

Baptist & Reflector

Weekwide Edition

Telling the Story of Tennessee Baptists

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SBC messengers elect Page, adopt CP study report

Editor's Note: Rather than one massive wrap-up story, see stories throughout this issue related to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Additional stories and photos from the convention will appear in next week's issue as needed.

Compiled by Lonnie Wilkey
Reflector

GREENSBORO, N.C. — In the first highly publicized, contested race for the Southern Baptist Convention presidency in many years, SBC messengers elected Frank Page as their new president.

Page defeated Tennessee pastor Jerry Sutton of Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville, and Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., in a three-man race.

The SBC meeting unofficially drew 11,639 messengers to the Greensboro Coliseum Complex. Despite a contested election and other items of business that were expected to draw more messengers, the registration fell just short of the 11,641 registered last year in Nashville.

SBC messengers also adopted a report on the Cooperative Program, honored legendary evangelist Billy Graham, considered numerous motions and

resolutions, voted to keep WMU as an auxiliary, heard an address from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and dealt with a variety of other reports and business.

Officers

In the presidential election, Page received 4,546 or 50.48 percent of the vote while Floyd garnered 2,247 votes (24.95 percent), and Sutton received 2,168 votes (24.08 percent).

It was the most contested race for the SBC presidency since 1994 when Jim Henry of Florida was elected president over Fred Wolfe of Alabama.

Page's strong level of Cooperative Program support apparently swayed many messengers. First Baptist Church, Taylors, gave 12.4 percent of its undesignated gifts through the Cooperative Program in 2005.

Floyd's church gave 0.27 percent of undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program in 2005 and an additional 1.6 percent to other SBC causes. Sutton's church gave a combined \$183,482 for Cooperative Program ministries, but it was designated with



NEW SBC President Frank Page, pastor of First Baptist Church, Taylors, S.C., fields questions from reporters following his election over Nashville pastor Jerry Sutton and Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd on June 13. — Photo by Van Payne

\$73,628 for Tennessee causes and \$109,854 for national SBC causes. The combined designated total amounted to 4.47 percent of undesignated receipts, according to Baptist Press.

In nominating Page, Forrest Pollock, pastor of Bell Shoals Baptist Church, Brandon, Fla., described Page as a "rock solid conservative" who will "stand up and not only love the Word of God, the inerrant Bible, but will support the Cooperative Pro-



ENJOYING THE annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Greensboro as a family were Bill Vest, pastor of Wildwood Baptist Church, Englewood, his wife, Vicki, and children Micah, left, and Will. — Photo by Lonnie Wilkey

gram. "The issue is not about theology. It is about methodology," Pollock said.

Sutton, who served this past year as the convention's vice president, was nominated by Calvin Wittman, pastor of Applewood Baptist Church in Wheat Ridge, Colo.

Wittman noted Sutton is committed to evangelism and

that during a time when Southern Baptists are in a period of "denominational uncertainty and transition," Sutton would "strive for unity, facilitate diversity, and model integrity."

Floyd was nominated by Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga.

— See SBC, page 6

WMU retains auxiliary status after SBC vote

By Steve DeVane
Biblical Recorder (N.C.)

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention meeting on Tuesday voted down a proposal asking that the Woman's Missionary Union become an official entity of the SBC.

The proposal's defeat allows WMU to retain its status as an auxiliary of the SBC. The motion that would have also called for the women's union to reaffirm its "exclusive" commitment to the SBC was defeated by a show of ballots. The vote went against a decision by the SBC Executive Committee, which had approved it on Monday.

Wanda Lee, WMU executive director, spoke against the motion. She said WMU's "singular purpose" is missions.

"We exist for the sole purpose of equipping our churches in missions education and missions involvement," Lee said.

She also said WMU has paid its own way for its success, noting that if WMU became an SBC entity, it would have to change the way it selects its trustees.

Kaye Miller, president of the national WMU, told messengers that at the request of the executive committee, WMU polled the members of its executive board, and members decided to request that they remain an auxiliary group, she said.

The executive committee passed the proposal with only a few votes in opposition. Earlier, an executive committee workgroup passed the measure with one abstention. It passed a subcommittee with one vote in opposition.

Discussion in the workgroup and subcommittee showed the SBC leaders were concerned about the WMU's continued relationship with the Baptist World Alliance. The SBC voted to withdraw from the worldwide Baptist organization two years

ago. SBC leaders also expressed concern that the WMU had in the 1990s removed a mention of the SBC in its governing documents.

SBC officials said the move gives WMU members a chance to tell Southern Baptists who they are. WMU officials, on the other hand, indicated their support for the SBC and suggested that the SBC reaffirm WMU's auxiliary status.

The executive committee passed the motion after a substitute motion that would have simply affirmed the WMU's auxiliary status failed with only two or three executive committee members voting in favor.

During discussion over the matter, Julie Walters, a WMU spokesperson, read a letter that Lee wrote to Randall James, the chair of the executive committee workgroup that dealt with the issue.

Lee told James that WMU values its Southern Baptist

partners. The group has already put in place processes to address some of the concerns some Southern Baptists have expressed concerning the group.

James said the invitation later passed by the executive committee was an opportunity for WMU to clarify its relationship with the SBC.

"There are some who question their loyalty and their allegiance to the Southern Baptist Convention," he said.

David Waltz, executive director of the Pennsylvania-South Jersey Baptist Convention, said during debate at the SBC meeting that only SBC missionaries are profiled in WMU literature. A recent study showed the churches with WMU programs give more money to the Cooperative Program than other churches.

"I feel to pass this motion would somehow say to them that we don't appreciate the work they've done," he said. □

SBC Executive Board to meet about hospital

Reflector

BRENTWOOD — The Executive Board of the Tennessee Baptist Convention will hold a special session on June 27 at 10 a.m. to consider a proposal from Baptist Health System of East Tennessee.

BHSET has selected Triad Hospitals Inc., of Plano, Texas, as its capital partner.

The two entities have signed a letter of intent to form a joint venture company that will run Baptist's four hospitals in Knoxville and support — Baptist Hospital East Tennessee, Baptist Hospital West, Baptist Hospital for Women, and Baptist Hospital of Cocke County.

The transaction will not be reported. — See TBC, page 2

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TBC Executive Board to meet about Baptist

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finalized until it has been approved by the TBC Executive Board and by the State Attorney General.

During the special called meeting of the Tennessee Baptist Convention on May 9, messengers authorized the Executive Board, or its designee, "to carry out all rights, powers, actions, and remedies of the convention with respect to Baptist Health System of East Tennessee."

During the past three years the hospital system has lost \$36 million after interest and depreciation. Through the first nine months of the current fiscal year the hospital has lost an additional \$6 million, according to information provided to TBC messengers in May.

Hospital officials asked for convention authorization for the Executive Board to act on any proposed transaction because hospital trustees needed "both flexibility and the ability to move quickly."

In a news release, Warren Payne, president and CEO of Baptist Health System, described the Triad partnership as "an exciting day for Baptists and for East Tennessee."

"Triad is an excellent company with a similar mission and culture to Baptist. Triad has extensive experience in hospital management, physi-

cian and employee relations, and community involvement."

Triad Hospitals, Inc., through its affiliates, owns and manages hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers in small cities and selected larger urban markets. The company currently operates 51 hospitals and 12 ambulatory surgery centers in 16 states with approximately 9,300 licensed beds. In addition, through its QHR subsidiary, the company provides consulting, education, intensive resources, and management services to hospitals and health systems throughout the United States.

James D. Shelton, chairman and CEO of Triad Hospitals, Inc., said, "We are very honored to have been selected by Baptist Health System. Both Baptist and Triad share common missions of providing the best possible care to the patients and the communities we serve. Baptist has a strong tradition in the East Tennessee area for excellent patient care and a reputation for dedicated employees and physicians. Everyone at Triad is proud to be associated with this outstanding organization."

The selection of Triad came after an extensive nine-month process led by a strategic planning task force made up of board members and physicians. The task force reviewed many options for Baptist including not-for-profit and for-

profit partners, as well as continuing operations as usual.

"Working with Triad allows Baptist to immediately pay off its \$217 million in debt," said Richard Cramer, Chairman of the Baptist Health System Board of Trustees. "The new Baptist/Triad partnership will be debt-free on day one. This will allow us to immediately make improvements and expand services at all three of our campuses."

The new partnership is a joint venture, not a sale. Triad will have 80 percent ownership and Baptist will retain 20 percent in the new company. Baptist and Triad will share 50/50 governance of the new company, which will retain the Baptist name. More importantly, the hospitals will maintain the Baptist faith-based mission and commitment to charity care at the current level.

"The partnership with Triad will allow Baptist to be on the forefront of healthcare in East Tennessee," said Cramer. "We anticipate major growth in the future."

All employees of Baptist will be retained and employed at their current compensation and comparable benefits, which was an important point for the task force.

"Our employees have worked extremely hard for Baptist during a difficult time," said Payne. "We wanted to make sure our choice gave

them every opportunity to continue working for our organization."

Physicians will make at least 50 percent of the board trustees at each hospital. Physicians will also be the immediate opportunity to invest in the new joint venture.

The Tennessee Baptist Convention will continue to the Board of the Baptist Health System of East Tennessee, said James Porch, executive director-treasurer. That board will in turn have 50 percent of the board trustees of the individual hospitals of the system, he added.

"I applaud the conscientious effort of these true Baptist trustees in addressing a challenging issue facing the Baptist Health System," Porch observed.

Porch observed that the inception of responding to the problem, "the leadership the hospital has communicated with me and Tennessee Baptists and provided opportunities for input in referring to continuing a viable relationship with the hospital."

"The commitment of trustees to the Christian mission of the healing institution never wavered, and I commend the trustees for their willingness to discharge their responsibilities while never losing sight of their relationship to the Tennessee Baptist Convention," Porch said.

Wilton exhorts SBC messengers to re-ignite vision

By Todd Deaton
For Baptist Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. — "It is time for all Southern Baptists to re-ignite the vision, to re-enlist our energies and to realign our focus — not as anyone other than the people of God," Don Wilton, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Spartanburg, S.C., urged messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention here June 14.

"We are a people who are no longer of the North or the South. We are no longer a people who are black or white. In fact, as proud as I am to be an American, as believers of Christ Jesus, we are not even of America. We are the people of God," the current president of the South Carolina Baptist Convention said during the SBC's convention sermon.

"Ours is not the Constitution of the United States of America," Wilton said. "Ours is the constitution of Almighty God in Christ Jesus found within the pages of this book [the Bible]."

Recalling how King Solomon was a man who had it all, was immeasurably blessed, and then lost it all, Wilton observed that Southern Baptists, too, have been greatly blessed by the Savior.

Identifying the "unobstructed access" to God which Solomon enjoyed as a significant issue relevant to Southern Baptists, Wilton asserted that before the convention can move into the future, "we have some serious confessing and forgiving to do."

"Southern Baptists, it is time for us to

wake up. It is time for us to stop the nonsense," Wilton urged. "It is time for us to roll up our sleeves and go to work and become the soul-winners that we claim to be."

Declaring that God has given "our marching orders," Wilton warned, "If we do not obey what God teaches us to do ... God will no longer bless this denomination."

Underscoring the importance of confession in maintaining unobstructed access to the Savior, Wilton emphasized the need to forgive:

- "Father preachers" who were too busy to give children the time of day.
- "Husband ministers" who treated spouses like second-class citizens.
- Ministers who behaved in a manner which discredited the Lord's work.
- Church members who "continually acted as blood clots" in the flow of God's grace.
- Theologians who placed a higher premium on theological correctness than the saving grace of God in Christ Jesus.
- "Small groups of power brokers who systematically disenfranchised so many faithful brethren."

And, Wilton said, Southern Baptists need to confess and forgive each other for not following the Great Commission to "go into all the world, and to preach, teach, baptize, and tell people about the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Unlimited time" is another critical issue for Southern Baptists, Wilton said.

Wilton observed that Southern Baptists have become too comfortable, falling into the illusion of having unlimited time. "Look at us, folks," he charged.

"We don't even hardly have to work of the coliseum and there is a hot dog in our right hand and a latte in our left hand. We've got places to go eat. We have nice houses. We've got pulpits and microphones and suits with ties that we wear."

Calling attention to the issue of "undeserved presence," Wilton highlighted four things that God's people cannot live without: the guarantee of God's promise, the writing of His name on their hearts, the conferring of God's grace for forgiveness and effective service, and the loving gaze of God's eyes.

Finally, Wilton cautioned against ignoring God's "unapologetic warnings" of national decline in membership, a loss of focus, disobedience, and idolatry as a penalty for God's people in Solomon's time. "Oh, God, would you pour out your wrath upon us? ... Would you enable us to be soul winners that you have called us to be?" — Deaton is managing editor of Baptist Courier (S.C.).

Statute of Billy Graham unveiled at SBC annual meeting

Jeff Robinson
ist Press

Cliff Barrows, BGEA vice president and Graham crusade song director for more than six decades, said the sculpture illustrates well the evangelist's five passions.

"It represents a passion for the Word of God," Barrows said. "He believes [the Bible] is the Word of God. You have heard him say in countries around the world as I have, 'the Bible says.' That was the foundation for his message. Then there was the passion for proclaiming it. You see that his mouth is open. ... He had the power and the passion to proclaim the gospel."

"And then the message preached is so clearly portrayed with the favorite text (John 3:16) that he has used in country after country ..."

He made that so clear, and people believe that he believed it and he meant it. He said that was the first verse his mother ever taught him when he was a little boy," Barrows continued.

"Then there was the passion for the lost. I love to see his arms outstretched, inviting people to the cross ... Then finally, there is his fifth passion, portrayed in the life of the Apostle Paul [when he said], 'God forbid I should



A SCULPTURE honoring evangelist Billy Graham entitled "There's Room at the Cross for You" was unveiled at the SBC annual meeting on June 14. The sculpture was created by Terrell O'Brien of Wyoming. The statute will be moved to Nashville where it will be on permanent display.

glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus by whom the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.' He would tell us as a young team many years ago, 'Fellows, we dare not glory in anything but the Lord Jesus,' " Barrows said. "He will not share His glory with another. Let's be sure to give Him the praise and the glory and the honor that is due to Him."

The sculpture was created by



CLIFF BARROWS, long-time song leader at Billy Graham's crusades, leads SBC messengers in singing "How Great Thou Art" after a new statute honoring evangelist Billy Graham was unveiled June 14 at the annual meeting. — Photos by Jonathan Blair

O'Brien, a bivocational pastor from Wyoming, and funded by Fryer and Samuelson, two Southern Baptist businessmen from Atlanta. O'Brien said he sought to capture both the man and his message.

"This is certainly about Dr. Graham, but it is also about the gospel and that is what I want it to portray and I hope that comes across strongly and profoundly because we are about preaching the gospel ...," he said. "I have tried to bring the gospel to the forefront in this sculpture and pay tribute to a man who has dedicated his life to preaching all over the world without compromise. So this has been a great privilege for me."

Welch, who is pastor of First Baptist Church in Daytona

Beach, Fla., said the memorial to Graham's ministry and message should serve as an inspiration for ministers young and old.

"If an older pastor were to wonder how he should go out of the gospel ministry, he should look at that statue," Welch said. "[Go] with the Word in your hand, preaching the cross, your mouth open, letting Jesus be known to the world."

"If there is ever a young pastor [who] wondered, 'What route shall I take for my whole ministry?' take a look at that statue. Go the whole way with the Word of God as the inerrant truth, with the cross of Calvary as your message, and with your mouth open preaching the Lord Jesus. That's exactly what this man [Graham] would do." □

Moral leadership needed to confront evil, Rice says

Gregory Tomlin
ist Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. — About America's moral leadership, the world could easily end into chaos and despotism. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said June 14 at Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting here. The weight of international leadership is not borne easily," said, "but we as Americans more than equal to this challenge, and we must be, for if we have a world without American leadership we are led capably to this solemn conclusion: If America does not great purposes, if we do rally other nations to fight for peace and support peace, and to help all hope who suffer oppression, then our world will drift into tragedy."

American inaction will result in strong abusing the weak inevitable threats "to the heart of our nation," Rice

he secretary's 30-minute press followed videotaped

comments from President Bush the previous day. Rice thanked Southern Baptists for their acts of compassion in southern Asia after the 2005 earthquake and tsunami; in Africa, where Southern Baptists are drilling wells and caring for AIDS patients; and in recent disaster relief efforts at home.

"Here in our own country, few have done more than Southern Baptists to ease the suffering of those who lost everything in Hurricanes Katrina and Rita," Rice said. "No man, no woman, no child is beyond the reach of your compassion. Whenever tragedy brings people to their knees, Southern Baptists have been there to help them get back on their feet."

The daughter and granddaughter of Presbyterian ministers in Birmingham, Ala., Rice said she appreciated Southern Baptists' prayers for her and the president as they pursue peace in the world. She said she prays daily and personally has found solace and strength in prayer in times of tragedy and heartbreak, such as the death of her parents and the Sept. 11

terrorist attacks.

Rice said she shares the conviction of President Bush and Southern Baptists who believe the United States can and must be a force for good in the world.

"The president and I believe that the United States must remain engaged as a leader in events beyond our borders," Rice said. "We believe this because we are guided by the same enduring principle that gave birth to our own nation — human dignity is not a government's gift to its citizens, nor is it mankind's gift to one another. It is God's endowment to all humanity."

Rice said the country is experiencing a trying time but must affirm its role in the world, simply because the health and liberty of the world's citizens is being threatened. Disease, the rule of tyrants and infringements on religious liberty are concerns the United States



SECRETARY OF STATE Condoleezza Rice spoke June 14 to messengers of the Southern Baptist Convention in Greensboro, N.C.

must address, she said.

"We go into the world not to plunder but to protect; not to subjugate but to liberate; not as masters, but as servants of freedom," she said.

Rice reminded Southern Baptists that as they rejoice in their freedoms to self-government, to private property, to education

and to think, speak and worship as they wish, there are many people across the globe who do not have the same freedoms. "America embodies these freedoms, but America does not own them," she said.

Among the roles the United States plays in the world, Rice said its primary role is ensuring the survival of democracy and winning the global war on terror. "When possible, we are bringing terrorists to justice, and when necessary, we are bringing justice to the terrorists," she said.

Rice said to the applause of messengers that the recent death of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the leader of al Qaeda in Iraq, is a positive step in the war on terror. "He will never harm, he will never murder, and he will never terrorize innocent people again."

Twice Rice mentioned the service and sacrifice of the nation's armed services who have assisted in the liberation of 55 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq. She said the sacrifice of these individuals proves the goal of democracy in the Middle East worthwhile. □

Amended resolution asks all SBC trustees to be teetotalers

By Trennis Henderson
Western Recorder (Ky.)

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Declaring “our total opposition to the ... consuming of alcoholic beverages,” Southern Baptist Convention messengers adopted a strongly worded resolution on the issue June 14.

Messengers adopted 15 resolutions presented by the SBC Resolutions Committee on issues ranging from genocide in Sudan to “human species-altering technologies.” In a resolution on public schools, messengers opted not to call for a wholesale “exodus” into Christian schools.

But the resolution on alcohol was the only one to spark extended debate.

Benjamin Cole of Dallas cautioned that abstinence is “not an essential for unity and not an essential for the proclamation of the gospel.”

Cole, one of the more prolific bloggers among younger pastors, insisted abstinence “is not a matter to die on.” His views echoed previous online posts by fellow blogger Wade Burleson of Oklahoma.

Committee member Dwayne

Mercer countered that Southern Baptists “have always stood for total abstinence.”

Warning that some believers advocate drinking alcohol “under the guise of freedom in Christ,” Mercer added that committee members “feel that the SBC ought to address this and be aware of what is going on all across America.”

Jim Richards, executive director of the conservative Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, proposed an amendment urging that no one be elected as a Southern Baptist entity trustee or committee member who “is a user of alcoholic beverages.”

Citing the need to “stand for holiness and purity in our walk,” Richards said, “The use of alcohol as a beverage can and does impede our testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ. Our leaders should take the high road in our walk with the Lord Jesus.”

Tom Ascol of Fort Myers, Fla., spoke against the amendment. “I do not think that we can be more holy than Jesus Christ,” he said, adding that “Christ turned water into wine.”

After approving Richards’

amendment on a show of ballots, messengers continued to debate the amended resolution.

One messenger emphasized the need to “take a stand against something that’s destroying our nation” while another cautioned against affirming an “extrabiblical” view that could undermine the Bible’s authority and sufficiency.

Citing Proverbs 23:29-35, the resolution noted that “years of research confirm biblical warnings that alcohol use leads to physical, mental, and emotional damage.”

Warning that “some religious leaders are now advocating the consumption of alcoholic beverages based on a misinterpretation of the doctrine of ‘our freedom in Christ,’” the resolution commended “organizations and ministries that treat alcohol-related problems from a biblical perspective and promote abstinence.”

Messengers approved the measure on a show of ballots.

A proposal on “engaging the direction of the public school system” drew brief discussion.

Voicing concern about public schools teaching “dogmatic Darwinism” and acceptance of the

homosexual lifestyle amid a pervasive “humanistic and secular orientation,” the resolution urges churches to solicit members to seek election to their local school boards and exert “their godly influence upon these school systems.”

The measure also affirms “the hundreds of thousands of Christian men and women who teach in our public schools” and encourages young people “who are seriously considering the teaching profession as a possible calling of God to pursue that calling.”

Jeff Young of Ravenna, Texas, called for “private Christian schools organized and funded by Southern Baptists” rather than leaving teachers “to operate in a hostile environment” in public schools. Despite Young’s concerns, messengers voted overwhelmingly to approve the original resolution.

Resolutions approved without debate included:

(1) Encouraged the U.S. House of Representatives to approve the Marriage Protection Amendment.

(2) Condemned China’s treatment of North Korean refugees

and appealed to the Chinese government to acknowledge North Koreans’ refugee status.

(3) Affirmed President George W. Bush and the U.S. government for “steadfastly pursuing a resolution to the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, Sudan.”

(4) Urged the U.S. government to “enforce all immigration laws, including the law directed at employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants. It also called on Christians to “follow the biblical mandate of caring for the foreigners among us.”

(5) Voted to “repudiate the strongest possible terms human species-altering technologies.”

Other resolutions passed without debate dealt with environmentalism and evangelism; off-campus biblical instruction; the affirmation of bivocational ministry; and part-time ministers; appreciation for Southern Baptist disaster relief work in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita; a pledge to pray for President Bush and the military; and recognition of Way Ridgecrest (N.C.) College Center’s 100th anniversary this year. □

Messengers ask for study of SBC executives’ perks, IMB turmoil

By Marv Knox
The Baptist Standard (Texas)

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Taking aim at issues ranging from SBC executives’ perks, to Calvinism, from pandemics to what they should call homosexuals, messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting presented a flurry of motions.

In fact, 29 motions proposed during the June 13-14 meeting in Greensboro, N.C., constituted an SBC record, reported Allan Blume, chairman of the convention’s order-of-business committee.

The motion that received the most attention asked the SBC Executive Committee to create a special committee to study trustee conflict as well as external manipulation and coercion at the International Mission Board.

Wade Burleson, a trustee from Oklahoma who was punished by fellow trustees after opposing several key IMB policies, requested the independent study committee. But convention messengers upheld the order-of-business committee’s decision to refer the motion back to IMB trustees.

Although Burleson got no resolution to alleged abuses by trustees of the International Mission Board, he left the SBC annual meeting with a dogged sense of optimism that those problems would be resolved peacefully.

That optimism is surprising, considering Burleson’s request for an outside investigation of the IMB was denied, a bylaw change to eliminate nepotism and cronyism on SBC trustee boards was gutted, and Burleson himself failed to regain full privileges as an IMB trustee. In fact, if convention messengers wanted answers to the charges leveled by Burleson and others, they got little more than silence and denial.

In one of the first motions at the annual meeting, Burleson asked SBC messen-

gers to authorize the convention’s Executive Committee to create a special panel to study conflict at the mission board.

The panel would have been charged with investigating possible manipulation of the IMB trustee-appointment process; attempts by heads of other SBC agencies to “influence and/or coerce IMB trustees, staff and administration”; secret trustee actions; implementation of narrow doctrinal requirements for missionary service; and suppression of dissent by trustees who take a minority position on board matters.

Messengers instead affirmed the SBC order-of-business committee’s proposal to refer the issue back to the IMB trustees themselves. The committee argued that traditional convention practice indicates an entity impacted by a motion has “first authority” to respond.

After the ruling, Burleson said he’d return to the IMB and “wait for direction.”

“I do believe [order-of-business committee chairman] Allan Blume treated me very fairly and did what he believed is best for the convention,” Burleson told Associated Baptist Press. “As a result, out of my respect for him as chairman of the committee, I chose not to fight the decision.” Blume is pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Boone, N.C.

Burleson said that, before he called for the ad-hoc committee to be formed, he tried to address the entire IMB board about his five concerns. “Last December, I made it very clearly known that I would like to address the board,” he said. His request, which was denied, came before trustees who tried to remove him from the board.

He said he hopes the issue can be cleared up before the agency reports back at the 2007 SBC meeting in San Antonio.

“If my concerns are dealt with internally, where they should be dealt with — and that’s key — then the report will simply say we have worked through the concerns ... If I can sign off on that, then

this issue is over. That’s all I want. That can happen. I believe it will happen.”

The conflict surfaced last fall, when IMB trustees narrowed the qualifications for appointment as missionaries. They disallowed candidates who practice “private prayer language” and candidates who have not received “biblical baptism” as defined by the trustees.

Burleson, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Enid, Okla., protested, claiming the board shouldn’t impose requirements more stringent than the SBC’s Baptist Faith and Message doctrinal statement.

“If I can be shown, number one, that there is statistical evidence that those policies were needed because of problems on the [mission] field, and number two, that administration and staff worked with the trustees in support of these policies, I will be satisfied,” Burleson told ABP. “If that is not shown to me, I must be given answers to why those policies were implemented.”

Some observers say the policy on “prayer languages,” a form of tongues-speaking, was pushed through by trustees intent on embarrassing IMB President Jerry Rankin, who acknowledges using the practice.

Burleson, on his blog, also criticized some IMB trustees for conducting secret caucuses to orchestrate the board’s formal sessions. Trustees, in turn, accused him of violating confidentiality rules, leading to the failed attempt to remove him.

A parallel motion, offered by a messenger from Oklahoma, asked that Burleson be restored to full privileges on the IMB trustee board. It was ruled out of order, since the IMB study is expected to take a look at Burleson’s status with the board.

Messengers’ motions most significantly impacted the Executive Committee, which received 15 referrals during the two-day meeting. The referred

motions included calls for:

• An “administrative expense analysis” of all SBC agencies and institutions. The motion seeks examination of agency presidents’ travel, housing, office, and residential expenses.

• Examination of the impact of Calvinism on Southern Baptist churches. Calvinism is a theological system named for 16th-century Swiss reformer John Calvin. Most notably, it emphasizes the sovereignty of God over human freedom.

• Development of contingency plans “in the event that the SBC annual meeting cannot be held due to a pandemic influenza or some other type of disaster.”

• The SBC to meet in New Orleans in 2008. David Crosby, pastor of First Baptist Church in New Orleans, issued the invitation. An attempt to require messengers to vote on the invitation failed. Jack Wilkerson, the convention’s business manager, explained the SBC is committed to meet in Indianapolis in 2008, and changing now would mean breaking contracts, costing the convention thousands of dollars; he also said the convention could not guarantee messengers’ safety in New Orleans.

• Amending SBC policies to require that convention officers be members of churches that give 10 percent of their budgets to the SBC Cooperative Program unified budget. This issue surfaced last year because the church of one candidate for president, Ronnie Floyd, contributed one-fourth of 1 percent and the church of another presidential candidate, Jerry Sutton, contributes less than 5 percent.

• A study of the way SBC boards function. The study is to determine the size, purpose, scope of responsibilities and frequency of meetings, as well as minimum qualifications for trustees.

Other motions were referred to appropriate entities. □ — Article reporting by Hannah Elliott of Associated Baptist Press.

Southern Baptists affirm Cooperative Program, WMU



By Lonnie Wilkey, editor

Time will only tell as to what importance historians will place on the 2006 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention.

In the present, however, I believe Southern Baptists made a statement about the Cooperative Program, the time-honored method of how Southern Baptists support missions and ministries in state conventions and nationally and globally through the SBC.

During discussion on a report from an ad-hoc committee charged with studying the Cooperative Program, Anthony Jordan, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, acknowledged he has heard the criticism that the Cooperative Program has become a "sacred cow." He noted that if that were the case, then the "sacred cow" has provided some "good milk" since 1925 when the CP was first established.

Jordan, however, discounted the theory that CP has become a

sacred cow. Instead, Jordan referred to the Cooperative Program as a "sacred effort."

The Cooperative Program is a sacred effort that has accomplished much through the years because churches collectively and cooperatively pooled their resources in order for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be shared locally, nationally, and globally.

For many years Southern Baptists elected leadership whose level of support has been lacking.

At least for this year, Southern Baptists said, "Enough is enough."

They elected Frank Page, a relatively unknown pastor (at least on the national level, compared to the other two candidates) whose church has given generously through the Cooperative Program. In 2005 the church gave 12.4 percent through CP.

The CP giving of the other two candidates' churches (Ronnie Floyd of First Baptist Church, Springdale, Ark., and Jerry Sutton of Two Rivers Baptist Church, Nashville) was no where near that mark.

Does that mean Sutton or Floyd were not good choices. No, both are proven leaders in the SBC. Sutton is a long-time Tennessee pastor and is a former Tennessee Baptist Convention

Executive Board member.

There were comments made that the SBC needs to be careful that we are not making people "pay to play" in the SBC. Just as in the local church, anyone can participate in the TBC or SBC annual meetings whether they personally give or not. Those desiring leadership roles, however, should be setting the example when it comes to stewardship, whether it be in the local church or on the associational, state convention, or national convention levels.

The vote in Greensboro just said that this year Southern Baptists wanted a president who not only supports CP verbally but one who leads a church that supports it financially as well.

A quick word about the CP report which messengers approved after an attempt failed to amend it to put 10 percent as a goal for giving in at least two places in the report.

Some feel taking the 10 percent out waters down the report. I honestly do not think so. I was uncomfortable with the 10 percent goal in the beginning, but for a different reason. I did not see it as a figure that would keep people from serving. I saw it as a figure that might keep people and churches from giving more.

I am a firm believer that you cannot give God. We should

never limit ourselves to 10 percent if we can do more. The same applies to churches.

The adopted recommendation affirms churches that have been committed to CP and exhorts those that have not to increase their CP giving over the next five years. It is a positive recommendation.

WMU

In other business, Southern Baptists also sent a strong message about Woman's Missionary Union.

Messengers defeated a recommendation that would have asked WMU to leave its auxiliary status and become an agency and to re-affirm its "exclusive" commitment to the SBC.

This is significant because it is the first time in many years that messengers defeated a recommendation presented by the SBC Executive Committee.

This action reaffirms WMU and lets them know that the majority of Southern Baptists are appreciative of all they do to keep missions in the forefront and for their role in promoting the special missions offerings.

I can only speak about WMU on the national level generally, but I know firsthand how important Tennessee WMU is in helping our churches focus on missions at all levels. Tennessee

WMU also is vital in helping church members understand the importance and value of special missions offerings such as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Golden Offering for Tennessee Missions.

My grandfather used to tell me all the time, "If it's not broke, don't fix it." Southern Baptists affirmed WMU is not broken.

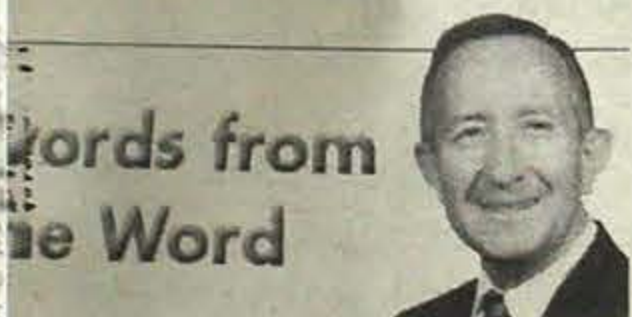
Other matters

All in all, the 2006 SBC annual meeting was a positive experience. Messengers honored evangelist Billy Graham and affirmed the long-time ministry of Adrian Rogers, a three-time SBC president and long-time Tennessee pastor who died last November.

The coliseum complex was not the most conducive site for the annual meeting, but North Carolina Baptists and the city of Greensboro, were gracious hosts.

I would be remiss not to mention outgoing SBC President Bobby Welch. During his two years as president, he focused almost entirely on evangelism and constantly reminded Southern Baptists that we need to be persistent in our efforts to tell others about Jesus Christ. It was a reminder we all needed. Continue to pray that his goal of seeing SBC churches baptize one million new believers this year will be met. □

The 'Light of the World' is the only cure for spiritual blindness



By Johnnie Godwin

Personal blindness

Over several years, my right eye grew blind. By 2006, its visual acuity or sharpness was mostly gone. So was a lot of color contrast. The cause was age-related macular degeneration (AMD). But now I can see! Not perfectly, but much better than six months ago. More about that later.

Physical blindness in our world

AMD blinded both of my parents in their later years. They were able to get around with peripheral vision but were legally blind. They couldn't drive a car, read a book, or find phone numbers to dial. More than once, Mother threatened to take a hammer to the phone when I less computerized menus kept her from talking to a real person. Dad and Mother both wished for a cure that didn't exist and never came.

Millions of people suffer from AMD and are robbed of much of life's enjoyment and independence. Millions of others are blind from different causes. To be blind — in one or both eyes — is to have the blinds drawn over your vision completely or to the

point of severe impairment. Great efforts are under way to rid the world of preventable blindness. Progress is encouraging, but those afflicted with varying degrees of blindness still suffer and often live in despair.

Churches and the visually impaired

Many churches are ignorant of the varying degrees of visual impairment among their congregations. For example, one night my widowed, live-alone mother got to prayer meeting by the hardest in a taxi. She arrived at church to worship only to find the pastor had decided to have a silent, visual-only service. She was provoked. All she could do was sit there in her blindness and pray. Admittedly, it was a rare situation — one that depended on being able to see.

But every week multitudes of churches project words and images on screens that the visually impaired can't see — or can't see without great difficulty. Why? Often the screen projections use pastels, subtle color shades, or reversed colors that lack contrast. The print may not be the most legible or the best size for the visually impaired to identify.

In this technological age, many churches have excellent sound systems and individualized hearing devices for the hearing impaired. Yet, the same churches may fail to provide the same degree of care for the visu-

ally impaired. Any ophthalmologist, optometrist, or visual specialist could identify colors and types that probably would work best in projection — or in printed matter also.

Another help is simply to provide really good lighting in a church. The last church I served called a fine pastor. When he got there, he didn't change much of anything except the lights. He led the church to get bright lighting for him and a congregation that were mostly of presbyopic age. "Presbyopic" doesn't mean Presbyterian; it literally means elder eyes. From about middle age on, older eyes need more light to see by. An illuminated pulpit lets folks see the pastor, lets him read the Bible, and focuses on Jesus as the Light of the world.

The Bible and blindness

"Blind" appears almost a hundred times in the Bible. As in Old English (dating back to the 700s), the word "blind" can refer literally to physical blindness or figuratively to mental or spiritual blindness. It's interesting to note in the Bible how many times Jesus healed the physically blind who starved for sight while the spiritually blind refused spiritual light and remained blind.

Until Jesus came, there was little or no hope for the blind. When Jesus healed a man born blind, the man testified it was a first from the beginning of time (John 9:1-41). Jesus healed peo-

ple immediately and completely because of His compassion and their faith. However, in one instance, Jesus' miraculous healing took a second touch. Jesus anointed a blind man's eyes with saliva and restored partial sight; then a second touch brought clear vision (Mark 8:22-26). This second touch reminds me of my own treatment.

A personal miracle

God still performs miracles, but He often uses modern medicine and doctors to work with Him on the miracles.

Sadly, most people afflicted with AMD have found that, at best, all modern medicine could do was slow their descent into blindness. Treatments varied: a special mix of vitamins and minerals, laser therapy, steroids, and even a form of medicine injected into the eye. Given AMD history, the handwriting was on the wall for my right eye.

But in February 2006, the outlook changed suddenly and radically. A new study and a new drug offered prospects of possibly improving vision lost to AMD. The criteria required for entrance into the new study was very narrow. To cut to the bottom line, I prayed, hoped, took initiative, and met the criteria.

After three eye injections, I too can say, "I was blind, but now I see." Not perfect, but better. I'm experiencing the miracle my parents hungered for.

So far, so good; but the total outcome is uncertain and will require further treatments — a second touch, so to speak. The FDA (Federal Drug Administration) may or may not approve the experimental drug to open the door to others who qualify. Please don't ask me about my treatment. Ask your own doctor. I can say the drug is Lucentis — technically, Ranibizumab.

I don't have an argument to make or a medical conclusion to draw; rather, I have a testimony: Whereas I was blind in one eye, I now see better. Again, not perfect, but better. I know God can still heal the physically blind. But I have a deeper concern — another kind of miracle.

Healing the spiritually blind

The greater blindness is spiritual blindness. Most of the world still suffers from blindness of heart and is alienated from God (Ephesians 4:18). Unless we testify and share the Word, the world will continue to be ignorant of its spiritual blindness (like the Laodiceans in Revelations 3:14-19). The condition is spiritual blindness and spiritual death.

The cure is the Light of the World (John 1:1-9). Amazing grace: God provided Jesus as His gift to cure the world of blindness. □ — Copyright 2006 by Johnnie C. Godwin, who will gladly share words from the Word via johnniegodwin@comcast.net.

SBC messengers elect Page, adopt CP ...

— Continued from page 1

Hunt described Floyd as a seasoned leader with visionary leadership locally, nationally, and globally. Floyd also is "on mission and is leading his church to be a mission-minded church on every front," Hunt said.

In a press conference following the election, Page stressed he's no less theologically conservative than other recently elected presidents.

"I do not believe the convention elected me to somehow undo the conservative resurgence," Page said. "That's not who I am and that's not what they want."

Page said he has supported the conservative shift in the SBC and was an inerrantist before he knew what it meant.

"I believe in the Word of God," he said. "I'm just not mad about it."

While most observers said Page's election — two blocks from where he grew up in Greensboro, N.C. — represents a shift to a more open and inclusive SBC, Page indicated his appointments to leadership positions won't be much different.

In a press conference just after the election, Page said he will have four criteria in selecting people for SBC leadership positions — a sweet spirit, an evangelistic heart, belief in the integrity of the Word of God, and support for the Cooperative Program, the SBC's unified budget.

Page said that he doesn't oppose those who currently serve in SBC positions, but believes that the same people shouldn't hold posts year after year.

"I'm not talking about a revolution," he said. "I'm not talking about cleaning house."

Page insisted his election was not about him. Instead, Southern Baptists sent a message that they believe they can do more together than apart and that they want to broaden involvement in the causes of evangelism and missions, he said.

"I think this is a strong call from our people," he said.

In other elections, Jimmy Jackson, pastor of Whitesburg Baptist Church, Huntsville, Ala., was elected first vice president in a runoff with Mark Dever, pastor of Capitol Hill Baptist Church, Washington, D.C. Jackson received 1,107 votes (51.44 percent) to 1,030 for Dever (47.86 percent). Two other candidates were on the first ballot — Kelly J. Burris, a pastor from Virginia Beach, Va., and Keith Fordham, an evangelist from Fayetteville, Ga.

Wiley Drake, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Buena Park, Calif., was elected second vice president on a first ballot with 2,408 votes (50.37 percent) over three other candidates.

John Yates of Monroe, La., and Jim Wells of Nixa, Mo., were re-elected recording and regis-



PASTOR STEVE and Connie Hensley of Chinquapin Grove Baptist Church, Bluff City, were among the approximately 11,500 people who registered for this year's annual meeting in Greensboro, N.C.

tration secretary, respectively.

CP report

Messengers approved a request by the Executive Committee June 13 to amend its earlier recommendation to the Southern Baptist Convention aimed at strengthening Cooperative Program giving.

The action followed a vote of 35-27 by Executive Committee members June 12 to revise two of its nine recommendations to the convention regarding the final report of the Ad Hoc Cooperative Program Committee issued in February.

One of the recommendations now encourages churches "to give an increasing percentage of undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program" but no longer specifies a 10 percent goal for supporting the missions and ministries of state Baptist conventions and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Another now encourages the election of leaders whose churches "systematically and enthusiastically lead by example in giving sacrificially and proportionally through the Cooperative Program," again without mention of a 10 percent target.

The original wording was part of a report by the Ad Hoc Committee, a 10-member group of state executives, Executive Committee President Morris H. Chapman and Bob Rodgers, the Executive Committee's vice president for Cooperative Program.

Executive Committee officers suggested the amendments after receiving feedback from large and small churches across the convention, including many who perceived the recommendations as a mandate from convention leaders infringing on the autonomy of the local church.

Anthony Jordan, executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma and chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, told messengers he believes this is one of the finest hours in the history of the convention and church members have a responsibility to step forward and reach the world with the Gospel. But, he added, he also believes the convention is "on the brink of defaulting in our responsibility."

"In 1980 the Southern Baptist Convention gave 10.7 percent per church of undesignated receipts to the Cooperative Program," Jordan said. "Today that number is 6.6 percent. In the greatest hour of opportunity, we're walking away from our responsibility to fund the greatest missionary force in the evangelical history of Christendom."

Mike Stone, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Blackshear, Ga., brought a motion to amend the recommendation "to reflect the original intent of the final report of the Ad Hoc Cooperative Program Committee" by inserting language specifying a 10 percent goal.

"I believe that we are at a historic juncture in the life of the Southern Baptist Convention," Stone said. "Much as we needed strong convicted leadership theologically in 1979, I believe we need that same level of challenging ourselves not so much theologically but now missiologically."

Rob Zinn, chairman of the Executive Committee, told the messengers he did not want the recommendation to be misconstrued.

"We are all pro-Cooperative Program. We believe in the Cooperative Program," Zinn said. "But we also are getting phone calls, and we are trying to be sensitive to all of our churches and our messengers and our people and our pastors. And we believe by putting a percentage there, it is being misconstrued and perceived that we are mandating what to give. We are simply encouraging all churches to give."

Other messengers discussed the pros and cons of the amendment before it was finally defeated in a show of hands vote. The Ad Hoc Committee's report was later approved.

IMB report

Questions about trustee rights and closed-door meetings dominated the International Mission Board's report to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

One messenger questioned the accountability of the board of trustees.

"Assuming that you would say that the IMB trustees are



DAVID DOCKERY, right, president of Union University, Jackson, presents the M.E. Dodd Award to Morris Chapman, right center, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee for his part of the Cooperative Program. With Chapman is his wife, Jodi. Ling on are two former trustee chairmen at Union — Jerry Tidwell, of Memphis and Mike Weeks of Brentwood. The presentation made during a dessert fellowship hosted by Union.

accountable to the people of the SBC, how is it that the executive sessions which have continued for months and months can continue considering that it's raised many, many, many questions ... for those looking on ... in not giving the people the full understanding of what's taking place behind closed doors?"

Floyd responded that there are times when the board needs to meet and discuss things internally with "the press out of the way." He also noted that at the last meeting, the board did not call any such session. "I'm not sure in whose minds these executive sessions have existed."

Floyd called for Southern Baptists to "trust these 87 men and women who represent a cross section of our convention to do the right thing when it needs to be done."

In his report, Rankin said Southern Baptists "must not be distracted, diverted, and discouraged by controversial and secondary issues."

"May we focus on the task and be found faithful ... in proclaiming the gospel until all have heard," he said.

In the midst of such heavily publicized internal issues, Rankin said publicity and discussion has largely overlooked the fact that God is moving as never before through Southern Baptists and the IMB.

In 2005, 137 unreached people groups gained access to the gospel for the first time, 99 of which had a population of 100,000 or more, he said. The IMB also appointed and sent 805 new missionaries to the field, a 26 percent increase in appointees over the previous year. Seventy-three percent of new long-term missionaries went to serve among unreached people groups.

Southern Baptists also gave the largest Lottie Moon Christmas Offering in history, with \$137,939,677.59 given during the yearly missions emphasis.

This served as a sign of "your obedience to the Lord, who told us to take the gospel to the ends of the earth," Rankin said.

Other matters

- Two Tennessee Baptists were selected to serve on the 2006 SBC Committee on Nations — Jimmy Arms, Street Baptist Church, Cookeville, and Glen St. Brainerd Baptist Church, Chattanooga.

- Messengers elected trustees for its entities. Of 105 nominations, only have ever served on an board, messengers were to

- The late Adrian R. Cordova, longtime pastor of Bel Baptist Church, Cordova, and three-time SBC president honored with separate per and video tributes on June 13 at both the Pastors' Conference and the annual meeting.

- Messengers gave a ovation to the North American Mission Board's new interim president, Roy Fish. Fish a longtime evangelism pro at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, before he retired. Messengers he was humbled to serve in the interim and help focus the entity on planting and evangelism. A search committee is looking for a successor to Bob Recco, who resigned April 17 in the wake of a trustee investigation that found evidence of mismanagement at the mission board.

- On the same day U.S. President George W. Bush visited Baghdad for a surprise first visit with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, he spent five minutes via a videotape during the first session of the SBC's annual meeting.

- Messengers approved the 2006-07 SBC Cooperative Program Allocation Budget of \$195,948,423.

- A Tennessee Baptist, Melissa Gay of First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, was elected secretary of the Executive Committee for their June 12 meeting. The committee includes reporting from Press, Associated Baptist and The Alabama Baptist

Tennessee Baptists help share Christ during Crossover

Compiled from news reports

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Southern Baptists threw music and prayers into Crossover during the weekend prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, using an international festival, biker rodeo, block parties, puppets, and even sweet potatoes to get a hearing for the gospel.

The results were positive during the opening session of SBC June 13, John Avant, president for evangelization of the North American Mission Board, thanked Southern Baptists for their efforts in Crossover held in the Greensboro area prior to the convention.

Crossover has reminded us that this is the greatest period of spiritual openness we have ever known," he said.

Avant said preliminary reports indicated 3,189 volunteers participated in Crossover. So far, 823 lives have been changed forever."

Avant also reported that 26 churches will be started as

a result of Crossover. "God has been so good to us," he said.

Mark Gray, church planting director for North Carolina Baptists, expects the fledgling congregations to take wing by the end of the year. Workers are using Crossover events to give an extra push to long-term results, he said.

Prayer was an integral part of the planning. Saturday morning, several dozen Baptists gathered at South Elm Street Baptist Church on Greensboro's south side for final instructions and maps to guide them to Crossover events. The plan was for them to "pray on-site with insight" as the prayerwalking philosophy puts it. They were to pray for the people working and the people they wanted to reach with the gospel.

"If there's nobody there, remember, pray anyway," instructed Glenn Walker, a member of Faith Community Church in Shelby.

Three Crossover events highlighted significant ministry directions for North Carolina Baptists — bikers, cowboys, and internationals. Some of the 160 missionary church planters who



THE GIG BAND OF ALPHA Baptist Church, Morristown, performs at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C., on June 10 as part of Crossover, an evangelistic effort held prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. — Photos by Wendy Winn

work with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are pushing to get new Baptist churches organized among each of the three groups.

Undoubtedly, the loudest project was the Biker Day and Charity Ride for the Children which drew more than 350 people, most riding motorcycles, to a field near the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. A motorcycle ride through High Point and Asheboro drew over 175 riders and collected more than \$3,000 for the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina. The Wheelz North Christian Stunt Riding Team performed stunts, spending more time on one wheel than two, it seemed.

Several Tennessee Baptists participated in Crossover.

A group from Alpha Baptist Church, Morristown, worked at Hillcrest Baptist Church in Greensboro.

Alpha Baptist supplied some of the rentals and supplies for the block party at Hillcrest which drew over 100 registrants, according to Tommy Hendricks, minister of youth at Alpha.

"Our church hosts an annual block party at a local city park each year and this was a good way for us to take this ministry on the road," Hendricks said.

"I believe it is important for the church to get outside of its own four walls and give back to the community," he added.

Larry Gilmore, evangelism director for the Tennessee Baptist Convention, participated in a block party at Southside Baptist Church, located in a transitional neighborhood. The event drew about 300 people from the community plus about 200-300 people from Calvary Baptist Church, another local church which helped support the block party, Gilmore said.

Gilmore said he "mixed and mingled" among the people and shared the gospel as opportunities arose. One person he witnessed to prayed to receive Christ, Gilmore shared.

"That was a joy," he said. Earlier on Saturday, well over 1,000 people filled the gymnasium of Ben L. Smith High School, a few blocks from the Koury Center, for an International Festival representing 15 nationalities who now live in North Carolina.

Asian children and Mexican grownups sang songs in their own languages and teenaged girls from India performed traditional Indian dances that seemed to blend traditional dance moves with the latest ones from the Bollywood music movies, all done to booming Asian music.

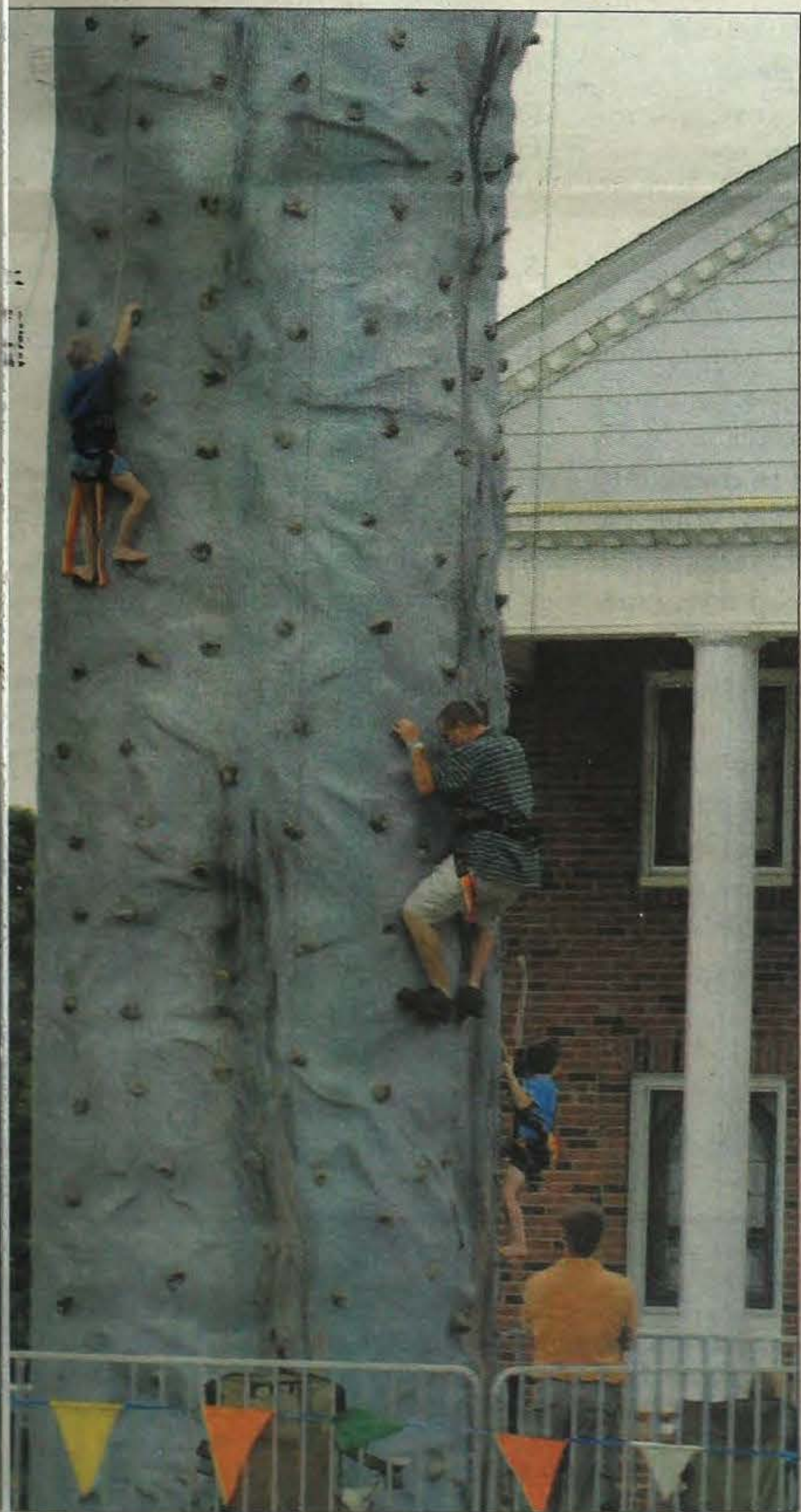
Organizer Vijay Kumar, who has started churches for Asian Indians, said he was delighted with the great turnout. Some groups displayed crafts and items of cultural importance and some people wore their national costumes; kimono-clad Japanese girls walked demurely from the auditorium.

Vietnamese spring rolls and other foods were offered and a Native American group, including some from the Lumberton, N.C. area, handed out sweet potato bread as samples. Registration workers tracked visitors for later follow-up.

Not counting the livestock of the Cowboy Stampede, the heaviest Crossover project was likely the sweet potato one.

On Friday, scores of Baptists sat or knelt around a whopping 44,000-pound mountain of sweet potatoes in a Winston-Salem parking lot as they bagged the potatoes for delivery later to people as a helping ministry. □

Article includes reporting by Editor Lonnie Wilkey and Mike Creswell for the North Carolina



WORKERS TO HILLCREST Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C., used this climbing and rappelling structure which was one of the activities provided at the church's block party. The church was participating in Crossover activities.



AMY GLENN of Alpha Baptist Church, Morristown, paints a design on the face of a child as part of the Crossover activities held at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C.



CAROLINE WALLS, left, and Halie Glenn of Alpha Baptist Church, Morristown, served as clowns at the Crossover block party held at Hillcrest Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C.

Evangelism
Missions
Discipleship
Ministry
Worship
Fellowship
Prayer

Church Health Matters

"Building healthy churches empowered by the presence of God."

MINISTRY Matters

Leaders of preschoolers and children at church have the awesome responsibility of creating a healthy environment where boys and girls can feel loved and cared for as they learn about God's love for them. Children need an environment that prepares them for the day when they will come to know their need for a Savior.

This issue highlights healthy childhood education in the local church. Included below is the contact information for members of your state missionary staff that are available to help you and your church in any area of childhood education.

Preschool Sunday School, Discipleship, and Weekday Education

Klista Storts(615) 371-2082
kstorts@tnbaptist.org

Children's Sunday School and Discipleship

Vicki Hulsey(615) 371-2081
vhulsey@tnbaptist.org

Preschool Missions

Andrea Knight(615) 371-7919
aknight@tnbaptist.org

Children's Missions

Andrea Knight(615) 371-7919
aknight@tnbaptist.org
Frank Green(615) 371-2025
fgreen@tnbaptist.org

Children's Camps

Nancy Hamilton(615) 371-2085
nhamilton@tnbaptist.org

Vacation Bible School

Kathy Trundle(615) 371-2082
ktrundle@tnbaptist.org

Preschool and Children's Music

Carla Nichols(615) 371-7908

Partnering with Parents Works

By Vicki Hulsey

There are 168 hours in every week, yet most children's leaders at church have one hour per week with boys and girls assuming there is perfect attendance.

What are you doing to make the most of the one hour? What can you do to help that one hour affect the other 167 hours?

Think about the children you teach.

- How much do you know about their family and their home environment?
- What organized activities are they involved in outside of church?
- What and who influences them?

Many parents feel inadequate to teach their children about God. As a result, parents often send their children to Sunday School, missions, camp, Vacation Bible School, a church daycare, or a Christian school to ensure they receive quality biblical instruction. While the church does share some responsibility for the spiritual growth of children, God is very specific about the responsibility of parents to teach biblical truths to their children.

A very clear mandate is given to parents in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 6:6-7 says, "These commandments I give to you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up."

Being a children's leader at church means much more than teaching the Bible to boys

and girls. Children's leaders must recognize the primary role of parents and work to become partners with the home. Begin to think of ways you can partner with parents.

Here are eight ideas to get you started:

1. Be regular in attendance and 2. Be on time. Being irregular in attendance or consistently late communicates to parents and children that church is not really important. We show up, and we show up on time for things we really care about.
3. Send cards to parents and children.
4. Make phone calls to parents. It's important that we get to know parents in order to partner with them in teaching and living God's truths. Take that opportunity to connect with parents.
5. Make home visits.
6. Invite parents to an open house to see how their children are taught.
7. Communicate with parents about special events. They provide permission as well as transportation and helping to chaperone.
8. Get parents more involved whenever possible. Send a letter to parents at the beginning of the year to let them know how they can be involved in their child's learning. Provide an update several times during the year.

There are many people who will have a great influence in leading a child to Christ. Find out what influences are in the lives of the children in your class and partner with them. Give your preschool and children's leaders the awesome privilege to carry His love to new generations.

Coming Up! Coming Up! Coming Up!

June 26-30 Journey Camp for Kids, Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center, Linden
June 26-30 Super Summer, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville
July 10-14 Impact Camp, Linden Valley Baptist Conference Center, Linden
July 14-16 Conversational English Workshop, Baptist Center, Brentwood
July 14-16 TN Baptist Fellowship of the Blind Retreat, Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center, Newport
July 21-22 Hispanic Youth Evangelism Conference, Manley Baptist Church, Morris
July 24-28 Impact Camp, Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center, Newport

For information on upcoming events, see the TBC web site at www.tnbaptist.org

How to Equip Preschool and Children's Teachers for Excellence

By Vicki Hulsey, Klista Storts, and Andrea Knight



Childhood ministries, such as Sunday School, missions, music, discipleship, Vacation Bible School, Weekday Education, and camps allow leaders opportunities to share the love of God with boys and girls and their families.

In the early childhood years, foundations are laid for salvation making it essential that we invest the time needed to be equipped for excellence when teaching boys and girls. Take a look at the following ways of equipping for excellence.

Equipping through Training

Curriculum is a wonderful tool, but curriculum does not teach children. Teachers teach children. Training is essential to ensure that preschool and children's teachers excel in the ministry God has given them. Training opportunities may include self-study, training within the local church, associational, state, and even national training. We encourage you to visit our web site at www.equippingu.com to learn more about training opportunities.

Check out these training tools for individual or group study:

- *Teaching Preschoolers: Laying Foundations for Faith* by Thomas Sanders and Mary Ann Bradberry
- *Understanding Today's Preschoolers* by Morlee Maynard and Jerry Aldridge
- *Essentials for Excellence: Connecting Preschool Sunday School to Life* by Carrie Beth Tonks
- *Teaching Christian Weekday Early Education* compiled by Pamela Boucher

- *Teaching Children: Laying Foundations for Faith* by Chris Ward, David Morrow, Anne Tonks
- *Understanding Today's Children* by Jerry Aldridge

Equipping through Resources

Everything we do in preschool and children's ministries should be age appropriate, Bible based, and child-centered. At times it is challenging to know if you are doing what is best for the boys and girls entrusted to your care. Many resources are available to help you in making good choices.

Check out these resources that support excellence in Preschool/Children's ministries:

- *Levels of Biblical Learning*, LifeWay Church Resources
- *Levels of Bible Skills*, LifeWay Church Resources
- *Missions Moments: Foundational Messages and Activities for Children* by Mitzi Eaker
- *Families on Mission: Ideas for Teaching Your Preschoolers to Love, Share and Care* by Angie Quantrell
- *The Hurt They Feel: Helping Preschoolers Deal with Tough Issues* compiled by Rhonda Reeves

The following resources are available for download at the TBC website at: www.tnbaptist.org.

- *Children and Worship: What is a Church to do?*
- *Learning Centers (Preschool)*
- *Preschool Space at Church*
- *Teacher Screening: Is There Really a Need?*

Equipping through Support and Encouragement

Fellowship is an essential element in the body of Christ. Look for opportunities to spend quality time with adults who will be an encouragement to you as you minister to preschoolers and children.

Some excellent ways to receive support and encouragement are:

- Stay connected to an adult Sunday School class. Ask to be informed when your adult class has fellowships, special prayer needs, etc.
- Observe others who have more experience than you. Ask an experienced teacher to mentor you.
- Schedule times for planning, praying, and playing with other members of your team.

Are you equipped?

ATTENTION VBS DIRECTORS:

The 2006 VBS Report form is now available at www.tnbaptist.org, under Childhood/VBS. The form from LifeWay should be coming soon. For more information, contact Barbara Owens at (800)558-2090, ext. 7905.

Babies: Is Your Church Babysitting or Teaching?

By Vicki Hulsey

MYTH: Toddlers begin to learn about God when they learn to walk and talk. Can babies really learn? Absolutely, your child is born to learn. What babies learn in the first year of life is foundational to how they will process biblical truths in the future.

Concepts learned during those early months are the first building blocks in the foundation that is being laid for that child to later accept Jesus as Savior.

Babies begin to learn about God through their relationships with parents and teachers at church. The parents and teachers become representatives of who God is.

While teachers rock babies, wipe noses, warm bottles, and change diapers, they are helping babies learn that:

God is love. How can a baby learn that God is love? A loving teacher feeds and rocks him as she speaks in a soft voice saying, "God loves you."

God is ever-present. How do babies learn that God is ever-present? Teachers arrive before the first baby. An ever-present teacher gets down on the floor with babies who are crawling.

God is faithful. Babies learn to trust teachers they can see and hear before they learn to trust a God they cannot see or hear. That ability to trust is a very important spiritual milestone. Later in life, children must be able to trust in order to accept Jesus as Savior.

What Questions Do Parents Ask When Choosing a Church Home?

By Vicki Hulsey

1. Who is the preschool/children's minister, director, or person in charge of making decisions for the care of children?
2. Does the pastor value preschoolers and children?
3. Are older preschoolers and children included in worship?
4. Is a security system in place for receiving and releasing preschoolers and children?
5. Is training a priority for preschool and children's teachers?
6. Are at least two adult teachers in preschool and children's classroom at all times?
7. Do both men and women teach in each classroom?
8. Are classes offered to equip mothers and fathers for godly parenting?
9. Does the church seek to understand and meet the spiritual needs of each family member?
10. Do teachers offer choices in Bible-learning activities that allow preschoolers and children to learn in the ways they learn best?
11. What options are offered other than Sunday morning that allow opportunities for both children and parents to build friendships?
12. Will there be ways parents can be involved in the preschool or children's ministries as a volunteer?

Pastors consider reaching today's world for Jesus

By Jennifer Rash
The Alabama Baptist

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Adrian Rogers' widow captured unexpected attention at the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference by asserting her husband would not approve of narrowing parameters of fellowship in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Joyce Rogers — whose deceased husband was a former Southern Baptist Convention president and longtime pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova — gently scolded Southern Baptists, saying: "Adrian Rogers would not have been a part of some things going on today, getting narrower and narrower about some issues. ... Adrian Rogers was a gracious man who worked for unity in the body of Christ. He believed with all his heart inerrancy was a hill to die on. But he still sought unity in the body of Christ."

Ed Young, another former SBC president and pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, likewise called for unity among Southern Baptist biblical inerrantists.

"Southern Baptists have forgotten who they are. And because of this, we do not know where we are going. I believe that we as Southern Baptists are on way, way, way too many side streets," he insisted.

"Our theology is biblical, it is not systematic. Therefore we are Baptists, we are not Calvinist; we are not Arminian; we are Baptists. That's who we are, and we always come down somewhere in the middle."

Functionally, Southern Baptists have the Great Commission as their mission statement, Young said. Their marketing strategy is to reach Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth.

"And when you forget who you are — a Great Commission people — you do not know, do not see where you are going

and you end up on side streets," he said.

Above all, "we've got to have a supernatural healing in the SBC; a healing of relationships," he said. "I was there through all the bloody battles but let me tell you something, we all believe this book (the Bible). We don't need all of this fighting and cutting and hard line and ruling out."

Author Rick Warren told the conference, "People aren't turned off to Jesus; they are just tired of people who don't really follow him."

Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Life* and pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., could not attend the event but addressed the crowd via video. In order to reach people with the gospel, those who claim to be Christians should be living as Christ did, he said.

Warren's "red-letter" sermon — drawing strictly from the words of Christ in Scripture — listed nine ways Christians should imitate Christ:

- Integrity. "Living with integrity means you are exactly what you appear to be. It's not perfection, but your life has wholeness and you speak the same in every situation," Warren said, referencing Luke 11:36 in which Christ refers to the "whole body" that is "full of light."

- Humility. Lack of humility is the greatest cause of stress in a Christian's life, Warren said. "Humility is not weakness, it's dependence on God. Stress primarily comes from the need to control and a lack of trusting God," he said. "He didn't say, 'Come to me all you who are weary and I will give you a lot more to do.' You'll live with insecurity until you learn to let go and trust."

- Simplicity. "We can see what a simple life Jesus lived — and He said, 'Be on your guard against all kinds of greed.' Success isn't measured by your salary," Warren said.

- Possibility. Christians should be the most creative and innovative

people in the world, he said, since all things are possible for those who believe.

- Hospitality. "This is practical love — love in action," he said. "We don't know how to be nice to one another anymore."

Christ said if even a cup of cold water is given to one of His followers, it's done unto Him, Warren added.

- Civility. In everything, do to others what you'd have them do to you, he said.

- Charity. "Let your enemy bring out the best in you, not the worst," Warren said, citing Matthew 5:44. "People should know us for what we are known for, not what we're against."

- Generosity. "Money is to be used, not loved," he said. "Every time I give, it breaks the grip of materialism in my life."

- Priority. Put God's work first, Warren said, as Christ commands in Matthew 6:33, and all other things will follow.

"When God finds a person willing to live like this, there is nothing God won't do for this person," he said. "They live not perfectly but they intentionally live the way God wants us to live. These are the secrets of being used by God in an extraordinary way."

Tony Evans, senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, told the Pastors conference, "You can get so busy doing the ministry for God that you can miss the God for whom you're doing the ministry."

Preaching from Acts 13:36, Evans said: "David served the purposes of God — he wanted to make sure he was in line with what God wanted. We glance at a small-screen version of the purposes of God while we're involved in other things, and what He really wants is to be the big-screen attraction. If we are not making an impact in our world, we are a failed people of God."

David Jeremiah, pastor of Shadow Mountain Baptist Church in El Cajon, Calif., challenged Southern Baptists



JOYCE ROGERS, widow of Adrian Rogers, longtime pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in Cordova, raises a baton representing her late husband's desire to see Southern Baptists united in preaching the Gospel to a lost world June 12 during the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference at the Greensboro Coliseum. — Photos: Bill Bangham

not to be ashamed of the gospel. Preaching from Romans 1:6-7, Jeremiah said the Apostle Paul — in going to share the gospel in Rome — faced some of the same challenges to that Christians today see.

Christians sometimes get ashamed of the gospel because they get backed into a corner, he said. "When we are trying to please everyone, we marginalize the gospel instead of making it the main point of our conversation."

Preachers need to return to preaching the gospel that can transform lives, Jeremiah said. "Are we truly convinced that the foolishness of preaching the gospel is the program and plan of Almighty God for our churches?"

Kerry Shook, pastor of Fellowship of The Woodlands, near Houston, revved up the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference with a video of a professional motocross biker riding over several jumps in his church's sanctuary during a conference session focused on contemporary worship. Motocross bike action — and similar attractions — draw the unchurched and cause them to drop their guard, Shook explained.

"They come in with their guard up and a chip on their shoulder. They wonder if you'll

accept them," he said. "But they loosen up with five minutes of motocross and will then listen to 30 minutes of a gospel message."

Seeing lives changed is what it's all about, Shook said. "You may say that's just entertainment, but there's a seismic shift in our culture from being a church culture to a secular culture. We are missionaries in that culture. I've had to learn the language to share the very same message that never changes — Jesus Christ."

Erwin McManus, pastor of Mosaic in Los Angeles, agreed with the need for multicultural sensitivities. And to preach this point, he broke into Spanish, then Korean, during his message. Just as many didn't understand all the words of his trilingual speech, many don't understand the growing contemporary style of worship and misunderstanding its purpose, too, he explained.

"A lot of people are speaking a language we don't understand, and we think they are rejecting Jesus but they are not," McManus said. "We simply need to understand that they need to hear the gospel in their language."

Other conference speakers included Nelson Searcy, pastor of The Journey in New York City; Dick Lincoln, pastor of Shandon Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C.; and John Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga.

Officers elected during the 2007 Pastors Conference were: president, Harry Wicker, pastor of First Baptist Church, Naples, Fla.; vice president, Kevin Eze, pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky.; and treasurer, Joe Taylor of South End Baptist Church, Reno, Nev. All were elected without opposition. □ — Also contributing to the story was Erin Turbell.



ED YOUNG SR., pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston, Texas, elaborated on the theme, "Reaching Today's World for Jesus Christ" June 12 during the closing session of the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference.



DAVID JEREMIAH, pastor of Shadow Mountain Baptist Church, El Cajon, Calif., preached at the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference.



TONY EVANS, pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas, preached at the Southern Baptist Pastors Conference.

WMU probes God's call during missions celebration

Charlie Warren
Kansas Baptist News

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Christians need to hear, understand, embrace, and live God's call, program personalists reminded Baptist women during the 2006 Woman's Missionary Union celebration.

"How can you hear God's call when those around you want you to mimic the call of someone else?" asked Paige Margolis of Richmond, Va., who interpreted the missions celebration theme throughout the meeting, June 11-12 in Greensboro, N.C.

Christians should discover the authenticity of God's unique call upon each believer's life to follow and obey, she stressed.

Embracing God's call means "putting our arms around something too great for ... It is a task we will never complete," she said. And sometimes it means Christ's followers must "toss overboard some of the baggage we've been carrying far too long."

"If we would stop clinging to things that leave us empty and look to the Lord who wants to fill us again and gain with what is meaningful and valuable and worthy and worthwhile, then we will begin to see that nothing is worth holding onto that the Lord says to discard."

Archie and Caroline Jones, former missionaries to Chile, reflected on their lifetime commitment to missions. Since arriving as career missionaries, they have served as short-term volunteers in South America, Venezuela, Armenia, and China, and they are ready to go again "wherever God leads us and whenever He provides the plane tickets."

They related their experiences in Chile where they lived an 800-mile-long association, starting churches and helping them grow.

While in South America, they adopted a Chilean baby and were surprised by the reaction of the Chilean people. "You must really love us," they often heard people say. "I adopted one of us."

An International Mission Board representative, identified only as Pam for security reasons, described the ministry she and her husband, started at the Mindanao Baptist Rural Life Center in the Philippines.

The ministry started when representatives from some of 14 Muslim tribes in the region contacted the center and asked for agricultural assistance. As a result, missionaries train local Chris-



DR. ALMA HUNT interacts with National Acteen Panelists during the Woman's Missionary Union Annual Missions Celebration. The 96-year-old is the former executive director of WMU and has always had a soft spot for Acteens.

tians to go into Muslim villages, providing Christian ministry and establishing house churches, she said.

Mississippi WMU President Donna Swarts described how she could balance WMU involvement with work in a ministry typically led by Baptist men — disaster relief.

She provided emergency childcare in the wake of flooding in Georgia in 1993 and then coordinated eight childcare units that responded to floods in North Dakota in 1997. She also joined relief efforts in New York City in the wake of 9/11.

"The experience of the years and the call of God have enabled me to be a small part of the army that is the church of Jesus Christ," she said.

John and Terri Forrester, North American Mission Board church planting strategists missionaries to Kotzebue, Ala., testified that early in their marriage, they felt God's call and sought appointment as international missionaries. But their son was born with a birth defect, which ultimately blocked their appointment to overseas service.

They served churches in their native Georgia and participated in short-term mission opportunities. Forrester served as a pastor in Montana and a director of missions in Georgia.

Then came the unexpected call to serve in Alaska in an area where snowmobiles provide the main mode of transportation, temperatures drop to 60-below-zero, and the nearest Wal-Mart is 350 miles away. The cost of living is out of sight, with gas costing \$7 a gallon and milk costing \$8 a gallon, they noted.

"Nobody wanted to go, but we answered God's call and said, 'We will go,'" Forrester said. "I know that I know that I know God called us there."

Norma Melton, who leads church and community ministries in Asheville, N.C.,

encouraged the WMU women to see themselves as instruments through which God touches a broken world.

"The most important partnership we will ever have is our personal partnership with Christ," she said.

Harriet Bowman, a missionary to Nigeria, told of her work with Muslims and unreached people groups. Many are unreached because they are in remote areas while others are unreached because "Islam has closed the door that makes them able to hear the gospel," she said.

God's call is both an event and a process, she noted. "The event is when you realize God is calling you and you say, 'yes.' Then you begin a process. When most people feel God is calling them, they don't have a clue how that is going to end up. But they begin the process of doing what God wants them to do and going through doors He opens."

She urged the crowd to focus on the gospel message.

"The message we carry will not be deterred and not be hindered. It will go out and go forth. ... It is the message that is important. So, carry the message and live out the call of God on your life."

Marvina Hooper, a former missionary to Honduras now living in Sorrento, Fla., described embracing the call as "going outside of our comfort zones."

As a new Christian and a college student, she went on a mission trip to Panama, which she said proves "God can use anyone if you are willing."

She later served "reluctantly" as a missionary journeyman to Panama, where she was the national WMU promoter. She married a fellow journeyman upon returning to the United States, and they later returned to Panama as missionaries. They were there during Operation Just Cause when U.S. troops invaded. They took cover under their



INFLATABLE GLOBES help participants pray for missions needs during the National Woman's Missionary Union Missions Celebration June 11 at the Sheraton Four Seasons in Greensboro, N.C. — Photo by Van Payne

bed as they heard bombs dropping nearby.

"We learned God is God and nothing is more important than God," she said.

They later served in Hawaii and Honduras but returned home due to aging parents.

She struggled with why God had led them back, but she now has a ministry teaching English to international adults and working with children's mission organizations.

National WMU President Kaye Miller of Little Rock, Ark., presiding at her first meeting, presented the Martha Myers Girls in Action Alumna of Distinction Award to Jacqueline Draughon of Graceville, Fla. Draughon, now in her 80s, began serving as a Girls in Action leader at a young age, and girls from her mission groups have gone on to be missionaries and church leaders.

WMU Executive Director Wanda Lee presented the Delanna West O'Brien Award for fostering Christian leadership in women to Eileen Mullins of Inez, Ky.

After her son was imprisoned in eastern Kentucky for killing his wife, Mullins started Haven of Rest, a ministry providing shelter and ministry to families visiting inmates.

"I heard the call; I understood the call; I embraced the call; and I lived the call," said Mullins, whose dream is that every federal penitentiary will be served by a Haven of Rest ministry.

In her report, Lee lauded the vision of Annie Armstrong and other early WMU leaders, adding "that call continues today for all of us."

Lee related multi-level "compelling, life-altering" calls on her own life, from accepting Jesus Christ, to a call to nursing, to a call to mission service overseas, to her call to lead WMU. She challenged the women to "go forward" and "stand fast" with "compassion

for the people of the world."

God has had His hand on WMU for 118 years, she said, reminding the crowd, "Missions is the only reason we exist."

Dramatist Jeff Smith of Richmond, Va., underscored the necessity of faith in following God's call, using biblical illustrations of Peter trying to walk on water and the healing of the blind man at the Pool of Siloam.

The nature of God's call is that "it will never be more than you can handle," he said.

"God is waiting for you to move so he can show Himself faithful."

In dramatic monologues during each session, Alabama WMU President Rosalie Hunt, author of *The Story of WMU*, portrayed Fanny Peck, early WMU president of the 1890s; Lottie Moon, early missionary to China after whom the Southern Baptist international missions offering is named; Ann Hazeltine Judson, an early missionary to Burma; and Annie Armstrong, first corresponding secretary — now executive director — of WMU.

Pepper Choplin, a music minister in Raleigh, N.C., led worship during the conference. Music features included the choir from Front Street Baptist Church of Statesville, N.C.; the liturgical dancers of Mount Herman Baptist Church of Danville, Va.; and Rozlyn Sorrell, concert artist from Garner, N.C.

In a hands-on mission project, participants gathered items for three North Carolina projects. More than 530 hygiene kits went to a homeless shelter. They assembled 120 backpacks with everything from towels to toothbrushes for children attending Angel Tree Camp. And women's prison ministry will have 111 gift bags to distribute. □ Also contributing to the story were Bill Webb and David Sanders.

Leaders

◆ **Jimmy Moore**, pastor of Parkway Baptist Church, Goodlettsville, recently retired after 30 years of service.

◆ **Marlon Stephens** has resigned as pastor from China Grove Baptist Church, Rutherford.

◆ **Tim Fair** has resigned of pastor of Northern's Chapel Baptist Church, Rutherford.

◆ **Jason Jackson** has resigned as pastor of Poplar Springs Baptist Church, Atwood.

◆ **Travis Hendrix** has resigned as pastor of First Baptist Church, Rutherford.

◆ Tennessee Baptist Convention staff recently taught classes at the Canadian Southern Baptist Seminary in Cochrane, Alberta. **James Porch**, TBC executive director treasurer, taught a church health class May 15-19. Also teaching the same week on church health was **Steve Holt**. **Don Pierson** taught a class on prayer May 28-June 4.

◆ West Hills Baptist Church, Lebanon, has called **Bryan Howard** as minister of music.

◆ Morganton Baptist Church, Greenback, has called **Tommy Self** as pastor.

◆ **Bryan Mowery** was recently called as pastor of Maple Street Baptist Church, Cleveland. A graduate of Cleveland State Community College and Bethany Bible College, Dothan, Ala., he is employed with Bradley Memorial Hospice as an end-of-life specialist and chaplain.

◆ Arlington Baptist Church, Knoxville, has called **Tim Guthrie** as pastor effective June 18.

◆ **Dewayne White** has resigned as pastor of New Horizon Baptist Fellowship, Hillview, Cleveland.

◆ Tasso Baptist Church, Cleveland, has called **Michael Cawood** as pastor.

Associations

◆ **Big Emory Baptist Association**, Harriman, sent a 56-member medical team June 9-18 to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Richard Lewelling, associate director of the association, served as the team leader. The team supported the Tennessee/Rio Baptist Partnership.

◆ **Robertson County Baptist Association**, Springfield, will hold its women's conference July 21 at Grace Baptist Church, Pleasant

View. The guest speaker will be Kathy Sharp, director of communications for Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif. Registration deadline is July 15. Call the association office for information at (615) 384-8197.

◆ **Midland/Northern Baptist Associations**, Maynardville, are sponsoring outreach activities and mission trips. The associations will hold Impact in the Park, a time of worship, fellowship, and baptism, July 15 at Big Ridge State Park, Maynardville. Mark Large, pastor of Hines Creek Baptist Church, Maynardville, will preach. In addition, the associations directed a June 9-17 mission trip with 40 volunteers to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where they conducted evangelism outreach and a medical clinic. The effort was to support the Tennessee/Rio Baptist Partnership.

◆ **Maury Baptist Association**, Columbia, is continuing to sponsor mission trips. The association will sponsor a mission trip to Townsend July 9-15 with 60 volunteers. The team will hold Bible clubs and do evangelism and construction. For information, call the association office, at (931) 381-0130. The association also recently sent six construction volunteers to Ocean Springs, Miss., where they installed sheetrock in a hurricane-damaged home. Since September 2005 the association has sponsored nine construction teams to four cities and two states affected by the hurricanes.

◆ **Loudon County Baptist Association**, Lenoir City, will sponsor a 16-member mission team June 24-July 1 to Boston, Mass., where they will conduct Vacation Bible School, Bible studies, and door-to-door evangelism for a Brazilian church. Bob Atwell, association director of missions, will serve as the team leader.

◆ **Nashville Baptist Association**, Nashville, and **Nolachucky Baptist Association**, Morristown, are sending an eight-member disaster relief feeding team June 25-July 2 to Oak Park Baptist Church, Algiers, La. The volunteers will serve disaster relief construction teams conducting hurricane relief.

Churches

◆ **Ridgeway Baptist Church**, Memphis, will host "Great Expectations: A Prayer Conference" Aug. 25-26. Avery T. Willis Jr., retired International Mission Board senior



A MUD-OUT TEAM of seven disaster relief volunteers from Duck River Baptist Association, Tullahoma, worked May 27-June 3 out of New Colony Baptist Church, Billerica, Mass., located between New Hampshire and the New Hampshire state line where they helped victims of recent flooding by doing mud-outting out sheetrock, and performing other recovery operations for homeowners. The team was led by Carolyn "Cookie" Baker, a member of First Baptist Church, Manchester. Prentice Wilkerson, a member of Keith Springs Baptist Church, Belvidere, served as the team's blue cap. Working from Don Miller, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Manchester; Dorethia Pratt, Liberty Baptist Church, Winchester; Bill Cowan, First Baptist Church, Winchester; and Mitchell Davis, Keith Springs Church. They are loading debris from a basement to the curb to be picked up by the city.

vice president for overseas operations, and others will serve as guest speakers. For more information, visit www.ridgewaybaptist.org/great_exp.htm.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Greenbrier**, will host a mission trip July 10-15 to Alpena, Mich., where they will work with Thunder Bay Baptist Church and Hubbard Lake Baptist Chapel. The five member team includes John Langlois, former pastor of Hillview Baptist Church, Goodlettsville, as speaker and Wade Smith, First Church minister of music, leading a praise band. The team will hold a concert at Hubbard Lake Chapel, a block party at Thunder Bay Church, and provide evangelism training.

◆ **Meridian Baptist Church, Knoxville**, sponsored a 43-member youth mission trip to Big Creek, Ky., June 11-16. The volunteers did construction and repair work on homes, general acts of kindness, and conducted social ministries in nursing homes and Backyard Bible Clubs for children.

◆ **Brownsville Baptist Church, Brownsville**, began holding worship services June 18 in its family life center as renovation continues in its sanctuary.

◆ **Sharon Baptist Church, Knoxville**, had 48 youth and their leaders serve

June 17-24 as World Changers in Birmingham, Ala. The church also recently held a successful "Arctic Edge" Vacation Bible School. Results included a total enrollment of 282 participants and an average attendance of 215.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Rockwood**, reported an average attendance of 195 during its June 4-8 Vacation Bible School. Ten children accepted Jesus as Savior at the VBS. Also a VBS offering of \$1,098 for a church youth mission trip was given by the participants.

◆ **Brentwood Baptist Church, Brentwood**, sent the first medical team from Tennessee to work this year in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The 28 volunteers worked June 1-11 at the Second Baptist Church of Villa Joao. The team was led by Raja O'Brien of Brentwood Church to support the Tennessee/Rio Baptist Partnership.

◆ **Springfield Baptist Church, Springfield**, will sponsor a mission trip July 22-July 29 to Riverside Baptist Church, New Orleans, La., where they will conduct Vacation Bible School and do mud-out and construction in the hurricane-damaged neighborhoods.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Sweetwater**, will sponsor a 16-member mission trip to Nicaragua the week of July 15. The team is in need of hygien-

ic kits, children's blow balls, and deflated soccer balls to take on the trip. For information, call the church at 337-3533.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Gallatin**, will send six disaster relief re-build volunteers the week of June 26 to Port, Miss., where they will help a family whose home was damaged by the hurricane.

◆ **Hermitage Hill Baptist Church, Hermitage**, will host "Southern Sound Festival," a gospel music festival which features church members Trevor Haley, dueling June 25 Sunday night service.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Hendersonville**, will conduct a disaster relief construction team of 10 high school students and adults June 5-11. The team will help build houses in the Ninth District, New Orleans, La., to help hurricane victims. The team leader is Darren R. Henderson, member of First Church. The team is working with the Crossroads Project, which is a combined effort of Humanitarian and Builders.

◆ **First Baptist Church, Old Hickory**, sent a 16-member construction mission team June 17-24 to a church in Metairie, La., to help hurricane victims build, clean up, mud-out, and feeding distribution.

graduates of four Southern Baptist seminaries have Tennessee ties

Baptist and Reflector

RENTWOOD — Five Southern Baptist seminaries recently graduated students with Tennessee ties. All information was supplied by the seminaries. Photos were used when available.

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Kansas City, graduated Ryan Eldridge, the son of David Eldridge of Crossville and Stephanie Edge of Doyle. He earned a master of divinity degree.

New Orleans (La.) Baptist Theological Seminary graduated Richard Michael Kirby of Lebanon, who earned a master of divinity degree. He is interim men's minister, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lebanon.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, graduated —

Rebecca Leigh Adair, Columbia, master of divinity; Brooks, Knoxville, master of arts; Stacy Denise Hill, Georgetown, master of arts; M. Lee, Knoxville, master of divinity; Amanda LeAnn, Knoxville, master of divinity;

Justin Ramsey, Cordova, master of divinity; Steven Glas Self, Memphis, bachelor of arts; Justin Herndon Terrell, Nashville, master of divinity; Bernard Tillery III, Nashville, master of divinity; Mary Elizabeth Young, Nashville, master of arts.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, graduated the following students with Tennessee ties —

Shley M. Akin, Norwood Baptist Church, Knoxville, master of arts in Christian counseling; Timothy R. Baltrip, Midway Baptist Church, New Tazewell, master of theology; Michael R. A. Lakeview Baptist Church, Harriman, master of divinity; Aaron L. Brown, First Baptist Church, Friendsville, master of arts in biblical and theological studies;

Ronald T. Bullock, First Baptist Church, Gleason, doctor



AKIN



BALTRIP



BEACH



BROWN



CROSSLEY



DANIEL



ELDRIDGE



HUTCHISON



JENKINS



KERR



KEVETTER



LAMPLEY



LANGSTON



MANDRELL



MANGRUM



MORSE



MUCHEWICZ



NEWELL



PARROTT



POINTER



POLK



PROFFITT



RIDDLE



SMITH

tor of ministry; Connie E. Crossley, First Baptist Church, Morristown, master of arts in Christian counseling; William L. Daniel, Tusculum Hills Baptist Church, Nashville, master of arts in Christian counseling;

John R. Farrar, Walnut Hill Baptist Church, Bells, doctor of ministry; Timothy W. Forsythe, First Baptist Church, Estill Springs, bachelor of science in youth ministry; Jenny E. Gibson, First Baptist Church, Cleveland, bachelor of science in leadership and church ministry;

Robert B. Hutchison, Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville, bachelor of arts in biblical and theological studies; James M. Jenkins, Long Hollow Baptist Church, Hendersonville; bachelor of science in youth ministry; David R. Kerr, North Athens Baptist Church, Athens, bachelor of arts in biblical and theological studies;

Paul A. Kevetter, First Baptist Church, Lebanon, master of

arts in Christian education; Matthew W. Lampley, First Baptist Church, Paris, master of divinity; James R. Langston Jr., WestLake Baptist Church, Knoxville, master of divinity; Benjamin D. Mandrell, Englewood Baptist Church, Jackson, master of divinity;

Andrew C. Mangrum, Southeast Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, master of divinity in pastoral counseling; Kevin M. Morse, First Baptist Church, Mt. Juliet, bachelor of arts in biblical and theological studies; Rick Muchewicz, Hopewell Baptist Church, Springfield, bachelor of science in leadership and church ministry;

Joseph S. Newell Jr., First Baptist Church, Dayton, master of divinity in pastoral counseling; Ronnie L. Parrott Jr., Stock Creek Baptist Church, Knoxville, bachelor of science in youth ministry; Anthony R. Pointer, Grace Baptist Church, Knoxville, master of arts in

Christian education; Christopher A. Polk, Calvary Baptist Church, Elizabethton, bachelor of science in missions evangelism church growth;

Shawn P. Proffitt, St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville, Ky., master of divinity; Jackson B. Riddle, Beaver Dam Baptist Church, Knoxville, master of divinity; Brian R. Roberts, Unity Baptist Church, Knoxville, master of divinity; Jason P. Smith, First Baptist Church, Halls, master of divinity; Michael C. Steffey, First Baptist Church, Bells, master of divinity;

Todd A. Stevens, First Baptist Church, Old Hickory, master of divinity; Brad A. Thayer, Witt Baptist Church, Morristown, bachelor of arts in biblical and theological studies; Charles A.

Watson, Meadow View Baptist Church, Knoxville, bachelor of arts in biblical and theological studies; and Jonathan L. White, First Baptist Church, Smyrna, master of arts in Christian education.

• Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Ft. Worth, Texas, graduated the following —

Wesley James Baldwin, Sevier Heights Baptist Church, Knoxville, master of divinity with biblical languages; and Eric Ward, First Baptist Church, Andersonville, master of arts in marriage and family counseling. □

CLASSIFIED

MINISTRY — DOM

Monterey County Baptist Association is accepting resumes for the position of associational minister. Please send resume to Search Committee, c/o Bobson, 95 Latham Chapel Milan, TN 38358.

MINISTRY — MUSIC

Vonore Baptist Church needs a part-time music minister. Job description is available at www.vonorebaptistchurch.org. Please submit resumes by July 31 to Music Minister Search Committee, Vonore Baptist Church, P.O. Box 308, Vonore, TN 37885.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Ebenezer Baptist Church is seeking a bi-vocational minister of music. The position requires

leading the music for Sunday morning and evening worship services, and Wednesday evening prayer meeting and a adult choir practice. Please send resume to Ebenezer Baptist Church, attention Minister of Music Search Committee, 2200 Midway Rd, Knoxville, TN 37914.

MINISTRY — COMBINATION

Oak Street Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a full-time minister of worship and discipleship. Applicants must meet biblical qualifications for leadership and have necessary skills to lead corporate worship through contemporary and traditional music with choir, vocal, and instrumental ensembles and to lead the

discipleship of church members by traditional and creative approaches. Resumes or inquiries to Search Committee, 804 Oak Street, Elizabethton, TN 37643, or e-mail at oakstreet@chartertn.net by July 16.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Director of music ministries and Christian education, full-time. Salary to be negotiated. Applications now being accepted. Send resume to Eastanallee Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, P.O. Box 3148, Riceville, TN 37370 or call (423) 462-2620. For more information, see our web site www.eastanallee.com.

MINISTRY — STUDENT

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Cookeville, Tenn. is accepting applications for a bivocational youth director. Send application and resume to Hamptons Crossroads Baptist Church, 109 Stallion Road, Cookeville, TN 38506 or call (931) 738-5937 for info.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

Seeking full-time youth minister at First Baptist Mayfield. Send resume to Bob Swift, Pastor, 118 West South Street, Mayfield, KY 42066.

MINISTRY — CHILDREN

Springfield Baptist Church is seeking a part-time minister to children. Please send resumes to the Personnel Committee, 400 N. Main St., Springfield, TN 37172 no later than June 25.

MINISTRY — PASTOR

Madison Baptist Church, a new church, is seeking a pastor for additional, kingdom-focused ministry. Resumes should be sent to Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 316, 4501 N. Hwy. 7, Suite 101, Hot Springs Village, AR 71906.

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

First Baptist Church, Monterey, is now accepting resumes

'Everyone Can' messages challenge Baptists to evangelize

By Lonnie Wilkey
Baptist and Reflector

GREENSBORO, N.C. — Southern Baptists should "turn the world upside down" through evangelistic efforts, speakers told the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

Four Southern Baptist pastors exhorted messengers to rally around SBC President Bobby Welch's "Everyone Can, I'm It" goal — baptizing one million new Christians between October 2005 and September 2006.

Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, thanked Southern Baptists for their support following Hurricane Katrina last year.

"We have a long, long way to go," Luter said, noting that his congregation has still not returned to its facilities. "Continue to pray with us and for us that God will use us in a mighty way."

Luter recalled his first thoughts when he heard Welch's "Everyone Can" challenge: "How in the world are we going to do that? It is such a monumental challenge."

Taking his text from Acts 1, Luter said Southern Baptists could learn from the story of a

small band of early Christians who "turned their world upside down" for Christ and did it "not just in their Jerusalem, not just in Judea, not just in Samaria, but they did it to the uttermost parts of the earth."

Furthermore, they did it without the resources and advantages Southern Baptists have today, Luter added.

The early church turned their world upside down because they were empowered by God with a new purpose and a new power, he observed.

Southern Baptists also will turn their world "upside down" when they are empowered by God, he added.

"We must be led and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will give us new power that will enable us to evangelize and to witness and to win the lost," Luter said.

David Cox, Welch's co-pastor and chosen successor at First Baptist Church in Daytona Beach, Fla., observed that one thing missing from Southern Baptist life today is "the concept of Christian love — loving one another and loving sinners."

Jesus Christ came into the world to seek and save the lost, Cox stressed. And just as Jesus showed His love on the cross, "we are going to have to demonstrate our love to a lost and dying world."

"They are not going to be impressed with our steeples and our sanctuaries," he said. "Most of the people where I am from are not going to come to church unless I go to them, take them



GENE MIMS, pastor of Judson Baptist Church, Nashville, challenged messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in Greensboro, N.C., to be active in winning the lost. — Photo by Bill Bangham

by the hand, demonstrate the love of Christ, and show them that Jesus died for them. That is the bottom line."

Cox encouraged Southern Baptists to follow the example of Matthew, a tax collector, who "gave up all that was dear to him to follow Jesus."

He also challenged Southern Baptists to follow the lead of Jesus who visited and fellowshiped with sinners. Southern Baptists "will never impact a lost world hanging out in Baptist or Christian circles. If you are not interacting or mingling with lost people something is wrong with your faith," Cox said.

The gospel is clear, he said. "Jesus Christ is a friend of sinners and if we are going to win

them we have to go where they are."

Gene Mims, pastor of Judson Baptist Church, Nashville, noted that while Southern Baptists have been called to evangelism and personal soul winning it is easy to lose focus at times.

He observed that the personalization of the Great Commission is the call of the 21st century.

"This is the time, the place, and the hour to personalize the Great Commission and ask not what is God going to do through your church or what he is going to do through the denomination, but what is God going to do through my life and where will He

send me in order that I might win some," Mims said.

The Apostle Paul began the task of reaching the world for Christ, he said, and Christians today can complete it.

"We have the right doctrine, the money, the resources. We know where everybody in the world is and we have already identified those who have not heard," he said.

"Today we have everything we need to win this world to Christ or at least to evangelize the last person on this earth with the gospel."

The danger lies in losing focus, Mims warned. "Sometimes we can lose our focus if we are not careful. We want to think about other things."

Stressing that he did not want to be misunderstood, Mims said other standards sometimes are placed ahead of Jesus and the gospel. "I believe we are in danger of putting up a gold stan-

dard if we are not careful we tell people you have to play in the Southern Convention. That is not a option. It has nothing to do with cooperation. ... Our focus is to be on people who are dying and are going to heaven."

James Walker, pastor of more Baptist Church, N.C., said fishing for men is "family business" of Southern Baptists. But while churches are "fishing in franchises," they have lost interest in fishing. "They have lost what they are supposed to be doing. They have lost their purpose," he said.

These churches talk about fishing, they teach about fishing, they preach about it, but they don't fish, Walker said.

"They haven't thrown the net in the water or tried to catch the fish in years," he said.

"Occasionally a fish will jump into the boat and everybody gets all excited. Perhaps we need to tell these churches they are out of business. They don't know it."

He encouraged Southern Baptists to follow the example of Jesus who came to seek and save the lost. "If that is our business, shouldn't we be fishing?"

Jesus was a fisherman, he passed the "family business" on to His disciples. In the church, he continued. "If churches get distracted by fishing by programs, by anything else that keeps them from reaching people for Christ, Walker said.

He encouraged Southern Baptists to be "live witnesses" for Jesus Christ. "If Jesus has made a difference in your life, then for goodness sake, tell someone. What are you doing?" □

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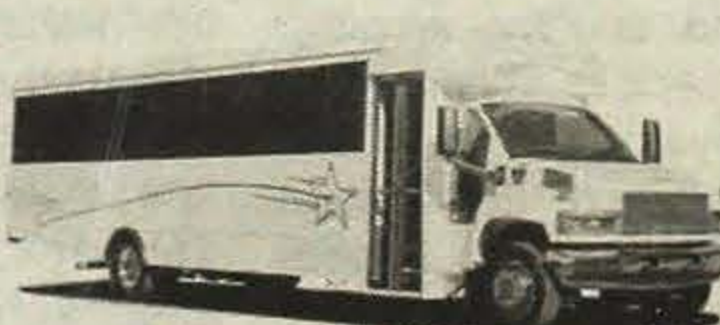
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Welch calls for 'more' president's message

Norm Miller
Artist Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. — In a sermon focused on witnessing, baptizing, and Cooperative Program missions, Southern Baptist Convention President Bobby Welch included his two years of service June 14 at the SBC's annual meeting here.

Preaching from the John 6:1-14 account of the young boy whose five loaves and two fishes ultimately fed 5,000 people, Welch often repeated the word "more."

After reading the passage aloud, Welch said Jesus looked at the crowd and wanted more souls to save. "Isn't it a wonderful thought that Jesus always has eye for the crowd?" Welch asked. "He's looking out the multitude."

Revealing his concern that Southern Baptists aren't looking at the multitudes of non-Christians with the same Christlike compassion because of a waning confidence in the soul-saving power of God, Welch said, "We must rediscover our confidence in the power of God's gospel to immediately and radically convert and change anybody, anytime, at any place when they will trust Jesus."

Welch, who recently announced his upcoming retirement from his 30-year pastorate at First Baptist Church in Daytona Beach, Fla., said the Southern Baptists demonstrate flagging confidence in God's ability to transform someone's life instantly by thinking that lost people might get more fully converted if they came to a series of classes and filled in all the blanks in a workbook over a period of several weeks.

"But that is not true," Welch said. While affirming efforts to bring people to Christ, he said the prevalence of such emphases on convoluted salvation processes in SBC churches is evidence "we somehow have become disconnected from the belief and confidence in our heart that God can bring it all on at one moment at one time at one place — the power of the Gospel to change a soul."

Since Jesus had asked the disciples about food for the crowd, Welch said that Jesus was looking for more Christians.

"We've got to do more going, and we absolutely have to do more giving," he said.

Reflecting on a conversation he'd had with one of the International Mission Board's regional leaders overseas, Welch recounted his asking the leader what was the most difficult aspect of serving God halfway around the world.

"The hardest part by far [is to] see the multitudes of millions out there without the gospel, we see people who are beyond number almost, and we see multiplied millions dying without Jesus, to look at what we have, the personnel, the provision, and the money, and realize it's not near enough," Welch recounted. "The hardest part [is] having to say, this group does not get as now. This million will not hear the gospel. This country will not know about our Lord. The hardest part, Brother Bobby, is saying no to the multiplied millions of lost who are ready to say yes to Jesus." "Ladies and gentlemen, I am telling you this today: It ought not be true. That should not be so," Welch said. "Everybody ought to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ."

"Whatever it takes in our giving and in our going, we must do it without any more delay. We must," Welch added.

Noting he wasn't picking up on any contemporary theme, Welch said the themes of giving and going have been "running through my life for 40 years."

"I didn't get up a message. I'm a man that God got and sent here to deliver a message."

"The Baptists' best bounce for their Baptist buck is through CP [the Cooperative Program]," Welch said. "With the Cooperative Program, everyone can."

"Your dollar works seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, all around the world, non-stop; and when you're snoring, asleep, it's still working." □



WELCH

Timothy: faith keeps God first

By Matt Cannon

Focal Passage: II Timothy 1:3-8, 13-14; 2:1-7

This letter written by Paul to Timothy has been a source of strength to an untold number of believers throughout the years. As a young pastor, I recall reading these words to Timothy as though they were written directly to me. It is amazing that such an encouraging epistle came from someone imprisoned and near death.

Paul wrote these words as a loving father writing to a son that he would soon leave. The passage we are studying serves to advise us that, like Timothy, we must strive to keep God first as we follow Him.

II Timothy 1:3-7. One of the greatest gifts to receive and pass on is a strong spiritual heritage. It is obvious that Timothy had this wonderful blessing by the fact that his grandmother and mother had the same faith as he did prior to him. Paul also played a major role in Timothy's calling and ministry.

Wherever you may be on your journey of faith, it is good to remember that you did not get there alone. More than likely your parents, pastors, teachers, and more all played a role in your coming to follow Jesus. Take a moment right now to praise God for those who impacted your life.

However, don't be content with just doing that. Keep the momentum going by positively influencing others to commit their lives to Christ. The Scripture reminds us to have no fear as we faithfully focus upon God and His will.

II Timothy 1:8, 13-14. Most people that I know spend their lives trying to avoid unpleasant and uncomfortable circumstances. It is easy to get detoured away from the often-difficult task of proclaiming the gospel. Satan seems determined to tempt each of us to hide our candle under a bushel where it is of no use.

The way to fend off the temptation to take the easy way out is to rely on the power of God. It is God who has saved us and it is God who empowers us to steadfastly meet all challenges.

I have never been in a real fistfight, nor do I ever want to be involved in one. If for some strange reason this were ever to occur, I would feel a lot more comfortable if there were several muscle-bound people there with me just in case I needed help. As we face the challenges of life, we should have great peace in knowing that God gives us strength and He also "has our back."

Paul also exhorts Timothy to hold on to the sound doctrine that he has heard. This is not done through strength of mind or mus-

Sunday School Lesson
Family Bible Series
June 25

cles, but only through allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives. Divine discernment is a wonderful weapon in combating devilish deceptions.

II Timothy 2:1-7. In comparing the Christian life to a soldier, an athlete, and a farmer, Paul indicates that ministering the right way is not for the faint of heart. Without a doubt, there is labor, hardship, and trials. However, there are also great rewards for faithfully completing the task.

The work that God has for each of us is important. To do it requires that we stay focused on our message and our mission. We must "be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

The grace that each of us rely on for salvation is the very same grace that we must rely on to successfully obey God. In my secular employment, my boss gives me a task and expects me to complete it with little or no input from him. However, we can know with assurance that when God commands us to do something, He provides all that we need to accomplish it. □ — Cannon is bivocational pastor, Cardiff Baptist Church, Rockwood.

Look to God for wisdom

By Randall Adkisson

Focal Passage: Job 21:1-28:28

Beware the false impression. On a hot day of driving the road ahead looks to melt into a wave of water. But it does not; there is a mirage.

In the middle of the night we were awakened by a baby's scream in the distant darkness. I opened the door, my heart pumping at a quickened pace. It was no child's panicked cry but a cat looking for a friend.

Eyes deceive. Ears mishear. Reason fails. Those who jump to conclusions often land in a pit of self-deception. Such was the peril of Job's three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

Job was sick, stricken, and suffering. His friends could see his plight with their eyes. His anguished pleas pierced their ears. Oozing wounds gave off noxious odors as he scavenged them with broken pieces of pottery.

What were they to conclude? Reason declared that God was punishing Job for his sins. This was the way of God, wasn't it? Job must be suffering publicly for his secret sins.

Job's friends were well reasoned but entirely wrong. Human nature has not changed. We often deceive ourselves when judging the circumstances and plight of others. Worse still, we broadcast our misperceptions, presenting them as "obvious truth," spreading hurtful rumors and gossip.

Jesus consistently warned against false judgment that arises

from human reason. *Do not judge lest you be judged, Jesus said. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you* (Matthew 7:1-2). The Scripture is clear in its warnings against bearing tales. *A perverse man spreads strife, and a slanderer separates intimate friends* (Proverbs 16:28).

Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar used "common" sense to condemn Job, but God calls for Christians to exercise spiritual discernment instead of common sense. Such discernment will be measured in grace and exercised with great care. James warns, *let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger* (James 1:19).

Wisdom worth digging for. Divine understanding and practical wisdom are commodities worth digging for, yet Job proclaims that, although one may dig deep at great peril to find gold, silver, or valuable ore, genuine wisdom may not be found by human effort. Instead wisdom is gained when one lives intensely aware of and responsive to God. Job declares, *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding* (Job 28:28).

Man's need for God-given wisdom is discussed throughout the Old and New Testament. The Proverbs declare, *How blessed is the man who finds wisdom, and the man who gains understanding* (Proverbs 3:13). When Solomon ascended to the throne, God offered to grant him any desire.

Sunday School Lesson
Explore the Bible
June 25

Solomon requested discerning wisdom, and God was pleased to grant it (I Kings 3:9).

Paul declares *the wisdom of this world is foolishness before God* (I Corinthians 3:19). James says, *If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God* (James 1:5). James further illuminates the character of heavenly wisdom, saying: *But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy* (James 3:17).

Although Job understood that the fear of God was the beginning of wisdom, he also knew that such wisdom did not always answer the "whys" and "whats" of the life. The heavenly reasons for human happenings often remain hidden from men.

Chuck Kelly, president of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, has noted that Hurricane Katrina's wrath bore down upon men and women who had specifically given their lives to follow God's call to ministry. Students and faculty at the school lost their homes and possessions.

Even today, godly wisdom beckons men and women to trust God even when they cannot understand the events that shape their lives. The wisdom is found in trusting God even when we do not understand Him. □ — Adkisson is pastor of First Baptist Church, Cookeville.

Tennesseans enjoy fun, fellowship during SBC annual meeting



STEVE LITTLETON, minister of music and youth at Gath Baptist Church, McMinnville, browses through the T-shirts in the LifeWay Christian Store exhibit area.



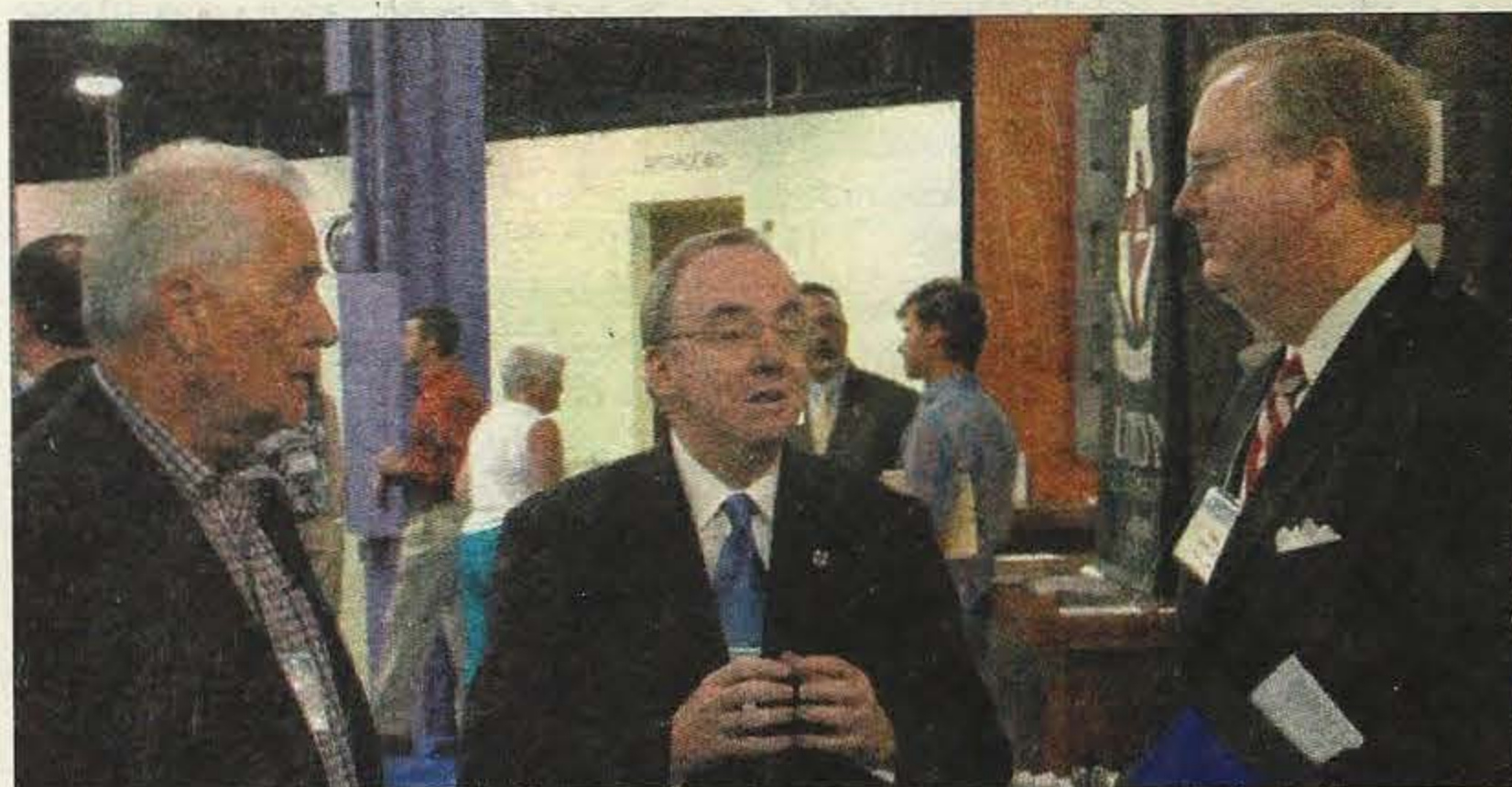
DON MATHIS, left, pastor of First Baptist Church, Watertown, visits with Mike and Sandy Boyd. Boyd is pastor of Wallace Memorial Baptist Church, Knoxville.



DAVID GREEN, left, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greeneville, visits with Walter Crouch, center, and Don Garner of Carson-Newman College at their booth at the SBC annual meeting.



SPENDING TIME in the exhibit area were, from left, Dianne and Mark Dougharty, Castellaw, and Steve and Donna Gaines, all of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, where Steve serves as pastor.



UNION UNIVERSITY President David Dockery, center, visits with Craig Christina, right, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jackson, and Jerry Richards, a layman at the church.



RAY JONES, left, director of missions in Big Hatchie Baptist Association, based in Covington, visits with Randy Pool at the Mississippi River Ministry booth. Pool is MRM coordinator for Tennessee and serves on staff at Gibson Baptist Association, based in Trenton.



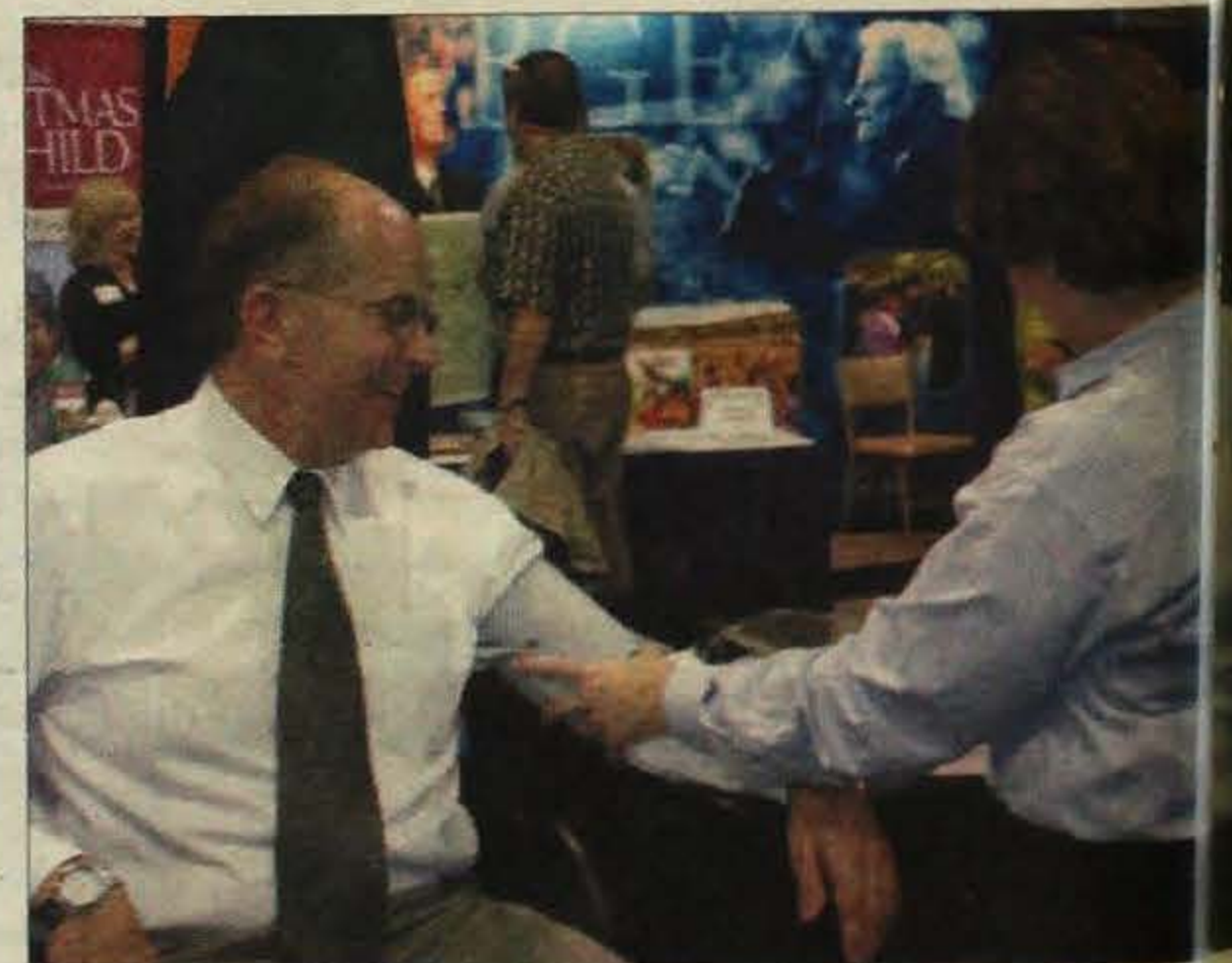
TONY BUCHANAN, pastor of East Rogersville Church, Rogersville, and his wife, Edie, browse through the exhibit area at the convention.



CHRISTOPHER ENIX, right, of First Baptist Church, Lake City, and a student at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville, visits with Allen and Phyllis Payne in the registration area where he worked with other Baptist Collegiate Ministry students at the convention. Payne is pastor of North Fork Baptist Church, Rogersville.



STEVE TAYLOR, pastor of Fellowship Church of the Smokies, Pigeon Forge, and his wife, Diane, pause for a moment in the exhibit area.



GALE HARTLEY, pastor of First Baptist Church, Janesville, gets his blood pressure checked by Judy Bates of Gulf Financial Resources.