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Arkansas Baptist State Convention

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST



Volume 92, Number 1 13

July 1, 1993



INSIDE THIS WEEK



In-depth
coverage
of the 1993
Southern
Baptist
Convention

**HOUSTON, TEXAS
JUNE 15-17**

Jerry Rankin (left), newly elected president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, counsels with individuals at the conclusion of the world missions presentation held June 16 during the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston. A total of 17,886 Southern Baptist messengers, including approximately 600 Arkansas Baptists, participated in the three-day convention held at Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center.

Graham challenges Baptists to proclaim the basic gospel

Southern Baptists must stick to the basics of a gospel that has the power to impact society, the church and individual lives, according to Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Baptist Church in Dallas.

Graham delivered the annual convention sermon at the June 16 morning

session of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center.

Biblical Christians must not lose hope, in spite of an "anti-Christian bias" in the media, losses in electoral politics and a pervasive secularism in our society, Graham said.

"By all accounts, we are losing the cultural war of our society," he said, adding that persons committed to a conservative view of morality have been "out-numbered and out-voted."

To those who claim that biblical views of morality are "prehistoric," Graham agreed, saying, "They were ordained and settled in the heart of God before time began."

God is judging America by "taking His hand off the lid" and allowing the nation to experience the consequences of its sin, he said.

Nevertheless, Southern Baptists must continue to preach an uncompromising gospel, knowing that it is more powerful than any cultural influences or societal trends, he said.

Too many preachers are more interested in style than substance, and they preach a "kinder, gentler evangelism" that soft-peddles the doctrine of eternal punishment, Graham said.

"If there was more hell in our pulpits, I'm convinced there would be less hell in our schools, our streets and our homes," Graham declared.

If Southern Baptists "emasculate" the gospel by downplaying its confrontational aspects, they risk joining other denominations in the "graveyard of ecclesiastical history," he maintained.

The gospel includes proclamation, declaration, invitation and transformation, and Southern Baptists dare not neglect any aspect of the unchanging message of God's Word, he said.

"The gospel is not true because it works," Graham insisted. "The gospel works because it is true."



Jack Graham

Cover Story

SBC photo / Don Bryan



New FMB president 8

Jerry Rankin, newly elected president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, counsels with individuals at the conclusion of the world missions report at the Southern Baptist Convention. Rankin was elected FMB president June 14 on a 59-14 vote.

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ARKANSAS BAPTIST

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Young re-elected president by acclamation

SBC photo / Van Payne

Southern Baptist messengers re-elected four out of five convention officers for 1993-94 terms, including three re-elected by acclamation.

Houston pastor H. Edwin Young was elected by acclamation to serve a second, one-year term as SBC president.

Mike Hamlett, pastor of First Baptist Church in North Spartanburg, S.C., nominated Young by saying the Houston pastor "is a man with integrity and intensity" and one "who has refused to be sidetracked by other issues."

Following his election, Young wiped tears from his eyes and said, "I believe that under God there will be a new day of missions and evangelism in all our churches."

Stressing a commitment to prayer, Young said, "It is hard to slide backwards when you are on your knees before God."

The SBC's current first vice president, evangelist Jay Strack of Dallas, was re-elected on the first ballot from among three nominees. Strack was nominated by Fred Wolfe, current vice chairman of the SBC Executive Committee and pastor from Alabama.

Wolfe said Strack's ministry and organization are "above reproach," and he noted Strack served as coordinator of Crossover Houston, an evangelistic effort sponsored by the SBC's Home Mission Board in which more than 1,200 people accepted Christ.

John D. Wallace, an SBC executive committee member from Morristown, Tenn., and Rodney Osborn, a physician from Peoria, Ill., were the two other nominees.

Of the 17,244 messengers registered, 8,154 voted in the election for first vice president. Strack won on the first ballot, receiving 6,330 votes, or 77.63 percent. Wallace got 941 votes, or 11.54 percent, and Osborn got 883 votes, or 10.83 percent.

In a two-way vote for SBC second vice president, Bobby Welch, pastor of First Baptist Church in Daytona Beach, Fla., received 75.5 percent, or 5,200 votes, to win the office.

Nominee Randy Huckabee, a pastor in Warner Robins, Ga., received 24.5 percent of 6,976 votes cast.

During a press conference after being re-elected SBC president, Young called for more distance between churches and politics, noting that Southern Baptists recently have been prone to cross the line between religion and politics.

Young, pastor of Houston's Second Baptist Church, said he encourages his church members to vote and to be personally involved in politics. Yet he said churches should not endorse candidates or be involved in political movements.

Praying for President Bill Clinton "has been my only agenda since he was elected," Young said, despite his disagreement with



SBC president Ed Young

Clinton's stand on giving homosexuals minority status and Clinton's pro-choice positions about abortion.

In response to the SBC resolution about Clinton, Young said he hopes it will result in a private meeting between Young and Clinton for a time of "praying and sharing."

Young said he hopes Clinton will reconsider some of his positions but he added that revival is not based on who is president but on Christians.

On denominational politics, Young said his goal is to "get back to missions and evangelism." In the last 13 years, Southern Baptists have continued to "slide away from really reaching pagans for Jesus Christ," he said.

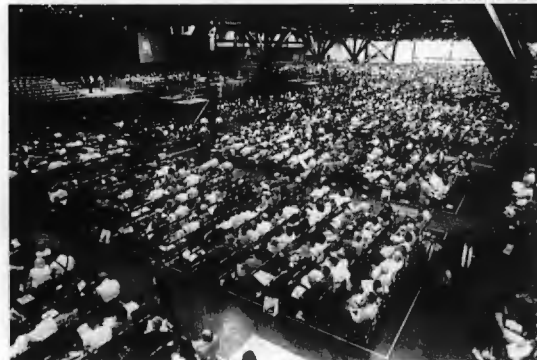
Young described himself as a "Bible-believing, evangelical Southern Baptist" who prefers to not use terms such as fundamentalist or moderate.

Asked about his support of Woman's Missionary Union, Young said he affirmed WMU. "We desperately need the energy of these wonderful women of God," he emphasized.

Young said he has read but not studied Lloyd Elder's proposal for denominational reconciliation. Elder, former president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, issued the call for healing several weeks before the SBC annual meeting.

Young said his first impression was that Southern Baptists have already tried most of Elder's suggestions and that the material offered little "substance that would lead us toward healing." Yet Young said he would look at the material more closely.

SBC photo / Van Payne



A total of 17,886 Southern Baptist messengers, including approximately 600 Arkansas Baptists, participated in the 1993 Southern Baptist Convention held June 15-17 at the George R. Brown Convention Center in Houston.

YOU'LL BE GLAD TO KNOW



By DON MOORE
ABCS Executive Director

Jesus said, "Ask...seek...knock." Those who do, "receive...find...opened." Following this instruction in Matthew 7:7-8, He said, "If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (v. 11). On the surface this is wonderful. Below the surface it is even more wonderful. The present tense of these verbs indicates that we are to "go on asking...seeking...and knocking."

What do you do when you have already asked, sought and knocked and nothing seems to have changed? You go on asking, seeking and knocking. Shirley and I have had to learn to do this during the months of her illness. God is working whether we see it or not. He is hearing whether we feel it or not. One absolutely sure way to obey God is to keep on asking, seeking and knocking.

We could never thank you enough for your prayers. Our plea is that you will continue faithful with us in intercession. He said, "Men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). The choice is simple for us, "pray or faint." Your prayers have helped us not to faint. Thank you and may He return the blessing to you in the ways He finds most appropriate for us.

With the election of a new Foreign Mission Board president, we need to recommit ourselves to prayer. Along with him we need to pray for Southern Baptists to keep faith with those who have gone as missionaries.

With this being the great time of the year for Vacation Bible Schools, state and associational camps and assemblies, we need to pray for God to do a great work with the army of volunteers and with those they will lead. What a privilege!

Pray for a spiritual awakening! As rotten as society is, it is no match for the "salt and light" of the living God Almighty. God's intention is that His work be done in and through the church. Pray first for an awakening in our churches.

Prayer provides spiritual perspective for convention

Prayer that precedes spiritual awakening focuses on God, not the needs of people; Christians doing the praying look for God's initiatives in the world rather than asking God to join theirs, according to speakers at the 1993 National Prayer Conference June 10-12 at Second Baptist Church in Houston.

"The Lord Jesus didn't come to meet needs. He came to do the will of the Father," Henry Blackaby, director of prayer and spiritual awakening for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, told more than 300 participants in the conference preceding the Southern Baptist Convention.

Jesus "did not let the needs of people set His agenda for ministry," Blackaby said. "When God takes the initiative in prayer, He always has eternity in mind."

Blackaby cited recent response among adults volunteering for missions, not primarily from seeing the needs of people, but because they believe "God has called them to an awesome assignment."

Foremost missions strategy

Minette Drumwright, director of the international prayer strategy office at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, said prayer has been the board's foremost strategy for missions since 1986. More than 2,000 assignments have been given to churches and groups willing to pray for unreached people groups and nations closed to the gospel.

"In these years, walls have come down, doors have been opened. Now there are believers among many of these people groups. In some, there are congregations," she said.

Prayer as strategy brings the person praying "into a position before God of humility and openness to receive God's direction of how, for whom and what to pray," Drumwright said. "Prayer releases God's power into the lives, situations and people for whom we pray."

"God has chosen to accomplish His purpose in response to the prayers of His people. He has chosen to give us a strategic role in partnership with Him," she added.

However, she warned, prayer takes the person or group praying "into the realms of spiritual warfare. Prayer as

strategy is a battle fought, spiritual armor in place, on our knees."

In other sessions, coordinators of prayer ministries in Houston churches outlined multi-faceted ministries built around intercessory prayer conducted 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"God is doing mighty work in Houston, Texas, for such a time as this," Jill Griffith, prayer coordinator at Second Baptist Church, said. However, she emphasized that prayer should be an emphasis of the entire church, not just those involved in the prayer ministry.

In addition to volunteers who commit to praying one hour per week, others are part of a cooperative ministry with 96 area churches to pray for local law enforcement officers. Others pray for children who attend the church's daycare center, write notes of encouragement to people who have requested prayer or pray during worship services for the leaders and for those who need to make spiritual decisions.

Steve Shanklin, prayer coordinator at St. Agnes Baptist Church located in the inner city of south Houston, said prayer intercessors receive training in prayer and also in understanding that God is sovereign and life is a war.

"We're seeing a change in our community," he said.

Larry Thompson, pastor of Dauphin Way Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., and national director of the Watchmen National Prayer Alert, warned, "If we do not pray, we are going to lose this nation. One of the great problems is we have so many breaches in the church that the enemy has come and gone as it pleased and the body is weak."

More than 2,000 Southern Baptist churches throughout the nation are participating in Watchmen National Prayer Alert, committing to pray at a designated hour during the week for revival and spiritual awakening.

Avery Willis, director of the discipleship and family adult department at the Baptist Sunday School Board, said interdenominational prayer efforts are in the planning stages in several cities, including Boston, Houston and Nashville.

"When God sends revival, He never limits it to one denomination, if it's real revival," Willis said. "God is moving in lots of ways for prayer."

Be doers of the word

The most significant event related to the 1993 Southern Baptist Convention took place even before thousands of messengers gathered June 15-17 in Houston's George R. Brown Convention Center to conduct convention business.

Hundreds of Southern Baptist volunteers recorded 1,253 professions of faith in Jesus Christ during Crossover Houston, a pre-convention witnessing effort that included door-to-door surveys, revivals, street witnessing and block parties. Related ministry efforts included neighborhood missions projects conducted by Woman's Missionary Union volunteers and a Brotherhood-sponsored "World Changers" project in inner city Houston involving more than 250 Southern Baptist youth.

Crossover Houston was Southern Baptists' fifth annual pre-convention witnessing project. The effort's results provide a graphic reminder that nothing accomplished during the three-day SBC is more significant than the eternal impact of ministering in the name of Jesus Christ and leading lost souls to personal faith in Him. As important as it is to meet, plan, hear reports and set goals, the most crucial challenge for Southern Baptists is to continually "be doers of the word, and not hearers only."

Another pre-convention event that will have a long-term impact on Southern Baptist ministry was the election of Jerry Rankin as the new Foreign Mission Board president. Although Rankin's election appeared in jeopardy due to questions about his views of charismatic gifts, he assured trustees he does not speak in tongues or advocate it for others. After being elected on a 59-14 vote, Rankin's election was unanimously affirmed by the entire FMB trustee board.

As I wrote in this column a month ago, the search committee is to be commended for selecting a career missionary with 23 years of overseas ministry experience. With the charismatic question behind him and the unanimous support of trustees, Rankin appears qualified and ready to guide Southern Baptist foreign mission efforts into the 21st century.

There were, of course, numerous other highlights and occasional low points during this year's annual meeting. Among the most memorable events were the highly publicized "extravaganzas" presented by the Foreign and Home Mission boards and the Baptist Sunday School Board.

Those and other reports, combined with quiet, orderly business sessions, left the impression that Southern Baptists are once again looking toward the future and placing a high priority on missions and

STRAIGHT FROM THE EDITOR



By TRENNIS HENDERSON

evangelism. President Ed Young's gracious, evenhanded presiding and his re-election by acclamation added to the positive atmosphere.

One drawback to the smooth proceedings was the realization that thousands of Southern Baptists no longer attend SBC annual meetings because they have felt excluded from meaningful participation in recent years. Lloyd Elder and Herschel Hobbs are working to establish a grassroots coalition which will call for shared governance and giving among all Southern Baptists. With the controversy that has plagued Southern Baptists for years, any sincere effort to strengthen genuine peace and harmony deserves careful consideration by SBC leaders.

Business highlights during the annual meeting included accepting the Home Mission Board report on Freemasonry and the absence of official actions challenging

the future direction of WMU.

The HMB trustees were correct in citing the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church in recommending that Masonic membership "be a matter of personal conscience."

Concerning the recent challenges and misunderstanding faced by WMU, I noted in March that trust is the bottom line. I believe WMU will continue to be a primary force in missions promotion and education throughout the SBC. I am thankful that convention leaders and messengers are providing WMU the opportunity to prove that belief true.

On the home front, Ronnie Floyd represented Arkansas Baptists well during the Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference as did other Arkansans who filled a variety of roles in various meetings. Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, challenged Baptist ministers to lead their churches to "storm the gates of hell" by relying on God's power which comes through prayer.

During the Freemasonry debate, another Arkansan offered words of wisdom that should be applied to every area of Southern Baptist ministry. Urging messengers to approve the HMB report, Ralph Douglas of Pine Bluff declared, "We need to get on to the business of winning souls for Christ.... Let's go on with Bold Mission Trust."

As Crossover Houston clearly reflected, the business of winning souls for Christ remains Southern Baptists' greatest challenge "for such a time as this."

Immanuel -- an Arkansas flagship

Immanuel Church in Little Rock, which has led the Arkansas Baptist State Convention in Cooperative Program giving for more than 30 years, has been accurately described in recent days as a flagship among Arkansas Baptist churches. That flagship sailed through stormy waters during the Southern Baptist Convention.

A constitutional amendment adopted to exclude churches which openly "affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior" was twisted to challenge the seating of messengers from Immanuel Church. The motion, which was unanimously rejected by the SBC Credentials Committee, sought to penalize Immanuel because of the policy stands on homosexual rights by the church's most famous member, President Bill Clinton.

Messengers were right to affirm historic Baptist positions by adopting resolutions opposing Clinton's policies on abortion and homosexuality. Messenger Bo Ham-

mock of Florida was wrong to try to blame Immanuel Church for President Clinton's political views.

Despite the pain and embarrassment of the situation, Immanuel pastor Rex Horne responded with grace and dignity. One high point was seeing numerous Arkansas Baptist ministers offer words of support on Immanuel's behalf.

Horne is in a unique position as pastor to the leader of the free world. While standing firmly against abortion and homosexuality, he insists that President Clinton "is welcome to worship with us and our obligation is to pray for him."

Both Arkansas Baptists and Southern Baptists also have pledged to pray for the president. Pray, too, for Immanuel Church and pastor Rex Horne during these challenging days. In fact, why not take a moment to send a note or card to Immanuel and let them know that Arkansas Baptists care for and support this flagship church.

GRAYDON HARDISTER

Purloughing missionary, Jordan Member, First Church, Benton

I liked the way the meeting was conducted; Dr. Young did a beautiful job of presiding. Overall there was a sweet spirit. Dr. Young's testimony concerning his "WMU mother" in the questioning time following the WMU report was great.

I felt that an opportunity to "cast" a vote as an individual messenger during the election of the president for 1993-94 should have been provided. The statement from the podium was that Dr. Young was elected unanimously only because there were no other nominations.

**BILL ELLIFF, pastor
First Church, Little Rock**

I was impressed by several things at the SBC.

The unbelievable unity in decision making which has come, I believe, through the final, clear settling of who we are theologically as a denomination.

The optimistic reports of our boards and agencies. Contrary to many reports, it is thrilling to hear that we are "up" in so many areas. The foreign mission report on Wednesday night was the most wonderful presentation I have ever heard at a convention.

Having come through these last days of controversy, we are now poised to have the greatest impact for missions, evangelism and revival that we have ever known. I rejoiced in the missions and evangelism themes being so pronounced.

**RAY EDWARDS, evangelist
Member, First Church, Berryville**

It was, all in all, a good convention. However, three things are still apparent:

You cannot please *all* the people any of the time. Note the controversy over Jerry Rankin's election to the Foreign

Arkansans share views of '93 SBC

Mission Board and announced to the convention.

Moderators and parliamentarians make mistakes as in not limiting debate to the amendment to the main motion to accept the recommendation of the Home Mission Board's Interfaith Witness Department concerning Baptist participation in the Masonic Lodge.

The SBC is a "modified" democracy—but the sheer numbers of people who would like to participate in debate and the time restraints make this necessary.

We still have many hurdles to overcome, but I feel in my heart that we are moving again toward our most important thrust of missions and evangelism.

**WALTER DRAUGHON III, pastor
Calvary Church, Little Rock**

On the one hand, from the ill-focused attack on Freemasonry and the President of the United States, to the unjustified attempt to "unseat" the messengers of Immanuel Baptist Church, Little Rock, to the affirmation of constitutional language which redefines "cooperation with the SBC" to connote not only that church's commitment to SBC causes but also its alignment with a certain doctrinal stance, the SBC continued its dissolution of historic Baptist principles.

On the other hand, our mission force is

still strong, debate was not marked by anger at one another, the WMU, while not affirmed, was left free to support its Christian mission, and the financial bases of convention agencies remains stable.

**LEDELL BAILEY
Director of missions
Calvary Baptist Association**

One of the things that greatly impressed me was the fairness of our president, Dr. Ed Young, in dealing with the various motions presented. I also was inspired by his presidential address and felt it was on target.

I thought the convention theme, "For Such a Time as This," was very timely and those who interpreted it, such as Charles B. Fuller and Adrian Rogers, gave us a word from the Lord that we needed to hear and heed.

**MARJORIE GROBER
Arkansans WMU president
Member, Immanuel Church,
Little Rock**

My impression of the convention was one of hope. For several years, the reports of the Home and Foreign Mission boards have been sparsely attended. This year the convention hall was full and overflowing.

I felt a kind and gracious attitude was evident in the presiding of our president. The election of a new Foreign Mission Board president dedicated to missions adds to my hope for the future.

I pray that God will use the hurt and embarrassment which some of us had to experience (through an unsuccessful motion to "unseat" Immanuel Church's messengers) to continue to bring unity to our convention.

**REX HOLT, pastor
Central Church, Jonesboro**

My overall impression of the convention was very positive. I felt that Ed Young presided fairly and sensitively with a view toward the future. I think we could have turned a corner at the convention and once again looked at Bold Mission Thrust and renewed a commitment to missions. Young's challenge to stay off the side streets was timely.

I was very pleased with Jerry Rankin's election as president of the Foreign Mission Board. I can sense Southern Baptists rallying with new vigor around the mission challenge. Being on the Home Mission Board, I was pleased that Southern Baptists settled the Freemasonry issues by overwhelmingly approving the report and recommendation on Freemasonry.

I just believe it was a positive convention.



Credentials Committee member Greg Kirksey (left), pastor of First Church, Benton, assists Jim and Becky Lagrone of Bryant with credentials information.

Messengers affirm HMB report on Masons

ABN photo / Mike Gill

Southern Baptist messengers overwhelmingly approved a Home Mission Board recommendation that Masonic lodge membership be a matter of private choice.

The recommendation, approved June 16 by the SBC in Houston, is part of a four-page report, requested during last year's SBC in Indianapolis.

The report states, "Many tenets and teachings of Freemasonry are not compatible with Christianity and Southern Baptist doctrine while others are compatible.

"We therefore recommend that consistent with our denomination's deep convictions regarding the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church, membership in a Masonic Order be a matter of personal conscience."

Messengers rejected an amendment proposed by M.G. "Dan" Daniels of Cottage Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala. The amendment would have removed the recommendation and called Masonic teachings a "mixture of paganism and Christianity."

Brad Allen, chairman of the directors for the Home Mission Board, opposed the amendment, saying it would "strike two of the dearest things to the Baptist heart," the priesthood of the believer and the autonomy of the local church.

"If we can't trust the soul competence of the believer in Jesus Christ to do the right thing, we're sunk," said Allen, pastor of First Baptist Church of Duncan, Okla.

Before debate began, SBC president Ed Young cautioned messengers in their debate by quoting John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye have love one for another."

Ron Sutherland, of Rehoboth Baptist Church in Tucker, Ga., a former Mason, said he supported the recommendation even though he did not think it was strong enough.

"I have never seen any other cult any more destructive than this one," he said. "I speak as one who has been there."

Wallace Finrock, of Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas, defended Masons as a supporter of religious expression.

"We would have been far worse off as Baptists in Texas had it not been for Freemasons," he said, adding that the first Baptist Sunday School in Dallas met in a Masonic hall.

"Don't reject, in a time of moral decline, those who believe in morality," Finrock urged.

Allen said the HMB board of directors backed the report, "knowing that we're not going to please everyone because we're Baptist."



Ralph Douglas (center), a messenger from First Church, Pine Bluff, challenges fellow Southern Baptist messengers to affirm the Home Mission Board report on Freemasonry and "get on to the business of winning souls to Christ."

Some supported the sentiments of Ralph Douglas, a messenger from First Baptist Church of Pine Bluff, who said, "It breaks my heart to see these kind of things come before us and divide us again and again and again.

"Let's settle this thing once and for all," he said. "We need to get on to the business of winning souls for Christ....Let's go on with Bold Mission Thrust."

"We don't win people to Christ by condemning them."

— Larry Lewis
Home Mission Board president

Masonic leaders hailed the vote as a positive move by Southern Baptists.

"I am pleased that the Southern Baptist Convention has not embarrassed itself by yielding to an extremist splinter group whose demands run so counter to the convention's traditional support of the freedom of each Southern Baptist's personal conscience and the autonomy of each local Baptist church," said John Boettjer, editor of *The Scottish Rite Journal*.

Boettjer added the study and debate has increased Masons' awareness and sensitivity for concerns by Southern Baptists and other groups.

Home Mission Board president Larry L.

Lewis thanked messengers for their support of what he called an "accurate, fair report and recommendation that I believe most Baptists would want to live with."

"I don't think most Baptists want us to condemn Freemasonry," he said, adding that he estimated SBC messengers' support for the HMB report to be 75 to 80 percent of the vote. "We don't win people to Christ by condemning them."

In a press conference after the vote, Lewis said he recognizes the importance of the issue among some Southern Baptists. He questioned, however, whether the matter warranted the \$111,000 price tag for a study by the board's interfaith witness department.

"With the world all around us lost and going to hell, I'm not sure that the large expenditure of time and resources on this issue were justified," he said. "It did cost more than any other study we've done."

Noticeably absent from the debate was Larry Holly, the Texas physician who last year requested a study of the compatibility of Freemasonry with Christian and Southern Baptist teachings. The author of two books on the subject, Holly also appeared before the HMB study committee during its research on the matter.

Lewis said he hopes the study and report will satisfy most messengers so Southern Baptists can focus on planting churches and evangelism, although he noted, "I would not predict that the issue ever will totally be settled."

Rankin elected FMB president on 59-14 vote following three-hour closed-door meeting

Veteran Southern Baptist missionary Jerry Rankin was elected president of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board June 14 over the objections of some trustees who said his charismatic leanings would be divisive to Southern Baptists' worldwide outreach efforts.

In a special called meeting in Houston, one day prior to the start of the annual Southern Baptist Convention, FMB trustees voted 59-14 to elect Rankin, a missionary/administrator from Singapore with 23 years of foreign missions service.

The vote was changed to a unanimous vote "in the spirit of harmony" on a motion by trustee Paul Pressler of Houston, who had voted against Rankin in the preceding roll call vote.

Rankin's nomination by a 15-member trustee search committee had drawn considerable fire after reports began to circulate that Rankin was open to charismatic practices, such as glossolalia or speaking in tongues.

Speculation had swirled that the more conservative trustees would muster enough votes either to deny Rankin's election or postpone a vote until the board's June 28-30 meeting in Richmond, Va.

Other reports indicated that Rankin's nomination would be withdrawn by either him or the search committee in the face of rising pressure. But the search committee, trustee chairman John Jackson of California and Rankin refused to back down on bringing the issue to a vote as planned.

Rankin, who said he does not speak in tongues or advocate it for others, faced stiff questioning on the subject in a three-hour, closed-door meeting with trustees.

"He answered them directly and with integrity," said search committee member Terry Horton of Texas.

Rankin has said that although he doesn't speak in tongues, he has had occasional experiences in "praying in the Spirit" in his private prayer life and had a one-time experience of interpreting when a man spoke in tongues in a public worship service in Singapore.

Presidential search committee chairman Joel Gregory of Texas said the committee thoroughly investigated Rankin's background and is satisfied he is not a charismatic advocate and has "remained true to Baptist doctrine."

Jackson and Gregory set the stage for the controversial vote with opening statements by all 15 members of the search committee and by Rankin himself.

Gregory told reporters before the called meeting that the committee, which spent



Moments after his election as Foreign Mission Board president, Jerry and Bobby Rankin appeared with Woman's Missionary Union president Dellanna O'Brien at the WMU annual meeting to express appreciation for WMU's support of missions.

14 months searching for a successor to R. Keith Parks, would resign if the board failed to elect Rankin.

Rankin and several members of the search committee wiped away tears as the 15 men and women spoke of their conviction that God had led the diverse group to a "miraculous" and unanimous decision to nominate Rankin.

They related how they had sought to set aside personal opinions, political considerations and the expectations of others to seek God's leadership in finding the right person for the job.

"We have a strategic place in God's eternal plan to bring people from every tribe and tongue and nation to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ."

— Jerry Rankin
Foreign Mission Board president

Speaking with emotion about a spiritual investigation several said changed their own lives, search committee members said they found Rankin to be deeply spiritual, gifted in leadership, not too attached to the past way of doing things and innovative.

Although reports persisted that some trustees opposed Rankin because he had

not played an active role in the politics of the conservative resurgence, trustees interviewed after the vote insisted that opposition was based on theological concerns, not politics.

The question, said trustee Bill Blanchard of Tennessee, centered around the charismatic issue, which "has more to do more with biblical interpretation than presupposition about what the Bible is."

Blanchard, who voted for Rankin, said Rankin satisfied him that he holds to the inerrancy of the Bible and that he is not a charismatic. One observer noted that opposition votes seemed to grow out of fear that charges of charismatic tendencies by Rankin could be a divisive factor in the work of the FMB and Southern Baptists.

After his election, Rankin told trustees: "I am sincerely convinced that every vote cast" was cast with integrity and "out of conviction from the Lord."

He said as he assumed his role as the 10th Foreign Mission Board president he is convinced "God has a plan and purpose (for Southern Baptists) far beyond what we can imagine."

Rankin also declared he had the "best job in the world" as area director for Southern Asia and the Pacific and that he had not aspired to the FMB presidency.

"There was nothing to make me aspire to reach the presidency — except for a lost world that needs Jesus Christ," he said.

Rankin said he succumbed to the search committee's process when he "recognized that tens of thousands of people were praying" for the committee.

Rankin also retraced his call to missions

from the time he accepted Jesus Christ as a 10-year-old boy in a Billy Graham Crusade in Mississippi and outlined, in general terms, some things he would seek to implement as Foreign Mission Board president.

"If we get in tune with what God wants us to do, we can have 5,000 missionaries and a \$100 million" a year in Lottie Moon Christmas Offering receipts by the year 2000, Rankin said.

He said that although he will consult with FMB staff, missionaries and trustees to determine "precise and firm directions" for the future, he would:

- Multiply efforts to reach "World A" — one fourth of the globe which has had little or no chance to hear the Christian gospel — but would lead the board to focus on traditional mission fields "that God has ripened for the harvest."

- "We will face the judgment and wrath of the Lord for failing to do so," he said.

- Support the board's historical strategy of planting career missionaries to develop work indigenous to the countries in which they serve, but seek more ways to involve a wide range of Southern Baptists and develop "impact strategies" to win the world to Christ.

- "I believe in the principle of developing indigenous churches" under national leadership, he said, "but indigeneity doesn't mean passivity" on the part of missionaries in seeking creative and innovative ministries.

- Advocate a "more diversified and more field-oriented strategy." That approach would seek to find "balance," he said, between the heavily field-oriented approach under the 25-year presidency of the late Baker James Cauthen and the more centralized strategy during the 13-year presidency of R. Keith Parks.

- "The world is diverse," he said. "We can't have one" approach to strategy. "We need to give more flexibility to missionaries on the field."

- Enhance efforts to equip missionary candidates spiritually and practically.

- Set up a rapid deployment force of missionaries, staff members, emeritus missionaries, volunteers and others to enter areas of the world "when doors of opportunity open up."

- Challenge and equip families in Southern Baptist churches in the United States to nurture international students who will return home as leaders of their countries.

- Streamline administrative procedures at the Foreign Mission Board and on the foreign mission field.

During a news conference following his election, Rankin said he had never found, in his studies, a definite position among Southern Baptists regarding

exercise of spiritual gifts such as tongues. "My beliefs certainly are consistent with the Baptist Faith and Message and I believe with all my heart the teachings of Scripture."

While he told the media all the gifts of the Holy Spirit could be operative on the mission field — particularly evangelism, prophecy, service and helps — he said the greatest sign and wonder he had ever witnessed was the conversion of an individual to belief in Jesus Christ.

Rankin expressed "tremendous affirmation of my pilgrimage and walk with the Lord" throughout the questioning by trustees. He characterized their concern as relating to a "perception of what people feel I've experienced might be disruptive because it's not common to most Southern Baptists."

When asked about his agency's relationship with the moderate Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, Rankin said he "would not see a possibility of working in any kind of union with that kind of independent effort among Southern Baptists." Instead, he urged support of his own proposal to broaden the work of the FMB to be "a network coordinator to mobilize the resources and interests of churches, state conventions and other agencies to contribute to our task of reaching a lost world."

Rankin added that the FMB and CBF "are not in competition in reaching the lost world," noting that "Satan is our only adversary." He also said the FMB will continue in cooperation with other like-minded evangelical groups.

But when it came to his assessment of the CBF's impact on funding, Rankin said the CBF "is deliberately competing and drawing away that kind of support Southern Baptists ought to be giving to the Foreign Mission Board."

Still, he expects Southern Baptists to be unified in reaching the world for Christ, expressing confidence that the 15 million-member denomination "will financially undergird the FMB."

"Once we focus on what God is doing, the resources are there and God will bless us," Rankin said. "We will be unified and on track with what God has for us to do."

"God has raised up Southern Baptists and blessed them with tremendous potential, not to bring glory to a great denomination, but to lift up and glorify our Lord Jesus Christ," he noted. "We have turned back to the biblical foundations and faith essential to effective evangelism."

"We have a strategic place in God's eternal plan to bring people from every tribe and tongue and nation to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. With single-mindedness we will be devoted to leading Southern Baptists to fulfill that task."

O'Brien says WMU membership is 'on the move'

Saying Woman's Missionary Union's "purposes have never changed," WMU executive director Dellanna O'Brien told messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention the organization includes action projects to take the gospel around the world.

"Moving beyond meetings to ministries. Moving beyond promises of commitment to practical actions. Even moving beyond our own organizations to support the missions efforts of others. Today's WMU is a membership on the move," O'Brien said in her report to the convention.

WMU came under attack after a January 1993 action by its executive board to enlarge its focus to include other, non-traditional missions opportunities and to produce missions materials on request for other evangelical groups.

At the end of her report, two messengers asked O'Brien about any plans for WMU to formalize a relationship with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, an organization of moderate Southern Baptists.

"Have you in the past, or will you in the future, encourage the WMU to support missions offerings for the CBF?" asked Wiley Drake, a messenger from First Southern Baptist Church of Buena Park, Calif.

"No, we have not in the past and we do not plan to do that in the future," O'Brien responded.

Harry Godfrey, a messenger from North Bristol Baptist Church in Bristol, Va., questioned the extent of WMU's involvement with CBF.

"We would provide missions education materials concerning the cause of Christ around the world," O'Brien said. However, WMU staffers indicated earlier in the week they have received no request from CBF for missions materials.

During a lull while a messenger moved to a microphone, convention president Ed Young said, "I'll tell you about my mother who was a (WMU) circle leader down in Laurel, Miss., for many years. I'll give my report, my witness."

Meeting prior to last week's SBC, the WMU executive board authorized a special fund to accept contributions for missions projects and the ongoing work of the WMU.

Messengers oppose Clinton policies

SBC resolutions take strong stands against abortion and homosexuality

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention took a strong stand June 16 against President Bill Clinton's policies on abortion and homosexual rights, then paused to pray for the president and his administration.

With only scattered opposition in a show-of-hands vote, messengers approved a resolution separating the nation's largest Protestant denomination from the president's views on the two issues and urging him "to affirm biblical morality in exercising his public office." SBC president H. Edwin Young then paused to pray for Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, both of whom are Southern Baptists.

Messengers also approved specific resolutions against homosexuals in the military, diplomatic ties to the Vatican, the Freedom of Choice Act and other abortion legislation, and in favor of racial and ethnic reconciliation and religious expression in public schools. Although resolutions are not binding on individual Southern Baptists and their churches, the statements are important in staking out accepted positions on issues and in making known Southern Baptist views.

Detailed concerns cited

The resolution "On President William Jefferson Clinton" criticized the president for repealing the pro-life policies of the previous two Republican administrations; directing the Food and Drug Administration to make abortion pills available in the United States; requesting funds from Congress to pay for elective abortions through the federal Medicaid program; and supporting the repeal of the Kemp-Kasten Amendment which would allow money the U.S. gives to the United Nations to support nations that require abortions.

The document also criticizes Clinton's support for repealing the ban on homosexuals in the U.S. military; inviting leaders of the "homosexual lobby" to a meeting at the White House; and appointing homosexuals and pro-choice supporter to high-level government jobs.

Resolutions Committee member Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, told messengers, "I want you to hear our heartbeat on this resolution." Noting that Clinton once shared his testimony in Floyd's church while serving as governor of Arkansas, Floyd added, "The intent of this resolution is not a personal attack on him.

"We love him and we are to pray for him. We respect his position (as president)," Floyd pointed out. Even so, Floyd said he believed passage of the resolution

was necessary to "separate ourselves as a body from his policies on the critical moral issues which we believe are in contradiction to the Word of God and what is best for America."

Before a vote was taken, Don Wilkie, a messenger from Onalaska (Texas) Baptist Church, spoke against the resolution, claiming it "smacks of partisan politics" and represented "a lack of class on the part of this convention."

Another messenger, Cary Cambrell from Trinity Baptists Church in Baton Rouge, La., proposed an amendment to the resolution that would have inserted a call for Clinton to "repent" for his views on abortion and homosexuality.

Speaking against the proposed amendment, Georgia pastor James Merritt, chairman of the resolutions committee, said: "The issue is not the person of the president, not the position of the president. It is the policies he is trying to put in place."

Following Merritt's remarks, the amendment was overwhelmingly defeated in a show-of-hands vote before the resolution gained final approval.

Earlier in the week, Merritt said he believed a resolution specifically addressed to Clinton was necessary since the president is a Southern Baptist himself but does not represent "mainstream Southern Baptist thought" on key moral issues. Merritt said the president represents "the most severe shift in moral perspective and policy formulation of any president in history."

On the issue of homosexuals in the military, Southern Baptists adopted a statement that describes homosexuality as "immoral, contrary to the Bible and contrary to traditional Judeo-Christian moral standards."

The resolution lists several reasons for opposing homosexuals in the military, including the fact that it is "detrimental to morale, unit cohesion, good order, discipline and mission accomplishment" and would endanger the life and health of military personnel by increased exposure to sexually transmitted diseases and tainted blood.

The resolution acknowledges the biblical promise "that all persons, including homosexuals, can receive abundant, new and eternal life by repenting of their sin and trusting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord."

But it also affirms Southern Baptist opposition to any government endorsement or sanctioning of homosexuality and to the proposed lifting of the ban on

homosexuals in the military. In addition, the statement decries acts of hatred or violence by or against homosexuals and voices pride and support of the U.S. military and its chaplains.

In discussion of the resolution, Fred Brown of Texas sought to add wording that made it clear homosexuals are loved by God and Southern Baptists. "I am afraid that someone in a homosexual lifestyle is going to hear what's going on here and they're not going to hear it the way we want them to hear it," he said. Brown said he wants homosexuals to know they can come to a Southern Baptist church and find people who love them.

Merritt said the committee felt the reference to the biblical promise of eternal life to all persons captured that spirit. Messengers agreed, defeating Brown's amendment.

FOCA legislation opposed

In addressing the issue of abortion legislation, messengers stated strong opposition to the Freedom of Choice Act, which would "result in a national abortion-on-demand law prohibiting states from regulating and restricting abortions in any meaningful way."

The statement notes that about 1.6 million abortions are performed each year in the United States, while expressing once again the view that life begins at conception and that the Bible prohibits the practice of abortion.

Southern Baptists voiced strong opposition to several abortion-related developments, including efforts to introduce abortion pills into the United States, moves to deny pro-life advocates free-speech rights during "responsible non-violent protests outside abortion clinics," and health-care reform provisions that would use public monies to fund abortions.

In addition, the resolution states Southern Baptist opposition to the use of "electively aborted fetal tissue" in scientific experiments and to repeal of the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits federal funding of abortion.

Messengers adopted a resolution on racial and ethnic reconciliation, reaffirming Southern Baptists' "intention to love our neighbors as ourselves, denouncing in strongest terms every expression of racial and ethnic prejudice, discrimination and hatred."

The statement calls on national and world leaders to work to end genocide wherever it is found and urges federal, state and local governments to enforce civil-rights laws "when such laws are in

accordance with the Word of God" and prosecute persons who violate such laws. Messengers added the conditional phrase about the Word of God when a messenger cited the possibility of homosexuals being granted civil-rights protection in the future.

The resolution also calls on Southern Baptists to "redouble their efforts in their own communities to reach across racial and ethnic boundaries to establish both wholesome friendships and mutually beneficial ministry relationships."

On the issue of religious expression in public schools, Southern Baptists decried rulings and actions they said have eroded the right of students to express their beliefs. They specifically noted the decision prohibiting outside prayers at school commencement ceremonies.

The statement urges Southern Baptists and school officials "to work aggressively for full and free accommodation of prayer and religious expression in public school policies, including public school-related events."

Messengers also stated their opposition to diplomatic relations with the Vatican once again. Diplomatic ties with the Roman Catholic see were established in 1984 and have been continued under President Clinton. In their resolution, Southern Baptists insist such ties are a violation of the First Amendment and they call on national leaders to end the relationship. At the same time, the resolution assures Roman Catholics they are not acting out of bigotry against them and remain willing to work with Catholics on moral, social and public policy issues of mutual agreement.

On another front, messengers approved resolutions affirming the Cooperative Program and the sufficiency of Christ for salvation.

The Cooperative Program, the SBC's unified giving plan, now averages \$1 million a day in gifts and supports more than 8,000 home and foreign missionaries, the resolution notes.

In the statement, Southern Baptists commit themselves to continuing and increasing support for cooperative missions "so that all people might hear the gospel." They also commit to consider increasing gifts through CP.

Responding to a messenger's concern that the resolution may be divisive, Merritt emphasized the inclusive nature of the resolution. "We're saying, 'Come one. Come all. Let's support the Cooperative Program,'" he pointed out.

The resolution on "The Finality of Jesus Christ as Sole and Sufficient Savior," opposes the false teaching "that adherents of the non-Christian religions and world views can receive this salvation through any means other than personal repentance and faith in Jesus Christ."



Richard Harris (second from left), director of mass evangelism for the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board, and Susan Frost (right) of Hiram, Ga., took part in Crossover Houston in front of the Houston Zoologica Garden.

Evangelistic thrust yields 1,253 professions of faith in Houston

Southern Baptists recorded 1,253 professions of faith during the fifth Crossover evangelism effort prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Houston.

Preliminary reports include 221 professions of faith from door-to-door surveys, 377 from rallies and revivals, 281 from street witnessing and 374 from block parties.

"In every case where churches participated enthusiastically, there were a multitude of seeds sown and a tremendous harvest," said Darrell Robinson, Home Mission Board vice president for evangelism. Crossover is jointly sponsored by the HMB and the host state convention and local association.

In addition to professions of faith, 5,000 people were fed during block parties and at least 1,448 prospects were discovered for local churches.

Darrell Copeland, pastor of Jersey Village Baptist Church in suburban Houston, said he expects a long-term impact from Crossover. His church participated in door-to-door surveys by matching a church member with an out-of-town volunteer. This was the first door-to-door experience for some of his church members.

"We saw 21 saved in our four hours of visitation and found 195 prospects for Jersey Village Church," said Arkansas volunteer Robert A. Martin, pastor of East End Church in Hensley. Martin's wife, Joy,

and their son, James, also assisted the Houston congregation.

"The person I visited with won a man to the Lord as I prayed for the witnessing effort and my wife led one person to the Lord," noted Martin. "Although this was the first Crossover in which Martin had participated, it was the third one for his wife and son.

Other Arkansans assisting Jersey Village Church were Royce and Carolyn Sweatman. "It was a very exciting time for us," declared Sweatman, minister of evangelism and discipleship for First Church of Harrison. "We assisted with door-to-door surveys. Carolyn knocked on 47 doors and was able to share the gospel message twice while I knocked on 54 doors, presented the gospel three times and shared my personal testimony twice."

Volunteers witnessing at parks, shopping centers and other places with high pedestrian traffic were added to the Crossover agenda in 1991 when the SBC met in Atlanta. This year's result of 277 conversions was the most successful statistically, said Norman Harbough, coordinator of the 35 street teams.

Street evangelism last year at Crossover Indianapolis reported 198 professions of faith; Crossover Atlanta had 156, he said.

In additions to the conversions, Crossover also generated excitement among local church leaders, Harbough said. "People now have a vision of what can be done."

Motions offered by messengers address diverse range of topics

Thirty-two motions, including four involving President Bill Clinton, were offered by messengers to the 1993 Southern Baptist Convention meeting.

Ten motions were referred to the Executive Committee, while another 10 were passed on to various SBC agencies and institutions.

In other business, Bobby Boyles, pastor of First Baptist Church in Moore, Okla., was elected to deliver the 1994 convention sermon. Messengers selected Oscar Romo of the Home Mission Board as alternate convention preacher. Gary Moore of Second Baptist Church in Houston was elected music director.

Citing stands on homosexuality and/or abortion by Clinton and, in two instances, Al Gore, the motions asked for a variety of action by the SBC. Clinton is a member of Immanuel Church in Little Rock and Gore is a member of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va.

One motion asked the SBC to unseat the messengers of Immanuel Church because "they are, by their silence, supporting Bill Clinton's endorsement of the homosexual lifestyle." The SBC credentials committee determined Immanuel had not violated the SBC constitution and remained in friendly cooperation with the convention. (See related article on page 13.)

Two of the motions were ruled out of order because they asked messengers to end a relationship between the SBC and Clinton or Gore which does not exist, committee on order of business chairman Fred Powell of First Baptist Church of Moore, Okla., told messengers. Under SBC polity, people are members of churches, not associations or conventions.

Two motions on Freemasonry were also ruled out of order since the convention passed a Home Mission Board recommendation on Masonry. The recommendation called for Southern Baptists to make membership in a Masonic lodge a matter of personal conscience and to evaluate Masonry in the light of the Lordship of Christ, the Bible and the HMB's report.

SBC president Ed Young, acting at the recommendation of the committee on order of business, ruled out of order a motion calling for an investigation into allegations of harassment of female students by a trustee of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. The convention has no authority to direct trustees on internal operation of an institution, Powell told messengers.

Sid Peterson, Midwestern trustee

chairman, responded on behalf of the seminary's board, because the motion's mention of a "certain trustee" impugned the character of every trustee, he said.

No such allegations have been brought to Midwestern president Milton Ferguson or him, Peterson said.

"If the proper procedures are followed, I assure you the administration and the trustees will vigorously and thoroughly investigate any and all charges and will take appropriate action," Peterson said.

Dennis Murphy of Minnetonka, Minn., had offered the motion.

A motion to allow the convention to vote its approval or disapproval of the election of Jerry Rankin as Foreign Mission Board president, "in light of" questions whether he embraces Pentecostal or charismatic doctrine, was referred to the resolutions committee. The resolutions committee did not offer it for convention action.

A motion requesting a report from churches regarding church attendance by members employed by SBC agencies was ruled out of order. The committee recommended the ruling because the convention cannot order churches to report to agencies, Powell said.

Among motions referred to the Executive Committee were proposals to:

- Prohibit churches which have ordained women from being represented at the annual meeting

- Require that the parliamentarian for the annual meeting be a Southern Baptist.
- Amend the bylaws to designate state

conventions rather than the president, in consultation with the vice presidents, to name SBC Committee on Committees members.

- Require Executive Committee members to be members of churches which contribute at least 10 percent through the Cooperative Program.

- Ask the SBC president to appoint a special committee to study all program statements of agencies and institutions.

- Require gifts from churches to the Cooperative Program be recorded and printed in the SBC Annual.

Included in motions referred to various SBC entities were:

- Three seeking action by SBC agencies to divest themselves of stock in companies with practices conflicting with the Bible or to discontinue use of credit cards which help fund Planned Parenthood.

- One referred to all seminaries seeking to discourage the schools' alumni associations from having exhibits at Cooperative Baptist Fellowship meetings and to withhold Cooperative Program funds if they do not comply.

- One referred to all SBC agencies to reconsider a motion from 1992 regarding the limiting of severance packages for employees.

- One referred to the Annuity Board requesting a percentage of annuity investments be used to provide insurance for pastors with no provision for it.

- Another sent to the Annuity Board seeking appointment of a special committee to study the possibility of accident and health "self insurance."

- Two involving the SBC Book of Reports, one directing the Baptist Sunday School Board to publish it and both requiring mailing of it prior to the SBC.

'Depend on the Lord,' Lewis urges

Missionaries must place their ultimate dependence on "the Lord, not on the board," Home Mission Board president Larry L. Lewis told 83 home missionaries at a commissioning service Sunday, June 13.

The HMB has finite resources to support missionaries, Lewis said. Yet he stressed God has an unlimited potential to meet their needs.

The missionaries, assigned to 25 states, work in a variety of ministries including black church extension, church and community ministries, language church extension, new church extension, personal evangelism and town and country missions.

Lewis emphasized to the home

missionaries the importance of a firm belief in the Bible and Christ. "The burning convictions of our soul are what fire us and fuel us," Lewis said.

Missionaries also must make personal evangelism a priority, said Lewis. "There are a lot of things in this world you can be and not be a soul-winner, but a missionary is not one of them."

Planting churches and meeting human needs also are important missionary tasks, Lewis said. When churches are started, "it's as if we planted Jesus in that place," he noted.

Evangelism, Lewis said, can be aided by social ministries. "The greatest way to win somebody to Christ is to touch them where they hurt," he said.

Immanuel messengers challenged, 'reaffirmed'

By Trennis Henderson

Editor, Arkansas Baptist

Rejecting a Florida pastor's proposal to "unseat" the messengers of Immanuel Church in Little Rock, the Southern Baptist Convention Credentials Committee voted unanimously June 16 to "heartily reaffirm" that Immanuel "is in friendly cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention and sympathetic with its purpose and work."

The committee's action, which followed a 90-minute hearing, came in response to a motion by Bo Hammock, pastor of Providence Village Baptist Church in Lake Butler, Fla., who charged that the members of Immanuel "are, by their silence, supporting Bill Clinton's endorsement of the homosexual lifestyle." President Clinton has been a member of the Little Rock congregation since 1980.

Immanuel pastor Rex Horne called Hammock's motion a "witch hunt," adding that he was "hurt, saddened and embarrassed" for his church and its 10 messengers.

SBC registration secretary Lee Porter said Immanuel's messengers "were not called here on a trial. We are trying to follow procedure. We wanted you to be here so we could hear your side of the story."

Arkansans affirm Immanuel

Several Arkansas Baptist ministers spoke on Immanuel's behalf, including Credentials Committee member Greg Kirksey, pastor of First Church, Benton.

"I have a very healthy respect for Immanuel Baptist Church," Kirksey told fellow committee members. Noting that "no church is more cooperative and sympathetic with the work of our convention," Kirksey called the motion and hearing "a disservice to one of our most faithful churches."

Arkansas Baptist State Convention executive director Don Moore, who was unable to attend the committee meeting, faxed a letter to the Credentials Committee affirming Immanuel Church.

Describing Immanuel as "the flagship of Southern Baptist mission support in Arkansas throughout the years," Moore said the church has led the state in Cooperative Program giving for more than 30 years.

According to a page 3 article in the June 17 issue of the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine*, Immanuel contributed more than \$400,000 through the Cooperative Program last year, ranking 13th in total CP giving among all Southern Baptist churches.



Rex Horne (left) and Bo Hammock take part in an informal new conference after Hammock challenged the seating of messengers from Immanuel Church in Little Rock where Horne is pastor.

"Baptist history provides no precedent for a convention or an association to tell a church what it has to do with regard to the disciplining of an individual church member," Moore emphasized. "Immanuel Baptist Church has not given its endorsement or approval of the man or the positions held by President Clinton."

If Immanuel's messengers were unseated, Moore added, "the convention will have left its historic polity and must be prepared to rebuke, censor and discipline every other church that does not practice church discipline against its errant members."

Other Arkansas ministers who spoke on Immanuel's behalf included Walter Draughon, pastor of Calvary Church, Little Rock; Jimmie Sheffield, ABCS associate executive director; and Billy White, pastor of Second Church, Little Rock. Additionally, Bill Elliff, pastor of First Church, Little Rock, and Rex Holt, pastor of Central Church, Jonesboro, sent letters of support for Immanuel to the committee.

Hammock's motion came the same day the convention gave final approval to a constitutional amendment declaring that churches which act to "affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior" are "not in cooperation" with the SBC and, therefore, not eligible to send messengers to annual convention meetings.

Hammock charged in his motion that Clinton is "doing more to promote and encourage homosexuality than anyone in

the history of the United States."

"It is a church's responsibility to deal with immorality within the church," Hammock told the committee, adding that Providence Village Church would "remove fellowship" from Clinton if he was a member there.

"What is a church in friendly cooperation?" Horne asked Credentials Committee members. "I preach that the Bible teaches that homosexuality is sin. We have been a church that has stayed loyal and true to Southern Baptists."

Assuring the committee that "it is unthinkable that Immanuel Baptist Church would affirm homosexuality," Horne added, "Our stances are not private; neither have I been silent."

After hearing from Horne, the committee adopted a motion stating it received no evidence Immanuel affirms, approves or endorses homosexual behavior, but received ample evidence to the contrary.

In an effort to clarify future challenges that might be waged under the new constitutional amendment, the committee's report to the SBC stated that a church acts only by an official vote of the congregation and that a church is not out of cooperation with the SBC because of a position on homosexuality held by one or more of its members.

During a press conference following the committee meeting, Horne told reporters that withdrawing fellowship from President Clinton "was never considered" by Immanuel.

"We did not endorse him or approve some of his views," Horne noted, "but he is welcome to worship with us and our obligation is to pray for him. We believe we could be redemptive by making our views concerning biblical beliefs on these issues known...and that the Holy Spirit can work through that."

'Indefensible' actions

Calling the motion and hearing "indefensible," Horne asked, "How clear can you be when you say homosexuality is sin? If Immanuel Baptist Church can be challenged on things like this, there's not a church in the Southern Baptist Convention that could not be challenged."

Horne told the *Arkansas Baptist Newsmagazine* that he "will never forget our 10 messengers sitting there like they were on trial. To be subjected to that, I'll never forget it."

Despite the painful process, "God can bring good out of difficult situations," he added, noting that Immanuel "will be stronger than ever on the autonomy of the local church."

Call to missions: Overcome walls, spread gospel

A world missions musical extravaganza confronted walls that home and foreign missionaries must breach to penetrate the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Featuring an array of music and media, the event challenged messengers to the June 16 evening session of the Southern Baptist Convention to eliminate attitudes which prevent missions involvement.

Costumed historical figures on stage and modern-day missionaries on video demonstrated how they have scaled the walls of fear, superstition, ignorance, cultural divisiveness and prejudice across the history of world missions.

But then, as set walls fell, the focus narrowed to individual Southern Baptists and the personal barriers they must hurdle to allow God's will to work in their lives.

"Do you recognize this wall?" asked Christi Myers, news anchor of KTRK in Houston, who interviewed the historical characters and the missionaries in the dramatic presentation.

"You should," she said, "because it represents your barriers to the perfect will of God in your life" as Southern Baptists seek to minister throughout the United States and in 129 nations around the world.

She described it as a "wall of selfishness" made of "bricks ... fastened together by the power of your will in resisting the call of God upon your life."

"Fear, superstition, ignorance, culture, prejudice and persecution are nothing in comparison to the power of this wall in stopping you from climbing over it to victory."

An enthusiastic audience of Southern Baptists repeatedly interrupted the session with applause in appreciation for the cast of professional actors, the choirs and orchestras of First and Second Baptist churches of Houston and the combined choirs of Union Baptist Association.

From a foreign missionary leading Backyard Bible Clubs in East German housing complexes to a home missionary feeding hurricane victims in south Florida, the audience got a glimpse of Southern Baptists' worldwide mission efforts.

Dale Thorne of the Foreign Mission Board said he sees walls tumble in Israel as Arabs and Jews become Christians and worship together. In one area, Thorne said many Jews are hearing the gospel for the first time.

Home missionary Ballard White said he had to overcome walls of cultural resistance when he began working on a Sioux Indian



In a dramatic presentation during Southern Baptists' world missions report, the "wall of Jericho" literally fell before the eyes of convention messengers. The program stressed the importance of overcoming barriers to missions involvement.

reservation in South Dakota more than 20 years ago. Then, the church had six members who were all Anglo. Now the church has more than 230 members, and it has regular services in five communities, plus work in nine other areas.

Home missionaries working with the international community, Ted Mall and Don Gerlach, stressed the need to share Christ with people who may be in the United States only a short time. Mall, a native of India, works at the United Nations, and Gerlach ministers to seaman at the port in Baltimore.

Planting gospel seeds

"You never know what happens to seed planted in Jesus' name," said Gerlach, who meets people from 127 countries.

Mall said building relationships with people from other countries and inviting them to Bible studies leads to chances to witness—his "first and foremost objective." When people return to their homeland and share their newfound faith, Mall said they witness to people he will never meet.

Southern Baptists may never meet people in China, but they are represented there by people like Charlie Wilson. Indigenous churches in China are "filled and overflowing," and 13 seminaries in China are training Christian leaders, Wilson said. He added that volunteers are needed for teaching positions and a number of other professional roles in China.

John Ingouf of the Foreign Mission Board also issued a plea for volunteers. Four hundred Southern Baptists are needed in November for an evangelism emphasis in India. Less than 100 have made definite

plans to participate, Ingouf said. He noted that only 2.6 percent of India's 860 million residents claim to be Christians.

The audience was challenged to overcome sin, selfishness and indifference to be involved in world missions. Don Kammerdiener, Foreign Mission Board executive vice president, and Larry Lewis, Home Mission Board president, issued pleas for financial and prayerful support of missions as well as for people to commit their lives to mission careers.

As missionaries stood among the audience, 619 people made commitments to home or foreign missions, according to preliminary reports. Another 1,800 people made decisions to support missions by giving more sacrificially or praying more consistently.

Prior to the musical and media presentation, Lewis and Kammerdiener reported on the work of the two mission boards.

Lewis said Southern Baptists started 1,281 churches in 1992, up 14 percent from the previous year, and that 71,000 youth and adults volunteered in home missions. He also noted that 2,164 babies were born to women ministered to through crisis pregnancy centers, and 832 women counseled there received Jesus Christ as Savior.

Kammerdiener, who has served for the past eight months as interim FMB president, noted that more than 250,000 persons — a record number — were baptized in 1992 as the result of Southern Baptist overseas missions efforts. He also noted that a record 32,000 churches in other countries are related to Southern Baptist work.

Pageantry highlights BSSB's musical drama

SBC photo / Morris Abernathy

As hundreds of teenagers flooded the platform, Baptist Sunday School Board president James T. Draper Jr. encouraged adults attending the Southern Baptist Convention to support young people participating in a new sexual abstinence campaign.

"True Love Waits," a nationwide campaign aimed at teens, was launched this spring. Houston-area youth joining Draper in the board's report to the SBC were representative of thousands across the country who already have pledged to remain sexually pure until marriage.

"True Love Waits" was just one of several new programs and emphases highlighted during the board's 90-minute report and dramatic musical extravaganza.

The presentation featured performances by country music singer Ricky Skaggs and contemporary Christian artists Cynthia Clawson and Wayne Watson as well as a cast of some 700 choir and orchestra members from First and Second Baptist churches in Houston. The drama was produced and directed by Gary Moore, Second Baptist's minister of music, and Gerald Ray, minister of music at First Baptist.

Also featured in the musical drama were movie actor Dean Jones and a drill team from Brentwood Baptist Church in Houston.

The drama, which drew two standing ovals from a crowded hall at the George R. Brown Convention Center, featured costumes and sets provided by both First and Second Baptist churches. Among the



Actor Dean Jones portrays Moses in the Baptist Sunday School Board's musical drama.

props and sets were a giant Bible, the ark of the covenant and a crystal throne. The presentation related the life of Moses to the Sunday School Board's vision of assisting local churches and believers "to evangelize the world to Christ, develop believers, and grow churches by being the best worldwide provider of relevant, high-quality, high-value Christian products and services."

In the report to the convention of the board's activities for the previous year, trustee chairman Dan Collins of Mobile,

Ala., noted two primary functions of the Sunday School Board: the ministry mission and a commitment to a greater evangelization role of bringing the world to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Collins said the board functions uniquely in Southern Baptist life as both a business and a ministry, but is committed to have a ministry impact "even as we sell our products and our services."

"The board is uniquely poised to help us define and redefine who we are as Southern Baptists, even in these uncertain times in our denomination," Collins added.

Draper noted the development of new products suggested by board employees, even while older products continue to have impact. The board produces more than 13,000 products and publications.

"We have so many new things, it would take us all night to tell you about them," Draper said.

He specifically noted the "incredible impact" of MasterLife, a multi-week personal discipleship program that has been used by former Panamanian dictator Manuel Noriega who became a Christian while imprisoned in Florida.

Draper also invited messengers to participate in the new Family Worship Bible Reading Plan, which provides daily Bible readings from The Family Worship Bible published by the board. The plan contains ideas for family devotionals, worship helps, family worship activities and songs.

"We encourage Southern Baptists to commit to read the Word of God together each day in 1994," Draper said.



Contemporary Christian recording artists Wayne Watson (left) and Cynthia Clawson comfort a dying AIDS patient and his friend during a skit presented as part of the Baptist Sunday School Board report to convention messengers.

SBC nominating report approved without dissent

The report of the 1992-93 Committee on Nominations passed without a challenge from the floor during the recent Southern Baptist Convention.

Messengers approved all nominees selected to fill 268 positions on the SBC's board, commissions and committees. Some of the nominees were new to their positions, while many were returning for second four-year terms. It was only the second time in 15 years the Committee on Nominations' report had escaped a floor challenge, chairman Joe Atchison said.

Before messengers approved the report, Atchison, director of mission for Northwest Association, explained the committee's criteria in making its choices.

"I was asked several times...if this group was represented or that group was represented," Atchison told messengers, "and my reply has been that the people that we bring to you for your consideration today are mainline Southern Baptists."

The committee used as its guidelines, Atchison said, a person's commitment to the Lord, commitment to a "perfect, inerrant, infallible Bible," support of the local church and Cooperative Program, his or her church's evangelistic efforts and expertise matched to the demands of the specific board.



Nominating Committee chairman Joe Atchison shares committee report.

Arkansas was one of three state convention which qualified for additional positions on boards because of increased membership.

Arkansas Baptists elected to a first term of service include William R. Elliff of Little Rock, Executive Committee; Stephen P. Davis of Russellville, Foreign Mission

Board; Wyndham Cook of Waldo, Home Mission Board; Ben J. Rowell of Rogers, Baptist Sunday School Board; Ken Lilly of Fort Smith, Annuity Board; Orman W. Simmons of Little Rock, Southern Seminary; Tony Preston of Bentonville, Christian Life Commission; and L. Bert Miller of Springdale, Order of Business Committee.

Arkansans elected to a second term of service include Mark W. Brooks of Springdale, Baptist Sunday School Board; Ronnie W. Rogers of Hot Springs, Midwestern Seminary; and James McDaniel of Brinkley, Education Commission.

Messengers also elected 68 people from 34 state and regional Baptist conventions to serve on the SBC's Committee on Nominations. The committee will bring nominations to the 1994 SBC meeting in Orlando of Baptists to serve on SBC's boards, commissions and committees.

The committee, to be chaired by William E. Bell of Euless, Texas, is made up of two people from each state or regional convention.

Arkansas Baptists elected to serve on the Committee on Nominations are Dennis Cottrell, pastor of Harvard Avenue Church in Siloam Springs, and William D. Sykes, a member of Central Church in Jonesboro.

Young urges Baptists off 'side streets,' back to Jesus

The America of yesterday is gone because Southern Baptists and evangelical churches have gotten off on "side streets" of homiletics, politics and inattention to evangelism and missions, said Southern Baptist Convention president H. Edwin Young.

"Our America, from any viewpoint, is growing darker and darker and darker," said Young, pastor of Second Baptist Church in Houston. "We look at our America in this hour and we have to ask, 'Where is the church?'"

Young said social victories today appear on the side of abortion advocates, drug dealers, the American Civil Liberties Union and proponents of the humanist agenda.

"The evangelical church, and, yea, even much of our beloved Southern Baptist Convention, have been on side streets," Young said.

Charging churches across America with impotence, Young said Christians must take up the cross of Christ daily: "My cross is every day and I'm to deny my agenda and I'm to give, in every way, Jesus the highest priority in my life.

"We're to walk through our cities and our towns and people will look and say, 'Are you a Christian?' and we'll say, 'Yes, we're guilty; I'm a Christian.'"

Political "side streets" also have occupied the attention of too many Christians, Young asserted.

"Somehow, we began to play political games and by definition politics comes to coalitions and coalitions lead to compromise and when we're in bed with a politician a genuine born-again Christian will be led to make compromises that we cannot and must not make," Young charged.

"The difference between the church in the 21st century and the church in the first century is the difference between influence and power," Young said. "The first century church did not have much influence (on the larger society), but it had the power of God" in its life and work.

But the "saddest side street we have marched down," Young said, is ranking evangelism and missions too low on the priority list.

"Out of our 38,443 (Southern Baptist) churches last year 7,771 churches did not baptize a single person," Young said. "Out of our 38,000-plus churches last year over 20,398 of these churches baptized four or less - many of them with memberships of 1,000, 1,500, 2,000, some of them 3,000-plus members."

"Brethren, we might as well get deadly honest," Young stated. "You can't find any universalists among us, but ... by not letting evangelism be the main thing ... we have become functional universalists."

Young said churches must reclaim the promises of God to win the world for Christ. Then, he predicted, "No president and no congress shall be able to stop the purposes of the almighty God. When George Bush was president we did not have revival and now that Bill Clinton is president he can't keep us from having revival."

But churches must become desperate for God and pray for renewal and revival, Young said. "When the message of evangelism becomes the main thing again, the SBC will no longer be on side streets."

ARKANSANS AT THE SBC

ABN photos / Miss Gil



The Arkansas Master Singers and Singing Women perform for the 1993 Southern Baptist Church Music Conference. Lester McCullough and Jean Pilcher directed the performance.



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AS THIS.

ESTHER 4:14



Bill Cook (right), director of Ouachita's Fayetteville extension center, and his wife, Rachel, greet guests at OBU's booth.



James Walker (left), Arkansas annuity/stewardship director, assists Ron Vicker of Texas with annuity information.



Jacob Price and his mom, Wendy, take a lunch break. Price is a member of Central, Magnolia.



Graydon Hardister (left) and his wife, Betty (right), missionaries to Jordan, visit during an FMB reception with Fuad and Linda Shorosh of Tennessee.

WMU leaders emphasize missions focus

Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union is moving beyond controversy to focus on the future, according to speakers' comments and the spirit evidenced during the group's 105th annual meeting June 13-14 in Houston.

In his first public appearance, less than one hour after his election as Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board president, Jerry Rankin asked WMU to join him in "reaching the world for Jesus Christ."

Greeted by a sustained standing ovation, Rankin thanked WMU for their missions support.

"You have upheld us and supported us," he said. "Apart from the very missionaries themselves, WMU is most responsible for the success of the largest missionary force around the world."

National WMU president Carolyn Miller of Huntsville, Ala., set the tone for the two-day meeting with her opening remarks June 13 to the 1,800-plus registered participants and guests.

After a brief reference to problems encountered by the national organization in recent months, Miller encouraged participants to look to the future.

"Although we have experienced a difficult year, we have real peace about our decisions and about what the future holds for WMU," she said. "That leaves us nothing but excited about our future."

The WMU executive board voted in January 1993 to enlarge their focus to include other, non-traditional missions opportunities and to produce missions materials on request for other evangelical groups.

The action produced resolutions from the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee and several state Baptist conventions expressing concern that WMU would no longer maintain exclusive relationships with the Home and Foreign Mission boards. FMB and HMB trustees subsequently affirmed the Executive Committee resolution. Other groups and individuals have expressed support for WMU.

During the June 14 morning session, Daniel Vestal, pastor of Tallwood Baptist Church in Houston, brought in 15 boxes containing more than 50,000 tributes to WMU. Vestal and four others held an April 8 telephone news conference to express support for WMU and urge Southern Baptists to write or call an 800 number to voice their tributes.



Wendy Hoag (left) of Heber Springs, a member of the National Acteens Panel, spoke about Acteens at the national Woman's Missionary Union meeting in Houston.

"Please continue, for the sake of the gospel and the cause of Jesus Christ," Vestal said, "to lead Southern Baptists—all Southern Baptists—in the cause of missions involvement and missions support into the next century and the next millennium."

In response, WMU executive director Dellanna O'Brien said, "WMU in its 105 years has never sought glory for itself. We have always said, 'If the hungry are fed, the wounded bound up and people are brought to Christ, to God be the glory.'"

In its executive board meeting June 12 prior to the annual meeting O'Brien said the controversy was discussed but board members determined no response was needed.

'Ready to move on'

Miller echoed that decision in her remarks to the general session. "We are here today because of our tomorrows, not because of what happened in our yesterdays," Miller said. "If you feel like I do, you are ready to move on—to greater service, to deeper levels of ministry, to a higher calling of missions."

Missionaries and other speakers called on Southern Baptists to support missions with their prayers, their money and a willingness to become personally involved.

Beverly Dunston Scott, retired professor of urban planning at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, N.J., noted, "We are inundated with human misery and need. We have been fed so much gloom and doom we are becoming compassion fatigued."

She called on Christian women to "see

themselves as God sees them—intellectually and spiritually capable, compassionate, caring. Christian service is not and should not be defined by man, denominations or society. It is defined by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Mike Chute, missionary in Hong Kong, said the three objectives of Bold Mission Thrust are still valid. "We still need people who will go. We need people who will give. We need people who will pray."

Home missionary David Fuller of Cleveland, Ohio, said Scripture is clear on serving "the least of these."

He said fear and pride are two barriers Christians face in ministering to others. "If we feel like we're better than the least of these, then we can't serve them."

Houston pastor William A. Lawson Jr. echoed Fuller's comments in a later session.

"Jesus set an example of service so that the church He left behind would not have the notion that it is a country club, but rather a community of service."

"If the focus of Jesus was on the underclasses, then where should our focus be?" asked Lawson, pastor of Wheeler Avenue Baptist Church.

Echoing the annual meeting theme, "Summoned to Serve," Lawson encouraged the audience to "return to your community to find a way to serve Jesus Christ because one day He is coming back for all of us. Will you be ready?"

Participants re-elected by acclamation their two national officers, Carolyn Miller of Huntsville, Ala., president, and Martha L. Wennerberg of Defunlak Springs, Fla., recording secretary.

Ministers hear call for spiritual healing

Pastors need to experience brokenness and humility to bring healing to their lives, churches and nation, speakers frequently told participants in the two-day 1993 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference June 13-14 in Houston.

"Heal Our Land," taken from II Chronicles 7:14, was the theme of the conference.

In the closing message June 14, Charles Stanley urged pastors to proclaim the grace of God, rather than judgment and repentance, as the only "message that's going to heal our land."

To effectively proclaim grace to hurting people, the pastor must do so "out of a broken life," said Stanley, pastor of First Baptist Church of Atlanta.

Brokenness, he said, is a process in which God targets anything a Christian depends on rather than God, arranges the circumstances to break a person, chooses the tools to do the breaking and controls the pressure on the person.

If you are "going to be a blessing, you're going to have to bleed," Stanley said.

Harold O'Chester, pastor of Great Hills Baptist Church in Austin, Tex., said, "Brokenness is that condition...where our will is brought into absolute and total submission to God's will....You've got to understand, whatever it takes (to break a person), God's up to it."

Seven things prevent leaders from being broken by God, said John Maxwell, senior pastor of Skyline Wesleyan Church in San Diego.

They are, he said, the fast pace of life, an unwillingness to be vulnerable, immaturity, isolation from the world, misplaced priorities, contentment with status quo, and a human perspective rather than a faith perspective.

"We lack brokenness because we don't see people like God sees people," Maxwell said. "If the pastor can be changed, the church can be changed, and if the church can be changed, the community can be changed."

Ego is "on parade in too

many pulpits," said Adrian Rogers, pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church in suburban Memphis, Tenn. The problem, he said, in the SBC is the same as in America — pride.

"I'm sick and tired of people standing up and talking about our great Southern Baptist Convention, our great churches. There's one who's great. His name is Jesus," Rogers said.

Columnist Cal Thomas blamed "a compromising, undisciplined, disobedient

church of Jesus Christ" for much of the moral and spiritual decline in America during the last 25 years.

Transforming the culture will require greater emphasis on prayer, more ministry by the laity and withdrawal from the public schools, he said.

Thomas exhorted pastors to "remove ourselves from American public schools and establish a superior school system. What's wrong with us being the standard and drawing them to our schools?"

The only thing keeping God from healing America is the sin "of the people of God," said Dallas evangelist Jay Strack. "We can either be humbled because of our sin or be humbled by our sin."

New Mexico pastor Charles Lowery and popular author and conference speaker Gary Smalley encouraged pastors to deal with relationships, especially in their families.

"If we're going to heal our land, we've got to heal our relationships," Lowery said. "Some men are trying to be Superman, super pastor. What your family needs is for you to be a husband and a dad."

Christians and their families need to "own up" to and resolve their anger, Smalley said. Men should "put on the nature of Christ" and be tender with their wives, he said.

Other speakers exhorted pastors to focus on evangelism without accepting the teachings of the power evangelism movement. "Many of you come from churches that reflect keepers of the aquarium rather than fishers of men," said E.V. Hill, pastor of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles.

Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla., said pastors need to make sure their churches don't become "Satan-friendly" in an attempt to become "seeker-friendly," adding that a "Satan-friendly" church is a material, liberal or sensational church.

Ike Reighard, pastor of New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., was elected conference president



Ronnie Floyd urges pastors to utilize "the God factor."

Floyd: 'Storm hell's gates'

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of First Church, Springdale, challenged ministers attending the 1993 Southern Baptist Pastors' Conference to lead their congregations to "storm the gates of hell" by utilizing the God factor, the leadership factor and the people factor.

"America is in need of spiritual healing for one reason alone," Floyd declared. "America is not in need of healing because of abortion or pornography or liberalism or humanism or even homosexuality. America is in need of healing because the church of America is sick. When the church of America is sick, the nation is doomed."

Emphasizing the importance of the God factor in addressing America's woes, Floyd said, "The only way to penetrate the mind of the American pagan today is through the power of God and that comes through prayer."

Floyd said courage is the key to implementing the leadership factor. "Leadership leads," he insisted. "Leadership does not have the goal of playing it safe, but of getting the job done, whatever it takes." He said the people factor involves implementing strategies which fulfill the Great Commission of Christ.

"The only hope for America," he concluded, "is for America to come back to God, to return to the principles of the Bible...and for the church, for once and for all, to return to be what God wants us to be more than anything — a church that storms the gates of hell."

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SBC's seminaries share testimonies, goals

A multimedia presentation and personal testimonies highlighted a report of the Southern Baptist Convention's six seminaries.

"The Word of God stands at the center of all we do and all we teach at our seminaries," Roy L. Honeycutt, retiring president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., told SBC messengers.

"God needs laborers," said William O. Crews, president of Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in Mill Valley, Calif. "There is an urgent need for compelling hands-on problem-solving. The seminaries are shaping a new generation of mission leaders. The time has come for churches to step boldly through the door (of mission opportunity) to minister to the world in both word and deed."

Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Church, Woodstock, Ga., said the most exciting days for his alma mater, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., are yet to come. "It's a new day of commitment to the conservative theology we have stood for all these years. It's a new day of compassion — compassion for lost souls."

Jimmy Garcia, ethnic missions coordinator for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, expressed his gratitude for the theological, philosophical and practical disciplines he received at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, which "strengthened my calling for ministry."

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary graduate Murray Wilton, pastor of Southside Baptist Church in Huntsville, Ala., said, "The seminary encouraged me, yes, demanded me to put my seminary knowledge into practical application."

The report concluded with an altar call from Southeastern president Paige Patterson for men and women to respond to their call to ministry by preparing with a theological education.

Midwestern Seminary

"Being the people of God means listening to the voice of Jesus and seeking to obey His commands" rather than focusing on criticisms of one another, Milton Ferguson told alumni of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Addressing approximately 140 alumni and friends during the institution's national alumni luncheon in Houston, Ferguson, Midwestern's president for the past 20 years, warned against listening to "those who criticize" others so loudly they don't hear the voice of God.

Alumni of the year included B. Marie Clark, a Christian education consultant for the Kansas City (Kansas) Baptist Association, and John W. Thomason Jr., executive director of the Wyoming Southern Baptist Convention.

Honorary alumni included Bon E. Lee, state student director for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, and Jim R. Love, president of International Business Ventures, Inc., in Kansas City, Mo. In addition, a charter was granted for the organization of an alumni chapter in Nigeria, where approximately 20 Midwestern graduates reside.

New Orleans Seminary

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary replaced its traditional alumni luncheon this year with an alumni breakfast attended by nearly 400 persons. The breakfast was the finale for the seminary's 75th anniversary year.

President Landrum P. Leavell II reported that during this 75th anniversary year enrollment increases were recorded both on and off-campus, for a record total enrollment.

Keith Huffman, chairman of the seminary trustees,

presented Leavell a plaque on behalf of all the seminary's trustees, recognizing his integrity, commitment, and service to the seminary.

Ernest L. Carswell Jr., pastor of First Baptist Church, Taylors, S.C., received a distinguished alumnus award and Don Aderhold, director of the seminary's extension center campus in Marietta, Ga., received the seminary's first honorary alumnus award.

Southeastern Seminary

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's national alumni association gave its first annual distinguished alumnus award to SBC president H. Edwin Young.

More than 275 persons attending the seminary's annual alumni reunion luncheon greeted Young with a standing ovation as president Paige Patterson presented the award.

Charles Page, moderator of the meeting and pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., said of his education at the seminary the "love of the Bible as truth without error was not upheld the way I thought it should be, but things are being done correctly now.... Many people all over the country want to be a part of what is now happening at Southeastern."

Patterson addressed the issue of Southeastern's probationary status placed on it by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). He said he could not promise what SACS would do, but he expressed confidence the seminary "will be free from the impediment of probation" by January of 1994.

Southern Seminary

Alumni and friends of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary bade farewell to retiring seminary president Roy L. Honeycutt and welcomed president-elect R. Albert Mohler Jr.

Honeycutt, who will be succeeded by Mohler Aug. 1, urged the 360 people at the luncheon meeting to "stay faithful, stay together and stay positive. Honeycutt emphasized his challenge to stay positive is not based on mere sentimentality: "Rather, as believers who commit their future to God's providential care, we are positive because of who He is and what He does in history."

In his address, Mohler pledged to maintain the heritage of Southern Baptists' oldest institution. "We stand on the threshold of the 21st century with an institution that is 134 years old and 134 years proud, with an unparalleled heritage," he said. "We stand on the brink of a new denominational moment which I pray will see this great denomination move into a bold and innovative future."

Honored as distinguished alumni were Alton Harpe Jr., retired director of student work at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., and Roy C. McClung, president emeritus of Wayland Baptist University in Plainview, Texas.

Southwestern Seminary

Southwestern Seminary will "maintain the academic course" it has had since its founding in 1908, the school's president told more than 850 alumni and friends attending the school's national alumni association reunion.

Russell H. Dilday, in his 15th year at Southwestern, said the seminary is continuing to combine scholarly academics with practical applications.

"The Christ-like and effective ministry of those who have been trained at this school, those who have been honed and sharpened at Southwestern, demonstrate the importance of this school," Dilday said.

Distinguished alumni awards were presented to Charles Lee Williamson, Dallas; Carolyn Coggin, Fort Worth; and James Crane, Fort Worth.

Swindoll emphasizes importance of integrity

Urging messengers to live with integrity, popular author and radio personality Charles R. Swindoll delivered the final address during the closing session of the Southern Baptist Convention in Houston.

"My message to you today who preach the Word of God and who love the Word of God is that you not be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that you live the 'Word of God,'" said Swindoll, pastor of First Evangelical Free Church, Fullerton, Calif., and newly named president of Dallas Theological Seminary. "Don't just quote it. Don't just preach it. Don't just teach it," he emphasized.

The audience applauded when Swindoll encouraged, "Be sure you live it when the church is watching and live it when nobody's watching."

Quoting Psalm 26:1, "Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my integrity," he noted the word integrity means soundness of heart and life.

"Integrity has to do with being financially accountable, personally reliable and privately innocent of impure motives and improper conduct," Swindoll said. "Churches, that is what you need to expect from your pastor; and pastors, that is what we want to see in our flocks. It is a mutual

working, an interweaving of integrity from life to life."

Swindoll asked: "If it were possible for me to slip into your inner world, the world that happens when the doors are locked and the crowd has gone home, and you are alone in the secrecy of your world and your thoughts, what goes on there?"

He continued, "God cares about your mind and the stuff you're putting in it. He cares about your eyes and the things you allow them to see. He cares about your lips and the things you say in the parking lot after board meetings."

Authentic integrity

Swindoll urged Southern Baptists to be people of integrity, "no matter what may plague us or trouble us. I'm not talking about being perfect men and women, I'm simply talking about being people who are authentic, who keep their word, who return their phone calls, who receive money for certain projects and make sure every dime goes to that project, who can be trusted with whatever authority God gives you.

"I challenge every one of you who

serve Christ as a leader in His church that you see yourself as a godly representative of His Word, that you realize you are a model being watched by young and old alike — not that it might freeze you by intimidation, but that it might free you to be the man you really are," he said.

"I think part of having integrity is admitting it when you're struggling," Swindoll shared. "I think it's not leaving the phoney impression in people's minds that you are living above and beyond the pressures of life."

"True integrity implies you do what's right when no one else is looking," Swindoll emphasized, "as well as when everyone else may be compromising."

"Real integrity stays in place whether the test is adversity or prosperity," he continued. "Sustained integrity calls for constant personal analysis."

"We must allow the sword of the Spirit to cut deeply into the soul and spirit of our beings and cut out the tumors that are bringing disease and corruption to our minds and hearts," he concluded. "Be a man, a woman of God in a generation that has lost its way!"

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Porter praises role of convention pages

Every few years it happens—a Southern Baptist Convention page shares with Lee Porter his desire to surrender his life to ministry.

"I pray before (the convention) and the week after that some will hear the call of God," said Porter, SBC registration secretary who has worked with the pages for 25 years.

"During a Foreign Mission Board report several years ago a page leaned over to me and said, 'That's what I want to be (a missionary),' " Porter smiled. "That's really what it's all about."

When Porter says pages are vital to the work of the convention, he means it. It takes a cast of hundreds to carry out the work of a convention that includes thousands of messengers, said Porter, and pages are literally "the hands and feet of the convention."

In a pre-convention orientation and pep talk to the 14 High School Baptist Young Men and six Acteens who served as pages, Porter emphasized the importance of their role.

Arkansas Baptist youth serving this year as pages were Wendy Hoag of Heber Springs and Jason Tolbert of Wynne.

"I want you to be alert to this great opportunity of service. It's an extension of the service you've done in your church, only now you're on the SBC level," Porter told the young people.

High School Baptist Young Men qualify to be pages by completing 300 hours of personal missions involvement, said Tim

Bearden, page coordinator for the Brotherhood Commission. "This experience helps them to better identify with their convention and gives them an inside look at the annual meeting and workings of the SBC," he noted.

"They'll be tested emotionally, physically and mentally," added Jeno Smith, who also coordinates pages. Duties of pages include working in the convention newsroom, registration, information center and message center.

The delivery of messages and ballots are among the most important duties of pages. Emergency messages are relayed by pages to the platform, where Porter approves the placing of the message on the convention's closed-circuit TV.

"We will receive over 1,000 emergency messages in a week," Porter said. "There will be 800 deaths in SBC churches and the pastors of those churches are here. It is extremely important that we locate people in an emergency."

Despite the preparation they receive, the convention offers surprises for pages.

"It's exciting... you don't know what to expect," said Matthew Waters of South Carolina. "You just have to learn to go with the flow."

David Lambert of Tennessee, who also is the 1993 High School Baptist Young Men's Speakout winner, said he has already made several close friends. "The guys and the leaders are great...It's just our second day together and I feel like I've known these guys forever."

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Baptists challenged to take action 'for such a time as this'

For such a time as this, God raised up the Southern Baptist Convention, and members need to take their responsibilities seriously, according to the four speakers charged with interpreting this year's convention theme.

The theme "For such a time as this" was taken from Esther 4:14, where Esther is challenged to use her position of privilege and influence to help the Jewish nation.

It is critical in these times that Southern Baptists clearly understand the priesthood of believers and use that understanding to initiate healing, said Charles B. Fuller, pastor of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.

"We are not a priesthood of one, with our own personal and private faith and order; rather we are bound together by an unmistakable oneness," Fuller said.

The priesthood of believers is not a license for individual believers to form their own set of privatized theological ideas," Fuller said. Believers may have "personalized theological ideas, but not privatized ones."

Fuller pointed out it is a plural priesthood, requiring accountability which introduces a healing power within the body of Christ. He said believers are not priests in their own right, rather through the authority of Jesus Christ, and Christians are to use the privilege of that position to proclaim Him.

Former SBC president Adrian Rogers said God wants unity within His church at

such a time as this. He said a unified fellowship is a sweet aroma to God, but he also stressed the difference between union and harmony.

"We don't have to be a denomination of clones," Rogers said. On the other hand, "we don't have to crucify the truth in order to have unity. It is better to be divided by truth than to be united in error."

According to Psalm 133, unity is like the morning dew, Rogers said. "You can't make it come, but when conditions are right, you can't stop it."

Revolutionary challenges

Christian Life Commission executive director Richard Land said today's Christians live in a time when biblical presuppositions and values are being challenged in a revolutionary way. Similar to Paul's description in Romans of a reprobate mind, Land pointed to the "downward spiral of sin" in society, where leaders are defending "the very attitudes and practices which have produced such devastation."

"No one party or candidate has a monopoly on God," Land said. "No political party can bring revival, and no political candidate can restrain it. If they are going to accuse us of partisanship, let them say we are partisan to God, partisan to truth, partisan to the Bible and partisan to Southern Baptists."

The constitution guarantees freedom for religion and not freedom from religion, Land pointed out. The convention crowd gave him a standing ovation when he said: "We're not calling for government sponsorship of religion, but we are interested, for instance, that when our children step onto public school property they retain their constitutional right to pray to God Almighty and to witness to each other."

Frank D. Pollard, pastor of First Baptist Church of Jackson, Miss., said the world needs the church's moral witness in such a time as this.

He said Daniel was faced with compromise, similar to the way believers are faced with compromise today. Daniel resisted compromise by refusing to defile himself, Pollard said.

"If you want to destroy people, if you want to control them," Pollard said, "then take them away from the things that have made them strong. Give them a whole new lifestyle."

Pollard pointed out that 30 years ago children born out of wedlock were known as illegitimate children and people involved in infidelity were considered immoral.

"You don't have to be 30 years old to remember when the vast majority of this society thought homosexuality was a totally unacceptable lifestyle," Pollard said.

At such a time as this, he noted, "our world needs us to be His church." Pollard said believers need to become role models for the society, showing them the strength that comes from an uncompromising faith in God.

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Coalition forms, seeks grassroots support

A preliminary proposal to help "call the family back together" emerged from a three-hour meeting hosted June 14 by Southern Baptist leaders Lloyd Elder and Herschel Hobbs.

The anticipated yearlong process is expected to involve a broad coalition of state convention leaders who will seek to highlight specific ways to promote hope and unity among Southern Baptists. One possible vehicle is a national "convocation of hope" involving selected state leaders.

Initial proposals to present a motion or resolution during the SBC annual meeting were rejected out of concern that the proposal would be defeated without an opportunity to enlist grassroots support.

Elder, former president of the Baptist Sunday School Board, recently issued a 16-page research report projecting that by the year 2000 missionaries would be called home from the field and some Baptist agencies would be closed "unless we stop the critical trends and build a new coalition among and by the people."

Elder acknowledged that his effort has received no encouragement from current Southern Baptist leaders, noting that "they are saying there is no crisis." By contrast, he said he had received an affirming response from Cooperative Baptist Fellowship coordinator Cecil Sherman who attended the meeting's general session.

Hobbs, an elder statesman in SBC life who issued a call in February for dialogue

among the convention's conservative and moderate forces, endorsed Elder's report after his own proposal failed to gain any momentum.

Elder's report, titled "Calling the Family Back Together," included 20 proposed action plans designed to "get governing and giving back together in Southern Baptist life."

In an effort to expand ownership of his proposals, Elder invited state convention executive directors, presidents and executive board chairman to the dialogue session held on the eve of the SBC annual meeting. Approximately 100 people attended a two-hour session which featured presentations by Elder and Hobbs and dialogue by participants. Following that session, about 30 state convention leaders accepted Elder's open invitation to form an ad hoc workgroup to discuss specific ways to move forward in establishing a "coalition of hope."

The workgroup elected a seven-member coordinating group chaired by Rodney Osborn, an Illinois anesthesiologist who is the immediate past president of the Illinois Baptist State Association and the State Convention Presidents Fellowship.

At a breakfast meeting the following morning, the workgroup adopted a statement which said, "We seek to interpret God's great call for a new day in missions advance. We seek input from those of like mind to share in the devel-

opment of a process to implement this vision."

In an afternoon press conference, Osborn said the workgroup "would ask all Southern Baptists to join us in that prayer." The workgroup met last week in Chicago to further discuss the specific mechanism to involve state convention leadership.

During the June 14 meeting, Elder cited statistical data which show that Southern Baptists' 14-year controversy consistently has reflected a 55-45 voting split. Claiming that 45 percent represents 6.9 million Southern Baptists who have been excluded from full SBC participation, he emphasized, "The urgency of the hour is to find a way that we can be inclusive of the whole number."

"We're talking about the principles of getting governing and giving back together in Southern Baptist life," Elder said. "We will not call the family back together unless we create some way to have shared governance in Southern Baptist life."

"If we are not inclusive in governance, we cannot expect Southern Baptists to continue to give," Elder declared, urging Southern Baptist leaders to "change the mentality from exclusivism to inclusivism."

Calling Lloyd's efforts "the best hope I see," Hobbs said, "What we have is not working. Let's try to adjust to something that does."

Regardless of the outcome of the efforts to establish a grassroots coalition, he added, "At least we've done one thing tonight. We've gotten together and talked it over."

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SBC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

SBC amends constitution to exclude churches affirming homosexuality

For the second consecutive year, Southern Baptist Convention messengers approved a constitutional amendment declaring churches which act to "affirm, approve or endorse homosexual behavior" as "not in cooperation" with the SBC and, therefore, not eligible to send messengers to annual convention meetings.

The amendment was first considered by messengers at the 1992 SBC annual meeting in Indianapolis and was recommended again this year by the SBC Executive Committee since changes in the constitution require approval during two consecutive annual meetings.

Speaking against the recommendation, messenger Larry Bishop of Norman, Okla., said: "If we adopt this amendment, we do not follow Jesus or trust Jesus sufficiently; we do not love through Jesus. Instead, we seek to substitute an illusory certainty of the written word.... We parade our piety before the nation.... We communicate hopelessness to the churches who make this mistake. And that's all it is, a mistake."

Messengers applauded Executive Committee member C. Ray Fuller of Joliet, Ill., when he said in support of the recommendation: "We want to assure messengers that without a specific, unprecedented move of this nature, we continue to be supportive of churches who reject us.... We must respond and give them an expulsion of love in acknowledging that they have pulled away from what we as Southern Baptists hold dear to our hearts."

SBC messengers voted to adopt the proposal with little opposition.

Also during the Executive Committee's report to the convention, opposition was raised to a recommendation to amend SBC bylaw 19 providing for representation from several Baptist entities on the General

Council of the Baptist World Alliance.

Messenger Phillip Senn of Troy, Tenn., moved to amend the committee's recommendation, omitting representation on the General Council by the president of the Woman's Missionary Union.

Referring to the WMU's auxiliary status with the convention, Senn said, "I in no way am trying to inflame anyone. I just feel that it is improper for this convention to assign a representative to serve on the Baptist World Alliance General Council that has not been elected by this body."

Executive Committee member Kenneth Barnett of Lakewood, Colo., was applauded by messengers when he spoke in opposition to Senn's amendment, saying, "The Woman's Missionary Union has always worked with the Baptist World Alliance. They have served with distinction in the past and as long as they serve with that distinction I see no reason why WMU ought to be left out."

Messengers voted down Senn's amendment and approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee, including WMU representation on the BWA General Council.

Convention messengers adopted all other recommendations of the Executive Committee with virtually no opposition. Those actions included adoption of a 1993-94 SBC program allocation budget of \$138,234,735 for SBC agencies and a 1993-94 SBC operating budget of \$4,222,204.

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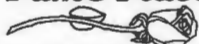
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SBC pamphlet's reference to CBF raises concerns

Members of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee adopted a recommendation asking the SBC Historical Commission to "cease to distribute" a pamphlet which makes reference to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, "until such a time it deletes any reference" to the CBF in the pamphlet.

The action came during a meeting of the Executive Committee prior to the June 15-17 SBC in Houston.

The pamphlet in question — "Who Are Southern Baptists?" — is part of a series designed to help Southern Baptists understand their history, according to Lynn E. May Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Historical Commission. Executive Committee president Morris Chapman invited May to address committee members before voting on the recommendation.

May said one characteristic of Southern Baptists is that "we are a cooperative people" who work together to reach the world for Christ. "We do that through the Cooperative Program," he said, "but there are also some churches that choose other means to support missions and evangelism." It is in this context that the pamphlet mentions the CBF as "one of the many ways Southern Baptists fund the Lord's work," he said.

The pamphlet acknowledges this fact, May said, but "by no means do we intend to promote the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship or damage the Cooperative Program."

Committee member Guy S. Sanders III

of Lake Wales, Fla., said he had received "numerous calls" from Southern Baptists who had seen the pamphlet and raised concerns about its reference to the CBF.

Committee members voted unanimously to approve the recommendation, which will be referred to the board of the Historical Commission for consideration at their next meeting.

Funds allocated to CLC

In other action, the Executive Committee voted to allocate \$300,000 of capital needs funds to the Christian Life Commission for use in purchasing housing for an office in the Washington, D.C., area. The funds were entrusted to the Executive Committee by SBC messengers at the denomination's 1992 annual meeting.

During the past year, the \$300,000 corpus was the focus of a dispute between the SBC and the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington-based religious liberty organization that claimed ownership of the money and threatened to sue the convention over the dispute. In February, Executive Committee members approved a settlement of \$100,000 to the BJCPA, leaving the \$300,000 fund the sole property of the SBC.

Also at the pre-convention meeting, John R. "Jack" Wilkerson was elected as Executive Committee vice president for business and finance, effective July 12. Employed by E.I. DuPont de Nemours & Company the past 28 years, Wilkerson, 50, said he recently took early retirement

to devote "full time and energies to Christian ministry."

Wilkerson's responsibilities will include managing the Executive Committee's business and finance office, serving as financial planner for the SBC operating budget and directing convention operations for the SBC annual meetings.

The Executive Committee also adopted resolutions of appreciation for Roy L. Honeycutt and Arthur L. Walker Jr. Honeycutt retires July 31 after 11 years as president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Walker retires September 1 after 15 years as executive director-treasurer of the SBC Education Commission and secretary-treasurer of the Southern Baptist Commission on the American Baptist Theological Seminary. Fred H. Wolfe, a six-year member of the SBC Executive Committee, was elected chairman by acclamation. He is pastor of Cottage Hill Baptist Church, Mobile, Ala., and has been vice chairman for the past two years.

Eldridge L. Miller, pastor of First Baptist Church, Sallisaw, Okla., was elected vice chairman, also by acclamation. He has been recording secretary for two years.

T.C. Pinckney, a retired Air Force general and member of Good News Baptist Church in Alexandria, Va., was elected recording secretary. He received 30 of 58 votes cast in a three-way race.

Also nominated were Scott Humphrey, another layman from Alexandria, and Stan Coffey, pastor of San Jacinto Baptist Church in Amarillo, Texas.

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Directors of missions look to the future

The current pattern for Southern Baptist program development no longer functions adequately and must undergo massive change to be effective in the future, according to Larry McSwain, former provost of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Speaking to the annual Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Directors of Missions, McSwain, who will become president of Shorter College in Rome, Ga., this month, said the mission of a church is local and "the congregation must be its own mission structure."

"Only those denominational structures which decide to facilitate the mission of the congregation will have a meaningful future," McSwain told 400 directors of missions gathered for the June 13-14 conference. "It is decentralized understanding which Baptists have always emphasized in theory but have not always practiced."

McSwain said the denomination is experiencing an increasing variety of organizational patterns within associations based on the needs of the local setting. He encouraged associations to be "partners

in the design of new ways of functioning if you have the skills and openness to participate in such efforts."

Other speakers addressing the conference theme "Looking Toward Tomorrow" agreed Baptist associations must adapt as change continues in society, the denomination and the churches.

"The future holds great promise if we will re-purpose the role of the association," said Larry Rose, director of missions for Tarrant Baptist Association in Texas. "Our purpose is to serve the churches."

The Great Commission was not left to an agency or denomination but to the local church, Rose said. "Our genius is not 'at the top' but at the grassroots."

Religious educators: 'Take future seriously'

"If Christians are going to make an impact in the 21st century, they must begin taking the future seriously," Tom Sine told religious educators gathered for the 38th annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Religious Education Association in Houston.

"Rarely do I find a denomination, seminary, agency or institution that is

making an effort to anticipate how things will change in the future....We are preparing people to live in the world that is, instead of how to live in the world that is going to be," Sine, a Seattle-based Christian researcher and futurist, said.

In his speech, "Anticipating Tomorrow's Challenges," Sine outlined several challenges that will impact Christian education in the next 10 to 15 years.

He said these challenges include a continued focus on ecology and environmentalism, changes in the global political and economic stage, America's shift to a more multi-cultural society and the "graying" of America.

To help Christians cope in an increasingly complex society, Sine said educators must take the lead in helping them discover the true biblical vision for the "good life."

"We need to search the Scriptures to find the fundamental aspirations that will define our lives," he said. "We've been letting the American dream do that, and I think that's idolatry. Our faith needs to have more of the aroma of the kingdom of God than the aroma of materialism and greed."

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**Ministers' wives hear
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"Jesus loves me, this I know" is one of the most important and meaningful things known to Willard Scott, weatherman on NBC's morning news show, "Today."

Speaking to more than 570 women gathered for the 38th annual Southern Baptist Ministers' Wives Luncheon, Scott said the other two meaningful things in his life are "going into anything with an attitude of prayer" and witnessing.

Introduced as "a star who makes a difference and who epitomizes the joy of living," Scott also reminisced about his rise to stardom, answered questions from the audience and recognized the 99th birthday of one of the women present.

Now a 43-year employee at NBC, Scott started working for the network as a page when he was 16.

Relating "the most exciting and meaningful thing that has ever happened to me," Scott said several years ago he received a letter from a young man who asked Scott to announce the 100th birthday of his uncle on the air during the "Today" show. After doing so, Scott began and

continues to receive up to 200 letters each day from people all across the country hoping to have their friend or relative's 100th or 100-plus birthday announced on the program.

Scott then honored a participant at the ministers' wives luncheon, Bess Russum of Hattiesburg, Miss., as she celebrated her 99th birthday.

June Honeycutt of Louisville, Ky., 1993 president of the ministers' wives group, announced the slate of 1994 officers including president Ellen Tanner of Oklahoma City. The speaker for next year's luncheon, when the SBC meets in Orlando, Fla., will be Anne Graham Lotz, daughter of evangelist Billy Graham.

**Arkansans perform
for church musicians**

More than 100 songs were offered by a variety of choirs, soloists, orchestras and conference participants during 10 concerts and two worship services at the 38th annual Southern Baptist Church Music Conference in Houston. The conference also included educational sessions

designed to help local churches develop their church music programs.

The conference concerts, which included the Arkansas Master Singers and Arkansas Singing Women, ranged from children's choirs to handbell demonstrations to organ recitals. The educational session included such topics as current trends in church music, teambuilding in children's choir and drama in worship.

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary president Russell Dilday spoke about the faithfulness of God at both conference worship services. Dilday stressed that faithfulness is a limitless dimension of God. He also predicted that future generations will judge how faithful we have been to our ministry calling, our Southern Baptist heritage and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Musical works commissioned by the conference were premiered, including the anthem "You Are a Light" by David T. Clydesdale, and the hymn "Our God, You Seek Our Company" by T. W. Hunt.

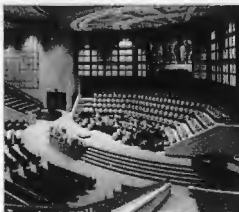
Mark Blakenship, director of Genevox Music Group at the Baptist Sunday School Board was elected conference president. Peggy Pearson, associate in the Arkansas Baptist State Convention church music department, was elected denominational representative for the West.

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By Glen Schmucker, pastor, First Church, Siloam Springs

Basic passage: Colossians 2

Focal passage: Colossians 2:1-7, 20-23

Central truth: Christ is the beginning and end of our faith.

A young man was attempting to rescue some people caught in a tornado. The storm was so close that, as he attempted to hold onto the mother and her daughter, his body was lifted into the air. The only thing that kept him from being blown away was his firm grip on a root protruding from the ground.

In response to strange and false doctrines which permeated the world of the early church, Paul admonished the Colossians to keep holding onto the root of their salvation, the person of Christ. He is the starting and ending point of the Christian faith (Col. 2:6-7). Christ is the central truth against which all matters of faith and practice are to be measured.

There is no greater truth than Christ. The emphasis on a deeper knowledge of Scripture will never lead one to anything of more substance than Christ. When we have found Christ, we have found God (Col. 2:9). Therefore, we go on in Christian living the same way we began, through personal faith in the Lord Jesus (Col. 2:6). Again, He is the beginning and end of all that it means to be Christian. He is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

The beginning of the Christian life, however, does imply its continuance. To be Christian means to be alive (Col. 2:13). Life, by its nature, demands expression. Being Christian means more than a one-time acknowledgment of Christ as Savior. It means directing one's life according to all that Christ is (Col. 2:5, 7).

But such faith, an absolute trust in Christ alone for salvation, is hard work. It is hard work because it means letting go of any pretense with regard to our ability to affect our salvation.

Every generation supplies its own culturally molded concepts of morality which give, when adhered to, a full sense of spiritual security. It was a problem for the Colossians (Col. 2:20-23) and it is a problem for modern man.

The call of Christ is to Himself. It is a call to an abandonment of anything, intellectual or religious, that calls our attention away from Him as the very source of all that faith means.

Life and Work

What the Word needs

By Ron Ford, pastor, Central Church, North Little Rock

Basic passage: James 1:16-37

Focal passage: James 1:19-25

Central truth: The Word of God needs acceptance, attention and application.

Our focal passage for the week deals with the Word of God. If we are not careful, we get into the habit of thinking that the Word of God needs our defense if it is to survive. The Word of God does not need our defense so much as it needs our use. The greatest enemy of the Bible is not the heretic, but the Christian who refuses to meet the needs of the Word of God. What are the needs of the Word of God?

The Word of God needs our acceptance. Verse 21 says, "Humbly accept the word." We receive the Word of God by giving it a hearing.

In order to hear the Word of God:

(1) We have to be quick to listen and slow to speak. We have twice as many ears as we have mouths for a reason.

(2) We have to be slow to become angry. Uncontrolled anger indicates an extreme self-centeredness which quenches the Word.

(3) We have to cleanse our lives. Moral filth and evil is like wax in our ears. When our ears become clogged, we can no longer hear. When our lives have too much sin, the Word finds little acceptance.

The Word of God needs our attention. First, we accept God's Word by listening to it. Then we go beyond just listening to giving our full attention to what the Word is saying. We inspect the Word. We investigate the Word. We examine the Word. We "do not merely listen to the Word."

We given attention to the Word the same way we give attention to a mirror. When a mirror is in the hallway, we cannot help but stop and look at ourselves. Is our hair ruffled? Are our clothes okay? We love to look deeply at ourselves in a mirror. So with the Word of God, we should give it the close attention that it deserves. When we do, it gives back a true picture of ourselves.

The Word of God needs application. Verse 22 sums it up, "Do what it says." We are to be doers of the Word. Let me paraphrase Matthew 7:21 to illustrate. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Bible, Bible,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does what the Bible says."

Bible Book

Peculiar people

By Ronnie Mayes, pastor, First Church, Beebe

Basic passage: 1 Peter 1:13-2:10

Focal passage: 1 Peter 1:17-21; 2:9-10

Central truth: Christians are different from other people because our God, salvation and way of life are different from that of this world.

Our economy and lifestyle are a different reflection of prices. The Christian life is the result of a price paid by Jesus. Someone has correctly said that salvation is free, but it is not cheap.

As believers, we are "peculiar" because of our salvation. We are not saved by buying our salvation with money, nor are we saved by keeping the traditions and religion of our forefathers. Our redemption comes from the precious blood of Christ.

The word "redeem" means to buy or to set free by the payment of a ransom. Peter clearly implies that God is the recipient of the ransom, accepting Christ's surrender of His life as an offering which abolishes the disobedience of sinful mankind.

The blood of Christ is precious. Only Jesus' blood removes sin, takes away the wrath of God, and appeases a Holy God. Of all the gods in the world, only our God sacrificed for His people.

The death of Christ was not a haphazard event, but was contained in God's eternal purpose (v. 20). God was not first Creator and then Redeemer, but Redeemer and then Creator. Charles Spurgeon said, "Jesus died for me. I have lived by these four words, and they are the words by which I am going to die."

Not only does our salvation make us "peculiar," but it is our birthright. As believers, we are somebody. We are a chosen race. Literally, it is "an elect race." A royal priesthood describes believers as sharing with Christ in kingship or sovereignty, as well as in priesthood. A holy nation points to the fact that while they may come from many earthly nations, spiritually they now form a distinct, holy, superior and exalted nation. No Christian should ever suffer from an inferiority complex.

1 Peter 2:10 is very clear that no one has always been a Christian. "Mercy" is written in the verb tense which points to the single decisive event of their conversion which brought them out of darkness into light and changed their status from a nobody to a somebody.

Convention Uniform

Heart of Christian ethics

By Glen Schmucker, pastor, First Church, Siloam Springs

Basic passage: Colossians 3

Focal passage: Colossians 3:4-11,

18-22

Central truth: Hope is the foundation of Christian ethics.

As the football team gathered in the locker room prior to its last game of the season the coach tried in vain to motivate his young high school athletes toward victory. But, having lost every game that season, they knew that no matter how they performed in that last game the season was beyond hope. Hence, with no hope for a winning season there was no motivation to play their very best and the game was lost.

Colossians 3 is a call to a standard of Christian ethics that runs contrary to the cultural norm. And the motivation behind the call is the certain knowledge that, no matter how great the cost in the present moment, the Christian will be ultimately victorious. Hope, the knowledge that "we will be revealed with him in glory" (Col. 3:4), is the foundation of Christian ethics. Without such hope we are reduced to a lifestyle motivated by the anxiety expressed in the pagan call to "eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we may die."

It is this certain knowledge of the ultimate outcome of our faith that informs the ethical content of our behavior. Released from the fear of ultimate loss, the believer can make great sacrifice in his day-to-day relationships on every level.

He can move beyond just giving free expression to carnal desires with regard to sexuality and material possessions (Col. 3:5). He can search out new levels of integrity and love as he models his earthly patterns of relating on the behavior of the One whose Spirit newly adorns his own instead of the worldly patterns of power and control (Col. 3:5-10, 18-22).

This ancient letter from Paul not only provides the model for modern Christian ethics, it also informs the way in which Christians should seek to influence moral reform in the secular world. We must do more than try to force Christian values on an unbelieving world else we simply put people in a moral straitjacket. We must also proclaim the hope that is in Christ if we seek to give the world a reason to live a different way.

Life and Work

Eradicating favoritism

By Ron Ford, pastor, Central Church, North Little Rock

Basic passage: James 2:1-13

Focal passage: James 2:1, 8

Central truth: Favoritism is a sin which needs eradicating from our lives.

Our passage for the week deals with the issue of favoritism. As believers, we are not to show favoritism. A close look at the passage shows this clear lesson.

Favoritism excluded (v. 1). The KJV is somewhat unclear, but the NIV leaves no room for doubt. "Don't show favoritism." The word used here is a distinctive Christian word, because the world shows little concern for this principle. It means to judge a person by the way they look, literally, to regard the face of a person. Appearance is one of many criteria which may be chosen as a standard of judgment. This kind of judging is forbidden. God does not show this kind of favoritism, neither should a believer.

Favoritism exemplified (vv. 2-7). After the principle is stated, James gives an example of what he is talking about. Two men come into the meeting house. One is obviously wealthy and the other is obviously poor. Suppose the wealthy man is given the best seat in the house and a great fuss is made over him, is this not favoritism? The church should be one place where people of different economic, racial, and educational backgrounds can sit down and fellowship together.

Favoritism exposed (vv. 9-13). We don't like to call many things sin. But favoritism is a sin. "If you show favoritism, you sin." Some seemed to be excusing favoritism by saying that this was just a little sin. Surely, it didn't amount to much. James says that a sin is a sin. To violate one part of the law is to violate the whole law. All sin is serious. The main difference in sin is the consequence. Obviously, I would rather have you covet something of mine than to murder me.

Favoritism eradicated (v. 8). There is only one solution for favoritism—the royal law of love. "Love your neighbor as yourself." This means treat others as you want to be treated. None of us wants to be subjected to favoritism toward others. It hurts when others are put before us. It hurts to be discriminated against. It hurts to be in the wrong social circle economically. For this reason, it has no place in the church.

Bible Book

Christianity in the home

By Ronnie Mayes, pastor, First Church, Beebe

Basic passage: 1 Peter 2:11-3:12

Focal passage: 1 Peter 3:1-7

Central truth: The key to how to live a Christian life at home, even with an unbeliever, is personal responsibility, not personal rights.

Christians generally agree that the hardest place to be a Christian is in the home. This is especially true if a Christian is married to a lost person or a Christian who is out of God's will. Verses 1-6 deal with the wife reaching an ungodly husband and verse 7 instructs the husband who lives with a godly wife.

A Christian woman is to be adorned with submissiveness. Christian submissiveness is a very misunderstood subject. The Bible does not say she is to "be subjected," but within the divine structure of society she is to "be subject herself." Submission does not mean inferiority, but is a function or a ministry.

Some women ask, "Why should I be submissive to my husband who is not a Christian and does not serve the Lord?" Peter's answer is, "So that the husband may be won to the Lord." The Christian wife is not only to have an attitude of submissiveness, but also an attitude of redemption. Many husbands are saved and their testimony is that God used the life of their godly wife to convict them. Christian women should not be as concerned with their individual rights as much as the redemption of their family.

Christian ladies should be more concerned about inward beauty than outward beauty (v. 3-4). These verses are not to be understood that it is a sin to wear make-up or dress attractively. The beauty of a godly woman doesn't come from external apparel, but inner beauty. Notice their beauty does not perish (v. 4), does not get old, and never goes out of style.

God's Word then directs the husband "likewise" (v. 7). He is to have a special knowledge about his wife. A wife takes special understanding and special honor. She is not only one's wife, but a sister in Christ. Outside of salvation, a godly wife is one of the greatest blessings the Lord can bestow on a man. God expects the husband to treat her with respect, honor and kindness or God will not answer the husband's prayers. A husband without a prayer life is doomed to failure.

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CONVENTION DIGEST

Young offers evangelists encouragement, challenge

Southern Baptist Convention president Ed Young, making an unscheduled appearance at the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists, said pastors need to make a point of using vocational evangelists in their churches.

Young pointed out revival starts in the family of God. "When the family is on their knees, they will get doctrinally straight; then they can go out and invite people to come to a love feast," he declared.

Expository preacher Stephen Olford exhorted evangelists to minister to their families. He said the spiritual depth of their ministries is a reflection of their spirituality at home. "What is true of me as an evangelist must be true of my home - I must have a Spirit-filled home," Olford said.

Jack Hazelwood of Little Rock was one of three members of the conference presented with awards of appreciation for their service as itinerant evangelists. Hazelwood has served in evangelism for 26 years.

Two Arkansans were elected officers for the coming year. Tom Cox was elected secretary and Kay Cox was elected treasurer.

Baptist computer users strive for increased quality

Members of the Southern Baptist Computer Users Association (SBCUA) focused on "Achieving Quality in Information Systems" during a two-day conference.

Thirty-seven of the organization's 51 active members attended the meeting at First Baptist Church in Houston. During plenary and small-group sessions, participants explored such technological advances as electronic mail and video conferencing.

SBCUA's 1992-93 president, Charles Williamson Jr., director of systems development for the Home Mission Board in Atlanta, presided over two business sessions in which the group elected officers and adopted revisions to their constitution and bylaws. Among the new officers is Al Farmer, computer services manager for the Arkansas Baptist State Convention, who will serve as the association's SBCNet system operator.

Women in Ministry goals: education, encouragement

With approximately 500 members in their 10th year, Southern Baptist Women in Ministry has two goals: to educate and to encourage, according to the organization's president, Terry Huneycutt, minister of Christian education at Greenwood Forest Baptist Church in Cary, N.C.

WIM officers are developing a guide, "Biblical Basis for Ordination of Women," and an educational brochure to be used as tools to educate people about women in ministry. "We want to lift all women in ministry up and encourage them to fulfill their individual calling," Huneycutt explained.

"We are not a phase. We are here to stay," Huneycutt added. "We have learned of God and His calling through our Southern Baptist Convention churches, but sadly we are having to leave those to answer our calling. The home that nurtured us and taught us does not always allow us a place to serve."

African American Fellowship adopts constitution

Adoption of a constitution marked the official formation of the African American Fellowship of the Southern Baptist Convention on the eve of the SBC annual meeting.

In a brief business meeting, pastors, church staff and lay members of the participating churches adopted a constitution to guide the organization which exists to encourage the fellowship and cooperation of African American churches in the SBC.

The constitution outlines the organization's purposes to work in harmony with the SBC in fulfilling the Great Commission through support of the Cooperative Program, to sensitize the SBC and its entities to concerns of the African American community and to help one another in church growth.

Filipino Southern Baptists establish national fellowship

The Filipino Southern Baptist Fellowship of North America organized during the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Houston. With 325 churches and mission congregations and 125 pastors in 27 states, the group has pledged itself to double their number by the end of the century.

Jaime Prieto, national consultant for Filipinos for the Home Mission Board, said the group will emphasize evangelism, church planting, church growth and ministries in developing their work. Specialized ministries include one to World War II veterans who have come to the U.S. to claim the citizenship promised at the end of the war. Another ministry is to undocumented Filipinos.

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