor of Central Church, Aurora, Colo.

Anderson was described as "a pastor who loves hurting pastors" by Ron Herrod, an evangelist from Oak Ridge. His Antioch Affection plan helps local church ministers who have been terminated or resigned under pressure.

Johnson called Powell "a Barnabas of the SBC conservative resurgence" in the critical years of conflict.

Pre-convention witnessing efforts by Southern Baptist volunteers resulted in 2,476 decisions for Christ and at least one new church started.

The Crossover New Orleans evangelism thrust involved volunteers who gave away food, conducted neighborhood surveys, and shared the Gospel.

The Implementation Task Force reported that the restructuring plan now underway should produce a net savings, after all expenses, of approximately \$34 to \$41 million.

Chairman Bob Reccord said the savings "are not an opportunity to build reserves or reduce giving but an opportunity to redirect resources from duplicated administrative operations to frontline ministries."

Reccord is a member of the SBC Executive Committee which named the restructuring committee and the ITF.

Annuity Board President Paul Powell, in his annual report, said that "Southern Baptists' annuity, relief, and insurance programs are healthy,

with retirement and relief benefits exceeding \$192 million last year."

He said that total assets managed by the board at last year's close amounted to \$5.173 billion, and that more than 37,000 employees of 20,253 churches were participating in the retirement and insurance programs at that time.

More than 35,000 employees of 246 Baptist agencies and institutions participated.

Attracting immediate attention of messengers and news media was a resolution concerning the directions of the Disney conglomerate.

The resolution came from the Resolutions Committee,

but was strengthened from the floor with an amendment that calls for a nationwide boycott of Disney if the SBC's Christian Life Commission's monitoring deems it to be needed.

Disney's trends and favorable treatment of homosexuals and their lifestyle are the reasons for the resolution.

The resolution, found elsewhere in this issue, spells out the homosexual stances of the Disney company.

There were 1,000 messengers from Tennessee, sixth in total numbers. Georgia was first with 1,300.

Messengers elected Richard Land, CLC as next year's convention speaker. The convention will meet in Dallas. ■

## TBAH directors studying Belmont Plaza purchase

At its mid-year meeting June 4, Tennessee Baptist Adult Homes board of directors voted to pursue study and negotiations for the purchase of Belmont Plaza. The board also plans to seek TBC Executive Committee support before acting.

TBAH was granted permission to raise its debt ceiling to \$7 million by the TBC Executive Board at its May 7 meeting.

Approval was contingent on the TBAH board's determining the feasibility of acquiring the property, which at that time was unnamed.

According to C. Kenny Cooper, executive director of TBAH, its board action was based on considerable preliminary investigation which determined that this facility would be desirable to strengthen the ministry of TBAH in its senior adult housing ministry.

The identity of the facility "was not privileged" at the time the request for a higher debt ceiling was made to the Christian Services Committee, the Executive Committee, and the Executive Board, Cooper said.

Belmont Plaza is a retirement community located adjacent to Belmont University, Nashville. It was originally developed by the Tennessee Baptist Service Corporation and later sold.

Cooper said the TBAH board "desires the support of the Christian Services Committee and the Executive Committee of the Executive Board before agreeing to any terms of purchase." — Wm. Fletcher Allen

# Messengers approve bylaw to begin restructuring

By Herb Hollinger & Lonnie Wilkey  
For Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Southern Baptists made it official June 11 — the denomination as it has been known for decades is being reshaped for the 21st century.

The restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, which reduces the number of SBC agencies from 19 to 12, is part of the "Covenant for a New Century" approved at the SBC's 150th anniversary meeting in Atlanta in 1995.

Messengers to this year's annual meeting, June 11-13 at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans, approved for the second year a change in Bylaw 15 which lists the SBC agencies. The bylaw change was the only part of the restructuring plan which needed approval at two successive SBC meetings.

The adoption of Bylaw 15 "provides a new moment for the Southern Baptist Convention," said Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, Ark., and chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

"Never before has a denomination of this magnitude ever restructured all of its entities, moving from 19 to 12, all for the purpose of taking the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world," Floyd said.

Messengers were given an

eight-page "Transition Plan for Covenant for a New Century," a report from the 10 member Implementation Task Force, as they entered the Superdome for the opening session of the convention. A motion failed to delay the vote on the restructuring recommendations until the afternoon session to give messengers time to look over the report.

The ITF was appointed in September 1995 by the SBC Executive Committee to implement the changes required by the Covenant for a New Century. The task force was assigned "to analyze, study, and take actions necessary, including monitoring the transitional actions of all SBC entities, to facilitate the orderly and timely transitions approved by the SBC in adopting the Covenant for a New Century."

The ITF report given to messengers is the first detailed look at the transition of the SBC restructuring which, organizationally, will be in place at the end of the SBC meeting in Dallas in 1997.

The report includes cost/benefits associated with the mergers and dissolutions of the seven agencies and addresses personnel issues.

The bottom line of the report, said ITF Chairman Bob Reccord, is a savings of approximately \$34-\$41 million

over five years.

Monies saved will "be made available for the front lines of missions church planting, and evangelism," said Reccord, pastor of First Church, Norfolk, Va.

A major part of the report deals with the creation of a new agency, the North American Mission Board, from the merger of three SBC agencies: the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission, and Radio and Television Commission.

The report says the one-time costs of severance, relocation of personnel and non-real estate implementation costs are between \$4.1 million and \$5.7 million. The recurring savings from labor efficiencies (derived primarily by eliminating redundancies and duplications) are estimated at \$6 million per year for five years. Another \$3 million in recurring savings will come from non-labor efficiencies, the report says.

Net savings for the NAMB in the first five years are estimated to be \$30-\$37 million with the recurring costs recaptured "within two years." Approximately \$4 million in additional savings will be realized from restructuring and dissolution of other agencies, the report estimates.

The report lists in detail

how each affected agency will deal with the restructuring. The legal phase of the restructuring will be completed and effective in June 1997.

Reccord encouraged Southern Baptist messengers to embrace the plan. "We cannot become what we need to be by remaining where we are," he said.

In the conclusion of its report, the ITF says it will need the "goodwill and the cooperation of the leadership of the affected entities. Because the implementation is a strategic, complex, and ongoing enterprise, the ITF covets the prayers of all Southern Baptists for this work."

Bill Prince, a messenger from Lawrenceville, Ga., moved the convention go on record as affirming the work of the ITF "as manifested in the spirit and content of its report to this convention and that the interpretations of the ministries assignment to the Sunday School Board and North American Mission Board be included in the official record." His motion was approved.

Following Reccord's report, SBC messengers adopted three other recommendations from the Executive Committee dealing with the mergers and dissolutions of the affected agencies. ■



## Timeline set for restructuring

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — The following time line for implementation was part of the Implementation Task Force report, "Transition Plan for Covenant for a New Century," presented at the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

► June 1996: Final approval of Bylaw 15 revisions.

► June-September 1996: Detailed Transition Plans are finalized by the ITF and the various boards.

► October 1996-June 1997: The Transition Plans are executed in order to achieve orderly and timely legal and organizational transfer to the new structure.

► June 1997: The Executive Committee reports to the SBC, recommending any further necessary legal revisions; the entities become legally operational; the former agencies cease.

► June 1997-June 1998:

The ITF monitors the implementation of Covenant for a New Century by reviewing annual plans and progress of entities in assuming ministry assignments, reviewing budgets to insure cost savings are achieved, reporting to Executive Committee any ministry statements in need of reformulation, evaluating ministry assignments, insuring provisions for displaced personnel, and more.

► June 1998: The Executive Committee gives implementation progress report to the SBC

► June 1998 - June 2000: The ITF monitors the status of new ministries, reviews Annual Ministry Plans and budgets, and reports to the Executive Committee, assisting the Executive Committee with reports to the SBC.

► June 2000: The Executive Committee reports to the SBC the final implementation of approved programs and structure for major advance in ministry in the third millennium. ■

## Elliff elected SBC president without opposition

By Lonnie Wilkey  
Baptist and Reflector

NEW ORLEANS — Southern Baptist Convention messengers elected Oklahoma pastor and former missionary Tom Elliff



NEWLY ELECTED officers for the Southern Baptist Convention are, from left, Fred Luder, pastor of Franklin Avenue Church, New Orleans, second vice president; Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Church, Del City, Okla., president; and Bob Anderson, pastor of Parkview Church, Baton Rouge, La., first vice president.

as president of the Southern Baptist Convention June 11.

He succeeds Jim Henry, pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla., as president of the nearly 16 million member denomination.

Elliff was unopposed for the SBC presidency, the first time in more than 50 years that a non-incumbent president did not face opposition.

In other elections:

► Bob Anderson, pastor of Parkview Church, Baton Rouge, La., was elected first vice president by a 3,423-2,884 margin — 54.27 percent to 45.73 percent over Fred Powell, president of Communicators Ministries of Richmond, Mo. Anderson has served in numerous denominational roles and is a trustee of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

► African American pastor Fred Luder of New Orleans was elected second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention June 11 in a runoff election with another Louisiana pastor. Luder, pastor of Franklin Avenue Church, New Orleans, received 2,417 votes (72.28 percent) to 936 votes (27.92 percent) for Leon Hyatt, a retired pastor from Pineville, La., and former chairman of the Foreign Mission Board trustees. Four pastors were on the first ballot.

► Lee Porter, of Lawrenceville, Ga., was unopposed for a 20th term as regis-

tration secretary. A former pastor and retired Baptist Sunday School Board employee, the New Orleans convention marked the 50th consecutive SBC meeting he has attended.

► David Atchison of Franklin, recording secretary since 1991, also was elected for another term.

Elliff, 52, a third-generation Southern Baptist pastor from Paris, Texas, currently serves First Southern Church, Del City, Okla. From 1981-83 he was a Southern Baptist foreign missionary in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. He also has held pastorates in Arkansas, Texas, and Colorado. He is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University, Arkadelphia, Ark., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

Elliff and his wife, Jeannie, have four children and six grandchildren.

Alabama pastor Fred Wolfe, a candidate for the SBC presidency himself two years ago, nominated Elliff.

"Tom Elliff has a clear focus of what God would have us do," said Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Church, Mobile.

Wolfe noted that under Elliff's 10 years of leadership that First Southern Church has baptized almost 5,000 people and its members have participated in more than 100 partnership missions endeavors.

"He has a missionary heart at home and around the world," Wolfe said. ■



opinion

## about letters to the editor

- Make it concise, no more than 250 words. Letters may be edited for length.
- Name may be withheld for sufficient reason. Include address and phone number.
- Avoid personal attacks on the character or integrity of anyone.
- Send original copy. Form letters and 'open' letters will not be published.
- Only one letter in a three-months period per writer will be published.
- If letter does not confirm, it will be returned.
- Opinions and ideas expressed in letters are not necessarily shared by the *Baptist and Reflector* and its staff.



## Partnership Prayer Requests

### June

- 19 —Continue to pray for a team of 10 to work in Bialystok, Poland, in July leading a children's camp. It could draw 120 children.
- 20 —Pray for the annual meeting of the Canadian Convention of Southern Baptists July 2-4.
- 21 —Pray for a speedy and complete recovery for Linda Mathis of Michigan. She has a malignancy.
- 22 —Pray for helpers to teach English and lead Bible study groups in the Baptist church in Bialystok, Poland. They are needed from September to December.
- 23 —Pray for permanent Baptist student ministers in Saskatoon and Winnipeg.
- 24 —Praise God for North Point Church in Michigan, which is a new congregation. Jim Searls Jr., is the pastor.
- 25 —Pray for workers and money to repair the historic sanctuary of the Baptist church in Szcztyno, Poland. They will be working on the interior area.

## Finding a way

A phrase chiding Mark Copenberger for his remarks at Midwestern Seminary concerning women serving as pastors states: "I will leave aside the issues of exegesis and church history" (letter, *Baptist and Reflector*, May 22, 1996). What a disclamatory statement. If my arguments were weak and I could not validate a theological position with sound exegesis and church history, I too, would leave them aside.

Widespread practice of ordaining women is a recent innovation, beginning in war-ravaged post-World War II Europe. Parliaments of countries with state-run churches made ordination of women a legal mandate (Norway and Denmark [1940s], Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Sweden [1950s]).

Sweden is noteworthy. Swedish Lutherans rejected the ordination of women in their church convention, but parliament made it law! Kristner Stendahl published a booklet in the ensuing ecclesiastical debate (*The Bible and the Role of Women: A Case Study in Hermeneutics*). His basic argument was: "Hey guys, we don't have a choice. Parliament has laid down the law. We must find a way to accommodate ourselves to this law and to legitimate this mandate from the government to the churches ... Eureka! Look at Galatians 3:28. Sound exegetical study shows that this verse has nothing to do with church order; it deals with spiritual status in the eyes of God. However, if we put a new interpretative spin on it, we can create biblical sanction for our socialist mandate."

Swedish Lutherans found their way out of a conundrum — reinterpret, lay aside exegesis and church history, get up to date. May we as Baptists refuse to "leave aside exegesis and church history" for the passing whim of a culture which rejects the will our Father left to guide us.

Roger S. Oldham, pastor  
First Church  
Martin 75237

## Questions

On May 20, Dr. James Porch addressed the Pastors/Staff conference, Beulah Asso-

ciation about concerns of some relating to implementation of ServanTeam 21.

Dr. Porch and Bill Wilson provided an overview of ServanTeam 21. Most questions that followed dealt with the method of implementation, rather than the program itself. I believe most were in agreement that ServanTeam 21 will be a good leadership tool for

## Note from editor

Several letters have been received supporting Oklahoma pastor Paul Brady's efforts to include a statement about God in the new SBC mission statement. Since his efforts succeeded at the New Orleans convention, the letters will not be used. The letters did not arrive in time to be used prior to the SBC sessions.

Paul Barkley's "Families Matter" column will return next issue.

Tennessee Baptists. I want to share some of what we discussed as nearly as I can. (Questions are italicized. — Editor)

*Why wasn't the ServanTeam 21 plan brought to the TBC for its review when it met in November?* Dr. Porch said that perhaps it was because the Executive Board is a corporation, it is autonomous, and such functions within the board can be carried out without convention approval.

Dr. Porch agreed that all departments of the Executive Board will be dissolved before the next TBC meeting.

*Is this in keeping with the Business and Financial Plan of the TBC which specifically designates funding for "departments" of the Executive Board?*

Dr. Porch explained to us that according to the Executive Board attorney the term "department" as used in the Plan is a generic term. Furthermore, we hope that the Constitution and Bylaws Committee will recommend all appropriate changes in our primary documents.

*Why weren't Tennessee Baptists notified of ServanTeam 21 at the November convention?*

Dr. Porch said the plan wasn't ready then. To a follow-up question, he said the plan was ready three weeks later.

*Can you see that a perception exists that many Tennessee Baptists are being left out of the major restructuring decisions of Tennessee Baptists in this decision?* Dr. Porch explained that this was an internal restructuring of the ministries of the Executive Board.

Dr. Porch also responded that no other groups or individuals had expressed concern over the handling of this matter.

There are other questions and answers, but these shed some light on the basic con-

cerns. I am dismayed that the Executive Board would act for the convention on such a matter. I believe ServanTeam 21 will be good for Tennessee Baptists, but that Tennessee Baptists should be included in making decisions about the direction of our convention.

Phillip C. Senn  
Troy 38260

## Two restructurings

For some time I have been reading articles written by you concerning the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Since you are so concerned about the SBC restructuring, how come you have not asked the same questions and made the same cynical remarks about the restructuring of the Tennessee Baptist Convention through ServanTeam 21?

I believe the vast majority of Tennessee Baptists have no idea their TBC is undergoing a major change. Besides the few articles written in the *Baptist and Reflector*, nothing has been said about this major restructuring.

I have received much more press on the SBC restructuring, through the *Baptist and Reflector*, and other mailings, than I have about the TBC restructuring. That seems a bit odd doesn't it? The entire convention gets to vote on the SBC restructuring and only the Executive Board voted on the TBC restructuring.

I am disappointed with the Executive Board, even though they may have had the power, that they did not defer the actual approval of the TBC restructuring to the Tennessee Baptist Convention as a whole. Especially something of this magnitude.

I support and like the ServanTeam 21 structure. However, I do not like or appreciate the way in which it was initiated or approved. I believe you could have reported on it more or allowed others to cover the story if it landed too close to home for you.

If you are going to criticize the SBC for their restructuring procedures (see your article in the last *Baptist and Reflector*), I suggest you look around the office before you write.

Jerry Essary, pastor  
McConnell Church  
Martin 38255

The Tennessee Baptist Convention is not undergoing restructuring; the staff of the Executive Board is. The Southern

Baptist Convention is being restructured, including all of its institutions, agencies, and mission boards. Some are to be eliminated, other combined. The same questions do not apply. Messengers at SBC sessions voted on restructuring of the convention. Executive Board members voted to restructure the Executive Board staff. — Editor

## Great conference

We were deeply moved and impressed by the Friday evening service at this year's Youth Evangelism Conference. We felt it was exactly what the youth of our generation need to hear. Our group enjoyed it immensely.

The Opryland portion of the conference was a good way to attract many youth to the services. It was a terrific way to end a great weekend.

The youth of First Church, Medina, think we should do it again.

Youth Group  
First Church  
Medina 38355

## Baptist independence

Our SBC executive committee leaders and other convention leadership should not get upset about any group of Southern Baptists who decide to make a move without their permission. Our leadership complained when Women on Mission decided to provide materials for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

I admire Women on Mission for deciding to provide materials for any Baptist group desiring quality missions materials. Their actions are very Christ-like.

More recently, the SBC leaders attacked state Brotherhood directors for joining together to help support disaster relief. They did this without SBC leadership, approval, blessing, or permission. The SBC leadership seems upset or offended. Why?

Isn't it the Baptist way for individuals to act autonomously, doing things that they feel led of the Lord to do, without having to run it by a "board" made up of the key leaders of our convention? These Brotherhood directors have acted righteously within their rights as Christians and Baptists.

The SBC leadership is not the only group that has God-led ideas. Wake up, SBC leadership, and don't criticize people who act independently.

Donald A. Davidson, pastor  
National Avenue Church  
Memphis 38122



convention



# This wasn't a Mickey Mouse event

**S**outhern Baptist messengers to the annual session last week in New Orleans discussed, listened, acted, and re-acted to many important things. National news media placed the greatest emphasis on what we said about Mickey Mouse and his Disney helpers, warning of a potential boycott.

Actually it wasn't Mickey the messengers discussed; it was the perceived overall soft stance on the homosexual lifestyle held by Disney.

The term Mickey Mouse is often used to describe something that is small, insignificant, or ill-conceived.

That can't be said about the 139th session of the Southern Baptist Convention. Southern Baptists sometimes have been guilty of the Mickey Mouse concept, but June 1996 was not one of those occasions.

So let's look at other important points of the meeting, and return later to the Disney resolution.

■ Jim Henry, one of the most respected and best loved pastors in the convention, ended his two-year tenure as he started it.

Honesty, openness, and a love for Christ, his Word, and Southern Baptists, marked his presidency.

When he was elected, many hoped he would have a spirit of openness that did not compromise his convictions. That came to pass. Others were fearful he would swing the door open too wide. That he did not do. He helped the convention with an attitude of reconciliation.

We quickly add that Henry never flinched from

those convictions. He made no desperate actions, and promised no plans beyond probability. He did dream of a Southern Baptist body with all parts working. He definitely made sure the motor is humming better.

■ Tom Elliff, the third pastor of Del City to be elected SBC president in recent years, was the choice of conservative leaders. He was elected without opposition (an almost unheard of reality in SBC life), and there were only a few voters who said "no."

Elliff's background should enhance his presidency. He has the rare opportunity to build on Henry's efforts toward reconciliation. Hold it, don't think ahead of me! Reconciliation is quite possible; it should not be scorned, and it is biblical in concept.

It does not mean compromising moral or biblical standards. It does not mean lowering views of God's Word or his leadership, nor our allegiance to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

It does mean making efforts as a leader to reconcile people under the Lordship of Christ.

■ Much more important also than the Disney resolution is the overwhelming approval of Bylaw 15 changes and the acceptance of the implementation plans for Covenant for a New Century.

Whether or not you voted for the restructuring of the Southern Baptist Convention, it is going to happen. Those who disagreed have choices. They can decide they want no part of it, or as a second option, they can decide to help make it work — so they can help shape the developing SBC.

What happens next will challenge all our skills, gifts, and cooperative attitudes.

Some of us are still unhappy about the Executive Committee's perceived tendency to work behind closed doors.

Some of this perception is accurate.

But it seems best to move on past that, and continue to observe if it continues. We have good reasons to help ensure the success of the restructuring.

■ Last year's confession and reconciliation with African Americans brought us closer to who we ought to be. That helped us express with prayer and stewardship the disgust and outrage over arson committed against our sister churches.

We have miles and miles to go, but we are on the right track. There is no reason to look back.

■ Many of the resolutions are thoughtful and worthy. Perhaps the Disney resolution best expresses Baptists' frustration toward a corrupt society. Perhaps there is some guilt since we know we have a commission to be leaven in the world.

What Disney has done with success is tantamount to moral treason. The company has abused the loyalty of Americans who thought they could always depend on purity and morality.

The proposed boycott may work. But it may be a good though ineffective effort to stem the tide of immoral behavior. Disney is big, no — Disney is huge. The Christian Life Commission may come up with a better plan. We hope and pray for that. — **B&R**



## Just for today

By Fred Wood  
pastor emeritus  
Eudora Church, Memphis

### Start with a smile

Shopper: "Isn't \$500 a lot of money for a sweater?"

Clerk: "Not really. The wool was shorn from sheep that lived in the Himalaya Mountains in Asia. It is an amazing yarn."

Shopper: "Yes, and you tell it so well, too."

### Take this truth

When we constantly exaggerate in order to make a point, we usually suffer a loss of credibility. An exaggeration is actually a lie. Why not tell the truth to begin with and build a reputation for accuracy and integrity.

Joaquin Miller, author of *Columbus*, said in that poem, "Men lie, who lack courage to tell the truth."

### Memorize this Scripture

Buy the truth and sell it not (Proverbs 23:23).

### Pray this prayer

Help me to realize only when I tell the truth am I free, free from fear, anxiety, and free also from worry that I'll be found out to be a liar. — **B&R**

# Fractured language should be healed

An astute observer of this page called to remind me that I misquoted Satchel Paige last week. He is right. But it was unintentional.

Paige did not admonish his audience to "keep looking back." He told them to *never* look back. That is good advice too, but a quick glance over the shoulder is not always bad for us.

Another topic comes down the avenue of thought this week.

While waiting for a storm to rain itself dry last week so the flight from New Orleans could continue, I read an article in the airline publication about word usage.

It was written by William Buckley, a good thinker, a good speaker, a profound user of words that beg to be used.

His use of words that are woefully neglected should assist all of us to a better appreciation of the English language. He emphasized that there are a plethora of tasty, rich, authoritative words in our language that go begging.

We are becoming a people of limited word usage and a vocabulary that is catapulting to extinction.

Not only do we fail to use those words

## one word more

— by Wm. Fletcher Allen, editor

that tantalize the ear with music and melancholy, we ignore the stellar adjectives and adverbs that add zest to our communications. And when we dare to risk using a verb, there is a strong likelihood that we will choose the shortest route, the wrong tense, i.e., I done, I seen, he were.

Of course, Shakespeare and a dozen other authors could be summoned to illustrate the "how to," but I choose John Gillespie Magee Jr., a "child" of 19 who grasped the awesome grace and power of God while flying at 30,000 feet through the Almighty's breath of clouds.

Hear the sheer imagery and eloquence of simplicity in these fragments of his sonnet of awareness, *High Flight*:

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth and danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings; Sunward I climbed and joined the tumbling mirth of sun-split clouds — and done a hundred things you*



ALLEN

have not dreamed of — wheeled and soared and swung high in the sunlit silence.

On he utters, of shouting wind and footless halls of air, of his silent lifting mind, high untraversed sanctity of space, until he put out his hand, and "touched the face of God."

Like a modern psalmist, the fledgling flier and writer also touches hearts and minds with the beauty of language.

Of course, David's psalms are the apex of language, perhaps matched by the majesty of the writer of Job. But Magee, son of missionaries to China who died in 1941 while serving with the British RAF, mastered modern language with the elements of mystery and close encounter with the Holy God.

As for language, we would do well to nurture ours, rather than abandon so precious a bounty.

And, in translating our faith to those outside the doors of eternal life, we should be careful to enunciate and articulate how it is that Christ died once for all. — **B&R**

# Come away to a lonely place and rest

I am boarding a plane soon for a long voyage with 14 others. Hundreds of others with accompany us in spirit. Many prayers have been offered for our mission trip to Brazil and much has been contributed in support.

But we are not the only ones who will travel this summer. Many of you will go somewhere else to enjoy yourselves.

Vacation is an opportune time to do the things you have always wanted to do. It is a chance to leave stress and worry behind.

I hope each one will be able to take advantage of vacation time so you can replenish your body and emotions.

Jesus sent his disciples out in pairs to do

## think about it

— Frank Crawford, pastor, Calvary, Kingsport

his mission work, according to Mark 6:7. When they returned they reported to Jesus all they had done and taught.

Then Jesus spoke some life-giving words, words that are as important to us modern-day disciples: "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place and rest a while," he said, according to Mark 6:31. And that is exactly what they did.

Vacation time away from normal routine is important for all of us.

Remember these three points as you va-

cation this summer. Have fun. Fun for you may be sleeping 18 hours a day, or it may be working a garden. But whatever it may be, enjoy it.

Learn something new. Vacation is not a time to put your mind on hold; it is a time to allow the mind to stretch in ways it wants to stretch. Read a book, learn a hobby, visit a museum, be an involved family member, learn — but keep it fun.

Finally, honor Christ. Jesus went with the disciples to rest. He goes with you in your rest also. Do not neglect to worship him publicly, pray to him privately, proclaim him openly. Stay with him, don't leave him behind. — **B&R**



## Registration dips

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — The 13,706 messengers who had registered for the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention meeting represented the lowest total since 1981 when 13,529 messengers registered for the convention in Los Angeles.

SBC Registration Secretary Lee Porter of Lawrenceville, Ga., expressed surprise at the low attendance. He had projected registration to be about 5 to 7.5 percent below the approximately 20,500 who attended the 1995 annual meeting in Atlanta. Instead, attendance was about 30 percent below that total.

Noting that he has not had time to study the matter, he said, "I just do not know. I do not have an explanation" as to the low messenger turnout.

The 1996 attendance marked only the fourth time since 1980 that fewer than 17,000 messengers have registered for an SBC annual meeting. The other conventions were: 13,844 in St. Louis in 1980; 13,529, Los Angeles in 1981; and 13,740, Pittsburgh, Pa., 1983.

The high-water mark for attendance was 1985 when 45,519 messengers met in Dallas, followed a year later by 40,987 in Atlanta. On two other occasions between 1985 and 1990 registration exceeded 30,000 messengers — 32,727 in San Antonio, Texas, in 1988 and 38,493 in New Orleans in 1990.

The smallest crowd for an SBC annual meeting since 1960 was the 8,871 messengers who attended the 1973 session in Portland, Ore.

The 1996 registration is similar to totals recorded between 1960-72 when the average attendance during those years was 13,371. The low attendance during that period was 9,396 in 1962 in San Francisco while the high mark was 16,678 in New Orleans in 1969.

During the 1980s the average SBC attendance was 24,392. For 1990-95, the average attendance was 23,077. ■

# Jim Henry points beyond restructuring for viable SBC

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Restructuring the Southern Baptist Convention is not enough to ensure the largest Protestant denomination's strength in a post-denominational age, outgoing SBC President Jim Henry said in his final presidential address June 11 during the annual SBC meeting in the Louisiana Superdome.

A revitalization of Southern Baptist hearts also is essential to the denomination's future, said Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla.

Although Henry outlined eight elements essential to revitalization, the crowd stopped him with a standing ovation when, speaking about effective participation within the denomination, he condemned the burning of African American churches.

"We deplore these acts of blind hatred," said Henry. As applause ended, he added, "May the world hear that as the heartbeat of Southern Baptists."

Challenging Baptists to "back up our words with actions," Henry said the convention will "pass the bucket" Wednesday night, June 12, to collect an offering for the black churches that have been destroyed or damaged by fire.

Henry also called for pastors, church and state convention leaders to "go home and take collections and free up resources to assist in rebuilding."

"Out of the smoldering ruins of those houses of worship, new

buildings will rise," Henry said. "But also a new message — built on our common bond of fellowship in Jesus Christ. That message is that we no longer say, 'you shall overcome,' but say with (these churches), 'we shall overcome.'"

Another example of the effective participation necessary to the future of the SBC is including more women and ethnics in leadership roles, he said.

"Failure to take advantage of these valuable resources would be a tragic waste," he said. "We should not ignore them or pay lip service with low visibility and narrowed opportunities."

Affirming the denomination's return to biblical authority, Henry nevertheless said some are continuing to "manipulate the procedures for denominational service" beyond what is necessary. He called this a "shadow on the soul of Southern Baptists" that, if lengthened, could potentially cause more damage than the battle for the Bible.

Henry also warned against the splintering of state conventions, saying it would only lead to the Balkanization of the SBC as resources were poured into more structures, legal entanglements and increased division.

"The long-term effect will

## president's address

— by Jim Henry, pastor, FBC, Orlando, Fla.

not be healthy, and we will see the demise of our SBC as we know it," he said.

Shared values is another element essential to revitalization, Henry said. "The core of Southern Baptist shared values is the Bible.

"If we stay true to the Book, we will not fail," he said. "We will not have to have study committee meetings for years to discuss if same-sex marriages are acceptable; if priests, bishops, or ministers who marry them are heretics; if abortions are permissible; if suicide on demand is a right to choose; if racial discrimination is optional; if gambling is a social benefit to our communities; if poverty is tolerable."

Henry said a third element to revitalization is a wholeness that incorporates diversity.

Pointing to the New Testament church, he said, "It was not the whole splintering into diverse parts, but rather diverse parts uniting to form the whole."

Noting that truth must be mixed with grace, he said the Southern Baptist flock should not allow itself to be pigeonholed by a few who have a legalistic and narrow spirit.

Other elements he cited as essential to revitalization were:

► teamwork: Pastor burn-out is at an all-time high, with 125 SBC ministers a month being terminated.

► "We are in this together,"

Henry said. "What weakens one, weakens all — what strengthens one, strengthens all."

► affirmation: Almost 700,000 persons were baptized by Baptists last year which also marked the second highest year for church starts, at 1,600; it was a record year for volunteers.

► links beyond the community: Our "magnificent obsession" must remain evangelism. To succeed at reaching the world for Christ, he said Southern Baptists must reach out to those of like faith, such as the National Association of Evangelicals.

► develop young people: Over the last 25 years, the 12-17 year-old age group has declined more than any other among those coming to Christ, Henry said. In addition to evangelizing them, Southern Baptists need to provide these young people with mentoring relationships so they will be less likely to burn out in ministry.

► a forward view is needed: "The God of yesterday and today is also the God of tomorrow, and you cannot walk with him without walking forward," Henry said. "Revitalization is of the heart. It occurs in the prayer closet, in the seasons of fasting, in experiencing God in our personal walk.

"This 'power walk,' Henry said, "will, in turn, have a positive impact on our churches and communities and denomination." ■



HENRY

## SBC offering totals \$281,000 for African American churches

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Messengers to the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting gave or pledged about \$281,000 during the June 12 evening session to help predominantly African American congregations in rebuilding their burned church buildings.

The offering followed the convention's adoption that morning of a strongly worded resolution condemning the arson and pledging support for the churches.

SBC messengers' actions during their annual meeting in New Orleans came during a week when the country's attention focused on the problem of black church fires to a greater degree than before.

In addition to three new incidents of church burnings, President Bill Clinton participated in a rededication service for a rebuilt building in South Carolina and a congressional committee approved legislation to help with the problem.

The total in gifts and pledges collected Wednesday evening was \$281,318, with many pastors promising to take offerings in their churches and forward them to the SBC Executive Committee. Before the of-

fering was taken, pledges of up to \$185,000 were made by three state conventions and three large churches. The offering contained \$57,690 in pledges and \$38,628 in cash.

In preparation for the offering, outgoing convention President Jim Henry reminded Southern Baptists they had committed in a 1995 resolution to seek racial reconciliation, especially with other Christians.

"While it is a good thing to pass a resolution condemning this deplorable and cowardly action, that's not enough. And we did that strongly," said Henry, pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla. The measure decreed more than 30 fires in the past 18 months.

Continuing before the offering, Henry recognized Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Church, Pensacola, Fla., and president of the Florida Baptist Convention. He announced the state convention was making a pledge of \$50,000 to the effort.

From the same microphone, Robert White, executive director of the Baptist Convention of the State of Georgia, followed with a pledge of \$50,000 from the convention.

Troy Morrison, executive director of the

Alabama Baptist Convention, also pledged up to \$50,000 from his convention.

"It's amazing how quickly and wonderfully the Holy Spirit can work when the body of Christ is of one mind and of one accord, and of one spirit," Henry said.

The pledges were not yet complete, however. Henry then recognized Adrian Rogers, three-time SBC president and pastor of Bellevue Church, Cordova

"My heart's been moved tonight," he said, to pledge at least \$10,000 from the church or personally.

"First Baptist, Orlando, can't let that happen, so we're going to give \$10,001," Henry said. "And if anybody wants to top it, you've got the right to come on down here and tell us in just a moment."

SBC President-elect Tom Elliff took him up on the offer. Without benefit of a microphone, Elliff, pastor of First Southern Church, Del City, Okla., told Henry of his church's pledge to give \$15,000.

Henry thanked both Bellevue and First Southern. He informed messengers that checks should be made out to the SBC Executive Committee, and buckets were passed in the Louisiana Superdome to collect the offering. ■

# Resolutions address social issues

For Baptist and Reflector

NEW ORLEANS — Messengers voted to boycott Disney "if ...," according to a resolution overwhelmingly approved by messengers during the annual convention. It was one of several resolutions which were approved by the messengers. Although not representative of the views of the almost 16 million Southern Baptists, resolutions do represent the views of elected messengers representing churches at the meeting.

Resolutions go through a committee process. In the case of the resolution on Disney, the convention's Resolutions Committee cited five examples of Disney "corporate decisions, which have included but are not limited to:" 1) granting insurance benefits to partners of homosexual employees; 2)

hosting homosexual "theme nights" at its parks; 3) a subsidiary's hiring of a convicted child molester to direct the movie, "Powder;" 4) a subsidiary's publication of a book aimed at homosexual teenagers; and 5) a subsidiary's production of the movie "Priest," which "disparages Christian values and depicts Christian leaders as morally defective."

Criticism of Disney practices also was voiced last fall by messengers to the Florida Baptist Convention.

The SBC resolution asked the Christian Life Commission "to monitor Disney's progress in returning to its previous philosophy of producing enriching family entertainment."

For at least one messenger, the boycott already is under way. Wiley Drake, pastor of a

California church just seven miles from Disneyland, voiced dismay with Disney's initial two-sentence response to the SBC resolution.

"We find it curious," Disney officials in California said, "that a group that claims to espouse family values would vote to boycott the world's largest producer of wholesome family entertainment. We question any group that demands that we deprive people of health benefits and we know of no tourist destination in the world that denies admission to people as the Baptists are insisting we do."

Drake, who gained messengers' approval of an amendment adding the boycott threat to a resolution drafted by the Resolutions Committee, charged Disney officials with misinterpreting the protest. "We're not insisting they deny admission to homosexuals" or deny health insurance to employees, he said, "just asking Disney not to promote beliefs that are against the Judeo-Christian lifestyle."

"I see no reason to observe Disney's record any longer, other than in judging the severity of the boycott," Wiley declared.

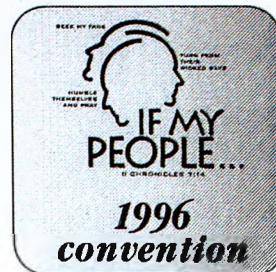
Another resolution expressed outrage at the arson fires which have damaged more than 30 African American churches, most in the Southeast, in the past 18 months.

"The desecration and destruction of churches is a particularly heinous form of hatred," messengers stated. "Attacks against any church constitute an attack against the entire believing community."

At the initiation of outgoing

SBC President Jim Henry, an offering was taken during the convention's Wednesday evening session for helping rebuild the churches. (For more on assistance to African American churches damaged by arson, see page 6)

Henry, in his presidential address, urged pastors, church and state convention leaders to "go home and take collections



and free up resources to assist in rebuilding." ■ — Connie Davis and Baptist Press contributed to this story

## Other resolutions passed —

For Baptist and Reflector

- ▶ Condemning President Bill Clinton's veto of the partial-birth abortion ban, calling it "shameful" — and taking particular offense at Clinton's statement he prayed about the decision: "We express our disapproval of the President's suggestion that God would reveal to him in prayer that any abortion method would ever have God's approval."
- ▶ Against worldwide persecution and denial of human rights of Christians, calling for action by President Clinton, the U.S. State Department, and Congress
- ▶ Requesting all political parties to include a pro-life platform since "the sanctity of human life is of primary importance to God and should be to humans."
- ▶ Against physician-assisted suicide to "affirm the biblical and Hippocratic prohibitions" against it, calling for federal, state, and local judicial and public policy action against it
- ▶ Against same-sex marriages, calling for federal, state, and local judicial and public policy action against it because any law supporting it is "wicked according to God's standards revealed in the Bible"
- ▶ For a 40-day period of prayer and fasting preceding the November elections and observance of a National Day of Prayer on election day.
- ▶ Advocating a national commission on the effects of gambling since no such commission has studied the effects of gambling upon society since 1976
- ▶ Urging increased support of global and domestic hunger and relief needs addressed by SBC agencies
- ▶ Committing to pray for and share the Gospel with the Jewish people
- ▶ Warning of a creeping universalism through ecumenism threatening to blunt evangelistic outreach
- ▶ Encouraging legislators "to develop the means and methods of returning educational and funding choices to parents" ■

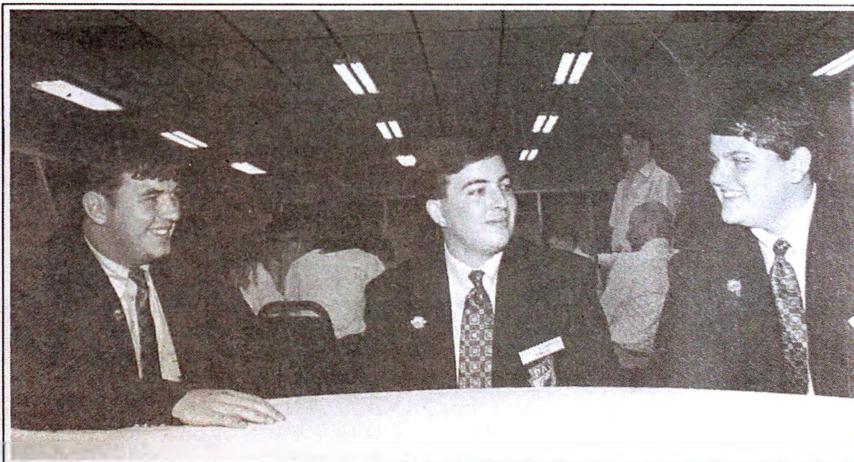
## Other resolutions presented —

For Baptist and Reflector

- ▶ Encourage the Republican National Convention not to weaken its strong pro-life platform and the Democratic National Convention to adopt a strong pro-life platform.
- ▶ Supporting a law against legalization of homosexual marriages.
- ▶ For restrictions to protect minors from cyperporn
- ▶ For Human Life Bill which identifies life as beginning at conception and affording life all protections accorded people under the U.S. Constitution
- ▶ Expressing appreciation for Paul Pressler and Paige Patterson in leading the SBC conservative movement
- ▶ For International Day of Prayer for the Persecuted Church Sept. 19
- ▶ Reaffirming the trinity
- ▶ Against close embrace dancing
- ▶ Against hatred, racism, and prejudice and for open membership in churches
- ▶ Against Freemasonry
- ▶ For a study of canonization of Bible — how and when the early church selected books of the New Testament



VISITING WITH A FORMER TENNESSEAN is Randall Cummings, left, pastor, First Church, Ripley, with Brad Curry, retired from New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary who is originally from Mercer, Tenn. Curry is pastoral care associate of First Church, Baton Rouge, La. He is with his wife, Catherine.



GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER are the three Royal Ambassadors from Tennessee who served as SBC Pages. From left are Ashley Johnson of First Church, Sevierville; Rusty Edwards of Southeast Church, Murfreesboro; and Andrew Green of Faith Church, Bartlett. Not pictured is Andrea Aldridge, an Acteen who also served as a page. Aldridge is from First Church, Waverly.



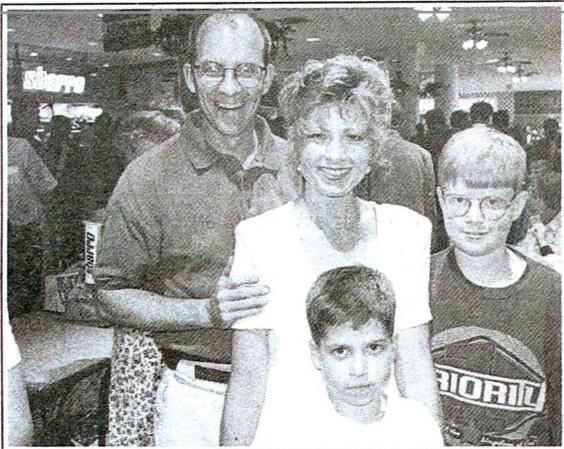
# 1,000 Tennesseans register as SBC



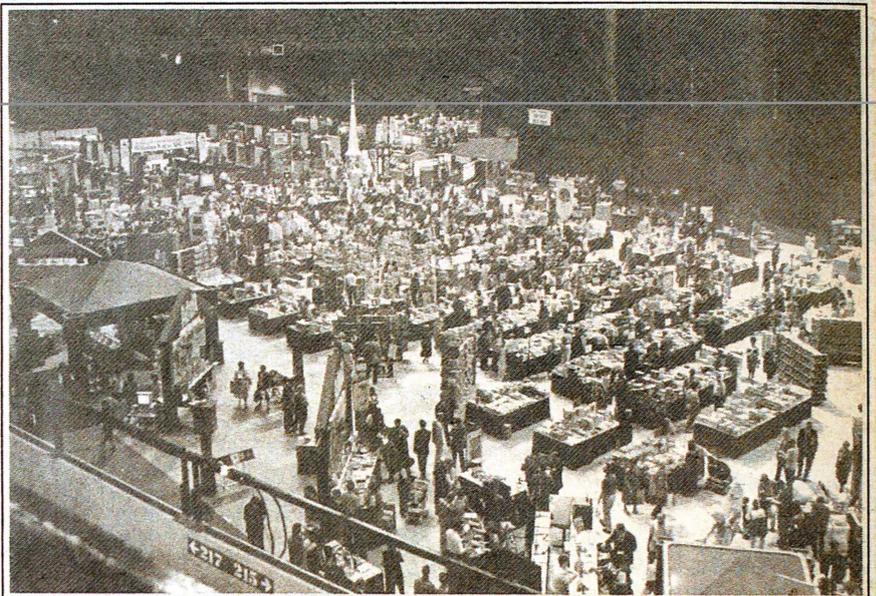
**TALKING WITH** David Morrow at the Sunday School Board exhibit are Mike Thrower, left, pastor, Brunswick Church, Brunswick, and his wife, Frances.



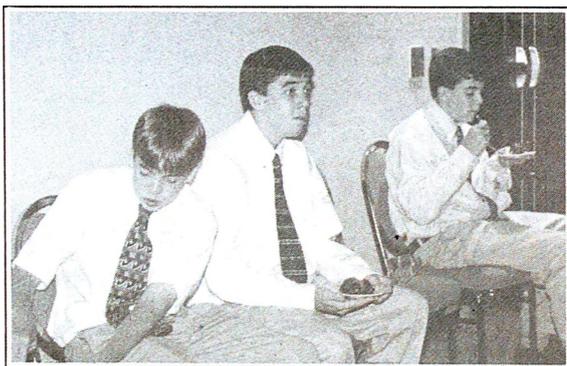
**REPRESENTING RIVERSIDE ASSOCIATION** are Ken McMillen, left, director of missions; his wife, Sarah; and Don Cobb, pastor, First Church, Livingston.



**IN THE RESTAURANT AREA** of a mall near the Louisiana Superdome are Jay McCluskey, pastor, North Cleveland Church, Cleveland, and his wife, Michelle, and their sons, John, and James.



**FILLING THE TWO-THIRDS** of the Louisiana Superdome not used for the meeting area is the exhibit hall. Two Tennessee schools — Carson-Newman College and Union University — had booths.

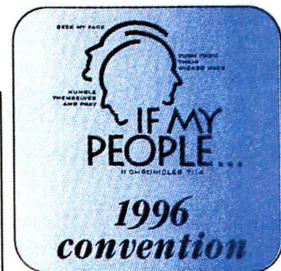


**ENJOYING THE REFRESHMENTS** during the reception held during the convention for David Dockery, new president of Union University, and his family are Dockery's sons, from left, Timothy, Jonathan, and Benjamin.



**DURING A RECEPTION** held during the convention for David Dockery, new president of Union University, and his wife, Lanese, center, Lealice Dehoney of Louisville, Ky., speaks to the couple.

# messengers



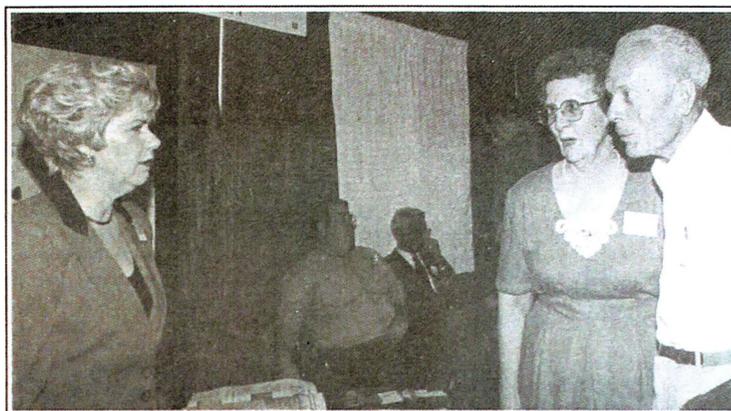
**TBC PRESIDENT** Ken Hubbard, pastor, First Church, Smyrna, and his wife, Faye, stand in front of the Louisiana Superdome where the annual convention meeting was held.



**PAUSING IN THE EXHIBIT AREA** are, from left, Terry Bradshaw, pastor, Memorial Church, Maryville; his wife, Brenda; and her sister, Judy Criver.



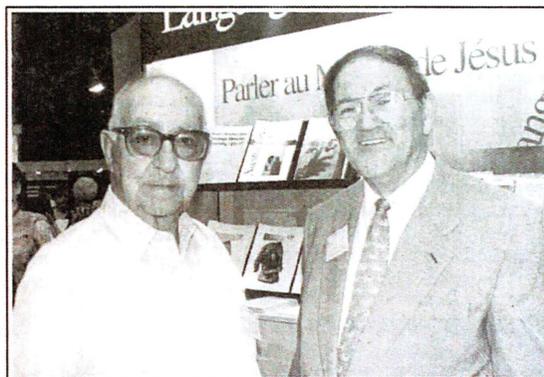
**ENJOYING THE VIEW** from a bench is Bill and Mildred Carden of Grace Church, Tullahoma.



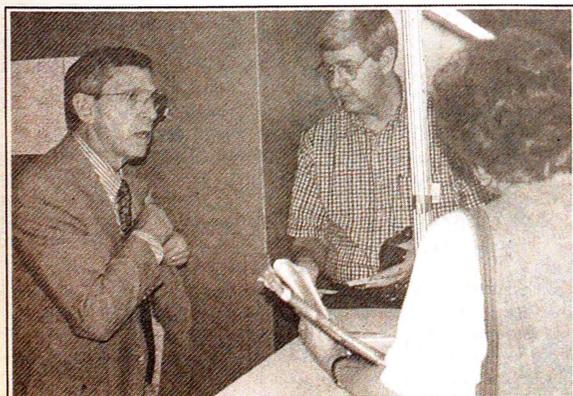
**VISITING AT THE UNION UNIVERSITY** booth in the exhibit area are Louise Lynch, left, director of alumni affairs, and Margaret and David Cooper of First Church, Bolivar.



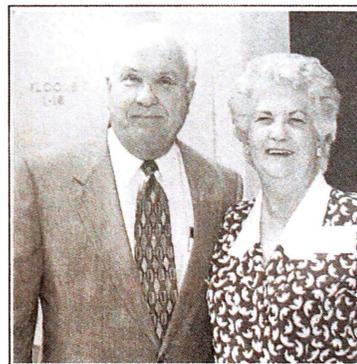
**IN THE MALL** which was located between the Louisiana Superdome and the Hyatt Regency is Trevis Otey Jr., pastor, Highland Church, Columbia, and his son, Trey.



**IN THE EXHIBIT** area are Marion Sherrill, left, a church planter in Keego Harbor, Mich., who is a native of Loudon, and Houston Inman, pastor, First Church, Loudon.



**HELPING PEOPLE** with their credentials is Raymond Boston, left, pastor, First Church, Dyersburg, who served on the SBC Credentials Committee.



**REPRESENTING** Lincoln Heights Church, Tullahoma, at the convention are Louis Rideout, pastor, and his wife, Ann.

# WMU members called to action

By Charles Willis and Lonnie Wilkey  
For Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Keynote speakers for the 1996 annual meeting of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union challenged Baptist women to ac-

tion in a variety of avenues in a changing world environment.

Author Lyle Schaller, who described himself as a "longtime fan" of the auxiliary to the Southern Baptist Convention, said he believes WMU is "at a crossroads" and he urged Baptist women to evaluate the direction of their organization.

"Life has changed," the research associate for the National Evangelistic Association told approximately 2,500 registrants for the meeting. "Being a pastor is more difficult and competition among churches has increased."

He said missions organizations were created in the 19th century in response to churches asking for help in fulfilling the Great Commission (Jesus Christ's command to take the Christian Gospel to all people in the world) beyond their communities. Today, they ask for help in fulfilling the Great Commission with immigrants and other groups that offer missions challenges within their communities.

Concurrently, he said, restructuring in the Southern Baptist Convention reduces the role of the national, denominational agencies; expands the role for state conventions; challenges associations to do more in missions and ministry; and encourages congregations to turn to parachurch organizations for help. Among examples he cited is the large number of Southern Baptists participating in Promise Keepers, an organization for Christian men.

He said the role of WMU could change with the addition of two initials — "R" and "D," representing research and development. He said he believes WMU has the potential to "invent new ways of doing ministry with new generations of people.

"We used to raise children up in a denominational heritage," Schaller observed. "Today, we have a free market. Younger generations

shop for church homes. It's a shopper's world, not a seller's world.

"I think the number one need is to make a better world for children to be born into," he said, suggesting WMU revise its mission statement to include building partnerships with congregations, associations, and state conventions to fulfill the Great Commission with today's and tomorrow's children all around the world.

Schaller told participants "we can't depend on you. You will either pull out, move away, or die. Some will do both," he joked. "We have to always reach new generations for Jesus Christ."

Meeting the needs of children and becoming advocates for children's needs was the challenge focus of Diana Garland, formerly Gheens professor of Christian family ministry at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky., and now on the staff of Presbyterian Seminary, also in Louisville.

Jesus said whoever welcomes little children in his name welcomes him, Garland said, citing Mark 9:37. "If we believed Jesus, we'd have waiting lists to teach children's Sunday School and lead Vacation Bible School," she said. "If we really believed this, we couldn't find enough children for people to tutor or enough at-risk teenagers for church members to mentor."

Churches are living out our culture's thinking, Garland said, by buying "good stuff" and providing professional services.

"In the meantime, children are growing up without loving, caring adults in the community of faith. Our society neglects children and our churches do too."

Most parents, she added, "are pouring their lives into their children, working to support them, and working in time for them all around the edges."

Today's children have fewer significant adults in their lives than in any other time period, she insisted. "The majority of adults do not have a significant relationship with any child in the congregation except those they are related to or those they teach in church.

"Children can't speak for themselves," Garland said, "and that is why they need advocates. I don't feel very powerful, but God likes to work through people like Moses who was terribly shy and had a speech impediment. He used a little boy with a slingshot and rocks to fell a giant.

"God doesn't expect us to be successful, only faithful."

Noted speaker, author, and educator Leonard Sweet gave WMU members some bad news and good news.

"This world is in trouble. This world is dying," Sweet, dean of theolo-



## New WMU officers make forecasts

By Lonnie Wilkey  
Baptist and Reflector

NEW ORLEANS — Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union will continue its traditional tasks while exploring visionary new opportunities, said the organization's newly elected officers.

Wanda Lee, of Columbus, Ga., and president of Georgia WMU since 1993, was elected as 16th president of the national organization June 10. Janet Hoffman of Hornbeck, La., a former Louisiana WMU president, was elected recording secretary. The two women, along with WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien, held a press conference immediately after their election.

The women replace outgoing officers Carolyn Miller of Huntsville, Ala., president, and Martha Wennerberg of DeFuniak Springs, Fla., recording secretary. Both completed five-year terms.

WMU has been and will continue to be an auxiliary to the SBC, Lee said.

WMU's roles in missions education and promotion of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions have not changed, she emphasized.

Also, WMU will continue to work with the two mission boards under their new names, Lee said. Southern Baptist Convention messengers are expected to approve a bylaw change during their June 11-13 annual meeting that will be the final step in approving a downsizing of the denomination from 19 national agencies to 12. The plan will change the Foreign Mission Board's name to International Mission Board. The Home Mission Board will merge with the Brotherhood and Radio and Television commissions to form the North American Mission Board.

Lee and Hoffman, however, said WMU also will be involved in visionary social needs projects.

During the last two years, WMU has focused on hunger and AIDS, Hoffman said. The 108-year-old woman's organization will deal with child advocacy and cultural diversity the next two years, she continued.

"In the society we live in, it is imperative to address these issues and do it with a spiritual basis," Hoffman said.

Lee also took note of WMU's pilot Christian Woman's Job Corps project targeted toward women on welfare.

"We want to help these women develop skills, become marketable and get out of poverty," Lee said. The program is currently being piloted in three South Carolina sites, Bismarck, N.D., and San Antonio, Texas.

As WMU president, Lee automatically becomes a member of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

While not sure what her role will be, Lee said she will be there "as a member of the team with voting privileges. I intend to exercise those privileges after prayerful consideration."

Both women expressed excitement about their new roles. "I owe a great deal of my missionary knowledge to WMU," Lee said. "I hope to give something back to WMU."

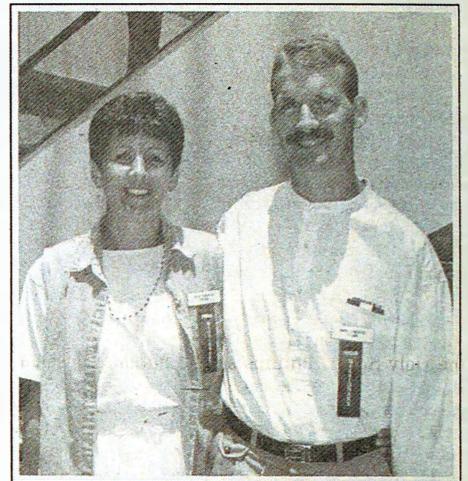
Hoffman agreed. "I can think of no better vehicle to serve the Lord than through WMU," she said. **B&R**

gy at Drew University, Madison, N.J., said.

In addition, the structure, strategies, and skills used by churches in the past aren't working as well as they used to, Sweet said. The good news, however, is that God is working to send one of the greatest spiritual awakenings this world has ever seen, he said.

Sweet gave WMU leaders eight words he said would change the church, the world, and one's life.

► "Show up." Acknowledging that if



**AMONG FOREIGN MISSIONARIES** recognized during the WMU annual meeting were Mark and Susie Edworthy of Poland. Susie Edworthy was a missionary speaker at the meeting. Tennesseans have worked with the couple through the Poland/Tennessee Baptist Partnership.

he had a choice, this is not the time in history he would have chosen to live. "But in the sovereignty of God, he has chosen me and you to show up in the 1990s and the early 21st century. God is birthing the greatest spiritual awakening in history. God is calling you. Are you going to show up?"

► "Be present." A lot of people show up, Sweet observed, but they spend their time complaining about why they have to be there. He reminded those in attendance that God didn't send Jesus to condemn the world but to save the world. "Don't spend all your time condemning the world," he challenged. "Deal with it."

► "Be yourself." "God made you to be just like you — not somebody else."

► "Let go." These are the hardest of the eight words to follow, Sweet confessed. He observed that many individuals and churches don't let go because they want to be in control. Let go and let God be in control, he urged. ■



# Pastors' Conference features leading pastors

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Hundreds gathered for the pre-convention Pastors' Conference in the Louisiana Superdome were challenged to preach the divine revelation of God's Word without compromise while praying and fasting for a God-led, heaven-sent revival throughout the Southern Baptist Convention and around the world. Carrying the message during the June 9-10 conference were pastors and former pastors, including three Tennessee pastors.

Ron Phillips, pastor, Central Church, Hixson, told the crowd the remedy for America is the remedy for the church — returning to God which was its "first love."

The church at Ephesus was directed in Revelation 2 to return to its first love, said Phillips, and the church today must do the same.

Even though Southern Baptists have embraced sound doctrine, they need to return to their first love, added Phillips.

The church of Ephesus was directed to remember its first works, which can be found in Acts 19, he said.

Those first works included supernatural experiences with the Holy Spirit, Phillips said, adding he wasn't advising people to speak in tongues.

He referred to an experience he had with the Holy Spirit. In 1989 he said he was ready to leave the ministry when he had an "anointing" of the Holy Spirit during prayer while attending a conference at Glorietta (N.M.) Baptist Conference Center. When he returned to his church, "all hell broke loose," he said. A minister at the church was fired, the church was sued for \$10 million, and about 350 members left.

He was ready to leave the ministry again, but decided against it. Phillips said he's glad he didn't because of what has happened since then. Since 1991, Central Church has seen 2,000 new members join.

Experiences with the Holy Spirit are exciting, expressive, and extravagant and expensive, said Phillips.

"My Bible says clap your hands ... shout unto God," he said.

"The Holy Spirit has set me free and I'm going to spend the rest of my life selling the victory that's in Jesus Christ my Lord," said Phillips.

Former SBC President Adrian Rogers said before revival may begin in the church it must start in the home.

"The measure of a man of God, whether he is in the min-

istry or out of the ministry, is the spiritual condition of his children," said Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis.

Phil Hoskins, pastor, Higher Ground Church, Kingsport, also spoke.

## SBC controversy

Former SBC President Bailey Smith accused state Baptist editors' critical of the SBC's conservative direction of opposing God's will for revival in his message.

"State editor, I want to say directly to you, if you keep writing those blistering editorials against the movement of God, you're standing in the way of what God wants to do in revival in the Southern Baptist Convention," Smith said.

Smith called for an end to criticism from some editors of state Baptist papers across the convention who he said have opposed the national convention's conservative swing begun in 1979.

"I know that a few years ago those that would not go with us called themselves denominational loyalists," Smith said. "The denominational loyalists under their loyalty are now stealing denominational schools, taking denominational mission money, taking denominational seminary students under the guise of being cooperative Baptists. I wish our state Baptist editors would be as concerned about that organization that is dividing us as they have been about the great conservative resurgence that never once sought to divide the Southern Baptist Convention."

Bill Webb, president of the Association of State Baptist Papers, called Smith's comments "at least, irresponsible, and at most, mean-spirited."

"State editors are a diverse group of Baptists committed no less to Christ than is Bailey Smith," Webb said. "His suggestion that state paper readers are subjected to a continuing diet of editorials against a movement of God tells me he has not been reading state papers very carefully."

## Other speakers

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, Ark., was elected by acclamation as president of the conference, succeeding Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Church, Woodstock, Ga. Floyd called the crowd to prayer and fasting, which is "God's gateway to supernatural power in your life, your church, the SBC, and our nation," he said.

Floyd, who said he has completed two 40-day fasts over the past 18 months, said the time to fast is "when you are desperate for God to do something great in your life, ministry, and country. People in America are not desperate. There is no urgency, no serious thought about God doing something miraculous. How desperate are you?"

Tom Elliff, pastor of First Southern Church in Del City, Okla., echoed the urgency for revival. "The great movements of God are led by people who believe it's a life-or-death issue and they're not afraid to speak it," he said.

Elliff, who later was elected SBC president during the SBC annual meeting, said Baptists cannot afford to waste an opportunity to sow the seed of revival across the world.

"The Southern Baptist Convention has not come all this way to hit no lay-up," Elliff said. "You either come when he calls — or when you get there, he's gone. Delay will cost you. You cannot will yourself into the presence of God."

Evangelist Junior Hill of Hartselle, Ala., said too many God-called men have been carelessly handling the Word of God for too long.

"I'm tired of seeing old-time preaching — preaching that once convicted the saints and converted sinners — now being replaced by dull and listless dialogue constructed upon doubt and built up by intellectualism and propped up by human reasoning," Hill said.

He said the church in large part has lost its voice in America because many preachers have stopped proclaiming the infallible, inerrant Holy Bible.

"I'm tired of seeing old-time righteousness, old-fashioned Bible separation that made our forefathers strangely different from the world, now meekly retreating before the common demands of homosexual preachers, beer-guzzling deacons, and baby-killing abortionists," Hill said.

Mack Brunson, pastor of Green Street Church, High Point, N.C., said preachers should never stray from the text of God's Word when standing behind the pulpit.

"We've been called to preach a word from divine revelation and not something from our sanctified imagination," Brunson said. "A lot of us have fallen in love with the sound of our own voice. ... It matters

whether or not you meet the master in the text."

Evangelist Rick Amato of Lincoln Park, Mich., concurred that Southern Baptists need to focus on passionately preaching the crucified Christ in what may be the closing days of such opportunity.

Amato said preachers need to proclaim "not Jesus the Republican and not Jesus the psychoanalyst, but Jesus the crucified, buried, and risen again from the dead."

Southern Baptist preachers need to be careful not to quickly associate church growth with revival, warned Ken Hemphill, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas.

"Church growth is not an appropriate goal for the church, but obedience to the will of God," Hemphill said.

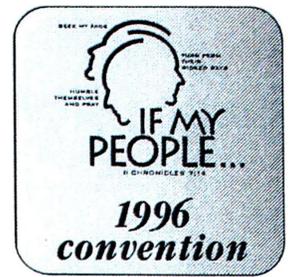
Junior Hill agreed that a church may grow numerically without growing spiritually. He said that churches wanting to grow are "developing an insatiable hunger that wants to grow to the point that it becomes an obsession rather than a vision granted by God."

"The blessings of God have never been demonstrated by calculators," Hill said. "Folks, the blessings of God are demonstrated sometimes in ways we can't see."

Herb Reavis, pastor of North Jacksonville Church, Jacksonville, Fla., called for Southern Baptists to break from their traditional doldrums of worship.

Southern Baptist churches, Reavis said, can grow without watering down God's Word. "Lost people don't like preaching," he said. "We don't give them what they like. We give them what they need."

With revival comes conflict, warned James Merritt, pastor of First Church, Snellville, Ga. "The enemies you make by



taking a firm stand for what is right will have more respect for you than the friends you have for straddling the fence. Those who stand tallest for God will always be the ones to draw the fire."

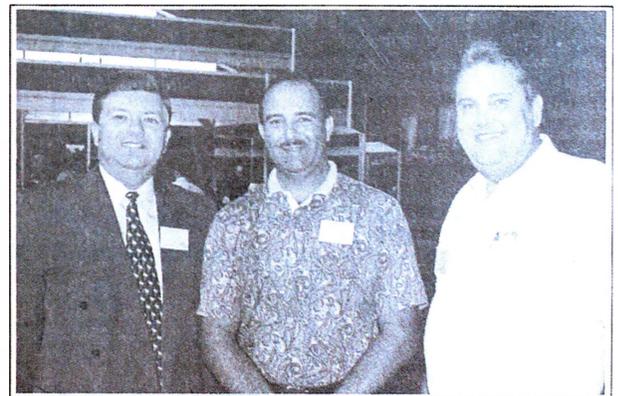
Jerry Vines, former SBC president and co-pastor of First Church, Jacksonville, Fla., agreed. "Your home is your greatest preaching station," he said.

Henry Blackaby, who coordinates prayer and spiritual awakening for the Home Mission Board, Foreign Mission Board and Baptist Sunday School Board, urged Southern Baptists to resolve to evangelize the world against all odds.

"You can go into China and see that communists have declared they will crush Christianity," he said. "But if they take 10, 20 will replace them. If they take 20, 100 will replace them. If they take 2,000, 2 million will replace them. The love of Christ produces the fruit that remains."

"Now God is trusting the love he gave his Son will send us also out into the world. I am absolutely confident that the love of God will produce absolute fruit that remains. May this generation be the source of fruit that remains in our broken world."

Other officers elected by acclamation were Ronnie Yarber, pastor of Gross Road Baptist Church, Mesquite, Texas, vice president, and Mike Rountt, pastor of Rose Hill Baptist Church, Ashland, Ky., secretary-treasurer. — Connie Davis contributed to this story.



TBC PASTORS' CONFERENCE officers David Daugherty, left, Shellstord Church, McMinnville, president, and David Thompson, Alta Loma Church, Nashville, secretary, visit with Clinton Association Director of Missions Michael Pearson.



## Promise Keepers founder gives closing message

Associated Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Christians of all colors must model loving relationships to answer racism that continues to plague America, Promise Keepers founder Bill McCartney told Southern Baptists.

"It is the cry of my heart that our people would see the pain in each other and begin to come together," said McCartney, whose stadium rallies are expected to draw 1.1 million men this year.

McCartney, former football coach for the University of Colorado, gave the closing message at the 1996 SBC annual meeting.

McCartney said he has spent the past year visiting clergy of color in cities across America. "I have found things that you couldn't possibly know," he said. Racial strife, he observed, "is so real. I understand why our nation is polarized."

McCartney cautioned his comments might offend his predominantly white audience. "But please be open. There is a spirit of white racial supremacy that is reigning," he said. That spirit is defined by insensitivity to people of color, he added.

Christians must show one another they are loved and appreciated, regardless of race, McCartney said.

"Within each one of us, there's this need for affirmation. No one should have to earn their significance."

McCartney discussed two visions he's developing for better race relations. One is to develop a better working environment for minorities at the 300-employee Promise Keepers.

The other is organizing a Christian million-man-march for September in Washington, D.C.

Rather than being marked by protest or defiance, the march would be characterized by prayer and repentance, he said. "Let's show the world what the body of Christ looks like," McCartney said. ■

# WMU launches project on child advocacy

By Teresa Dickens & Orville Scott  
For Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — The urgency for churches to respond to the needs of children was stressed at a June 11 news conference as the Southern Baptist Convention got underway in the Louisiana Superdome and one day after Woman's Missionary Union launched Project HELP: Child Advocacy.

WMU, with more than 1.1 million members, will seek to lead Southern Baptists to do more to serve the needs of children through volunteer projects, said WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien.

Joining O'Brien in the news conference were Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, and Diana Garland of Louisville, Ky., who is helping lead a two-year study funded by the Lilly Foundation on incorporating children into the life of the church.

In its Project HELP series, WMU previously has launched emphases on hunger and AIDS. The hunger emphasis resulted in the donation of more than 1.2 million cans of food and more than \$378,000 to food ministries across the United States, O'Brien said.

More than \$17,000 and 123,000 items have been given to support local AIDS ministries. More than \$108,000 has been given to support House of Hope in Vitoria, Brazil, an AIDS hospice under direction of Southern Baptist foreign missionary Karen Gray.

Garland, author of *Precious in His Sight*, a book on ministering to children, said more American children today die from violence in a year than died during any year of the great polio scare of the 1950s.

Recalling Jesus' admonition to his disciples to let the children come to him, Garland said, "All too often children have no voice in a church."

"Do you want to experience God in your life? Then invite a child into your life and serve that child," she said.

Garland said all children need advocates in the community and in government. She called on Christians to "speak out in behalf of our children."

Land said America in one generation has gone from a child-centered culture to a child-neglecting and child-abusing society.

"The fastest-growing poverty group is children," Land said, noting there is widespread hunger and malnutrition among children. He applauded efforts to alleviate hunger on the part of WMU as well as agencies such as the Christian Life Commission, Foreign Mission Board, and Home Mission Board.

Noting he is not against women working when they choose to, Land said economic necessity has forced many par-

ents into the work place when they had rather be at home with their children.

Observing that children most at risk do not have two loving parents, Land urged churches to develop ministries to such families.

"Most church members are not aware of the extent of the problem," he said, noting that one in three 6-year-old girls and one in five 6-year-old boys will be sexually molested by age 16.

Land said there is undeniable evidence that violence on television has dramatically increased violence in American society. He said studies of South Africa and two towns in Canada, which didn't get American television until the 1970s, showed major increases in murder and other violent acts within a few years after the advent of TV.

Garland said children are growing up with fewer caring adults in their lives.

"There is a growing and deepening poverty for children who feel there is no one who cares or who can help them. It makes them feel there is no hope," she said.

In addition to problems at home, O'Brien urged Southern Baptists to help alleviate problems in other countries, such

as large numbers of street children in Thailand and Brazil where leaders sometimes decide the solution is to eradicate them through murder squads at night.

"Jesus told his disciples, 'If you want to be great, welcome this child,'" she said.

Project HELP: Child Advocacy will focus on ways to educate and involve Christians in responding to the needs of children (birth through 18 years) and the churches' role as their advocate within the church family, community and the world.

The project outline includes four categories which will help participants become aware of the needs of children, learn how to pray for children, and involve them in spending time with and becoming an advocate for children.

The global component of Project HELP: Child Advocacy involves collecting money for a ministry in Naan, Thailand, that provides housing and training for underprivileged children.

Full details of the project are outlined in the Project HELP: Child Advocacy Resource Kit. This kit and a variety of other materials related to the project are available through WMU Customer Service at 1-800-968-7301. Additional information may be obtained from Trudy Johnson, Special Projects Manager, P.O. Box 830010, Birmingham, AL 35283-0010. ■



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# Floyd challenges Baptists to pray, fast

Baptist Press

**convention sermon**  
— by Ronnie Floyd, pastor, FBC, Springdale, M.

## NEW ORLEANS

— Only brokenness and repentance before God can rescue America — and Southern Baptists — from the spiritual crisis leading them to ruin, a leading pastor told Southern Baptists attending their convention's annual meeting June 12 at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans.

"The spiritual vital signs in America, in our church, and in the lives of many Christians today demonstrate the urgent and the imperative need that we hear a message from God today," Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, Ark., and chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, said in the annual convention sermon.

Social disintegration in America and the dearth of baptisms in many Southern Baptist churches clearly indicate a spiritual crisis only a touch from God can resolve, he said.

The rising rates of teenage pregnancy, violence, pornography, abortion, homosexuality, and adultery attest to the "pitiful spiritual condition" of the United States, Floyd said. Yet Southern Baptists should be more alarmed that only 3.5

percent of their 40,000-plus churches baptize 26 people or more in one year.

Many Southern Baptist churches are majoring on minor issues — such as whether or not to clap and sing choruses in worship — and neglecting major issues — like bringing others to Christ, repentance, revival, reconciliation, and making disciples, he said.

"My friend, the churches of this denomination need a mighty, God-sent, Holy Ghost revival," Floyd declared, as applause and a chorus of "Amens" rose from the assembled messengers.

Even the convention itself, despite 17 years of conservative redirection, needs a spiritual awakening, Floyd said. The SBC's "revival to the Word of God" has been followed by an "organizational reformation," but the convention now needs "a fresh touch from God" that will result in repentance and reconciliation and send Southern Baptists out into a world in need of Christ, he said.

"What do we have if we be-

lieve in inerrancy of Scripture and have little commitment to evangelism?" Floyd asked. "I'll tell you today what we really have. We may have people who wear the label of inerrancy on their shirt pocket, rather than the label of moderate, but we will simply be a denomination of old wineskins that are brittle and inflexible and lifeless.

"An authentic belief in the inerrancy of Scripture will result in the evangelism of the lost and a love for the brethren," Floyd said. "A person who has not demonstrated the priority of evangelism and world evangelization in their church has absolutely no business determining the future direction of the Southern Baptist Convention."

Turning to the Old Testament book of the prophet Joel, Floyd told the assembly only heartfelt repentance offers any hope of people experiencing a profound moving of God's spirit. Spiritual leaders must model brokenness and humility in their own lives and must call God's people to repentance for their spiritual condition, he said.

Like the great prayer re-

vival that swept the United States in 1858 and brought more than one million people to Christ, Southern Baptists must devote themselves to prayer and fasting if another spiritual awakening is to come to America, Floyd said.

He challenged Southern Baptists to make four commitments:

(1) Use Sunday morning, Oct. 27, for a call to a day of prayer and fasting.

(2) Hold a "solemn assembly" on that Sunday evening to call people to repentance for their sin.

(3) Observe Wednesday, Oct. 30, as a day of humiliation, prayer, and fasting for personal, church, and national revival.

(4) Use both morning and evening services on Sunday, Nov. 3, to focus on the subject of revival.

"God is on the brink of ushering in a mighty spiritual awakening across this land," Floyd said. "The urgency for spiritual awakening in this midnight crisis calls us to spiritual repentance and calls us to act together now. God wants to bring a mighty revival to our churches and our nation before he comes again." ■

# Elliff calls denomination to work together for revival

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — About an hour after quickly being elected without opposition to the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, Tom Elliff practiced what he said he plans to preach: calling Southern Baptists to turn to God.

"I feel like Solomon, who said, 'I don't know how to go out and I don't know how to go in,'" Elliff said before leading reporters in prayer, asking God for discernment and wisdom as he fielded questions about the convention's future.

But the 52-year-old pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., appeared poised and confident in laying out the direction of the SBC as outgoing President Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., prepared to pass the convention gavel June 13.

In his opening statement, Elliff called Southern Baptists to work together in ushering in worldwide revival. "I believe we need genuine revival," he said. "We need to turn to God in our nation. ... The direction of my leadership would be that we would turn to Christ. Step up to the plate and be the people of God he expects us to be."

Elliff expressed positions on issues ranging from the conservative resurgence in the SBC to President Clinton's veto of a bill prohibiting partial-birth abortions.

"On divisive issues in the convention: I'm not interested in encouraging people who want to divide, split, and to tear apart the fabric of our convention. The last thing any of us would ever want to

see would be a ripping apart of the framework of the Southern Baptist Convention. It's not these conservative groups that are causing that. It is convention groups that would take Southern Baptist money and send it to non-Southern Baptist organizations. That's what would cause the fragmenting of our convention."

On inclusion of "moderates" in Southern Baptist fellowship: "If you mean by 'moderates' someone who does not hold to the inerrancy of the Scripture and principles of Scripture, the word would be the same to them that I would share with anybody, and that would be to repent and to understand that the Scripture contains the absolutes of God. ... Southern Baptists have very clearly said, 'This is what we believe. This is where we stand. We are a Word-driven denomination with a mandate from Christ to reach people with the Gospel.'"

On the Walt Disney organization's support of the gay and lesbian movement: "Over the years the Disney corporation has been associated with family and family values. ... The children would say, 'Can we go to the movies? It's a Disney movie.' You say, 'Well, if it's a Disney movie, OK.' But you can't say that anymore. That's unfortunate for us. It's even more unfortunate for Disney because it means they have taken a direction that we can't support financially, we can't support morally. I believe that's the sen-

timent of our convention."

On women as senior pastors: "I cannot find in the Scripture any passages which would support the role of a woman ... being pastor of a local congregation."

On the likelihood Elliff would appoint to a committee position a Baptist who believes Scripture contains error: "That's like asking me if I would be willing to have in the United States Army someone who would not pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and thereby espouse principles of our nation. In a word, no, I would not knowingly, and I would work long and hard to make sure I knew who I appointed. ... We have said as Southern Baptists: 'We believe in this.' And so now we are moving a step beyond as Southern Baptists. We are taking the Word, which we hold up to be the Word of God — inerrant and infallible — and we are seeking as a convention to live by the principles of that Word. I would encourage those whom I have appointed to look very carefully at their appointments. I would want them to ensure their appointments would have that same standard, those same principles."

On the integrity of conservative leaders in SBC: "I have found the men associated with the conservative resurgence to be aboveboard in every way. I have found them to be men who are genuinely concerned about their churches and their lives, but also they have a heart large enough to be concerned about the Southern Baptist Convention. I have not found them to be acerbic or acrimonious in their statements or actions toward others." ■



ELLIFF



## Messengers answer call

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — His arms outstretched, Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board President Jerry Rankin asked the hushed assembly: "Who will go? Whose heart is broken over the needs of a lost world, a broken heart that will compel a response to God's call?"

As the congregation stood and sang "Wherever He Leads, I'll Go," people left their seats and filtered down the aisles of the cavernous Louisiana Superdome Wednesday evening in New Orleans. They came by singly and in pairs, couples with their arms around each other, a man with his arm over a boy's shoulder. They stood and talked and prayed with missionaries on the floor of the arena. Others remained in their seats and quietly filled out commitment cards pulled from their programs.

The commitment service was part of the June 12 annual report of the FMB to the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. When the decisions were tabulated, more than 1,500 commitments had been registered: 476 for some type of overseas missions service, four for home missions and 959 pledging to support missions by praying, giving, or encouraging others.

One person made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ; 94 renewed their commitments to their Lord.

"We had 105 people express interest in career service overseas," said Jim Riddell, associate director of the FMB personnel selection department. "That's the largest number of career commitments at an appointment service in years."

The board appointed 54 people to career positions in about 25 countries during an emotional service that mixed pageantry, music, video, drama, testimony, and a parade of international flags — a tradition of the appointment services. ■

# WMU, FMB executives sign volunteer agreement

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Chief executives of Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union and Foreign Mission Board signed a letter of agreement June 12, making WMU a "primary source of trained volunteers to be used in mission work worldwide."

WMU Executive Director Dellanna O'Brien and FMB President Jerry Rankin signed the letter of agreement before a small crowd of WMU and FMB leaders gathered in the

FMB booth in the SBC annual meeting exhibit area in the Louisiana Superdome.

The letter of agreement, similar to the agreement the FMB has with the Brotherhood Commission, states the FMB's volunteers in missions department will "make available to the volunteer connection office of Woman's Missionary Union strategic volunteer requests identified by the area offices of the board.

"Through the WMU network of state, associational, and church leadership and

through WMU curriculum, products, and programs," the document continues, "the volunteer connection office will recruit individuals to fulfill the requests."

Volunteer connection is

WMU's newly created volunteer recruitment office directed by Delane Tew, a former FMB missionary to Japan. The office will develop a network of volunteers based on interest and desire and provide training for

these individuals before placing them in volunteer assignments. Along with the FMB, volunteer connection also will work with the Home Mission Board to recruit missions volunteers. ■



O'BRIEN



RANKIN



Woman's Missionary Union and persons with AIDS around the world thank you for your generous response to Dare to Care. Your prayers and donations met physical needs and touched many lives with Christ's love.

Tennessee's contributions totaled:

Items donated: 9,464

House of Hope donations: \$10,435

Given locally: \$364

Nationwide Totals:

Items donated: 123,598

House of Hope donations: \$108,996

Given locally: \$17,461



Woman's Missionary Union

Mission Statement:

To provide missions-related programs, information, resources, and training to motivate and enable churches and believers to meet spiritual, physical, and social needs, locally and globally.



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# Help others

By L. Joseph Rosas III

## Focal Passage — Romans 14:13-18; 15:1-7

The first Christians probably saw themselves as a reform movement within Judaism. The inclusion of Gentiles in the fellowship introduced a number of dynamics that challenged the unity of the Church. Paul, as apostle to the Gentiles, wanted brothers and sisters in Christ from different cultural and religious backgrounds to peacefully co-exist and demonstrate Christ's love by relating redemptively to one another. He deals with the relationship between the "weak" and the "strong" in Romans 14. The weak includes Christians of Jewish background who still feel some pull from the law regarding diet and holy days. Paul's obvious emphasis is on the responsibility of the mature Christian toward the weaker brother.

**The principle related to obstacles (ch. 14:13).** The mature believer is to avoid putting a hinderance (stumbling block) or a trap (obstacle) before a weaker brother. There are numerous gray areas of Christian conduct in which there is no clear command or prohibition regarding conduct. However, the mature believer must forego the privileges of freedom if a certain action will harm the weaker brother.

**The principle related to love (vv. 14-15).** The problem of meat offered to idols and Jewish dietary law are in mind as Paul says that no food is unclean of itself. This was the lesson Peter had learned on the housetop in Joppa before preaching the Gospel to Cornelius. The point is, even though a Christian has the right to eat meat one should be motivated by love for the weaker brother to abstain if necessary.

**The principle related to the kingdom (vv. 16-18).** The believer is to live with a kingdom view. One's liberty in Christ will be spoken of as evil by the weaker brother if it offends. The seriousness of this injury to the weaker brother is indicated by the word translated "spoken of as evil." The kingdom is concerned with righteousness or ethical living, peace or harmony among brothers and joy the fruit of a right relationship to God and the family of faith. Motives and actions that are designed to serve God will be approved by others as well.

**The principle related to growth (ch. 15:1-4).** The strong are to bear with the failings of the weak. More than merely enduring, we are to help carry the load. The goal is the growth and maturation of the weaker brother. We should not be self-centered. We should be neighbor-centered. Christ is the example. He did not live to please himself. He bore our guilt and shame. Likewise each Christian should live redemptively in relationships with weak brothers and sisters in Christ.

**The principle related to unity (vv. 5-6).** Paul breaks into a benediction. God himself through the testimony of Scripture gives endurance and encouragement for Christian living. As a result of God's grace there should be unity in the worship of God. Our love for one another should demonstrate the extent to which God in Christ has loved us and our unity in Christ is the greatest proof that Jesus was sent by God.

**The principle related to acceptance (v. 7).** This section of Romans opens in 14:1 with the appeal to accept him whose faith is weak and concludes with the admonition to accept one another. Thankfully, the text does not say Christ will accept you as you accept one another. But Christ's acceptance of us is to be our example. ■ — L. Joseph Rosas III is pastor of Union Avenue Church, Memphis.

# Faith and wisdom

By Kevin Goza

## Focal Passage — James 1:5-8; 3:1-5a, 13-18

The Christian cannot live effectively for God apart from wisdom. Wisdom can be described as God-given insight into God's will and God's ways. James gives powerful descriptions of wisdom in the life of faith.

### Wisdom in perseverance — ch. 1:5-8

World War II concentration camp survivor Victor Frankl said, "If I can know why, I can survive any what." Christians can survive any "what" if they know that their trials have meaning. James teaches us that we can ask God, and he will supply wisdom from above that will satisfy our need for meaning. For James, wisdom was a practical matter, not a philosophic speculation. In the face of trials, wisdom is a gift from God which may be used for coping with life's assaults.

God is a good giver. Verse 5 says God gives generously and without finding fault in the seeker. He does not remind us that we just asked for wisdom a week ago, or that we have not taken full advantage of his wisdom in the past. Rather, he just gives, and gives,

## Convention Uniform Lesson

and gives. How gracious is our God!

However, as one asks for wisdom in persevering, they must ask in faith (vv. 6-8). James gives an illustration of the effect of asking God while doubting his response. Waves driven by the wind are unstable and unpredictable. Asking God while doubting his ability to give reveals spiritual instability and uncertainty. The result: that person will not receive the wisdom they seek, because God's wisdom will not have a stable platform in their life.

### Wisdom in proclamation — ch. 3:1-5a

William Jennings Bryan returned from one of his

speaking engagements and said, "Last night I learned that I have power over the audience." Words are powerful. In his commentary on James, Harold Bryson outlines verses 1-4 by saying that words have power to educate, to direct, and to communicate.

Every Christian is a teacher, whether they assume a Sunday School class or occupy a pew. One should not assume the role of teacher without commitment to God's truth. Teachers are honored and influential members of society. To teach is to present truth. When untruth is taught as truth, God's judgment is invited (v. 1).

Mastering the tongue is a great challenge. James says that controlling ones speech is a mark of spiritual maturity (v. 2). A person who is in control of their words is a person in control of their actions.

The Christian must control their tongue because of the enormous influence of words. One conversation can redirect a life. What we say may seem small to us, but words can have eternal consequences (vv. 3-5a).

### Wisdom in peacemaking — vv. 13-18

James makes the distinction between earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom.

Earthly wisdom creates relationships characterized by bitterness, ambition, and envy. Such wisdom has no vision beyond this world, is characteristic of one who has never been saved, and has its source in satan himself. Christians should abandon earthly wisdom.

On the contrary, God's wisdom leads to relationships that are marked by peace. ■ — Kevin Goza is pastor of First Church, Lebanon.



Bible study  
for June 23

# Worship, leadership, and marriage

By Tom Moncrief

## Bible Book Lesson

### Focal Passage — Malachi 1:6-9; 2:8-9, 13-16

When Malachi ministered to the people of Judah, the times were hard. A fresh word from God was needed to offer hope and help.

### Unacceptable worship — ch. 1:6-9

Malachi begins with two principles which would receive widespread agreement. The fatherhood and lordship of God were illustrated. No Israelite would deny the importance of a son's obligation to honor his father or a servant's recognition of his master. God required the sincerity of these claims to be demonstrated.

The priests questioned the charge but the prophet pointed to their practice of offering polluted food upon God's altar. The law stipulated that every sacrificial animal must be free from spot or blemish. Such polluted offerings would never be offered to the government leader, yet they presented the castoffs to God. Sacrifice meant offering to God something of cost or value as a symbol of consecration to God. Their actions revealed that they did not take the Lord and his offering as seriously as they took local government requirements. Indeed,

one's concept of God determines his attitude toward loyalty to and worship of the Lord.

So the prophet called upon the people to see God and repent so God could reveal his graciousness to them. This call still needs to be heeded today. God yet is not pleased with empty ritual but desires a sincere heart reaching out for communion with the eternal God.

### Unworthy leaders — ch. 2:8-9

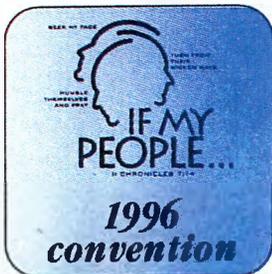
The people were lax in their attitudes and practices following the example of the priests. Now the priests were held accountable for the detestable situation. God judged the priests for breaking God's covenant with Levi, their ancestor. It is now revealed that they would be held in contempt by the people. The defiled priests were carried off to the city dumping ground. The ritual law surrounding the sacrificial system was one means to keep Israel separate from the world. These practices were to be followed with hearts of devotion to the Lord who was the focus through them all. Failure to remain pure in this re-

spect has defiled the entire system intended to draw people to God. As a result the fate of the priests was awful.

### Unhealthy marriages — vv. 13-16

The people were covering the Lord's altar with tears but did not forsake their sins. The sorrow was because God did not accept their offerings, not because of their sin. God refused their offerings because of their contempt for solemn marriage obligations. They were putting away their wives and marrying women from surrounding nations. These foreign women from pagan situations inevitably led the men into pagan worship.

Perhaps more basic was the fact the marriage vow or covenant made between a couple and witnessed by God was broken. In such union, they became one before God. Mixed marriages violated this oneness and were regarded as wrong. God desired to bless the people with a true seed of God among whom his true doctrine might be nourished in the midst of pagan idolatry. They were commanded to stop their evil practices and turn to him. The ultimate purpose was for faithfulness to God to open the way for his blessings on his people. ■ — Tom Moncrief is a member of First Church, Cleveland.



among people elected from 35 state and regional Baptist conventions June 10 to serve on the SBC's Committee on Nominations.

The committee will bring recommendations of Baptists to the 1997 SBC meeting in Dallas to serve on the SBC's various boards, commissions, and committees.

One layperson and one church vocational worker is selected from each convention.

Elected to serve from Tennessee were Randy Isbell, Hopewell Church, Savannah, and Gail Ferrell, Ridgedale Church, Chattanooga. ■

## DOMs create staff position

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — More than 400 directors of missions from Southern Baptists' 1,200 geographic associations meeting June 9-10 in New Orleans established their first administrative staff position.

They also adopted a resolution urging educational institutions "to provide training within their curriculum to raise the level of understanding, awareness, and appreciation of associational missions ministry." A copy of the resolution will be sent to each college, university, and seminary operated by any cooperating Southern Baptist body.

The group voted to employ John E. Dent Sr., of Walhalla, S.C., as their first executive treasurer. Dent, a DOM, also serves as the organization's treasurer. ■

## Tennesseans tapped to serve

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Two Tennessee Baptists were

## BP, state papers celebrate history

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — The 50th anniversary of Baptist Press, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention, and the 100th anniversary of the Association of State Baptist Papers were the news items reported in the denominational press report to messengers at the 1996 SBC annual meeting.

Baptist Press was organized in 1946 and was originally under the umbrella of the Baptist Sunday School Board, according to Herb Hollinger, vice president for convention news for the SBC Executive Committee.

The following year Baptist Press was assigned to the Executive Committee. The (BP) logo was designed in 1959 and is a U.S. registered trademark.

Baptist Press now has five bureaus located in Nashville, Washington, D.C., Dallas, At-

lanta, and Richmond, Va.

As part of Hollinger's report, a copy of the recently published history of state Baptist papers, some of which are older than the 151-year-old SBC, was presented to President Jim Henry.

Fletcher Allen, editor of the *Baptist and Reflector*, told Henry that the newspapers' "long history of reporting and interpreting news to our readers" led to the selection of the book's title, *Contending for the Right to Know*, a phrase used by the late Everett Sneed who was editor of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*.

The volume is available from state papers.

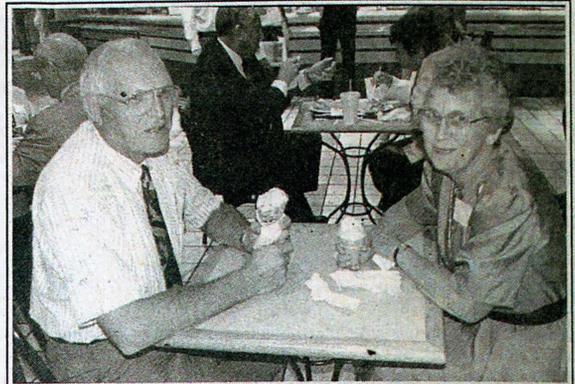
In 1995, Baptist Press released 1,820 news and feature stories through a variety of news media throughout the world, including the 39 state Baptist newspapers that make up the association. ■

## Campus ministers urged to provide spiritual help

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Campus ministers must give top priority to spiritual guidance rather than turning first to the "modern gurus" of secularized psychiatry and counseling, according to Gary Furr, pastor of Vestavia Hills Church, Birmingham, Ala.

Furr, keynote speaker for the June 7-9 annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Campus Ministers in New Orleans, said too often today "when people have real problems, they go to a psychiatrist. They don't go to a pastor.



TAKING A BREAK between sessions of the convention are Frank Proffitt, director of missions, Sevier County Association, and Polly Proffitt.

"Psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers are doing preliminary 'soul work' and that means spiritual guidance is not being dealt with in the church like it should," Furr told about 25 participants in the sessions.

Furr emphasized that a large part of the work of campus ministry involves guiding and directing young lives. "Guidance is an awesome task. It is more important than rallies, revivals, and creative worship experiences," he said. ■

## SBC Executive Committee elects same officers

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee members re-elected the entity's three officers by acclamation during an organizational meeting June 12.

The re-elected officers are Ronnie Floyd, a Springdale, Ark., pastor, chairman; James Merritt, a Snellville, Ga., pastor, vice chairman; and Rex Terry, a Fort Smith, Ark., attorney, recording secretary.

Fourteen new members were welcomed to the Executive Committee, including SBC President Tom Elliff of Del City, Okla., and new national Woman's Missionary Union President Wanda Lee of Columbus, Ga. ■

## Volunteers needed in Cuba: Fanini

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — The doors are open in Cuba, and volunteers are needed to share the Gospel there, Nilson Fanini told participants in the June 12 Baptist World Alliance breakfast during the SBC annual meeting.

Fanini, president of the BWA and pastor of First Bap-

tist Church of Niteroi in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, said Cuba and other formerly closed nations have opened their doors to Baptists who must respond quickly.

Fanini, known as "the Billy Graham" of Latin America, said Cuban Christians lack

funds to construct buildings, so they meet in homes. When membership reaches 50 to 100, they divide and start meeting in another home. Baptist membership there doubles every two years, he said.

"We must go there and share the Gospel within five years," he urged. ■

## Jeanette Henry speaks to SBC ministers' wives

Baptist Press

NEW ORLEANS — "Life isn't always fair, but the light who created life is, and I'm stepping into the light," Jeanette Henry told a capacity crowd of 800 women at the 41st annual conference of Southern Baptist Ministers' Wives June 11.

Henry, in a rare appearance as a public speaker outside Sunday School classrooms, told of her growth experiences as a minister's wife. Her husband, Jim Henry, is pastor of First Church, Orlando, Fla., and outgoing SBC president. "Becoming a Christian gave her "purpose in life," to please God, she said.

In other conference action, Carolyn Weatherford Crumpler, former executive director of Woman's Missionary Union, was presented the Mrs. J.M. Dawson Distinguished Service Award for "distinct denominational contribution beyond the local church." ■



FANINI



LOOKING AT 'SOUTHERN BAPTIST SPECIALS' in a New Orleans shopping center near the Louisiana Superdome is Bob Ward, pastor of Washington Avenue Church, Cookeville. Items on sale included clothing, books, and dolls. The Superdome was the site of the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. — Photo by Don Rutledge