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### June 27, 1996

Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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Arkansas Baptist State Convention, "June 27, 1996" (1996). *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine, 1995-1999*. 37.

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# ARKANSAS BAPTIST

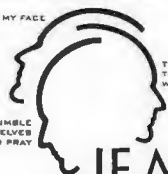


Volume 95, Number 13

June 27, 1996



SEEK MY FACE



TURN FROM  
THEIR  
WICKED WAYS

HUMBLE  
THEMSELVES  
AND PRAY

## IF MY PEOPLE...

II CHRONICLES 7:14

# SBC '96

**H**undreds of Southern Baptist messengers responded to a call by Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd to set aside time this fall to pray and fast for spiritual awakening.

## ARKANSAS BAPTISTS

# Arkansans elected to national leadership positions in SBC

Several Arkansas Baptists were among individuals elected to Southern Baptist leadership positions during the recent Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans.

Larry Pillow, pastor of Second Church, Conway, and Doyle Moore, a member of Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock, were elected to the 1996 Committee on Nominations. The 70-member committee is responsible for recommending individuals to serve as trustees of Southern Baptist entities. Arkansans serving on the Committee on Committees which nominated Pillow and Moore were Stan Parris, pastor of First Church, Hope, and Mike Pierce, a member of Geyer Springs First Church.

Arkansans elected to service by this year's Committee on Nominations include Ron Sanders, pastor of Life Line Church in Little Rock, Southern Baptist Annuity Board, and Donald Jones, a member of Lakeside Church, Hot Springs, a trustee nominee for an Annuity Board trust fund. Ronnie Rogers, pastor of Lakeside Church, was chairman of this year's Committee on Nominations. Also serving from Arkansas was Wesley Kluck, a member of Second Church, Arkadelphia.

Arkansans elected to a second term of service include:

■ Home Mission Board, Ed Harrison Jr., pastor of Dollarway Church, Pine Bluff.

■ Southwestern Seminary: Ed Saucier, pastor of Grand Avenue Church, Fort Smith. Saucier also was elected to a second term as Southwestern's representative to the Southern Baptist Foundation.

■ Historical Commission: Carel Norman, director of missions for Little

Red River Association.

■ Stewardship Commission: Harvey McClellan, a member of Immanuel Church, Rogers.

Jim Richards, director of missions for Northwest Association, was elected to a second year as chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business.

In other business, Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission, was elected to deliver the 1997 convention sermon. David Miller, an evangelist from Heber Springs, was chosen as the alternate to preach the convention sermon.

During the SBC Executive Committee's organizational meeting, Ronnie Floyd was re-elected committee chairman and Rex Terry was re-elected recording secretary. Floyd is pastor of First Church, Springdale, and Terry is a member of First Church, Fort Smith. Floyd, who preached this year's convention sermon, also was elected president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

Other Arkansas Baptists involved in this year's annual meeting included Jack Kwok, director of the state convention's cooperative ministries department, who served on the Resolutions Committee; George O'Neal, pastor of Bella Vista Church, who served on the Credentials Committee; Bobby Dusek, minister of education at First Church, Benton, who served on the Tellers Committee; and Zach Bledsoe, a member of Memorial Church, Hot Springs, who served as a convention page. Tom Cox, an evangelist from Mountainburg, was re-elected president of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists.

## Cover Story



### Prayer and fasting 9

Hundreds of Southern Baptist messengers responded to Ronnie Floyd's call during the SBC convention sermon to set aside a time to pray and fast for spiritual awakening.

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# ARKANSAS BAPTIST

USPS 008021

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The Arkansas Baptist (ISSN 1040-6056) is published bi-weekly by the Arkansas Baptist News Magazine, Inc., 601-A W. Capitol, Little Rock, AR 72201. Subscription rates are \$4.85 per year (individual) \$6.36 per year (Every Resident Family Plan), \$7.00 per year (Group Plan). Periodical postage paid at Little Rock, AR. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Arkansas Baptist, P.O. 352, Little Rock, AR 72203; telephone 501-376-4791.

Member of the Southern Baptist Press Association Volume 95 • Number 13

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# Offering aids arson victims

## Baptists give, pledge \$281,000 to rebuild African-American churches

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—In a visible show of support for African-American churches whose facilities have been burned by arsonists, Southern Baptist Convention messengers gave or pledged approximately \$281,000 to help rebuild the burned church buildings.

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

The messengers' actions came during a week when the country's attention was sharply focused on the problem of black church fires. In addition to three new incidents of church burnings, President Clinton participated in a rededication service for a rebuilt church facility in South Carolina and a congressional committee approved legislation to help address the problem.

The total in gifts and pledges collected during the convention's Wednesday evening session was \$281,318, with many pastors promising to take offerings in their churches and forward them to the SBC Executive Committee. Before the offering was taken, pledges of up to \$185,000 were made by three state conventions and three large churches. The offering included an additional \$57,690 in pledges and \$38,628 in cash.

In preparation for the offering, outgoing SBC president Jim Henry reminded Southern Baptists messengers that they had committed in a resolution a year ago to seek racial reconciliation, especially with other Christians.

"While it is a good thing to pass a resolution condemning this deplorable and cowardly action, that's not enough," said Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla. "We want to be doers of the word by taking an offering to help our brothers and sisters in Christ."

Convention officials announced June 18 that a fund has been established to continue assisting congregations whose facilities have been destroyed by arson. Officials noted that all the money sent to the "Arson Fund" will be distributed exclusively for the rebuilding of the churches.

Southern Baptist churches are invited to channel their gifts through their state conventions. The designated funds should be marked "Arson Fund" when sent to the state convention office.

In addition, several Southern Baptist construction crews are volunteering to immediately begin rebuilding the burned church facilities. Thus far, four Baptist state conventions have sent crews to

churches in need and the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission is attempting to contact each of the fire-damaged congregations to assess the level of need.

Those wishing to be part of volunteer construction crews may contact the Brotherhood Commission at 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104; phone 1-800-280-1891.

The resolution passed during the annual meeting not only condemned the burnings and expressed support for the churches, it also called for focused reconciliation efforts in communities affected by racial violence and encouraged local, state and federal governments to do everything possible to arrest and prosecute those guilty of the arson.

The Resolutions Committee members desired "to express their compassion for

their brothers and sisters in Christ," committee chairman Nancy Victory said. "It's just a matter of we're all in the body. What hurts them hurts us."

The offering and resolution preceded by hours the 34th reported burning of a predominantly black church in the past 18 months. Fire gutted the First Missionary Baptist Church in Enid, Okla., at 4 a.m. Thursday, June 13. Two churches in Greenville, Texas, were hit by fires Sunday and Monday.

A Southern Baptist congregation also became an arson victim in the early morning hours of June 17. The Georgia congregation, Pine Lake Baptist Church in Stone Mountain, averages 250 people on Sunday mornings and has 33 black members, according to interim pastor Randy Mullis.



## SBC registration hits 15-year low

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—A total of 13,706 messengers registered for the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in New Orleans — the lowest total in 15 years. By comparison, 38,493 messengers participated in the 1990 SBC — the last time the convention was held in New Orleans. This year's total included 460 Arkansas Baptist messengers.

SBC registration secretary Lee Porter expressed surprise at the low attendance. He had projected registration to be about 5 to 7.5 percent below the approximately 20,500 who attended the 1995 annual meeting in Atlanta. Instead, attendance was about 30 percent below last year's total.

This year's attendance marked only the fourth time since 1980 that fewer than 17,000 messengers have registered for an SBC annual meeting. The convention's record attendance came in 1985 when 45,519 messengers gathered in Dallas, followed a year later by 40,987 in Atlanta.

# A PASTOR'S HEART



By EMIL TURNER  
ABCS Executive Director

The political events of recent days have been difficult. (Perhaps more difficult for some than for others — you see, I grew up in Louisiana.) The circumstances are heartbreaking for Governor Tucker and his family and difficult for Arkansans.

This is not a time for meanness, pettiness or incrimination. It is a time for prayer. We are people saved by grace, therefore, we should demonstrate grace.

Li. Governor Mike Huckabee is to be commended for his gracious responses and actions. As Christian people we should pray for all elected officials. As Arkansas Baptists, we feel a special concern for Mike Huckabee. Remember him and Janet and their children in prayer. May God grant him wisdom to know God's direction and grace to lead our state.

I have just returned from the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in New Orleans. The two most important aspects of the convention have been ignored by the secular press. For the second year in a row, the convention voted to amend Bylaw 15. This now makes possible tremendous changes in the structure and organization of the SBC.

The other item ignored by the secular press was the impact of "Crossover New Orleans." In this evangelistic push prior to the convention more people were led to faith in Christ than at any other convention. These were great events for Southern Baptists.

■ Have you read *By Their Blood* by James and Marti Hefley? (Baker, 1996). This is the second edition of this excellent work. I bought a copy of the first in 1979. This is even better. It is a great tool for missions workers, Sunday School teachers and pastors. The book catalogs and comments on the missionary martyrs of the 20th century. Very inspirational.

REX HORNE

## President's Perspective

### We know the truth



I read with interest the history of Israel as recorded and preserved in the Old Testament. One reason for my attention is the comparison that can be made with our own country. Although Israel was given a unique relationship with God, it was not too long until it appeared God was no longer enough.

When Joshua's generation died, the next one did not know the Lord or His works. God in mercy raised up judges to deliver them. God speaking and delivering through the judges did not result in the people submitting to God in wholehearted devotion.

The next desire of Israel was for a king "like all the nations." It didn't take the nation long to realize they were better off under Samuel than Saul. The rejection of the people was ultimately a rejection of God. The "everybody is doing it" excuse is an old one.

God continued to reach out to people. In the first chapter of Hebrews we read the summary, "fathers...spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." (Hebrews 1:1-2).

In a few days we will celebrate our nation's birth. No one would argue that we, as a nation, are anywhere near to God's will for us. By His grace, we

live in a country where we can still worship and witness. We know God is enough. We believe there is no hope, life or salvation outside of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

A professor Williamson of LSU wrote: "Secular man, like the citizens of the decadent Roman empire, can always dismiss an outstanding Christian individual as an exception...(one) whose stature is not attainable by ordinary mortals...But when large numbers of quite ordinary people of all races and classes and nations exemplify the Christian ethic, secular man has to take notice."

Government is to maintain a level playing field for free religious expression (and then get off the field, as I heard Dr. Richard Land once say). Christians, by simply living as Christians, should change our country and world. Francis Schaeffer said it this way, "It is then up to Christians to show that Christianity is the Truth of total reality in the open marketplace of freedom."

We know the truth. We still have the opportunity. Do we have the will?

Rex Horne, pastor of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, is president of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention.

## Personal perspectives

"We are a Word-driven denomination with a mandate from Christ to spread the gospel."

—Tom Elliff, newly elected SBC president

"The most desperate need in the Southern Baptist Convention is a mighty spiritual awakening."

—Ronnie Floyd, SBC Executive Committee chairman

"We, as Southern Baptists, are a diverse people... We must appreciate and appropriate this diversity for the common good."

—Jim Henry, outgoing SBC president

# Memorable moments at the SBC

Southern Baptist messengers did a lot more in New Orleans than criticize Disney for recent "anti-Christian and anti-family" actions related to homosexuality and other moral issues. Many secular media reports, however, left the impression that was the only issue of substance addressed by messengers.

While the resolution calling for a possible boycott of Disney was a newsworthy event, it was far from being the most significant action taken during the SBC annual meeting. One of the most memorable moments in this year's convention was the offering collected to help rebuild African-American churches attacked by arsonists. Following last year's resolution on racial reconciliation, the willingness of messengers to donate more than \$281,000 in cash and pledges will long be remembered as a moment when Southern Baptists put their words into action concerning racial harmony.

Another significant moment came as Arkansas Baptist pastor Ronnie Floyd delivered this year's convention sermon. Floyd, who also serves as chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, eloquently challenged messengers to make a commitment to pray and fast for spiritual awakening.

Declaring that "God wants to bring a mighty spiritual revival to our churches and to our nation and to us personally," Floyd urged Southern Baptists to set aside specific dates this fall to pray and fast. Hundreds of people responded by kneeling

## STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



By TRENNIS HENDERSON

in prayer at the conclusion of the message.

Other memorable moments included Crossover New Orleans and the Foreign Mission Board commissioning service. Crossover, Southern Baptists' annual pre-convention witnessing blitz, resulted in more than 2,600 people accepting Christ as Savior. The FMB emphasis, which featured the appointment of 54 new foreign missionaries, also produced more than 1,500 personal decisions, including 105 people who expressed interest in foreign missions service.

In addition to the convention's positive, feel-good moments, outgoing SBC president Jim Henry issued a courageous warning against "political manipulation that freezes the work of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ." Affirming Southern Baptist diversity as "a source of our richness," Henry urged Baptists to reject a "legalistic and narrow spirit."

Henry's words were a refreshing echo

of the 1987 SBC Peace Committee report which called for "all organized political factions to discontinue the organized political activity in which they are now engaged." The report specifically called for discontinuing any "political strategies developed by a group with central control."

Unfortunately, the SBC presidential election was once again blemished by behind-the-scenes political involvement. Although Tom Elliff's uncontested presidential election was heralded by many as a sign of convention unity, the fact is that he was hand-picked last fall by a self-appointed group of 80 Baptist leaders, including several former SBC presidents. While it is true that other groups could have fielded competing candidates, the point is that such action stands in direct opposition to the convention-adopted Peace Committee report.

"If there were some kind of real... threat, it might be important to narrow it to one person," Henry said in a recent interview. "But in the situation we are in now and in the future, I hope we would be open to just letting men be open to the Holy Spirit and say, 'I'm available.'"

Southern Baptists must make their own decisions about boycotts, prayer and fasting, witnessing opportunities and countless other issues. Hopefully the time also will soon return when we can freely celebrate our diversity in convention politics and eliminate any action that "freezes the work of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ."

## An open letter to Bailey Smith

Dear Bro. Bailey,

I was surprised and disappointed to hear of your negative assessment of state Baptist paper editors during your sermon at the recent Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference.

Voicing your concern about "blistering editorials against the movement of God," you declared that you are "tired of non-soul-winning editors who go to non-soul-winning churches who have not seen a revival in 50 years telling us what's wrong with ours." If those charges were accurate, I would be upset with state papers editors too.

What I sense, however, is an inaccurate, inappropriate attack against fellow believers who are working just as diligently as you are to discern and fulfill God's will in our lives. At a time when Southern Baptists are striving to eliminate prejudice toward diverse racial and ethnic groups, it's tragic that a former Southern Baptist Convention president would use part of his allotted time during a Pastors' Conference sermon

to make sweeping prejudicial statements against a group of faithful co-workers.

Allow me to use myself as an example. Less than two weeks before you made your blanket accusation against "non-soul-winning editors," I was in Romania with a volunteer missions team, preaching the gospel and witnessing to people in spiritual need. God's Holy Spirit allowed me the privilege of personally helping lead more than 25 people to faith in Christ during that two-week effort.

Although 25-plus conversions in two weeks is the exception rather than the norm, I also have taken advantage of opportunities in recent months to share the gospel with family members, neighbors and even strangers I have met while traveling. While I still have far to go in my spiritual growth and Christian pilgrimage, please don't toss me into your category of "non-soul-winning editors."

As for being part of a "non-soul-winning church," I am thankful to God for my affiliation with First Baptist Church of

Benton, where I serve as a deacon and Sunday School teacher. During the past few months, our church has baptized more than 50 people as the congregation continues to grow numerically and spiritually.

In contrast to your charges against Baptist editors, SBC Executive Committee chairman Ronnie Floyd demonstrated sensitivity and statesmanship while delivering this year's convention sermon. In his call for prayer and fasting for spiritual renewal, Floyd invited "each state convention paper and editor... to embrace these challenges in the spirit of unity."

What a joy to be invited to be a partner in calling for spiritual revival rather than being falsely accused of writing "blistering editorials against the movement of God."

I pray, Bro. Bailey, that God will allow you to recognize and appreciate the vital ministry role of state Baptist papers and that we can work together as Christian brothers for the benefit of God's Kingdom.

Your brother in Christ,  
Trennis Henderson

**Bill L. Fuller, pastor**  
*First Church, Blytheville*

The 1996 Southern Baptist Convention was one of quiet determination in completing the transition plan of restructuring our convention. The "Covenant for a New Century" was completed in less than one hour with minimal discussion. Truly this trust vote now awaits the details of how it will affect our churches and their work in the days ahead.

Messages preached by SBC president Jim Henry and Ronnie Floyd were strong and meaningful. The other presentations by the Sunday School Board and Foreign Mission Board were a blessing to all who attended.

The smaller number of messengers who represented our churches regretfully seems to indicate that our convention has lapsed once again to mainly include ministers, church staffs, state and convention workers, directors of missions and their families attending. I am convicted that unless our dedicated Christian laymen become more involved in the mainstream affairs of our convention, we will be weaker and not able to truly do that which God wants in evangelism and missions.

**Cheryl Williams, layperson**  
*First Church, Cabot*

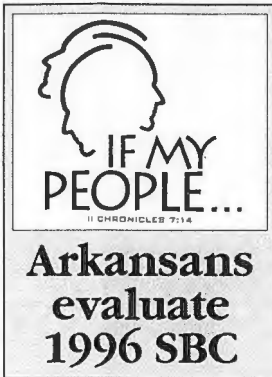
What a privilege and honor to be a messenger to the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention. The spirit of love and compassion was more than evident. Southern Baptists are truly becoming increasingly inclusive as indicated by their stand on racism and the growing participation of women from the platform. God is doing a mighty work among Southern Baptists. I can't wait for the 1997 SBC.

**Steve Martin, pastor**  
*First Church, Filppin*

The spirit of this convention was reflected in the soul-stirring convention sermon brought by Ronnie Floyd. His challenge to Southern Baptists to renew our commitment to evangelism, renewal and revival brought hundreds of pastors and church leaders to their knees on the convention floor. With tears in many eyes and a strong desire to obey God in every heart, a fresh move of the Holy Spirit stirred our Baptist family.

**Ted Grove, pastor**  
*Portland Church*

Being at my first SBC annual meeting, I was not sure what to expect. I have seen God's Spirit move among the



pastors and messengers to our annual meeting. I have seen God move through our association and I have seen Him move locally. Was God going to move at the national level?

Wednesday's response of God's people was a profound indication that God is choosing to move!

■ Pastors and church leaders by the thousands committed to lead their churches in prayer, fasting and spiritual revival in late October.

■ Hundreds of thousands of dollars were committed to restoring our black brothers and sisters' churches destroyed by arson fires.

■ Wednesday night indicated God's movement in His people toward world evangelism as dozens of families committed themselves to foreign missions.

Yes, God is moving! May our passion for God not diminish. He is larger than all our business. And when He chooses to move, no motion or resolution can stand in His way.

This convention has touched me deeply. God is moving in my brothers and sisters. Revival is upon us.

**Brett Cooper**  
*Director of public relations*  
*Williams Baptist College*

Working in the exhibit hall, it was nice to be so close to the convention floor. We were able to talk to a huge number of folks at the convention and we were particularly gratified to visit with numerous Arkansans people.

Seeing such an assembly of God's people makes one pray all the more that we can brush aside petty differences and get back to real Kingdom work.

**Lonnie W. Latham**  
*Director of missions*  
*Bartholomew Association, Warren*

Jim Henry became the pastor to the convention when he challenged us to raise the money to rebuild African-American church buildings.

**Jim Hausler**  
*Language missions associate*  
*ABC missions department*

The convention has had a good spirit, especially during the Executive Committee report -- it was done in an hour less than the time allotted. There was good fellowship and a good group of foreign missionaries at the exhibit. It is always enjoyable to visit with fellow Baptists from other states.

Now that the baton is being passed, pray that God will bless the restructuring and pray for those involved.

**Mike Petty, pastor**  
*Park Place Church, Hot Springs*

The wind blows...where He wills. Southern Baptists have set the sail to be driven by the power of our Lord to fulfill His purposes for our convention. This convention has been used of the Lord to give me an empowering and refueling wind to return home and help my church "see His face."

**Ed Hinkson**  
*Director of missions*  
*Pulaski Association, Little Rock*

This was my first directors of missions meeting and I thought it was great. I would encourage other DOMs from our state to attend. I got some new ideas from what I heard others share.

The Pastors' Conference, for me, was a C- but I would give Jim Henry an A+ for his message to the convention.

**Clayburn Bratton, pastor**  
*New Hope Church, Greenwood*

This has been one of the best conventions I have attended. A sweet spirit prevailed throughout. Reports indicated baptisms were up. Cooperative Program giving was up. Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong offerings were up. We give God the glory.

The foreign missions commissioning service was the high point. It warms my heart to hear many of the appointees tell of their call to missions through Acteens and Royal Ambassadors. The churches that have, for some reason, abandoned their mission organizations are the losers.

# Elliff elected SBC president by acclamation

NEW ORLEANS (BP/ABP)—Former Arkansas Baptist pastor Tom Elliff was elected Southern Baptist Convention president June 11. Elliff was unopposed for the SBC presidency, reportedly the first time in more than 50 years that a non-incumbent president did not face opposition.

Elliff, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Del City, Okla., succeeds Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., as president. He was nominated by Alabama pastor Fred Wolfe, an unsuccessful candidate for the SBC presidency two years ago against Henry.

In other elections, Bob Anderson, pastor of Parkview Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, La., was elected first vice president by a 3,423-2,884 margin (54.27 percent to 45.73 percent) over Fred Powell, president of Communicators Ministries of Richmond, Mo. Anderson is a trustee of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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

Lee Porter, of Lawrenceville, Ga., was unopposed for a 20th term as registration secretary. He is a former pastor and retired Baptist Sunday School Board employee. David Atchison of Franklin, Tenn., recording secretary since 1991, also was elected for another term.

Elliff, 52, has served as pastor in Del City since 1985. From 1981-83 he was a Southern Baptist foreign missionary to Zimbabwe. A graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, he was pastor of Southside Mission in Warren and Martindale Church, Little Rock, while in college. He also has been pastor of churches in Texas and Colorado.

"Tom Elliff has a clear focus of what God would have us do," said Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile. Wolfe noted that under Elliff's leadership, First Southern Baptist Church has baptized almost 5,000 people and its members have participated in more than 100 partnership missions endeavors. His congregation gave approximately \$75,000 through the Cooperative Program last year, less than 3 percent of the church's undesignated receipts.

During a press conference following his election, Elliff called Southern Baptists to work together in ushering in worldwide revival. "I believe we need genuine revival,"



New SBC officers are (left to right) second vice president Fred Luter of New Orleans; president Tom Elliff of Del City, Okla.; and first vice president Bob Anderson of Baton Rouge.

he said. "We need to turn to God in our nation....The direction of my leadership would be that we would turn to Christ, step up to the plate and be the people of God He expects us to be."

Assessing divisive issues in the convention, the new president said, "I'm not interested in encouraging people who want to divide, split and to tear apart the fabric of our convention. The last thing any of us would ever want to see would be a ripping apart of the framework of the Southern Baptist Convention. It's not these conservative groups that are causing that. It is convention groups that would take Southern Baptist money and send it to non-Southern Baptist organizations. That's what would cause the fragmenting of our convention."

## 'Word-driven denomination'

Concerning inclusion of "moderates" in Southern Baptist life, he noted, "If you mean by 'moderates' someone who does not hold to the inerrancy of the Scripture and principles of Scripture, the word would be the same to them that I would share with anybody, and that would be to repent and to understand that the Scripture contains the absolutes of God....We are a Word-driven denomination with a mandate from Christ to spread the gospel. We have said, 'This is what Southern Baptists believe. Can you operate within that framework? If so, we embrace you.'"

Discussing the ministry role of women, he said, "I cannot find in the Scripture any passages which would support the role of a woman...being pastor of a local congregation. It's not a question of value or importance. Men and women are equal in the eyes of God but have a different role."

Concerning his presidential appointments, Elliff said he "would work long and hard to make sure I knew who I appointed....We have said as Southern Baptists: 'We believe in this.' And so now we are moving a step beyond as Southern Baptists. We are taking the Word, which we hold up to be the Word of God — inerrant and infallible — and we are seeking as a convention to live by the principles of that Word. I would encourage those whom I have appointed to look very carefully at their appointments."

Elliff said he has "found the men associated with the conservative resurgence to be above board in every way. I have found them to be men who are genuinely concerned about their churches and their lives, but also they have a heart large enough to be concerned about the Southern Baptist Convention."

Insisting that the 80 men who met several months ago to choose him as their presidential candidate did not manipulate the SBC political process, he added, "Those 80 men have 80 votes. They're men of integrity and prayer."

Affirming Southern Baptists' commitment to race relations, Elliff remarked, "I can say without reservation that Southern Baptists have set their face toward racial reconciliation, ethnic inclusion."

Concerning cooperation with other religious groups, he added, "The record shows Southern Baptists over the years have held hands with many different religious groups in this country, especially on specific issues: the racial issue, the pro-life issue. When we find other groups which...have at the core the central message of the cross...we also join together with them in sharing the gospel with the nation."



## Resolutions speak strongly on key moral, social issues

NEW ORLEANS (BP/ABP)—Taking strong stands on a variety of moral issues, Southern Baptist Convention messengers adopted 14 resolutions during their June 11-13 annual meeting in New Orleans.

The most closely-watched resolution calls on Southern Baptists to consider boycotting Disney theme parks and products unless Disney officials change such "anti-family, anti-Christian" practices as providing insurance for same-sex partners of employees and opening Disney theme parks to homosexual groups during gay and lesbian theme nights.

The resolution also criticized some films and books that signal "a significant departure from Disney's family-values image," including the film "Priest" which, the resolution said, "disparages Christian values and depicts Christian leaders as morally defective."

Disney officials expressed surprise at the action, releasing a brief statement that noted: "We find it curious that a group that claims to espouse family values would vote to boycott the world's largest producer of wholesome family entertainment."

The initial resolution proposed by the Resolutions Committee did not call for a boycott but instead urged messengers to give "serious and prayerful reconsideration (of) their purchase and support of Disney products."

Messengers approved an amendment proposed by Wiley Drake, a pastor from Buena Park, Calif., which threatened a boycott of Disney theme parks and retail stores if the company is unresponsive to the resolution.

Jim Henry, who completed his second year as SBC president, quipped following the vote: "I was going to Disney, but I don't think I will now." Henry's Orlando church is within a few miles of Disney World.

In another resolution, messengers noted their opposition to the legalization of homosexual marriage, affirming "the Bible's teaching that promotion of homosexual conduct relationships is an abominable sin calling for God's swift judgment upon any such society."

The resolution indicated support for pending congressional legislation which would bar the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages.

Messengers also adopted measures opposing President Clinton's veto of partial-birth abortion ban legislation and the arson of African-American churches. They also passed a resolution affirming evangelization of Jews and endorsed

### Disney Resolution

"In recent years, The Disney Company has given the appearance that the promotion of homosexuality is more important than its historic commitment to traditional family values....We encourage Southern Baptists to give serious and prayerful reconsideration to their purchase and support of Disney products and to boycott Disney Company stores and theme parks if they continue this anti-Christian and anti-family trend."

creation of a national commission to study the effects of gambling.

Without opposition, messengers passed a resolution expressing profound disdain at the arson-blamed fires of African-American churches, promising to "pray for, support, encourage, stand with and assist our sister churches and fellow believers in the African-American community who have been victims of these criminal acts."

"We deplore these acts of blind hatred," Henry declared. "May the world hear that as the heartbeat of Southern Baptists."

"This desecration and destruction of churches is a particularly heinous form of hatred," added Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. "To burn a black church is to plunge a dagger deep into the heart of the African-American community."

In an outpouring of support for the victimized congregations, messengers collected and pledged more than \$280,000 to aid in the rebuilding of the destroyed or damaged churches.

Messengers condemned President Bill Clinton's veto of the partial-birth abortion ban, adding an amendment calling his decision to veto the legislation "shameful."

On a related matter, messengers called on the Republican National Convention to maintain its pro-life platform plank and urged the Democratic National Convention to adopt such a plank. Messengers also spoke against physician-assisted suicide, affirming "biblical and Hippocratic prohibitions" against the practice.

Noting that the resolution was consistent with the convention's longstanding affirmation of the sanctity of life, the statement said, "We vigorously denounce assisted suicide as an appropriate means of treating suffering."

A resolution protesting the worldwide persecution and denial of human rights of Christians also gained messenger approval. Land charged that the U.S. State Department has been "pathetically uninvolved" in the matter, adding that the situation was no better under previous administrations.

Adopting a resolution on Jewish evangelism, messengers urged the convention to make a planned and concerted effort to proclaim the gospel to the Jewish people.

"This resolution would seem to be the next logical step in continuing efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention to reclaim its evangelical roots and its commitment to minister to all people," said R. Michael Smith, president of the Southern Baptist Messianic Fellowship.

"The Great Commission is to the Jewish people too," added Gus Elowitz, a congregational leader at Beth Yeshua Hamaschiach in Houston, the first Southern Baptist Messianic congregation.

Messengers also approved a resolution affirming Baptist autonomy and speaking against any long-term commitments with other religious groups "which would risk possible compromise of historic distinctives."

In other action, a resolution in support of a National Commission on Gambling, the focus of legislation recently passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, was endorsed by messengers. The commission will study the effects of gambling on society.

"Gambling is a terrible scourge in our nation, which destroys lives, families and finances," Land said. "There is nothing positive about gambling. Every part of it is negative and destructive."

Other resolutions approved by the messengers:

■ Affirmed parents' rights to direct the education of their children, encouraging legislators "to develop the means and methods of returning educational and funding choices to parents."

■ Urged Southern Baptists to multiply their efforts to provide for global and domestic hunger and relief needs. The resolution noted that giving to hunger and relief ministries is experiencing steep decline.

■ Called for Southern Baptists to join in a 40-day season of prayer beginning Sept. 27 for "the future of our country." The resolution also notes election day, Nov. 5, as a National Day of Prayer.

## Floyd calls for prayer, fasting during SBC annual sermon

Insisting that "the Lord will move with you or without you," Ronnie Floyd challenged fellow Southern Baptists to set aside one week this fall to fast and pray for spiritual revival in America.

"As we race toward the coming millennium...we need to stop long enough to know where our country is, our church is and our denomination is spiritually," declared Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale. "I believe we are in a major spiritual crisis—a midnight crisis. It is dark spiritually in America."

In addition to preaching the 1996 convention sermon, Floyd was elected president of the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference and re-elected chairman of the SBC Executive Committee.

### Answer 'not in ballot box'

Emphasizing that "the answer to this spiritual crisis in America will not be found in the ballot box, but in the prayer closet," Floyd added that "the most desperate need in the Southern Baptist Convention is a mighty spiritual awakening.

"The answer to the spiritual crisis in our denomination will not be found in our restructuring the denomination, but will be found by putting off the carnal mindsets of territorialism, pride and arrogance, and putting on the sackcloth of prayer, fasting and humiliation before God," he declared.

Predicting that the next controversy in the SBC will be over "the supernatural movings of the Holy Spirit of God," he called on churches to develop "a liberty of the spirit" and "to let God blow open and destroy your old wineskins."

"What do we have if we believe in inerrancy of Scripture and have little commitment to evangelism?" Floyd asked. "I'll tell you today what we really have. We may have people who wear the label of

inerrancy on their shirt pocket, rather than the label of moderate, but we will simply be a denomination of old wineskins that are brittle and inflexible and lifeless.

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

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

"When is the last time you have been broken with grief and tears before your people over your own sin, their spiritual condition, and over their nation?" he asked. "Have you ever called your people to pray and fast for revival in their lives, their church and in America?...As spiritual leaders we must model brokenness, humiliation and repentance before our people."

Floyd challenged Southern Baptist pastors, evangelists and denominational leaders to take the lead in calling for spiritual awakening by making a commitment:

■ Preach on the subject of fasting on Sunday, Oct. 27, "calling for a commitment for God's people to fast and pray for revival" for one day during the coming week, suggesting Wednesday, Oct. 30 as a preferable date.

■ Lead church members in a solemn assembly Sunday evening, Oct. 27, "calling



Arkansas pastor Ronnie Floyd preached the 1996 convention sermon during the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting, held June 11-13 at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans.

them to repentance of sin and to cry out to the Lord for mercy."

■ Observe "a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting" on Oct. 30 "as we encourage every Christian who is a member of a Southern Baptist church to pray and fast for the purpose of personal spiritual revival, revival in their church, and for revival in America."

■ Preach Sunday, Nov. 3, "on the subject of spiritual revival in our personal lives, our churches, and in our nation; calling for God's people to do whatever it takes to see revival in our day."

"God is on the brink of ushering in a mighty spiritual awakening across this land," Floyd said. "The urgency for spiritual awakening in this midnight crisis calls us to spiritual repentance and calls us to act together.

"Are we fasting, weeping and mourning over the spiritual condition of our nation, our churches and our lives?" he asked. "God's people return to God His way. This is God's way. In this midnight crisis, return to God with your whole heart."

Emphasizing that "God wants to bring a mighty spiritual revival to our churches and to our nation and to us personally before He comes again," Floyd invited messengers to make a public commitment to pursue spiritual awakening. Hundreds of people responded by kneeling in prayer on the floor of the Louisiana Superdome at the conclusion of Floyd's sermon.

## A CALL TO PRAYER AND FASTING

**SUNDAY MORNING, OCT. 27**

- Preach on the subject of prayer and fasting.

**SUNDAY EVENING, OCT. 27**

- Lead church members in a solemn assembly.

**WEDNESDAY, OCT. 30**

- Observe "a day of humiliation, prayer and fasting."

**SUNDAY, NOV. 3**

- Preach on the subject of spiritual revival.

## SBC messengers approve bylaw to restructure

NEW ORLEANS (BP/ABP)—Southern Baptist messengers made it official June 11 — the denomination as it has been known for decades is being reshaped for the 21st century.

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

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

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

"Do you realize you have just changed possibly the course of denominationalism in all of America?" he asked.

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

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

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



Implementation Task Force members (left to right) Bill Hogue, Bob Reccord and Ted Warren answer questions during a press conference following final approval of SBC Bylaw 15. The action officially sets convention restructuring into motion.

ciated with the mergers and dissolutions of the seven agencies and addresses personnel issues.

The bottom line of the report, according to ITF chairman Bob Reccord, is a savings of about \$34-\$41 million over five years.

An estimated \$30 million of that amount is expected to come from "recurring savings from labor efficiencies" projected at \$6 million per year. ITF member Ted Warren added, however, that it has not yet been determined how many jobs will be eliminated in the restructuring process.

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

The report says the one-time costs of severance, relocation of personnel and non-real estate implementation costs are between \$4.1 million and \$5.7 million. Another \$3 million in recurring savings is expected to come from "non-labor efficiencies."

The plan also eliminate five agencies: the Southern Baptist Foundation, the Historical, Stewardship and Education commissions and the Commission on American Baptist Theological Seminary, an African-American school in Nashville, Tenn. Many tasks performed by those agencies will be given to other denominational entities.

Encouraging messengers to embrace the plan, Reccord noted, "We cannot become what we need to be by remaining where we are."

Warren said another unanswered question is what will happen to studios at the Radio and Television Commission in Fort Worth, Texas. The plan calls for the North American Mission Board to be based at a new HMB building in Alpharetta, Ga.

Adding studios at that site would cost about \$9.2 million, Reccord said. He added that the task force is considering several options, including moving the whole operation, leaving the studio in Fort Worth and moving administrative offices to Georgia or subcontracting all future television production.

## Covenant for a New Century implementation time line

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>June:</b> Bylaw 15 revisions gain final approval from SBC messengers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>June:</b> The Executive Committee reports to the SBC, recommending any further necessary legal revisions; entities become legally operational; former agencies cease.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>June:</b> The Executive Committee gives implementation progress report to the SBC.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>June:</b> The Executive Committee reports to the SBC the final implementation of approved structure.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>June-Sept.:</b> Detailed transition plans are finalized by the ITF and the various boards.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Oct.-June:</b> Transition plans are executed to gain transfer of organizations to the new structure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>June-June:</b> The ITF monitors implementation of Covenant for a New Century.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>June-June:</b> The ITF monitors the status of new ministries, reviews annual ministry plans and budgets and reports to the Executive Committee, assisting the Executive Committee with the reports to the SBC.</li> </ul>	

# 'Revitalization of hearts'

*Henry urges Southern Baptists to 'back up our words with actions'*

NEW ORLEANS (BP/ABP)—Restructuring the Southern Baptist Convention is not enough to ensure the denomination's strength in a post-denominational age, outgoing SBC president Jim Henry emphasized during his final presidential address.

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

"We are making strides in widening the participation level across a wider range of our Southern Baptist family," Henry noted, "but there are a few who demonstrate a need to continually manipulate the procedures for denominational service and control beyond the call extended to Southern Baptists several years ago to return us to biblical authority."

If such action "exceeds the original intent, let us expose this for what it is — political manipulation that freezes the work of the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ," he urged. "It is a shadow on the soul of Southern Baptists, and if it lengthens, it has the potential to be more damaging than our struggle for the Bible."

Outlining eight elements essential to revitalization, Henry received a standing ovation as he condemned the burning of African-American churches.

"We deplore these acts of blind hatred," he declared. "May the world hear that as the heartbeat of Southern Baptists."

Challenging Baptists to "back up our words with actions," Henry said SBC messengers would "pass the bucket" to collect an offering for black churches that have been destroyed or damaged by fire. Messengers responded the following night by giving and pledging more than \$281,000 to the effort.

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

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

## Shared values essential

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

"If we stay true to the Book, we will not



***"We must always seek to be like Jesus, who was full of truth and grace."***

— Jim Henry  
1994-96 SBC president

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

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

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

Emphasizing that "we must always seek to be like Jesus, who was full of truth and grace," Henry said the Southern Baptist

folk should not allow itself to be pigeonholed by a few people who have a "legalistic and narrow spirit."

"We, as Southern Baptists, are a diverse people. This is a source of our richness, but this is also a source of challenge for us a denomination," he remarked. "To succeed and be revitalized, we must have more than tolerance and sympathy. We must appreciate and appropriate this diversity for the common good."

Other elements he cited as essential to revitalization are:

■ **Teamwork:** Noting that pastor burnout is at an all-time high and 125 Southern Baptist ministers a month are terminated, Henry said, "We are in this together. What weakens one, weakens all — what strengthens one, strengthens all."

■ **Affirmation:** Almost 700,000 persons were baptized by Baptists last year which also marked the second-highest year for church starts, at 1,600. 1995 also was a record year for volunteers.

■ **Links beyond the community:** Our "magnificent obsession" must remain evangelism, Henry declared. To succeed at reaching the world for Christ, he said Southern Baptists must reach out to those of like faith, such as the National Alliance of Evangelicals.

"We must do a better job of producing Christians who can see the world through the eyes of Christ," Henry urged, adding that such commitment "removes us from an isolation mindset and keeps us a dynamic force in the mainstream of the evangelical community."

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

■ **A forward view:** "The God of yesterday and today is also the God of tomorrow, and you cannot walk with Him without walking forward," Henry affirmed. "Revitalization is of the heart. It occurs in the prayer closet, in the seasons of fasting, in experiencing God in our personal walk."

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

# Messengers introduce 29 motions

## Proposals range from annuity investments to human rights issues

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—A motion calling for the Southern Baptist Annuity Board to refrain from investing in companies that profit from the sale of alcohol, tobacco or materials which "undermine biblical morality" gained widespread discussion before being voted down by messengers.

Robert L. Garringer, who introduced the motion, objected to his proposal being referred to the Annuity Board for consideration. After the Committee on Order of Business agreed to place the motion on the agenda during the convention's closing session on Thursday morning, Garringer moved that his motion be voted on "immediately, ... as soon as possible — today." Messengers in the Wednesday morning business session eventually voted to move the debate up a day, but then defeated Garringer's proposal following discussion of the motion.

Calling for Annuity Board leaders to "screen every company competing for Baptist dollars," Garringer said they should immediately confess their "failures" and not repeat what he characterized as "elitist" practices of the past.

Speaking against the motion, Thomas E. Miller Jr., Annuity Board senior vice president for public relations, said the board's internal investment policy already prohibits investments in companies that are publicly recognized as engaged in activity contrary to Southern Baptist principles.

Miller said liquor, tobacco, gambling, pornography and abortion industries are named in the policy, which also excludes any company whose products, services or activities are publicly recognized as being incompatible with the moral and ethical posture of the Annuity Board.

Although Miller said he was in "spiritual agreement" with Garringer, he said the motion would be "literally impossible" to enact without increasing the risk of "punitive damages" to the board.

In other actions, messengers adopted a 1996-97 SBC Cooperative Program allocation budget of \$145,053,499. The total represents an increase of 2.4 percent over the 1995-96 budget.

In a recommendation presented by Mark Brister, chairman of the Program and Structure Study Committee, messengers approved a motion to include the words "to the glory of God the Father" in a mission statement of the Covenant for a New Century.

Three motions decrying the recent burnings of African-American churches joined almost a dozen resolutions presented on the same subject.

Tom Cocklereece of Alaska proposed assisting African-American churches with financial support and volunteer labor. His motion was referred to the Brotherhood Commission for further consideration.

Other motions proposing prayer and assistance to African-American churches destroyed or damaged by fire were introduced by R. Zack Zbinden of Georgia and Dennis Sartain of South Carolina. Zbinden's motion was referred to the SBC Executive Committee for further action, while Sartain later withdrew his motion.

Other motions ranged from a request to "bombard" the White House with complaints of how Christians are persecuted in some countries to a call for an SBC bylaw change to exclude agency heads from recommending candidates for trustees of their agencies to the SBC Committee on Nominations.

The lone motion scheduled for debate during the closing session of the annual meeting was introduced by F. Leslie Kammerdiener Jr., of Kansas.

Kammerdiener's motion called for the Executive Committee to report at each convention meeting on actions taken regarding all motions referred to the Executive Committee at the previous year's convention. Executive Committee president Morris H. Chapman said he "totally approved" of the motion's intent which was overwhelmingly approved.

Home Mission Board trustee Wyndham Cook, a member of Westside Church in El Dorado, requested a bylaw change to prevent SBC agency heads or their staff from recommending individuals to serve as trustees of their entities. Cook introduced a similar motion last year which the Executive Committee declined to approve. An effort to divide the question for an immediate vote failed.

Other motions referred to the Executive Committee include:

- A proposal to ensure at least one of the three top SBC offices — president, first and second vice president — be filled by a layman.

- A request for the Executive Committee to prepare and distribute pamphlets and other information contrasting the theological views of the SBC with those of the Alliance of Baptists, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship and others.

- A proposal to establish a four-year liberal arts university accountable to the SBC.

- A recommendation to re-route Cooperative Program funds through the SBC Executive Committee.

- A call to determine when a church is

in violation of Article III of the SBC constitution. Article III lists criteria for messengers who are members of cooperating Southern Baptist churches.

Among other motions sent to the SBC Executive Committee were four requests involving geographical or time changes for the SBC annual meeting. The motions included such as:

- The annual meeting be scheduled later in the month of June.

- The annual meeting be held regularly in cities where SBC work is not well established.

- The convention meeting be held one year in the northeast United States.

- SBC annual meetings be held by satellite broadcast or in regional locations.

In the first motion addressed to the North American Mission Board — to be created from a merger of the Home Mission Board, Brotherhood Commission and Radio and Television Commission — the development of a series of television and radio spots to "enhance the image of Southern Baptists" was proposed.

Two motions referred to the Committee on Order of Business for consideration in planning the 1997 annual meeting were:

- A request to recognize the "God-given talents of a more representative panel of preachers, readers, speakers, singers, and other leaders" at future SBC annual meetings.

- A proposal that people from the New England states and those north of the "Mason-Dixon Line" be asked to participate in SBC annual meeting programs.

Two motions referred to the Baptist Sunday School Board were:

- A request for the BSSB not to use the name "LifeWay Press" on materials sold to other denominations or non-Baptist groups.

- A proposal that the board stop publishing the 12-volume Broadman Commentary.

Three motions referred to the Christian Life Commission included:

- A call to "bombard" embassies and the White House to protest for human rights and freedom of religion for Christians being persecuted in other countries.

- A request for the CLC to establish a proxy voting system to communicate with corporate managers.

- A recommendation that the agency's name be changed to the "Christian Ethics and Religious Commission."

A single motion dealing with Christian education was referred to all SBC agencies and institutions. The motion called for better use of "empty" church facilities.

# Arkansans at the SBC



Both Arkansas Baptist-affiliated colleges were represented in the convention's exhibit area in the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans. Williams Baptist College president Jerol Swaim (above, at left) talks with two visitors to the college's booth, while Randy Garner, director of admissions counseling, and his wife Angela, (below, outside) greet Jack and Sue Hazelwood at the Ouachita Baptist University alumni reception.



As chairman of the 1996 SBC Committee on Order of Business, Jim Richards, director of missions for Northwest Association, played an active role in setting the pace for each business session.

Along with business, worship played an important part in the convention program. Buster Pray (right), minister of music for First Church, Springdale, and Rob Hewell, Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music ministries department director (far right), each led messengers in worship during sessions.





The Zambian Acapella Choir provides special music during the Foreign Mission Board's 1996 report to the SBC.

## FMB presents challenge of 'Last Frontier'

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

As the congregation stood and sang "Wherever He Leads, I'll Go," people left their seats and filtered down the aisles of the Louisiana Superdome the evening of June 12. They came individually and in pairs, couples with their arms around each other, a man with his arm over a boy's shoulder. They stood and talked and prayed with missionaries on the floor of the arena. Others remained in their seats and filled out commitment cards.

The commitment service was part of the annual FMB report to the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention.

When the decisions were tabulated, more than 1,500 commitments had been registered: 476 for some type of overseas missions service, four for home missions and 959 pledging to support missions by praying, giving or encouraging others.

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

The board appointed 54 people to career positions in about 25 countries during an emotional service that mixed pageantry, music, video, drama and testimony. A parade of international flags — a tradition of the appointment services — included a procession of gray banners representing 2,161 ethnic people groups with 1.7 billion people who have never heard of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Baptists from every area of the world came to the microphone and told about the need for the gospel in their own coun-

tries and appealed for help. As each finished speaking, missionary appointees stepped up and shared how God had called them to meet needs in that part of the world. Each group then knelt at the front to pray for the lost and unreached in its area.

Many Christian hearts are burdened for those who don't know Christ, Rankin said, but the new missionaries are different because their hearts have been broken over the needs of the lost and unreached.

"I pray you will never lose that broken heart," he told the appointees. "If your heart ever ceases to be broken, you'll not have the joy of bringing the lost to Jesus Christ.... Your ministry will be ineffective."

### Missionary: 'We're still alive'

Rwanda missionary Marlene Lee recalled the April 1994 genocide that left 500,000 Rwandan Tutsis "chopped up and left to die and rot like garbage."

Southern Baptist stayers sustained her and her husband, Stan, as they were forced to evacuate and then worked among abandoned children in a refugee camp in Goma, Zaire, Lee said. They even survived two attempts on their lives, she said, "because you were praying."

"We're still alive and this coming Sunday we leave to go back home to Rwanda, to rejoin our nationals as we lead our nation in the revival that is taking place there," she said. "Will you continue to pray that we will be given God's mercy and protection, that we will be strong...and that we will see the world recognize Rwanda because God is doing something there?"

Appointee Erin Thomas recalled the 1990 airplane crash that claimed the life of her partner, English teacher Mary Anna Gilbert.

"In that horrible moment, I didn't know whether I would live or die," Thomas said. "I can't explain why God took Mary Anna home but chose for me to live. But I can

affirm that God's plan is for me to claim one of these gray flags, representing an unreached people group in Indochina."

The appointment service capped an evening program that included presentations by the Home Mission Board and the Baptist World Alliance.

In his formal convention report, Rankin said the FMB has appointed more than 12,000 missionaries in its 151-year history. Half of those have taken the field since 1976. One-third of that number remain in active service today.

In 1976, the FMB reported 80,000 baptisms and 7,500 churches on mission fields, he said. Twenty years later, the board reports 287,000 baptisms and 39,000 congregations. Of 50 new churches planted each week during 1995, seven were among peoples of the "Last Frontier" that previously have had little or no access to the gospel.

He thanked Southern Baptists for record gifts through the Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and for the record number of volunteers and new missionaries being sent. However, the needs and opportunities around the world exceed the resources, he said.

"We should be sending out at least one missionary for every 1,000 members in our churches," Rankin said. "God is still saying, 'If my people will hear and respond to my call, not 5,000 but 15,000 Southern Baptists would be impacting a lost world with the gospel. If my people would give generously and sacrificially, \$100 million could be given to the Lottie Moon offering."

"If my people would lift up their eyes and look on the fields and pray, strongholds of Satan would be broken down, and soon a multitude that no man could count from every tribe and people and tongue and nation would be gathered around the throne and worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ."



## WMU, FMB leaders sign agreement to 'enlarge volunteer involvement'

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

WMU executive director Dellana O'Brien and FMB president Jerry Rankin signed the letter of agreement before a small group of WMU and FMB leaders gathered in the FMB booth in the Southern Baptist Convention exhibit area in the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans.

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

"Through the WMU network of state, associational and local church leadership and through WMU curriculum, products and programs," the document continues, "the volunteer connection office will recruit individuals to fulfill the requests."

Volunteer connection is WMU's newly created volunteer recruitment office directed by Delane Tew, a former FMB missionary to Japan. The office will develop

a network of volunteers based on interest and desire and provide training for those individuals before placing them in volunteer assignments. Along with the FMB, volunteer connection also will work with the Home Mission Board to recruit volunteers.

WMU's development of volunteer connection is in response to the growing "trend of personal involvement in the going and doing of missions," O'Brien said. This volunteer service, she noted, "enlarges the involvement, both in giving and doing, of these individuals in missions when they return home."

"This new relationship with the Foreign Mission Board," she said, "will provide WMU many exciting opportunities as we continue to look for new ways of involving our membership in missions."

Rankin said the new agreement with WMU is part of the FMB's ongoing effort "to broaden its strategy for involving more volunteers" in overseas missions experiences.

Noting WMU's "influential network," Rankin said the relationship with the women's organization will "assist us in developing and sending trained volunteers" to help fulfill Southern Baptists' efforts through the FMB to evangelize the world.



Ken and Lygia  
Lovelace

Larry and Berri  
Matz

## Two couples with Arkansas ties appointed by FMB

NEW ORLEANS - Two couples with Arkansas ties were among 54 people appointed missionaries by the Foreign Mission Board during a service at the Superdome in New Orleans. The appointment service was held in conjunction with the June 12 annual report of the FMB at the Southern Baptist Convention.

Appointed were Ken and Lygia Lovelace of Spring Hill, Fla., and Larry and Berri Matz of Dayton, Ohio.

The Lovelaces will live in Portugal, where he will start and develop churches and both will be involved in outreach ministries.

Born in Pine Bluff, he is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Jerry Lovelace of White Hall. While growing up, he also lived in White Hall and considers it his hometown and First Church there his home church.

Lovelace is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He has been pastor of East Park Baptist Church in Belvidere, Ill., and associate pastor of evangelism at Travis Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas. Since 1993, he has been pastor of First Baptist Church of Weeki Wachee Acres in Spring Hill.

The Matzes will live in the Philippines, where he also will start and develop churches and they will be involved in outreach ministries.

Since 1992 he has been associate pastor in education and administration at Crestview Baptist Church in Dayton.

Berri Matz served as a teacher for Crawfordsville Public Schools while the couple lived in Memphis.

Both couples will leave for Rockville, Va., in August to complete a seven-week orientation before leaving for the mission field.



Foreign Mission Board president Jerry Rankin and Woman's Missionary Union executive director Dellana O'Brien sign a letter of agreement calling for WMU to help recruit volunteers for foreign missions assignments.



## BSSB president Draper cites agency's 'abundant fruits'

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—The ministries and resources developed by the Baptist Sunday School Board are the "abundant fruits" of its work during the past year, BSSB president James T. Draper Jr. told messengers to the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention during the agency's annual report.

"As we develop materials or services or ministries, we must focus on relationships, beginning with that which must be first in our lives, our relationship with Jesus Christ," Draper said.

Feedback from state convention meetings, networking strategies and partnerships with other denominational entities have become a key means to focus ministries and services, he said. This year Draper noted that he is visiting 15 state convention offices "to learn about their priorities, to listen and to identify ways we can work together more effectively."

"Sometimes our relationships are begun in special places that are forever tied in our minds to the experiences we had there," he observed, adding that Gloriaia (N.M.) and Ridgecrest (N.C.) Conference Centers "throughout their history have been places where people have made life-changing spiritual decisions and received training that equipped them for greater service."

To position the conference centers for effective ministry into the 21st century, Draper said the board has launched a fundraising campaign seeking contributions from a limited number of donors.

In a presentation following the report, Draper spoke of needs that prompted the board's new strategy to aid ministers in crisis. He said approximately 225 ministers are fired every month.

LeaderCare has been developed "to address the simmering issues that lie close to the surface of denominational life," he explained.

Introducing Brooks Faulkner, a 31-year employee of the board who will lead the ministry of prevention, intervention and restoration, Draper said he and Faulkner have wept together when learning during recent months of two pastors who committed suicide.

He also presented Linda Miniard, a consultant who will work with an estimated 22,000 women serving in ministry leadership positions on church staffs.

He said among the board's priority issues is an emphasis on church growth. The 1.5.4 church growth plan detailed in *Kingdom Principles for Church Growth*,



Rick Warren told SBC messengers, "Great churches are built on purpose, not on plans or personalities."

a book by Gene Mims, vice president of the board's church growth group, is a strategy that will grow churches, Draper said.

Draper introduced Rick Warren, senior pastor of Saddleback Church in Mission Viejo, Calif., as a pastor whose church embodies the 1.5.4 principles.

Warren said he is most often asked how his church grew so fast and so big. He said the church "balanced the five functions of the church. All living things grow, if they are healthy. It is natural for a church to grow if it is healthy. When the functions of a church are balanced, health and growth automatic.

"Great churches are built on purpose, not on plans or personalities," Warren continued. "I want to say from my experience, it works."

Other items included in the BSSB presentation were:

- Introduction of an all-new National Conference for Church Leadership at Ridgecrest and Gloriaia this year.

- The simultaneous inclusion of two Broadman & Holman books on a best-seller list during the past year.

- Release of 20 volumes of The New American Commentary as of this year, half of the publishing project.

- Celebration of Baptist Book Stores' 70th anniversary this year.

Also joining Draper during the presentation were Broadman & Holman author Wellington Boone and Linda Miller, a Baptist Book Store employee.

Draper presented Boone the author's copy of his book, *Breaking Through*, describing him as "one of the most dynamic Christian teachers of our time."

Boone told the audience the 1995 SBC action on racial reconciliation was "the restoration of the desolation of the generations up to this time."

"This is the first time a Christian publisher has selected a black man as an 'A' level author," he said. "There can only be one first. The rest of the Christian publishers will have to eat the dust."

Miller, assistant manager of the Baptist Book Store in Los Angeles, recounted her experience of praying with a customer who was distraught over the massacre of 16 children in Dunblaine, Scotland.

She said through that customer, she met the daughter of the mayor of Dunblaine. At the urging of her granddaughter, Miller led in a Sunday School project, creation of a banner of children's handprints in the shape of a rainbow with the message, "You are now in the hands of God." The banner was then sent to Scotland as a gift to the town.

One contact with a customer in the Baptist Book Store has resulted in a ministry effort, Miller said, that has resulted in friendships and ongoing contact with a town that suffered loss.

Also during the presentation, popular youth speaker and author Josh McDowell warned messengers that the central core of Christian faith in America has not been as seriously challenged in the last 2,000 years as it is today.

McDowell said he fears Christian leaders will awaken in a few years to find that something called "positive tolerance" has become the number one virtue in America.

"Positive tolerance declares that all viewpoints are equal," he said. "John 3:16 is being replaced by Matthew 7:1: 'Judge not that you be not judged.'"

"If you say in the average classroom, 'I love you but hate your sin,' you will be labeled a bigot and intolerant," McDowell said.

Justice and tolerance cannot coexist," he said.

"Justice says there is a moral basis for right and wrong. Tolerance says there is no moral basis," McDowell said.

McDowell, who received a standing ovation at the close of his message, encouraged churches to lead not only youth but their parents through "Right from Wrong," a curriculum produced by the BSSB for a national campaign he is spearheading.

"We have turned a whole generation loose with precepts but no moral authority," he warned.

"America is not a battlefield," McDowell declared. "It's a mission field."

# 'We could not do this job alone'

## HMB report affirms ecumenical boost to aid Bold Mission Thrust

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Citing the end of the millennium as a strategic time in history, Southern Baptist Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis urged Southern Baptists to link arms with evangelical denominations and organizations across America to share Christ with every person in the nation by the end of 2000.

Lewis, noting Southern Baptists have had as a Bold Mission Thrust goal to share the gospel with everyone in America by 2000, called "Celebrate Jesus 2000" a specific strategy that developed out of a "shared vision" of many evangelical organizations in America.

"No matter how great our intentions, we could not do this job alone," Lewis said. "This will require a great effort, not only of Southern Baptists, but all Great Commission Christians who have this on their heart. We want to take the rhetoric of Bold Mission thrust and make it a reality."

The national effort consists of four primary elements:

■ Prayer. "If we are to be effective in reaching America for Christ we must bathe this nation in prayer," Lewis said. "Prayer must be paramount."

Lewis said he could envision prayer marches in every city, prayer partners in every church, prayer chains and prayer for everyone in a city's telephone directory.

■ Personal witnessing. "Every effort will be made to share the gospel with every person at every door," Lewis said. "Hopefully, no one will be missed in the effort."

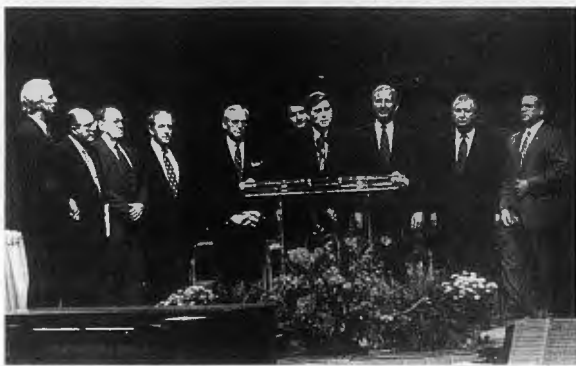
Witnessing efforts include sharing door-to-door, distributing gospel tracts and Jesus videos, as well as contacting people by mail and telephone.

■ Proclamation. Simultaneous revivals, area crusades and major revival efforts are planned for spring 1999, to be followed by a "great central crusade" in fall 1999 for broadcast everywhere in America.

Part of that effort is YouthLink 2000, a project to bring youth from across the nation to seven stadiums on New Year's Eve 1999. "What a great way to usher in the millennium," Lewis stated.

■ Preservation. "We will congregationalize and disciple those won to Christ," Lewis said. "We expect literally hundreds of churches to be planted as part of this effort and as fruit of this effort."

The HMB leader introduced representatives of several evangelical organizations participating in the strategy. They included Don Argue, president of the National Association of Evangelicals; Paul Cedar, chairman of Mission America; John Cortis, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic



During his report on "Celebrate Jesus 2000," a strategy to reach America for Christ by the turn of the century, Home Mission Board president Larry Lewis introduced evangelical leaders who have joined in the "shared vision" to evangelize the nation.

Association; Steve Douglass, executive vice president of Campus Crusade for Christ; Nilson Fanini, president of the Baptist World Alliance; and C.B. "Bill" Hogue, vice president of the BWA. Lewis also recognized Jim Henry, outgoing SBC president, and Tom Elliff, newly elected SBC president for their involvement.

"God is marvelously and miraculously bringing Christians together as never before in history," Lewis said. "The Home Mission Board is giving leadership to the most intensive evangelistic thrust in the history of the SBC and maybe in the history of our nation."

***"God is marvelously and miraculously bringing Christians together as never before in history."***

— Larry Lewis  
President  
Home Mission Board

Just before the HMB presentation, several of the evangelical leaders spoke to reporters.

"It's the Lord that has initiated this in the hearts of many of us in many different ways," Cedar said. "This is a strategic

initiative that is on the cutting edge of sharing Christ."

Said Argue: "There is a fresh interest that is present for evangelism, renewal and reaching America for Christ."

Cortis stressed the importance of personal witnessing to achieve the project's goal.

"We're in a day when evangelism does still work," he said. "The more we do that, the more we're going to see the blessing of God."

During his official report to SBC messengers, Lewis said Southern Baptists should thank God for gains in several missions and evangelism areas.

HMB reports show there were 393,811 baptisms in 1995, up 4 percent from the previous year. "Let us thank God for these lives that have been changed and been reached by the gospel," Lewis said.

Lewis also noted there were 1,458 new Southern Baptist churches started last year — including 144 existing churches which affiliated with the convention.

In other statistics, records show 40,120 constituted churches and 5,716 church-type missions put the total number of Southern Baptist congregations at 45,836; there were 4,857 missionaries appointed by the HMB, close to the goal of 5,000 appointed home missionaries by 2000; there were 2,248 Mission Service Corps volunteers participating last year in home missions ministries; and a total of 79,162 Southern Baptist volunteers participated in short-term mission projects.

## **Annuity Board benefits exceed \$192 million**

Southern Baptists' annuity, relief and insurance programs are healthy, with retirement and relief benefits exceeding \$192 million last year, Annuity Board president Paul Powell told more than 13,000 messengers attending the June 11-13 annual meeting at the Louisiana Superdome in New Orleans.

Powell, in the board's annual report, said that of the 25,601 annuitants who received benefits in 1995, 9,982 received \$200 or less because of inadequate participation by themselves and the churches they served during their employment years.

The Annuity Board's Adopt an Annuitant program provided an extra \$50 each month to 1,711 of the oldest with the least benefits, he said. "All of the money for this program comes from designated gifts, and once an annuitant is enrolled, it is probable the need...will continue for life."

Total assets managed by the board at the end of 1995 were \$5.173 billion. More than 37,000 employees of 20,253 churches were participating in the retirement and insurance programs at the end of the year. Also, more than 35,000 employees of 246 Baptist agencies and institutions participated during the year.

Outgoing SBC president Jim Henry, pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., said he believes one of the reasons his church had "one of its greatest years in giving" was because of its strong participation in the Adopt an Annuitant program.

## **Six seminary presidents report campus progress**

"This is one of the first years that we have come back — all of the seminaries — to our historical roots," a former seminary trustee told Southern Baptist Convention messengers.

After a report by Southern Baptist Theological Seminary president Al Mohler, Lindy Reed, a former Southern trustee and pastor of Birchwood Baptist Church, Independence, Mo., thanked the six seminary presidents on behalf of the messengers gathered in the morning session.

Mark Coppenger, president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, reported the seminary is "just where we need to be...waiting on the Lord."

The success of the seminary does not depend on the number of students enrolled, Coppenger said, but the seminary will grow if, and when, students are called by God to study there.

Paige Patterson, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, described the campus as a "white-hot atmosphere" with one-third of the students

involved in soul-winning and missions endeavors.

Mohler said Southern Seminary is "not an evangelical seminary, we are the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. We live by our name. We are proud of our name."

At Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, classrooms of students whose skin tones are like the colors of a children's song — red and yellow, black and white — reflect the diversity seen "in the wonderful world mission laboratory in which God has planted" the seminary, president William O. Crews said in his report.

"Several wonderful programs are already in place to provide students with hands-on experience in evangelism, church planting and church growth in selected mission fields around the world," Crews said. "We are excited to be a part of a leadership development process that gives this kind of practical ministry experience to those who will be the future leaders of our churches."

Charles S. Kelley, who recently took the helm of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, addressed during his report the question, "What kind of seminary is New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary going to be?"

"It is going to be the church place, on mission to equip leaders to fulfill the Great Commission and the great commandments, using as a standard for ministry, values that include doctrinal integrity and servant leadership," Kelley said.

Ken Hemphill, president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, said the "spirit of revival" continues there.

He said student revival teams who traveled to states where Southern Baptist work is fairly new led 131 persons to accept Christ as their Savior.

"We believe our convention and our nation is on the brink of revival and we want our seminary and campus to be a part of that," Hemphill said.

## **Plumb depths of salt and light, Land urges SBC**

In his June 11 report, Christian Life Commission president Richard Land challenged Southern Baptists to "plumb the depths of what it means to be salt and light." He targeted concerns over parental rights, the sanctity of human life, a radical homosexual rights agenda, racial reconciliation and persecution of Christians.

The CLC will oppose efforts to "stand against the radical homosexual rights agenda in Washington, D.C.," Land said. He said he believes a majority of Americans oppose "this radical agenda that would seek to make deviant behavior acceptable and normal in this society."

Land expressed disappointment at the

Walt Disney corporation scheduling a gay emphasis day in light of their portrayal as a family business with family-oriented programming.

In standing for the sanctity of all human life, Land said that includes "conception to natural death and everywhere in between."

While standing for racial and ethnic representation in America, Land said that "will only happen if the Christians in America stand up and practice the reconciling love of Jesus Christ."

Land called on Southern Baptists to stand up for Christians facing "unprecedented persecution" overseas as a result of their faith in Jesus Christ.

"Christians are literally being crucified in the Sudan and Ethiopia, are under death sentences for accepting Jesus Christ...in places like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and face an aggressive campaign of government persecution against Christians in the People's Republic of China, the People's Republic of Vietnam and Cuba."

## **Brotherhood president evaluates past, future**

James Williams, president of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, looked back at the organization's 90-year history as well as the organization's future during a report to Southern Baptist Convention messengers.

Citing the growing participation of men and boys in missions, Williams remarked, "Last year, God allowed us to post an increase in total enrollment and involvement of almost 16 percent, to an all-time record of 749,000."

Even this significant growth, Williams said, could not blunt the reality of the future of the Brotherhood Commission, however.

It will be dissolved as a free-standing organization, located now in Memphis, Tenn., and become part of the new North American Mission Board to be housed in Alpharetta, Ga.

"These numbers show legitimate growth and strong momentum, and we must not allow it to be lost as the Brotherhood Commission becomes a part of the new North American Mission Board," Williams said. Because of the growth and increased interest, "this is no time for 'downsizing' of effort."

Williams ended by sharing his vision of having 1 million men and boys involved in missions education and 500,000 serving as missions volunteers by the year 2000.

"The work of involving Southern Baptist people in missions is God's work," Williams said. "He started it. He has sustained it and whatever God starts He will finish, regardless of what the organization is called."

# '96 Crossover yields 2,659 new Christians

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

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

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

Fred Dyess, director of missions for the Baptist Association of New Orleans, said, "It was a blessing to see people witnessing all over the place. I know our churches will follow up on people who made decisions and take what they learned and do it again. We're trying to take the gospel to every household by the year 2000, and this was a good start."

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

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

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

Hundreds of youngsters played in an inflatable "moonwalk" and had their faces painted. Adults selected items of clothing donated by First Baptist Church, Lafayette, La. Baton Rouge-based Michael Ellerbe and the gospel group Refined By Fire provided music for the party, with Ellerbe enlisting a backup group of children to sing a rap version of Romans 16:19-20. They leapt in unison at the promise that God will crush Satan under the feet of believers.

St. Bernard resident Katrina Evans expressed appreciation for the block party. "I like the way they read you the Bible and help you on these things." She noted that



Mike West (left), a member of Central Baptist Church in Hixson, Tenn., prays with a resident of St. Bernard Housing Community during a June 8 block party in New Orleans. This year's Crossover resulted in more than 2,600 people accepting Christ.

more teenage men needed to be present.

"They're the most troublemakers."

"It was really, really fun," commented Susan Townsend, a member of Otter Creek First Church in Little Rock, who was part of a team of five Otter Creek teens and three adults that participated in Crossover.

"We worked at the Suburban Baptist Church in New Orleans," she said. "We had a block party and we put on singing, puppets, had games for the kids and were in witnessing teams."

She said part of the Otter Creek team "prayed, handed out Bibles and witnessed to people that came to the block party. The other part of our team went out with partners door-to-door."

## Memorable experience

"It was fun," she emphasized. She said one of her most memorable experiences of Crossover was of a team "that went up to a lady's house to witness. The woman was in her pajamas. She was so urgent to hear the gospel."

"The team said, 'We can come back,' and she said, 'No, I want to hear now.' So they carried on a conversation through a mail-box slot," she said. "You don't know how much of an impact you are making on people until they (accept Christ)."

In another, better-known area of the Crescent City, Crossover New Orleans volunteers worked in the French Quarter, where sex shows, psychics and voodoo shops assault visitors' senses. On Friday night, Tennesseans Don and Miny Weaver admitted their hearts were heavy at what they saw on Bourbon Street.

"All the wickedness that's going on here — how can our feeble effort make a

difference?" Don Weaver asked. "It scares you; you almost feel like you ought to not be here at all. But still God loves these people. He created them and we need to see them through His eyes."

Later that evening in Cafe Joel — a Christian coffee house on Bourbon Street — Weaver led a man to the Lord and introduced him to a cafe worker for follow-up.

Salvations also were recorded in prisons as volunteers shared the gospel with inmates. At St. Gabriel women's prison, 67 people made professions of faith and 34 people were baptized Sunday morning. "It was electrifying," said Richard Harris, Home Mission Board director of mass evangelism, who led the service.

Meanwhile, pairs canvassed neighborhoods, asking residents about their religious beliefs and sharing the gospel.

Greg Barker, pastor of Haynes Avenue Baptist Church, Shreveport, La., saw Crossover as a means of introducing the teenagers of his church to door-to-door evangelism. The church's WMU used their mission funds to cover expenses for the four adults and eight teenagers to make the day trip to New Orleans.

"It started out as a class project," added Beth Mericle, also of Shreveport. Admitting she wasn't excited by the prospect of witnessing in New Orleans, Mericle said, "I'm their Sunday School teacher and I knew it wouldn't look too good if the teacher didn't want to go. So I prayed about it and knew I needed to be here."

E.C. and Jeanie Mitcheli accompanied the Shreveport youth, grateful for the opportunity to witness. "No matter how old you are, 5 or 85, a born-again Christian should start producing fruit," he affirmed.

## Preach without compromise, Baptist pastors challenged

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Southern Baptist pastors who converged on the Crescent City June 9-10 at the Louisiana Superdome were challenged to preach the divine revelation of God's Word without compromise while praying for revival.

"God's gateway to supernatural power in your life, your church, the SBC and our nation is by humbling ourselves through prayer and fasting," said Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale.

Floyd was elected by acclamation as president of the 1997 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference. He succeeds Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga. The theme of the 1996 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference was "Fruit That Remains," based on John 15:16.

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

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

Elliff, who was elected Southern Baptist Convention president, said Baptists cannot afford to waste an opportunity to sow the seed of revival across the world.

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

Spiritual renewal and revival must make its presence felt in society's political and social climate, evangelist Bailey Smith said.

"I'm not proud of a president of the United States that claims to be a Southern Baptist that backs every damnable cause that comes down the pike," Smith said as the audience responded in a standing ovation. "It's time the people of God that have standards have a president in the White House. We need a revival in the White House. We need a revival in the church house. We need a revival in your house. We need a revival in my house."

Smith, who served as SBC president from 1980-82, said Hollywood is a major enemy of Christians.

"There are some enemies of the cross that need to back up," Smith said. "I want you to say to the Hollywood crowd 'back

up.' It's interesting to me that the favorite word of cussing today in Hollywood is the word 'Jesus Christ.' Why don't they pick on Buddha and his flabby bellybutton? They're not going to pick on Buddha because he doesn't hurt anybody. They're not going to pick on Islam with its commitment to violence. That fits right into the terror of the Hollywood screen."

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

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

*"The great movements of God are led by people who believe it's a life-or-death issue and they're not afraid to speak it."*

— Tom Elliff  
SBC president

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

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

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

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

Ron Phillips, pastor of Central Baptist Church, Hixson, Tenn., said revival in America is dependent on believers returning to their first love of Jesus Christ.

"When is the last time you went into the arms of Jesus Christ and said, 'I love

you? What price will you pay? How will you show him your love?'"

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

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

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

"It's a time of celebration," Reavis said. "Baptist folks have gotten so dead that if you act like you're alive they think you're charismatic."

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

With revival comes conflict, warned James Merritt, pastor of First Baptist Church, Snellville, Ga. "The enemies you make by taking a firm stand for what is right will have more respect for you than the friends you have for straddling the fence. Those who stand tallest for God will always be the ones to draw the fire."

Before revival may begin in the church it must start in the home, former SBC presidents Adrian Rogers and Jerry Vines said.

"The measure of a man of God, whether he is in the ministry or out of the ministry, is the spiritual condition of his children," said Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn.

Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla., agreed. "Your home is your greatest preaching station," he said.

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

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

"Now God is trusting the love He gave His Son will send us also out into the world. I pray that love will be evidenced in us.... May this generation be the source of fruit that remains in our broken world."

Other Pastors' Conference officers elected by acclamation in addition to Floyd were Ronnie Yarber, pastor of Cross Road Baptist Church, Mesquite, Texas, vice president, and Mike Routt, pastor of Rose Hill Baptist Church, Ashland, Ky., secretary-treasurer.

## WMU leaders combine tradition and vision

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

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

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

WMU has been and will continue to be an auxiliary to the SBC, Lee said. WMU's roles in missions education and promotion of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for home missions have not changed, she emphasized.

Also, WMU will continue to work with the two mission boards under their new names, Lee said. Southern Baptist Convention messengers approved a bylaw change during their June 11-13 annual meeting that will be the final step in approving a downsizing of the denomination from 19 national agencies to 12.

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

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

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

O'Brien told members the organization is facing a "hinge moment in history."

She cited examples of WMU ministries during the past year such as Project Help: AIDS and North Korean relief efforts.

"It would be impossible to know and to share all that WMU is doing in churches, associations and states in the time of this entire annual meeting," O'Brien said. "Suffice it to say, we are continuing in the steps of our foremothers, seeing needs and responding in the name of Christ."

Acknowledging that "it is difficult to see in detail the context and the work of our beloved organization in the future," O'Brien added. "We must say, however, that these days will offer new challenges, new opportunities, new methods."

O'Brien acknowledged the uncertainty



New WMU president Wanda Lee shares her vision of WMU as executive director Dellanna O'Brien and recording secretary Janet Hoffman look on.

caused by the restructuring of the SBC.

"This next year will be significant as we finally know the details of our denomination's reorganization," O'Brien said. "In a vacuum of knowledge, it has been difficult for us to anticipate with precision our role."

WMU members also heard keynote speakers challenge them to action in a variety of avenues in a changing world environment.

### 'At a crossroads'

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

"Life has changed," the research associate for the National Evangelistic Association told approximately 2,500 registrants for the meeting. "We have to always reach new generations for Jesus Christ," he declared.

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

"If we believed Jesus, we'd have waiting lists to teach children's Sunday School and lead Vacation Bible School," she said. "If we really believed this, we couldn't find enough children for people to tutor or enough at-risk teenagers for church members to mentor."

Noted speaker, author and educator Leonard Sweet gave WMU members some bad news and good news. "This world is in

trouble. This world is dying," said Sweet, dean of theology at Drew University, Madison, N.J.

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

Participants also heard messages from the presidents of Southern Baptists' two missionary-sending agencies.

Foreign Mission Board president Jerry Rankin said FMB personnel have identified 2,466 people groups that have not been accessible to missionaries. And while foreign missionaries reached 41 new people groups last year, he said, the systematic effort to reach such groups cannot be accomplished quickly enough.

"Millions will die before we can reach them with the gospel," Rankin said.

During a session emphasizing reaching people "in the homeland," Lewis praised Southern Baptist leaders who 20 years ago "dared to dream." Their dreams resulted in Bold Mission Thrust, Southern Baptists' plan to share Christ with everyone in the world by the year 2000.

He told WMU members of the HMB's "Celebrate Jesus: 2000" interdenominational strategy to get the gospel message to everyone in America by the year 2000. The HMB plan, according to Lewis, calls for an extensive prayer effort in 1997, followed by taking Christ to every home in 1998 and ending with crusades in 1999.

"I believe Southern Baptists are on the threshold of a fourth Great Awakening," Lewis said. "Let's stand with God and make it so."

## Staff changes

**Bruce J. Brown** began his ministry June 1 as pastor of Rose Bud Church, coming there from First Church of Harrison where he had served as youth and children's pastor since 1992. He previously was youth minister and associate pastor for Bethel Church of Celina, Texas. Brown is a graduate of University of Central Arkansas and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Cookie, have three children, Matthew, Michael and Megan.

**David Alan Smith** will begin his ministry July 21 as pastor of First Church of Piggott, coming there from Locust Grove Church of Murray, Ky., where he has served since 1993. He previously was pastor of West Church of Hickman, Ky., Second Church of Leachville and Faith Church of Forrest City. Smith is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to the former Dianna L. Daniels. They have a daughter, Kaylee Danielle.

**Raymond A. McDonald** is pastor of First Church of Locksburg, coming there from Bethesda 'Y' Church of Bivins, Texas. He also has served other churches in Texas and Missouri. He is a graduate of Dallas Bible College and Criswell Center for Biblical Studies. He currently is completing correspondence study with Southeastern Bible College in Birmingham, Ala. McDonald and his wife, Madge Marie, have three children, Jonathan Ray, Nicole Marie and Joshua Ray.

**Joseph Botwinick** recently began his first ministry as a pastor at Concord Church, Aly. Licensed to the ministry by Second Church of Jacksonville, he is a graduate of Arkansas Tech University, Russellville, and has attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Botwinick is married to the former Glenda Jo Swalm of Aly.



## ARKANSAS ALL OVER

By MILLIE GILL

**Joe Silva** is pastor of Long Ridge Church of Booneville. He and his wife, Michelle, moved there from Frankfort, Ky., where he was associate pastor and youth minister for Thornhill Church. Silva is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

**Joe Vallandingham** joined the staff of Concord Church of Van Buren May 26 as minister of music and education. Vallandingham, who has served in the ministry for 30 years, came to Van Buren from First Church of McAllister, Okla. He is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, Okla. He and his wife, Glenda, have two children, Michael and Christina.

**Danny Haflich** joined the staff of First Church of Forrest City June 7 as student minister with the responsibilities of ministering to both children and youth. He previously served as minister of youth and education for First Church of Marion and as minister of youth for Vanderbilt Church of West Memphis. Haflich, a graduate of Crichton College of Memphis, was ordained to the ministry by Vanderbilt Church.

**Darrell Smith** joined the staff of Geyer Springs First Church in Little Rock June 16 as minister to single adults, coming there from First Southern Church of Del City, Okla. He previously served First Church of Albuquerque, N.M. Smith is a graduate of Liberty University, Lynchburg, Va., and Baylor University. He and his wife, Diana, have three children, Trevor, Allie and Kelsey.

**Keith Adams** will join the staff of Sylvan Hills First Church in North Little Rock July 14 as minister of students and recreation, coming there from First Church of Wetumpka, Ala., where he has been minister of youth. He is a native of Forrest City where he served First Church as youth ministry intern. In addition, he has been associate pastor and minister of youth for First Church of Stafford, Mo. Adams is a graduate of Southwestern Baptist University, Bolivar, Mo., and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to the former Joan Hughes of Forrest City. They have two children, Morgan Keeling and Kaylee Marie.

**James C. Alcock Jr.** will join the staff of First Church in Clarksville July 21 as minister of music and senior adults, going there from First Church of Hope where he has served for eight years as minister of music and administration. He previously was a contract worker in church music for the Baptist Convention of New England and director of church music and church recreation for the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware. In addition, Alcock has served in interim and part-time music and education leadership positions for churches in Maryland, Tennessee and Kentucky. Alcock, a member of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* board of directors, is a graduate of Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to the former Mary DeLaine Sherbenou, also a graduate of Union University and Southern Seminary. They have two adult daughters, Melody Will of Virginia Beach, Va., and Jana Alcock of Little Rock, and one grandchild.

**Michael Bowien** is pastor of Central Church, Dyess. He is a graduate of Mid-America Seminary. Bowien and his wife, Janie, have two children, Michael Jr. and Amanda.

**Kristy Norris** and **Jeff Noble** are assisting Second Church in Monticello with summer ministries. Norris, a sophomore at the University of Arkansas at Monticello, is serving as children's ministry director. Noble, UAM Baptist Student Union director, is interim education director.

**Sarah Dumas** is summer children's director for First Church of Hope. A native of El Dorado, she recently completed her freshman year at East Texas Baptist University in Marshall.

**Martin K. Babb** resigned June 23 as minister of education and youth at Pulaski Heights Church, following four years of ministry. He has accepted the call to join the staff of Springfield Church, Springfield, Tenn., as associate pastor and minister of

## Fluella Koone dies in automobile accident

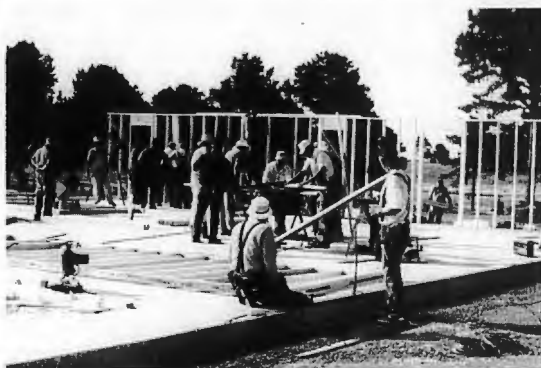
Fluella Martin Koone, 73, of Conway died June 14 in a three-car accident at the intersection of U.S. 65B and Arkansas 286. The accident occurred when her husband, Victor Koone, who was injured in the accident, was attempting to turn east on Arkansas 286, according to police. Koone had served as pastor of Immanuel Church in Clinton from 1987-1991.

As Koone attempted to turn, his vehicle was struck broadside by a vehicle driven by Rodney Mosby of Conway. This caused Koone's car to

strike a third car driven by Patrick Hubert, also of Conway. Neither Hubert nor Mosby was injured and no charges were filed.

Mrs. Koone's funeral services were held June 20 at Immanuel Church in Clinton where she was a member. Other survivors include a son, Jerry Koone of Conway; three daughters, Judy Kalista of West Sacramento, Calif., Vicki Coons of Brookland and Debra Anderson of Willits, Calif.; a brother, three sisters; 16 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.





*A fellowship hall and educational building were erected June 15 at Mount Hebron Church of Joy by the Calvary Volunteers. This 50-member group, representing churches of Calvary Association, is directed by Marvin "Pete" Ogle, associational Brotherhood director. Larry Gray of Rocky Point Church of Judsonia is construction supervisor for the volunteer group, organized to assist associational churches with building needs. Ledell Bailey is director of missions.*

education. Babb, who previously was a staff member of Calvary Church of Little Rock and the youth consultant in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention Sunday School department, is a graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is married to the former Beverly Smith, also an OBU graduate. They have two children, Meredith Lynn and David Keith.

## Church news

**Open Door Southern Church** is a new work that has been launched in the Piney area, southwest of Waldron. Pastor Billy Watson is leading the services which currently are being held in a tent. He reported that six people are awaiting baptism.

**Chapel Hill Church of DeQueen** launched a stewardship emphasis earlier this year that has resulted in an 11 percent giving increase compared to the previous year. Members were invited to "Just Say Yes" to tithing, Bible study, reaching lost persons and visitation through bulletin inserts, posters, Sunday School teachers and messages by pastor John D. Davey. The church also recently honored Woman's Missionary Union director Donna McKinley as the "Chapel Hill Mother of the Year." McKinley was presented a plaque and a woman's devotional Bible.

**Hot Springs Church**, which recently constituted during a service with 646 people in attendance, currently is meeting at Hot Springs Middle School with an average attendance of more than 600. Michael Pounders is serving as church administrator. Other staff members are James Craver, Jerry Jones and Lisa Caple. The new congregation has petitioned Central Association for membership.

**East Side Church of Osceola** observed its 26th anniversary June 2 with Sunday School and a morning worship service that included a memorial service honoring deceased members, special music by the Jeff Crockett Family and a message by pastor Tom Doty. A noon potluck meal concluded activities. The church, organized in 1969 with 42 charter members, currently has a membership of 408.

**North Arkansas Association** has organized a Missions Adventure team that will minister to children in 18 churches this summer. Team members Todd Hunt, Shannon Morris, R.J. Sweatman and Jennifer Lott will share through drama, music and puppetry.

**Correction:** An incorrect date was published in the June 13 issue concerning the 50th anniversary celebration of Highland Hills Church of Texarkana. The anniversary will be observed July 14, including services at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. and an 11:30 a.m. luncheon.

## Charleston First Church celebrates 150th anniversary

Pastor Mike Love challenged the members of First Church of Charleston to discover new frontiers with frontier spirits as the church celebrated 150 years of ministry May 31-June 2.

"Though we are 150 years old and still reflecting the 'light of Jesus Christ' in the community of Charleston and around the world, I believe there are still many frontiers left for First Church to discover," Love declared. "Let's not be afraid of these, but move in faith into the next 150 years and the 21st century."

The Charleston church was organized in 1846 under the leadership of Charles R. Kellum who remained as pastor until his death in 1850. The church disbanded in 1862 and was reorganized in 1866 by E.L. Comper, who served as pastor until 1876.

The congregation, in its 150 years, has met in a log cabin and in a building whose doors had bullet holes in it from the Civil War. The church purchased its present property in 1922, with numerous remodeling programs and property purchases for additional educational and parking space since that time.

## Expanded ministry efforts

During its history, the congregation has sent the Bill Bullington family to serve as Southern Baptist foreign missionaries and has had 38 pastors, with Love beginning his ministry there in 1990. Two Sunday morning worship services and a children's church have been launched under his leadership.

Speakers for the anniversary Bible conference were former pastors Larry Home, C.E. Hansford and Gene Ryan, Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Emil Turner and Concord Association director of missions Nelson Wilhelm.

Special music was presented by the church's children's and youth choirs and quartet, Jim Gifford, Rick McKinney, Jeff Gammill, Patti Gregston, Linda Neissel and Gene and Kaye Robertson. Program features also included recognition of long-time members.



## ***Promise Keepers founder calls SBC to bridge color lines***

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

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

McCartney, former football coach for Colorado University, delivered the closing message for the 1996 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting.

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

Warning that his comments might offend his predominantly white audience, McCartney said, "Please be open. There is a spirit of white racial supremacy that is reigning."

That spirit is defined by insensitivity to people of color, he said. "How do you feel when you're in the company of people who feel they are superior to you?" he asked. "We get caught in that kind of oppression, we can go somewhere else. I'm telling you that oppression exists for the men and women of color and there's nowhere they can go."

Christians must show one another that they are loved and appreciated, regardless of race, he emphasized.

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

"Everyone out there is saying, 'Do you love me? Do you love me not? You told me once, but I forgot.'"

Describing two visions he is developing for better race relations, McCartney said one goal is to develop a better working environment for minorities at the 300-employee Promise Keepers. The other is organizing a Christian million-man-march for September in Washington, D.C.

Rather than being marked by protest or defiance, McCartney said the march will be characterized by prayer and repentance.

"We can come in humility and unity and we can stand together and we can kneel together. And the people watching TV can say, 'Oh how they love each other. Oh, how they love their God.'"

McCartney urged Southern Baptist men to develop close friendships with minorities. "Let's show the world what the body of Christ looks like," he urged.

"Our church agreed without any hesitation to support the campaign."

Dr. Wayne Smith, pastor of First Baptist Church of Marshall, on why his congregation was the first to pledge to the Local Church Campaign at Williams Baptist College:

*"I have been familiar with the work of WBC since the 1950's, when I was the public relations director at Ouachita Baptist University.... I remain a strong believer in Christian higher education, and I appreciate Williams Baptist College for the kind of work it does. The Local Church Campaign is a tremendous opportunity to help Williams move forward. Our church agreed without any hesitation to support the campaign."*



WBC needs the support of all Arkansas Baptists to provide more scholarship dollars, and to upgrade its facilities.

For details on the Local Church Campaign, please call the WBC Office of Institutional Advancement, 1-800-722-4434, ext. 164.

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## PRAYERWALK

# Prayerwalk teams intercede in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Scores of Southern Baptist Prayerwalk teams fanned out across the Crescent City, interceding at strategic sites for specific needs and key activities leading up to the June 11-13 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans.

The purpose of the Prayerwalk teams, who hit the streets June 7, primarily was "to go before, to prepare the way, first of all for the Crossover New Orleans evangelistic effort," said Randy Sprinkle, director of the international prayer strategy office of the Foreign Mission Board.

Sprinkle was a coordinator of the prayerwalking effort which sent teams to local churches and areas where on June 8, there would be Crossover block parties and where evangelistic teams would go into neighborhoods to share the gospel.

"Any evangelistic effort will bear fruit in direct proportion to the amount of prayer that went before," Sprinkle said.

"Prayerwalk New Orleans" was sponsored by the Bold Mission Thrust Prayer Mission Team which includes representatives from various Southern Baptist agencies and organizations. The Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans and the Louisiana Baptist Convention also supported the effort.

"We had held in past years what we called a National Prayer Conference," said Sprinkle. "We wanted to move toward a more direct involvement."

About 125 people attended the morning training session at New Orleans Baptist

Theological Seminary and then after lunch scores of two-member teams fanned out for Prayerwalk New Orleans.

"The key to prayerwalking," Sprinkle said, "is just a practical expression of our created purpose: that we walk with God. What God is doing when we walk with Him out among the people of the world is that our intercessions move to a whole new level."

Sprinkle explained that prayerwalking is simply walking along with a partner in a place where there are needs and praying as the Holy Spirit makes participants sensitive and aware of the needs.

"You probably would not know people are prayerwalking," Sprinkle said. "But you are constantly talking to God and to your partner; we are co-laborers together. Really we are three-member teams — it's a three-way conversation and prayer time."

"Being there helps you see and hear and sense; and that fires our prayers with what God is doing and how He wants us to pray," Sprinkle said. He said someone has described this method as "praying on site with insight. The insight is brought by the spirit of Christ."

Sprinkle teamed with Henry Blackaby, a leader in prayer and spiritual awakening for the Home Mission Board, to prayerwalk in the French Quarter.

Other Prayerwalk teams strolled and prayed their way through strategic sites such as the Superdome, the site of the 1996 SBC meeting. Teams also prayerwalked major hotels where messengers



Henry Blackaby and Randy Sprinkle participate in a prayerwalk prior to this year's Crossover New Orleans ministry.

would be staying. Other teams went to colleges and universities and to the riverfront, where intercessors prayed for the merchant seamen who come from all parts of the world.

Sprinkle said prayerwalking is both practical and strategic. Strategically, he said, "Whenever God decides to send His blessing, He calls people to — the intercessors — to prayer."

"Prayerwalkers often have the opportunity to talk, witness and minister to people they pray for," he added.

In a debriefing session later in the day, Sprinkle said there "weren't any specific outstanding stories, nothing dramatic." However, a young teenager reported leading another youth to Christ and one team was invited into a home in a neighborhood.

"We know that there will be results because we have that promise" from God, Sprinkle said. "We follow the spirit of God's leading and when we're obedient He always blesses."

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# BMT ministry goals require focused efforts

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—The effect of Bold Mission Thrust is not measured in the accomplishments of denominational agencies, but in the ministry of 45,000 churches and missions across the country and in more than 130 countries across the world, Ernest Mosley told Southern Baptist messengers.

Bold Mission Thrust was initiated in 1976 with the goal that the SBC "set as its primary missions challenge that every person in the world shall have the opportunity to hear the gospel of Christ" by the year 2000.

Mosley, executive vice president of the

Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, noted that "Southern Baptists have continued to grow in the number of churches witnessing in the land" as well as increasing in church membership, offering receipts, mission contributions and involvement in volunteer ministry projects.

Despite these positive trends, two statistics are disturbing, Mosley noted:

- 56 percent of new church members

ships reported in the past five years are from transfer of letter.

■ Undesignated receipts to support world missions given through the Cooperative Program have declined from 10.7 percent to 8.7 percent over the past 14 years.

The last four years of the 20th century will involve focused efforts to achieve the BMT goals set in 1976, Mosley said.

## Classifieds

**Copier for sale** — Used Sharp SF 8100 copier with 15 bin sorter, auto document feeder, \$500. Call Arkansas Baptist Foundation 501-376-0732.

**Wanted** — a good used 16-passenger van for church use. Call 501-697-2285 or 501-731-2427.

**Wurlitzer organ** — to donate to church or mission. Contact FBC, Lake City, 237-4414.

**Minister of youth and music** — Send resume with references to Clarence Arnold, committee chairman, Immanuel Baptist Church, PO Box 578, Magnolia, AR 71753. No phone inquiries please.

**Youth minister** — Woodland Heights Baptist Church in Harrison, Ark., is looking for a part-time or bivocational youth minister. Contact church office 743-2129.

**Accepting resumes** — For pastor. Send to: Pastor Search Committee, South McGehee Baptist Church, P.O. Box 843, McGehee, AR 71654.

**Accepting resumes** — part-time, year round youth director. Send to: First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 250, Pangburn, AR 72121.

**Houseparents** — Oklahoma Baptist Homes for Children is looking for a loving, Christian couple to be houseparents at the Oklahoma City campus. Call Rod Phillips at 405-691-7781.

**Seeking resumes** — for full-time minister of music and youth. Send resumes to: Music/Youth Search, c/o First Baptist Church, 201 E. Haywood, England, AR 72046.

Classified ads must be submitted in writing to the ABN office no less than 10 days prior to the date of publication desired. A check or money order in the proper amount, figured at 90 cents per word, must be included. Multiple insertions of the same ad must be paid for in advance. Classified ads shall be restricted to church-related subject matter. The ABN reserves the right to reject any ad because of unsuitable subject matter. Classified ads will be inserted on a space-available basis. No endorsement by the ABN is implied.

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Nationwide Totals:

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## MINISTERS' WIVES

### Jeanette Henry encourages SBC ministers' wives

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—"Life isn't always fair, but the Light who created life is, and I'm stepping into the light," Jeanette Henry told 800 women at the 41st annual conference of Southern Baptist Ministers' Wives June 11 in New Orleans' Hyatt Regency Hotel ballroom.

Henry told of her growth experiences as a minister's wife. Her husband, Jim Henry, is pastor of First Baptist Church, Orlando, Fla., and was 1994-96 president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Henry said she "came with excitement into this life" of being a minister's wife, an adventure that began in New Orleans as the wife of a seminary student at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"Our first home was in New Orleans, our first furniture, my first full-time job, our first baby, our first income tax filing, our first hurricane and our first pastorate," she said, addressing the luncheon theme of "Stepping in the Light."

Becoming a Christian gave her purpose in life, Henry said, "and that purpose was to please Him."

However, Henry said she did not have a focused purpose "until I fell in love with a 120-pound hunk of personality who loved people and politics and who wanted to be the governor of Tennessee."

"I knew he was struggling with the decision to be a preacher," Henry said. She was struggling herself with the need to be focused in her spiritual life. On the night she made a commitment to full-time Christian service in Kentucky, she had no idea Jim would tell God the same night, hundreds of miles away in Panama City, Fla., that he wanted to give up his dreams of political life and "do whatever God wanted him to do."

Learning about God's gifts was an important step in her life, Henry said.

"I always wondered why I never thought of taking a pie or casserole to someone, and when I was supposed to fix something, I always had to be reminded.

"Then I found out I don't have the service gifts. I have the teaching and leading gifts," she said. "That knowledge relieved me of the guilt I had for years. I still had a responsibility, but now I could focus on how God really wanted to use me. I learned God gifts us all in different ways."

While the path of each minister's wife is different, "our purpose is the same," she said. "We step in the light and the light gives us purpose, passion, provision and peace. We have different paths and we wear different shoes, but we are one body and each member belongs to the other."

## DIRECTORS OF MISSIONS

### Directors of missions establish staff position

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

They also adopted a resolution urging educational institutions "to provide training within their curriculum to raise the level of understanding, awareness and appreciation of associational missions ministry."

The resolution cited the strong need for increased reliance on the association in the 21st century and the fact that the association is the closest denominational entity to the local church, fostering cooperation, a hallmark of Southern Baptist ministry, among local churches.

A copy of the resolution will be sent to each college, university and seminary operated by any cooperating Southern Baptist body.

The group, meeting prior to the June 11-13 annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention, voted to employ as their first executive treasurer John E. Dent Sr. of Waihalla, S.C., a retired director of missions who also serves as the organization's treasurer.

Outgoing president Charles B. Nunn Jr., executive director of missions for Richmond Baptist Association, Richmond, Va., told his fellow directors of missions the work of the Baptist association is where the spiritual action is among Southern Baptists.

Every association of Baptist churches should seek to foster and facilitate the spread of the gospel locally as well as globally, he said.

Today's director of missions, Nunn said, is a key resource person, an administrator, an equiper and enabler, a community leader and a change agent to assist churches

to make the changes in attitudes and priorities that enable them to respond to the rapidly changing spiritual needs and challenges that confront them daily.

He urged directors of missions to encourage their associations to observe a week of prayer and offering goal for associational missions.

Officers elected to serve in 1996-97 are: president, Larry Rose, Tarrant Association, Fort Worth, Texas; first vice president, David R. Dean, Metropolitan New York Association; second vice president, Ed Gilman, Suncoast Association, Largo, Fla.; and secretary, Ernest K. Sadler, Jackson Association, Pascagoula, Miss.

## ANNUITY BOARD REQUIRES IMPORTANT DECISIONS

### URGENT!

Present investment funds will be closed and new funds opened January 1, 1997. Each retirement plan participant must make a decision as to which new fund or funds to choose. This is a major opportunity for greater financial security in retirement.

The decision-making process can be made easier by using a new educational tool, *LifePoints*. Meetings are scheduled throughout Arkansas to help plan participants select a new

investment strategy. An Annuity Board representative will be there to demonstrate the use of *LifePoints* and answer questions.

The dates and locations are listed. For specific information about the meeting in your area, call your state annuity representative, James Walker, at (501) 376-4791. You can also call the Annuity Board's toll-free number, 1-800-262-0511.

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## MUSIC MINISTRIES

# Music ministers identify creative worship methods

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—From biblical object lessons to writing songs that celebrate special occasions, there are an unlimited array of creative things a local church can do to enhance its worship ministry, a panel of music ministers said at the 40th annual Southern Baptist Church Music Conference June 9-10 at First Baptist Church in New Orleans.

Panelist Tom Bolton, minister of music at First Church in Little Rock, said his church sponsors a "composer's weekend" once a year.

"My goal was for the choir to get to know a composer and that composer's work," he explained. The benefits have included a higher degree of musical excellence in the performance.

"I think when the composer is sitting there you want to do it right," Bolton said.

He said the weekend also serves as an encouragement to the composer. "I invite composers whose work I admired and let them know we admired their work. We've had a couple of composers say they've never heard their music performed."

David Bolin, minister of music for Colonial Hills Baptist Church in Cedar Hill, Texas, gave an "object lesson" demonstration that could be applied to a series of

Easter sermons.

After a responsive reading based on Judas Iscariot's betrayal for 30 pieces of silver, Bolin passed a small leather bag filled with coins around the room.

"If (the congregation's) mind wandered during the message, they would look around and see the object being passed around and it would draw them back into the message," he said.

### Personalize special services

R.G. Huff, minister of music for University Hills Baptist Church, Colorado Springs, Colo., discussed the importance of personalizing special services, such as ordinations. He gave the example of when the church ordained a deacon who had been a longtime member.

"We agreed to allow everyone in the church to lay on hands, which we had not done before," he said, noting that limiting the laying on of hands only to those who had been previously ordained would exclude all of the women and most of the new deacon's closest friends.

Harry Thompson, minister of music at Calvary Baptist Church in Alexandria, La., described the benefits of that congregation's conservatory of music.

When school boards are faced with budget cutbacks, Thompson said, often fine arts funding is the first item cut. That was among things that triggered his interest in starting a conservatory, he said.

Donn Wisdom, minister of music at Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta, said the church puts on a two-hour, fully choreographed production called "family night" three evenings in August. Past performances have featured such music as Broadway show tunes, television theme songs, country and jazz standards.

"It's a musical review that features all ages in the music ministry," he explained. "It's to provide a wholesome performance the whole family can attend. It also allows our people to introduce our church to people who don't go to our church."

Participants also heard Gerald Ray, minister of music at First Baptist Church, Houston, describe the benefits of having the choir memorize the music for each worship service. Other topics discussed during the session included the use of responsive readings in worship, conducting skills and maintaining interest through creativity.

Bill Tiemann, minister of music at Buena Vista Baptist Church in Owensboro, Ky., listed ways computers can help music ministers. Obvious uses are to write articles for church or music ministry newsletters, he said. It is also possible to use computers for planning the annual music budget and making requests to the church finance committee.

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## Convention Uniform

### Origins

By Gary L. Burney,  
assistant to the pastor,  
New Hope Fellowship, Springdale  
Basic passage: Psalm 104  
Focal passage: Psalm 104:9-35  
Central truth: God as Creator  
deserves our praise.

There are a lot of questions today about origins:

How was the universe formed? A big bang?

How did life begin? Evolution? A one in 100 billion chance!

How have we reached our current status? Survival of the fit?

Did everything just happen or was there an intelligent beginning?

Was there a mind behind the origin of the universe, our solar system, planet earth and life? Was it chance or was it God?

The author of Psalm 104 asks these same questions and arrives at the conclusion that God did it! God is the answer! Since the answer to the creation question is God, some obvious conclusions can be reached:

■ *God still has creation under control* (v. 9-14). This contradicts many popular beliefs and teachings. The creation is the result of a well-formulated plan, not an accident of nature. According to the Psalmist, the world didn't just happen. There was an intelligent Creator who set the laws of the universe in motion and still holds everything together. God established it and God is still in control.

■ *God established an orderly creation* (v. 15-22). This takes out the element of chance! God's creation has a plan. That plan includes man, even in his sinful state. Before the foundation of the world, God planned to save man. What an awesome thought: God knew man would sin and He went ahead with His plan.

■ *The more we understand God's creation, the greater will be our praise* (v. 33-35). The more we understand, the more we find we don't understand. Considering how vast God's creation is, it's amazing how much God loves us. There is still so much we don't know, but what we do know is life-changing.

## Life and Work

### Chasing after the wind

By Jere D. Mitchell, pastor,  
First Church, Fayetteville  
Basic passage: Ecclesiastes 1:16-  
2:4, 8-11  
Focal passage: Ecclesiastes 1:17-  
2:4, 8-11

Central truth: The true meaning of life is not found in or by undisciplined living.

I sat and listened as Sue, a single mother, poured out her frustration about the meaninglessness of her life. "I get up, I go to work, I come home, fix supper, go to bed, get up and start over again. Is that all there is to life?" Her question has been asked thousands of times by thousands of different people. "Is this all there is?"

Solomon is generally accepted as the writer of Ecclesiastes. He had the power, wisdom and resources to pursue life's true meaning. He had come to a point in his life that, upon reflection, seemed to have no meaning. Isn't that depressing?

I frequently talk with people who struggle at this point. Young people often come to this conclusion. That is a reason for a high suicide rate among teens. Middle-age people feel frustrated because life doesn't seem to make sense. Retired people are often depressed because when they leave work, they lose identity and purpose.

For many, the writer of Ecclesiastes hit the nail on the head. Life is meaningless. It is empty. It is "chasing after the wind." Life can have meaning, but life's real meaning will not be found in selfish pursuits.

■ Wisdom for the sake of wisdom is not the answer. Wisdom has a valid place. It is to be sought so you will know how to live life at its very best. Wisdom comes from God (James 1:5). Ask Him for wisdom.

■ The meaning of life will not be found in the accumulation of things — houses, cars, businesses, bank accounts — they do not answer life's deeper questions.

■ The meaning of life is not found in the unrestrained pursuit of pleasure, sexual or other. Playing the world's greatest golf course, seeing the Super Bowl, or experiencing the high of jumping out of an airplane fail to answer life's greater question. If they do, why must they be repeated over and over?

All of these types of pursuits lead only to the conclusion: "Life is all vanity and striving after the wind." What a disappointment!

Real life is found in a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

## Bible Book

### John's vision of Jesus

By Rodney Reeves, pastor,  
Central Church, Jonesboro  
Basic passage: Revelation 1:1-20  
Focal passage: Revelation 1:5-6  
Central truth: Christ and His  
Kingdom rules over all.

What is the primary subject of the book of Revelation? It isn't the end times, although John's prophecy does deal with things to come. It isn't God's punishment of the wicked, although John assures his readers that those who oppose God will be destroyed. It isn't the anti-Christ, the millennium, or the final judgment, although John's revelation makes mention of these.

Jesus Christ is the primary subject of the last book of the New Testament. "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (v. 1) is not just a revelation from Jesus but is also a revealing of Jesus to John. God revealed Christ to the disciple, and his description of what he saw in this vision of the Son of God was intended to be read to the churches who faithfully "bore witness to the word of God" (v. 2), in order to encourage them concerning the things to come (vv. 1, 3).

Notice how Christ is first described (vv. 5-6) — as a faithful witness who loves His disciples. His resurrection, as the firstborn of the dead, has released those in slavery to sin. He is the ruler of all things and has established a kingdom of priests through His church. Before, He was looked upon by "those who pierced Him" (v. 7) as a slaughtered lamb. But in the end, He will return as King over all, from the first to the last, and they will mourn His coming — the end of their kingdoms (vv. 7-8). The vision of a faithful, powerful, returning Lord of Lords was meant to strengthen the hearts of those who suffered tribulation, as citizens of Christ's kingdom, due to their "testimony of Jesus" (v. 9).

The vision of a powerful eastern king (vv. 12-16), holding court in heaven, would put any earthly western (Roman?) despot in his place. Those who reign with Christ in heaven, the seven lampstands (the seven churches, v. 20), share in the majesty of His glorious presence (v. 13). The exalted King commands John to preserve the vision and audition in a book, not to be sealed, but to be read by the seven churches (v. 11). All of this was meant for them. The conquering King had overcome Death and Hades (v. 18). What was there to fear (v. 17)? When Christ is clearly seen as He is, Christians can clearly see what will be.

## Convention Uniform

### The elements of faith

By Gary L. Burney, assistant to the pastor, New Hope Fellowship, Springdale  
 Basic passage: Psalm 105  
 Focal passage: Psalm 105  
 Central truth: Faith is more than a leap into the darkness. Faith has a basis in what God has done previously.

Faith is the key element in the Christian life. Salvation comes through faith (Eph. 2:8-9). We are to live our lives on the basis of faith, believing that God will do what He says He will do, and believing that God has our best interests at heart.

Sometimes it is difficult to live by faith. The cares of this life can be overwhelming and the "tyranny of the urgent" can cause us to make decisions based on the needs of the moment and not on sound biblical principles. What should we do when our faith begins to waiver? The Psalmist has the answer:

■ *Seek the Lord* (v. 1-4). Here is where we usually make our first mistake. As Christians, we usually seek God's solution last and not first. We should always seek God's solution first. We are to seek the Lord, seek His strength, seek His face - His presence, His guidance, His power.

■ *Remember the great things He has done* (vv. 5-44). What great things has God done for you in the past? Do you have a list? When you begin to doubt, remember what God has done for you in the past and hold tight to the assurance of God's faithfulness for the future.

■ *Praise the Lord for what He has done and for what He is going to do* (v. 45). This is a simple phrase with a lot of meaning. Praise the Lord for what He has done. Praise the Lord for the solution to your situation, believing that God will do what He says He will do and believing that God has our best interests at heart.

Faith is a leap into the darkness, knowing who is there to catch us.

## Life and Work

### Finding life's meaning

By Jere D. Mitchell, pastor, First Church, Fayetteville  
 Basic passage: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14;  
 Proverbs 1:7; 2:1-8; 3:5-6; 8:35-36  
 Focal passage: Ecclesiastes 12:13-14;  
 Proverbs 1:7; 3:5-6  
 Central truth: Life does have meaning. It is found in a right relationship with God.

Last week's Bible study was depressing. The writer of Ecclesiastes told us in his search for the meaning of life that there was none. Today's study gives us hope. The writer concludes that after his search, life's meaning is to be found in knowing and obeying the Creator of all the universe. Our lesson includes verses from Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. Meaning in life is found in fearing, obeying and trusting God.

■ *Fear God*. To many, "fear" usually means to be afraid. There is an entire vocabulary describing phobias. The word used in these verses, studied in context, means "to stand in awe of God or to reverence God." Many people have a casual attitude about God. Most believe there is a God, but don't see Him as awesome. He is "the man upstairs" or the "gentle grandfather." In truth, He is the creator and sustainer of everything. He is the judge who will bring all things to an end and will judge every act (Ecc. 12:14). Someone with that kind of authority and power ought to be held in awe. When we see Him in that way, we begin to understand about life's meaning.

■ *Obey God*. Being obedient to God and His Word is a way to show reverence. The greatest commandment that you are to obey is that you love God supremely. True love is expressed, not just by what you say, but by what you do. You express your love by worship and praise of Him. You express your love by your thanksgiving to Him. This should be done individually and corporately. Love is expressed by service to God. It is also expressed by faithful stewardship. Jesus said the second greatest commandment to obey is to love one another. It is impossible to love God and not love each other.

■ *Trust God* (Prov. 3:5-6). Pride is a barrier to knowing life's meaning. Many think they have life all figured out. Usually they establish everything around themselves. They are the main attraction. What arrogance! Only when you are humble enough to admit you don't have it all figured out and are willing to turn to God and trust Him will you begin to get it all together.

## Bible Book

### ...to the seven churches

By Rodney Reeves, pastor, Central Church, Jonesboro  
 Basic passage: Revelation 2:1-3:22  
 Focal passage: Revelation 3:19-22  
 Central truth: Christ will perfect His church.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ to John was written as a circular letter for seven churches. Although Christ addressed each "angel" (messenger) of every church, the entire revelation was intended to be read by all the churches (v. 3:22). Humiliating for some, public knowledge of Christ's sermon for each church was meant to encourage every believer to be faithful. Christ only disciplines those He loves (v. 3:19) and those with whom He desires to share the riches of His kingdom, described as "eating from the tree of life" (v. 2:7); escaping "second death" (v. 2:11); receiving "hidden manna" (v. 2:17); having "authority over the nations" (v. 2:26); wearing "white garments" (v. 3:5); becoming a "pillar in the temple" (v. 3:12); and reigning with Christ (v. 3:21).

Nothing escapes the resurrected Lord. He knows the best and worst of each congregation (vv. 2:2, 9, 13, 19; vv. 3:1, 8, 15). He praised churches deserving affirmation, he corrected those who needed rebuke. Two churches (Pergamum and Thyatira) had assimilated into Roman culture, eating idol meat and living immorally. Evidently, these "worldly" Christians earned the nicknames "Nicolaitans" or "Jezebels" (vv. 2:15, 20). Christ warned the churches in Ephesus and Sardis of His imminent return to inspire them to finish what they started (vv. 2:5, 3:3). He encouraged two churches (Smyrna and Philadelphia) who were persecuted by the "synagogue of Satan" (vv. 2:9, 3:9) to remain faithful and receive the "crown of life" (v. 2:10, 3:11). Only one church, Laodicea, had become too comfortable with the world, living as if they no longer needed God (v. 3:17).

Notice how Christ's revelation meets every need. For the churches at Smyrna and Philadelphia, He is the Resurrected Lord who holds the keys of David's kingdom (vv. 2:8; 3:7). To Ephesus and Sardis, He is the sustainer of the entire Church ("holding seven stars," vv. 2:1, 3:1). His Word cuts like a sword and His fiery eyes will purify the worldly Christians in Pergamum and Thyatira (vv. 2:12, 18). For Laodicea, Christ will have the last word! He is the Amen (v. 3:14).



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## CONVENTION DIGEST

### National Hispanic Baptist Fellowship incorporates

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Hispanic Baptists, who have been part of the Southern Baptist Convention for more than 100 years, incorporated as an organization during their ninth annual meeting June 8 at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. The group, which formed a fellowship a decade ago, also adopted a new name, National Hispanic Southern Baptist Fellowship, and approved a new constitution.

The fellowship represents 3,800 churches and works in support of 21 state Hispanic fellowships, with a total membership of nearly 500,000 members.

The conference, conducted almost entirely in Spanish, was punctuated by spirited "Musica Congregacional" led by Pedro Nunez, pastor of San Juan Church in DeQueen.

Rudy Hernandez of San Antonio, president of the Hispanic Fellowship of Texas and a former SBC second vice president, called for Southern Baptist ethnics to "march on the Southern Baptist Convention" in 1997 "to say 'Praise the Lord' for being Southern Baptists and to ask God to bless the effort of Southern Baptists."

He said a planned rally, parade and high-profile involvement during the 1997 SBC annual meeting in Dallas should help "launch" ethnics into the next century.

### Jewish fellowship introduces home missionary

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—For the first time since 1989, Southern Baptists have a home missionary to Jewish people. Jim R. Sibley, appointed by the Home Mission Board, was presented June 10 to members and guests of the Southern Baptist Messianic Fellowship at its annual meeting in the Louisiana Superdome preceding the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention. Sibley, who will work with the HMB's interfaith witness department, was a Southern Baptist representative in Israel for 13 years.

During convention business, messengers to the SBC adopted a resolution on Jewish evangelism, urging the convention to make a planned and concerted effort to proclaim the gospel to the Jewish people.

"This resolution would seem to be the next logical step in continuing efforts of the Southern Baptist Convention to reclaim its evangelical roots and its commitment to minister to all people," said R. Michael Smith, fellowship president.

The purpose of the fellowship, begun seven years ago, is to serve as a clearinghouse for information of importance to Jewish believers, Smith said. The fellowship makes statements on issues of interest to Jewish people — including the state of Israel.

### Campus ministers urged to give spiritual guidance

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

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

Psychoanalysts say they can take people to a certain place and then they can't go beyond that, Furr said. "All of this is a call to ministers to reclaim spiritual guidance."

When someone comes for help, Furr said their problem can typically be divided into one of three areas: confusion, inability to cope and unconscious conflict, which can be treated through psychotherapy; a dilemma of what to do, which is best handled through counseling; and yearning for coherence and communion, searching for God, which requires spiritual guidance.

"It is inappropriate to treat spiritual guidance issues with psychotherapy," he said. "We need to distinguish spiritual issues from psychotherapy issues."

### Research shows nine trends in evangelical churches

NEW ORLEANS (BP)—Prayer precedes evangelistic harvesting, preaching fuels it and Sunday School fans the flame, according to research compiled from Southern Baptists' most effective evangelistic churches. Findings on the data were shared June 8 at the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Research Fellowship held at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Thom S. Rainer, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, presented "A Study of Effective Evangelistic Churches in the SBC."

Rainer was able to identify nine trends related to effective evangelistic churches. He said those churches focus on conversion growth over total growth; emphasize preaching; participate in prayer movements; have re-evaluated church growth methodologies; have renewed Sunday School; have returned to "going" for growth and evangelism; have worship that is traditional/revivalist; focus on youth ministry as the new receptive field; and plant new churches.